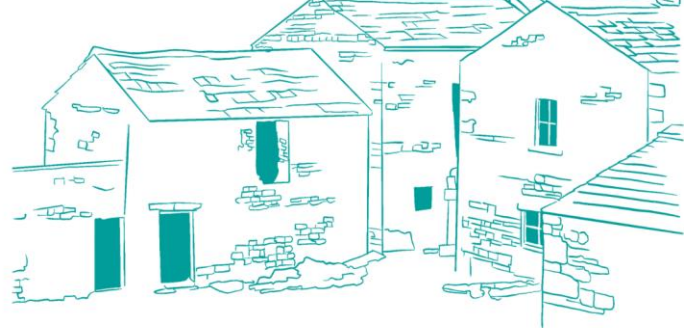




A National Amenity Society

Pippa Card
Planning Case Officer
Wiltshire Council
By email: pippa.card@wiltshire.gov.uk

17 December 2025

Shaw House, Bath Road, Shaw, Melksham, SN12 8EE. Planning application no. PL/2025/09237.

Dear Pippa,

Thank you for notifying the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) of this application. Based on the information supplied with the proposals, we offer the following observations and advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Summary

We do not consider that the proposed works have adequate justification. We recommend that the current proposals are **amended** to reinstate the historic floor plan and internal features, to reduce the harmful impacts on the listed building.

Significance

The significance of the Shaw House is established by its Grade II listing (NHLE No. 1364149), which indicates that it is of national interest. The current house was built in 1711, replacing an earlier manor house on the site, with additions to the south in 1840. The grand scale of the house, high-quality external and internal detailing, and large subsidiary buildings including the Grade II listed stable block all indicate the wealth and importance of the original owner.

The building holds high historic, architectural, and evidential value in its historic fabric, classical aesthetic and surviving plan form and design.

Comments

The CBA note that the building was subject to unsympathetic repairs in the twentieth century, and we are generally supportive of the principle of repair and restoration. However, we are concerned that some areas of change already undertaken were not informed by the advice available through the Listed Building Consent process, and have caused an unjustified level of harm to the building.

The application has been submitted as a retrospective LBC for the removal of the chimney stack, fireplace, and wall in the kitchen. As per the submitted Heritage Statement, the chimney stack was boxed in with plasterboard during the early works. CBA note the poor condition of the chimney stack, but its retention and conservation would have been preferable to its removal.

Given its size and location, it is believed that that this chimney stack was part of the original 1711 building. As such, it is of high historic and evidential value. Fireplaces were vital for cooking, heating and other domestic functions, and the scale of this central stack was proportionate to the scale of the wider building. It also held evidence about the location of the historic service areas of the building; these areas are often subject to more change than the higher-status rooms within historic buildings, and evidence regarding their historic location and use is of particular interest in establishing a building's domestic history.

The removal of the chimney stack at all levels harms the legibility of the house's original floor plan and the use of different spaces. It is also not what we would have advised in structural terms, as the loss of the extensive chimney breast will affect the structural stability of the surrounding areas of fabric. As steel beams behave differently to historic building materials in response to changing moisture and temperature levels, the insertion of beams to mitigate the removal of the stack is also not an approach we would recommend. As such, we consider that if permission had been properly sought for these works, we would have advised against the granting of listed building consent for this aspect of the proposals, as we do not consider that it meets the requirements of NPPF paras. 212 or 213.

Although the damage has already occurred, appropriate mitigation could be achieved by reinstating the fireplace and chimney stack, using appropriate materials and retaining the original size and proportions based on historic photographs and plans.

The enlargement of the wall opening in the kitchen does not have the clear and convincing justification required by NPPF para. 213. This has resulted in the loss of historic fabric and an alteration to the historic floor plan. The CBA concur with the advice of your local planning authority's conservation specialist, that it would be of less harm to the building to return the opening to its historic width, utilising appropriate materials.

We also support the recommendation to replaster the walls where these were historically plastered over the stone; exposed stone is usually a feature of functional buildings such as barns, and are not characteristic of high-status domestic properties like this. Similarly, the exposed roof beams within the early nineteenth century southern bedroom are not typical of the period and the reinstatement of a ceiling would be preferable, although we recognise that the historic fabric of the ceiling may have been beyond repair.



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We note that the applicants' intention was to sensitively restore the listed building, which was in need of repair. Unfortunately, the works did not benefit from the advice available through the Listed Building Consent system, which exists to ensure that heritage assets are protected from avoidable harms. We remind the applicants that works to a listed building without the proper consents are illegal under the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, and recommend that in future all works are undertaken with the proper consent.

Recommendation

The CBA are broadly supportive of the principle of the repair of Shaw House. However, some of the works undertaken have caused a level of harm to the building's historic character and significance which are not adequately justified; specifically, the loss without reinstatement of the central kitchen chimney stack at all levels, the widening of a historic opening in the wall adjacent, and the loss without reinstatement of historic plaster and the ceiling to an early nineteenth-century bedroom. As such, these works does not meet the requirements of para. 212 and 213 of the NPPF, and we would have advised against the granting of listed building consent if it had been sought.

In order to mitigate these harms to the building, we recommend that the central chimney stack, plaster, historic wall and previous ceiling are reinstated using traditional methods and materials. This will retain some legibility of the building's historic floor plan and character despite the irreversible loss of historic fabric.

I trust these comments are useful to you; please keep the CBA informed of any developments with this case.

Kind Regards,

Dr Alison Edwards
Listed Buildings Caseworker

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) is the national amenity society concerned with protection of the archaeological interest in heritage assets. Local planning authorities have a duty to notify the CBA of applications for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition, under the procedures set out in, **Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification To Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of state (England) direction 2021.**



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