

CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference: PL/2025/08624
Application Type: Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
Consultation ends: 18 December 2025
Case officer: Fiona Webb

Site Address: 5 St Johns Court, Devizes, SN10 1BU
Proposal: Insertion of a wooden sash window into a former doorway, currently infilled with blockwork. Removal of the en-suite shower room in the front ground floor bedroom. Dividing this room with a stud wall to create a private bedroom, whilst creating a ground floor bathroom and lobby within the original bedroom space and adjoining the present hall space.
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

Policy: From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 16 requires that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the Council to pay **special attention** to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Section 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. Paragraphs 214-216 of the NPPF require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved. Paragraph 210 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that "designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance."

Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy Policy CP57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping': A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.

Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets illustrates the application of policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for PP and LBC.

Site and assets considered: The site is a Grade II listed building located in Devizes Conservation Area.

Proposal: The proposal seeks the insertion of a wooden sash window into a former doorway, currently infilled with blockwork. Removal of the en-suite shower room in the front ground floor bedroom. Dividing this room with a stud wall to create a private bedroom, whilst creating a ground floor bathroom and lobby within the original bedroom space and adjoining the present hall space.

Relevant planning history: ENQ/2025/01304 - Redecoration, replacement boiler and water heating tank (like for like), extraction for cooker and shower and a new sash window into a bricked up doorway; K/35949 - Change of use and associated alterations to former club premises to form two dwellings (approve); K/35996/L - Restoration & alterations to facilitate conversion of building to two dwellings (approve); K/44522/L - Insertion of 6 new roof windows, creation of new openings in roof structure, re roofing with original clay tiles (approve); K/58396/LBC - Internal and external alterations to create 2 no. dwellings. Demolition of 1920's extension (approve); K/58395/F - Change of use of former liberal club to 2 no. dwellings and erection of 1 no. new dwelling (approve).

Issues: impact on the listed building, impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, impact on the conservation area.

Information considered/provided: Paragraph 207 requires that applicants describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This should include sufficient information to provide a clear understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting and the potential impact of any proposals on that significance. In this case, whilst the applications are accompanied by a “Design & Access Statement” and a “Heritage Statement” the documents provides limited information about the building and fails to provide any objective assessment of the fabric affected, its date or significance or of the impact of the proposals and, as a result, they fail to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

However, paragraph 208 also provides for the local planning authority to make its own assessment of impact and the following heritage recommendations are offered on this basis.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting: The NPPF defines significance as the “value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be **archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic**. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.” Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

In this case the significance of the building lies largely with its historic fabric and architecture - its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest and which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

The rear of the building has, however, been compromised by extension and alteration during the modern period and is of lesser interest. The existing ensuite bathroom in the ground floor front room has also been added at some point without the benefit of Listed Building Consent.

Assessment: The property is part of a terrace of Grade II listed buildings located in Devizes Conservation Area.

The building is 18th Century and was listed on 9 April 1954 under the list entry ‘The Liberal Club, St John’s Court, Devizes.

The building was given permission for conversion to residential use in 2008. It is clear, from my site visit and the information provided that the interior of the property was altered during the conversion and that little interior detailing survives and interior doors are mainly modern. The exterior retains much of the original aesthetic appearance although many of the windows are modern.

The insertion of a new window opening through a blocked up doorway in the external passage way would involve no loss of historic fabric as the blocked up doorway is an historic opening and the infill is modern blockwork. The proposed window is a traditional timber sliding sash window to match other existing windows at the property, this is considered acceptable.

In regard to the replacement of the downstairs ensuite with the creation of a lobby and separate small bathroom, this is also considered acceptable in principle since the existing is unauthorised and of poor construction. The room is spacious enough to accept an international partition without significance loss to the plan form and the works would not involve any loss of historic fabric. Skirtings and doors should match historic details.

Summary & conclusion: The NPPF confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification.

The impact of the proposals on heritage assets will be neutral and the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance are considered to be met and there is therefore no objection to the approval of the application.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

Devizes Town Council – No objection

Trust for Devizes – Appears consistent with objective to conserve the LB, its features and setting.

REPRESENTATIONS:

None

RECOMMENDATION:

Consent

REASON FOR GRANTING ~~PERMISSION~~/CONSENT/REFUSAL:

The proposed works would preserve the special historic interest of the heritage asset in accordance with Sections 16(2) and 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990 and NPPF section 16, because these works, subject to conditions, would have no detrimental impact on the historic fabric and would be of an appropriate material and detailing.

Conditions

- 1 The works for which Listed Building Consent is hereby granted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The works hereby granted consent shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents: Location Plan – dated 6/11/2025 Existing and proposed floor plan - dated 5/11/2025 Kitchen window style 1, 2 and 3 – dated 4/11/2025 Proposed sash window - dated 12/11/2025 Proposed joinery cross section through window – dated 12/11/2025 Proposed joinery 1 – dated 12/11/2025 Elevation of Doorway inside passageway – dated 23/12/2025 Drawing showing through glazing bar - dated 23/12/2025 REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of the significance of the heritage assets and their setting.
- 3 All new internal joinery shall replicate adjacent equivalent historic examples.

REASON: In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of the listed building.