



PLANNING HERITAGE

Conservation Planning Consultancy

Heritage Assessment – Wansdyke House, Wilsford, Wiltshire

INTRODUCTION:

This statement has been prepared for an application which seeks to create a new opening between the kitchen and dining room extension in combination with other minor alterations at Wansdyke House, Wilsford (the 'Site'). This report assesses the heritage impact of the proposed change.

Wansdyke House, No. 13 The Street in Wilsford is located on the south side of the main street through the village / conservation area. It is a two storey, double fronted, Flemish bond brick, plain tile house that is attached to the property to the west. The property was extended to the east in 1989 (full height extension) and to the south/rear in 2017 (single storey extension). The Wilsford Conservation Area was designated in 1975 and reviewed in 2004. The conservation area covers the historic core of the village stretching from Wilsford Manor in the east to Wilsford House in the west and including the Church of St Nicholas. The Council adopted and published a character appraisal in 2004.

The published conservation area character appraisal (CACA) describes the village as being *a quiet rural village predominantly of cottages, several of the 16th century and earlier. Most have thatched roofs and timber frame walls consistently painted in the estate cream.* The CACA describes the Site as being *a small listed brick and tile cottage with a date-stone in a recessed panel 1819 W over WD. It was originally symmetrical about a central front door with a good façade ... built in red brick in Flemish bond. The six panel door with blind fanlight has a fine semicircular arched head. The 'S' tie plate has no doubt been required because of internal alterations concurrent with the 20th century extension.*

The Site was listed at Grade II in June 1986 and the list description states: *No. 13 II House. 1819. Brick with tiled roof. Two storeys, 2 bays, with C20 third bay added on left. Good central 6-panelled door with frame in brick rebates, and unglazed radial fanlight. Curved hood on brackets. Casement windows with gauged flat brick lintels. Panel over door has datestone and initials W. W.D 1819. Stack to right gable.*

The key findings include:

- That the historic significance of the heritage asset has been considered and that it is the aim of the applicant to ensure that the proposals will not harm to that significance;
- That the original planform of the property has been altered over time by the extensions and alterations which have created a modern character and planform, it has been through those adaptations and functional alterations that has created a comfortable dwelling;
- That the architectural significance of the building is derived from its street elevation and the contribution it makes to the streetscene;
- Internally, the historic significance is derived from the exposed detailing including the infilled mullioned window set within the former gable end wall of No.14. The interior plan on the ground floor has evolved and modernised but continues to contribute to the overall historic significance;
- That the proposals will utilise the rooms in a manner that will not cause substantial harm or total loss of significant historic interest, rather they will enhance the historic building as a whole;
- That the proposed scheme will provide suitable accommodation and preserve the legibility of the room plan between the kitchen/dining room; and
- That the works will not cause harm or detriment to the wider Conservation Area.

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PROPOSAL:

The proposed works seek to create an open plan kitchen/dining room arrangement by removing a section of an internal wall/partition between the two rooms spanning between the kitchen/dining room door and a retained knib at the eastern end. The opening will reflect the existing door heights and have a splayed reveals.

Other works that will be beneficial include the replacement of the existing first floor bathroom rooflight with a conservation style version, thus benefitting the appearance of the property in a more visually appropriate manner in tandem with the repointing of the decorative/vitrified brickwork of the west gable end in traditional lime mortar.

Additional rooflights are proposed in the dining extension roof.

The proposals are shown in full in the accompanying plans.

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CONTEXT:

The primary source for the history of the village can be found in Volume 10 of the Wiltshire Victoria County History (VCH), in which it states that *the south side of the village street is bordered by several groups of cottages of 17th-, 18th-, and 19th-century dates. A number have thatched roofs, some are partly timber-framed, and some partly of colour-washed brick. Most were owned in 1971 by Mr. Henry Horton, who had carried out much internal modernisation.*

The cartographic sources highlight the medieval street pattern and the village experienced a short period of expansion in the early C19. The character of the village is noted in the character appraisal as being defined by the *number of surviving thatched and timber framed cottages... the village is extended along a lane between two end groups where intervening green spaces between buildings are integral to its character... The east end is the village centre or nucleus presided over by the parish church situated at the crossroads of the Street and Church Lane.*

The cartographic evidence shows how the Site has evolved and that until the 1920s there was a larger building/range attached to the east end which extended back to the rear in the location of the present extension. The range appears to have been largely demolished by the 1920s.

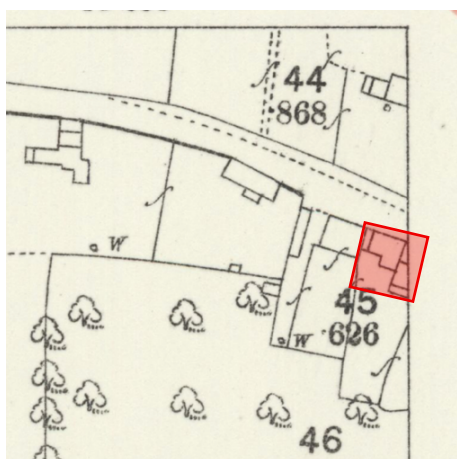


Fig.i: Extract from 1886 OS map

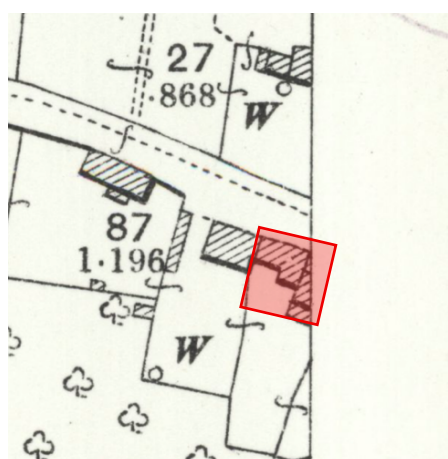


Fig.ii: Extract from 1900 OS map

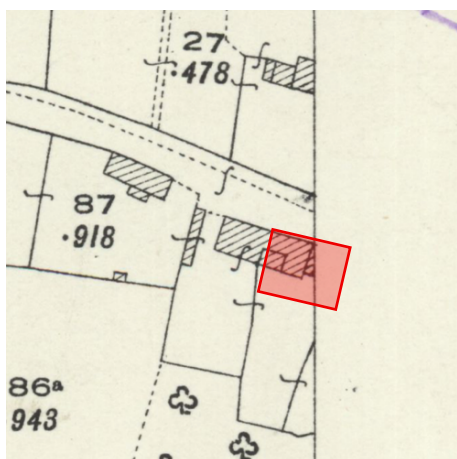


Fig.iii: Extract from 1924 OS map

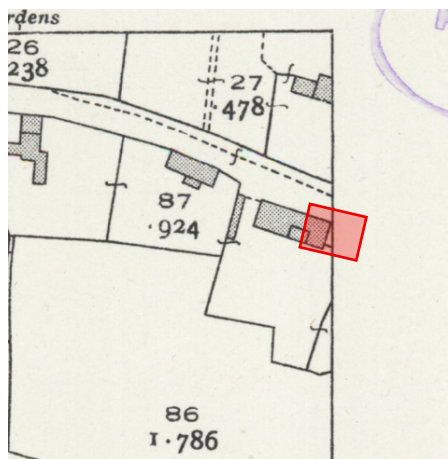


Fig.iv: Extract from 1941 OS map

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THE BUILDING:

Originally a modest two room plan brick dwelling, the sources and on-site evidence revealed that the property has had a long history of change and alteration, not least the demolition of the eastern range. Internally, it is also apparent that the original planform of the property has been altered over time, which in turn has introduced adaptations and functional alterations.

Notwithstanding those changes, the existing property retains a high degree of historical and architectural significance because of its external appearance, character, age relationship to the street and attractive features which include the date-stone panel W.W.D 1819 set into an blocked up window, the simply vitrified patterns in the west gable, front door with fanlight and hood and the dogtoothed detailing along the eavesline. It is the front façade which makes a positive contribution to the wider village.

Internally, there have been several alterations made to the planform, including the addition of the extensions and linking through to the study. The interior planform comprises a central hall and rooms on either side. Little of the original character survives, except in the study which sits in the single storey addition formed by roofing over the gap between the Site and No.14. It is in this space, that the historic exterior timber framing of No.14 is exposed and visible. The ceiling in this area is covered by plasterboard.

The inspection showed the first floor room plan is effectively a C20/C21 arrangement, which has allowed for the provision of bathroom and ensuite facilities.

The focus of the site inspection was the ground floor arrangement including the kitchen space, the dining room extension and the small study area. These rooms are typical of an adapted modest floorplan with each space linking into the next to create a space of mixed character.

Some modest opening up work were undertaken to investigate the type and form of wall between the kitchen and dining extension was/is. These works revealed that it is a mix bond brick construction with a sand cement render applied to the south (previously external) side. Photographs submitted with a previous application (17/11626/LBC) show that the rear elevation in this area was rendered in a modern finish and a had a small leanto entrance attached to the two storey rear tower.



1. No13, Wansdyke House



2. The rear elevation and dining room extension

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3. Opening up work on kitchen side wall



4. Opening up work in dining room



5. The exposed brickwork



6. Exposed render work

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SIGNIFICANCE:

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses. Section 66 (1) of the same act states that, when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects the setting of a listed building, special regard should be had to the desirability of preserving its setting.

Significance can be defined as the '*value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest*'. Significance is unique to a place and it is vital to identify this, as the aim of conservation is to sensitively manage change to a place to ensure that its significance is protected, and revealed, reinforced and enhanced at every possible opportunity.

There are occasions when the significance of a building or place may be regarded simply as intrinsic. However, since significance is evaluated as a result of how a building or place is interpreted or perceived at a given moment, there are instances where significance can be regarded as a fluid concept that can either be eroded or enhanced, depending on the consequences of change. Significance can be eroded through, for example, partial demolition or inappropriate alterations. Alternatively, it can be enhanced through informed, considered change which can bring positive benefits. These benefits can include the revealing of heritage values, the re-assertion of historic integrity, facilitating greater public appreciation and the strengthening of communal values and uses – all of which may ultimately raise the level of significance. Thus, the aims of managed change to protect, reveal, reinforce or enhance significance can be achieved through a variety of means including conservation, improved interpretation, understanding and/or presentation.

The primary historical and architectural significance of the house can be found in its exterior front façade and the contribution it makes to the harmonious village grouping of cottages and houses. The attractive historic entrance with its canopy is a notable feature of the front façade. And this in turn with the relationship to the main street, retain high significance. As such, the Site contributes to the understanding of C18 and C19 architecture of the village by virtue of forming part of streetscape.

Of equal importance is the historic association with No.14 and the enclosure of the gap between the two buildings. The historical association contributes to the significance and character of the Site as a whole. However, internally the evolution of the plan altered the circulation patterns and spaces. The décor, fixtures and fittings in the area affected by these proposals are modern and have low or neutral heritage significance. Whilst the removal of small section of (internal) wall can be achieved and will retain the understanding of how these spaces were sub-divided but equally how they have been adapted to the achieve a more sustainable use and configuration for a modern family home. This scheme will have not affect that understanding.

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IMPACT OF THE WORKS:

The NPPF definition of the significance of a heritage asset (Annex 2: Glossary) as **the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.**

The proposals have been assessed in order to understand any potential harm that they may cause to the significance of the heritage asset and whether any such harm can be effectively mitigated.

The assessment of the Site revealed the historic significance is derived from its period of construction and the contribution it makes to the row of housing, which in turn contributes to the wider character of the wider village and the streetscape. The kitchen area has been formed in an area not originally designed for such a use but it is now at the centre of the house. This space contributes to how as a modern home, the rooms are used and adapted, whilst retaining the sense of heritage and character.

The design philosophy has been one that considers the many references including the historic and existing planform and fabric to ensure that the works will not harm the building, accepting that as internal works there will be no harm to the wider conservation area. The aim of the proposed works is to create a layout that enables better communication and circulation within the living spaces while preserving the historic integrity and understanding of the ground floor. It is a design which does not significantly alter the original arrangement nor diminish the architectural or historical value of the building. The objective is to adapt the property for modest, contemporary family living while safeguarding the significance of the heritage asset, specifically the appearance of the property and its contribution to the streetscape.

It is accepted that these works will alter the appearance of the property, however that change will be in form of enhanced pointing, creating a sympathetic traditional appearance and where the changes are to the rear, it is acknowledged that the rear of the property makes far less of a contribution both in heritage terms and to the Conservation area as a whole.

The assessment showed the historic wall has been modified and to a degree, compromised by earlier works and that by removing a section of this to open out the room and connect it directly to the dining area, it would still retain the intellectual understanding of these spaces. The area of wall being removed, although original to the building, is faced with modern drylining and plasterboard. It is also the case that the dining room elevation was rendered in cement, indicating that there had been a series of prior modifications that had changed the appearance of the building and historic fabric of the property.

These proposals will however ensure the preservation of its key architectural attributes and will not cause harm to the house or its historic character. The formation of an opening between the kitchen and dining area is now common practice and has been shown not to adversely affect the understanding of the historic significance of the building. These are changes which will preserve the property's architectural integrity.

This approach is one that respects the planform, fabric and character and will result in a bespoke solution that suits the specific situation of No.14 Wansdyke House. The proposals will not compromise the understanding of the accommodation within the building and in this regard the works will not harm or cause the loss of significance to the heritage asset.

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CONCLUSION:

The proposed scheme builds upon the principles and layout established in the approved 2017 application and the quality of the finishes and detailing has not compromised the significance of the building. These spaces have evolved over time to provide a kitchen and dining room; however, they remain somewhat divorced. These proposals will allow for better connection, and the quality of the work will be such that it will not compromise the status, understanding or significance of these spaces.

No harm will arise to the listed building or the wider townscape, and the changes will preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the heritage asset.

We hope this statement clearly shows the heritage significance will remain unharmed and that the kitchen/dining room compliments the modern use as a family home in tandem with works of enhancement to the exterior. We respectfully request that listed building consent is granted.

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