

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: PL/2025/08825 (LBC) & PL/2025/08575 (PP)

Site Address Old Bengers, Enford, SN9 6AW

Proposal: Removal of C21 porch and external boiler and erection of new kitchen extension at rear

Please find following comments in respect of the above application(s).

Recommendations:

☐	No comment
☐	Support in principle
☐	Support subject to conditions (as set out below)
☒	Object (for reasons set out below)
☐	No objections

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 Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 (LBC) and 66 (PP) require that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings 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 212-5 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 to 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.

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.

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.

The Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. Proposals are required to "demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) "enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the existing pattern of development" and "responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting."

Site and assets considered:

Old Bengers is a thatched dwelling prominently sited at a corner between the Longstreet and Littlecott settlements of the Enford Conservation Area. Grade II listed in 1986, the list description is very brief and dates the building to the C19. The two-storeyed west front elevation is of mid C19 brickwork with near-symmetrical openings containing vertical sliding sashes, however these sashes are set flush with the brickwork suggesting it is a skin over an earlier building, and sight of the rear elevation immediately confirms this, with a probable C17 timber-framed cottage exposed to the rear, with a single-bay C19 extension to the south. The north gable elevation is of rough clunch/stone blocks; the eaves of the original building were raised (indicated by the eyebrow dormer to the rear) but it is not clearly indicated in the stonework of the gable. Immediately to the north, connected by a narrow single-storeyed infill structure, is Three Horseshoes Cottage, a grade II listed thatched cottage of one and a half storeys, brick, stone and flint and dating from circa 1700. Most of the surrounding buildings to north and south are identified within the Enford Conservation Area Appraisal (2007) as making a positive contribution to the CA's character.

Planning History

16/03848/LBC Internal alterations and external vent to the toilet facility Approved 19/07/2016

E/2013/0253/FUL & 254/LBC Remove existing garden sheds, lower ground level to drive level and construct garden and log store with studio above Refused 25/04/2013

Proposal

Removal of the rear porch, the adjacent external boiler, and erection of extension.

Assessment

The application does provide some description of the building's evolution based on documentary sources, but little is derived from close inspection of the building itself. We are told little about the surviving fabric of the timber-framed cottage, which one would imagine could be quite accurately dated by an appropriate specialist, such as the staff of Wiltshire Buildings Record. Historic maps indicate the southern bay (which has brick and flint to the south gable and rear) was added between 1841 and 1886. A structure was added to the north of the rear elevation, abutting the neighbour, between 1899 and 1922, and remained for most of the C20; no photos show this structure and there is no clear indication remaining of its attachment to either of the adjacent buildings. It appears to have covered the well and was probably of lightweight construction. Structures also appeared and disappeared from the southern gable during the C20.

The property's significance lies in its high degree of survival of early fabric and the legibility from the rear of the original cottage; its representation of vernacular domestic architecture in a village setting, the evolution of the building and the decision to aggrandise its frontage with smart brickwork and sash windows in the C19 while leaving the rear untouched. It has some social significance as a former village post office. The

building's linear form is a strongly traditional characteristic of steeply roofed thatched buildings. The exposed timber framing is apparently little altered, with the exception of the later C20 ground floor window that cuts through a post, possibly part of an earlier doorframe. The simple open timber porch to the rear serves a doorway within the C19 southern bay, and is abutted to the north by a low enclosure around an external boiler. The porch and adjacent joinery are all modern and unobjectionable although there is no obviously related planning history.



(Photo from 2022 preapp submission)

The proposal is to replace the porch with a single-storeyed kitchen-diner extension, built of brick under a pyramidal roof of slate and glass. Removal of the porch raises no concerns. The 4.6m square extension projects 5.8m from the rear elevation of the property including its link, while the link section encloses 2.3m of the timber-framed section, including nearly all of the large diagonal brace. The manner of attaching to and weatherproofing the junction between the flat-roofed link and the timber-framed structure is not described, but appears likely to interfere with the eaves of the lower parts of the roof and to introduce an unsatisfactory detail with regard to confidence in rainwater disposal adjacent to some of the building's most significant fabric. The section drawn through this only shows the higher level thatch. The eaves of the new kitchen would be slightly higher than the eaves of the lower thatch eaves, so that none of the timber framing would be visible from the street nor from most of the garden.

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 proposal is considered to cause harm to the character of the building, due to the impact of obscuring and enclosing a significant part of its most interesting elevation, and by interfering with its simple linear form. There would be a small degree of harm to the character of the CA by the loss of this visibility and the

introduction of the rather unusual pyramidal kitchen extension, but this is essentially an extrapolation of the harm to the LB itself. The harm falls within the 'less than substantial' range in NPPF terms, perhaps towards the middle, and the weighing of public benefits is appropriate. In this instance, there is no clear or convincing justification for the proposals and no obvious public benefits that might outweigh the harm.