

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

13 January 2026

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Application No: PL/2025/09658
Variation of condition 2 (Approved Plans) relating to application PL/2022/03377 - to include a larger dormer for a compliant staircase and loft conversion, with minor rooflight location changes.
Rest Harrow, Low Road, Little Cheverell, Devizes, SN10 4JZ

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

Recommendations:

☐	No comment
☐	Support in principle subject to amendments to the scheme (as set out below)
☐	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 Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. 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: Rest Harrow is identified in the Conservation statement for Little Cheverell as a significant unlisted building which in terms of the NPPF is a non-designated heritage asset.

Proposal: The proposal seeks the variation of condition 2 (Approved Plans) relating to application PL/2022/03377 - to include a larger dormer for a compliant staircase and loft conversion, with minor rooflight location changes.

Relevant planning history: PL/2022/03377; E/2012/0612/FUL; K/18920.

Issues: impact on the significance of the non-designated heritage asset, impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Information considered/provided: Paragraph 207 of the NPPF 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 "Planning Statement" the document 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, it fails to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

However, paragraph 208 of the NPPF 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.

Assessment: This is my second response and follows on from the submission of amended plans.

Rest Harrow is identified in the Conservation statement for Little Cheverell as a significant unlisted building which in terms of the NPPF is a non-designated heritage asset. The property is a linear two storey house with an attic dormer. It is of brick construction which has been painted and rendered with a pantile roof. The windows are multipane timber casements. The house follows the local vernacular with similar style properties found on the low road. Map evidence clearly shows that the house is pre/late 19th century and the interior beams and fireplaces in the photographs suggest a much earlier date. The proposal is to add a larger dormer for a compliant staircase and loft conversion, with minor rooflight location changes.

Detailed guidance on extensions is found in the Little Cheverell Conservation Area Statement: '3.5.4 Extensions Relatively small proposals can cumulatively alter the character of the Conservation Area. It is important therefore that extensions to buildings do not dominate the host structure.

I am of the view that the amended design constitutes a retrograde step from works previously approved.

The cumulative effect of a large double width dormer and three roof lights would cumulatively significantly erode the rear roof slope which is unbroken in its original form and an unspoilt feature of the NDHA.

The proposed dormer is unduly wide with horizontal proportions to the proposed windows which would not match that of the windows below in the main elevation and as such would be at odds with the character of the vernacular cottage.

I would also add that a sizable two storey extension has recently been approved and built to provide significantly more family accommodation; the principle of this was considered accepted in order to try and reduce future development pressure on the host building and minimise harm to the vernacular character of this building.

Overall it is considered that the oversized dormer with its undue horizontal proportions and the three roof lights would cumulatively dominate the rear roof slope of the host building and would not meet the criteria for new extensions as set out in the Conservation Area Statement and the policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. These additions on the host building would dominate the roofscape and would not subservient to it. The proportions of the dormer would be unduly horizontal and would not reflect the proportions of the host building.

The roof design of this vernacular building would be unduly compromised. The proposed new dormer is not of a traditional design which relates to the host building it is a wide flat roof dormer which does not reflect the design of the dormer at the front of the house which reflects the scale of the windows on the façade below. The proposals will harm the appearance and significance of the non-designated heritage asset and have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Little Cheverell Conservation Area.

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 proposals will result in harm to the building which is a NDHA which makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area which is a designated heritage asset. The proposals involve only part of the conservation area and could therefore be considered as causing 'less than substantial harm' for the purposes of interpreting the NPPF. Indeed, the wording of the NPPF and the 'special attention' by Section 72 of the Act requires that any level harm caused should be taken seriously.

Whilst paragraph 208 allows that a level of harm may be offset by public benefits, which could include conservation benefits, in this case the works and the proposals are articulated as being primarily for the convenience of the occupants i.e. a private benefit. As a result, the proposals fail to meet with the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance and I therefore recommend refusal.