

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

Application no. PL/2025/09513 & PL/2025/09440
Address: Chestnut Cottage, Hilcott
Case Officer: Joe Leesam

Chestnut Cottage is a grade II listed building located within the Hilcott Conservation Area. The list description states (for means of identification purposes only) the following: *C17. Brick with thatched roof. Two storeys and attic, 3 bays with timber framed rear extension on right, 1 bay long. Dark red brick with ashlar quoins and stone mid-wall string. Moulded stone 2-light windows with brick relieving arches and leaded lights. Central door removed and entrance now in rustic thatched lean-to on left. Projecting oven in right gable, thatch half-hipped.*

The current application is for the removal of the later 20th century conservatory (approved in 1992), and its replacement with a single storey extension.

This site has almost annual submissions since 2019 to try and extend this listed building further, on top of the existing later 20th century extensions (applications for extensions were approved in 1992, 1998 and 2002 including for the conservatory and canted kitchen ‘wing’), including a dismissed appeal in 2020.

During the assessment for the earliest of these applications, in 2020, it was commented that the Conservation Team ‘would not object to the principle of providing a single storey extension on a similar footprint to the existing conservatory’.

Historic England’s Advice Note 2 (Making Changes to Heritage Assets) paragraph 41 states: “The main issues to consider in proposals for additions to heritage assets, including new development in conservation areas, aside from NPPF requirements such as social and economic activity and sustainability, are proportion, height, massing, bulk, use of materials, durability and adaptability, use, enclosure, relationship with adjacent assets and definition of spaces and streets, alignment, active frontages, permeability and treatment of setting. Replicating a particular style may be less important, though there are circumstances when it may be appropriate. It would not normally be good practice for new work to dominate the original asset or its setting in either scale, material or as a result of its siting. Assessment of an asset’s significance and its relationship to its setting will usually suggest the forms of extension that might be appropriate”.

The current proposal does not respect the historic and traditional proportions of the cottage, and is overly large, and spans beyond the rear elevation – this is poorly designed, especially when combined with the flat roof. The design is not of high enough quality to respect the fine architectural qualities of this listed building, particularly the fine front elevation, which would be harmed by the visual impact of the proposed extension as it

lacks local distinctiveness. The fenestration details on the west and north elevation are also poor and do not respect or reflect the existing detailing on the historic cottage and its extensions, adding in yet more variations that give a rather disordered and confused design, awkwardly juxtaposing against the historic and architectural interest of the listed building. The combination of the size and design of the proposed extension, together with the cumulative impact of the existing extensions, does not appear as a successful solution for the replacement structure, as it adds in another design that does not try and pull together existing more traditional design elements and details to give a more homogeneous addition that responds to its context, and appears more function-led to achieve the enlarged 'kitchen-diner', which is out of character for this traditional vernacular building (and has already been provided with the implementation of the 2002 approval).

It is again unfortunate that the applicants have not approached the Council for pre-application advice, as unfortunately the current proposal is again considered to detract from the special architectural and historic interest of the cottage, causing harm. However in this instance, these concerns can be addressed by amending the design to a traditional pitched roof extension, or lean-to, that respects the depth and width of bay, the size and proportions of which form part of the significance of the designated heritage asset i.e. an addition that is no larger in footprint than the existing conservatory (although squaring off the canted design would increase the footprint slightly, but this is accepted).

Otherwise, the application should be refused due to the harm caused to the designated heritage assets, including the conservation area.