

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Listed Building Consent Application

Replacement of Rotten Sash Window

Property: The Old School Room, 18 Coppice Hill, Bradford on Avon, BA15 1JT

Applicant: Mark Ames

Local Planning Authority: Wiltshire Council

Date: February 2026

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of an application for Listed Building Consent (LBC) for the replacement of a single sash window at The Old School Room, 18 Coppice Hill, Bradford on Avon, BA15 1JT. The statement has been prepared in accordance with the requirements set out by Wiltshire Council and is proportionate to the scale of the proposed works.

The application is necessary because rot has been found to extend deep within the timber sections of the existing sash window, affecting its structural integrity. This deterioration is likely due to the location of the window, which is particularly exposed to the elements, resulting in prolonged moisture ingress over time. As a consequence, further repair would not provide a durable or long-term solution and would risk repeated failure.

This statement has been prepared with reference to the following national and local policy framework:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023), Chapter 16 — Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Historic England Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets (2016)

Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015), Policy CP57 — Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment

2. Description of the Heritage Asset

2.1 Designation and Setting

The Old School Room at 18 Coppice Hill is a Listed Building. The property is the former Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School, directly associated with the adjacent former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, which is itself a Grade II* Listed Building. The building has been sensitively converted to residential use and retains its historic character.

The building sits at the upper end of Coppice Hill, a short but historically significant street running uphill from the old market place at the junction of Silver Street and The Shambles. The street is lined with a sequence of picturesque gabled houses dating predominantly from the seventeenth century, and the setting is one of considerable historic and architectural quality. Bradford on Avon contains over 340 listed buildings within its civil parish — one of the densest concentrations of listed buildings in Wiltshire — and the town as a whole is of exceptional historic character.

The property lies within Bradford on Avon's Conservation Area, which further underlines the sensitivity of the wider setting.

2.2 History of the Building

The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel at the top of Coppice Hill was built in 1812 on land formerly used as a rackground — ground upon which newly-woven woollen cloths were stretched on tenterhooks to dry and bleach. The chapel replaced a smaller place of worship at the rear of the former Maiden Head Inn in Market Street, at which both John and Charles Wesley had preached, reflecting Bradford on Avon's strong Nonconformist heritage.

The Sunday School — now The Old School Room — was constructed as an ancillary building to the chapel, providing religious education for the children of the congregation. Such Sunday Schools were a characteristic feature of Nonconformist institutions across England during the nineteenth century and represent an important aspect of the social history of Bradford on Avon's working community.

The chapel congregation declined through the twentieth century and the chapel roof was removed, leaving only the walls standing, which now enclose a swimming pool. The Sunday School building survived and was subsequently converted to residential use, retaining its external form and much of its historic fabric. Its conversion gives the building a continued and active life while preserving its historic character.

2.3 Architectural and Historic Interest

The building contributes to the historic streetscape of Coppice Hill and forms part of the group of listed buildings at its upper end. Its architectural character reflects the vernacular traditions of Bradford on Avon, including the use of local Bath stone construction. As a former place of religious education and an integral part of a wider Nonconformist chapel complex, the building has both architectural and social historic significance.

Sash windows are a characteristic feature of Bradford on Avon's historic buildings; the museum notes that No. 20 Coppice Hill — immediately adjacent — was updated in the early eighteenth century with larger sash windows. The retention of period sash windows throughout the street contributes materially to the coherence and character of the conservation area.

3. Significance of the Heritage Asset

In accordance with Historic England guidance, the significance of a heritage asset is the sum of its archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic interest, including any contribution made by its setting. The significance of The Old School Room can be assessed as follows:

3.1 Architectural Interest

The building is of architectural interest as a well-preserved example of Nonconformist ancillary religious architecture in the local Bath stone vernacular. Its scale, form, and position at the head of a historically significant street contribute to the distinctive character of Coppice Hill.

3.2 Historic Interest

The building has considerable historic interest as the former Sunday School of the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, which was itself closely associated with the Wesley brothers. It reflects the important role of Nonconformism in the social history of Bradford on Avon during the industrial period, when the town's weaving and cloth-finishing industries supported a substantial working-class community.

3.3 Archaeological Interest

No specific archaeological interest is identified in relation to the proposed works, which are confined to the replacement of an existing window opening. The works will not involve excavation or disturbance of below-ground archaeology.

3.4 Artistic Interest

No specific artistic interest of particular note has been identified in relation to the building, beyond its contribution to the pleasing and coherent historic streetscape of Coppice Hill.

3.5 Contribution of Setting

The building's setting — at the top of Coppice Hill, adjoining the remains of the Grade II* listed chapel and surrounded by listed seventeenth-century cottages — enhances its significance. The setting is of high historic quality and any works that affected the external appearance of the building would need to be considered carefully in this context.

4. Description of Proposed Works

The proposed works consist solely of the replacement of one sash window. We are proposing the replacement of the affected sash on a strict like-for-like basis. The new sash will be traditionally manufactured in timber to match the existing original in terms of profile, section sizes, glazing arrangement, detailing, and overall appearance. No alterations are proposed to the surrounding frame, reveals, or architectural character of the building.

5. Assessment of Impact on Significance

5.1 Impact on Architectural and Historic Significance

The proposed replacement window will replicate the existing window in all material respects. Sash windows are a historically appropriate window type for this building, consistent with the character of the wider Coppice Hill streetscape. The replacement of a rotten window with a new timber sash of identical design and configuration will sustain the architectural character of the building and will have no adverse impact on its architectural or historic significance.

The need to replace rather than repair is driven by the advanced state of decay of the existing window, which is beyond the point at which repair is practicable. The approach of like-for-like replacement in matching materials is consistent with best conservation practice as set out in Historic England's guidance on maintaining historic buildings.

5.2 Impact on the Setting

Because the replacement window will be indistinguishable in appearance from the original, the proposed works will have no impact on the contribution made by the building to its setting, including the Conservation Area and the group of listed buildings at the head of Coppice Hill.

5.3 Impact on the Conservation Area

The works will have no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the Bradford on Avon Conservation Area. The retention of authentic timber sash windows in the historic streetscape is consistent with the character appraisal of the Conservation Area, and the proposed like-for-like replacement supports this aim.

6. Steps to Avoid or Minimise Adverse Impact

The proposed approach has been designed to avoid and minimise any adverse impact on the significance of the listed building and its setting. The following measures will be employed:

Like-for-like replacement: The new window will replicate the existing in all material respects — design, dimensions, material, detailing and finish.

Timber construction: Timber is the traditional and appropriate material for sash windows in Bradford on Avon's historic buildings. No synthetic substitute materials will be used.

Minimal intervention: The works are confined to the window unit only. No masonry, reveals or structural elements will be disturbed.

Skilled workmanship: The works will be carried out by contractors experienced in the repair and maintenance of historic buildings.

Photographic record: A photographic record of the existing window will be made and retained.

7. Conclusion

The Old School Room at 18 Coppice Hill is a Listed Building of architectural and historic interest, forming part of a significant group of heritage assets at the head of Coppice Hill within Bradford on Avon Conservation Area. The building's association with the adjacent Grade II* former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and its role as a former Sunday School reflect the social and religious history of Bradford on Avon.

The proposed works comprise the replacement of a single sash window that has deteriorated beyond repair. The replacement will be carried out on a like-for-like basis using matching timber construction, dimensions, design and finish, ensuring that the architectural character of the building is fully maintained.

The proposed works will have no adverse impact on the significance of the listed building, its setting, or the Bradford on Avon Conservation Area. On the contrary, the replacement of a failing window with an appropriate timber sash of matching appearance will sustain the fabric and character of the building for the future.

It is respectfully submitted that Listed Building Consent should be granted for the proposed works.

Prepared by: Mark Ames

Date: February 2026