

APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

OFFICER DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/00029
APPLICATION TYPE:	Listed Building Consent (Alt/Ext)
SITE ADDRESS:	Wilton House
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Various basement works
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

Wilton House is a grade I listed building in the Wilton Conservation Area. There are many publications about the remarkable building and its interior. The heritage statement provides an uncontentious summary of the building's evolution. There are several high grade listed structures close to the house and within its park, which itself is listed grade I on the Register of Parks and Gardens.

The list entry for the house, for means of identification purposes only, provides the following description:

GV

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Outstanding for both historical and architectural reasons.

A courtyard house in landscaped grounds, probably on site of the medieval nunnery. Rebuilt by 1st Earl of Pembroke after 1544 and largely finished by 1563. The Holbein porch (qv) and the centrepiece of the east front survive from this period. South wing remodelled by Solomon de Caux in early C17 and rebuilt after 1647 fire by John Webb with Inigo Jones supervising the internal arrangements. Gothicised by Wyatt circa 1801 who built the cloister in the courtyard and remodelled the north and west fronts. The exterior Gothick features mostly removed in early C20 and replaced by classical. Built of ashlar. 2 and 3 storeys with corner and gatetowers one storey higher. Modillion cornice and balustraded parapets.

East front: former entrance front. Central gatetower circa 1550: 4 storeys, 3 bays with mullion and transom windows (long on 1st floor) and central 3 storey oriel over Tudor archway. Gothick parapet (by Wyatt circa 1801) and cupola (modern restoration). Entrance flanked by Doric aedicules surmounted by achievement of arms. C16 arms over central 1st floor window. Flanking 2 bay wings link with corner towers (of 2 bays also), glazing bar windows with architraves, cornices on 1st floor, sashes on ground and 1st floors, casements above.

South front: 9 wide bays, end towers of 1 bay with pedimented gables and quoins. Towers have segmental pediments to 3rd floor windows (glazing bar casements). All windows have architraves, with cornices 1st floor (piano nobile), segmental headed with heavy voussoired keystones on ground (semi-basement) floor. 2nd floor windows casements, rest glazing bar sashes. Central 1st floor window Venetian, with blank sides, surmounted by an achievement of arms flanked by carved figures. End 1st floor windows have pediments. These and centre window have projecting square baluster balconies on porches.

West front: 1, 2 and 3 storey infill between corner towers. Crenellated parapets. Central canted bay window with wide stairs leading to Italian garden.

North front: 2+3 + central entrance + 3 + 2 bays, remodelled with mullioned windows. Internal courtyard has 2 storey crenellated cloisters by Wyatt, 1st floor windows with wide Tudor perpendicular 4-light windows.

Wilton House is one of England's principal country houses. The Herbert family (Earls of Pembroke) have been great patrons of the arts and builders.

The south range of Wilton is of seminal importance to the development of Palladianism, almost a century later. The suite of state rooms on the piano nobile by Inigo Jones are by far the best surviving C17 rooms in England. Fully described in Pevsner, Guidebook, Country Life May 1904, Jan 1944 and especially May, July and August 1963.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

PROPOSAL

Works are confined to the basement: removal of a modern partition in the 'softener room', addition of a partition within the service kitchen; reopening a blocked doorway from the service kitchen to the private kitchen (formerly staff sitting room); removal of dumbwaiter at basement level only.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Legislation

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 16 requires 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 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.

National Policy and Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out government policy, including 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 213-215 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 LBC (and planning permission).

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

Whilst not directly relevant to listed building consent applications, the below policies give an indication of the Council's approach to development affecting heritage assets:

- Core Policy 57 '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.
- Core Policy 58 '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."

ISSUES

Impact upon the preservation of the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural and/or historic interest. Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Wilton Town Council – "support"

Historic England – *"Historic England provides advice when our engagement can add most value. In this case we are not offering advice. This should not be interpreted as comment on the merits of the application. We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers. You may also find it helpful to refer to our published advice at <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/find/>"*

Historic England provided preapplication advice in October 2025 directly to the applicant which has been shared with the case officer. Extracts:

Summary. *Wilton House is listed at grade I. The proposals to replace the heating system will not have a harmful impact on the building but to meet the requirements of the NPPF further detail is required to support the submission of a full application for listed building consent.*

Summary of proposed works

The current proposals principally concern the replacement and updating of the existing heating system.

During these works it is also proposed to carry out some minor alterations to the west end of the ground floor. These are the replacement of the existing 20th century kitchen, the removal of a partition wall in the former 'softener room', and the removal of a 20th century dumb waiter from the west corridor.

Impact

On the basis of the site visit and the information provided thus far the proposed replacement and updating of the heating system will not have a harmful impact on the significance of Wilton House.

The additional proposed works are also unlikely to have a harmful impact on the significance of the building, and the removal of the dumb waiter will be a heritage benefit, restoring the form of the west corridor.

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of Section 5(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 (as amended) the application for listed building consent was publicised by way of:

- A site notice displayed near the site;
- An advertisement placed in the local press

These methods were used to inform interested parties and to allow a statutory consultation period of **21 days** for representations to be submitted.

Below is a summary of the representations received during the consultation period. In accordance with the provisions of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, only matters relevant to the consideration of the building's special architectural or historic interest have been taken into account in the assessment of this Listed Building Consent application.

None received.

ASSESSMENT

In accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special regard has been given to the significance of the listed building, including its architectural and historic interest, and the desirability of preserving both the building and its setting. Relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, have also been taken into account. These policies require that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset must be clearly justified and weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Impact of proposals on the significance and setting of the building/structure:

Understanding the impact of proposed works on a listed building requires a careful and proportionate assessment of how those changes affect the asset's heritage significance and its setting. This includes both the physical alterations to the building itself and any changes to its spatial or visual relationship with surrounding structures or spaces.

The significance of a heritage asset is not static; it is shaped by its architectural, historic, and communal values, and by how these are experienced in context. Therefore, any intervention must be considered in light of the asset's identified significance, with attention given to both potential harm and benefits. Benefits may include repairs that support the long-term conservation of the building, improved energy performance, or enhanced public access and understanding.

This assessment is grounded in the statutory duty under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving the building and its features of special interest. It is also informed by national policy, particularly paragraphs 199–208 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and relevant local heritage policies and guidance.

The building's significance is of the highest order, being a grade I listed building and one of the grandest houses in the country, on the site of an abbey granted to the Earls of Pembroke in the C16, having associations with the best known architects (John Webb, Inigo Jones, James Wyatt) and landscape designer ('Capability' Brown). The summary of its detail and significance in the heritage assessment is considered a good reflection. The list entry is similarly clear – '*The suite of state rooms on the piano nobile by Inigo Jones are by far the best surviving C17 rooms in England.*', and the associated fine art is equally extraordinary, including Rembrandt, van Dyck, Rubens and Holbein.

A site visit was undertaken in October 2025, accompanied by Historic England's inspector, when all of the proposals were reviewed.

The heritage statement provides extracts of plans from the 1960s, along with photographs.

'Softener room' partition. The room has been divided since 1966 by a stud partition that forms an office to the side of a rear entrance hall. The cornice positioning in the area indicates earlier alterations to partition positions. Removal of this partition raises no concerns.

The dumbwaiter, also post-1966, is enclosed by concrete blockwork at basement level and significantly obstructs the western service corridor. Its removal is a welcome improvement. Construction above basement level is timber and needs no structural support as a result of the work.

A doorway between the service kitchen and the former staff sitting room is proposed to be reopened, in order to provide access to a new utility room. The utility room would be formed by the installation of a new stud partition approximately 2.2m from the southern end of the service kitchen. The service kitchen is known to have been in the same use since at least the mid-C20 but has no features of architectural or historic interest and currently has later-C20 fitted kitchen units. These proposals raise no concerns with regard to the historic floorplan, character or significance of the rooms affected.

Impact on Ecology

While Sections 16 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 do not explicitly reference protected species, Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty to consider potential impacts on protected species when determining applications. This responsibility arises from broader environmental legislation and national planning policy, and must be taken into account where relevant.

		Y / N / NA
(a)	Does the site or proposed development possess/impact on any of the features where protected species are likely to be present (assessed	NA

	against Natural England's standing advice) and where species are likely to be found?	
(b)	If yes, has a protected species survey been submitted?	
(c)	If yes, does the survey show a detailed consideration of ecological impacts, wildlife mitigation and the creation, restoration and enhancement of wildlife corridors to preserve and enhance biodiversity in accordance with the standing advice?	

Comments (if any):

CONCLUSION

The proposed works are minor and cause no harm to the character or significance of the grade I listed building, in accordance with the aims of section 16 of the Act and the NPPF. There would be no external impacts that could affect the setting or character of any other heritage assets.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Listed Building Consent be APPROVED

Conditions

LB 3 years

Plans/docs