

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Application No: PL/2026/00822 and PL/2026/00550
Retrospective planning application for rear dormer/balcony alteration, solar panels, rooflights and variations to rear elevation construction. MOORFIELD FARM, 2 CHURCH STREET, STEEPLE ASHTON, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 6EW

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

Recommendations:

	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)
X	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 16 requires that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing 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.

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: The property is a Grade II listed building located in Steeple Ashton Conservation Area. The site also affects the setting of neighbouring listed buildings including the Grade I Church of St Mary the Virgin.

Proposal: The proposal seeks retrospective planning application for rear dormer/balcony alteration, solar panels, rooflights and variations to rear elevation construction.

Relevant planning history: 15/10171/FUL and 15/10271/LBC - Retrospective application for windows and roof lights already inserted and proposed flat roofed store addition at rear of car port ancillary outbuilding located at the rear of the dwellinghouse (approved); 14/04215/FUL - Partially retrospective outbuilding with double car port (Alteration to planning permission W/09/02433/FUL) (approved); W/11/01484/LBC and W/11/01483/FUL - Demolition of flat roof extension and lean-to garage Construction of new two storey wing to southwest corner (approved); W/09/02433/FUL - Proposed demolition of existing sheds and replacement with double carport, and store/workshop/studio building (approved); 17/01611/LBC and 17/01207/FUL - Demolition of flat roof extension & lean to garage and construction of two storey wing to South West corner (Amendment to 11/01484/LBC) (approved);

Issues: impact on the significance of the listed building, impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, 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, the applications are accompanied by a "Heritage Statement" which provides insufficient information to understand the impact of the proposals and is proportionate to their scope since the conversion of the attic space into habitable accommodation is not assessed. As such the requirements of the NPPF are therefore not met in this respect.

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 consultation response follows on from amended plans being submitted.

The property is a Grade II listed building located towards the centre of the village of Steeple Ashton on the north western side of Church Street to the south of St Mary's Church. The property is also located in Steeple Ashton Conservation Area.

The property faces straight onto Church Street behind a simple grassed front garden. The property benefits from a generous curtilage to the rear and sides.

The building has seen a number of successive extensions and alterations at the property, including a two storey rear extension in 2017.

There is no heritage objection to the reinstatement of the originally consented dormer at the property since this will have a neutral impact.

However, I note that there is no consent for the second floor to be used as habitable accommodation.

The additional conversion works have included the insertion of a partition dividing the staircase area from the central section of the attic which forms a bedroom lit by the approved dormer with an ensuite within the existing small room to the south. Cupboards have been created on the east side of the landing area. A low wall along the east side of the attic has created a void at eaves level. The attic space of the historic rear wing has been upgraded to provide storage space.

The works to convert the attic have not had an impact on the plan form of the space. The additional partition separating the stair and landing area from the bedroom does not impact on the understanding of the roof space. The partition has been set adjacent to the truss and so is an independent structure that can be regarded as a reversible change that has had no impact on historic fabric. Similarly, the low walls to the sides, dividing off the area at the eaves, have had no impact on historic fabric and could be removed without impact on the historic roof structure. The service runs between the boiler within the cupboard on the landing area and the ensuite have been installed within the void at eaves level and there is no indication that there has been any impact on historic fabric. The ensuite is also located above a bathroom at first floor level and so the soil pipe drops through the floor to the previously existing services at this level.

The alteration to the attic of Moorfield Farmhouse needs to be considered in the relation to the overall significance of the listed building which recognises that the pre listing 'modernisation' of the house effectively stripped the interior of almost all of its architectural and historic interest with the roof trusses, constructed using reclaimed timbers, being the only historic fabric visible.

Regarding the four solar panels have been installed on the inner-facing slopes of the roofs of the two rear wings. These panels are well hidden from view and cannot be seen in relation to the principal elevation. These are considered acceptable in heritage terms subject to a condition requiring their removal at the end of their useful life.

Regarding the omission of the stone quoins to the inner corners of the gabled wings, this is seen as a beneficial change as it limits the status and busyness of the rear elevation which was originally of a plain character.

As such, it is concluded that the works undertaken in addition to the works approved in 2017 have had little adverse impact on the significance of the heritage asset, and the partitions and services are all reversible alterations that have not impacted historic fabric.

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.

Subject to condition requiring the removal of the solar panels at the end of their useful life, there is no objection to this application.