

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

27 April 2026

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Wiltshire Council Conservation
(South/West)

Officer's Name: Sarah Hill
Officer's Title: Senior Planning Officer

Application No: PL/2026/01991
Demolition of existing cottage and erection of new dwelling
Easton Cottage, Water Street, Berwick St John, Shaftesbury, SP7 0HS

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

Summary of my comments

The application states that the demolition is now a necessity as the building is structurally unsound – not so surprising given they have removed the roof, floors and rear wall. Where is the structural engineer's assessment to say that it is beyond repair?

Unless it can be demonstrated otherwise to your satisfaction, I would suggest that the front wall and two gable walls are retained and repaired and incorporated into a new structure. This will at least retain some historic fabric and the character of the original cottages as well as one of the brick chimney stacks.

If it can be demonstrated that this is not possible (reasonable within the scope of the project), then I recommend that the new building is no larger than the existing approved dwelling (thereby discouraging the pulling down of historic structures).

I note there were conditions attached to the previous consent that should have been discharged before work commenced? If they were not (as I suspect they weren't) – I recommend we seek these details up front this time around.

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

Policy:

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 214-16 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." **It is also required that distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced.**

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:

Easton Cottage (formerly a semi-detached pair of cottages) is not listed, but is of some age which is evident from its existing elevation. The cottage makes a positive contribution to the character of this part of the conservation area.

The cottage is within the Berwick St John conservation area.

Relevant planning history:

PL/2022/03238

Proposed single storey extensions to front and rear, car port to side elevation, roof alterations and associated internal alterations

This is what I said:

Whilst not listed, the building (formerly two cottages) is clearly of some historic interest and makes a positive contribution to the character of the conservation in view of its scale, siting, massing and use of traditional local stone and traditional features such as casement windows with hoodmoulds, dormer windows, brick chimney stacks etc. As such, it is a traditional looking cottage in keeping with the rural character of the village.

You will also be aware that Salisbury Civic Society also submitted comments – objecting to the first iteration.

Issues: impact on the conservation area.

Information considered/provided:

Paragraph 207 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 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 (as appropriate):

Repeating what I said in my previous 2022 comments:

'Whilst not listed, the building (formerly two cottages) is clearly of some historic interest and makes a positive contribution to the character of the conservation in view of its scale, siting, massing and use of traditional local stone and traditional features such as casement windows with hoodmoulds, dormer windows, brick chimney stacks etc. As such, it is a traditional looking cottage in keeping with the rural character of the village.'

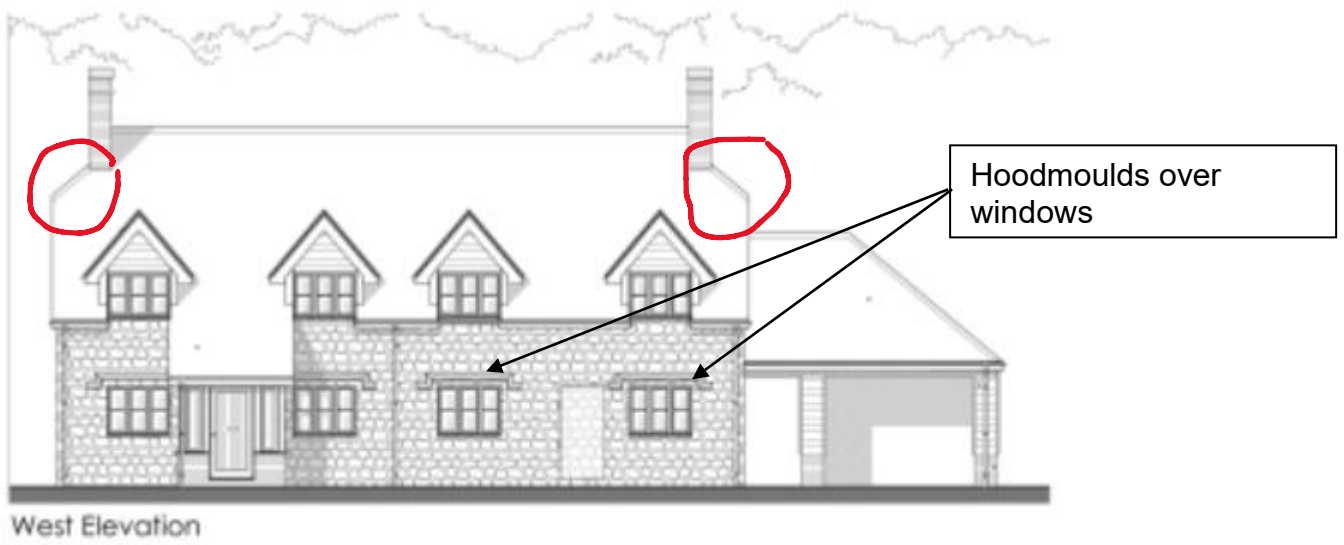
Salisbury Civic Society said:

'This is an attractive vernacular building, which, unlike cottages of similar date in the village (probably early C19th), may not have been listed because it had lost its thatch by the time the listings inspectors came round. It nevertheless clearly makes a positive contribution to the village conservation area.'

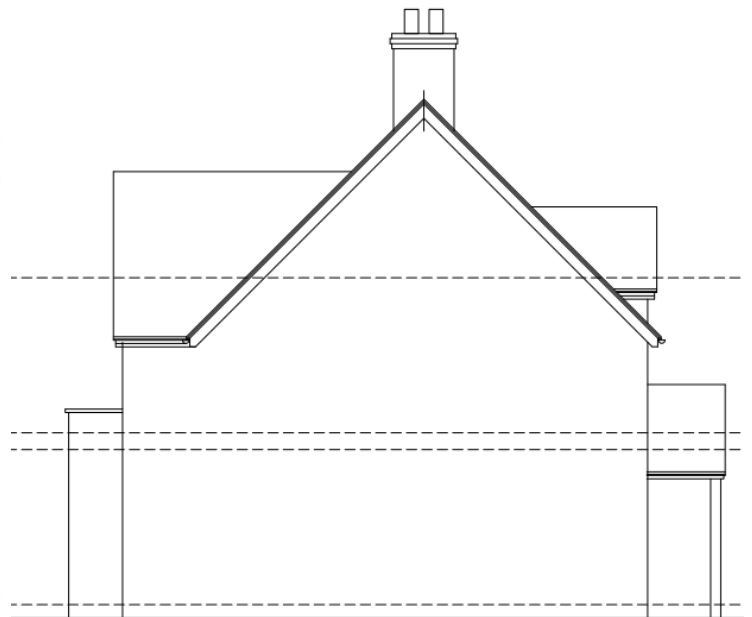
Assessment:.



Approved front elevation
(west)



Approved north elevation





As now proposed.
No hoodmoulds,
loss of symmetry of
two cottages, loss
of a chimney stack,
no consideration in
respect of RWG.

In respect of the previous application, we commented that preservation of the notion of two cottages (now one) should be retained, to be in keeping with other development in the vicinity. The new proposals pay no regard to this. Furthermore, there appears to be no consideration of previous comments such as those of Salisbury Civic Society which sought for the retention of interesting 'heritage' features such as the stone hoodmoulds over the windows. And unlike the previous approved drawing, we don't have the downpipes indicated, so we could end up with the 'orange' (my) arrangement. We have also lost the interesting roof detail (almost a quarter hip) around the chimney.

Summary & conclusion:

The building is one that contributes positively to the character of the conservation area. Consent has been granted for the retention of the existing building and its further development ie extension to the rear. The claim is now that it is beyond repair and yet this is not evidenced. If you accept that it is beyond 'reasonable repair' then I recommend the application I refused on the basis that the proposals as currently presented would fail to preserve the character of this part of the CA (and that of this pair of cottages) and is contrary to section 72 of the Planning LBCA Act 1990.