

Ms Pippa Card
Planning Department
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
BA14 8JN

30 April 2026

Dear Pippa

RAMSBURY MANOR – FURTHER LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

On behalf of The Ramsbury Manor Foundation, Gracechurch Town Planning is pleased to submit this application for listed building consent to Wiltshire Council (“the Council”) regarding the proposal for the *“Further opening up works (following reference PL/2024/11184) required to remove asbestos and in order to facilitate the specification of the proposed repairs / upgrading to The Manor House”* at The Ramsbury Manor Estate, Whites Hill, Ramsbury, Wiltshire W1J 5EB (“the site”).

The application is also supported by the required application form and:

- Asbestos Management Survey (prepared by Asbestos2Go);
- Asbestos Refurbishment and Demolition Survey (prepared by Asbestos2Go)¹;
- Design and Access Statement (prepared by Peregrine Bryant Architects);
- Heritage Statement and Appendices (prepared by Peregrine Bryant Architects); and
- supporting plans, comprising:
 - 263 HE RMI 000 A Estate Location Plan;
 - 263 HE RMI 001 Location Plan;
 - 263 HE-RMI 010 Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan;

¹ The Asbestos Management Survey was carried out in May and June 2025. It is a non-destructive / non-intrusive survey based on observations to accessible areas. The Asbestos Refurbishment and Demolition Survey was carried out in June and July 2025 after the approval of PL/2024/11184 - this survey was therefore able to access those areas opened-up in accordance with that listed building consent. Both documents therefore provide a record of asbestos found and suspected in The Manor House.

- 263 HE-RMI 011 Existing Ground Floor Plan;
- 263 HE-RMI 012 Existing First Floor Plan;
- 263 HE-RMI 013 Existing Second Floor Plan;
- 263 HE-RMI 410 Opening Up Findings – Lower Ground Floor Plan;
- 263 HE-RMI 411 Opening Up Findings – Ground Floor Plan;
- 263 HE-RMI 412 Opening Up Findings – First Floor Plan;
- 263 HE-RMI 413 Opening Up Findings – Second Floor Plan;
- 263 HE-RMI 440 RCP Conditions – Lower Ground Floor Plan;
- 263 HE-RMI 441 RCP Conditions – Ground Floor Plan;
- 263 HE-RMI 442 RCP Conditions – First Floor Plan;
- 263 HE-RMI 443 RCP Conditions – Second Floor Plan;
- 263 HE-RMI 405 C Proposed Opening Up – Lower Ground Floor Plan;
- 263 HE-RMI 406 C Proposed Opening Up – Ground Floor Plan;
- 263 HE-RMI 407 C Proposed Opening Up – First Floor Plan; and
- 263 HE-RMI 408 C Proposed Opening Up – Second Floor Plan.

Background

Ramsbury Manor is a Grade I listed Manor House located within a Grade II registered Park and Garden, in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Opening The Manor House to the public has always been a key part of the vision of the applicant, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation.

The Foundation has its background in The Capricorn Foundation (registered charity 1135174), which was set up by Mr Harry Hyams to administer and display the internationally important HJH Collection and to open The Estate, including The Manor House, to the public. The Ramsbury Manor Foundation was set up specifically to deliver this, with its specific charitable objectives being:

- to preserve and conserve for the public benefit Ramsbury Manor, Ramsbury, its architectural heritage, gardens, surrounding grounds and park land and contents being of artistic, historical, architectural or constructional merit; and
- to advance the arts or education in particular by preserving and making available Ramsbury Manor and its contents to the public for their academic study, educational purposes and appreciation.

The principle of opening The Manor House has already been established in, for example, the planning permission and listed building consent to provide an Exhibition Centre and New Estate Yard (Wiltshire Council refs PL/2022/04972 and PL/2022/05380). The Foundation has also already undertaken other work to support the future opening of The Manor House, including the refurbishment of the Courtyard Buildings adjacent to The Manor House (Wiltshire Council ref 17/11946/LBC) and re-roofing The Manor House (Wiltshire Council ref 19/00649/LBC).

More recently, listed building consent (Wiltshire Council ref PL/2024/11184) was granted on 6 June 2025 to carry out opening-up and investigative works to The Manor House. This was with the aim of:

- identifying how to replace the electrical and plumbing systems within The Manor House, which have been identified as unsafe;
- undertaking a structural assessment, to identify areas of The Manor House where repairs including strengthening may be required; and
- identifying, in all other respects, work that is required to ensure The Manor House is safe for both staff and visitors.

The exact repair and remedial work identified through the opening-up and investigative works would then be subject to a further listed building consent application. All of this is proposed. The HJH Collection has been decanted from The Manor House.

The opening-up works were then undertaken in the second half 2025. This revealed:

- extensive electrical and plumbing service runs;
- additions to the structure including steel beams and brackets, as well as areas where firrings have been installed to try to level existing floor;
- complexities in the structure including possible secondary floor / ceiling voids; and
- extensive areas of asbestos (under the floorboards but also including in flue vent pipes, lining panels, radiator casings, vinyl flooring, adhesive and around electrical and plumbing equipment). The Asbestos Reports (prepared by Asbestos2Go) supporting this application details the extent of the known asbestos and also – based on this – areas where asbestos is suspected.

All of the above also indicated that, although The Manor House has been described as barely altered, previous work has been more extensive than previously realised.

Because of the complexity of the building's structure – its irregularity, complicated load paths, as well as signs of previous interventions – the limited opening up that took place was not sufficient to fully understand the building's structure and its condition.

In addition, having discovered asbestos, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation has a legal responsibility to actively manage it and the risk it poses. The limitations of the opening-up work has restricted the ability to completely define its extent and effectively manage

that risk. With staff requiring access to floor voids for ongoing maintenance, and future access required to update services, the ability to record, manage and monitor this risk to workers and occupants is impacted. Any asbestos containing material will need to be removed before any works within the floor voids can be carried out. Careful lifting up of all floorboards to enable the removal of known asbestos, and to enable a comprehensive survey and removal of other asbestos, will ensure that there is no remaining dangerous dust or debris such that the risk can be effectively managed.

Application

This application therefore seeks approval for further opening-up, to remove that asbestos (both known asbestos, based on opening-up works to-date, and further asbestos that may be found through the further opening-up works) and in order to facilitate the specification of the proposed repairs / upgrading to The Manor House through further structural investigation.

While the proposed plans show that all floorboards are proposed for lifting, the applicant will only lift as many as are required to understand the structure and / or remove the asbestos.

The floorboards will be lifted as per the methodology in the Heritage Statement (prepared by Peregrine Bryant Architects), which is identical to the methodology approved by the Council in the previous application (Wiltshire Council ref PL/2024/11184) i.e. contains provisions for the marking of each board, storage within the same room, and reinstatement in the same pattern, with suitable fixings.

The methodology for the asbestos removal is also described in the Heritage Statement (prepared by Peregrine Bryant Architects). This includes:

- a further survey to understand the further extent of the asbestos in The Manor House. An experience carpenter will work alongside the asbestos surveyor so floorboards can be lifted without damage, the void surveyed with any materials suspected of containing asbestos sampled and the extent quantified before boards are re-fitted. Once the full extent of asbestos materials / contamination is known the scope of remediation can be finalised;
- flooring that has been previously removed will then be removed and cleaned;
- the exposed asbestos insulation board will then be sprayed with a fibre suppressant and sheeted to prevent the spread of asbestos; and
- an asbestos enclosure will then be erected. The enclosure needs to be secure, strong enough to outlast the duration of the project and to being placed under the negative pressure required for extraction/filtration. While they are often fixed to the building structure using strong adhesive tape and timber supports, that will not be the case in The Manor House. Once the asbestos enclosure is secure, removal will start.

While it is acknowledged that the proposed additional areas of opening-up are extensive, the works proposed are the only way that The Manor House can be properly assessed. Other techniques, such as camera surveys, can be limited by floor voids or joists and would not also solve the issue of removing the asbestos (where there is a legal duty on The Foundation to do so).

The Heritage Statement supporting this application concludes that any harm caused by the further opening-up works would be between none and the lowest end of “less than substantial” harm. But wherever it lies on the notional scale, less than substantial harm falls to be weighed against the public benefit that would flow from it. The benefits of the opening-up works are that they will lead to the removal of asbestos and repairing of The Manor House, thus making it safe for visitors and achieving the wider and significant public benefit of opening of The Manor House to visitors so that it and The HJH Collection can be viewed in context.

The Council has confirmed in previous cases (see, for example, the application at the Grade I listed Stockton Manor (Wiltshire Council reference 14/10193/LBC)) that:

- lifting and re-laying floorboards in their current formation, without damage, should have no impact on the special interest of a building; and
- the complete removal of the asbestos (rather than, for example, a more limited exercise) is of benefit in providing certainty for future owners and contractors and preventing potential repeated disturbance of the floors for this purpose in the future.

We therefore request that the application for listed building consent is granted without delay.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Johnson', with a stylized flourish.

MATTHEW JOHNSON MRTPI

Gracechurch Town Planning Ltd is registered in England and Wales at Fifth Floor, 167-169 Great Portland Street, London, W1W 5PF, number 16299916.