

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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(South/West)

Officer's Name: Sarah Hill
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Application No: PL/2026/02689
Newport House, Salisbury Street, Mere, Warminster, BA12 6HE
Proposed Conversion of a Single Dwelling into Two Apartments

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

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 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."

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.

The following points are taken from the Historic England document “The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3” (HE GPA3) that are considered to be particularly relevant:

HE GPA3 Part 1:

“The NPPF makes it clear that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset.”

“The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. ...views of or from an asset will play an important part...”

“While setting can be mapped in the context of an individual application or proposal, it cannot be definitively and permanently described for all time as a spatially bounded area or as lying within a set distance of a heritage asset. This is because the surroundings of a heritage asset will change over time.”

“The importance lies in what the setting contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance.”

Other HE publications

[Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading](#)

HE GPAs and HEANs [The Planning System | Historic England](#)

Site and assets considered:

The house is not listed but is in the Mere conservation area, for which there is no adopted appraisal.

Whilst not listed, the house clearly has historic provenance (front elevation appears to be 19th century) and makes a positive contribution to the character of this part of the conservation area.



Proposal:

The application says the conversion of the one dwelling into two apartments.

The existing front elevation already has two doors (principal and side entrance). I assume that the division would be a vertical one, with the two new units utilising the two existing doors on the principal elevation?

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 "Heritage Statement" the document provides limited information about the building and the proposals, however, it is considered sufficient in terms of the current application. Furthermore 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.

Assessment: of proposals including their impact on the special interest of the building/conservation area and any harm which will occur via loss of historic fabric, scale, bulk (etc as appropriate). Also any benefits.

As noted in the heritage statement:

'The existing dwelling currently has two entrance doors, one on Salisbury Street the other within the adjacent Access Passage. Each one of these will serve the new dwellings; therefore the external appearance will remain the same. This will preserve the architectural importance of both elevations.'

In respect of the rear of the building (which is also in the CA and leads out onto North Street), a garden is provided for the larger unit and a shared proposed parking area.

In terms of the impact on the CA, in respect of the rear arrangements, I don't think there would be any change, if I have identified the right 'rear'. In which case, the works would preserve the character of the CA.



Summary & conclusion:

The NPPF confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset (**ie a conservation area**), 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.

It is considered the proposals would have no adverse impact on either the conservation area or the setting of adjacent listed buildings and as such are considered to be in accordance with sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990.