

APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

OFFICER DELGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/02679
APPLICATION TYPE:	Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
SITE ADDRESS:	Home Farm, 61 High Street, West Lavington, Devizes, SN10 4JB
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Installation of stud walls to form new bathroom
RECOMMENDATION:	Refuse

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site comprises a two-storey rendered dwelling known as Home Farm, which is a Grade II listed building, located within the settlement of West Lavington. The building is designated for its special architectural and/or historic interest under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The site lies within West Lavington Conservation Area, and formed part of a village farmstead, which has now been converted into residential dwellings. As part of these works, the former Granary was connected to the farmhouse.

The main house is formed of three bays, with a central doorway, and eight over eight sash windows offer a polite, Georgian façade to the street scene. The Granary offers a blank façade to the street scene and is set subservient to the host dwelling. It has been unified in appearance as part of the recent works using the same render applied to both buildings. The now single dwelling retains features of special interest that contribute to its heritage significance.

The curtilage includes the historic boundary walls that are considered part of the listed building under Section 1(5) of the 1990 Act.

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

WEST LAVINGTON HIGH STREET, West Lavington SU 0053 (east side) 13/300 No 61 (Home Farmhouse) II Farmhouse. C17 and early C19. Rendered with C20 concrete tiled roof. Two storeys, 3 wide bays, with left bay beyond gable stack being a C17 timber framed structure. Central 6-panelled door within a late C19 open masonry porch with round arch and flat lead roof. Sixteen-paned sash windows. Gable stacks. Framed bay has colourwashed brick noggings to framing 2 panels high with straight corner brace. Roof hipped with raking slatted flush ventilator to roof space. Interior not seen.

PROPOSAL

Installation of stud walls to form new bathroom. Within the submitted information, it highlights the installation of the ensuite but provides no details of the associated plumbing and services to create a new bathroom.

The works will retain the existing small built-in cupboard which sits in part of the eaves, but the edge will form the start of the new stud wall which will continue and return at the window reveal.

The entrance door will be opposite the main entrance door to the room that links the main dwelling with the former Granary. Limited details have been provided on the drawing showing the proposed layout of the bathroom and do not clarify whether it is a proposed shower or bath to be installed, or where the proposed services, including the SVP or the possible location of any required extract fans.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
14/06760/LBC - Listed building consent Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 10/9/2014 – Removal of cement render from front elevation and replacement with lime render. Repair to cill plate and corner post of timber frame. Localised stitching and repointing of masonry. Replacement of dilapidated section of guttering.
17/07861/PREAPP - Pre-Application enquiry Decision - Pre-App Response Date: 29/9/2017 – Conversion, extension and alterations
16/07866/PREAPP - Pre-Application enquiry Decision - Pre-App Response Date: 25/8/2016 – Various works to listed building
K/42474/L - Listed building consent Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 18/9/2002 – Alterations and extensions to dwelling.
K/42475 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 18/9/2002 – Alterations and extension to dwelling
18/11321/LBDC - Listed Building Discharge of Condition Decision - Approve Date: 11/2/2019 – Discharge of condition 3 on 17/12188/LBC
15/12492/LBC - Listed building consent Decision - Approved Date: 15/3/2016 – Internal alterations to the first floor layout of the building.
17/11961/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 27/2/2018 – Constructing a single-storey side extension; Constructing a higher roof void over the kitchen to accommodate a bedroom (amended proposal to one previously approved); re-building a side lean-to element; creating a doorway link between the house and Granary
17/12188/LBC - Listed building consent Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 27/2/2018 – Constructing a single-storey side extension; Constructing a higher roof void over the kitchen to accommodate a bedroom (amended proposal to one previously approved); re-building a side lean-to element; creating a doorway link between the house and Granary
K/17250 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 16/4/1991 – DEMOLITION OF LEAN TO AND ERECTION OF EXTENSION
K/17253/L - Listed building consent Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 16/4/1991 – DEMOLITION OF LEAN TO AND CONSTRUCTION OF EXTENSION

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.

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.

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 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.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

No responses were received.

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of Section 5(3)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 (as amended) publicity is not required for listed building consent to carry out works affecting only the interior of a Grade II (unstarred) listed building.

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.

Information considered/submitted

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.

The property is a Grade II listed former farmhouse and associated former Granary which was recently converted to connect to the farmhouse. The site sits within West Lavington Conservation Area. The application was submitted with a Planning, Design and Heritage Statement which provides sufficient information to understand the asset but provides limited information on the significance of the Granary and provides insufficient information to allow for the impact on the fabric to be assessed.

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 significance:

According to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), significance is defined 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 further categorises significance into four key values:

- *Evidential* – the potential of the asset to yield evidence about past human activity.
- *Historic* – the ways in which the asset illustrates aspects of history.
- *Aesthetic* – the sensory and design qualities of the asset.
- *Communal* – the meanings and associations attached to the asset by people.

In this case the significance of the building lies largely with its historic fabric and architecture - its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing exposed within the vernacular buildings have significant aesthetic and architectural interest, and which contribute to the character of the conservation area. Of particular significance is the C17 Granary, which now forms part of the residence and the village location of the farmstead. The Granary was a large open store, with a simple timber frame structure. The recent conversion works have protected this space, which was given special consideration.

The importance of village farms within this part of Wiltshire has been recognised in the Wiltshire and Swindon Farmsteads Guidance Farmsteads Assessment Framework and the associated Farmsteads Character Statement, which highlights that there is special significance in prominent village-based farmsteads. The guidance highlights the retention of farm buildings, especially

building such as a Granary as these have often been lost, therefore highlighting the high significance of this structure.

Whilst now part of the residential use due to its connection to the farmhouse, the external appearance retains a non-domestic, agricultural appearance. Internally, the interior has had a light touch approach to the conversion works and retains its open space, which was a deliberate consideration as part of the previously approved works to connect the Granary to the main house.

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 property is formed of the main farmhouse (dated to the C17, refaced in the C19) and the recently connected Granary (C17).

The proposed scheme looks to insert an ensuite into the Granary space to support the use of the room as a bedroom. The submitted plans provide very limited information on the proposed works, as they only indicate the position of the stud wall, and that the ensuite will comprise of WHB, WC and a bath or shower. This is not considered sufficient to fully understand the impact of the proposed works as creating an ensuite has the potential to cause harm through the installation of the facilities, the impact of the additional loading on the timber frame, the impact of steam/ water within the historic timber frame and the location of the services, in particular the SVP. However, the principle of the sub-division of the space is considered to cause harm to the significance of the building, and it has not been clearly or convincingly justified (under NPPF terminology) why there is a requirement for an ensuite.

The submitted information does not provide consideration for the insertion of the drainage and ventilation, the insertion of the walls to support the hanging of the WHB, WC cistern and the insertion of a bath or the formation of the shower, including the shower tray (and associated trap) and the screen. There will be a requirement for ventilation as there is no openable window, and therefore the need to extract the steam will be required as part of Building Regulations requirements. Whilst there is some consideration for listed buildings, they generally require an openable window. If no ventilation is provided, there is a potential for long term harm to the historic timber frame through the moisture. There could be an increased risk if the in-appropriate materials

are also used, which prevents vapour permeability (breathability). There is no consideration for the additional loading on the slender timber frame, which whilst it has been repaired to allow for the room to function, it is not clear from the information provided that the timber frame is sufficient for the proposed change.

Heritage Statement Justification for the Works

The submitted Heritage Statement justifies the proposed works with five considerations:

- i. that space is no longer an 'outbuilding' (3.10);
- ii. is 'reversible' (4.2);
- iii. that a precedent has been set for sub-division of the space by the creation of the small wardrobe (4.4)
- iv. that there is no loss of historic fabric (6.2).
- v. 2015 application supported the insertion of an ensuite (6.3).

i. 'Outbuilding'

Whilst it is acknowledged that the building is no longer an outbuilding, the approved scheme to connect the Granary to the main house did protect the open space of the room and the historic fabric by ensuring that the space remained open, and a lighter function was used for the room as there was a concern with the structural condition of the existing frame. The approved application (17/12188/LBC) had the ensuite removed as part of the pre-application discussion, which was included within the submitted Heritage Statement (so accessible in the planning history).

The Heritage Statement written by Mathewson Waters Architects noted the concerns raised over the sub-division and the impact of the services, and stated that there would be 'no need to try and subdivide the first floor of the granary; We would intend to just retain one open room which would have access to a shower room or bathroom just inside the main house as indicated on the submitted plan.' The principle of sub-dividing the space and the impact of the new services had been previously discussed and discounted. Within the submitted application, this is not considered and no new evidence has been presented.

As part of the discussion, there is a question over the structural strength of the frame of the Granary. Whilst the frame has been repaired, and is likely therefore to be structurally sound, the 'strength' of the frame is questioned with the additional loading, especially if bath is proposed. Within the application there is no consideration about the structural strength of the timber frame.

ii. 'Reversible'

The reversibility of the works recognises that there will be some harm, and this harm needs to be balanced with benefits and requirements for the harm.

The approved application (as discussed above) considers the requirement of bathrooms. Within the submitted application, there has been no clear and convincing justification why an ensuite is required. No clear and convincing justification has been provided that the proposed scheme would prevent the property from being occupied or prevent a long-term sustainable use.

The consideration of reversibility must be undertaken on the likelihood of it being reversed, which in this situation is unlikely, and therefore there is a need to consider the balance of harm and

need. There is no clear and convincing justification for the works, that are considered to outweigh the harm of the sub-division and the unknown harm of the installation of the services.

iii. 'Precedence'

The existing wardrobe is low level, allowing the volume and open nature of the room to be enjoyed and understood. The creation of the large ensuite would encroach into the space and sub-divide the room across the gable end. The insertion of full height walls will be more noticeable than the existing wardrobe which sits in the eaves. The proposed scheme would create a larger intrusion into the room, which is considered to cause harm.

iv. 'No loss of fabric'

Whilst there is no loss of historic fabric, the space of the room contributes to the significance of the building, recognising its former function. It has not been demonstrated within the submitted application that the proposed scheme would result in no loss of fabric. Therefore, it is considered to harm to the significance of the listed building.

v. '*Previous Ensuite*' (2015)

The Heritage Statement states that a previous application in 2015 supported the insertion of an ensuite into a bedroom which included the slight loss of historic plasterwork to allow the door to be formed. This was located within the main farmhouse, and not the Granary, which is considered to be of higher significance due to the age of the timber frame and the open nature of the space. Unlike planning applications, precedence is not a consideration within listed building consent applications as each application requires to be assessed for its merits, based on an understanding of the significance, and an impact assessment of the proposed works.

Impact Assessment

Under the NPPF, there is consideration which allows public benefits to outweigh the harm. This is a private dwelling, and it is considered that it has not been demonstrated that there is a need for the proposed scheme. Therefore, it is considered that there are no public benefits to outweigh the harm of the proposed scheme.

There are concerns regarding the proposed introduction of a bathroom into the Granary due to the impact the subdivision and the potential harm from the physical works which are considered to have an impact on the significance of the plan form, fabric and character of the Granary. The Granary is the most sensitive part of the building as it is a simple agricultural building which had, until recently, not been converted to residential use, partly due to the fragile fabric. Within the submitted information, it has not been demonstrated that there will not no impact on the significance of the space, or that there is a clear and convincing justification for the works which change to the agricultural character of the space, place unnecessary loading on the timber frame and have an unknown impact from the physical works.

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. As these works are focused on internal works only, this is not considered to apply. However, if any works to form ventilation were required, this would have the potential to impact on the roof covering, and therefore ecology may be impacted.

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.

In this case, the proposals will result in harm to the building via the limited information provided, the potential for harm due to the installation of the services, the impact of additional loadings on the existing C17 timber frame and the principle of loss of floor plan through the sub-division of the space. The proposed intervention to create the additional services, including the SVP and ventilation would have further adverse impact on the significance, character and appearance of the listed building and the potential to impact on the character of the conservation area dependant of extracts & SVP. The proposals involve only part of the building and could therefore be considered as causing 'less than substantial harm' for the purposes of interpreting the NPPF, but they involve the impact on the historic fabric and significance of the building and should not be seen as being of lesser consequence. Indeed, the wording of the NPPF and the 'special regard' by Sections 16 of the Act requires that any level harm caused should be taken seriously.

Paragraph 215 allows that a level of harm may be offset by public benefits, which could include conservation benefits. In this case, however, insufficient objective justification has been provided to demonstrate that the benefits which will result from the works will outweigh the harm caused and, as a result, the proposals fail to meet with the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Listed Building Consent be REFUSED for the following reasons:

The proposal would involve the insertion of a new stud wall will result in the sub- division of the space which retains its simplicity and open form, which will diminish the ability to understand this former agricultural space which has had limited intervention and therefore causing harm to the significance of the building. The proposed intervention to create the additional services, including the SVP and ventilation would have further adverse impact on the significance, character and appearance of the listed building. It is considered that clear and convincing justification for the work has not been provided, nor significant public benefits that would outweigh the harm. The proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the existing character and appearance of the heritage asset sections 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and NPPF (2024) paragraphs 212, 213 & 215.