

APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT OFFICER DELGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/03362
APPLICATION TYPE:	Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
SITE ADDRESS:	The Estate Office, Longleat Safari And Adventure Park, Longleat, Horningsham, Warminster, BA12 7NW
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Conservation repair and alterations to roof turret (Roof Slip D) at Longleat House.
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

Longleat House is a grade I Elizabethan prodigy house of exceptional quality and survival of historic fabric. Adjacent to the house is the orangery with walled garden listed at grade I, stables (grade I) fountain (grade II), boathouse and covered bridge (grade I) are the stables – all set within a grade I registered park and garden.

The parkland also contains an internationally renowned safari park that has been operating since the 1960s.

The park and parts of the house are open to the public. In respect of the current application, it should be noted that parts of the library and archive are housed on the second floor.

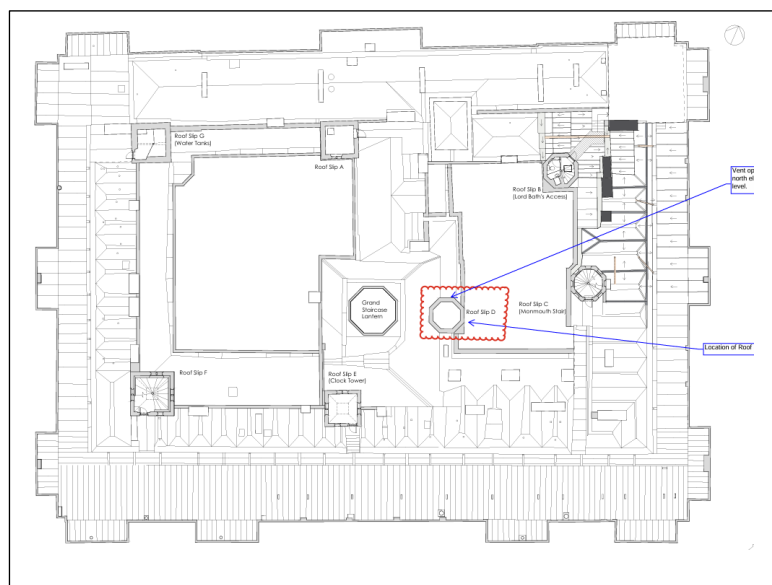
The house is part open to the public but is also home to a number of residents, including the 8th Marquess of Bath and his family, as well as offices on the second floor (which also houses the archive).

The list description for the house is as follows:

'Country house. 1568, facades of 1572 by Sir John Thynne with Robert Smythson and Alan Maynard, north wing and internal alterations 1801-11 by Jeffry Wyattville for 2nd Marquess of Bath, interior redecorated 1870s by J.D. Crace for 4th Marquess of Bath. Bath stone, Welsh slate hipped roof, lead flats, ashlar Tuscan column stacks. Large rectangular block with two courtyards, the east an amalgamation of two smaller courtyards by Wyattville. Three storey and basement, 2:1:2:5:2:1:2 bays to front; 2 windows to each of the four projecting bays. Central C18 Doric portico with broken pediment with Thynne arms, double 8-panelled doors up ten stone steps with curved balustrade, basement has 3-light and 4- light recessed chamfered mullioned casements. Three storeys with Doric, Ionic and Corinthian orders flanking the projecting bays and linked by continuous entablatures, bays have 3-light mullioned and transomed casements with circular niches to sill zones, windows between are 4-light, with shaped aprons, balustraded parapet with scroll and strapwork decorations to bays, C17 and C18 statues. East front has three projecting bays with three 4-light mullioned and transomed casements between, raised terrace with balustraded parapet and steps to centre 7 bays. West front has similar rhythm of bays as the east. Rear, north side including central bay was completed by Wyattville, only the two flanking bays are C16. Roof retains gables of 1568 build, with four square 'banqueting houses'

around the west courtyard, each with 2-light mullioned shuttered windows, domed fishscale stone roof with classical cupola, three octagonal stair turrets around the east courtyard have similar detail, probably by Smythson. Chimney stacks with unusual decorated friezes and domed cappings, single or grouped. Interior: Four-bay 2-storey hall with screen's passage, in original position to right of entrance; retains original C16 fittings and decoration, the remainder of the house refitted by Wyattville and Crace. Hall has hammer-beam roof, screen's passage with Ionic order and strapwork, by Andrew Gaunt c1578, carved fireplace of 1560s with Ionic columns and overmantel with terms to entablature is only fireplace by Alan Maynard in original position, others by him now in west range and servants' hall, other ornament includes niches with shell hoods flanking bay windows, carved balcony at east end of c1682. Imperial stairs with carved turned balusters with decorated Soane-style vault and glazed octagonal dome by Wyattville, original stairs were at dais end of hall. Wyattville also improved internal arrangements by making corridors around the courtyards, external walls of courts retain cross windows of 1568 build. All state rooms refitted and decorated late C19 in Italian style, with fine gilded plaster ceilings, white marble fireplaces, including some early C19, and imported wall coverings such as Spanish leather in the state dining room. Bedrooms with earlier C18 or C19 fittings including Regency fireplaces and Chinese painted wallpaper. Bishop Ken's Library over the Hall with pilastered walls and segmental arches made c1585. Attached to rear by ashlar walls is former larder, now shop, by Wyattville in same style and retaining original fittings. House set in very fine parkland, landscaped by Capability Brown 1757-60 and again 1800-10 by Humphry Repton whose Red Book for Longleat is at the house.'

BACKGROUND TO (AND JUSTIFICATION FOR)THE WORKS



The repairs relate to roof slip D which is one of the three octagonal lantern and stair turrets within the east courtyard of Longleat House, and believed to have been designed by Robert Smythson. It originally provided access to the roof, however, the staircase was removed (date unknown) and as such, it is no longer 'in use'.

Description from the Heritage, Design and Access statement:

'Externally, the turret is formed of a domed fishscale Bath stone roof with infilled blind windows. The thin masonry construction and through joints leave the structure vulnerable to water penetration and weathering'.

'Internally, access is currently gained only via a small loft hatch in the Library Passage ceiling using a stepladder. The lath and plaster ceiling below extends across approximately 6sqm'.

'A quinquennial inspection undertaken in 2022 by benjamin+beauchamp architects identified the need for ceiling replacement together with masonry repairs and improved ventilation to the turret'.

'The ceiling structure has since been propped and the Library Passage temporarily closed for health and safety reasons. Investigations identified extensive decay, beetle infestation, and significant loss of structural integrity to the timber joists and primary beam, caused by prolonged moisture ingress and poor ventilation'.

And

'The eastern ceiling joists are in an advanced state of decay and affected by deathwatch beetle activity, with substantial loss of timber section rendering them unsafe. Joists within the north-west corner have also deteriorated significantly'.

And

'The principal beam has deteriorated where it bears into the north wall masonry and requires further structural investigation'.

And at 4.2

'In order to prevent further water ingress and deathwatch beetle activity, the environmental conditions within Roof Slip D must be improved through the creation of a dry and ventilated turret space.'

At 4.4

'The turret currently has no ventilation. Below ceiling level, the Library Passage is heated, while above the ceiling the single-skin masonry structure is unheated and uninsulated, making it susceptible to condensation and moisture build-up'.

At 4.5

'The existing ceiling structure has suffered significant decay and loss of structural integrity, particularly to the eastern joists. The primary beam is showing significant decay at its bearing ends, and joist pockets evidence an earlier floor structure above to the east side of the turret. The lath and plaster ceiling remains in situ but requires additional support to ensure its long-term stability and safe retention'.

PROPOSAL

From the Heritage, Design and Access statement:

Repairs to the roof

- *The stone domed roof will be repointed where the existing mortar has failed. Repointing to be carried out using a lime putty mortar, with exact mix to be agreed following sampling of existing mortar.*
- *Repointing and repairs to the blind windows and stucco render will be carried out at the same time, again with matching lime mortar to match the comparative hydraulicity of the existing mortars.*
- *Missing or damaged sections of cornice to be assessed for sectional replacement, indent or mortar repair. To be in Bath stone and matching profile to existing.*

Introducing Ventilation

- *A small creasing tile vent (maximum 200 x 200mm) will be introduced on the north elevation to provide ventilation above ceiling level.*
- *High-level drainage outlets will also assist ventilation by creating a stack effect. The works will require limited removal of historic masonry fabric.*

Ceiling and new lower floor

- *Existing primary beam is to have splice repairs, in air-dried oak, to each bearing end, with the intent to retain as much of the ceiling and joist pockets as possible.*
- *Existing ceiling joists that have lost their structural integrity will be paired with new air-dried oak joists.*
- *Stainless steel screw fixings with washers will be installed through the plaster into the new joists to support the existing lath and plaster ceiling. Washer heads will be lightly recessed and made good with a skim coat of proprietary interior filler gauged with whiting.*
- *Existing joist pockets will be reused to form a lightweight landing above ceiling level, ensuring loads are not imposed directly onto the ceiling structure*

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary

Site visit made on 18 November 2025

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.

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.

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.

Section 14 of the NPPF addresses the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change.

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 (and planning permission).

Historic England Advice Note 18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency, provides advice in support of consistent decision making on approaches to improve the energy efficiency and support carbon reduction of historic buildings, whilst conserving their significance.

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 any features of special architectural and/or historic interest.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Horningsham Parish Council: no response received

Historic England: no comment

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of Section 5(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 (as amended) the application for listed building consent was publicised by way of:

- A site notice displayed near the site;
- An advertisement placed in the local press.

These methods were used to inform interested parties and to allow a statutory consultation period of **21 days** for representations to be submitted.

Below is a summary of the representations received during the consultation period. In accordance with the provisions of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, only matters relevant to the consideration of the building's special architectural or historic interest have been taken into account in the assessment of this Listed Building Consent application.

No representations were received.

ASSESSMENT

See drawing 0155.P.04 Proposed Roof Slip D Sections

The proposals include essential and sensitive repairs to Slip D, including the 'later' ceiling over the 2nd floor. The proposals are well detailed and necessary to preserve the existing historic fabric.

In more detail, in respect of the **external** works to the turret roof, the works are essentially like-for-like repairs and as such, do not require listed building consent.

In terms of the proposed ventilation, as noted by the architect: *'The proposals involve a minor loss of historic fabric but look to significantly improve ventilation and reduce the risk of future condensation, moisture ingress, and mechanisms for decay and beetle attack. The use of creasing tiles to form the vent are a means to clearly differentiate new intervention from existing stone fabric.'*

The proposals, as shown in the proposed sections, evidence new ventilation grilles which are below parapet level and would not be visible. A new vent cowl would also be installed into the internal access floor to improve ventilation. Again, it would not be visible.

Internally (ie within Slip D), the proposals provide essential structural stabilisation while retaining most of the existing ceiling and structure. The use of traditional materials, reuse of existing joist pockets, and discreet repair methods reduce visual impact and support the long-term conservation and safe maintenance of the turret. In addition, a new platform is introduced above

the ceiling (and using existing redundant joist holes) that provides a means for the contractor, and future contractors, to access the ceiling from above.

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.

In order to be acceptable, the application needs to be assessed against the following criteria:

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 application is supported by a Heritage, Design and Access Statement. 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.

Longleat is a grade I listed Elizabethan prodigy house of exceptional interest on a number of levels.

The repairs relate to roof slip D which is one of the three octagonal lantern and stair turrets within the east courtyard of the house and believed to have been designed by Robert Smythson. Their association with Smythson compounds their interest.

The blind windows were likely infilled at a later date, but demonstrate past function and features. The ceiling (following the removal of the stairs at a date unknown) is old and lathe and plaster and as such, is of some significance, evidencing the evolution of the function of Slip D.

Furthermore, the ceiling is over part of the second floor corridor and as such, contributes to the interest of the corridor.

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 212-221 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and relevant local heritage policies and guidance.

Regular quinquennial inspections are undertaken of the house by a conservation-accredited architect. The need for works to Slip D were identified in a recent report.

The proposals are largely 'like-for-like' repairs but there are some new works proposed to improve ventilation and drainage as well as maintenance.

As such the proposals would be in accordance with Section 16 of the Planning LBCA Act 1990, Chapter 16 of the NPPF and CP 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy as well as Historic England guidance on the importance of regular and timely maintenance.

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.

		Y / N / NA
(a)	Does the site or proposed development possess/impact on any of the features where protected species are likely to be present (assessed against Natural England's standing advice) and where species are likely to be found?	N
(b)	If yes, has a protected species survey been submitted?	
(c)	If yes, does the survey show a detailed consideration of ecological impacts, wildlife mitigation and the creation, restoration and enhancement	

	of wildlife corridors to preserve and enhance biodiversity in accordance with the standing advice?	
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Officer comment: The following was received from the agent:

'... the domed roof is constructed from a single skin of solid ashlar stone, so we feel there is no potential for bat access into the roof slip. There was also no evidence of bats or bat droppings during the most recent inspections. The proposed works are confined to inside the roof slip itself, together with some limited repointing and the introduction of drainage spouts to serve the new inner roof deck. The works to repoint any open ashlar joints is essential to protect this vulnerable structure from continued water ingress. No works are proposed to the lower surrounding roofs.'

Officer response: LBC is not required for repointing. The application is required because of the internal works.

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 impact of the proposals on heritage assets will be largely positive and the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance are considered to be met.

In this case the proposals will also result in considerable heritage benefits by virtue of the proposed investment in repair and upgrading/structural repair which will help to secure the future/stability of the building /via facilitating the optimum viable use.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

That Listed Building Consent be GRANTED, subject to the following conditions:

LB 3 years

The proposed new ventilation grilles will be cast metal with an integral fly mesh 6x9 inches approximately and painted a colour to match the stone.

Approved plans

Existing second floor plan 0155.S.016

Existing roof plan 0155.S.021

Roof Slip D ceiling condition survey (plan) 01555.S.093

Elevation Roof Slip D ceiling condition survey 01555.S.094

Proposed Roof Slip D ceiling plan 0155.001 – shows repairs to ceiling structure which includes partnering up decayed rafters

Proposed Roof Slip D lower floor plan 0155.002 – shows new access floor into existing joist holes

Proposed Roof Slip D Upper Floor plan 0155.P.03 Rev A – shows new metal outlet pipe and new vent cowl

Proposed Roof Slip D Sections 0155.P.004 KEY PROPOSED DRAWING

Informative re Ecology There is a low risk that bats may occur at the development site. Many species of bat depend on buildings for roosting, with each having its own preferred type of roof. Most species roost in crevices such as under ridge tiles, behind roofing felt or in cavity walls and are therefore not often seen in the roof space. Bat roosts are protected all times by the Conservation Of Habitats and Species 2017 (as amended) even when bats are temporarily absent because, being creatures of habit, they usually return to the same roost site every year. Planning permission or listed building consent for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation or substitute for the need to obtain a bat licence if an offence is likely. If bats or evidence of bats is found during the work, the applicant is advised to follow the advice of a professional ecologist or to contact Natural England's Batline through the internet.