

2026/03057 Householder
Site: The Old Vicarage, Hankerton, Malmesbury, SN16 9LF
Proposal: Loft conversion into a bedroom and bathroom

Recommendations:

☒	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. Sections 16 (LBC) and 66 (PP) require 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 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 213 - 215 of the NPPF 2024 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.

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."

The Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. Proposals are required to "demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) "enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the existing pattern of development" and "responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting."

Heritage Assets:

The Old Vicarage, Hankerton, Malmesbury – NDHA
Holy Cross Church Church Lane Hankerton grade II *

Site and assets considered:

The Old Vicarage is located on Church Lane, a no through lane off Cloatley Road, Hankerton. It fronts south with its principal access of Church Lane to the southwest.

It is a sculptured building articulated on all sides with a prominent rear (north) elevation onto the small Green with a pedestrian gate in a dry-stone wall giving direct access to the Green and Holy Cross Church.

The house dates from 1906 designed by London Architect Henry De Bertodano who also designed the War Memorial Cross at the Triangle in Malmesbury.

It is a good example of a Voysey influenced Arts and Crafts house with roughcast render elevations, cross wing to left hand and off centre left front door with half round leaded porch hood, a pair of rear gables, stone mullion windows, including distinctive arrow slot windows to attic gables and oval feature windows to side of front porch and rear elevation.

The roof is typical Arts and Crafts style steep pitch, Roman tile roof with swept eaves and tall rendered stacks.

The Old Vicarage is considered to be a Non Designated Heritage Asset.

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Relevant planning history:

Issues: The impact of roof alterations on the NDHA and listed Church.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting: The NPPF defines significance as the “value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest.

The interest may be **architectural**, or **historic as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 S 1**.

Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.” Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

In this case Old Vicarage is not listed however it considered to be a Non-Designated Heritage Asset that has significance evident in the Arts and Crafts architectural style by a named architect, its form, and layout function in context of a Vicarage and relationship with Holy Cross Church, materials, expression/detailing which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest that makes a positive contribution to the setting of Holy Cross Church.

Assessment:

The Old Vicarage Hankerton was built in 1906 as accommodation for the clergy and is located and orientated to function with close access to the Church in a prominent position backing onto a small Green outside the Church gates and in the streetscape of Church Lane. The Arts and Crafts style provide a quality of appearance that is sculptured being a house that is viewed from all aspects.

The proposal involves the conversion of the attic to include the installation of a number of rooflights, widening of the arrow slit windows to the attic to single casement and raising of the attic ridge to accommodate insulation that will also alter the appearance of the swept eaves and roof profile.

In considering the design it is worth referencing the principles of good design in the Historic England guidance 'I want to Convert My Loft' advises

'In an old house, there are some important things to think about before deciding to convert your loft. This can be a good way to increase space without building an extension, but it will affect the interior of the house, the roof structure and the outside of the roof.'

In many old houses, the roof is an important part of why the house is interesting, even if it's not seen. If roofs are well built they last a long time and tend not to be affected by changing fashions, unlike room decoration and windows.

The way roofs are constructed can show how old the house is because carpentry methods changed in particular ways over time.

A well-designed dormer window can work on some roofs, but on others, it may be better to use small rooflights....

To decide what is best, assess the shape of the roof, the style and character of the whole house and how visible the roof is. Rooflights and new dormers are best avoided on the front roof slope.

Improving insulation is a major part of converting a loft, but you need to maintain roof ventilation at the same time, which may require additional roofing battens. The aim should be to keep alterations to the outside of the roof to a minimum'.

The proposal has an excessive number of rooflights and roof profile and eaves alterations. I consider that insufficient design consideration has been given to the significance of the roofscape on this Art and Crafts style house and the impact on the roofscape of the proposed roof lights and roof raising especially at the eaves is harmful. The significance of the Vicarage and its roofscape to the setting of the grade II * listed church is also harmed by the use of rooflights to the Vicarage.

The proposals need to find a revised balance between natural light and insulation while preserving the character of the significance of the sweeping and unbroken tiled roofscape, that is a significant feature of the architecture of this Arts and Crafts Vicarage.

As a suggestion I would remove the rooflights and review dormers to similar Arts and Crafts houses to find a suitable design for a maximum of a pair of small dormers to front and back roof slopes as maximum. Natural light otherwise should be from the arrow slit windows that should be retained as an integral part of the design. There may be potential to increase the chamfer on the inside of the arrow slits to improve natural light.

In respect the roof raising a careful architectural response is required to maintain as far as possible the swept eaves details and reduce the heavy proposed fascia board used to facilitate the raising of the eaves. An eaves detail should be provided to show the revised proposal.

There is also no detail or section drawings to show the current attic roof and the trusses /rafter arrangements and whether any extensive alterations are required to the roof structure. Again, any alteration to principle roof structure should be avoided if possible.

It is understood that the current roof tiles will be reinstated.

Summary: 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.

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