



THE OLD RECTORY, MERE, WILTSHIRE, BA12 6DS

HERITAGE STATEMENT ADDENDUM 2
(PL/2026/03798)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Heritage Statement Addendum has been prepared in response to the guidance provided by Wiltshire Council's Senior Conservation Officer, Jocelyn Sage, within the Pre-Application Enquiry response dated 5 August 2026. It relates to the proposals submitted under Householder Planning Application PL/2026/03798 for works at The Old Rectory, Church Street, Mere, Wiltshire, BA12 6DS, validated on 2 July 2026.

1.2 This latest Addendum has been prepared by Adrienne Ridler-Lee MSc, on behalf of the applicants, Dr John Middleton and Catherine Stevens. It sets out and assesses the amendments made to the scheme in response to the conservation advice received, with particular consideration given to the significance, character and special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

1.3 This Addendum aligns with policy within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015. Guidance is taken from Historic England's 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' Good Advice in Planning Note 3 (GPA3), 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' Good Practice Advice Note 2 (GPA2), and Historic England's Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance.

2.0 SUMMARY OF PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED WORKS

2.1 The Old Rectory at Mere has recently been purchased by the Applicants who have identified areas of the building that require repair and conservation, as well as carefully considered, modest alterations that seek to improve the function, viability and sustainability of the home for the long-term, safeguarding its future. The details of works are summarised on Planning Application PL/2026/03798 as comprising '*Sundry internal and external repairs and alterations to include replacement and insertion of roof windows, replacement windows and doors, enlarge openings to form new doorways, block internal door opening, replacement of parts modern ground floor floors and removal other modern interventions, form new internal door opening, alterations to partition walls, remove and replace modern ceilings and floor. Install solar panels*'

2.2 This Heritage Statement Addendum does not seek to repeat the information contained within the previously submitted Heritage Impact Statement except if and where it is directly relevant to the amended proposals assessed herein.

3.0 UPDATES AND AMENDMENTS – PROPOSED KITCHEN

3.1 The previous design iteration included the removal of the lathe and plaster ceiling in order to achieve a raised ceiling, with the roof timbers exposed and a rooflight inserted. The Pre-Application Response advised that the existing ceiling should where possible, be retained and repaired. However, the existing lathe and plaster is in a significantly deteriorated condition and is failing in areas to an extent that renders effective repair impracticable. Its condition is such that its future viability cannot reasonably be assured, nor can its long-term integrity and stability be secured through localised repair alone.

3.2 A repair approach would require the complete removal of the existing lathe and plaster ceiling which would result in the loss of historic fabric. The Applicants have reconsidered the original proposal to insert modern plaster board immediately below the existing lathe and plaster, as this would comprise a modern finish that would not be in keeping with the character of the house. Having consulted with a professional lime plasterer and conservator (David Tabberer of Chalkborn Conservation) a more sympathetic and appropriate approach has been identified, comprising the retainment and support of the remaining lathe and plaster ceiling with woodwool boards set immediately underneath the historic fabric, allowing the meat hooks to be retained and observed in their original position. The woodwool boards will be finished with lime plaster, applied in a traditional method that will respect and reflect the historic character of the existing. The installation of 300mm mineral wool insulation between the joists will positively contribute to the thermal performance and energy efficiency of the space, whilst providing a durable insulation solution with proven long-term performance characteristics. In addition to achieving an appropriate traditional appearance, the proposed woodwool boards and plaster will provide a more durable and fire-resistant ceiling construction, improve the resilience of the building, and help to safeguard its historic fabric and continued use into the future.

3.3 David Tabberer of Chalkborn Conservation has provided technical and material detail separate to this Statement to further inform the Conservation Officer of this proposed approach to the ceiling works.

3.4 Following the amended approach to the treatment of the kitchen ceiling, the proposed rooflight has been withdrawn from the scheme. Ventilation will be achieved via a roof void to a tile vent.

UPDATES AND AMENDMENTS – PROPOSED KITCHEN CONT.

3.5 Wiltshire Council's Conservation Officer was cautious about the estimated date of the construction of the internal partition walls (since removed) within the proposed kitchen space (former utility). The original Heritage Impact Statement identified these as 'modern', which for clarity for the purposes of this assessment refers to the C20. The partitions were inserted underneath the ceiling, and upon an entirely C20 pine floor which is supported from underneath by modern stress graded and treated timber 175 x 50 joists (Figs.7 and 8) dated to between 1967 and 1988 based upon markings on the machine sawn timbers. The partition walls (Fig.1) were constructed of economic and lightweight fibreboard with modern, simple skirting boards which did not reflect those seen elsewhere within the dwelling. The removal of the partitions did not result in the loss of any historic fabric, merely reinstating the historic proportions of the room.



Figure 1. Proposed kitchen. Note fibreboard partition with modern skirting boards, and cracked, blown and dropping plaster from lathes, and C20 pine floor.

UPDATES AND AMENDMENTS – PROPOSED KITCHEN CONT.

3.6 The plans for the proposed kitchen doors to the east elevation have been further refined to consider the cellar light well below and how it can be sympathetically incorporated into the improvements, and also how damp and rainwater ingress can be appropriately mitigated. Following the insertion of the new double door (Fig.2) the surrounding surfaces will be made good to match the existing finishes, with a new water bar and appropriate weather seals incorporated to prevent water ingress and, in turn, reduce the risk of moisture penetration into the cellar below. The existing concrete step, which currently covers the lightwell (Fig.3) serving the cellar, will be carefully lifted and replaced with a new glazed, ventilated walk-on light cover by Techcomlight (Lucernario), measuring 65cm x 190cm, with any required surrounding stone comprising Blue Lias to match the existing exterior ground surface covering. In addition to improving natural light and ventilation to the cellar, the glazed cover will allow partial views into the historic space below, improving the legibility of this element of the building and encouraging greater appreciation, curiosity and understanding of the historic fabric and spatial arrangement of the heritage asset.



Figure 2. Proposed east elevation illustrating new kitchen doors above cellar light well.



Figure 3. Cellar lightwell looking up towards area outside existing east door (proposed kitchen).

UPDATES AND AMENDMENTS – PROPOSED KITCHEN CONT.

3.7 Following the Conservation Officer's advice, the existing windows to the north elevation of the proposed kitchen will be repaired or replaced retaining the established fenestration pattern, proportions and character of the elevation (Fig.3). Window 14 will be replaced with a casement window matching the character of W15, with slim profile double glazing. Window 15 will be repaired and conserved so that it can open as it was originally intended to do so. This element of the scheme provides great heritage benefit and will result in a positive impact upon significance.



Figure 4. Proposed north elevation; note kitchen windows to retain their scale and form.

UPDATES AND AMENDMENTS – PROPOSED KITCHEN CONT.



Figure 5. Looking north towards proposed kitchen/dining room door opening.



Figure 6. Looking south towards proposed kitchen/dining room door opening.

UPDATES AND AMENDMENTS – PROPOSED KITCHEN CONT.

3.8 Prior to the further removal of plaster from the elevations to either side of the existing doorway between the proposed kitchen and dining room, the exposed arrangement of the stonework appeared to suggest that the opening may previously have been wider and subsequently reduced, as discussed within the original Heritage Impact Statement. As the Conservation Officer correctly identifies, following the careful removal of additional plaster to expose a greater extent of the masonry, no definitive construction joint is visible and there is therefore insufficient evidence to substantiate this interpretation, however it is physically and visually evident that the opening has been reduced in height by the insertion of a panel underneath a historic lintel.

3.9 The Applicants respectfully seek to retain the proposed modest widening of the existing opening, but the scale of this alteration has been greatly reduced to merely comprise the removal of the warped timber frame, with the stone elevations to either side plastered in a lime mortar which will provide a continuation of the existing treatment (within the proposed dining room) and visual and material harmony. The Applicants wish to remove the section above the existing door opening to reinstate the historic height, however, the existing timber lintel has rotted and requires replacement which shall be carried out with a new timber insert, with any requirements for further structural support advised by the structural engineer and details forwarded to the Conservation Officer for review and approval prior to the works being carried out. The removal of a later timber door frame, the plastering of the ends of the stone elevations to either side of the opening, and the reinstatement of the original door height will have no harmful impact upon the significance of the heritage asset.

3.10 The proposed works to the kitchen floor will involve the careful lifting and removal of the existing modern pine floorboards, several of which are dangerously degraded. The existing floor structure is of C20 construction, comprising modern stress-graded and treated timber joists measuring approximately 175 x 50mm. Importantly, no historic floor timbers or associated historic structural elements survive within the cellar beneath the kitchen (Figs. 7 and 8), and the existing floor structure is entirely modern. The proposed works will therefore result in no loss of historic timber fabric.

3.11 To provide the necessary structural support for the proposed AGA, an additional steel beam (size to be confirmed by the Structural Engineer) will be introduced beneath the front edge of its proposed position. The beam will be carefully bedded into the existing walls using in-situ concrete, consistent with the existing structural arrangement, with particular care taken to ensure that no voids or air gaps are created. Existing steel beams within the cellar will be retained, with surface corrosion removed and the steelwork recoated using an appropriate protective paint system in accordance with the Structural Engineer's specification. Following completion

UPDATES AND AMENDMENTS – PROPOSED KITCHEN CONT.

3.11 cont. of the structural works, the kitchen floor will be reinstated using a Nu-Heat Omnifloor system, or similar approved, incorporating underfloor heating, with an engineered oak board finish laid in accordance with the manufacturer's specification.

3.12 The works therefore provide an opportunity to improve the structural integrity, thermal performance and functionality of the kitchen floor whilst retaining the existing structural arrangement wherever practicable. As the affected floor and supporting timber structure are entirely of C20 date, the works will not result in the loss of historic floorboards or historic cellar timbers and will consequently have a negligible effect upon the significance and special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.



Figures 7 and 8. Cellar ceiling, comprising C20 timbers supporting the C20 proposed kitchen floor (pine) above.

4.0 UPDATES AND AMENDMENTS – PROPOSED DINING ROOM

4.1 The previous application sought consent to lift the existing Blue Lias flag stones, however this element of the scheme has been withdrawn, and the floor will remain as it currently is. The only intervention will involve the removal of concrete around the edges of the existing floor to be replaced with blue lias.

4.2 The Applicant's seek consent to remove the existing timber framed window to the south elevation, which is a later insert into a historic door opening as evidenced by stone infill below. This element of the scheme intends to lower the window sill to create a heritage appropriate window seat which will allow for the increased observation and enjoyment of the setting to the south from within the dwelling throughout the seasons. The modest increase in size (Fig.11) will require the removal of some historic, but not original fabric (stone).

4.3 This latest iteration of the scheme has evolved to provide a sympathetic and pragmatic solution for the existing ground-floor window, enabling its retention and continued use within the dwelling with which it is historically associated, thereby avoiding its complete removal from the building. Fortuitously, the existing first-floor bathroom window opening is of similar proportions to the ground-floor window, requiring only a minimal reduction in width of approximately 50mm. This can be readily accommodated through the introduction of slightly wider framing to either side of the relocated window, without materially altering the proportions of the existing opening. The current first-floor bathroom window is a modern, economically constructed faux-leaded casement dating from 2023 (Figs.9 and 10), incorporating applied (stick on) faux leadwork that is physically and visually incongruous with the character and architectural quality of The Old Rectory. Its replacement with the existing ground-floor window, which will be carefully repaired and conserved where necessary prior to relocation, provides an opportunity to retain, conserve and repurpose existing fabric within the listed building, rather than allowing its permanent loss. The approach therefore represents a positive conservation-led amendment, securing the continued functional use of the window while also improving the architectural coherence of the first-floor fenestration.

4.4 The existing opening does not represent an unaltered element of the historic elevation and has itself undergone previous alteration in response to the changing requirements of the building and its occupants. Whilst this earlier intervention does not establish a precedent for further change, it demonstrates that this part of the elevation has evolved historically and that the existing arrangement is not fundamental to an understanding of the original architectural composition of The Old Rectory. The proposed alteration would continue this established process of carefully managed adaptation, whilst remaining limited in its physical extent.

UPDATES AND AMENDMENTS – PROPOSED DINING ROOM CONT.

4.4 cont. The enlarged opening will be fitted with a high-quality timber-framed glazed unit, appropriately detailed to correspond with the established fenestration of the south elevation. The resulting opening will therefore remain compatible with the proportions, materials and architectural language of the listed building and will not appear visually incongruous or undermine the overall character and coherence of the elevation.

4.5 Importantly, the existing timber-framed kitchen window will not be discarded as part of the works. Instead, it will be carefully removed, repaired and conserved where necessary, and relocated to the first-floor bathroom, replacing the poor-quality C21 faux-leaded casement currently occupying that opening. This provides meaningful mitigation for the proposed alteration, securing the continued use of historic fabric within the building whilst simultaneously removing an unsympathetic modern intervention and improving the architectural quality of the first-floor fenestration. When considered collectively, the limited loss of historic masonry is balanced by the conservation and repurposing of the existing window, the removal of an incongruous C21 unit, and the introduction of appropriately detailed fenestration to the kitchen. The residual impact upon the significance and special architectural and historic interest of The Old Rectory is therefore considered to amount to less than substantial harm at the lower end of the scale.



Figures 9 and 10. First floor bathroom window (c. 2023). Stick on faux lead. Proposed to be replaced with existing kitchen window (south).

UPDATES AND AMENDMENTS – PROPOSED DINING ROOM CONT.

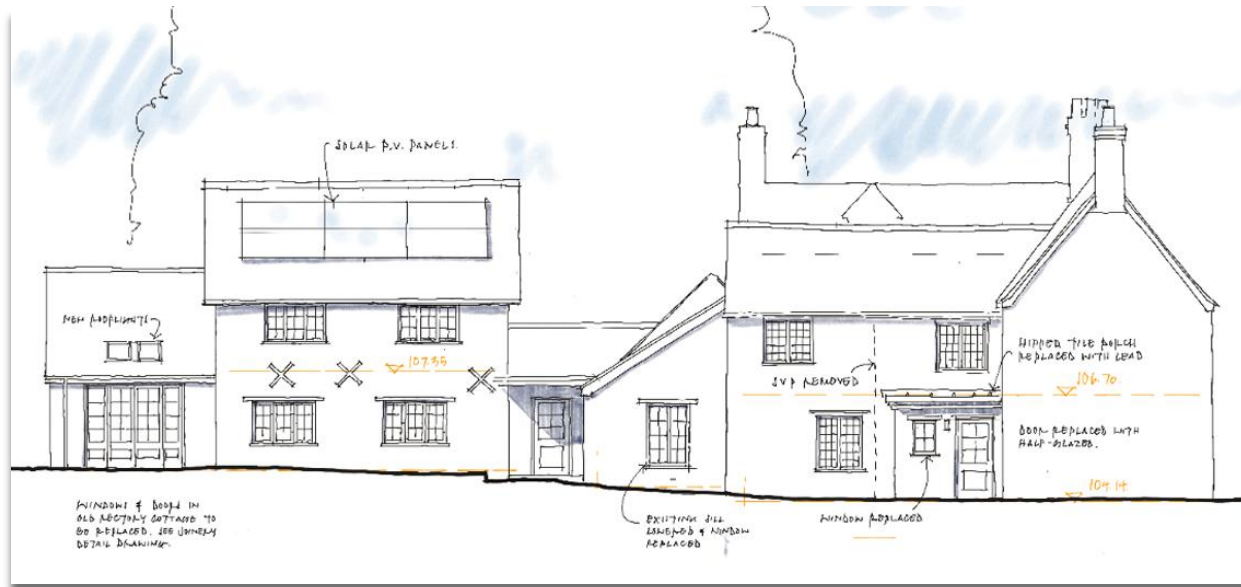


Figure 11. Illustration of proposed south elevation. Note proposed dining room window providing balance and visual harmony within existing fenestration.

5.0 UPDATES AND AMMENDMENTS – PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR AND ATTIC

5.1 The Applicants wish to confirm to the Conservation Officer that no Elm boards from within the attic space will be lifted to replace modern inserts at first floor level. The Elm boards in the attic are to be lifted during plumbing works to ensure that their integrity is safeguarded during the works; they will then be placed back into their original positions. The floor timbers at first floor level comprise a combination of North American pine (Douglas Fir) and brown oak. Any replacements required at first floor will comprise timbers to match the existing.

5.2 The amended scheme now proposes the retention of the existing historic wall between the principal bedroom and adjoining bathroom, thereby preserving the established historic proportions, plan form and spatial legibility of the room. This represents a positive amendment to the scheme, avoiding the loss of historic fabric previously associated with the proposed reconfiguration. A Georgian door (Figs.12 and 13), retaining its original brass door furniture, is located between the ensuite bathroom and landing but has previously been blocked and taken out of use. The amended proposals seek to reopen this doorway and reinstate the historic door to its originally intended function, thereby revealing and restoring an element of the building's historic circulation and plan form. To accommodate the Applicants' requirements whilst minimising intervention, a smaller walk-in closet is proposed within the ensuite, accessed from the landing. This revised arrangement provides the required functionality while allowing the principal internal elevations, historic walling and established proportions of the bedroom to be retained, as illustrated on the updated floorplans. Overall, the amendment represents a more conservation-led approach, balancing contemporary domestic requirements with the retention and reinstatement of historic fabric and spatial relationships.

5.3 The previous scheme comprised the relocation of the door opening to bedroom 2, and the retainment of the door and its associated timberwork (frame) for readability. The Conservation Officer advised that she would not insist on the retention of this doorway in its existing location as it does not form part of a designed ensemble, therefore the doorway will be sealed with a lightweight stud wall, and the existing door case/frame carefully removed and conserved before being repurposed in the new opening.

UPDATES AND AMMENDMENTS – PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR AND ATTIC CONT.



Figures 12 and 13. Revealed Georgian door on first floor (ensuite to landing).

6.0 UPDATES AND AMMENDMENTS – PROPOSED GENERAL WORKS

6.1 The plans have been amended to include the works undertaken to the chimneys. These works were considered urgent due to the condition of the existing fabric, with one chimney (west) in particular being structurally unsound and displaying a pronounced lean. Its condition presented a potential risk of structural failure which, had it occurred, could have resulted in significant consequential damage to the historic fabric of the listed building below. The works undertaken were therefore necessary to stabilise the structure and safeguard the building from further harm; during the works, new lead trays were inserted, and the chimney was reconstructed to exactly match the historic pattern. A second chimney, requiring less repair, was rebuilt down 10 courses only, 6 of which were able to use salvaged bricks. Additional conservation repairs to the chimneys remain outstanding and will be undertaken as part of the wider programme of works incorporating the same considerate approach as necessary.

6.2 During the Pre-Application Enquiry site visit, the Conservation Officer identified that several of the existing sash windows (Figs.14 and 15) are modern replicas, with their later date evidenced in part by the detailing of the sash horns. The Applicants had previously understood these windows to comprise historic fabric and had therefore initially proposed their repair and conservation. In light of their confirmed modern provenance, however, the substantial financial cost associated with repairing windows of limited heritage value is not considered proportionate or viable. Consent is therefore sought for the replacement of two additional windows, W1-11 and W1-13, to correspond with those for which replacement consent is already sought.

6.3 The replacement windows will replicate the appropriate traditional form, proportions and detailing of the existing fenestration, whilst incorporating slim-profile glazing to improve the thermal performance and energy efficiency of the dwelling, which will not be visually discernible from either the immediate or wider setting. Their replacement therefore provides an opportunity to secure greater architectural and material consistency across the fenestration without resulting in the loss of significant historic fabric.

6.4 The Conservation Officer also requested that the existing glazing bead detail should not be replicated and that the individual panes should instead be traditionally puttied into place. The Applicants fully accept this recommendation and confirm that the replacement windows will incorporate heritage-appropriate putty glazing and suitable traditional detailing. This approach will ensure that the materials, construction and visual appearance of the replacement windows are more appropriate to the architectural character and special interest of The Old Rectory.

UPDATES AND AMMENDMENTS – PROPOSED GENERAL WORKS CONT.



Figures 14 and 15. Modern replica sash windows (to be replaced).

UPDATES AND AMMENDMENTS – PROPOSED GENERAL WORKS CONT.

6.5 The snug currently suffers from damp, most notably affecting the east and south internal walls, where moisture ingress is adversely impacting the historic stonework, evidenced by visible damp within the existing lime plaster above. The effects extend into the adjoining morning room, where moisture penetration has contributed to the complete failure of the original plaster finish to the adjacent east wall. This condition is further exacerbated by the presence of an inappropriate impermeable tanking system, which restricts the natural movement and evaporation of moisture through the traditional masonry and, if retained, will contribute to the continued deterioration of the historic fabric.

6.6 The existing tanking will therefore be carefully removed and replaced with a vapour-permeable lime-based compound, finished with an appropriate lime plaster to maintain the traditional character and appearance of the existing surfaces. This approach will reinstate a compatible and permeable finish, allowing the historic masonry to better manage moisture whilst safeguarding the underlying fabric.

6.7 The works represent a clear conservation benefit, addressing an existing source of deterioration through the use of materials compatible with the traditional construction of the building. They will enhance the material condition and long-term integrity of the historic stonework and are therefore considered to result in a positive impact upon the significance and special architectural and historic interest of The Old Rectory.

6.8 Other amendments to the scheme concerning the ground floor snug include confirmation that the parquet floor in the room will be retained and simply covered with an engineered oak floor.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The amended scheme responds positively to the Conservation Officer's comments and guidance, resulting in a refined approach that reduces the extent of intervention and associated impacts upon the architectural and historic significance of The Old Rectory. The Applicants' approach remains fundamentally heritage-led, with the retention, conservation and enhancement of historic fabric and character central to the proposals, alongside securing the building in a materially and structurally sound condition for its long-term conservation.

7.2 The proposals deliver wider public benefits by securing the continued maintenance and viable occupation of an important historic building within its established setting, including its historic relationship with the formerly associated church and its contribution to the wider historic character and townscape of Mere. Ensuring that The Old Rectory remains a functional and attractive family home will encourage continued investment and stewardship, safeguarding its significance for future generations.

7.3 The scheme incorporates sensitive measures to improve environmental performance, including roof-mounted solar photovoltaic panels, improved thermal efficiency and reduced reliance upon the public electricity network. Locating the solar panels at roof level avoids the need for a ground-mounted installation within the historic garden, allowing the continued cultivation of gardens, trees and other planting which contribute positively to the verdant setting of the house, support local biodiversity and provide opportunities for carbon sequestration.

7.4 These measures demonstrate how sensitive adaptation can support the long-term conservation of a listed building whilst responding to contemporary requirements for sustainable and energy-efficient living. Maintaining The Old Rectory as a desirable, practical and efficient home will help secure its continued viable use and reduce the potential for future deterioration or obsolescence. Taken as a whole, the amended scheme represents a considered and conservation-led approach. Any residual harm is limited and localised, amounting to less than substantial harm at the lower end of the scale, and is outweighed by the conservation, functional, environmental and wider public benefits secured by the proposals. The scheme will therefore preserve, and in several respects enhance, the significance and special architectural and historic interest of The Old Rectory, whilst sustaining its positive contribution to the historic environment of Mere.