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SOUTH WRAXALL **South Wraxall Manor** Pilates Studio

Design and Access Statement



Project No 1084

July 2026

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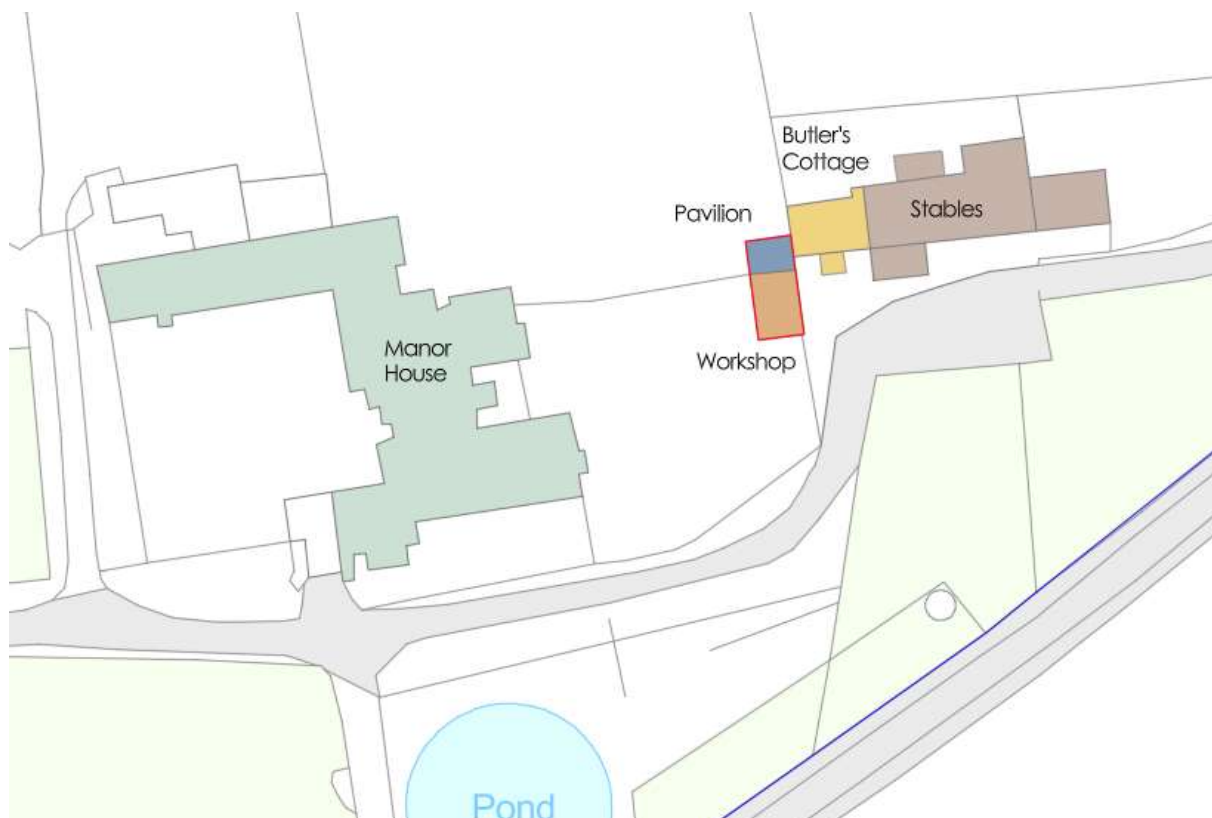


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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This document forms part of a planning and listed building consent application to Wiltshire Council for alterations to an existing outbuilding to provide a Pilates Studio, self-contained sauna and changing facilities for use by the householder.
- 1.2. To be read in conjunction with the following documents:
 - i. Existing & proposed drawings
 - ii. Historic Development of the Outbuildings – report by benjamin + beauchamp architects
 - iii. Archaeological report prepared by Michael Heaton in 2002 in association with works to the main house
 - iv. 2no. ecological reports by Greena Ecology
- 1.3. The existing buildings to be altered include:
 - i. Workshop: this building dates from the mid/late C20, constructed of rubble stone walls incorporating borrowed historic elements of dressed stone, artificial stone slate roof incorporating a rooflight.
 - ii. Pavilion: this dates from the C19, constructed of rubble stone walls, natural stone slate roof. It is currently used from storage and incorporates electrical switch gear.



2. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

- 2.1. South Wraxall Manor is a 15th century manor house of national historic significance. The manor house is a palimpsest of layered Medieval, Elizabethan and Jacobean fabric and prior to its sale in 1966 it was continuously owned by the same family for 500 years. Further description of the history of the manor house is given in the appended Historic Development of the Outbuildings report.
- 2.2. The manor house is Listed Grade I, and the grouping of ancillary buildings 25m to its west are curtilage Listed.
- 2.3. The workshop and pavilion are later structures, and their progression on site is described in the appended Historic Development of the Outbuildings report.
- 2.4. The site lies within the Lower & South Wraxall Conservation Area and is described in the 1981 appraisal document.
- 2.5. Listing Description:

Listed Building

Grade:

I

List Entry Number:

1021853

Date first listed:

13-Nov-1962

List Entry Name & Statutory Address 1:

SOUTH WRAXALL MANOR, WITH GARDEN WALL TO SOUTH

GV I

Manor house. Early C15 for Long family, altered late C16 and C17, c1700 and restored c1900 by A.C. Martin for E. Richardson Cox. Random rubble stone, stone slate roof with stone stacks. Plan: 4-bay hall with screens passage on east side of courtyard, services now to north range with gatehouse to south. Single-storey with attic, 8-window hall range has 2-storey porch to right with moulded Tudor-arched opening with hoodmould, diagonal buttresses, 2-light Perpendicular window over and to left side, cornice with gargoyles to parapet, hall to left has 2-light Perpendicular window, large gabled stack, square bay with 3-light Perpendicular window to ground floor and square-headed window with tracery over, moulded cornice with gargoyles to parapet, late C16 gabled addition to left has two mullioned casements to cellar, large 8-light mullioned and transomed window to main floor and 3-light mullioned casement to attic, another gabled bay to left has 4-light mullioned and transomed window with 3-light attic mullioned casement, saddleback coping. To right of hall is gable end of former services with C17 mullioned casements, gatehouse range projecting to right has lateral stack, 2-light mullioned casements with cusped arched lights and one 3-light mullioned casement to first floor, early C20 elliptical archway to right, gabled dormer with 2-light mullioned casement. Throughway below gatehouse has blocked doorway and winding stairs to upper floor, south side of this range has C20 double panelled doors to gabled gatehouse, hoodmould with lozenge terminals over elliptical archway, C15 oriel window with cusped lights over, diagonal buttresses, projection on east side for stairs, early C20 square bay with mullioned casement to right. South side of former service range has buttresses with offsets, C17 three-light and 2-light mullioned casements, one pointed window with Y tracery to ground floor, rear has early C20 added 2-storey corridor with formerly open 4-bay loggia to ground floor, studded timber-framed first floor with Ionic pilasters, wood mullioned casements. Rear of hall range has square stair turret with 4-light cross window with cusped arched lights, 3-light Perpendicular window either side and square light to first floor, wing projecting to right has 12-pane sashes in moulded architraves, round-arched half-glazed door to north side and large 8-light mullioned and transomed window with hipped roof to right (lighting rear of dining room). North range has Tudor-arched doorway left of centre, blocked pointed doorway and planked door to right,

lateral stack, 2-light mullioned casements with cusped arched lights and hoodmoulds, projecting stair turret to left. Left return of north range has 3-light mullioned casements with arched lights to ground and first floors, rear has C20 door to right part, now offices, 2-light mullioned casement with cusped lights to left, first floor has inserted C20 steel casement and mullioned casement, early C20 parallel kitchen range attached to left has hipped roof and mullioned casements, range continues to left with closed 2-bay loggia and 4-light mullioned and transomed casement to first floor over and to east gable end, gable end has open 4-bay loggia on Tuscan columns to ground floor. Interior: Hall has "original 4-bay open roof; arch-braced collar trusses, on carved wooden animal corbels, cusped panels between principals and purlins, stone fireplace dated 1598 with strapwork overmantel, square surround, late C16 richly-carved wooden screen at lower end has arched openings, Ionic pilasters, gallery over. Late C16 passage and stair turret to rear of hall; Perpendicular windows and buttresses retained on former external wall, C18 stairs with turned balusters and ramped handrail. Dining room at upper end of hall, former solar, added by Walter Long late C16; very fine barrel-vaulted plaster ceiling with thin ribs and pendants, extravagantly carved stone fireplace with caryatids and figures in niches with square surround, full wainscot panelling with pilasters, unusual stone canted projection opposite fireplace with three shell-headed niches. North east wing drawing room has fine late C16 stone fireplace with Ionic columns, two strapwork cartouches to overmantel with Latin inscriptions, full fielded panelling, shell-headed niche to right of fireplace, bedroom over has large stone fireplace with two tiers of coupled columns, overmantel with cartouches. South east wing has 7-bay arch-braced collar truss roof with wind braced purlins, so-called Raleigh Room on first floor with linenfold panelling and Tudor-arched fireplace, stairs to this wing from screens passage are C18 with three turned or barley-twist balusters per tread, moulded ramped handrail. Good joinery throughout; C16 moulded doorcases and wainscot doors, some C18 panelled doors in moulded architraves. Rubble stone walls with saddleback coping and two moulded Tudor-arched doorways, enclosing west side of courtyard and continuing to gate piers at south entrance (q.v.). Robert Long owned the Manor here in 1433; this building may be a C15 rebuilding of the Manor on a new site, Manor Farmhouse (q.v.) possibly representing the C14 manor house. Robert Long was M.P. for Wiltshire in mid C15, the Long family held the property until early C20. (Country Life, March 26, 1904; January 14, 1905; N. Pevsner, The Buildings of England, Wiltshire, 1975)

Listing NGR: ST8331265463

Sources

Books and journals

Pevsner, N, The Buildings of England: Wiltshire, (1975)

'Country Life' in 14 January, (1905)

'Country Life' in 26 March, (1904)

3. PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

- 3.1. Pre-application advice was sought from Wiltshire Council in January 2026, and a detailed report was returned by Andrew Thomas. Its observations and suggestions were used in the preparation of this application, in particular:
- i. The proposed roof lantern was judged to be potentially harmful and advice to reconsider breaking the roofline of the workshop was considered. The lantern was revised to a glazed dormer to the eastern slope of the roof, to minimise its impact on the manor house. The lantern was viewed as an anachronistic introduction; a catslide dormer is a more historically appropriate form for a gabled roof of its type.
 - ii. The site was noted as being within the consultation zone for the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC, with surveys for Greater Horseshoe bats (and also Great Crested Newts) required. These were carried out and their results are detailed below (see 6 Ecology).

4. PROPOSALS

4.1. Proposals comprise the following:

- i. Conversion of the workshop into a Pilates studio with associated washroom.
- ii. The insertion of a self-contained sauna within the pavilion.
- iii. Alterations to internal and external openings.

2.3. Proposed alterations to the fabric include:

- i. Workshop: It is proposed to re-roof the workshop (currently of artificial stone slates) using natural stone slates, remove the existing rooflight and to insert a glazed dormer facing east, away from the manor house.
- ii. Workshop: Relocating the access door to the western elevation and reconfiguring window to the south elevation.
- iii. Pavilion: Removal of existing boarded panel and insertion of new door leaf and frame in boarded oak, re-using the existing stone doorcase surround.
- iv. Pavilion: Removal of existing blind window panel and replacement with new sash window
- v. Pavilion: incorporation of a self-contained sauna which will be free standing
- vi. Landscaping: alterations to ground levels and provision of stepped accesses to the workshop and pavilion to suit lowered internal floor levels.

5. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1. Elements of heritage significance with potential to be impacted by proposals are identified as:

- i. Manor house: although materially unaffected by proposals, the character and setting of the heritage asset should be carefully safeguarded. The house and grounds carry nationally significant aesthetic, historic and evidential heritage value.

Significance: Very high.

- ii. Workshop & pavilion: The pavilion is recorded in the appended archaeological report as assumed contemporaneous with the stables, built by 1656 and much modified. No evidence is given to support this, and the pavilion is not shown on the 1841 tithe map. It's possible an earlier structure was built here in conjunction with the main house & walled gardens and later rebuilt, or that the structure is indeed early and was missed off the tithe map in error. In either case the appreciable fabric to the pavilion is C19, which would accord with recorded site-wide alterations (including extensive work to the stables) in the latter half of C19.

The stables & Butler's Cottage carry evidential value by virtue of their clearly defined purposes as ancillary to the operation of a manor house, supported by evidence of their chronology in the house's written record. Neither the use nor the age of the pavilion is clear, and so its evidential and historical value is hampered.

Significance: Medium

As the workshop dates from the 1970s, its evidential and historic value is low, but elements of building fabric elsewhere can be retained to preserve and enhance its aesthetic value.

Significance: low

- iii. Butler's Cottage & Stables: as Listed curtilage structures which contribute to the narrative of the manor house's history and offer information about life through changing areas, whilst adapted and modified during the C20 their historic and evidential value is moderately high. Modified in 1860 with good quality materials, they also carry aesthetic value.
- iv. Significance: high.

5.2. Impact of proposals are considered to be:

- i. Manor house: proposals look to alter a later building on site, and external alterations are minimal and sympathetic in nature. The proposed dormer faces east, away from the manor house, and the aspect of the workshop from the manor house is materially improved by replacement of the roof in natural stone slate. The new opening to the west of the building modifies an elevation from the 1970s and is entirely screened by established gardens. Conservation of the pavilion and replacement of the fenestration, which is in poor repair, also contributes to the value of the site as a whole.

Similarly, changes to the landscaping scheme look to reverse the introduction of unsympathetic elements (e.g. informal "crazy paving" area outside workshop laid at level above internal floor level). Renewal of these areas to new levels in high quality stone with new stepped accesses would represent an overall benefit to the setting of the heritage asset.

Overall, the impact on the house is of benefit to the character and setting of the heritage asset.

Impact: benign.

- ii. Workshop & pavilion: The pavilion is currently unused and its dilapidated door and false boarded window are currently negatively impacting its overall value and condition. Replacing with traditionally detailed units in timber would be an overall improvement. Internally, the sauna is to be a standalone unit which leaves the interior ceiling unaltered. Lowering the later inserted floor and blockwork will be beneficial with careful structural consideration. The stopped access will face north to the gardens and will be detailed in high quality materials; its impact is neutral. Overall, utilising the structure will safeguard its condition.

Impact: benign.

The east and south walls of the workshop are of 1970s construction and its quoins and window are re-used from elsewhere. The relocation of openings and replacement units in timber with traditional detailing would be of overall neutral impact to its aesthetic value.

The replacement of the artificial stone slate roof covering with natural stone is of overall benefit. Relocating the door to the eastern façade creates a sense of place

with the terrace and re-connects the lavender bed to the path back to the manor house.

Proposals looks to introduce a glazed catslide dormer to the eastern slope of the gabled roof. The spring height of the vaulted ceiling is quite low (under two metres), and the dormer introduces increased height to the space, which is more appropriate to its new use as a Pilates studio. The glazed roof also provides natural light and replaces a rooflight which is in poor condition. The north wall adjoins the pavilion, and generally the low eaves and higher ground level mean there is little opportunity for fenestration to the east and west elevations. The dormer affords the space natural light without introducing further openings to the elevations.

The replacement of the rooflight with a glazed dormer introduces a significant new element which has the potential to be of harm to the building. This has been mitigated by the use of sympathetic materials of high quality (timber, lead, patent glazing) detailed appropriately for an ancillary structure on the estate (see early C20 glazed canopy to the stables block immediately to the east). As the proposals provide a structure of modern construction required to facilitate its new use, the harm is seen to be justified.

Impact: less than substantial harm/justified.

- iii. Butler's Cottage & Stables: The buildings and materially unaffected by proposals, but the western elevation forms a boundary with the frontage of the stables and contribute to the character of the courtyard. The western elevation of the workshop is largely unaltered save for the addition of the new dormer. The dormer has potential to introduce less than substantial harm to the character of the grouping. Ancillary buildings record a snapshot of the way a manor house is used through different eras and, as their form is often adapted to follow changing functions, often reflect changing habits of the household. Thus, provided the new form uses sympathetic materials and detailing to preserve the character of the grouping, its introduction is justified within the ancillary area of the grounds.

Impact: less than substantial harm/justified.

6. ECOLOGY

- 6.1. The site lies within the consultation zone for the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC. Surveys were conducted by Greena Ecology (see appended report) which found that no Greater Horseshoe bats are using the site and work can continue under a Low Impact License.
- 6.2. DNA testing was carried out to the large pond on site to check for Great Crested Newts, and no evidence was found. Please see appended report by Greena Ecology.

7. ACCESS

- 7.1. Pedestrian access to the workshop is currently via a door on the southern elevation; this is to be relocated to the western elevation with new steps to the lowered ground floor level. **The existing opening to the north elevation of the pavilion is to be retained at a lower level, with new external steps to suit.**
- 7.2. Vehicle access is unchanged by these proposals.

8. SUMMARY

- 8.1. These proposals seek to make alterations to re-purpose a relatively modest modern building of low heritage significance and a pavilion building of heritage significance which is currently unused and in need of urgent repair and re-purposing.
- 8.2. External alterations are largely limited to the roof of the Workshop with an insertion of a dormer and replacement of poor-quality reconstituted stone tiles with natural stone slate.
- 8.3. External alterations to pavilion are principally limited to removal of existing poor quality joinery elements and their replacement with new, traditionally detailed.
- 8.4. Other alterations will include introduction of external land drainage, repairs to the roof and repointing of masonry to reduce water ingress.
- 8.5. Internal alterations include the removal of a modern, concrete slab to the workshop and lowering of floor level here to provide increased headroom. Other alterations include the introduction of internal finishes of high quality.

9. PHOTOGRAPHS



Workshop from the stable yard, re-used elements of dressed stone set within rubble masonry. Pavilion can be seen behind to the right.



Workshop from the south, re-used sash window, concrete slab introduced to raise floor level can be clearly seen at the door threshold.



Pavilion from the garden - false window is actually painted board.



Pavilion, boarded opening which internally has a threshold considerably higher than floor level, is to be replaced by to be replaced by an additional window, cement pointing removed and masonry re-pointed with lime work. **Threshold to doorway to be lowered to allow use as door, plinth to be re-set at lower level, dressed stone surround to be extended.**



Workshop interior, modern construction, concrete floor slab to be removed to increase headroom.



Pavilion interior, window open (left) door opening (right) to be reinstated to include new joinery.



Pavilion: sauna insertion to be self-contained. The existing boarded ceiling to remain unaltered.



View towards outbuildings from manor house; intervisibility is monthly shielded by mature gardens.