



**Historic Building
Advisory Service**

Historic Building Heritage Assessment

**Melbourne House, The Nursery,
Devizes, Wiltshire.**



August 2026

Reference: 251006A

**MELBOURNE HOUSE
THE NURSERY
DEVIZES
WILTSHIRE**

Historic Building Heritage Impact Assessment

Prepared on behalf of

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MELBOURNE HOUSE THE NURSERY DEVIZES WILTSHIRE

Historic Building Heritage Impact Assessment

Summary



Fig: Melbourne House from the southwest

The Historic Building Advisory Service was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Wrench to undertake an historic building assessment of works to and around a building known as Melbourne House, The Nursery, Devizes, Wiltshire. These works are mostly to kitchen on the east side where this will involve a re-ordering of that area, together with a raising of the roof and the introduction of new roof lanterns and widening the opening to the dining room.

Other work will be to form a new cloakroom on the ground floor to the original block and the door to the study is to be widened. Across the west elevation of the two storey modern east side wing the modern windows of a style to that of a sash with central vertical glazing bars. Externally is the proposed erection of a garage in the northwest corner of the gardens in a similar to where a two story annexe has previously been approved.

The assessment was undertaken by means of a visual appraisal and analysis of the building and its setting to determine the extent that the proposed work likely to have on its historic character and / or significance. This includes both fabric and plan of the building, as well as external appearance and other adjacent heritage assets.

A survey of readily accessible documentary and other sources was undertaken to understand the general development of the location. This assessment aims to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

This building dates to the mid 19th C as part of a development probably undertaken by a local speculative housing developer, when it may have been a commercial nursery, when considered with associated land to the east. It was then extended in the second half of the 19th C to become a house of improved status, which was accomplished by demolishing an adjacent cottage to make a formal drive from Bath Road to the north. In more recent decades since the mid 20th C it has been an hotel as well as Council offices and a children's home, but has now reverted to being a private house.



Fig: Melbourne House from the southeast

The internal works to the building, being both to the toilet and kitchen, will mostly only involve the loss of modern material, where this was originally undertaken in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The results will be improved and restored historic open spaces within the original part of the house as well as a larger and more efficient and effective kitchen and associated living space with an improved connection to the dining room. It is only that latter aspect, together with the widening of the door from the hall to the study that will result in a small loss of historic fabric. There will not be any detrimental impact on the historic character or significance of the house.

The change of window type to the west elevation of the east side wing will replace large single pane tilt and turn windows with traditional pattern vertical sliding sashes. This will produce an appearance that is more in keeping with the fenestration of the main house.

Externally a garage is proposed to be erected on a different orientation to a two storey annexe of a similar footprint, but of lower ridge height that has already been approved in that general position. That would suggest that as the concept has already been accepted then the change will have a largely neutral impact on the historic character or significance of the house.

The site inspection was carried out in 16 December, 2025.

MELBOURNE HOUSE THE NURSERY DEVIZES WILTSHIRE

Historic Building Heritage Impact Assessment

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 The Historic Building Advisory Service was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Wrench to undertake an historic building assessment of works to and around a building known as Melbourne House, The Nursery, Devizes, Wiltshire.
- 1.1.2 The examination of the building was undertaken generally within the guidelines of good surveying and building archaeology practice. The purpose of the survey was to undertake an assessment of the historic nature and character of the building that is presently used as dwelling and how it may be affected by the proposed work. This was undertaken by means of a visual and physical assessment and analysis of the building to understand its means of construction as well as the way it has been altered and adapted over time.

1.2 Survey Content

- 1.2.1 The aim of this report is to produce an overall impression of the property and its setting at the time of the inspection. This was undertaken by a visual examination of the elements that make up this facility to identify the means of construction, analyse its construction, and assess its historic significance and what historic character remains.
- 1.2.2 Voids, cupboards, closed spaces, etc. were inspected where these were relevant and ready access could be gained. Areas that we were requested or prevented from entering by the owner / occupant of the facility were also not inspected. Similar considerations apply to surfaces with directly applied coverings such as wall panelling or heavy coverings, fully fitted or stuck down carpets and other sheet floor coverings. In all these cases the general 'feel' of the building has been taken into account to whether there was any historic fabric concealed or there is a need for a further more detailed inspection or opening up of the structure that will involve the client in additional cost.

- 1.2.3 Readily accessible documentary sources were reviewed in an attempt to create an established time and ownership line for the relevant parts of the site and buildings. The results of this research were then applied to the findings from the site survey in an attempt to show the development of the relevant part of the site.
- 1.2.4 This assessment has been compiled in line with good practice to meet the requirements of NPPF.

1.3 Survey Information

- Premises inspected: Melbourne House
- Location: The Nursery,
Devizes,
Wiltshire.
- Client: Mr & Mrs Wrench
- Property Occupant: Mr & Mrs Wrench
- Current Use: Dwelling
- Reason For Inspection: Historic building impact assessment
- Inspection By: R J Hill MRICS, MCIfA
- Inspection Date: 16 December, 2025
- Listed Building? Grade II
- Registered Park / Garden No
- Scheduled Monument No
- Conservation Area? No
- National Landscape / Park? No

2 GENERAL

2.1 Location



Fig 2.1.2: Melbourne House from Bath Road

- 2.1.1 The Nursery is a length of street to the northwest side of Devizes town centre, where it is part of the A361, which is a busy road as it is the main feeder road in to the town from the west and northwest. This is in a largely residential area with some commercial activity in the vicinity.
- 2.1.2 Melbourne House is positioned on the south side of the road where it is behind a street frontage of mostly terrace houses and is approached by means of a drive between two of these blocks before passing through a pair of modern wrought iron gates. The plot is of a form that is often referred to as a backland development and is an almost stylised leaf shaped on plan, being straight on the north side and at the north ends of the east and west sides, before that come to a blunt point to the south, with the drive forming the stem on the north side.
- 2.1.3 Flanking the drive on either side on the west is Farleigh Place, terrace of two storey houses of a style dating to the early to mid 19th C. Those on the east would seem to be of a more mid 19th C, are built of brick and are known as Melbourne Place. Then to the east of the main part of the site is a small backland estate of modern houses of the late 20th C called Melbourne Mews. Beyond the south

boundary the ground drops steeply away where this is north side of the Kennet and Avon canal is in a cutting. On the west of the main part of the site there is what is effectively a sunken lane running down to what is known as Sussex Wharf and is now a residential home.



Fig 2.1.4: Melbourne House from Melbourne Mews

- 2.1.4 The west wall to Melbourn Mews is the east side of the present kitchen of the house and this continues to the south and away from which the south two storey wing is spaced by approximately 1.0 – 1.2 m. When Melbourne House is viewed from the east, much of that side of the house, as well the kitchen roof is screened from public view by a large brick built garage block that has a slate covered pitched gable ended roof.

2.2 Description

- 2.2.1 The house lies on an approximately southeast to northwest axis, however for the purposes of this consideration of the building we will refer to the main elevation to the garden as being the south. Other orientation is based on that with the kitchen being on the east side and the approach drive coming in on the north of the west side.
- 2.2.2 On the plot Melbourne House is positioned against and forming part of the north boundary to the east side of the drive and into the northeast corner of the site, with the main elevation facing approximately to the south. On plan the main historical block is approximately square with a single storey side addition on the east and west sides and a forward projecting porch on the south side. There is a single

storey link block, the present kitchen, that runs along the east boundary wall and connects to a two storey block that projects to the south along that side.



Fig: 2.2.1: Melbourne House from the northwest

- 2.2.3 Projecting out and up through the ridge of the roof to the main part of the house is a raised structure, that could be considered as either a cupola or a lantern. This has a stair access to it from the second floor, is timber framed, octagonal in shape and with windows on all sides apart against the top of the stairs on the west side.
- 2.2.4 On entering the site, the drive terminates on the southwest corner of the house with a gravelled parking area to the west and turning space to front of the house (south), which extends to the two storey wing on the east side. The remainder of the site is set to lawns with what would appear to be an octagonal mid 19th C brick built summer house being positioned in the southeast corner against the boundaries in that position.

3 EXISTING EXTERNAL INSPECTION

3.1 Roof



Fig 3.1: Main roof

- 3.1.1 The roof to the main part of the house is a hip structure covered in natural slates, with the ridge and hips all dressed over in lead.
- 3.1.2 Projecting up through the ridge is an octagonal cupola that is capped by an octagonal lead covered roof with lead rolls on the hips. Below that is painted timber glazing and the sides are dressed in lead as well as the housing to the stair housing on the west side.
- 3.1.3 The single storey east and west side wings are mono pitch structures leaning against the sides of the house and covered with natural slates, with lead dressings to the hips and lead flashings in the abutments to the main house walls at the top.
- 3.1.4 Over the north hip to the west side roof is a bay window with a similar styled slated hipped with lead hips.
- 3.1.5 On the east side of the house there is a shallow slate covered mono pitch roof along the side of the main extension and another across the north boundary wall that were probably over coal and similar sheds associated with the domestic part of the house. There is lead valley gutter between these on the northwest intersection and modern conservation style roof lights set into the roof slopes.
- 3.1.6 Over the link block long the east side, between the single story roofs and the east boundary wall, is a flat roof finished with bituminous felt and similar upstands to the side wall and the north end of the two storey modern wing. Set into this is a small fixed light roof lantern.



Fig 3.14: East side flat roof over existing kitchen

- 3.1.7 The roof to the two storey block is covered with natural slate to a gable ended structure, where the verge are pointed.
- 3.1.8 Over the front porch is a flat roof that appears to be of behind a low surrounding up stand wall and is covered in lead sheet. There is a small lead upstand to the main wall to house and surround walls.

3.2 Chimneys

- 3.2.1 Against the north boundary wall on the east side of the house and projecting up through the north roof slope over the kitchen are the remains of a brick chimneystack. This was originally of two flues, but now only one, which is fitted with an asbestos cement ventilator type terminal to the top. This has lead flashings to the roof and upstand wall.
- 3.2.2 Both the chimneys to the main house are similar, with one on the east and west hip slopes, where these are slightly off centre. These are built of Bath stone and each contains four flues, but are evidently modern rebuilds as they have modern lead trays inserted in to them, as well as modern lead flashings to the roof

coverings. They are both surmounted by clay flue terminals, some of which have rook guards fitted.

3.3 Eaves and Rainwater Goods

- 3.3.1 To the main house these have wide painted timber soffits and painted timber fascia boards that support half round section uPVC guttering, which empty into to circular section uPVC downpipes that run down to below ground level. All the soffits have modern ventilator grilles set within in, presumably to allow for cross flow ventilation within the roof space.



Fig 3.3: Eaves to main house

- 3.3.2 To the east and west single storey additions, the eaves structure consists of a moulded stone cornice running around the head of the walls, which support a painted timber fascia board. To this is fixed half round section uPVC gutters to the underside of the slate drip and which connect to the main roof downpipes.
- 3.3.3 The two storey modern block has painted timber fascia boards and soffits, supporting half round section uPVC guttering and downpipes.
- 3.3.4 The single storey flat roof link block addition has a painted timber fascia board effectively fixed to the head of the wall, supporting half round section uPVC guttering and downpipes.

- 3.3.5 The flat roof to the porch drains to a hopper head at the northeast corner in to the head of a cast iron downpipe, which then runs down to below ground.

3.4 External Walls

- 3.4.1 The east wall is of brickwork that has been painted, which sits into Bath stone quoins on the southeast corner and is apparently of solid construction, approximately a brick and a half thick. Where the brickwork is exposed below the painted coating, adjacent to the northeast corner, this is a purple/red brick and this is all laid in Flemish bond with a neat pointed joint. At second floor level the windows have cambered header brick arches over them and Bath stone sills, whilst, the first floor windows have concrete lintels and pre-cast concrete sills.



Fig 3.4: South elevation

- 3.4.2 Over the first floor north window where there is a large timber lintel built in over it and below there can be seen where this was a large opening that has been bricked-up with brickwork of a type and size that would suggest a dating to the late part of the 20th C. This window was evidently a bay type structure with a hipped roof over the top as indicated by marks on the wall surface, which would correspond to the surviving and matching bay window in a relative position on the west elevation.

- 3.4.3 The window to the east elevation first floor south has been altered and reduced in width, particularly on the left hand side and the head over this has been adjusted so it is now a modern precast concrete lintel and out of character with the house. This window may previously have been change to form part of a fire escape route from the building by past users of the property.
- 3.4.4 Around the second floor south window there has been alteration, particularly below the sill and also the left hand side where this has been rebuilt, in brickwork much as that to the former first floor bay window. Below and to the left of this window that are stains and marks on the brickwork, indicating where there a fire escape staircase ran down from the window above. This was supported on gallows brackets, as suggested by marks on the brickwork where it would have run down to ground level by the southeast corner of the main part of the house.
- 3.4.5 The main south elevation is face with Bath stone with narrow joints to produce an Ashlar appearance with string lines running across it at first and second floor window sill levels and which have been cut out to allow for those to be positioned. The upper floor window heads are deep stone lintels with timber sills, but those to the ground floor have and stone heads and cills. The form and style of the ground floor windows could suggest that these have been remodelled at a later date, possibly when the side extensions and / or porch were added.



Fig 3.4.6: West side wing

- 3.4.6 The fronts of the side wings, and the exposed west side, are of a slightly different stone to the central front elevation, as can be suggested by the quality and colouring to the material to them. Both side elevations appear to have been butted to the earlier core building as seen by the lack of keying-in, particularly on the west side where there has been some slight movement in the junction. The jointing in the stonework is slightly courser than that to the main elevation and it is also marked out by the greater degree of weathering and disruption of the surfaces that has occurred. At the head of these walls is a cornice below the roof drip, which in style and form is alien to that to the main house, as it is too decorative.
- 3.4.7 To the front of the side wings the window heads are semi-circular and have a noticeably different lintel arrangement to the main front. Along the west side the window heads are flat with square cut ends instead of splayed as over the front openings. At the north end of the west side the window cill has been cut down to form a set of French doors with concrete steps down to ground level and where the original window sill stubs can be seen on either side of the opening.
- 3.4.8 The upper part of the west wall has been coated with modern hard cement type render applied in large bays to the upper and lower sections and with the centre section evidently having been recently re-rendered as suggested by the difference in mortar type. This finish has been scribed to resemble ashlar stonework with a coloured mortar rubbed into the more original joints, as can be seen in the high level section. The whole of the bay window on this side has been completely re-rendered in a plainer cement type finish of a slightly different colour and texture.



Fig 3.4.9: Rear (north) elevation

- 3.4.9 The rear wall of the main part of the house is of painted brickwork, much as that on the east side, laid in Flemish bond. Within this towards the west side at first floor level, there is a brick arch that would suggest there is a blocked up window in that position. The other windows in this elevation towards the centre and east side wall, all appeared to be later and rather crudely insertions with a mixture of flat and slightly cambered arches or timber lintels over them.
- 3.4.10 From what could be seen of the rear wall to the kitchen, where this extends up above the tops of sheds and outhouses built against it in the back of the properties to Melbourne Place, which faces on to The Nursery, is in brickwork. It has a rendered brick capping and appears to be in Flemish bond built with a mixture of brick types and would suggest that it was a boundary wall that has been much altered and adapted over time.



Fig 3.4.10: Rear (north) wall to kitchen

- 3.4.11 Walls to the two storey rear wing are of cavity construction, built with an orange / red faced clay brick, laid in stretcher bond with roll lock cambered arches over the tops of the window openings formed in a somewhat crude nature. There is a damp proof course (DPC) built in at approximately internal ground floor level. On

the south end of this, is a single storey extension in the same brick, although the upper section appears to have been raised, possibly to form a parapet wall supporting metal railings to the balcony at that level.



Fig 3.4.11: Two storey rear wing

- 3.4.12 The walls to the link block between the kitchen and the two storey rear wing are constructed as that latter part.
- 3.4.13 The front porch is all in Bath stone with semi circular headed windows to each side and opening to the front, which is flanked with a moulded plain pilaster on each side and key stone to the centre of the door arch. There is moulded cornice band around the upper section and then a heavier cornice at the top. From the overall style of construction, this would also appear to be generally butted to the front elevation as an adaptation to the original façade, suggesting a date to the late 19th C by its style. The outer opening has a recess around it, that would have taken a frame for a set of shelter doors opening into the porch.

3.5 External Windows

- 3.5.1 Those on the upper storey on the east side all appear to be modern replacement eight over eight pattern small pane single glazed vertical sliding sashes.
- 3.5.2 Those to the front of the main block of the house are of mixed types of single glazed vertical sliding sashes. The second floor windows are three-over-three windows, which appear to be late 20th C reproductions as evidenced by the horns to the windows and the quality and size of the glazing bars. Larger three-over-three paned windows are fitted to the first floor, where some of these are

replacements, such as that on the west side and possibly to the centre, whilst the east side window appears to contain some historic glass. In all cases the outer panes are slightly narrower than the central panes.



Fig 3.5.2: South elevation windows

- 3.5.3 Those to the front of the main block of the house are of mixed types of single glazed vertical sliding sashes. The second floor windows are three-over-three windows, which appear to be late 20th C reproductions as evidenced by the horns to the windows and the quality of the glazing bars. Larger three-over-three paned windows are fitted to the first floor, where some of these are replacements, such as that on the west side and possibly to the centre, whilst the east side window appears to contain some historic glass. In all cases the outer panes are slightly narrower than the central panes.
- 3.5.4 The ground floor windows to the main part are tripartite vertical sash windows with timber mullions on each side of large plate glass one over one central sashes and one-over-one plate glass sash side lights on each side. The format of these windows would suggest that were adaptations dating to the late 19th C.

- 3.5.5 The windows to the front of the single storey sections are round headed plate glass vertical sliding sashes of one over one pattern and of a style of joinery typical of the mid – late 19th C.
- 3.5.6 On the north elevation, the windows are single glazed with first floor east window being a modern reproduction unit as a flush frame timber casement, with a three pane fixed light beside that and a two pane casement to the upper floor.
- 3.5.7 All the windows around the two storey southern block are all modern standard joinery double glazed windows, with the majority being top hung casements, although the centre ground floor is a top hung casement with side hung casements to this.
- 3.5.8 The porch has fixed round headed direct glazed coloured lights on either side
- 3.5.9 Closing off the south side of the kitchen to the single storey link block, is a modern full height double glazed timber frame screen containing casements to the upper section and fully glazed to floor level.

3.6 External Doors

- 3.6.1 The door to the two storey addition is a modern standard joinery Carolina pattern style of door of four panels and a glazed semi-circular head. This hung in a modern painted timber frame.
- 3.6.2 To the south end of the two storey block, there are modern double glazed French doors with double glazed side panels

4 EXISTING INTERNAL INSPECTION

4.1 Cellar

- 4.1.1 Access to this is at the north end of the house, adjacent to the external wall, where a set of brick steps with timber nosing's run down from the first floor to the lower level.



Fig 4.1: Cellar

- 4.1.2 This comprises multiple areas and levels below the ground floor under and to the west side of the central ground floor entrance hall with a section extending to the external wall of the west wing, where on the north side there appears to be a blocked up access to the floor above and also a closed up window on the west side. This is section is under the main part of the house where modern steel beams have been inserted in a central position running front to back. There are other beams that pick-up the ground floor against the north wall, with additional support taken over the head of the stairs.
- 4.1.3 Through this area the floor is all in traditional brickwork laid flat.

- 4.1.4 The walls all of brickwork with paint finish, although there are sections of more modern work towards the base, possibly where these have been stabilised using late 20th C concrete blockwork.
- 4.1.5 The door at the head of the stairs to the cellar is a modern timber four panel fire door fitted with intumescent stripping.

4.2 Entrance Hall



Fig 4.2: Entrance hall

- 4.2.1 This extends from the front door, though the centre of the original part of the house to the rear, where it then turns across the back of the house to the kitchen lobby at the east end.
- 4.2.2 Most of this area has a floor of suspended timber construction over the cellar below, where this is covered with stone tiles. The floor across the back part is of solid structure with tile coverings as that to the front part.
- 4.2.3 The walls to the dining room side to the front part of the hall are all of solid construction and those to the sitting room side are apparently of lath and plaster construction, but may be lath and plaster lining to solid construction. In the rear

part of the hall, the wall to the rear sitting room is of modern hollow construction, as is that to the cellar enclosure and the ground floor cloakroom. To the base of the walls is painted timber torus profile skirting boards and with a modern ogee profile dado rail running the upper section.

- 4.2.4 On the wall to the back of the dining room fireplace is a large closed-up fire opening with painted stone surround of a type typical of kitchen usage. To the left hand side of this fireplace is now a cupboard with modern partitioning surrounding it and a closed up door opening leading through into what is now the dining room.



Fig 4.2.4: Rear section of hall

- 4.2.5 At the east end the rear part of the hall the wall to the kitchen is a modern lightweight structure.
- 4.2.6 The ceiling is a flat soffit with ogee profile cornice running from the front and towards the back, where it finishes against the wall to the kitchen and also to the ground floor cloakroom. As this also then finishes to modern partition wall to the head of the stairs, it can be considered as modern installation.
- 4.2.7 All the doors within the rear part are modern fire doors of various types, being either flush face or with glazing panels. That to the sitting west room is a four panel door with glass in the upper section, with more traditional four panel doors

elsewhere in the area. Even when these are of more historic types that have been fitted intumescent stripping and show where modern ironmongery has been fitted.

- 4.2.8 Running up from the hall are a set of timber stairs to the first floor with a timber panel spandrel wall to the base enclosing a small cupboard behind it under the stairs.

4.3 Sitting Room



Fig 4.3: Sitting room

- 4.3.1 The main part of this room is within what can be considered to be the original core block of the house and is connected to the section within the west side extension with an opening cut through the side wall.
- 4.3.2 The floor is of suspended timber construction covered with fitted carpets.
- 4.3.3 The walls are of solid construction apart from that to the entrance hall as noted previously, with painted timber torus profile skirting boards to the base.
- 4.3.4 Running up the wall to the ground floor north room is a chimneybreast with white marble fire surround and mantle shelf around a brick fire opening over a modern ceramic tile hearth. Within the opening is a small modern wood burning stove.

- 4.3.5 The ceiling is a flat soffit with decorative vine leaf pattern decoration of a late 19th C style coving to the perimeter. This extends in to and around the part within west side extension, so giving an indicative dating as to when the room was restyled.
- 4.3.6 The inner face of the main windows are panelled around with timber shutters fitted to those on the south side, but on the west window these appear to have been lost.

4.4 Dining Room



Fig 4.4: Dining room

- 4.4.1 The floor is of suspended timber construction covered with fitted carpets.
- 4.4.2 The walls are all of solid construction with painted timber torus pattern skirting boards to the base.
- 4.4.3 A chimneybreast runs up the wall to the rear part of the hall and is fitted with a grey marble fire surround and is generally as that described for the sitting room.
- 4.4.4 The ceiling is a flat soffit, possibly of lath and plaster construction with cornice to the perimeter that has floret pattern applied decoration.

- 4.4.5 There are radiused reveals to the door opening from this area into the kitchen and an applied timber threshold within the opening with a rise of approximately 75 mm.
- 4.4.6 To the right hand side of the fireplace in the section into the east single storey addition is a cupboard, with modern fire door fitted to the front.

4.5 Study



Fig 4.5: Study

- 4.5.1 This has suspended timber floor with a board width that is typical of the mid - late 19th C. Within the single storey west extension the boards run the in a different direction to the original part, showing this part is a later addition.
- 4.5.2 The walls are apparently of modern hollow construction to the interior as well as internal cupboards, hollow lined to the north side, and then solid to the external west and internal firebreast. A picture rail runs round the room just below ceiling level.
- 4.5.3 A chimney breast runs up the wall to the sitting room and in the base of which is a fire opening, with concrete hearth, brick interior and moulded stone surround and mantel shelf over it.

- 4.5.4 To the left hand side of the firebreast is a small narrow cupboard formed and a larger safe cupboard in the left hand side.
- 4.5.5 There are shutters fitted to the window opening to the upper part, where this has been adapted to form French doors.
- 4.5.6 The ceiling itself is a flat soffit, probably of lath and plaster.

4.6 Ground Floor Cloakroom



Fig 4.6: Ground floor cloakroom

- 4.6.1 This has evidently been formed as a disabled toilet in recent times, as intimated by door size, internal width and fittings within it.
- 4.6.2 The floor is of solid construction covered with modern vinyl non-slip sheet flooring.
- 4.6.3 The walls are all of modern hollow construction or modern hollow lined to the exterior.
- 4.6.4 The ceiling is a flat soffit of plasterboard.
- 4.6.5 Sanitary fittings comprise; DDA compliant low level WC suite, low level hand rinse basin and a modern extractor fan to the external air.

4.7 Rear Kitchen Lobby

- 4.7.1 The floor is of solid construction covered with fitted vinyl non-slip flooring.
- 4.7.2 The walls all the way round are either of modern hollow construction or with modern hollow lining to solid structure.
- 4.7.3 Running up the north wall is apparently a boxed pier and over the head of which is a boxed beam running on a line which would approximate to the external main wall of the house.
- 4.7.4 The ceiling is a flat soffit in three levels, including that below the raised roof over the east side single storey wing, in to which is a modern conservation style roof light.
- 4.7.5 Opening off this room is a modern flush fire door with glazed panel within it , to the kitchen.

4.8 Kitchen



Fig 4.8: Kitchen

- 4.8.1 The floor is a solid construction covered with diagonally set large format quarry tiles of a modern type.
- 4.8.2 The walls to the link block are part solid and part hollow construction, where it would appear that the doorway to the link position has been altered or the opening reduced in size to what it is now. In the base of the north wall there is the remains of a fire opening and chimney breast behind the kitchen units.
- 4.8.3 In an approximately central positing is a brick pier that carries a boxed beam under the bottom of the former east side outhouse roof, with a return to the side of the house at the north end. Another boxed beam spans across the room at the north end in a position approximately to the bottom of the former north side outhouse roof slope.
- 4.8.4 The ceilings under the east and north side roofs are skelings finished with plasterboard or similar. The east side ceiling under the side roof is a flat soffit of plasterboard or similar.
- 4.8.5 All the kitchen units are all modern standard units.

4.9 Link Corridor to Two Storey Rear Wing



Fig 4.9: Link corridor

- 4.9.1 This is within the modern addition associated with the building of the two storey rear wing.
- 4.9.2 The floor is of solid construction where the surface shows patterning of where walls have been removed between the kitchen and base of the stairs. It would suggest that there were previously cupboards along the east wall.
- 4.9.3 The door between this area and the kitchen is a modern fire door.
- 4.9.4 The walls are of solid construction with modern torus profile skirting boards.
- 4.9.5 The ceiling is a flat soffit with down lighters fitted within it under the flat link roof.
- 4.9.6 Leading off this area is a flight of stairs to the first floor of the modern wing and a glazed four panel door to the ground floor of the modern block and to the exterior.



Fig 4.10: Main stairs to first floor

4.10 Main Stairs from Ground to First Floor

- 4.10.1 These are a timber structure that rise as a straight flight for their full length.
- 4.10.2 Their style would appear to be mid 19th C by the stair trim, turned baluster pattern to the timber balustrade on the open side under a timber handrail. This runs between a turned newel at the base and then a swept handrail at first floor.
- 4.10.3 The wall where it rises through the stairwell is of traditional construction and the ceiling over it is the underside of the staircase from first to second floor.

4.11 First Floor Landing



Fig 4.11: First floor landing

- 4.11.1 The floor is a suspended timber structure covered with timber boards.

- 4.11.2 The walls are all of solid construction at the front end and then lath and plaster towards the rear.
- 4.11.3 The ceiling is a flat and even soffit, possibly of plasterboard.
- 4.11.4 Leading off this area to the bathroom is a modern four panel door and the other door openings have no doors fitted owing to renovation works.

4.12 First Floor Southwest Bedroom



Fig 4.12: First floor southwest bedroom

- 4.12.1 The floor is a suspended timber construction covered with fully fitted carpets.
- 4.12.2 The walls are of solid to the exterior and to the front, landing and to the back with some areas of lath and plaster of a traditional nature.
- 4.12.3 The ceiling is a flat soffit with a simple moulded cornice to the perimeter. This includes being wrapped around the head of the wardrobes to the side of the fireplace, which runs up the north wall indicating that this is all a modern installation.
- 4.12.4 The balustrade to the stairwell is similar to that to the stairs from the ground floor to this level. There has been some adaptation to this at the newel to the bottom of the stairs to the second floor.

4.13 First Floor Southeast Bedroom



Fig 4.13: First floor southeast bedroom

- 4.13.1 The floor is a suspended timber structure covered with carpets.
- 4.13.2 The walls are of solid construction, including a chimneybreast running up the north wall. This has a cupboard formed in the recess on the left hand side with modern four panel door to the front.
- 4.13.3 The ceiling is a flat and even soffit of lath and plaster, with no cornice to the perimeter.
- 4.13.4 Leading off this room is a modern four panel door to the en-suite.

4.14 First Floor Southeast Bedroom En-suite

- 4.14.1 The floor is a suspended timber structure covered with large format ceramic tiles.
- 4.14.2 The walls are either of traditional solid construction, and where these are to the interior are of modern hollow construction where these are to the interior of the building.
- 4.14.3 The ceiling is a flat and even soffit with down lighters fitted within it.



Fig 4.14: First floor southeast bedroom en-suite

- 4.14.4 Sanitary fittings comprise; modern acrylic claw foot bath, low level WC suite with cistern duct and ceramic wash basins over a vanity unit base.



Fig 4.15: First floor northwest bedroom

4.15 First Floor Northwest Bedroom

- 4.15.1 The floor is a suspended timber structure with softwood boarding of a size and type typical of the mid to late 19th C, where this changes as it goes into the bay window, suggesting that this is a later addition.
- 4.15.2 The walls are of solid construction with painted plaster finish and plain timber skirting boards to the base. Running up the wall to the first floor southwest bedroom is a chimneybreast with no opening in the base.
- 4.15.3 The ceiling is a flat and even soffit of lath and plaster.



Fig 4.16: First floor bathroom

4.16 First Floor Bathroom

- 4.16.1 The floor is a suspended timber structure covered with modern simulated timber plank boarding.
- 4.16.2 The walls are of solid construction to the exterior, modern hollow partitioning to the interior and traditional lath and plaster to the first floor northwest bedroom. The lower parts of the walls are finished with dado boarding.
- 4.16.3 The ceiling is a flat soffit, most probably of lath and plaster with down lighters fitted within it.
- 4.16.4 Sanitary fittings comprise; low level WC suite with cistern in duct, pedestal wash basin and shower with glass enclosure.

4.17 Stairs from First to Second Floor



Fig 4.17: Stairs from first to second floor

- 4.17.1 In terms of general construction these are as noted for those from the ground to first floor, but the external string is plainer and is more typical of those to a service stair.
- 4.17.2 The handrail to the balustrade is of a modern replacement, where there has been changed from the lower newel and a different pattern of balusters.
- 4.17.3 The walls where they rise through this are generally as that described on the floor below.
- 4.17.4 The ceiling is a continuation of the landing above.

4.18 Second Floor Landing

- 4.18.1 In general terms this is as that described for the first floor landing and about which, similar comments apply. The floor boarding is of softwood of possibly late 19th C or early 20th C, possibly being replacement.



Fig 4.18: Second floor landing

- 4.18.2 The walls are of solid construction to the exterior and hollow construction to the interior, possibly with some modern facings to these all the way through. On the

east side is a blocked up doorway to the southeast second floor bedroom where there was previously two smaller rooms

- 4.18.3 At the south end the ceiling has a slight section of skeling, where this is on the eaves of the main roof, and is flat to the reminder of the area.
- 4.18.4 The open side of the stairwell is guarded by a balustrade similar to that from the stairs from the first floor.

4.19 Second Floor Southwest Bedroom

- 4.19.1 This has a suspended timber floor covered with fitted carpet.
- 4.19.2 The walls are of solid construction to the exterior and hollow construction to the interior with simple painted torus skirting board to the base.
- 4.19.3 Running up the wall to the second floor northwest bedroom is a chimneybreast with no fire opening from what we could ascertain. To the right hand side of that is a door opening to a cupboard to the understairs space to the cupola and on the left hand side a door opening into the second floor northwest room.
- 4.19.4 The ceiling is a flat soffit with skeling to the perimeter on the south and west sides and in the southwest corner hip rafter projects down through this.



Fig 4.19: Second floor southwest bedroom



Fig 4.20: Second floor southeast bedroom

4.20 Second Floor Southeast Bedroom

- 4.20.1 Generally this is as that described for the second floor southwest room in terms of construction, although with no cupboards to the sides of the firebreast on the north wall.
- 4.20.2 In the east wall, to the right hand side of the east window, there is some slight disruption seen in the plaster finish to the wall in that position, that could indicate where there may have been a dividing wall across the room in that position, corresponding with the blocked up doorway to the landing in the opposite wall. This would have then been the escape stairs window from this level, as noted externally.

4.21 Second Floor Northwest Bedroom

- 4.21.1 Apart from the lack of carpet to this room, it is generally as that described for the second floor southwest room, although it also extends across the north end of the landing, where there are dividing walls of both modern hollow and early 20th C hollow construction.
- 4.21.2 Projecting down through the ceiling to this area, is the underside of a truss rafter on the alignment of the wall to the side of the stairs to the cupola. There is also

the underside of a timber beam in the ceiling on the approximate line of the side wall to the stairs, where this runs across into the north skelling.



Fig 4.21: Second floor bathroom



Fig 4.22: Second floor northeast bedroom

4.22 Second Floor Northeast Bedroom

- 4.22.1 This is effectively the same as that to the second floor southwest bedroom in terms of walls, floor and ceiling.
- 4.22.2 Dropping down on the skelining on the north side is the underside of a truss rafter, similar to that noted within the northwest bedroom ceiling.
- 4.22.3 Running up the wall to second floor southeast bedroom is a chimneybreast with no fire opening in the base.

4.23 Stairs from Second Floor to Cupola



Fig 4.23: Stairs to cupola

- 4.23.1 These are effectively ladder stairs with a set of winders or tapers steps at the top as they turn to the interior of the cupola. It is in two sections, which show how these have been altered and realigned, with a change of pitch angle between the lower and the upper parts. The lower section would have continued out further onto the second floor landing than presently. This is also indicated by the pitch of the handrail on one side, which has been adapted and would correspond to the change of wall construction noted around the landing and the second floor northwest bedroom.
- 4.23.2 The walls where these rise to the cupola are as that noted for the floor below.
- 4.23.3 There is a panel door with glazing in the upper section closing off the cupola from the top of the stair.
- 4.23.4 Adjacent to the head of the stairs there is an access hatch into the roof space to the main part of the house.
- 4.23.5 The ceiling over this area is of lath and plaster, where this rises up through the adjoining roof space and the underside of the external housing.

4.24 Cupola



Fig 4.24: Cupola interior

- 4.24.1 The floor is a suspended timber structure covered with parquet type timber boarding.
- 4.24.2 The walls are timber panelled all the way around, apparently of plywood or similar, with timber battens covering the joints to the lower part. The upper part is a series of single glazed windows all the way round apart from to the stairs access.
- 4.24.3 The ceiling is a vaulted timber structure, where this rises to a central drop pendant with the rafters exposed supporting sarking boarding above that and to the lead work.

4.25 Main Roof Space



Fig 4.25: Roof space

- 4.25.1 This is a fairly simple structure, being primarily a purlin type roof based around the main hips and the two principal chimneystacks project up through it, where the base of these are all in brickwork of a colour and type noted on the east side. The rafters span up from the eaves over the purlins to the hips and the ridge board at the top, where they intersect.
- 4.25.2 The underside of the roof coverings are lined with what appears to be a breathable type sarking felt suggesting it has been stripped and re-slatted within the last 30 – 40 years, although, into this additional ventilator tiles have also been inserted. There is then mineral wool insulation quilt over the ceilings to the second floor.

4.26 East and West Side Single Storey Extension Roof Spaces

4.26.1 No access was available to these areas.

5 DESK TOP STUDY

5.1 Map Study

- 5.1.1 There is a fairly small scale road map of Wiltshire produced by Andrews and Dury and published in 1773, which shows some ancillary detail, although more to a representative standard than purporting any accuracy. In that respect, in the area of Melbourne House, there are some properties shown against the edge of the road and what could be the lane leading to what is Sussex Wharf. It would appear that there was no significant development behind the street at that time.
- 5.1.2 There is a general map of Devizes produced at a small scale in 1832 by R K Dawson, which shows the town boundaries and roads in general terms. However, much as with the Andres & Dury map, this is not of a suitable scale of sufficient detail to show all but the most notable buildings behind the road frontage.

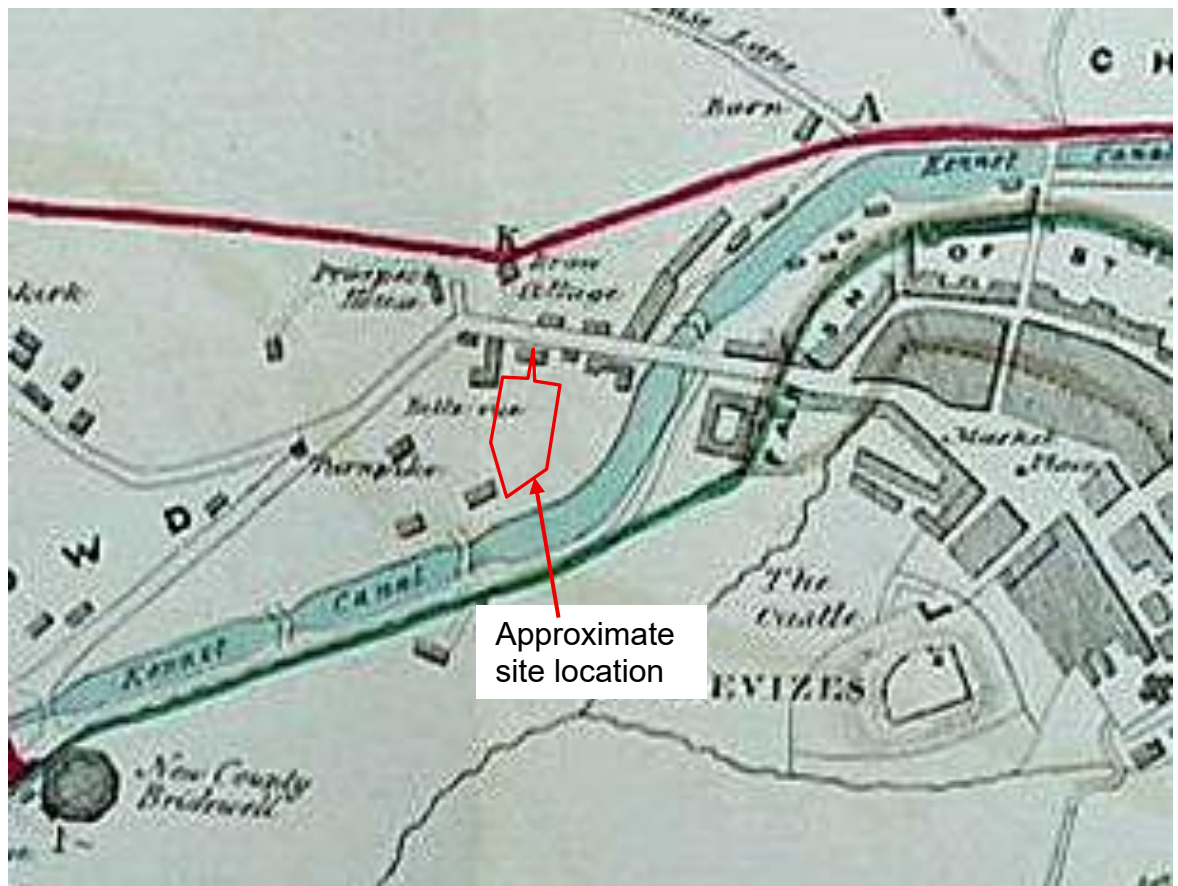


Fig 5.1.2: Extract from map by RK Dawson 1832

- 5.1.3 The first large scale map, although not produced with total accuracy is the 1840s Tithe Map, which was intended to show land that was subject to the payment of tithes to the church with accompanying site areas and liability. The style of plotting is slightly representative in terms of buildings and structures, although with sufficient detail to show boundaries with degree of accuracy.



Fig 5.1.3: Tith map extract

- 5.1.4 On the Tithe Map Melbourne Place against the road to the front is shown with some accuracy, as is Farleigh Place to the west of that. However, the main item of note is that there is only a narrow path between the two front terraces and Melbourne House, whose main access is from the east, over land that now forms Melbourne Mews (plot 755), which was and still is accessed from the main road by a lane running back on the west side of the former Artichoke Inn (754). On that side there appears to be yard associated with this house with a number of buildings along what is now the east boundary of this site.
- 5.1.5 At the time of the Tithe Map, what is now Melbourne House (plot 756) is shown as a very square building much as the shape of the present core of the property. The northwest corner of the house is shown in line with the east side of the path from the road. An internal boundary then ran from the southwest corner of the house as a straight line to the south boundary to the canal. What is now the west side of the garden is shown as a separate piece of ground (772).

- 5.1.6 To the rear of the house, along the east boundary towards the south end, the Tithe map shows a long building that abuts to a similar structure on the opposite side. Domestic properties on the map are shaded pink, whilst this is grey and which usually indicates the use is commercial or industrial, where in this situation it could be stabling or similar associated with the property.
- 5.1.7 The appearance of this house, as well as the naming of the terrace to the front, would correspond with the second time that Lord Melbourne was prime minister. He was a reforming politician as well as being a favourite and mentor to the young Queen Victoria when she ascended to the throne.

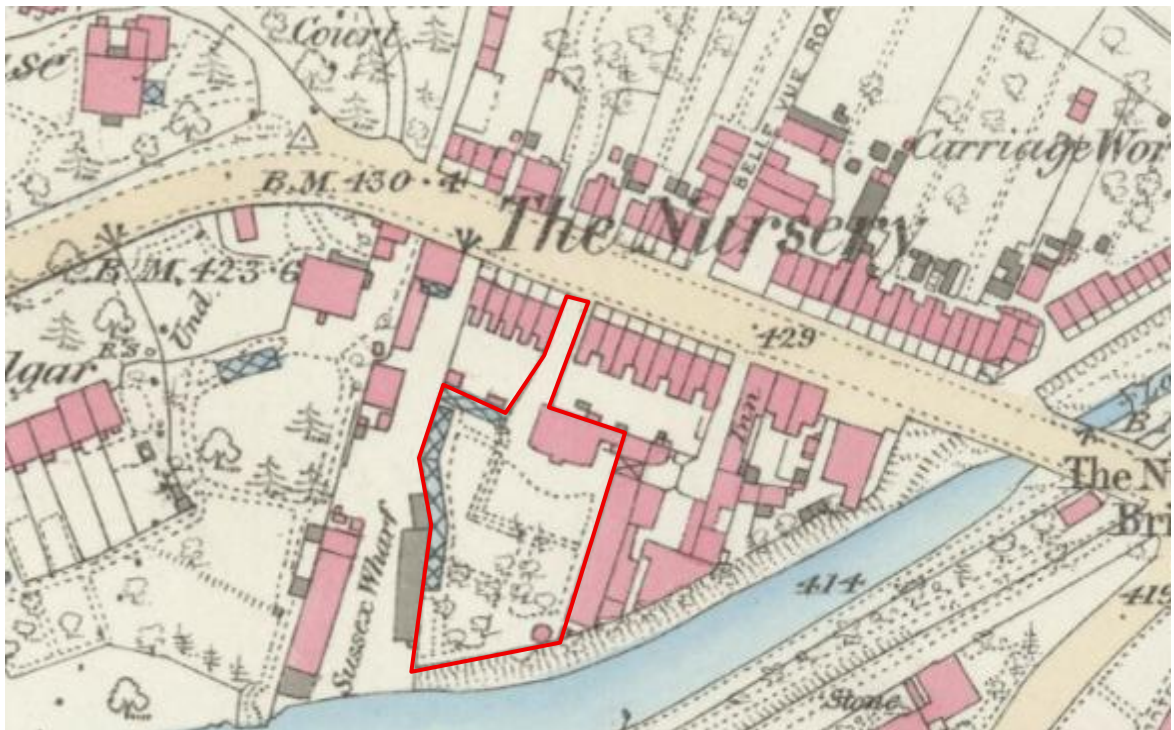


Fig 5.1.7: OS 1861-2500 map extract

- 5.1.8 It is the Ordnance Survey (OS) town map of 1861, at a scale of 1 – 500, which first shows this site in real detail, when it was called Melbourne Villa. This was at a larger scale than the 25" to the mile scale map published the same year and showed more detail, but not all the site was included in the mapping. By that time the east and west single storey side wings had been added, together with the addition along the east side north wall to the back of Melbourne Place. The main and secondary side additions are noticeable by the change in the proportion of the house when compared to how it is seen on the Tithe map and its relationship to the adjacent property boundaries.

- 5.1.9 The garden to the south and west had by then extended to cover the area as it does now and the summer house has been built in the southeast corner. The access drive on the west side of the house from the road has been formed by widening the former footpath, which necessitated the removal of the east end cottage to Farleigh Place. This was probably intended to be to create a more formal entrance from the road to the front (south) side of the house and to demarcate it from what seems to have by then to have become a 'trade' entrance from the yard east side.
- 5.1.10 On the east side of Melbourne Villa in 1886 there was an arched entrance on the east side to some form of commercial yard on the other side, which was still accessed from the lane beside the Artichoke. The long building seen on the Tithe map to the southeast as being within the grounds of the house is now outside, where its back (west) wall is now the east side of the garden, so creating a more distinct pleasure garden for the property. There are also two long ranges of greenhouses shown along the northwest and west sides of the garden.



Fig 5.1.10: OS 1886 25" scale map extract

- 5.1.11 Subsequent editions of the OS 25" to the mile scale maps, published in 1900 and 1923, show the house and plot much as it was on the 1886 version. During this period the house does not have any name given to it on the maps.

- 5.1.12 In the post World War II period the OS changed the format and scale of their larger scale maps to 1- 2500, as well as the method of presentation to accompany a complete re-survey of the country. With this re-survey the 1970s edition showed that the greenhouses to the perimeter of the garden have disappeared and the site shape seems to be established as it is now seen, but with no arched access from the east side. The house is simply called Melbourne.
- 5.1.13 To the east side of the site the buildings on the yard are still seen in 1970 as they were seen on the earlier editions. However, the range along the east side of the plot and outside of the present plot, are named as Melbourne Cottages, but there are no obvious closed-up openings seen in the face of this wall into this garden to suggest it was connected to Melbourne House. At that time the present kitchen extension along the east side had not been added, nor the two storey extension along the east side of the plot to the southeast of the house.



Fig 5.1.11: OS 1970 1- 2500 scale map extract

5.2 Documentary Material

- 5.2.1 Cartographical evidence shows the whole area to the northwest of the town to have been a mass of gardens and orchards in the late 18th C. In particular a map of that time marks a belt of 'nurseries and gardens' running outside the then borough boundary from the site of the Assize Courts to Gains Lane. The area

seems large, but may be no more than was to be expected on the outskirts of a rather sophisticated town of this sort and where the soil is fertile. It was one of these areas that provided the name for this part of the town and this adjacent section of the Bath Road and is first called that in 1839.

- 5.2.2 A person who played an important role in the development of Devizes was Joseph Needham Tayler, a former naval captain, who after returning from the Napoleonic wars began developing land in and around the town after 1830. This included shops and houses, as well Trafalgar Place, which lies to the west of Melbourne Villa, in 1844. Other properties that can be ascribed to Tayler are Melbourne Place and Farleigh Place, which face on to Bath Road to the north of this house and were first called that in 1844. This was about when there is the first appearance of Melbourne Villa is on the Tithe map, corresponding with the development being undertaken by Tayler.
- 5.2.3 As to the exact development of this property and by whom there is no clear evidence. Similarly there is no subsequent detail documentary evidence about how the site has subsequently change until more recent years.



Fig 5.2.3: 1926 arial photograph of Melbourne House

- 5.2.4 There is an arial picture of Melbourne House that was taken in 1926 from the southwest, which shows it with the east and west side wings. The kitchen, as now seen, on the east side has not yet been built, but there is still a large covered archway in to the yard on that side as indicated on the 1923 and earlier OS maps. Around the ground an extensive range of large greenhouses can be seen, linking

this house to its potential nursery origins, and as also seen on mapping from an early age.

- 5.2.5 There is a high level vertical arial picture of this area of the town, but does not show this site with clarity. However, another picture taken in June 1967 shows the site in some detail, including a curving parking area to the south of the house. By that time the greenhouses along the west and north sides of the garden had been removed, but the building on the west side of boundary to Sussex Wharf are still there.



Fig 5.2.4: 1967 arial photograph of Melbourne House

- 5.2.6 By the mid 1970s Melbourne House was being used as a hotel, which was apparently very popular with guests as reported in the Gazette and Herald newspaper. Later Melbourne House was reported as becoming a psychiatric unit for the elderly.
- 5.2.7 In 2010 Wiltshire Council decide to buy Melbourne House for £850,000 so as to convert it into offices to be used by the Council's children's service. An annexe was built that was intended to provide temporary emergency accommodation for children and as an associated resource centre. Then after being declared redundant following expansion and refurbishment of the Trowbridge children's resource centre to provides increased family areas, the building was put up for sale, with offers sought in excess of £900,00 pounds.

6 LISTING

6.1 Official list entry

Heritage Category:	Listed Building
Grade:	II
List Entry Number:	1251770
Date first listed:	19-Sept-1972
List Entry Name:	Melbourne House
Statutory Address 1:	MELBOURNE HOUSE, THE NURSERY

6.2 Location

Statutory Address:	MELBOURNE HOUSE, THE NURSERY
District:	Wiltshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Devizes
National Grid Reference:	ST 99922 61698

6.3 Details

1. 1042 THE NURSERY

Melbourne House ST 9961 2/303

II

2. Set well back from street, the main front facing west. Access by a drive adjacent to Melbourne Terrace gv. Circa 1840. 3 storeys ashlar on projecting plinth. 1st and 2nd floor block sill courses. Hipped slate roof with overhanging eaves. In the centre of ridge a small octagonal stair light, on lead base, with 2 light casements. Ashlar chimney stacks at ridge ends with moulded stone capping. 3 windows, square on 2nd floor, recessed sashes, later glazing bars. 2 tripartite sash windows on ground floor, no glazing bars, block sills. Central ashlar porch, semi-circular arched entrance with keystone, flanked by thin Doric pilasters on pedestals, cornice and blocking course with moulded coping. Round headed side windows with marginal glazing. Recessed door of 1 light with marginal glazing and round headed centre pane and 2 flush panels below. Semi-circular fanlight. Stone architrave surround. Along sides of house single storey extensions, slightly recessed from front. Half hipped slate roofs with moulded eaves cornice. Round headed window to front and 2 windows to side.

Listing NGR: ST9992261698

6.4 Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: 434462

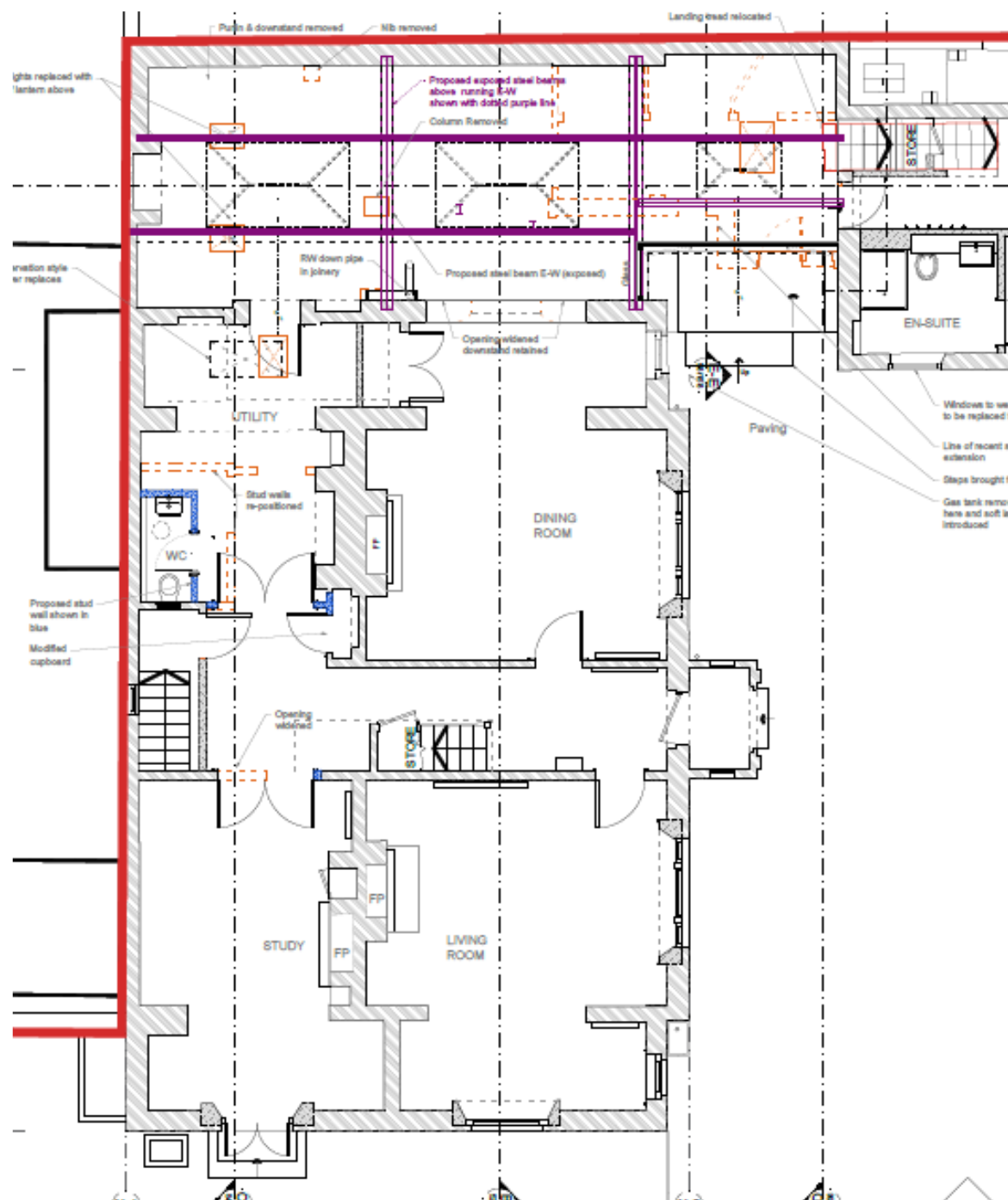
Legacy System: LBS

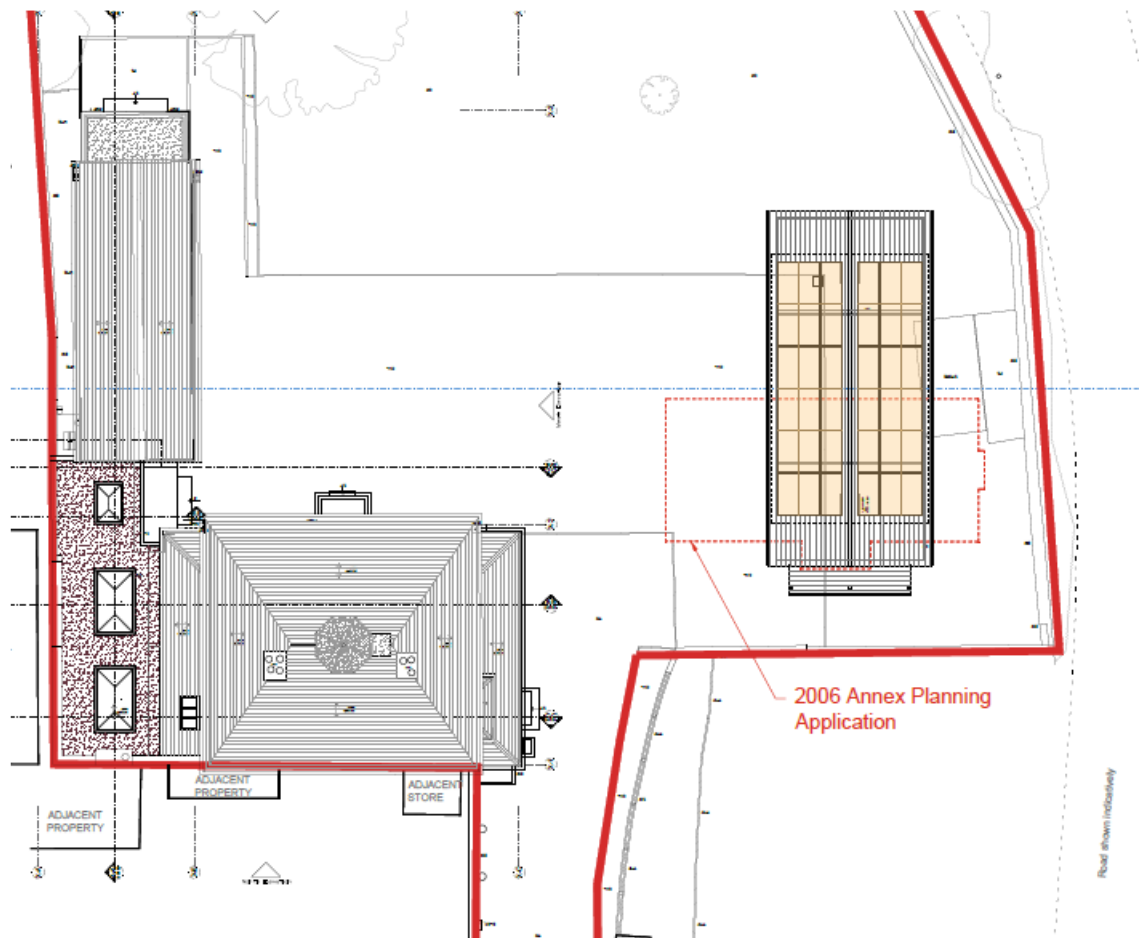
6.5 Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

End of official listing

7.1 Plan





Proposed garage position

7.2 Description of works

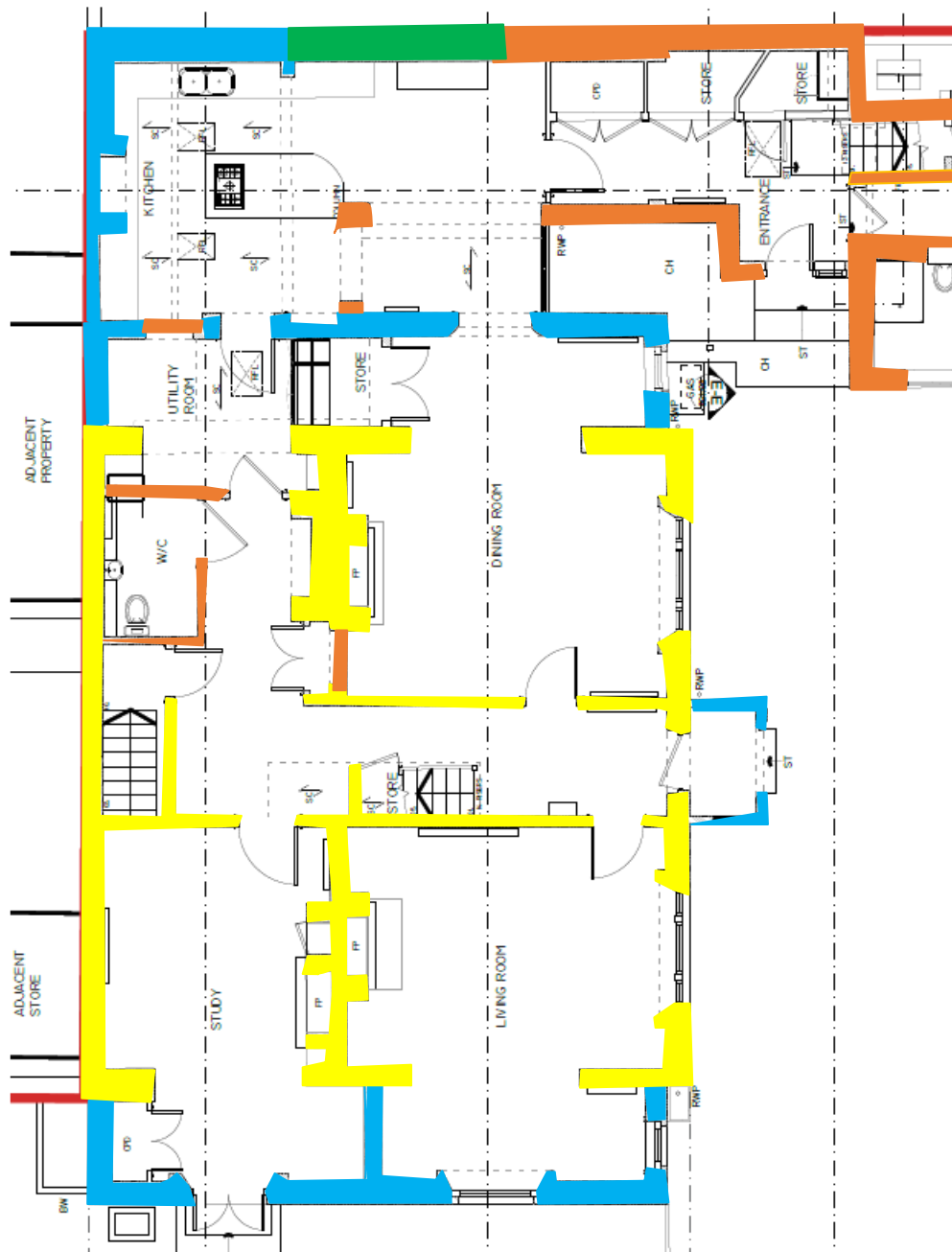
- 7.2.1 The proposals to the house primarily involves work to the ground floor, mostly to the kitchen at the east end, but with a smaller amount at the rear of the main part of the house and the change of window types to the modern two storey rear wing. The majority of this work will involve fabric that appears to date to the mid to late 20th C or where elements have been substantially altered in modern times.
- 7.2.2 At the rear of the original part of the house, beside the cellar stairs lobby, a cloakroom of a size to make it fully access for disabled person was formed when this used by the County Council. This is constructed as a lightweight structure as noted above and is to be replaced by a smaller enclosure to provide a ground floor cloakroom that is more appropriate for a family house. In doing so it will enable a larger utility room to formed with the removal of the wall forming the kitchen lobby

at the east of the this area. This will enable the provision of an appropriate level of facilities as could be expected by a modern family in a house of this size.

- 7.2.3 The kitchen area is a mixture of build phases, with the initial part being a small section at the north end that dates from the first quarter of the 20th C and is to be reordered and extended south to link it to the two storey extension block. A new flat roof will be formed over this space with roof lanterns set with the centre, where this will be within the set with the existing side walls at the north and east sides. Most of the fabric to be removed is modern, with the exception of the roof structure over what were the former sheds adjoining this part of the house and which were much modified by the Council's fairly recent alterations.
- 7.2.4 Internally, by restructuring the roof to span from side to side, it will enable a single uninterrupted space to be created, with removal of support columns and buttresses. To improve the internal space further and better link the new kitchen layout the existing doorway to the dining room is to be enlarged, which will result in the loss of a small amount of historic fabric.
- 7.2.5 The windows to the two storey rear extension are standard joinery storm proof large pane tilt and turn units, which in style and appearance are greatly at odds with the main house. The replacement windows will be vertical sliding sashes of a two over pattern so as to be more appropriate to this location and obviate the large areas of reflection experienced from the present form.
- 7.2.6 It is also intended to erect a timber framed garage of a car barn type to the south of the house. This is in a position adjacent and of a similar size to previously consented building of this type and positioned on an approximately north – south axis and away from the west and the northwest boundaries.
- 7.2.7 The garage is proposed to have a timber frame that will be clad with horizontal timber boarding with open bays to the centre on the east side. This is to have a gable ended pitched roof covered with natural slates to match that of the house as well as having photovoltaic panels set within the coverings.

8 HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

8.1 Building Construction



Phases

1830 – 40



1840 – 1885



Early 20th C



Late 20th / early 21st



- 8.1.1 The main core of the building is that part forming the central three storey block that apparently built in the second quarter of the 19th C as suggested by map evidence as well as the overall style and form of construction as still seen for that part. This appears to have primarily been accessed from a yard on the east side, now the small housing development on that side, with just a narrow path on the west from Bath Road and between the two terraces to the north.
- 8.1.2 The original block is of a fairly plain style that is not unusual for late neo Georgian style houses that can be seen across central and southwest Wiltshire. However, a rather peculiar feature is the roof lantern, which rather than being just a means of providing high level light to a central stair well is actually a view point. In many ways this could be considered as 'crows nest' look-out much as the developer, and former naval officer, Joseph Needham Tayler would have known them.
- 8.1.3 In the third quarter of the 19th C a single storey wing was added against both the east and west sides with a mono-pitch roof running up against the original house. There was also a small extension on the east side, against the north boundary wall possibly as a range of sheds, that was amalgamated into the present kitchen in recent times. At that time an oriel window was added at first floor level on the east and west sides at the north ends where these had slate covered hipped roofs. However, that on the east side was removed in the early 21st century, as suggested by the modern brickwork used to infill the opening with only the timber lintel it left exposed. Around this it can be seen where the brickwork to the wall space has been disturbed by the work.
- 8.1.4 With the second phase of the development to the house with the side extensions, the present drive from Bath Road was formed by widening the footpath, which entailed the demolition of what had been the east end cottage of Fairleigh Place. That was probably to allow this house to become a more distinct house of quality as can be suggested by how the grounds to south were laid-out as well as the range of large glasshouses along the west boundary. At the same time the entrance to the yard on the east has been reduced to a covered archway, to further reinforce this being a single high status residence.
- 8.1.5 The internal use and social segregation of the house following this enlargement can still be seen in the floor plan. The dining room, living room and study are largely in positions where they would be expected, with the front door and hall being reserved for the family and invited guests. The kitchen was at the back of the house, behind the dining room and to which it was connected by a dedicated door and also had the stairs to the cellar. Whilst there was a door from the kitchen to the end of the hall that would only have been for staff to answer the door to visitors or to service the upper floors. Tradesmen and staff would have used the east side arch from the yard to approach the backdoor, where there probably coal and other sheds along the east and north side of the service yard on that side.

- 8.1.6 At some time, possibly in the mid 20th, when this property was used as an hotel, an external metal fire escape and landings was added on to the east side of the building from a doorway in an enlarged window opening on the second floor. Evidence for this can still be seen as a scars and fixing positions on the wall face as well as differences in the brickwork used. It can also be seen where the first floor east side south window has also had its opening adjusted and may have also been some form of escape door. All this ironwork and adaption was probably removed in the early 21st century when the east side yard was roofed over and the south wing added.



Fig 8.1.6: Scar of removed fire escape stairs and top landing

- 8.1.7 Most of the work to form the present kitchen would appear to have been undertaken in the time when it was owned by Wiltshire Council, in conjunction with erection of the two storey accommodation wing along the east boundary. This involved alterations to the east side of the house and the opening-up and alteration of the sheds along the east and north sides.
- 8.1.8 With the late 20th C housing development to form Melbourne Mews, in the former east side yard, the buildings along the joint boundary wall on that side were

removed. It was probably at that time that the connecting opening was finally closed-up and the wall height on that side lowered to the height now seen along what is now the east side of the kitchen.

8.2 Historic Impact

- 8.2.1 In the rear part of the house the work is to reduce the size of the cloakroom as well as remove the former kitchen lobby and the widening of the door to the study, which is all formed in modern materials. The result will help restore a more original area of space to this room.
- 8.2.2 The present space now used as the kitchen is all a very modern construction, where the exception is the small remnant pitched roofs of the former sheds at the north side at the east end. Following the removal of the existing roof structure a new flat roof will be inserted over the area, which will include the former south extension entrance lobby to create a larger internal space. This will be set within the existing east and north perimeter walls, with just a slight re-capping to the part of that to Melbourne Mews to address the existing poor quality top.
- 8.2.3 This new roof will not be readily seen from a public viewpoint, apart from the very tops of some of the roof lights. In forming this new structure only a small amount of historic material in the form of the section of late 19th C shed roofs will be removed and those were much altered in the late 20th C kitchen formation.
- 8.2.4 Internally the altered space will not be interrupted by piers and columns and so form a far better pace for modern living. Enlarging the present opening between this space and the dining room will result in a small loss of historic fabric, but will enable a better level of movement through the ground floor of the house, although with a slight reduction in historic contextual space relationships.
- 8.2.5 The change of window format to the two storey south wing will remove late 20th C large pane storm proof casements and replace them with timber vertical sliding sashes within the existing openings. These will be of a format far more visually appropriate than the type presently installed.
- 8.2.6 To the west of the house it is proposed to erect a new timber framed and clad building to provide covered parking for the house as well as garden storage. This is on an area of what is presently open gravel surfaced parking and effectively in a position where planning approval has previously been given for a two storey annexe, which would have had a higher ridge than that proposed.
- 8.2.7 The proposed garage will be a simple shed like structure and set away from the house that it does not dominate it, while at the same time mirroring the wall in which the two storey wing runs-out from the main house along the east boundary. When looking in along the entrance drive it will not be readily visible, and then only the top of the gable above the adjacent boundary walls. By being end-on to

Fairleigh terrace it will not present such an amount of roof bulk to the views from the first floor rear windows of that terrace and it will be lower than the previously approved annexe.

8.3 Significance Considerations

- 8.3.1 Melbourne House is a listed building and while the listing recognises its national architectural and historic interest, the official list description does not normally set out what features are important, or to what degree and nor does it describe what elements play a neutral role, or detract from the building's significance. Understanding these aspects is essential in enabling informed decisions to be taken when proposing alterations to the building, so that its special interest can be conserved wherever possible. The purpose of this section is to provide a detailed assessment of significance, so that the effects of any proposed changes upon the listed building can be fully evaluated.
- 8.3.2 The following assessment of the building uses Historic England's Conservation Principles (2008), which provides tools for understanding the significance of the buildings and places in relation to the following values.
- 8.3.2.1 **Evidential** (or architectural) value – the physical aspects of a building that yield evidence about its past.
 - 8.3.2.2 **Historic** value – the extent to which the building is associated with or illustrative of the historic events or people.
 - 8.3.2.3 **Aesthetic** (architectural / artistic) value – which includes the importance of buildings or places for their design, visual, landscape and architectural qualities.
 - 8.3.2.4 **Communal** value – includes the importance of buildings or places to societies and communities, including the local identity.
- 8.3.3 This assessment draws upon the historical understanding set out above, and follows established conservation practice in using the following terms:
- 8.3.3.1 **Higher Significant** – original elements which make a notable contribution to the building's historical and architectural interest of the building.
 - 8.3.3.2 **Significant** – original elements which make a strong though secondary contribution to the building's special interest, or later additions which have notable historic or design value.
 - 8.3.3.3 **Lower significance** – this may include original elements where these are of very modest or greatly diminished value; more often it relates to non-original features which contribute to maintaining the overall building's architectural or historic interest (e.g. replacement windows which replicate the original design).

- 8.3.3.4 **Neutral or Detracting** – features which do not contribute positively to the historic and architectural interest of the building, and in some cases may even detract from an appreciation of its significance. This can include original fabric where it is of minimal special interest, and is located in an area that has undergone notable change.
- 8.3.4 These terms are used in a purely relative sense within the context of the house, and should not be taken as descriptions of the absolute significance of elements compared to those in other listed buildings.
- 8.3.4.1 For this statement, the significance of the different elements has been assessed as follows:
- 8.3.4.2 The exterior of the building has for the most part a higher significance in terms of evidential and historic values. It has lower communal value as a private house as in this location it is not readily seen from any publicly accessible position.
- 8.3.4.3 Within the front part of the interior of the front ground floor rooms are similarly of higher significance for the evidential and historic social values, while the rear rooms in the service part score lower given the level of alteration to the plan form. The modern kitchen wing has little social or historic interest.
- 8.3.5 The significance of the elements of the building that are affected by these proposals are highlighted below:
- 8.3.5.1 The restructuring of the ground floor cloakroom, the removal of the kitchen lobby and the widening of the study door will not result in any loss of historic fabric. The reduction in volume of the toilet and the removal of the end lobby will help restore the more original level of space to this part of the house. Therefore it can be considered to be a positive benefit for both the historic character or significance of this property, while the widening of the study door will be neutral.
- 8.3.5.2 The present kitchen is a somewhat poor arrangement with internal dividing walls and support piers, as well as large unusable cupboards, which is all of modern materials, apart from a small section of late 19th C shed roofs over part of it. On completion the roof will be a modern energy efficient structure, as well as one that will be in good order with fewer joints and intersections and so easier to maintain. It will not be visible from any public viewpoint, apart from the tops of some of the roof lanterns. Externally the changes will be neutral in terms of their impact on the historic character or significance of the property.
- 8.3.5.3 The resultant internal space, with an enlarged connection to the dining room, will be better for modern family living as well as provide a better and more intrinsic link to the south wing accommodation block. The result can be considered as being largely neutral or even slightly positive in terms of the

historic character or significance of this property and how it will enable the house to function in modern times, rather than a late 20th C mis-mash of spaces.

- 8.3.5.4 The change of window pattern to the south to storey wing can only be seen as a positive improvement with the insertion of traditional pattern vertical sliding sashes to replace bland late 20th C large pane glazing.
- 8.3.5.5 Forming a new garage in part of the garden to the west of the house will be of a form and type that is very similar to other garages and outbuildings that can be found in the area around this site. As consent has already been given for a new annexe building of a similar footprint, but with greater height, this erected in this general location it must have been considered appropriate for this position. In this re-orientated position the impact on the historic character or significance of this property can only be considered as being neutral.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1.1 Melbourne House has a core that dates to the second quarter of the 19th C and was possibly part of a range of housing developments that were undertaken by a retired naval officer who lived in Devizes. He was a person whose work spurred the extension of the town on the north side of the canal, when this was then part of a larger area used as a commercial nurseries.
- 9.1.2 This house was enlarged in the third quarter of the 19th C as well as other works being carried that included the demolition of an adjacent cottage to allow the creation of a more formal drive from the Bath Road at the north. The property seems to have remained as a private house through into the latter part of the 20th C before becoming an hotel and then offices in the 21st C before changing back to a house once more.
- 9.1.3 The change of size of the ground floor cloakroom as well as other small work in the same area will not result in any loss of any historic fabric, but will help improve the spatial character of that part of the house. Therefore this will be largely positive on the historic character and significance of this building.
- 9.1.4 The kitchen is presently a result of adaptations undertaken in the early 21st C when it was used as a home for children, when this was effectively of a commercial nature in character. The proposed changes will only result in a small amount of historic fabric loss, but will create a space that is far more suitable for a modern family housing and not be visible from the public domain. This will not have any detriment on the historic significance or character of the house.
- 9.1.5 Changing the window type and form to the two storey rear wing can only be considered as a positive improvement of the setting of the main historic block.
- 9.1.6 As previous approval has been given for the erection of a two storey annexe of a similar sized footprint, it can be considered that the impact of the setting of this house by a lower single storey garage block will be neutral.

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