

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Application No: PL/2026/01029
Retrospective Application for replacement/ modified/new/windows and doors, internal works to include new partitions, staircase, recovering of roof surfaces and associated works
Penleigh Farm, Fairwood Road, Dilton Marsh, Westbury, BA13 4EB

Please find following comments in respect of the above application(s).

Recommendations:

☐	No comment
☐	Support in principle subject to amendments to the scheme (as set out below)
☐	Support subject to conditions (as set out below)
☒	Object (for reasons set out below)
☐	No objections

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

National Policy and guidance: From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 (LBC) and 66 (PP) require that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving or listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the Council to pay **special attention** to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

Historic England's Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008) provides policy and guidance for the "sustainable management of the historic environment". Additional relevant guidance on the application of policies set out in the NPPF is contained within their publications:

- Historic Environment Good Practice Planning Advice Note 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015)
- Historic Environment Good Practice Planning Advice Note 3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets 2nd edition (2017)
- Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets (2025)

“The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3” (HE GPA3) which notes that “The importance [of setting] lies in what the setting contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance.”

Local Policy: The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that “designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance.” It is also required that distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced.

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

Proposal: The application is for retrospective consent for the replacement/ modified/new/windows and doors, internal works to include new partitions, staircase, recovering of roof surfaces and associated works. The basis of this application is following Enforcement action for unauthorised works.

The works include:

- External
 - Replacement of roof covering, including installing insulation
 - Rainwater goods
 - Partial rebuilding of walls (B01)
 - Removal of porch
 - Localised repointing
 - Some replacement of stone mullions
 - Restore/ replacement of windows and doors
 - Amendment of openings to create doors/ windows
- Internal
 - Drylining of the walls with an insulated plasterboard
 - Replacing joinery details (skirting board, architrave, etc)
 - Replacement of failed floor joists and floorboards
 - Change of layout, including staircase and adjustment of partition walls.

Relevant planning history: The property was subject to pre-application advice in 2013, which resulted in applications (PP & LBC) being submitted and approved in 2014 (14/05352/FULL & 14/50406/LBC). It is understood that the works commenced but were not completed. It is these consent that the new owners were deemed to be complying with. However, these consents had pre-commencement conditions which were not discharged, and the current works have deviated from the consent in terms of layout and details.

Issues: impact on the listed building, impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings.

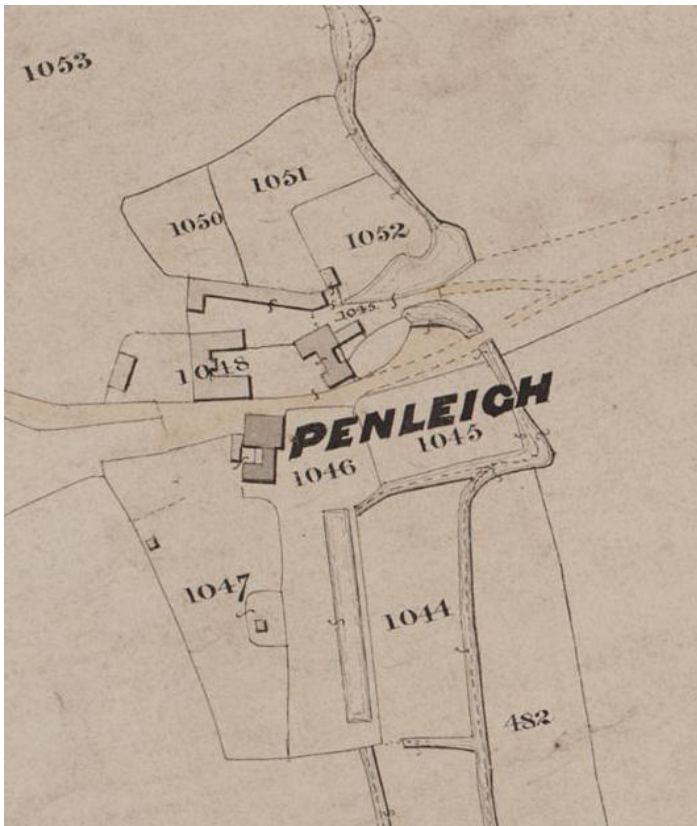
Information considered/provided: Policy HE5 of the NPPF requires applicants to assess the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including the contribution made by their setting, and to identify the likely effects of the development on that significance. Sufficient information should be provided to enable a clear understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, and the impact of the proposal upon it.

Decision-makers must be satisfied that assessments accurately reflect the effects on heritage assets caused by development proposals and in this case the applications are accompanied by a Heritage Statement and Design and Access Statement. The information submitted as part of the application is considered to be insufficient to fully assess the application.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting: The NPPF defines significance as the “value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be **archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic**. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.” Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

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

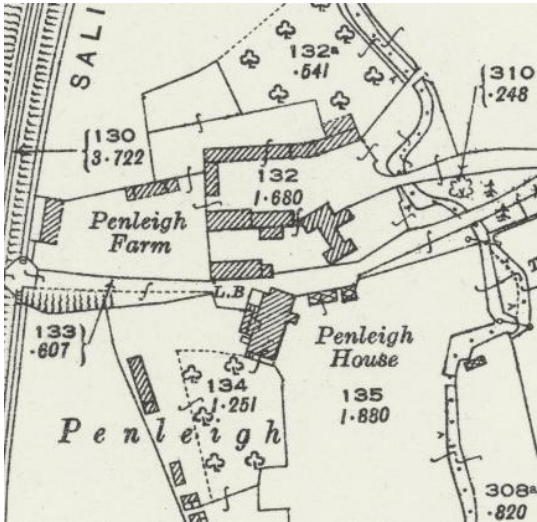
In this case the significance of the building lies largely with its historic fabric and form, and its relationship with the adjoining listed buildings, Penleigh Cottage & Penleigh House, both Grade II listed. Penleigh House is noted as a country house of late C17, and extended in 1710 for George Turner, who had bought the property from Lord Stourton in 1704. Penleigh Cottage has been dated to c1700, and was the former Stables and Carriage house to Penleigh House



1840 Tithe map, showing main house to the south (1046), the U shaped building the Stable block (1048) and the H shaped building the farmhouse. The farm buildings lie to the north.



Andrews and Durys Map 1773



3rd Ed. OS map, showing development and changes, in particular to the Stable Block, and the development of the railway to the west.

Pevsner describes the group as 'Penleigh House. Dated 1710.... Brick stables and Farmhouse, the latter dated 1716, both with cross windows.' The listing description recognises that the building is early C17, with C18 additions and early C19 wing. This appears to create a slight misunderstanding of the site.

To allow for an assessment to be undertaken, a simple phasing plan of the development and changes to the building would highlight the significant fabric. The early C17 section has (had) high quality stone mullioned windows, and the sale detail photos show plaster work which would be expected to be found in a high status building. Many former country houses were either relegated to farmhouses to allow for a new dwelling to be formed in the latest fashion, or incorporated into the new house. The listing description notes that Penleigh House has a 'slightly earlier range to left [which] has three moulded cross windows to ground floor, plat band and three 12-pane sashes to first floor, one hipped attic dormer. Left return in rubble stone has small 8-pane sash to first floor and single recessed chamfered attic light. Right return of main range has external stack with datestone; GT / 1710; initials of George Turner.' It is therefore possible that Penleigh Farmhouse formed part of the wider estate buildings (such as stable block), or was part of the earlier main house.

Existing Condition

The NPPF (2026), Policy HE4.3, states:

Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the asset should not be taken into account in any decision relating to the asset.

It is understood that the property had been vacant for a number of years, and has been subject to arson attacks. The sales details provide some images on the condition of the property. This shows that there was issues of rot, presumable from water ingress and poor maintenance. As part of the application, a Photographic Survey was provided. This shows that some fire surrounds were removed, some glass in the windows is smashed, or boarded, that there are localised areas of damage through arson and that some

stripping out has occurred. However, there remains some architraves, skirting boards, plaster (and wall paper) on walls and plaster finish to the ceilings, and complete floors and some fire surrounds. It is acknowledged that the building was not habitable at the time of purchase, and that works were required to bring the building back to a habitable condition.



Both taken from the Carter Jonas website - [Farm for sale in Penleigh, Fairwood Road, BA13 : Bath : BTR230014](#)

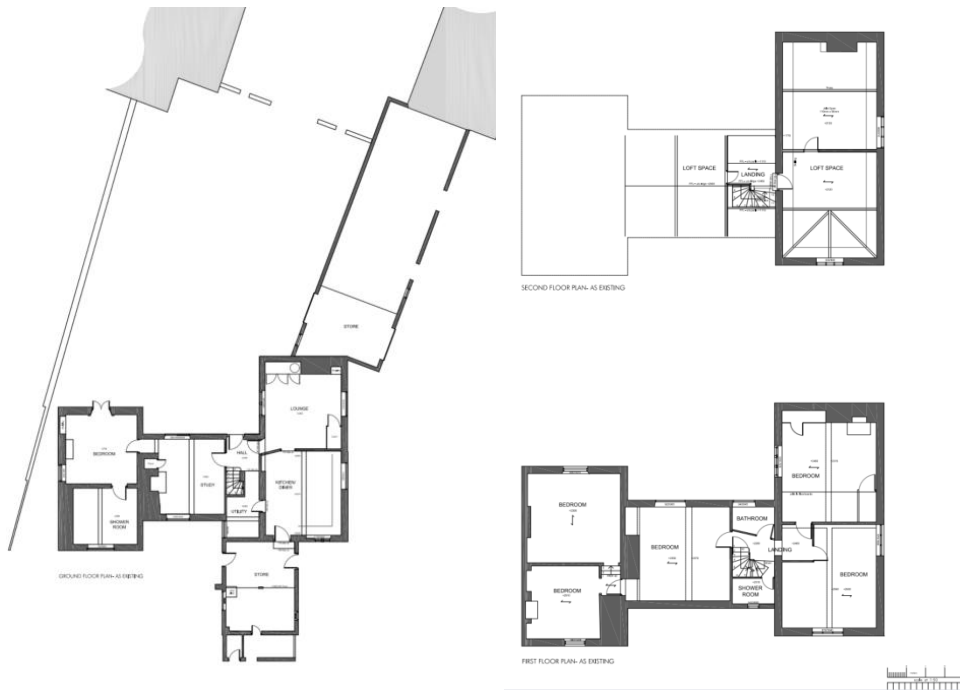
Previous Applications

In 2014 an application was approved (14/05406/LBC) for 'Extension of existing farmhouse into adjoining stable building and internal alterations relating to the use of the building as a family dwelling.' The submitted DAS has photographs showing mould on internal walls, with some walls having no picture rails, some with a very simple picture rail, and a mix of skirting boards, reflecting the social heirarchy of the spaces and the organic changes that have occurred to the property. They also show historic doors (C17/18) and internal cupboards of signifiante (as shown in the sales photo above).

The existing elevation and plans show the following:

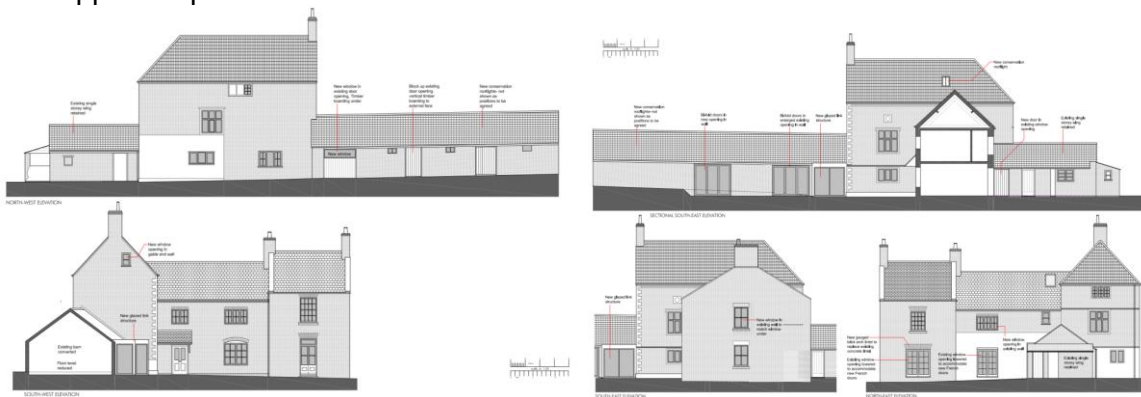


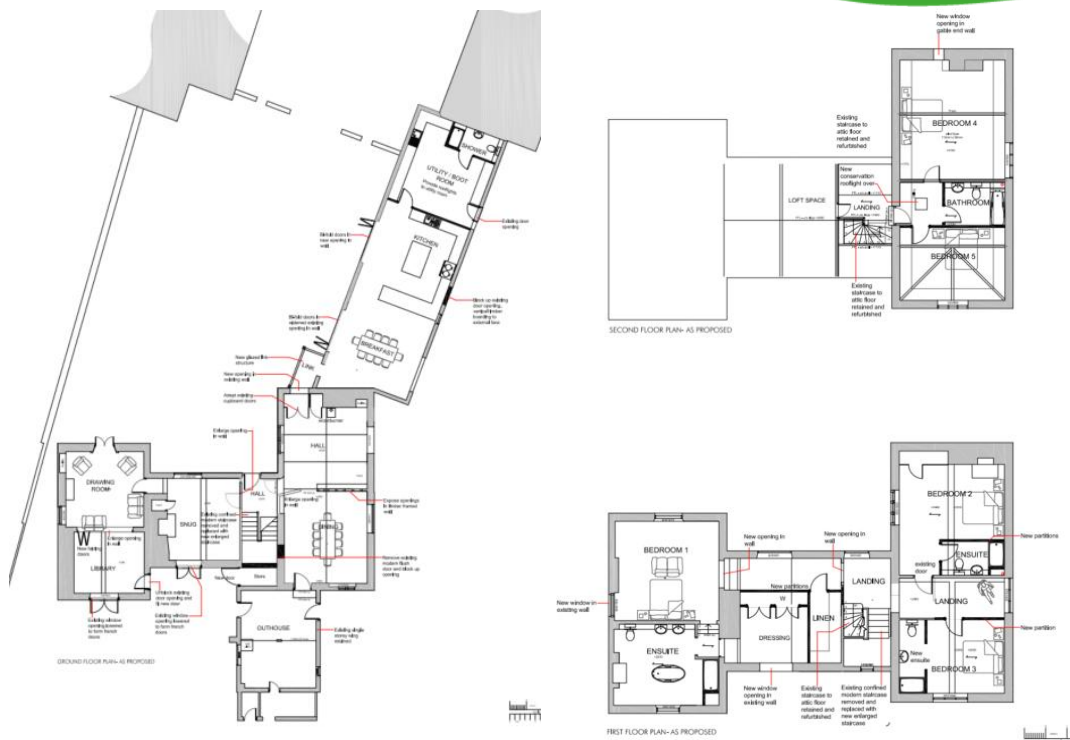
Previous 'existing' elevations.



The 'existing' floor plans.

The approved plans:





The consent had three conditions, with a pre-commencement condition for full details of the internal and external joinery, including staircase; full schedule of internal wall finishes to walls, floors and ceilings; full details of external decoration and samples of external materials. As this condition has not been discharged, breaching or failing to comply with the condition is a criminal offence.

As part of the submitted justification for undertaking the recent works, it is noted that the above consent is in place, and therefore works could commence without further consent. However, as noted, the pre-commencement condition was not discharged, and therefore works should not have commenced. The existing consent does not also justify the change of layout and additional works undertaken.

Assessment: The principle of bringing this vacant building back into active use is fully supported, though the works undertaken raises significant heritage and structural concerns.

External Works

Roof

The works involved the stripping of the roof covering, battens and repairs to the existing structure, and have been completed to the slate roofs. The extent of the timber repairs to the roof structure is unknown, with only some information provided within the Heritage Statement. Some works could be considered as repairs but the applicant is keen to highlight the long-term neglect to the building, which therefore has the potential for extensive works required to the roof structure to allow the roof covering to be reinstated. Without additional information on the extent of the works to the roof structure, it is not possible to assess the impact/ loss/ etc.

A drawing of the existing and proposed roof details has been provided, which shows a traditional detail (no insulation), though it may have a membrane or roof felt. The proposed detail shows the insertion of a TLX Silver Multifoil insulation which is laid against the roof structure, and then a 'breathable' membrane applied. Recent research has shown that the 'breathable' membrane fails, resulting in trapped moisture which leads to long term defects. The placement of the foil insulation prevents any vapour permeability of the roof space as any moisture/ vapour will hit the insulation and will not be able to 'evaporate' to the breathable membrane or to the external air space. This detail therefore has the potential to create future issues within

the building and therefore would not be supported as part of an application. It is acknowledged that these works have been completed (unauthorised) and that a cost has occurred, however, cost implications are not a main consideration when assessing works to protect the significance of a building. The cost/ balance of bringing the building back into active use will be discussed later.

Within the additional submitted information, a Method Statement was provided. This specifies repairs, including replacement of roof structure, the application of a 'breathable, conservation-approved fungicidal fluid', creating a 50mm air gap (but no details of how this gap is ventilated), the application of a Tri-Iso 10 multi-foil and insulation, to create an 'airtight' sealing. This information conflicts with the submitted drawing detail.

A better detail would be to insulate between the rafters with a flexible, natural insulation (wood wool, thermafleece, etc), apply an insulating skirting board and then a breather membrane (if required) and then apply the roof covering. This means that the whole roof structure becomes vapour permeable and protects the historic fabric for the long term and improves thermal efficiency for the occupants.

The placement of the insulation raises the height of the roof covering very slightly, but this is insufficient to raise concerns. Improving thermal efficiency within historic buildings is an important step to helping take this protection of these buildings into the future.

The replacement of the roof covering should respond to the existing roof covering, and samples should have been provided. As shown on the estate agents' photo (below), there is a mix of roof covering, including Bridgewater tile. It is understood that works have only been undertaken to part of the roof (slate) and therefore it is presumed that not other works to the tiled roof covering has been undertaken. There is a concern that if the building is in as poor a condition as stated, then the building is not watertight, and therefore temporary works (such as scaffold 'top hat', or similar) should be installed to protect the building.



Estate Agent (Carter Jonas) image of the property on the sales details.

Windows and Doors

The additional information provides a selection of 'proposed' and 'existing' drawings, and they provide numbers, but there is no window schedule to allow for reference, and no record of the condition of the windows. The Historic England guidance is clear that repair should be the first consideration, and broken glazing does not justify the wholesale replacement of the windows. The 'before' images within the submitted information show that the some of the windows could have been in fair condition.

No details of the timber used for the replacement windows have ben provided. A use of Acoya could be acceptable, depending on what was removed. There would have been an opportunity that if the windows were shown to be beyond repair that slim-profile double glazed windows (or similar) could have been installed, to improve thermal efficiency. At present, the walls have been lined with insulation, and there the windows are single glazed still means that there is heat loss out of the windows.

The submitted information provides photos of the windows installed, which includes the use of expanding foam. This product should not be used within listed building as it is not vapour permeable and puts additional pressure onto the softer fabric, which has the potential to result in longer term damaged. It also raises the quality of the workmanship to bring this building back into active use.

North Elevation

No works undertaken (or proposed?).

East Elevation

A majority of the windows have been replaced, including altering the size of the window to the first floor, forming a new window to the first floor (as approved 2014) and creating a French door from an existing window.

South Elevation

Proposed to replace stone mullions. No details provided. These should not be modified or artificial stone.

West Elevation

All the windows on this elevation have been replaced.

The information supplied is insufficient to fully assess the application. However, a wholesale replacement of the windows is generally not supported.

The proposed works to install additional French Doors needs an assessment on the loss of fabric and the impact on the historic floor plan. Within the submitted information there is insufficient information to fully assess this.

Internal Works

Joinery details

The additional information provides a Joinery detail drawing (A17 25 37 P1015), showing a single skirting board type (228mm high), a single architrave type and a picture rail. As shown in the submitted photographic schedule, the sales details and the images in the previous consented scheme (which is referred to in the application), the property had a variety of joinery details, including doors and historic cupboards. This would be expected in a property like this as it would respond to the social hierarchy of the rooms and spaces, of the piecemeal changes and the functions of the room.

A single type of tall skirting board is considered in-appropriate to the property which has developed and evolved over its lifetime. Skirting boards, as with other joinery detail was place specific, with the best rooms having the more expensive decorative detail, and as you progressed through the property, the details altered to suit the social hierarchy and function of the space. Some spaces would not have had skirting boards (as evidenced in the approved DAS 2014), or would have simple, plain skirting boards. Installing a high-end skirting board would be in-appropriate for a property like this.

There are no details of the existing/ retained doors, or replacement internal doors. Whilst it is understood that the property was subject to vandals and arson, there is no information to provide guidance on what remained. Some of these items are unlikely to be subject of theft as they would have limited value (unlike fireplaces & surrounds), and therefore they would be expected to remain. Some of these elements may have been removed to allow for the installation of the dry lining (discussed elsewhere) or to suit the other alterations undertaken. However, there appears to be sufficient information to provide an informed decision on the types of skirting boards to be used in the property as it has only been in recent years that a standard skirting board has been used throughout a house.

The proposed staircase drawing (A17 25 37 P1002) shows a painted staircase formed of MDF treads, with an oak handrail. The balusters with decorative brackets to the stringer, are a similar style to a mid-late 1700s detail. In many listed buildings, it would be a requirement to replace a staircase in a suitable material (oak or pine), in a style that befits the space. The style is considered to be appropriate, but there is a concern over the material used. As noted above, the balance between budgets, bringing the building back into active use and the quality of the workmanship will be discussed later.

The approved scheme (2014) had a simple dog-legged staircase contained within a formed bay in the entrance hall. This layout would be more typical of a farmhouse, though the installed staircase would not be totally out of character, but would be more suited to a grander house. To change the style of the staircase, it is required to create a larger hallway, and therefore the stud portion has been moved, reducing the size of the adjoining room (proposed study). To create a larger opening to take a wider staircase, there is also the potential of further loss of historic fabric. As the building has suffered from neglect and damage, and further loss of historic fabric would not be supported for personal benefits (change of layout).

A new window has been installed on the newly formed landing, which follows the position of the previously approved scheme (2014).

Change of Layout

The alteration to create a ground floor WC and alteration of the hallway has been briefly discussed above. However, there is a consideration on the impact on the scale and form of the room (proposed study), and the decorative details (if any remain) such as the ceiling joist. The principle could be acceptable, but further information is required. The scale and form of the room were an important aspect of the design, and therefore this needs to be assessed. The proposed change is considered to be a personal benefit.

To the first floor, the approved scheme (2014) resulted in several changes the floor plan by creating a dressing and linen space, and the inserted of some stud walls to create a third bedroom (with ensuite) and an ensuite to Bedroom 2. The proposed scheme has reconfigured the hall space to create an additional bedroom (rather than ensuite and linen store). This layout appears to have lost an internal wall of which there is no information and could have contained original fabric.

A new stud wall has been inserted, and a door has been removed (no details on the age of this door) to create a master suite, of bedroom and bathroom. This is similar to the approved scheme. There are no details of the drainage (including SVP) to this ensuite.

Misc. Works

Formation of a ground floor Clock Room

A portion of the hall has been sectioned off with a new stud wall and door to allow for the creation of a new WC. There are no details on the drainage runs, or the position of the SVP. No details have been provided on the impact of joinery details.

New Log Burner in Study & Living Room

New log burner, flue and hearth have been installed. There are no details on these, or what was removed to allow for the insertion.

Plaster board to ceiling – Kitchen & other rooms

The submitted evidence shows that there was no plasterboard in the evident, but the remains of lath & plaster. The use of modern materials, such as plasterboard and gypsum plaster in historic, traditionally built buildings is well recorded. The use of these materials restricts the movement required of a traditionally building structure and cannot assist with the vapour permeability ('breathability') of the structure.

Internal drylining with Insulated Plasterboard

Of greater concern is the lining of the internal walls with a modern insulated plasterboard. This removes the vapour permeability of the building and therefore the softer materials used in traditional materials will not be able to work as designed and will result in long term defects. The worst-case scenario would be structural failure which may not be seen until there is substantial damage.

- **Vapour Permeability and Interstitial Condensation:** Traditional buildings function on the principle of vapour permeability ('breathing'). Lining the internal walls with modern, impermeable plasterboard and non-breathable insulation introduces a severe risk of interstitial condensation. As highlighted by SPAB's *Old House Project*, modern rigid materials fail to accommodate the natural movement, and

moisture shifts of historic fabric. This risks trapping moisture within the walls, leading to dry/wet rot in timber floor joists and the structural degradation of the historic brickwork or lime plaster.

- **Trapped Construction Moisture:** Given that the building was exposed to weather prior to these works, the fabric is likely saturated. Installing impermeable internal linings permanently traps this moisture within the core of the walls, accelerating fabric decay.
- **Inappropriate Use of Foils and Membranes:** The deployment of multifoil insulation in the roof and walls is highly problematic in a historic context. These products often act as vapour barriers, altering the building's dew point and creating high risks of condensation.
- **Thermal Bridging:** The submitted information lacks detailing on how internal window reveals are treated. Inadequate detailing here will create severe thermal bridges, resulting in localized dampness and mould growth around historic openings.

In addition to the fabric impact, the use of these materials have covered the existing walls resulting in a change of room size, the loss of any details (which is unknown) such as joinery cupboards or plaster details, and a further loss of historic fabric (lath & plaster walls/ ceilings).

Cost and Impact of Works undertaken

While the works appear to have achieved the immediate objective of bringing the building back into a habitable and beneficial use, this has been achieved through interventions and the use of modern materials that are not considered appropriate to the character, construction or significance of the listed building. Of particular concern is the potential for these works to adversely affect the long-term performance of the historic building fabric, potentially resulting in deterioration that may be difficult or costly to remedy.

The principle of improving the thermal performance and habitability of the building is not, in itself, objectionable. There are established methods of improving the environmental performance of traditional buildings which respond appropriately to their construction, materials and significance, and suitable proposals could be supported through the Listed Building Consent process. However, the materials and methods employed in the unauthorised works would not be supported in their present form, given both their physical impact upon the historic fabric and the potential consequences for the building's special architectural and historic interest.

It is acknowledged that the owners have invested considerable time, effort and expense in returning the building to active use, and the intention to secure a viable use for the building is welcomed. Nevertheless, good intentions and beneficial use do not, in themselves, outweigh the requirement to safeguard the special interest of a listed building. The works need to be assessed on the basis of their actual and potential effect upon its fabric, character and significance.

The works demonstrate differing degrees of concern. Some interventions, such as the use of MDF within the staircase, represent materials and methods that are inappropriate to the character and detailing of the historic building. Other works, including the use of expanding foam around window openings and within masonry, appear to have been executed without sufficient regard to the performance and conservation of the surrounding traditional fabric. The installation of internal dry lining and foil insulation appears to have been undertaken with the positive intention of improving thermal performance; however, such interventions require particularly careful consideration within a traditionally constructed building, as inappropriate specifications may alter the movement of moisture through the building fabric and create conditions that increase the risk of concealed deterioration.

Taken cumulatively, these interventions have resulted in harm to the historic fabric and significance of the listed building and, in some instances, have introduced a risk of further and potentially more serious deterioration if they remain unaddressed. The concern is therefore not simply that unauthorised works have occurred, but that the interventions themselves are incompatible with the conservation and appropriate long-term management of the designated heritage asset.

It is understood from the information provided that the works progressed in the belief that they were acceptable and covered by an existing consent. However, that consent was subject to a pre-commencement condition requiring further details to be agreed prior to works beginning. Had that process been followed, the suitability of the proposed materials and construction methods could have been properly considered before installation. This would have provided the opportunity to identify appropriate alternatives, avoiding unnecessary work and expenditure while securing a solution that both met the owners' objectives and protected the special interest and long-term condition of the listed building.

There were also mechanisms available to respond to any genuinely urgent need to secure or protect the building pending agreement of the wider works. Where works are considered immediately necessary for the preservation of a listed building, the legislation makes provision for urgent works in particular circumstances. This does not, however, provide a general exemption from the requirement for Listed Building Consent. Early engagement with the Council could have established whether any limited works were genuinely urgent and enabled an appropriate programme of interim measures to be agreed while the necessary details for the substantive works were resolved.

Overall, although the objective of securing the occupation and continued use of the building is recognised and supported in principle, the means by which this has been achieved are not considered acceptable in conservation terms. The unauthorised works have caused harm to historic fabric and to the significance of the listed building, while aspects of the work also create a foreseeable risk of further deterioration. The appropriate response should therefore be directed towards securing the removal or remediation of harmful interventions and their replacement, where necessary, with conservation-appropriate solutions that achieve the reasonable requirements of the occupants while safeguarding the building's special architectural and historic interest.

Summary & conclusion: The NPPF confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification.

In this case, the proposals will result in harm to the significance of the building (including its fabric), and result in harm through the use of in-appropriate materials and potential harm to the plan form of the historic building.

Policy HE6 allows for harm caused to be weighed against the public benefits resulting from the proposal. However, in this case it is acknowledged that bringing the building back into use is active use is a public benefit, however, due to the extent of the harm identified, this would not outweigh the harm caused.

The proposals therefore conflict with the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance and the application is recommended for refusal.