

Rood Ashton Hall, West Ashton, BA14 6AS

Introduction

This statement has been produced by Raymond Winrow of Slade Smith and Winrow - Architects on behalf of Mr and Mrs Tim Dawson, the owners of Rood Ashton Hall.

The statement provides information to support a retrospective Listed Building Consent application for minimal raised terracing to the perimeter of the internal courtyard at Rood Ashton Hall.

The works were completed in 2018 and as the four-year enforcement period applies, planning permission is accepted.

Attached to support the statement and the application are: -

- Drawings - 2026-
- 1. Courtyard plan before the installation of the terraces.
 - 2. Elevations before the installation of the terraces.
 - 3. Courtyard plan as it is now.
 - 4. Elevations as they are now.
 - 5. Details of the terraces and the well.

Photographs of all elevations, the well, deteriorated cobbles and the yard drain.

The Council's e-mail indicating their requirements to lawfully correct matters or submit a retrospective application for Listed Building Consent. A retrospective application is the action the owners of the building have chosen.

Heritage statement

Rood Ashton House, built in 1808, had a coach house added in 1830 to the designs of Thomas Hopper. It is in gothic style to match the house.

The building housed grooms, horses and carriages. The crenelated stable lodge and large cobbled courtyard were entered through an arched opening.

The building, in disrepair, and its garden were separated from the ruined core of the house estate in the second-half of the 20th century.

The building was listed Grade II in 1988 as Rood Ashton Lodge. It is now known as Rood Ashton Hall.

The listing describes the courtyard with *“elliptical headed double carriage stable doors, mullioned casements with pointed lights and battlemented parapets. The interior of the stables, partly gutted but retaining good quality timber and cast iron partitions between stalls, slate panels with tethering rings and cobbled floors”*.

Evolution of the building

There does not appear to be a date when the building was first converted to a dwelling.

The application, No. W93/0891/LB, approved in 1993, describes the proposed works as *“alterations to the internal layout, fenestration and general refurbishment”*.

The application form lists materials to be used in:-

“Roof: Asbestos cement slates, ie Eternit, colour grey/black.

Walls: Repair of existing ashlar stonework and replacement of existing spalled and cracked render with lime render of mix specification to be approved by the local authority”.

The drawings submitted were drawings of the plans and elevations of existing and as proposed at 1:50 scale.

The courtyard appeared to be the same as at the time of listing. The majority of the accommodation was domestic with many parts simply described as rooms. The stables were, as the listing description, with large wooden doors, but internally shown as garages.

Most of the work described appears to have been carried out, but there are no details. A note on drawing 495/03 refers to drawing 08 which is not part of the application deposited. A site inspection note dated 19/8 indicates some details have been seen and *“OK’d them”*. There are no details explaining this note. It appears that there could be other changes which have not been recorded by the Council.

The work carried out has removed all traces of the stables, and this was accepted by the Council. A swimming pool existed in 2018 and proposals to remove this and provide a new arrangement were approved in 2020 and have now been carried out.

Setting

The property is sited in open countryside. It was part of the original estate and its setting has not changed. The site and adjacent areas are treed but the house is still prominent because of its height and style.

The Works

On the 24th of August 2026, Wiltshire Council indicated, by e-mail, that works in the courtyard, seen by a conservation officer on photographs, did not have Listed Building Consent and that permission should be sought or the works should be removed and the courtyard cobbles restored.

The existing courtyard, before the works in question, was in a poor state. The east and west edges of the courtyard had significant areas of disintegrated cobbles and areas where cobbles presumably once existed but had long ago been replaced with concrete. The areas of disintegration were fertile ground for weeds. Some of the concrete was over a well in the southwest corner.

Reinstatement of the cobbles was not practical or possible at the time of the works in 2018 and is not possible now. The cobbles date from 1830 and replacements cannot be obtained. The applicant, faced with a dilapidated arrangement, decided to install raised areas of minimal size to substitute for the dilapidated edge areas of cobbles. Cobbles which were satisfactory were used to repair the remaining areas and construct the walls of the raised areas. Some of the cobbles are still in a very poor state and had to be just left; these are visible today.

The applicant acted with a lack of knowledge of the legislation but in the best interests of the building, so that the courtyard could be enjoyed in its domestic setting.

The well that was discovered has been exposed, preserved, and made an element of interest.

The cobbled areas are unsuitable for siting tables and chairs, so in two corners of the courtyard the paved areas are marginally increased to allow this domestic arrangement.

All of the arched openings around the courtyard have been filled in with masonry or fenestration. The internal floor levels have been raised so that most doors leading into the courtyard have steps. There is no evidence of the building's former use as stables and carriage accommodation. This change has been fully accepted by Wiltshire Council.

The cobbled courtyard was in disrepair and has been dealt with sympathetically to provide for its residential use.

The central tree is in a container and does not affect the cobbles under, nor the drainage arrangements which remain original. Other planted elements provide a softening of the space to further provide the domestic element.

When entering the courtyard, the immediate impression is of a fully cobbled area, the edge treatment is secondary.

The drainage is an existing yard gully, positioned centrally, but the cobbles are laid without mortar so most of the rain will soak into the ground before reaching the gully. An early example of SUDS!!!

Impact and Mitigation

Fabric

The walls supporting the terraced areas are constructed with retrieved cobbles. The surface of the terrace is limestone slabs laid, in random sizes and butt jointed, provide a high-quality finish which would have been expected in the 19th century and with the quality of the existing building.

Setting

The raised terraces, being the same material and colour of the cobbles, have very little impact on the courtyard. The large, cobbled courtyard is still apparent and the terrace additions have minimal effect on its appearance.

Conclusion

There is some harm to the original concept of a fully cobbled courtyard. Reinstatement of the dilapidated areas of cobbles was not possible and the raised terraces provide better areas for using the space for domestic purposes. In mitigation, the changes provide a greater benefit to the now residential property.

The architectural appearance of the courtyard has been radically changed from being suitable for stables and carriages to domestic use. All fully approved by the local authority. The present change of raised terraces to the perimeter of the courtyard is the last part of the transformation. The architecture has not suffered and is still acceptable as Victorian Gothic.

If an application for change had been made before construction, I suggest that, knowing the circumstances, the Council would have been sympathetic and probably approved.

The effect of the alterations, and the atmosphere experienced in the courtyard, cannot be experienced from photographs. I ask that the officers inspect the site and reconsider their initial reaction and approve this retrospective application