

DESIGN AND HERITAGE ASSET STATEMENT

Springfield House, Potterne Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 5DD

Proposed works: Widening of existing vehicular access; formation of a double parking area with associated retaining wall; formation of rear patio and alterations to garden levels/retaining wall; alteration to an existing rear external door; and erection of a modest garden summerhouse within the rear garden.

1. Introduction

This Design and Heritage Asset Statement has been prepared in support of proposals at Springfield House, Potterne Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 5DD.

The statement should be read alongside the submitted site location plan, existing and proposed block plans, existing and proposed site level drawings, the survey/proposed elevation drawing, the revised Proposed Block Plan and the submitted details of the proposed Weybourne Summerhouse.

Springfield is a Grade II listed building, List Entry No. 1252255, first listed on 19 September 1972.

Accordingly, particular care has been taken in developing the proposals to ensure that the special architectural and historic interest of the property is respected and that the works remain appropriately subordinate to the listed building.

The proposals are relatively modest in nature and principally concern improvements to the functionality of the existing residential property and its grounds. No substantial extension or fundamental alteration to the form of the listed building is proposed.

2. Site and Surrounding Context

Springfield House occupies a substantial residential plot on the western side of Potterne Road. The submitted site location plan identifies Springfield within an established group of residential properties including The Gables, Brandon House and The Wicket on the western side of the road, with Eversley, Woodville, The Mallings and Belmont situated opposite.

The dwelling is set back from the highway behind its front garden and existing driveway/access arrangement. The plot extends considerably to the rear and side of the house and forms an important domestic setting to the listed building.

The existing block plan demonstrates the relationship between the house, driveway, garden and surrounding properties. The proposal retains the established residential use, the principal building and the majority of its surrounding garden.

The character of the site derives principally from the historic dwelling itself, its traditional materials and architectural detailing, and its setting within a generous established plot.

3. The Heritage Asset

3.1 Statutory Designation

Springfield is included on the statutory list at Grade II for its special architectural and historic interest. The official list entry records the property as dating from approximately 1830.

The building is described as a two-storey property constructed in red brick upon a projecting stone plinth, with chamfered quoins and a stone band between the storeys. It has a steeply pitched hipped slate roof with overhanging eaves.

Its principal elevation contains recessed sash windows with block sills and flat stone arches incorporating triple keystones. The central entrance is particularly distinctive, comprising a recessed six-fielded-panel door, lion-head iron knocker and semi-circular fanlight with radial glazing bars, contained within a plain ashlar surround. The entrance is further emphasised by a stone Doric porch with columns, pilasters, stepped frieze

and moulded cornice.

The south-west side also contains an iron scroll-bracketed first-floor balcony with a French window opening onto it.

- its early nineteenth-century origins and historic fabric;
- its well-proportioned two-storey form;
- its red brick, stone and slate material palette;
- its sash windows and traditional joinery;
- its formal principal elevation and high-quality stone entrance detailing;
- surviving architectural features and detailing; and
- the ability to appreciate the building as a historic dwelling within its established domestic setting.

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

4. Significance of the Heritage Asset

The significance of Springfield House is predominantly architectural and historic.

Architecturally, the building is a good surviving example of an early nineteenth-century dwelling, displaying a coherent classical composition and a strong palette of traditional materials. The stone quoins, banding, window surrounds, sash windows, entrance arrangement, slate roof and surviving decorative details all contribute positively to its special interest.

Historically, its circa-1830 date gives the property value as part of the development and architectural history of the locality.

The spacious garden setting also contributes to an appreciation of Springfield as a substantial historic dwelling. However, the significance of the heritage asset is concentrated primarily in the architectural character, historic fabric, form, proportions and detailing of the listed building itself.

The design approach to the proposed works has consequently sought to retain this hierarchy, ensuring that landscaping, parking, the summerhouse and minor alterations remain visually and physically subordinate to Springfield House.

5. Existing Site Arrangement

The existing property is served by an established vehicular access from Potterne Road, leading into the site and around the front/side of the dwelling.

The land surrounding the house varies in level. The submitted existing level/profile drawing records the relationship between the dwelling and the sloping garden, including the existing front, side and rear ground profiles.

The proposals have been designed in response to these existing levels rather than seeking wholesale regrading of the site.

This is important from a heritage perspective because it allows the established topographical character of the grounds to remain readily understandable while providing practical improvements to the property's external areas.

6. Description of the Proposed Development

The application proposes a coordinated package of relatively small-scale works comprising:

- 1 widening of the existing driveway access;
- 2 formation of a double parking bay within the front portion of the property;

- 3 construction of an associated retaining wall to accommodate the parking area and existing change in levels;
- 4 formation of a patio area to the rear of the dwelling;
- 5 reformation of a small existing retaining wall adjoining the proposed patio;
- 6 very modest grading of the adjoining garden into the new retaining wall;
- 7 alteration of one existing rear single external door to incorporate two glazed panels, reflecting the character and appearance of the other existing rear door; and
- 8 erection of a modest, traditionally designed timber garden summerhouse within the rear garden.

The revised proposed block plan illustrates the new parking arrangement close to the existing access, the proposed hard landscaped area immediately to the rear of Springfield House and the position of the proposed summerhouse within the rear garden.

The proposed level drawings demonstrate that the works respond to the site's existing gradients and do not involve wholesale alteration of the garden topography.

7. Design Approach

The overriding design principle has been one of minimum necessary intervention.

The proposals have been developed to improve the practical use of Springfield House while avoiding unnecessary alteration to its historic form and fabric.

The proposed parking area is located within the established front curtilage and uses the existing access as its starting point. Rather than creating an entirely separate means of access, the proposal simply widens the existing entrance sufficiently to improve vehicular access to the proposed parking area.

The parking bay has been designed in conjunction with a retaining structure because of the existing changes in ground level. This provides a controlled and visually coherent solution rather than undertaking more extensive excavation or regrading across the front garden.

At the rear, the patio is positioned immediately adjacent to the dwelling where a domestic terrace would naturally be expected. The associated retaining wall and slight grading of the garden are limited to that necessary to achieve a usable relationship between the house, patio and garden.

The proposed summerhouse follows the same restrained design approach. It is modest in scale, traditionally detailed and positioned within the rear garden so that it reads as a subordinate garden structure rather than competing with the listed dwelling.

No fundamental alteration is proposed to the overall form, height, massing or principal elevations of Springfield House.

8. Widening of the Existing Driveway Access

The proposal involves the widening of an existing, established access rather than the creation of a new independent entrance.

This distinction is important in design and heritage terms. The established relationship between Springfield House and Potterne Road will remain, with vehicles continuing to enter the property at substantially the same location.

The widening will allow improved access to the proposed double parking bay and reduce the need for difficult manoeuvring within the site.

Care will be taken with the detailing of any altered boundary treatment associated with the widened access. Traditional and visually recessive materials will be employed so that the works integrate with the existing property and do not compete with the listed building.

The intervention is considered proportionate to the functional benefit achieved.

9. Proposed Front Parking Bay and Retaining Wall

A double parking bay is proposed within the front garden, as identified on the proposed block plan.

The site's existing topography means that some excavation and retention of ground is required to create a practical parking surface. The design therefore incorporates a retaining wall around the relevant part of the parking area.

The proposed level drawing illustrates how the parking and retaining arrangement is integrated into the existing ground profile. The proposal seeks to localise changes in level rather than substantially re-engineering the wider garden.

From a heritage perspective, the important consideration is that the parking area remains a landscape/curtilage intervention and does not materially alter the architectural form of Springfield House.

The retaining wall will be finished in materials sympathetic to the listed property and the surrounding historic character. Appropriate traditional walling and coping details will ensure that it reads as a considered garden structure rather than an incongruous engineered feature.

Similarly, the parking surface will be selected with regard to the traditional character of the property, avoiding unnecessarily harsh or visually dominant finishes.

The proposal therefore represents a practical means of providing two usable parking spaces whilst retaining the building as the principal visual focus of the site.

10. Proposed Rear Patio, Retaining Wall and Garden Levels

A new patio is proposed immediately to the rear of the dwelling.

The rear garden currently incorporates changes in level and an existing retaining arrangement. The proposal seeks to reform a relatively small retaining wall and very slightly grade the adjoining garden into the new retaining wall abutting the patio.

This approach has deliberately been chosen in preference to significant excavation or extensive recontouring.

The works shown on the proposed level/profile drawing remain modest in relation to the wider garden and retain the overall established relationship between the house and surrounding land.

The patio itself is a conventional domestic feature appropriate to the continued residential occupation of the property. Its position adjacent to the rear elevation allows it to function as an immediate external amenity area without extending built development substantially into the garden.

Materials will be selected to complement the traditional character of Springfield House. Natural and/or traditionally detailed materials of appropriate colour, texture and finish will ensure that the patio and retaining wall sit comfortably alongside the historic fabric.

10.1 Proposed Garden Summerhouse

As part of the proposals, a small garden summerhouse is also proposed within the established rear garden of Springfield House, in the position identified on the revised Proposed Block Plan.

The proposed building is a Weybourne Summerhouse by Crane Garden Buildings, measuring approximately 2.4 metres by 2.4 metres. Its modest footprint and domestic garden scale ensure that it will remain clearly subordinate to Springfield House and will not compete with the architectural presence or significance of the Grade II listed dwelling.

Considerable care has been given to the selection of the summerhouse. Rather than adopting a contemporary or utilitarian garden building, the chosen design has a distinctly traditional character that is considered particularly appropriate within the grounds of this historic property. It incorporates painted horizontal shiplap timber cladding, Georgian-style windows and doors, and a hipped roof finished with natural cedar shingles. The external timberwork is proposed in an understated Ivory finish.

The manufacturer's drawings demonstrate a compact, well-proportioned building with a symmetrical hipped roof form and traditionally detailed glazed openings. This gives the summerhouse the appearance of a high-quality garden pavilion rather than a conventional utilitarian shed and allows it to sit comfortably within the landscaped setting of Springfield House.

Its siting has also been carefully considered. As shown on the revised Proposed Block Plan, the summerhouse is positioned within the rear garden and away from the principal elevation and highway frontage, where it will form part of the established domestic garden rather than a prominent element within the public setting of the listed building. Its small scale and garden location ensure that Springfield House will continue to remain unquestionably dominant within its plot.

Importantly, the summerhouse is a detached and visually subordinate structure and does not require alteration to the historic form or principal architectural features of Springfield House. Its introduction therefore allows the occupants to enjoy an additional functional garden amenity without requiring an extension or more substantial intervention to the listed dwelling itself.

The use of timber construction, traditional fenestration and natural cedar roofing provides an appropriately soft and sympathetic material palette which will complement the garden environment and weather naturally over time. The proposal has deliberately avoided an overly modern architectural treatment or materials that might appear incongruous within the setting of the heritage asset.

The summerhouse is therefore considered to represent a modest, carefully positioned and appropriately detailed addition to the domestic curtilage. Its traditional design, limited footprint and sensitive siting ensure that it will preserve the ability to appreciate Springfield House as the principal historic building on the site and will preserve the special architectural and historic interest and setting of the Grade II listed building.

11. Alteration to Existing Rear Door

The only direct alteration proposed to an external opening of the listed building is a modest change to one of the existing single rear external doors.

The submitted survey/proposal elevation drawing clearly shows the existing and proposed rear elevations. The proposal retains the existing door opening and general door proportions but introduces two glazed panels to the door, producing a design that more closely relates to the other existing rear external door.

This is a deliberately restrained alteration.

There is no proposal to enlarge the structural opening or materially alter the composition of the rear elevation. Instead, the change concerns the detailed treatment of the door itself.

Given the listed status of Springfield House, particular care will be given to the joinery detailing. The replacement/altered door will be designed and fitted with due regard to the character of the listed building, including appropriate proportions, glazing arrangement, profiles, mouldings, construction and finish.

The intention is not to introduce an overtly contemporary or standardised door design, but to produce a high-quality joinery solution which sits naturally within the historic elevation and reflects the established character of the existing doors and windows.

12. Materials and Detailing

The choice of materials is fundamental to the success of works within the setting and fabric of a Grade II listed building.

All new materials will therefore be selected to be sympathetic to the age, appearance and architectural character of Springfield House.

Where walling is required, its material, coursing, pointing and coping treatment will be appropriately detailed to harmonise with the established palette of the property and its grounds.

Hard landscaping will similarly employ a finish of appropriate colour, scale and texture so that the new parking and patio areas do not appear excessively suburban or visually intrusive.

The proposed summerhouse has also been selected for its sympathetic traditional material palette, including painted timber shiplap cladding, Georgian-style fenestration and natural cedar shingles to the hipped roof.

Particular attention will be paid to the altered rear door. Joinery details will be carefully considered and the finished door will reflect the proportions and traditional character of the existing building.

The approach throughout is one of compatibility rather than imitation for its own sake: new work should be identifiable upon close inspection while remaining harmonious with the listed building.

13. Assessment of Heritage Impact

The proposals have been considered against the significance of Springfield House as a Grade II listed building.

The most significant architectural components identified within the statutory listing - including the principal composition, sash windows, stone detailing, central entrance and Doric porch - will remain unaffected. The official listing specifically records these elements as features of the building's architectural interest.

The proposed works are predominantly confined to the external landscaping and curtilage.

Although the front parking area will introduce additional hard surfacing and retaining structures, it is deliberately accommodated within the existing site levels and accessed through a widened version of the established entrance.

The listed dwelling will remain clearly legible as the dominant architectural element within the site.

The rear patio and retaining works are smaller-scale still and will principally affect the immediate domestic garden setting. The slight grading proposed avoids unnecessarily extensive engineering works and maintains the wider garden character.

The proposed summerhouse is similarly limited in scale and is positioned within the rear garden, away from the principal elevation and highway frontage. Its traditional form and materials, together with its detached and subordinate character, mean that it will not challenge the visual primacy of Springfield House or obscure an appreciation of its principal historic fabric.

The door alteration affects the listed building directly but is highly localised. The existing structural opening and overall relationship of openings within the elevation will remain. The proposed two-panel glazed arrangement is informed by an existing door elsewhere on the same rear elevation and therefore has an established contextual reference within the building itself.

Subject to appropriate detailed joinery, the door alteration is considered compatible with the architectural character of the property.

Overall, the works have been intentionally designed to preserve the architectural and historic significance of Springfield House.

14. Heritage Design Principles and Mitigation

A number of principles have been incorporated into the proposals to minimise heritage impact:

- reuse and modest widening of the existing access rather than formation of an unrelated new access;
- concentration of parking works within a defined part of the front curtilage;
- retaining structures used to manage the existing changes in level and avoid excessive garden regrading;
- retention of the overall garden setting;
- location of the patio immediately adjacent to the dwelling;
- only very slight grading of the garden around the rear retaining wall;
- siting of the summerhouse discreetly within the rear garden, away from the principal elevation and highway frontage;

- selection of a modest, traditional summerhouse with timber shiplap cladding, Georgian-style fenestration and cedar-shingle hipped roof;
- use of sympathetic traditional materials;
- retention of the existing rear door opening;
- a proposed glazed door arrangement informed by an existing door on the building; and
- careful attention to traditional joinery proportions, detailing and finish.

These measures demonstrate that heritage considerations have informed the design rather than being considered retrospectively.

15. Access

The property already benefits from vehicular access from Potterne Road.

The proposed widening does not materially alter the established point of access but will provide a more practical entrance arrangement serving the proposed double parking bay.

Providing defined off-street parking within the site should improve the practical operation of the property and allow vehicles to be accommodated within its curtilage.

Pedestrian access to the dwelling will remain available and the residential use of the site is unchanged.

16. Planning and Heritage Considerations

Springfield House is a designated heritage asset and consequently the statutory duties relating to listed buildings are engaged.

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The National Planning Policy Framework also requires applicants to describe the significance of heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting, with the level of detail proportionate to the importance of the asset and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal.

The significance of Springfield House has therefore been considered from the outset.

The proposals are intentionally limited in scale and retain those elements that make the greatest contribution to the building's significance. The principal historic building remains intact and visually dominant, while new external works, including the proposed summerhouse, are subordinate and capable of being executed in sympathetic materials.

The proposal consequently represents a conservation-led approach which allows reasonable adaptation and improvement of the property while respecting its special architectural and historic interest.

17. Public Benefits and Planning Balance

The proposals provide modest but tangible benefits to the continued practical use of the property.

The widened access and properly formed double parking bay will provide a safer and more convenient arrangement for vehicles within the existing residential curtilage.

The rear patio will provide an improved external amenity area directly associated with the dwelling, while the limited retaining and grading works provide an orderly transition into the existing garden.

The summerhouse will provide an additional high-quality garden amenity in a detached form that avoids the need for a more substantial addition to the listed building itself.

The alteration to the rear door will improve its functionality and natural light while using a design informed directly by existing joinery on the property.

These improvements are achieved without an extension to the principal listed building, without substantial alteration to its historic form and without loss of the architectural features specifically identified within the statutory list description.

18. Conclusion

Springfield House is an attractive and architecturally distinctive Grade II listed early nineteenth-century dwelling, whose special interest derives from its historic form, proportions, traditional materials and surviving architectural detailing.

The proposals have been designed with this significance firmly in mind.

The widening of the existing access is limited to that necessary to provide improved vehicular access. The double parking bay is carefully integrated with the site's existing levels through a sympathetic retaining wall arrangement. The proposed rear patio, small retaining wall and very slight garden grading constitute modest domestic landscaping works which preserve the wider garden setting.

The proposed alteration to the rear door retains the existing opening and introduces two glazed panels reflecting the design language of another existing door on the rear elevation. Particular attention will be paid to joinery details, profiles, glazing and finish to ensure an appropriate relationship with the listed building.

The proposed summerhouse has similarly been selected and positioned with particular regard to the heritage significance of Springfield House. Its modest 2.4m x 2.4m footprint, traditional hipped form, cedar-shingle roof, painted timber shiplap cladding and Georgian-style fenestration provide an appropriately restrained garden-building character. Located discreetly within the rear garden, it will remain visually and architecturally subordinate to the listed dwelling and will not detract from the appreciation of its principal elevations, historic form or architectural detailing.

Materials throughout the development will be high quality and sympathetic to the age, architectural character and material palette of Springfield House.

The proposals therefore represent a restrained and proportionate intervention, allowing reasonable improvements to the functionality and enjoyment of the property whilst safeguarding the features and characteristics which contribute to its special architectural and historic interest.

It is consequently considered that the proposals will preserve the special interest, character and setting of Springfield House and constitute an appropriate form of development for this Grade II listed property.