

REPORT OUTLINE FOR AREA PLANNING COMMITTEES**Report No.**

Date of Meeting	04 September 2019
Application Number	19/02713/LBC
Site Address	Merchant House 34 High Street Royal Wootton Bassett SN4 7AF
Proposal	Replacement of UPVC windows, replacement of damaged lintels and rebuilding of front wall above windows
Applicant	Mr Johnathan Bourne on behalf of Royal Wotton Bassett Town Council
Town/Parish Council	ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT
Electoral Division	Wootton Bassett South– Cllr Hurst
Grid Ref	406728 182586
Type of application	Listed Building Consent
Case Officer	Caroline Ridgwell

1. Reason for the application being considered by Committee

The application has been called to committee at the request of Cllr Hurst so the committee can consider the design details.

2. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to assess the details of the works against national policies in the Planning Act, NPPF, BS7913 and other material considerations and to consider the recommendation that listed building consent should be **REFUSED**.

3. Main Issues

0 representations of objections from neighbours were received and 0 representations of support. Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council Planning committee has no objections to the proposals.

The key issues in considering the application are as follows:

- Principle of the works.
- Impact on significance of the heritage asset.
- Impact on the setting of the heritage assets

4. Site Description

Merchant House, 34 High Street, Royal Wootton Bassett is a grade II listed building in the middle of the town, dating from the early C19. It was first listed on 17 January 1955 and described as "*House, now shop. Early C19. Stone slate roof, Welsh slate rear pitch. Stone*

gable and rear wing 2 storey. Symmetrical facade, recent ground floor shop windows and central door. Brick quoins. Flat brick arches over timber windows to first floor. Brick dentilled eaves.” And forms a group with numbers 35 and 36 High Street. The ground floor on the high street accommodates two shops, the first floor is flats and the rear wings are offices. The building has had some unfortunate modern interventions, including uPVC windows on the first floor of the front elevation, misaligned and inadequate grey uPVC rainwater goods and a failing felt and bitumen flat roof to name but a few. The building has now been purchased by the town council who are keen to enhance this designated heritage asset and ensure the long-term future of the building.

The house is centrally located within Royal Wootton Bassett town, is adjacent to and in close proximity to several listed buildings. The site is within a Conservation Area.

5. Planning History

N/87/02358/LBC	ALTERATIONS TO LISTED BUILDING(INSTALL SHOP WINDOWS ON THE WEST WALL) - APPROVED
N/93/00233/ADC	NON-ILLUMINATED DIRECTION SIGN DIRECTIONAL SIGN – REFUSED
N/95/01946/LBC	SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION/ NEW WINDOWS & DOORS TO SIDE ELEVATION/BUILD UP INTERNAL OPENING/GENERAL REFURBISHMENT & REPAIRS & REMOVE STAIRCASE EXTENSION/WINDOWS AND DOORS – APPROVED
N/95/01945/FUL	REAR EXTENSION AND NEW WINDOWSAND DOORS TO SIDE ELEVATION EXTENSION/WINDOWS AND DOORS – APPROVED
N/98/01883/LBC	INTERNAL & EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS INTERNAL/EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS - PERMISSION
N/98/01882/FUL	CHANGE OF USE (UNIT 3 GROUND FLOOR TO A2 ESTATE AGENT) AND TWO FIRST FLOOR ROOMS TO OFFICE PLUS EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS USE AS OFFICES/ESTATE AGENTS - PERMISSION
N/99/01423/LBC	AMENDMENT TO N/98/1883/LB SHOPFRONTS RELATING TO UNIT 3 - PERMISSION
N/99/00846/LBDC	SUBMISSION OF DETAILS RELATING TO CONDITIONS 2(a)(1)(2) & (3) RELATING N.98.1883.LB DETAILS OF NATURAL STONE AND BRICK/SHOP WINDOWS/DOORS AND FRAMES - PERMISSION
N/99/01725/LBDC	SUBMISSION OF DETAILS PURSUANT TO CONDITION 2(A)1 OF N/98/1883/LB - DETAILS OF ADVERTISEMENT – PERMISSION
16/06854/LBC	Repairs to the existing building including decorations, replacing UPVC windows, replacing damaged slates, replacing damaged lintels. - APPROVED

17/00989/LBC	Take down and rebuild front parapet wall to level of first floor window lintols, and provide additional support to main roof structure in order to improve structural integrity - APPROVED
18/05985/LBC	Repairs to the existing building including replacing a rotten timber window and repairs to the rear gable wall at first floor level. - APPROVED

6. The Proposal

The application seeks listed building consent for replacement of the two uPVC windows at first floor level on the front elevation with timber framed casement windows, replacing the timber lintols over the first floor windows, as well as taking down and rebuilding the brick arch and wall above the first floor windows.

7. Local Planning Policy

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Area) Act 1990

NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework)

Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paras 189, 192, 193, 194, 196 and 200)

BS 7913:

British Standards Guide to the conservation of Historic Buildings

Historic England Planning advice note 2

Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment – Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning:2:

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

Core Policy 57 (i) and (iv) – Ensuring high quality design and place shaping

Core Policy 58 – Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan:

P7-Design

8. Summary of consultation responses

Royal Wotton Bassett Town Council- No objection.

0 letters of objection have been received.

0 letters of support have been received.

9. Publicity

The application was advertised by a site notice and press advert. No comments were received.

10. Listed Building Considerations

Under the provisions of section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and the provisions of the NPPF para 2, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. At the current time the statutory development plan in respect of this application consists of the Wiltshire Core

Strategy (WCS) (Adopted January 2015); the 'saved' policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan (NWLP) 2011 (adopted June 2006); and the Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan (made April 2018).

Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require Local Planning Authorities in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Principle of the works

One of the principal ethics of conservation is to only carry out work if it is completely necessary, to choose the simplest and least intrusive option, repair rather than replace, and to ensure as far as possible that the work is reversible. This is in order to retain as much as possible of the historic fabric in-situ and not harm its significance. In the vast majority of cases this is possible but may be more complicated than removing the original fabric and replacing it.

In 2016 consent was granted under application 16/06854/BC for works to include replacement of the uPVC double glazed windows with timber framed flush casement windows, replacement of some Velux rooflights with conservation rooflights, repointing of chimneys, brick and stonework, replacing cement verges with lime mortar, replacing flashings, replacing the felt/bitumen flat roof with grp and replacement of the paving in the small rear courtyard. In addition, the drainage in the rear courtyard will be altered in order to reduce the frequency of flooding. There is also a suggestion to alter the threshold of the door from the pedestrian side passage into rear section of the building. Rather than adjusting the threshold, this is going to be achieved by adding a drainage channel in front of the doors.

The use of GRP for flat roofs is not usually accepted on heritage assets. However, the size of this roof would result in a requirement to rebuild the structure in order to create falls for lead to be laid correctly. In this particular circumstance the manmade membrane will be accepted. The grey uPVC rainwater goods will be replaced with cast metal, not black uPVC as written on the drawings.

Further investigation was carried out following the listed building consent being granted and prior to any works commencing. It showed that there was a structural weakness with the main roof and that structural reinforcement is required to prevent further damage. Also, that the degree by which the brick wall has been displaced above the first floor window is too far to resolve in any less intrusive way than taking down the brickwork to lintol level and rebuilding in its correct position. Consent was granted in May 2017 (17/00989/LBC) for this work over and above that permitted under 16/06854/LBC.

Once work commenced on site, it emerged that the lintols over the first floor front windows were to be replaced and a catnic lintol added. This work had not been agreed in advance of the works commencing, the method and materials were not considered good conservation practice and the structural calculations seemed to be trying to achieve new build standards. After lengthy debates, the works ceased, the unauthorised uPVC windows were reinstalled and the new timber framed windows that had already been made were stored elsewhere.

This application is for replacement of the two unauthorised uPVC windows with single glazed timber framed casement window on the first floor of the front elevation (already approved in the previous applications), taking down and rebuilding the brickwork above the two first floor windows so that they are returned to sit flush with the rest of the brick elevation (already approved in previous applications), insertion of a concrete lintol above the existing timber

lintol on each of the first floor windows on the front elevation, and addition of a steel catnic lintol 'L' lintol to reinforce the brick arch to the windows. This lintol would be visible externally on the underside of the brick arch/window reveal. The proposals for the lintol are an amendment to the originally submitted scheme which suggested removal of the existing timber lintol to be replaced with either a timber or a pre-stressed concrete lintol with catnic lintol.

The previous consent was for taking down the brickwork between the parapet wall and the top of the first floor windows on the front elevation, to be rebuilt in line with the rest of the front elevation brickwork, to remove the uPVC windows currently fitted in two first floor openings on the front elevation and replace them with single glazed timber framed small pane casement windows, to replace an internal lintol on the rear elevation of the building, and works to stabilise the roof structure.

Windows -

Replacement of the unauthorised uPVC windows with timber framed single glazed windows has already been approved and is acceptable.

Brickwork -

Taking down and rebuilding the dislodged brickwork above the two first floor windows has already been approved and is acceptable. From site inspection this work appears to have already been carried out in 2018. An email from the builder confirm that the brickwork was reinstated to secure the building as a temporary replacement using the mortar mix agreed on site because the windows were not replaced. The sample panel was approved and the obvious misalignment of the brickwork, particularly above the left hand window, has now been removed, although the joints are not as fine as the completed result will be. Unfortunately, repeating the work with these old bricks increases the chances of losing historic material, as the more these bricks are manipulated, the greater the chance of breakage. Due to the risks of losing more historic fabric, this would not generally be considered acceptable so soon after this work was carried out previously. However, the tightness of the joints has not been achieved in the temporary fix so very reluctantly, repeating the dismantling and rebuilding work will be accepted.

Lintols -

The structural works to the lintols are not supported. The proposals and calculations were reviewed by a CARE registered structural engineer for the LPA and the advice given was that the solution was not in accordance with good conservation practice and the degree of structural reinforcement proposed was excessive for a heritage asset. The current lintols have not failed and the load on the lintol is not likely to exceed its current weight unless there is heavy snowfall (which is unlikely nowadays). An alternative solution has been suggested and that would be to insert a stainless steel angle over the top of the existing timber lintol which would be hidden from view, as well as possibly adding bed-joint reinforcement in the brickwork above. This work would be less obtrusive and less harmful to the significance of this heritage asset. The options were looked at by a senior building control officer who confirmed that this less obtrusive solution would be accepted by Building Control. The solution was put forward to the agents but rejected. It was also suggested that the agent seeks an opinion from a CARE registered structural engineer but that was also rejected.

In addition to the intrusive engineering works, the brickwork has already been taken down and rebuilt. These are historic bricks and are quite soft. To take the sections of walling down again increases the possibility of damage to the bricks and loss of historic material. As mentioned above, this will be accepted reluctantly, as the rebuilding work does not match the tight joints of the historic mortar beds that remain undisturbed. Nevertheless, this work will need to be carried out with extreme care in order not to lose more historic bricks.

Impact on Heritage Assets

There are two issues here:

1. Whether the addition of any form of structural reinforcement is necessary to beef up the lintols over the two first floor window openings on the front elevation;
2. If reinforcement is necessary, what form should it take.

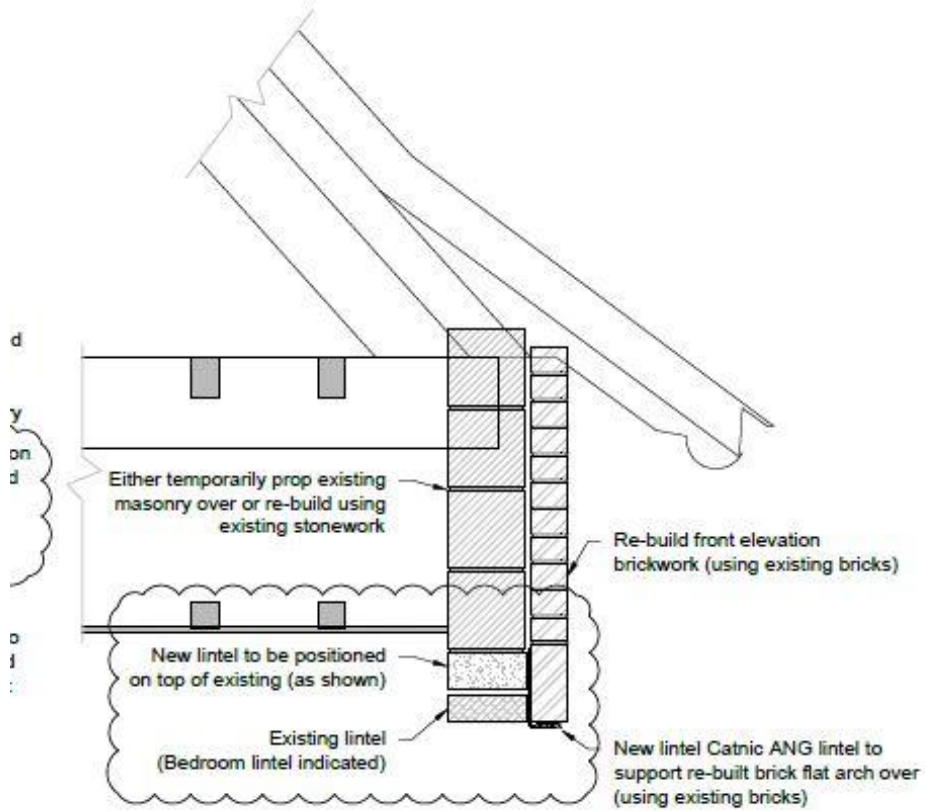
1. Is strengthening necessary?

The approach by the applicants appears to be to add reinforcement as a preventative measure. A problem with the roof truss in the attic above had been discovered and consent granted for structural works to that under 17/00989/LBC. That failure resulted in lateral movement, pushing the gable wall out but may also have put pressure on the walls below (front walls). The submitted heritage statement says that "*The principle of the replacement of the failed timber lintels has previously been accepted as it formed an integral part of application reference 16/06854/LBC*". It was not in fact discussed as part of the 2016 application. Furthermore, the statement goes on to say that "*...the existing lintels exceed their allowable bending stress and that the inner timber lintels should be replaced, with either timber or pre-stressed concrete. The proposals seek to comply with these recommendations to ensure the structural stability of the building.*" The submitted report from the structural engineer (ref 4158-R02) states in point 2.4 "*The existing timber lintels supporting the inner skin masonry and roof structure over the existing window openings do not comply with British Standards by calculation.*" There are differing arguments being put forward as to whether the lintols over the first floor front elevation windows have actually failed, are on the point of failure, or may fail if additional weight is added because they do not tie in with guidance for British Standards.

The proposals appear to go beyond what is necessary, thereby harming the significance of the heritage assets through unnecessary intrusive works, the addition of new materials and non-traditional details in the form of catnic lintols. Looking at historic buildings and trying to achieve structural standards found in new buildings leads to harmful works that are not necessary.

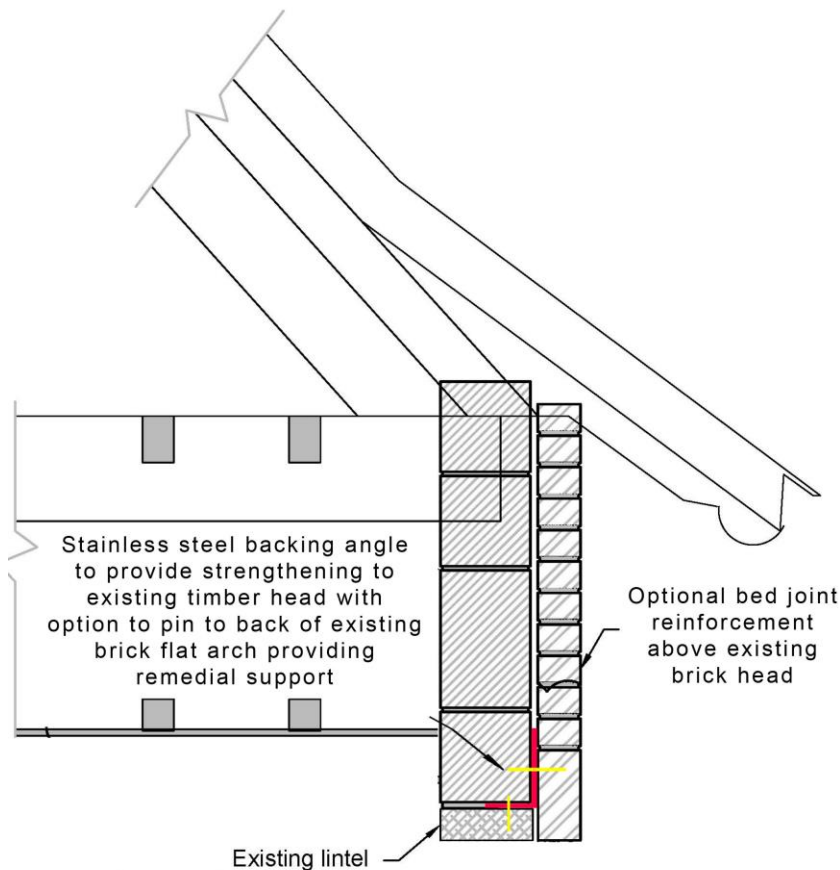
2. If some strengthening is required, what form should it take?

Should it be agreed that the lintols do require strengthening in some way, there is a less intrusive and more subtle method than the one proposed. An alternative solution has been put forward which adheres to the conservation approach that the least intrusive solution is most acceptable for a heritage asset. The more conservative solution would be to strengthen the lintols so that they are adequate to carry the required loading. The applicants proposals appear to be based on requirements for a new building and would be far more intrusive. A catnic lintol is not a traditional detail, it is found on new buildings.



1-1 Section 1-1
Scale: 1:20

SDS strengthening proposals 22.05.19



Merchants House, Wooton Bassett

Option for strengthening to existing first floor window head



Mann Williams Alternative Less intrusive and not externally visible solution

Setting of heritage assets

Replacement of the current uPVC windows in the two first floor openings on the front elevation with timber framed, small pane single glazed casement windows has already been approved and will enhance the conservation area setting of the heritage assets. The works to improve the alignment and pointing of the brickwork above the first floor windows on the front elevation will have a small impact on the heritage assets and their setting but this may be negated if historic bricks are lost when the wall is dismantled again. The works to the internal lintol will have a negligible impact on the setting of the heritage assets. It is considered that the matters debated in this application will have very little impact on the setting of the heritage assets.

11. Conclusion (The Planning Balance)

The proposed works to the lintol over the two first floor windows on the front elevation would harm the special historic interest of the heritage assets due to the intrusive nature of the works and introduction of unsympathetic details and materials. The degree of strengthening is excessive and will create two areas of overly rigid masonry that will not move with the rest of the building. Furthermore, removing the recently rebuilt sections of brickwork above the two first floor windows will result in unnecessarily disturbing historic material that has only recently been rebuilt. The proposed works would be contrary to Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990, the NPPF section 16, the BS7913 and Historic England's Planning Advice Note 2 (Managing significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment. On a local level, Wiltshire Core Strategy (Jan 2015)

CP57 (i), (iv) & CP58 (Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment), and Policy 7 of the Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan (Made April 2018) due to the introduction of a non-historic detail in the form of the catnic lintol.

RECOMMENDATION

Listed Building Consent should be REFUSED for the reason set out below:

- 1 The proposed works to the lintol over the two first floor windows on the front elevation would harm the special historic interest and significance of the heritage assets due to the intrusive nature of the works and introduction of unsympathetic details and materials. The degree of strengthening is excessive and will create two areas of overly rigid masonry that will not move with the rest of the building. Furthermore, removing the recently rebuilt sections of brickwork above the two first floor windows will result in unnecessarily disturbing historic material that has only recently been rebuilt. The proposed works would be contrary to Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990 and NPPF section 16 paras 189, 192, 193, 194, 196 and 200, and the BS7913, as well as Wiltshire Core Strategy (Jan 2015) CP57 (i), (iv) & CP58 and Policy 7 of the Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan.