

North Hertfordshire District Council

Building Conservation comments

File Ref: 24/02060/FPH & 24/02061/LBC

Date: 20/12/2024

Planning Officer: AHD

Address: Julians, Julians Park, Rushden, Buntingford, Hertfordshire, SG9 0TD

Subject: see below.

- **24/02060/FPH** - External alterations to Music Room and Service Wing. Partial conversion of Coach House (Home Farm) to residential annexe. Demolition of mid C20 Workshop and construction of Swimming Pool and Gym with link corridor together with erection of walled courtyard to south of new Pool and Gym. Demolition of 2no garage buildings (retaining early C18/early C19 wall and incorporated into the construction of replacement garage building). Reinstate loop driveway.
- **24/02061/LBC** - Internal and external alterations to Villa, Music Room and Service Wing. Internal alterations to former Coach House (Home Farm) at ground and first floor to facilitate partial conversion to residential annexe. Demolition of mid C20 Workshop and construction of Swimming Pool and Gym with link corridor. Demolition of the larger of 2no garage buildings (retaining early C18/early C19 wall to be incorporated into the construction of replacement garage building). Repairs to wall, pillars, and railings to Entrance Courtyard.

1.0 Recommendation

- 1.1 I previously commented under ref: 23/01014/PREH on 16/01/2024 and 30/04/2024. Following feedback from Historic England an updated revised scheme was received on 5 April 2024 and it was with respect to this scheme that I stated: *I am satisfied that considerable effort has been made to address previous matters raised with some relatively minor compromises required along the way. In the event that formal applications are submitted and subject to consideration of conditions and further appraisal of the rear windows, I am likely to find the proposal acceptable and that the works will not harm this listed building's special character.*
- 1.2 It is considered that further changes are required before these applications are ready for determination. I have discussed my thoughts recently with Melanie Meyer and was initially going to hold my comments in abeyance pending a formal response from Historic England.

2.0 Proposed Ground Floor Plan - drawing no. 2309/PD/201 Rev L and Proposed Plan (Kitchen Area) - drawing no. 2309/PD/203 Rev J

- 2.1 Since commenting in April, drawing no. 2309/PD/201 Rev J has been updated to Rev L whilst drawing no. 2309/PD/203 Rev I has been updated to Rev J. As stated above, this process has involved Historic England throughout with what I consider to be a general consensus on the approach taken. However, I note SPAB's response received on 30 October and which raises several matters.
- 2.2 One such matter is that whilst no objection is raised to the demolition of the existing 1939 workshop building, concerns are raised regarding the proposed pool building with the SPAB view being that it is not convinced that connecting the two structures is appropriate. Furthermore, SPAB has stated that a new 1.8-meter-high brick wall to create a courtyard would 'obscure the

glazed link from the southwest, visually forming a solid connection between the buildings’ and that the proposed pool building is also ‘larger than the workshop and will feature a parapet at the same height as the workshop ridge, as well as two projecting bays’ thereby increasing ‘the overall mass of the building’. SPAB states that ‘Combined with the repositioning of the structure in front of the service wing, the pool building would become much more dominant than the workshop building, the harm caused by this dominance has not been addressed in the supporting documents’.

2.3 SPAB continue by stating that

The justification provided within the HDAS for connecting the structures is to “encourage use.” Unfortunately, we do not consider this justification sufficient to outweigh the harm that would be caused to the historic interest of the asset. If the pool building were to be a separate structure at a similar distance from the service wing as the workshop building, the structure would become less dominant and therefore might be acceptable.

2.4 Whilst the pool building is undoubtedly larger and would physically connect with the service wing resulting in the loss of a 24-pane window and brickwork below (see photo below), the design of the link is such that I consider its impact has been kept to a minimum ensuring to an extent, a sense of visual separation for the pool building.



Detail of the replica horizontal sliding sash window and brickwork.

2.5 A historic recording and analysis of the kitchen (26 May 2023) was undertaken by BJHC. I note the following with respect to the Butler’s Pantry Corridor:

The cupboards that are built into Butler’s Pantry Corridor conceal a very large fireplace with a heavy oak bressummer. The cupboard doors are fixed with nailed on butterfly hinges and are likely EC18th but must be resited as part of the 1939 works as the owner has a photograph of a C17th overmantle that has been removed. The corridor walls are panelled and have small shelves. There is a roughly formed arch in the ceiling which is probably a flue for a copper or small stove.



2.6 SPAB states the following:

*We question the proposal to open up the Butler's Pantry Corridor for the reconstruction of the 17th-century overmantel. The HDAS states that this intervention aims to enhance the understanding of the building, despite resulting in the loss of 18th-century fabric. This perspective overlooks the fact that buildings evolve over time, with successive layers of alterations reflecting the changing needs and aspirations of their owners. Removing these layers in pursuit of reconstructing a lost historic feature diminishes the building's complexity and erases part of its historical record. **We do not believe that the loss of historic fabric can be justified by the reconstruction of the overmantel. Therefore, we are unable to support this intervention.***

2.7 I understand the point made here and I'll come back to this shortly. In the meantime, it is acknowledged that several doors would either be removed or need to be repurposed if the open-plan arrangement is to be proceed.

2.8 I note the following at page 27 of the submitted HDAS:

The 4no Georgian style doors located in C20th partitions, that will be made redundant as part of this work, will be re-used within the new layout, with one relocated to the first floor of the Villa.

The Butler's Pantry door, D1, indicated to the right side in the photo above, (Historic Recording p.24) will be relocated in a new frame and partition and will form a lobby to the external door leading to the north terrace, adjacent to its existing position.

Door D4, (Historic Building Recording p.16) located within the MC20th partition forming the closet will be relocated to the proposed shower room partition, in approximately the same location.

Door D3 (Historic Building Recording p.20) will be relocated to the first floor of the Villa, where it will match the other doors to Bedroom 2.

The C17th door (Historic Recording p.26 & 27) D2 will be relocated to the proposed laundry partition.

The door between the Lobby and the Kitchen will remain in place (Historic Recording p.18)

The door between the Kitchen and the Butler's Pantry service corridor is MC20th will be re-used elsewhere. (I will refer to this as D5 – Historic Recording p.21)

Whilst I made no mention in my previous comments to whether these doors should be retained or not, there is arguably a case to retain the character of the Butler's Pantry Corridor. In so doing potentially doors D1 and D5 could be retained in-situ. If the applicant was seeking a unformed approach to doors off the kitchen then I am appreciate that my suggestion would not achieve this.



Door D1 - The Butler's Pantry has an interesting 3 panel door with the fields outlined with machined mouldings which are missing where the two locks are applied. The door is hung on simple hinges set out on blocks with slot headed screws. There is an applied coat hook rail as well as a single coat hook behind the door.

Door D2 - There are historic game hooks and a suspension chain with no obvious use. In the floor there is a drain for a sink that has been removed. The door is a C17th style vertically boarded, filleted and plank door with hobnails and has two repair plates. The wooden box lock has been let in and the Suffolk Latch and automatic door closer are MC20th. The door is rehung on mild steel T-strap hinges with slot headed screws and later Phillips head screws as repairs. This was originally an external door

Door D3 - The door to the service corridor appears to be an original Georgian style 6 panel door and is hung on a T-strap hinge and a pintle hinge. It has an EC19th style bolt and figure of eight loop for a hasp and padlock. There is a replacement C20th Suffolk Latch as well as a keeper for an earlier one. There is also a metal wear plate for a self-closer. It is evident this door has had a long life.

Door D5 - The door into the Hallway is from the 1939 works. The door into the Butler's Pantry Corridor is a two panel Georgian style servant's door with C19th bolt and an C18th or EC19th Suffolk Latch nailed in position. Currently hung on butt hinges it has a broken off T-strap hinge and L-hinge. The top has an added fillet and the mid-rail has been quite badly damaged.

2.9 At page 58 of the BHJC report it states:

Of interest are the many reused doors that have been rejuvenated and rehung as part of the new layout. When looking at doors it is important to consider how they are hung on the frames. In the EC19th it was still commonplace to nail the hinges to the door and the frames or hang them on pintles. The only door that meets this criteria is the side door out into the garden by the Butler's Pantry.

The other doors, while older than 1939, have all been refurbished, altered and rehung. The door from the Kitchen to the corridor leading to the Store has been used as a pattern for two other doors but has also been rehung. In this case it has a T-strap hinge and a special kind of pintle that acts as a self-closer. This later stopped working and a MC20th self-closer was added (now removed).

2.10 To address SPAB's objection to the proposed interventions within the Butler's Pantry Corridor, consideration could be given to retaining existing doors, cupboards and panelling. I appreciate that I previously stated a "consequence of removing the C20 partitions forming the Butler's Pantry/Laundry, the amended layout provides the opportunity to reinstate the C17 fireplace and bressummer beam to the proposed kitchen and dining area". However, I can be convinced of an alternative approach offered by SPAB which is to do less, and I am not entirely convinced that to reinstate an overmantle in what would be an opened-up space adjacent to the external doorway leading to the Butler's Pantry Corridor is fully justified. Not interfering with this space would enable two existing doors to also be retained in-situ (see 2.7).

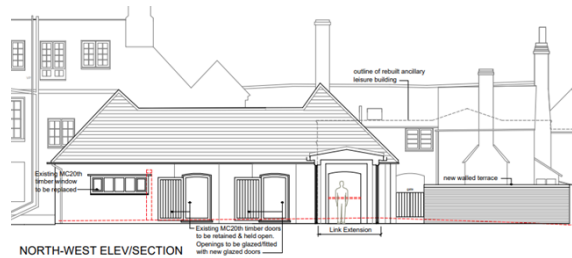
3.0 **Proposed First and Second Floor Plan - drawing no. 2309/PD/202 Rev J**

3.1 Since commenting in April, drawing no. 2309/PD/202 Rev C has been updated to Rev J and is considered unobjectionable.

4.0 **Proposed Elevations – drawing no. 2309/PD/204 Rev H**

4.1 SPAB states that:

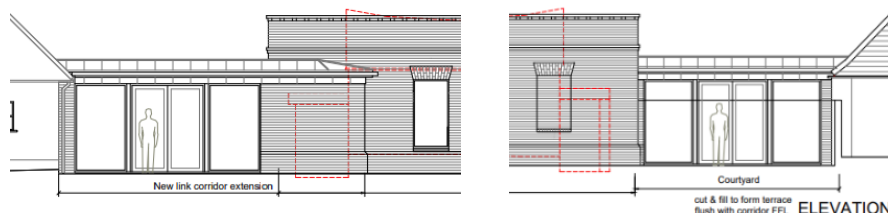
The introduction of fully glazed doors to the south elevation is problematic. The harsh visual properties of an unbroken expanse of glass can be a stark contrast with the surrounding historic brickwork. We therefore encourage the applicant to consider a design that incorporates smaller glass panels within a timber frame if there is a need to introduce more light to the internal space. We are also not convinced that the rehanging of the historic doors onto parliament hinges would work well in practice, further detailed drawings should be provided to show the impact that the proposals will have on the historic fabric.



- 4.2 I note the point made here and if the doors are set on parliament hinges, I assume it would be the inner face of the doors which would appear externally against the building. I am less perturbed by the fully glazed doors which, whilst contrasting, would not in my view be harmful. It is noted that due to the projecting brickwork surrounds, only part of each door would sit completely flush against the brickwork. Alternatively, I am prepared to consider, for instance, stable doors in these openings which could be fully or part-opened in good weather.



- 4.3 As stated previously, the handling of the pool link is such that it reads in design terms as a visually 'lighter weight' structure that will provide an acceptable link between the pool building and host building. As discussed with the architect, a condition could be imposed stating that this link should not receive blinds or any treatment to the glazing.



- 4.4 I previously queried as to how the timber braces in the images below relate to new fabric and that internal elevations would be welcome as part of a formal submission. An internal elevation is provided but it lacks the clarity of detail to

be able to make an informed decision without imposing a condition. It is understood that a more detailed internal elevation will be prepared.



5.0 Proposed Drive - drawing no. 2309/PD/205 Rev B

- 5.1 Previously, I stated one of the list entries refers to the forecourt walls, entrance gates and claire-voie (a claire-voie meaning literally 'clear way' and signifying an opening in an enclosure allowing one to see beyond it. It was much used in French 17th-century architecture).



The turning area is considered unobjectionable. I previously stated that the stone pillars that terminate the curved railings should be underpinned and retained in-situ rather than being relocated elsewhere in the grounds and I understand that these are to remain in-situ.

6.0 Proposed Garage Block - drawing no. 2309/PD/206 Rev C

- 6.1 Since commenting in April, drawing no. 2309/PD/206 Rev B has been updated to Rev C (although referred to as Rev D in NECDM indexing) and is considered unobjectionable.

7.0 Roof Section drawing no. 2309/PD/207 and Roof details/sections drawing no. 2309/PD/208

- 7.1 Unobjectionable.

8.0 Suggested conditions (FPH only)

1. Details of the roof tiles for the pool extension roof and garage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the development hereby consented. Thereafter the roofs shall be covered in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II* listed building under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

2. Prior to commencement of that part of the development hereby consented, a sample brick panel indicating brick type, bond and mortar mix for the pool extension and associated walled enclosure to form courtyard shall be erected close to the rear of the service wing and opportunity given for officers to inspect the panel(s). Once approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the pool extension and associated wall shall be built in accordance with the sample panel.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II* listed building under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

3. Prior to commencement of that part of the development hereby consented, a sample brick panel indicating brick type, bond and mortar mix for the garage building shall be erected on site and opportunity given for officers to inspect the panel(s). Once approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the pool extension and associated wall shall be built in accordance with the sample panel.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II* listed building under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

4. Details of all new rainwater goods shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the development hereby consented. Thereafter the rainwater goods shall be installed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II* listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan

Suggested conditions (LBC only)

1. Standard LBC time condition.
2. No blinds, obscure glazing or other treatment shall be installed to the glazing of the pool link unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II* listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

3. All new windows and external doors shall be manufactured in timber and the windows shall be externally white-painted unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II* listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

4. For the avoidance of doubt a comprehensive window schedule shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority indicating new windows, existing windows to be repaired and existing windows to be replaced. In addition, sections details of the joinery/glazing/framing of all new windows shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the development hereby consented. Thereafter the windows shall be manufactured and installed in accordance with the approved schedule and details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II* listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

5. The existing internal doors to the Butler's Pantry (D1) and the kitchen door adjacent shall be repaired and retained in-situ unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II* listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

6. As stated at page 27 of the submitted HDAS:

- i. Door D2 will be relocated to the proposed laundry partition;
- ii. Door D3 shall be relocated to the first floor of the Villa, where it will match the other doors to Bedroom 2;
- iii. Door D4 shall be relocated to the proposed shower room partition, in approximately the same location.

unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II* listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

Mark Simmons
Senior Conservation Officer