

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	25/02515/LBC & 25/02596/FPH
CASE OFFICER:	VW
APPLICATION SITE:	Old Manor House, Shaftenhoe End, Bogmoor Road Barley, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 8LE
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Extend south gable end, change cladding, and alter fenestration of existing west extension. Internal and external alterations including installation of air source heat pump on west elevation of existing west extension.

RECOMMENDATION:

I encourage consideration of the points raised before offering a final recommendation and conditions.

SHORT SUMMARY:

Impact on listed building's special character

The proposal will have some impact upon the listed building's special character occasioning a small degree of harm as set out in my report and where certain matters have not, in my opinion, be sufficiently well justified.

SITE CONTEXT:

Old Manor House is grade II listed and is a Designated Heritage Asset for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF. The list entry reads as:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1102546?section=official-list-entry>



DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

I note my colleague's advice under appn ref: 24/02784/PREH below:

A pre application site visit was undertaken to advise agent re strip out work and the refurbishment and further proposed development.

This Grade II Manor House has been the subject of modern later interventions which include panelling to walls, later internal staircase, a later side garden room, a non-original porch to the North elevation.

Internal alterations as detailed in agent's email 18 February to the Conservation Officer are supported in principle, but this is subject to the submission of a Heritage Impact Statement notwithstanding any loss of significant historic fabric.

Installation of double glazing. Retrofit applied glazing bars to the existing windows of the North wall elevation are unlikely to be supported. Replacement windows similar in design to the original windows (casements) will be considered favourably subject to an LB application. All other proposals to fenestration and glazing will be considered when an LB application is received.

External alterations that include the removal of the non-original porch to the north elevation and replaced with a more appropriate lead hooded porch is welcomed but subject to an application. Other external interventions such as heat sources and siting will be considered.

Section 4.0 entitled 'Background Understanding of Site – Site Inspection' on page 44 of the submitted Heritage Statement provides a chronology for this building which assists the understanding of this heritage asset.

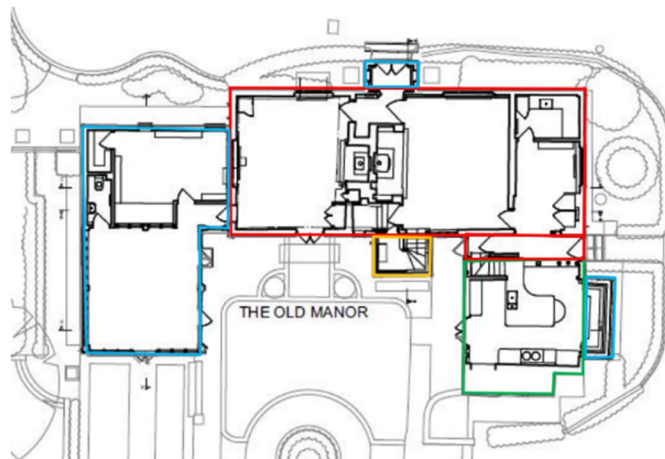


Figure 4.50: Showing the phasing of the house. The following key has been used:

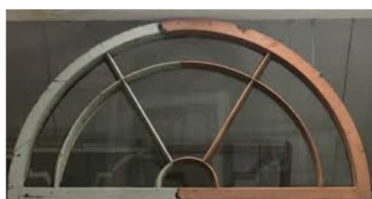
- Green: Denotes 16th century.
- Red: Denotes 1624.
- Orange: Denotes 1700.
- Blue: Denotes 1990s- early 2000s.

EXTERNAL SCHEME ITEMS

Main Range

Removal of porch and front doors and reinstatement of traditional canopy

Referencing Fig 4.4 on page 12 of the HS, no objection is raised to this proposal. Having said that even though there is evidence of the 3-pane rectangular fanlight to the former opening as shown in Fig 4.5, I find this a little incongruous and a semi-circular fanlight may be better i.e. images below and would be similar in form to that which exists on the East Elevation (Fig 4.59 and 4.60 on page 47).



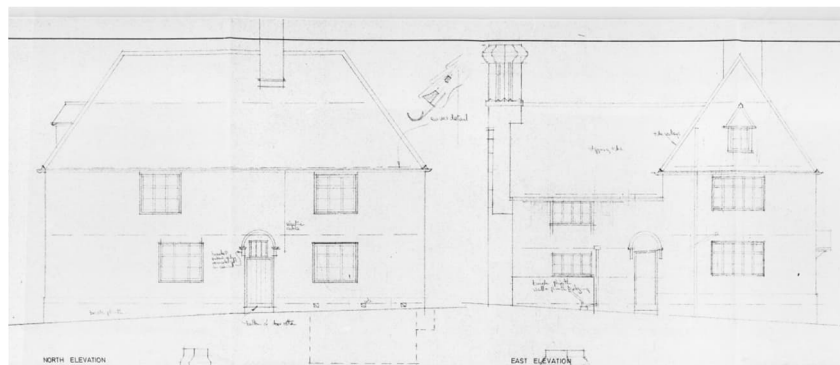
New stone steps adjoining main entrance.

No objection.

Ground and First floor windows on northern elevation of the main range to be replaced.

When listed on 27 May 1968, Old Manor Farm House was described as '1624, date on stair wing. Altered C18 and C19' with '6 light C19 mullion and transom flush frame small pane casements' and with left end having '10 light mullion and transom casements and a 2 light hipped dormer'.

These windows appear to be the very same windows depicted in the existing elevation drawing no. 218/3 submitted under ref: 92/00169/1LB



The list entry states that the previous mullion / transom windows were C19 and on 19 August 1992, SPAB wrote the following:

We are also concerned about the proposed elevational treatment of the house. It would be preferable to repair, rather than replace the existing windows; the replacements currently proposed are too elaborate and would spoil the attractive simplicity of the building. The proposed north porch should be omitted for the same reason. Also, the proposed bay window is too large and elaborate for the east elevation. In addition, we suggest new dormer windows are confined to the rear elevation to limit their effect on the building's architectural character.

Internally, great care will be required with the repair and conservation of existing features. We also urge that every effort is made to retain and repair the secondary staircase and adjoining partitions.

It seems clear that this building is of considerable architectural and historic interest. In its present condition it seems likely that the building merits grade II* listed status and we strongly recommend that your authority approaches the Department of National Heritage to request this. The current

According to one source the tripartite sash window, specifically featuring the vertically sliding mechanism, gained prominence in 18th-century Britain as part of the Palladian and Georgian architectural movements. This building is neither Georgian or Palladian but a sense of grandiosement was created following the granting of consent under ref: 92/00169/1LB including dormers and large tripartite sashes (6-over-6s flanked by either 2-over-2s or 4-over-4s). Whilst SPAB considered that these windows would spoil the building's attractive simplicity, the significant attention paid to their detailing as noted in submitted drawing no. 218/8 is such that I consider that they make a positive contribution. I also note page 45 of the current HS which says that "prior to their installation the building had casement windows, more in keeping with the style of the building". Introducing slimlite-glazed mullion/transom windows is considered acceptable subject to the glazing bars not being applied.



Ground and first floor windows on eastern elevation of the main range to be replaced.

No objection.

Casement windows in front dormers, eastern elevation of main range and window in dormer on western side of main range to be replaced.

No objection.

Retrofitting of double glazed on those casement windows to be retained

No objection subject to 'through' not 'applied' bars.

French doors to be replaced with bifold doors on southern elevation of main range and existing French window opening to be enlarged

No objection.

Cross Wing

Existing French doors on western elevation of cross wing to be replaced

No objection.

Casement window in dormer on western elevation of cross wing and existing casement windows in bay window on the eastern elevation of the cross wing to be replaced.

No objection.

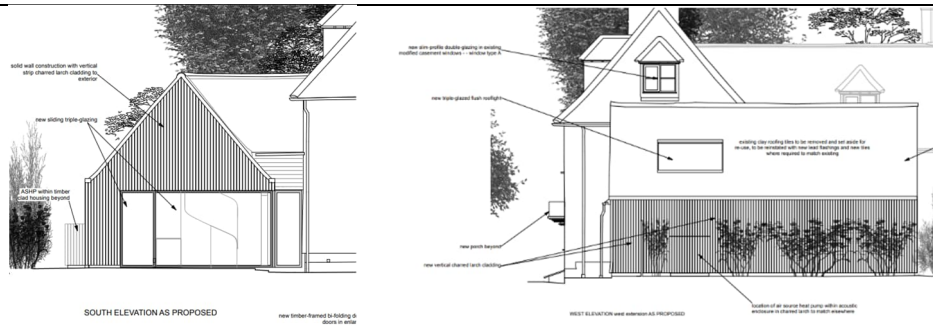
New window to be created on the southern elevation of the cross wing

No objection.

Sun Room

Alterations to External Envelope

Although the changes are visually significant it is considered that the changes will not harm the listed building's special character.



New air source heat pump to be installed adjoining the western elevation of the Sun Room

No objection.

INTERNAL ITEMS

Insulation of the interior between timber frame and installation of breathable insulation proposed below all first floor floors.

No objection.

Main Range

Replacement of the current main staircase

Page 5 of the 1992-94 RCHM report (Feb 1994) is reproduced at Fig 4.33 on page 28 of the HS and states that *"The modern staircase, constructed recently, exactly reproduces the one that it replaced"*. This is a commendable aspect of the scheme and whilst not historic fabric, seeking to replicate the original staircase was a worthwhile conservation exercise. However, I note the following at page 67 of the HS:

The current staircase newel post and splat balusters do not accurately copy the historic example seen in the 1992 photograph at Figure 4.14. The present balusters and newel post are mediocre in the quality of their execution.

Whilst it would be disappointing to see the replacement of the splat balusters with a sandblasted and blackened steel purpose-made balustrade, there is no convincing justification to resist this in heritage terms.

Original



Figure 4.14: 1992-94 photograph showing the historic splat balusters and newel post in the stair wing (Source: Historic England Archives, Reference: BBS2/06134).

1990's like-for-like replacement

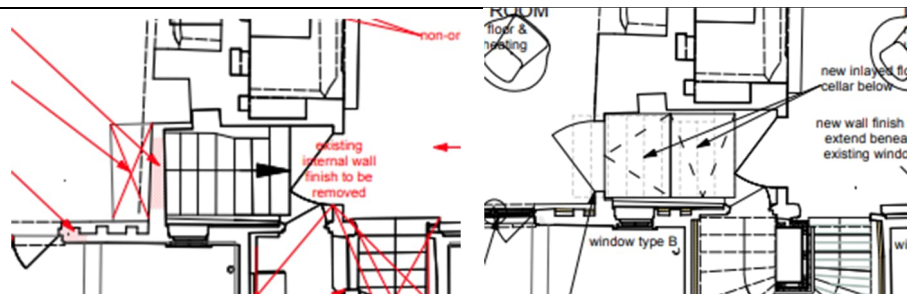


Figure 4.103: Showing the dining room doorway leading to the stair wing. Also showing the historic 3-light window, with one light blocked by the stair wing.

Ground floor

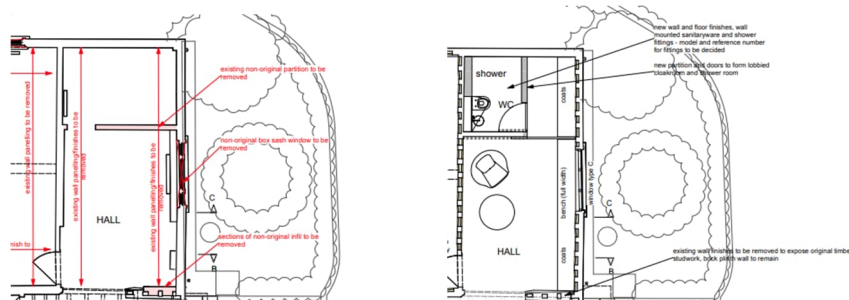
Creation of doorway from sitting room into cellar stairwell

No objection.



Removal of wall between Utility Room and adjoining room

No objection.



Removal of the infill wall adjoining door on eastern elevation of the cross wing

No objection.

New timber flooring in dining room and sitting room, entrance lobby and installation of underfloor heating

It is acknowledged at page 57 of the HS that *"The floor of the lobby area has modern narrow floorboards of no heritage value"* At page 58 of the HS it states that the Sitting Room *"has been fitted with generic solid wood modern narrow floorboards of no heritage value"* whilst at page 60 of the HS it states that the Dining Room has also been *"fitted with generic solid wood modern narrow floorboards of no heritage value"*. No objection is raised to the installation of new timber flooring and underfloor heating in these rooms.

First floor

First floor Western bedroom's floor repairs

The following is noted at page 68 of the HS and floor repairs are unobjectionable:

The room has been fitted with modern, good quality timber floorboards of no heritage value.

Alterations to floor coverings in first floor Western Bedroom

I note the following at 1.2 of the submitted DAS:

The documents submitted with this application include drawings from the project Structural Engineer showing details of two alternative options for strengthening the beam to mitigate further deflection. Further site investigation will determine the most viable option; both solutions involve strengthening the beam from above and, provided a new floor is laid level over the existing structure, the steelwork will not be visible when the works are complete.

New engineered timber floorboards are to be installed in the master bedroom. These will be laid on low-profile underfloor heating, which is to be laid level on firing pieces on the existing floor joists. Acoustic insulation is to be installed between the floor joists. Levelling the floor in the master bedroom will create a void mid-span of the main timber beam, and this void will accommodate the steel strengthening splint.

I have considered drawing no. Ref 24-722 Sheet SK2 and whilst I raise no objection to either of the beam strengthening options, for the avoidance of doubt, a condition could potentially be imposed.

Repositioning of chimneypiece in first floor Western Bedroom

No objection.

Creation of new doorway into first floor Eastern Bedroom

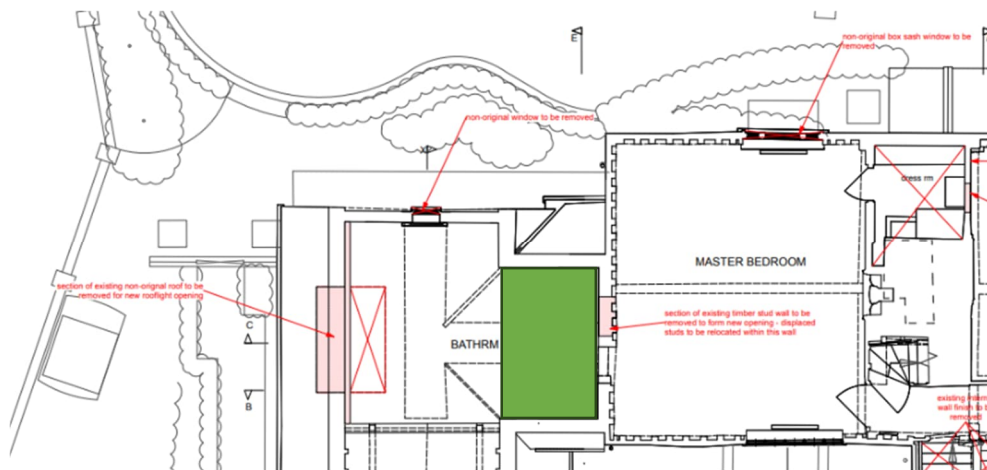
Comments at 1.4 c(v) on page 15 of the DAS are noted and is unobjectionable.

New doorway to be created between first floor Western Bedroom and sun room

Although the door has no significance, there appears to be no convincing justification for moving the door position and which will result in the unnecessary loss of historic fabric forming the gable end. I understand the rationale for introducing a full height naturally lit space over the kitchen but I encourage a compromise whereby a smaller Master ensuite is provided in the area shaded green below instead of there being a landing to the Master Bedroom. By all means introduce the circular shower into this space.



Figure 4.134:
Showing the doorway from the western bedroom into the bathroom at first floor level within the sun room.



New level floor to be introduced in first floor Eastern Bedroom

No objection.

Alterations to floor coverings in first floor Eastern Bedroom

No objection.

Dressing room adjoining Master Bedroom to be converted into a shower room

Arguably a contentious element of the scheme is that described at 1.6 ii of the DAS:

A new master shower room is to be installed ensuite to the master bedroom in the former dressing room. The shower is to be accommodated within a circular drum shower which will project into bedroom 2. Photos taken by English Heritage pre-1990 record the presence of an existing door opening in the north-west corner of bedroom 2 - to the right-hand side of the fireplace. Reinstatement of this opening would facilitate access to the master shower-drum as shown.

The earlier image below left (from DAS) can be compared with fig 4.150 at page 73 of the HS (below right).

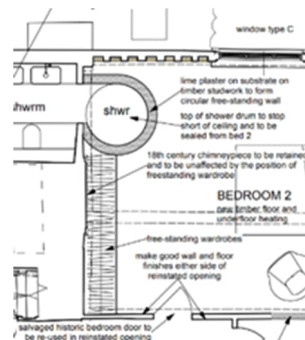


North-west corner of bedroom 2 pre 1990 showing a previous door opening to be reinstated.



Figure 4.150: Showing the western wall of the north-eastern bedroom.

Drawing no. 580 02 03 - Proposed 1st Floor Plan, shows the proposed shower to Master Bedroom penetrating Bedroom 2's space and the fireplace covered by wardrobes.



Page 73 of the DAS states:

Figure 4.16 shows a 1992 photograph of the room including its bolection moulded chimneypiece and overmantel. The room retains these elements. On the southern side of the chimneypiece is a small historic cupboard, which appears to provide access into the historic smoke hood, that predated the installation of the 18th century chimneypiece and overmantel. On the southern side of the western wall is a small 2-panelled door from approximately the 18th century that serves an understairs cupboard.

Both the Master Bedroom and Bedroom are within the 1624 historic core, the Built Heritage Consultancy states at page 110 the following:

Overall, the shower drum would appear somewhat incongruous given its shape and position within a bedroom, but its impact has been mitigated by the fact that it would be a reversible installation. A minor degree of harm is acknowledged here to the significance of the listed building, falling within the 'less than substantial harm' bracket at the negligible end of the spectrum.

Generally speaking, whilst some alterations may be reversible, the shower would be a semi-permanent incursion into Bedroom 2's space at the very least. I agree that there would be a degree of harm to the building's significance but this is not at the negligible end of the 'less than substantial' spectrum as suggested. When considered also alongside the screening of the bolection moulded chimneypiece and overmantel I conclude that the degree of harm to this room would be low/moderate. Considering that the existing

bathroom to the Master Bedroom is within the later addition, the shower room appears to be somewhat unjustified and adversely affects Bedroom 2's internal character. The same can be said of the wardrobes in Bedroom 2.

Loft

Creation of a W.C. and shower room in loft.

No objection.

Cross Wing - Ground floor

Historic brick surround to existing kitchen's fireplace to be restored (subject to investigation).

No objection.

Relocation of kitchen use into the existing sun room.

No objection.

Replacement of floor in existing kitchen and installation of underfloor heating.

No objection.

Sun Room

Replacement of floors and substrate in sun room and installation of underfloor heating.

No objection.

Removal of ground floor ceiling and floor structure above in sun room.

No objection.

New staircase within sun room from ground floor to first floor.

No objection.

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Sections 16(2) & 66(1)

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031:

Policy HE1

NPPF (December 2024):

The following paragraphs are relevant:

- **135 c)** (*sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment*),
- **207** (*local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting*)
- **210** (*desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*),
- **212** (*great weight should be given to the asset's conservation*),
- **213** (*clear and convincing justification*), and
- **215** (*harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use*).

CONCLUSION:

The proposal is broadly considered acceptable subject to matters raised.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons**DATE:** 27/11/2025