

Application Number:	WD/D/20/002081
Webpage:	https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/
Site address:	SHERBORNE HOUSE, NEWLAND, SHERBORNE, DT9 3JG
Proposal:	Re-use of Sherborne House into exhibition, events, function, restaurant and office space, with associated repair and extension
Applicant name:	Sherborne House Trust 2018
Case Officer:	Cass Worman
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Andrews

1.0 Referred by Nominated Officer following concerns raised by Sherborne Town Council

2.0 Summary of recommendation:

GRANT subject to conditions

3.0 Reason for the recommendation:

- Significant public benefit, regeneration of an underused site & secures a viable and ongoing use for a heritage asset at risk
- Design is considered appropriate and essential to the proposed function & uses, which would preserve the character of the Conservation Area and the less than substantial harm to heritage assets is far outweighed by public benefits of the scheme.

4.0 Key planning issues

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of development	Secures a heritage asset at risk, provides a variety of social, community and economic benefits in a sustainable town centre location
Design	The proposed extensions and additions are an appropriate response to the setting of the listed buildings and location within the Conservation Area
Listed Buildings	The proposal would comply with Policies ENV4 and NPPF Para 16, any less than substantial harm is outweighed by public benefit; secures an ongoing use for a heritage asset at risk

5.0 Description of Site

Sherborne House is a Grade I listed building, with separately listed Grade II Coach House and separately listed Grade II garden walls. The property is on the Historic England Buildings at Risk Register. It lies within the Conservation Area. Sherborne House has been largely vacant since the closure of the school, and since has had a complex planning history.

Significance of the heritage asset

Grade I listed Sherborne House is one of Sherborne's most notable historic buildings. The origin of the site is as a medieval borough created by Bishop Le Pour de Salisbury and the building incorporates fabric dating at least from the sixteenth century. However, the main architectural significance of Sherborne House derives from its early eighteenth construction phase. In the 1720s the principal three storey range was built by Sir Henry Seymour Portman as a dwelling of high status and architectural quality, intended to be one of the most impressive properties in the town. An inventory of 1726 describes a richly furnished and decorated interior, and elements of that still survive in the building. Most notable of those elements is the extremely well-preserved stairhall with its ornate staircase and the Classically painted walls and ceiling, which are attributed to the eminent court artist Sir James Thornhill.

Since its eighteenth-century heyday, Sherborne House has had a somewhat chequered history, and for much of the twentieth century it was used as a girls school, being purchased by Dorset County Council in the 1930s. This institutional use was not entirely compatible with conservation of the house's fine interiors, although the stairhall survived remarkably unscathed during this period. Despite the inevitable proliferation of low-grade buildings occurring around it, Sherborne House retained its dignified Classical exterior and generous grounds.

A lack of investment during the period of its educational use left the building in need of considerable repair. The school vacated it in the early 1990s and it was added to English Heritage's Buildings at Risk Register. The creation in the mid-1990s of a dedicated Arts Trust at Sherborne House provided an interim use for the building but ultimately failed to raise enough capital funding to establish a viable arts centre.

The granting of permission for residential development on land at the rear of the house has somewhat compromised its setting. However, the associated planning agreement did provide funds for essential external repairs to be undertaken, together with conservation of the Thornhill paintings. Despite consent being granted at that time for a flexible reuse of the house for arts and/or office use, the house remained empty and unused, until its purchase by the current owner in 2018

6.0 Description of Development

Since Autumn 2018, the property has been owned by the Sherborne House Trust. This application proposes to convert Sherborne House into an Arts Centre, providing space for arts administration, events, education and exhibitions.

The Georgian rooms on the ground and first floor of the main house building would be used for exhibition space, private, corporate and community events, the second floor of the main building would be converted into flexible office and co-working space.

A large, contemporary extension to the north creates a courtyard to the rear of the Tudor wing, providing exhibition and events space. The Tudor and Digby wings to the west will house a bistro, café and associated storage, kitchen and plant.

A new contemporary extension to the rear with copper finishes and glulam beams provide a flexible space for events, exhibitions and functions. A new range of single storey service buildings flank the west wall. A new entrance canopy is proposed to the front linking the Tudor Wing to the Main House.

The Tudor Wing and Coach House becomes the café/restaurant.

Landscaping proposals are set out to compliment with a piazza and soft amphitheatre to the rear/north of the site.

7.0 Relevant Planning History

The planning history of the site is complex, being a school and then following the redevelopment of the site with housing to the north and associated attempts to redevelop & reuse the Main House. Below is a summary of the pertinent main applications, there being a number of associated conditions and variation applications associated with these permissions:

WD/D/15/000444 Change of use from school to offices and retail and to make internal and external alterations Approved 22/05/2015

1/D/10/001037 Erect 44 residential dwellings together with associated works comprising demolition of part boundary walls & formation of car parking & access ways.
Approved 28/09/2011

1/D/10/001035 Change of Use of 1st & 2nd floor to Use Class B1 (business use) & change of use of ground floor to D1/B1 use (non-residential institution/business use).
Approved 28/09/2011

1/N/97/000291 Erect extension; enlarge vehicular access; form parking areas; create new pedestrian access; erect gates, railing and boundary wall and make change of use from school, youth club, 2No. dwellings and 1No. flat to an Arts/Heritage Centre with studio workshop. Approved 02/03/1998

8.0 List of Constraints

Wildlife - DERC
Wessex Water - Supply
RANS Yeovilton Safeguarding Area
Wessex Water - Waste
Area Inside DDB
Landscape Character Area
Surface water flooding
Listed Buildings
Groundwater Source Prot. Zones
Section 106
Contaminated Sites
Contaminated Sites Buffer
Veteran Trees 500m buffer

9.0 Consultations

All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

Consultees

Historic England – support subject to conditions

The Georgian Society – No comment

The Ancient Monuments Society – No comment

Sherborne Town Council:

The Town Council have commented that they are pleased to see the proposals to bring Sherborne House back into use after so much time laying dormant, however they raised a number of concerns and highlighted a lack of information presented in the application:

- The lack of comprehensive Business Plan.
- The lack of traffic management plan and construction traffic management plan.
- The lack of a consultee comment from Wessex Water, especially in regard to the sewage capacity.
- Question as to whether the development would generate a CIL contribution
- Concerned with regards to the loss of trees within the grounds of the house and suggested that contributions are used to plant new trees elsewhere within the town.
- Questioned whether environmentally friendly, low carbon options would be used when selecting kitchen equipment and sources of heat and light.
- Acknowledged a potential future conflict of interest as the Sherborne House project as presently envisaged, may in future take events, business and customers away from the council-run Digby Hall.
- Owing to concerns raised, request Committee consideration

Dorset Council Conservation Officer - support subject to conditions

Dorset Council Senior Archaeologist – No objection, taking into account previous archaeology surveys and previous use of the site, no archaeological conditions are required.

Representations received

Sherborne and District Society CPRE – support, some concerns as to the proposed design

Friends of Sherborne House – support *“this is a well-researched and exciting plan of which Sherborne Town will be proud and will bring great benefits to the community”*

Comments from Neighbouring residents raise concerns relating to amenity and are discussed in associated planning application WD/D/20/002081:

Total - Objections	Total - No Objections	Total - Comments
1	7	0

Petitions Objecting	Petitions Supporting
0	0
0 Signatures	0 Signatures

10.0 Relevant Policies

Adopted West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015-2031 (2015)

- ENV 4. HERITAGE ASSETS
- ENV 10. THE LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE SETTING
- ENV 12. THE DESIGN AND POSITIONING OF BUILDINGS

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

1. Introduction
2. Achieving sustainable development
4. Decision-making
12. Achieving well-designed places
15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Other material considerations

Design and sustainable development planning guidelines SPD

Sherborne Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)

Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment

11.0 Human rights

Article 6 - Right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 Protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted Development Plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.

12.0 Public Sector Equalities Duty

As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have “due regard” to this duty. There are 3 main aims:-

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty.

13.0 Financial benefits

Material considerations

- Additional jobs & employment
- Additional spending in the town centre from visitors to the attraction via shops, restaurants and accommodation etc

Non material considerations

- Business rates
- Additional spend in council car parks

14.0 Climate Implications

The application is supported by comprehensive documentation regarding designs for the proposed heating, ventilation, power and lighting. The Qoda Mechanical & Electrical Services Strategy Report 2443.R1 outlines a number of measures which will be taken to ensure the new-built element is as sustainable as possible, for example using high rated glazing for thermal insulation & high efficiency room-sealed boilers.

Design elements have been incorporated in order to meet the 10% consequential improvement target in the listed building, including new boiler plant, new ventilation plant, new LED lighting and smart controls – due to the listed nature of the site, more extensive energy saving upgrades are limited.

All new elements will comply with all relevant legislation, regulations, standards, guidance and good practice.

15.0 Planning Assessment

15.1 Principle of Development

This application follows pre-application advice, provided in conjunction with Historic England. The principle of the use for office and arts spaces is established via previous consents; however, these consents were never implemented, and the building as-is clearly cannot support itself financially, 20 years of attempts to secure funding for renovation have been unsuccessful, including efforts by Dorset Councils.

In order to preserve as much as possible of the existing building fabric that merits the listing, and meet modern accessibility, fire safety standards, and to provide a flexible, multipurpose space, suitable for a wide variety of uses, it seems reasonable to require a modern extension to facilitate the multi-uses proposed, and required to secure the long term future of the building. The choice of a relatively large footprint but relatively low height fits both the proposed business need and planning/listed building needs, and is considered to be acceptable in principle.

The application is supported by a Business Activities Summary, which outlines the Sherborne House Trust's plans to enter into a series of partnerships with third party organisations, both charitable and private, to help deliver its vision for Sherborne House.

The Trust plans to work with Dorset Visual Arts to develop a high quality and wide-ranging art, design, and making programme at Sherborne House, who would be based in the first-floor Tudor Wing office space and will also manage a selling exhibition and gallery space. It is also envisaged that The Sherborne House Trust would develop relations with a number of other regional and local arts organisations.

Other income streams envisaged by The Sherborne House Trust include:

- café, delicatessen and restaurant, housed in the Tudor Wing
- The Georgian rooms on the ground and first floor of the main building would be available for hire for smaller private, corporate and community events, weddings, conferences, talks, supper clubs, parties, exhibitions and workshops, with concessionary rates available for art and community organisations and users of the second-floor flexible offices

- The second floor of the main building would be converted into flexible office and co-working space
- the proposed new contemporary rear extension would allow Sherborne House to host a wide variety of large scale private, corporate and community events, e.g. functions, weddings, wakes, pre-wakes, festivals and parties, as well as conferences, lectures, film nights and live streamed events, exhibitions and art fayres etc

The business case which has been provided, outlines the proposed uses of the buildings, and these activities outlined are considered to be both viable, sustainable and in the Council's opinion, sufficiently demonstrates that the future of this building would be safeguarded by the use proposed.

The Sherborne House Trust has secured funding via a charitable trust and foundation to carry out the required restoration works to the listed building, and to bring the site back into a long term and viable use. The funders have agreed to underwrite the first three years of trading, which ensures a secure financial foundation for the beginnings of the project.

Conditions would be used to ensure that the restoration and renovation works to the listed buildings are carried out in tandem with the new build elements, and that the required works to the listed buildings are completed prior to first use & occupation of the new build elements.

15.2 Design and Impact on Listed Building

Since pre-application discussions, the scheme has evolved considerably in response to concerns expressed by Conservation experts about the physical and visual impacts of the proposed contemporary extensions on the listed building. As a result, this application has taken on board many of the concerns raised, and the overall scheme has the support of Historic England and the Council's Conservation Officer.

It is acknowledged that given the scale of the scheme's proposals, the proposed development would have a significant visual and physical impact on the listed building, however it is the Officer's opinion that a clear and convincing case has been presented for the viability of the enterprise, and that the scale and type of the proposed interventions do represent the optimum viable use of the site.

During the course of the application, Historic England and the Council's Conservation Officer sought greater clarity of the proposed internal interventions within the historic core of the building, as pre-application discussions had focused all attentions on agreeing a suitable design and approach for the new-build elements of the scheme.

Clarity has subsequently been provided via a series of Room by Room drawings which outline the proposed repairs, renovations and finishes proposed for the Georgian House, Tudor and Digby rooms. The internal proposed works are repair, renovation and improvement, which would help to restore the heritage asset back to its former status. Whilst some modern fireplaces would be removed, all historic

fireplaces would be retained. This clarity provided in the Room by Room drawings is welcomed by Conservation and Historic England Officers, and the exact details and method statements are to be agreed via a condition, following an in-depth joint site visit.

A large, contemporary extension to the north creates a courtyard to the rear of the Tudor wing, providing exhibition and events space. A new canopy extension to the rear with copper finishes and glulam beams provide a flexible space for events, exhibitions and functions. The scheme has been carefully devised to provide a clear distinction is maintained between the rear of Sherborne House and extensions, from both within the building itself, and when viewed from elevated parts of the site.

A grassed, flat roof links the rear of the main House with the new copper-roofed events space, and revisions to the eastern wall have maintained a sense of interest and subservience to the design.

A glazed walkway provides covered access to the bar, store, WCs in a new range of single storey service buildings which flank the west wall. These are lightweight and subservient additions.

A new entrance canopy is proposed to the front linking the Tudor Wing to the Main House, this is a lightweight linking structure and acceptable in its design.

Landscaping proposals are set out to compliment the scheme's multi-purpose function with a piazza and soft amphitheatre to the rear/north of the site, and planting around the boundary walls, in association with a series of 'artists pods' around the boundary walls, details of which would be agreed by condition. A 'service yard' is focussed to the east of the site alongside the vehicular access and car parking.

Historic England are supportive of the scheme, subject to conditions, and the agreement of the room-by-room schedule for the associated Listed Building Consent.

Policy Considerations: Heritage Impacts

As the works proposed will have a significant impact on a Grade I listed building, one of the top 2.5% of all listed buildings, and therefore of exceptional interest, the proposal needs to be considered against the national legislation (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) and Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The NPPF advises in paragraphs 193-4 that any harm or loss to a designated asset should require a clear and convincing justification – unjustified harm is never acceptable, regardless of the public benefit it brings, if alternative and less harmful options exist. This applies most strongly to highly designated heritage assets.

The scheme follows extensive pre-application discussion. Amendments have been made to the design to allay conservation experts' concerns; the contemporary design is considered an appropriate response to the building, and as discussed above, the justification and the business case is considered to represent a viable best use of the heritage asset. It is therefore considered that the harm has been reduced to such a degree, that it cannot be avoided or reduced through any further amendments to the scheme. Nor could it be offset by mitigation of the harm or enhancement of the asset.

Less than substantial harm has been identified in this instance. Although this harm would be less than substantial, it would nonetheless still be material. Paragraph 193 of the Framework states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the assets' conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm.

The harm would be derived from the proposed additions. Whilst the design has been developed in a sensitive way, which would be easily legible in terms of the new intervention, with the primacy of the listed building retained, there would nevertheless, be a degree of harm to the setting of the asset. This harm would, in the words of the Framework, be less than substantial and to which considerable importance and weight must be attributed. Consequently, the development would conflict with Policy ENV.4 of the Local Plan and the aims in Paragraph 192 of the Framework, these require that proposals consider the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of designated heritage assets.

Paragraph 194 of the Framework specifies the need for clear and convincing justification for any development that would cause harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, however slight the harm, and whether through direct physical impact or by change to its setting. Paragraph 196 requires that where less than substantial harm occurs, as in this case, it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Great weight must be attributed to safeguarding the high-status heritage asset.

Public Benefits

The public benefits of this proposal include the reuse of the asset in a way that would make it more accessible to the public, by facilitating greater public access and enjoyment of the building and its grounds. It would result in the regeneration of an underused site and secure a viable and ongoing use for a heritage asset at risk. It would create a community asset in the heart of Sherborne, where it would result in economic, environmental and social benefits for the town. It would have cultural benefit in terms of the use of the building for cultural events and exhibitions. There would be public realm benefits in relation to the extensive and well-developed landscaping proposals. These are all public benefits that weight in favour of the scheme.

Taking all of these matters into account, the public benefits of the proposal would cumulatively be sufficient to outweigh the harm that would be caused to the setting of the listed building.

In the opinion of your officers, the application meets the requirements of paragraphs 189, 190, 193, 194, 196 and 200 of the NPPF, in that the less than substantial harm which would result through the proposals, would be outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme.

This conclusion has been reached having regards to sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard

to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Conditions are proposed which would secure the precise room by room schedule of works, and a schedule of inspections from the Conservation Officer (including agreed points of progress where inspection of the works to the main house would take place). This would include an agreed set of repair phases, and seek to ensure that the works to the main house, are progressed a phased way, which would be agreed in writing.

17.0 Recommendation GRANT subject to conditions:

1. The work to which this listed building consent relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the consent is granted.

Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by reason of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Location Plan S-1282-01A
Existing Site Plan (Topo) S-1282-02
Existing Site Section AA S-1282-04
Existing Basement Plan S-1282-05B
Existing Ground Floor Plan S-1282-06B
Existing First Floor Plan S-1282-07B
Existing Second Floor Plan S-1282-08B
Existing Roof Plan S-1282-09A
Elevation and Section Key S_1282-10
Existing South and North 2 Elev S-1282-11
Existing South 2 and West Elev S-1282-12
Existing East Elev S-1282-13A
Existing West 2, North, East 2 Elev S-1282-14
Existing Wall Elevation 1 & 2 S-1282-15
Existing Newland Boundary Wall Elev S-1282-16A
Existing Section A-A & B-B S-1282-17
Existing Section C-C, D-D & E-E S-1282-18

Proposed Masterplan PL-1282-101B
Proposed New & Existing Extents PL-1282-102
Previous Planning Approvals PL-1282-103
Proposed Site Plan PL-1282-104B
Proposed Basement Plan PL-1282-105
Proposed Ground Floor Plan PL-1282-106B
Proposed First Floor Plan PL-1282-107E
Proposed Second Floor Plan PL-1282-108F
Proposed Roof Plan PL-1282-109B

Proposed South Elevation PL-1282-201A
Proposed West Elevation PL-1282-202A
Proposed East Elevation PL-1282-203A
Proposed North Elevation PL-1282-204A
Proposed North Weathered Elevation PL-1282-205A
Proposed West Wall Elevation PL-1282-206

Proposed Site Sections PL-1282-301A
Proposed Arts Entrance & West Sections PL-1282-302A
Proposed North Section PL-1282-303A
Proposed Courtyard & East Sections PL-1282-304A

Proposed Green Roof Details PL-1282-401A
Proposed Glazing Details PL-1282-402A
Proposed Copper Roof Details PL-1282-403A
Proposed Basement Stair Wall Detail PL-1282-404

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. Works to the Main Georgian House and Tudor and Digby Wings, are to commence no later than the commencement of the superstructure works above damp course level to the extensions shown in beige on the approved plan PL-1282-101B (masterplan).

All works shall proceed in strict accordance with a Room by Room Schedule of Works, which must be provided to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, prior to the commencement of works to each room. Thereafter, the works must be completed in accordance with details as agreed in each Room by Room Schedule of Works, and each room must be completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, prior to first use or occupation of any part of the site.

Reason: To ensure the restoration of the historic core of the building proceeds in conjunction with the new build elements, in the interests of safeguarding the historic building at risk

- 4: Prior to commencement of the works to the Main Georgian House and Tudor and Digby Wings, the Council's Conservation Officer and the Applicant shall agree to a Schedule of agreed dates/points of progress, for the inspection of the progress of the works, by the Council's Conservation Officer. This Schedule shall include an agreed set of repair phases at which point the progress of the works shall be inspected. Thereafter, works must proceed in accordance with agreed Inspection Schedule, and the Council's Conservation Officer shall be made aware of progress when works each of these agreed phases is reached, to allow inspection by the Council's Conservation Officer. The works must be completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, prior to first use or occupation of any part of the site.

Reason: To ensure the restoration of the historic core of the building proceeds in conjunction with the new build elements, to allow progress by the Council's Conservation Officer to be monitored, in the interests of safeguarding the historic building at risk

5. Prior to the erection of new walls as shown on approved plans PL-1282-203A and, PL-1282-202, sample panels measuring at least 1 metre by 1 metres, demonstrating the proposed materials, showing colour, texture, coursing, mortar mix and pointing detail, shall be constructed on site for the inspection and approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Prior to installation of the new superstructure roof, samples of materials for the roof coverings, shall be made available in site for the inspection and approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Construction of the new walls and roofs shall not commence until the samples have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and thereafter development shall proceed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the character of the locality in the interests of the appearance of the development, and in the interests of the heritage asset

6. Prior to all repointing or repair to the front roadside wall, and prior to the widening of the eastern entrance, a sample area of wall, measuring at least 1 metre by 1 metres, demonstrating the proposed pointing detail, mortar mix, and replacement brick materials, shall be completed on site for the inspection and approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, repairs of the wall, and widening of the eastern entrance shall proceed in strict accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the character of the locality in the interests of the appearance of the development, and in the interests of the heritage asset