

APPLICATION WEB COMMENTS FORM

Information available for public inspection and available on our website

Location: Newland Nursing Home, 50 Newland, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 3JG

Proposal: Erection of rear orangery (amendments to previously approved 23/02902/LBC)

Application Reference: 24/02119/LBC

Date: 19/09/2024

Assessment of the significance of heritage asset(s) affected by the proposal

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1289018?section=official-list-entry>

WITNEY OXFORD ROAD SP3610 (South side) 6/210 No.50 and 50A (Newland 06/02/70 House) - (Formerly listed as No.50 (Newlands House)) II

House. c.1820-30. Limestone ashlar front with coursed rubble to sides and rear gabled stone-coped Welsh slate roof; brick end stacks. Double-depth plan. 3 storeys; symmetrical 3-window range. 6-panelled door with overlight set in wood architrave with panelled reveals and bracketed flat hood. Keyed raised architraves to 6-pane sashes; raised storey band. Similar first-floor sashes and 3-pane attic sashes; bracketed cornice over sash above door. Bracketed overhanging wood eaves. Similar 2-storey bay to left, with 6-pane and 10-pane sashes. Rear range has stone stacks. Interior not inspected.

Newland House (now Nursing Home) has both architectural and historical significance.

Newland is within Witney and Cogges Conservation Area. Known as Character Area 7: The Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) states: *Newland forms a memorable ribbon of historic roadside settlement, trailing off to the south-east on the same axis as West End, and characterised by long, unbroken terraces of strikingly small period cottages. Although now indistinguishable from the rest of Witney, Newland began life as a separate settlement intended in the 13th century to rival Witney for local pre-eminence. This aspiration was never realised, and Newland was eventually incorporated into Witney parish in 1932. Nowadays, Newland is defined by the road it lies along, which forms one of the main routes into and out of Witney to the south-east, linking with the A40 at the top of Oxford Hill. The built character throughout Newland is consistently of a humble residential nature.*

Referring to Newland House in particular Para 11.4.4 states: *...Perhaps the most notable exception is Newland House at the street's northern end. As well as being one of very few three storey buildings in this part of the conservation area, Newland House features ashlar window surrounds and a decorative stone hood on console brackets over the centre first floor window.*

Consideration of potential impacts/harm

The current proposal is to amend application 23/02902/LBC to use reconstructed stone in sandstone colour, and Ashlar render finished cavity wall mimicking faced sandstone wall, and PCVU doors and windows.

In the previously approved application 23/02902/LBC, the use of natural stone to match the building and use of timber ensured that the character and historic and architectural appearance of the listed building would have been preserved; natural materials are more appropriate for extensions to listed building, which is why this previous application was supported.

In the CAA Character Area 7: Newland under 11.3 Materials: in 11.3.1 it states: *The building materials of Newland display marked consistency. The majority of houses and cottages employ rough dressed limestone (or occasionally rubble stone) laid in narrow or irregular courses. Ashlar cut stone (or at least more finely dressed stone) is occasionally used (e.g. for stone quoins). Rendered or painted finishes are almost entirely absent. Unusually, brick makes an occasional appearance, sometimes with the decorative use of burnt headers (e.g. no. 168, Newland Road, no. 6, Oxford Hill, and nos. 5, 7 and 13, Stanton Harcourt Road). Brick is also sometimes used for lintels over windows and for quoins in houses that are otherwise built of stone. Chimney stacks are almost universally of brick.*

Sandstone materials / colour is not mentioned in the CAA.

Newland House is constructed in Ashlar limestone (see HE's list description above). Sandstone is not found geologically in Witney (see our Design Guidance 3: Geology & Landscape), and not in the construction of this building. In our Design Guidance for 4. Local Character – Witney falls under the Limestone Wolds, where walling materials include: *Oolitic limestone, laid as uncoursed rubble, or squared and laid in courses, in a variety of bed widths and colours* • *Ashlar limestone dressings* • *Cornbrash limestone for field and boundary walling, laid in narrow beds* • *Red 'Oxford' brick chimneys* • *Lime render on rubble stonework*. Sandstone materials / colour would be incompatible and would harm the character and appearance of this listed building.

Furthermore, utilising plastic doors and windows instead of timber, is not only using a non-sustainable material, but also synthetic materials would result in a harmful appearance detracting from the host listed building.

With regard to UPVC the CAA is clear when it refers to the Threats and Vulnerabilities of the conservation area. In Para 11.8 it states: *The humble vernacular character of Newland has already been heavily compromised by the widespread use of uPVC and aluminium windows. The haphazard mixing of modern window and door types has also significantly eroded what would have been the striking uniformity displayed by Newland in the 19th century.*

Also, para 3.3.3 states: *Modern substitutes such as uPVC and aluminium do not look the same, and generally have poor environmental consequences...*

And ...*mainly for their appearance, but also their poor environmental credentials, uPVC and aluminium windows are generally not desirable additions to traditional buildings and are almost never acceptable for Listed Buildings.*

It is clear in the approved application's D&A that the applicant considered that these materials were more superior and appropriate for this building - 23/02902/LBC: The D&A statement concluded: *'...the design sympathetically reflects the existing architectural features, and the original character of the house will therefore be maintained'*.

And, yet in the D&A statement for this current application it has exactly the same conclusion: *'sympathetically reflects the existing architectural features, and the original character of the house will therefore be maintained'*. I do not consider this statement has adequately assessed the impact of synthetic and incompatible materials on this listed building.

Conclusion:

I raise a conservation and design objection to the proposed application in terms of the proposed materials. The amendments to utilise reconstructed stone (in sandstone colour) and UPVC on the extension would harm the character and appearance of this listed building. I recommend the applicant reverts to the previous application using natural materials that are not only more sustainable but also preserve the character and appearance of the listed building.

The current proposal does not comply with legislation, NPPF section 16 and EH9, EH11, OS4 and our design guidance.

Regards

Tara Hayek MSc, BA(Hons), IHBC
Senior Conservation and Design Officer

NB: Where development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, Planning Officer needs to weigh this harm against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.