

## **Referral to Committee Report**

Parish: Ashcott  
Application No: 01/23/00002 Received: 16/02/23  
Application Type: Listed Building Consent - alterations  
Proposal: Part-retrospective Listed Building Consent for works to be carried out to the Grade II Listed Ashcott House (List Entry Number: 1344970) and required for a change of use of the from residential (C3) to school (D1) with provision for boarding.  
Location: 13 Bath Road, Ashcott, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA7 9QS  
Applicant: The Levels School



## **Committee decision required because**

This application is referred to the chair and vice chair of the Planning North Team as the officer recommendation is contrary to comments received by Ashcott Parish Council to the associated application for full planning consent at the same site (App Ref: 01/23/00001).

## **Site and Surroundings**

The application site is located close to the western edge of the built-up limits of Ashcott Village. The application site consists of an irregularly shaped deep and spacious plot consisting of both the application building which fronts onto Bath Road (A39) and grounds which back onto a Public Right of Way known as Kings Lane (Path Number: BW 1/10) which is a quiet no-through-road that serves a number of houses and the Levels School at Etonhurst and also allows access to the rear of the site. The site has its own gated access towards the front of the site leading onto a tarmacked access track shared with 2 neighbouring premises located at numbers 9 and 11 Bath Road and which has an established vehicular junction with Bath Road. The application site is set over several levels due to the topography of the site and sloping ground levels. The rear portion of the site consists of spacious grounds including several large wooden sheds and outbuildings towards the immediate

rear of the application building courtyard with the remaining grounds comprising of a large grass field containing trees, with several areas of the field appearing to be undergoing excavation works. There is a mud and pebbled track which passes through the middle of the rear grounds of the site and connects onto the courtyard of the application building.

The application building is a Grade II Listed building known as 'Ashcott House' (List Entry Number: 1344970). The application building is set back significantly from the highway behind a large fore garden comprising of a large field with several large trees. The application building also has its own enclosed rear stone courtyard. The Official List Entry offers the following further description of the application building:

*“Country house, subsequently school, now empty. Mid C18, some C19 additions and alterations. Stucco scribed as ashlar, ground floor of rusticated ashlar, colour washed, rusticated ashlar quoins, wide bracketed eaves, asbestos slate roof, ashlar stack to left, rendered stock to right; plain bands at first and second floor levels. Three storeys, 2:1:2 bays, symmetrical frontage, 9 and 12-pane sash windows in moulded architraves, slightly cambered heads, emphasised keys; Venetian windows in a similar surround to centre of first floor, 3:13:3 panes; segmental headed sash to centre of second floor. Central door opening, paired 3-panelled doors, top 2 panels glazed, in a semi-circular head opening with an architrave, fanlight with radiating glazing bars; projecting non-conforming flat-roofed porch. Embattled single-bay wing set back to each side, to left hipped double Roman tile roof, to right slate roof, rusticated ashlar quoins, sash windows in conforming style except those to left of 4 panes. Two large semi-circular head opening to left return. Interior with 2 fireplaces and some ornamental plasterwork. Range of outbuildings at the rear are not of special interest.”*

## **Proposal**

Part-Retrospective Listed Building Consent is sought for works to be carried out to the Grade II Listed Ashcott House (List Entry Number: 1344970) and required for a change of use of the from residential (C3) to school (D1) with provision for boarding. A Schedule of works has been provided alongside the current application which provides a more detailed specification of any external and internal works proposed to the Grade II Listed Ashcott House as part of the current application. All of the works as per the schedule have been undertaken other than some matters relating to fire and insulation. However, a brief overview of any external and internal works which have already been carried out to the Grade II Listed Ashcott House alongside works proposed to the wider grounds is provided below.

The following external works and alterations to accommodate the proposed change of use have already been carried out:

- Structural repairs of west gable.
- Stabilisation and painting of render where required.
- Replacement of loose concrete veneer.
- Redress mullions and quoins.
- Repair chimney.
- Relay pantiles on outbuilding.

- Replacement of 2 arched French doors (lower section only).
- General repainting.
- Repair lead work.
- Replace missing slates.
- Remove and refit cast iron guttering.

The following internal works and alterations to accommodate the proposed change of use have already been carried out:

- Reinstatement of missing plasterboard.
- Replace any broken or missing chequer floor tiles.
- Repair swollen doors.
- Make good missing lime render.
- Remove stairlift.
- Stitch repair and stabilise office ceiling.
- Repair coving.
- Remove and reinstate rotten joists, ceiling, and floor.
- Repair arch in room above office.
- Box in new beams.
- Reinstate missing dowel beads.
- Install new plumbing and carry out rewiring works.
- Reinstate fire surround.
- Replace missing floorboards.
- Reinstate missing skirting board.
- Install New dry lining.
- Replace coving.
- Redecoration works.

A variety of associated works are also proposed to the wider grounds including but not limited to the creation of new highway accesses, car-parking areas and landscaping works, all of which are further considered under the associated application for full planning consent at the same site (App Ref: 01/23/00001).

### **Relevant History**

Applications Affecting the same BLPU and Overlapping the same Spatial Area:

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Case Officer</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Proposal</b>
01/22/00010	EC	WDN	Works to facilitate the change of use from residential to school
01/22/00009	EC	WDN	Change of use from residential (C3) to school (D1) with provision for boarding, associated works for access and parking.
01/94/00019	SHH	GTD	Erection of triple garage, resiting stone entrance gate and pillars, erection of

			stone portico and raising height of boundary wall.
01/94/00018	SHH	GTD	1. Partial demolition of outbuildings within garden of house, 2. Demolition of redundant chimney on east elevation, 3. Demolition of first floor timber framed classrooms, 4. demolition of existing porch, 5. Formation of new window openings in main house, 6. Alteration to vehicular entrance to north of existing shared access, 7. Raising of stone south boundary wall at A39 by 500mm in matching stone and relay existing copings.
01/94/00013	SHH	GTD	Change of use from school dormitory building to single dwelling.
01/89/00037	CTP	GTD	Conversion and extension to provide 25 sheltered homes and alteration to existing access.
01/89/00036	CTP	GTD	Refurbishment of Ashcott House to include sheltered flats, external alterations to include demolition of outbuildings, new window openings and reroofing.
01/89/00005	CTP	REF	Erection of four additional dwellings to approved sheltered housing scheme.
01/89/00004	CTP	GTD	Demolition of outbuildings and erection of extensions to listed building with internal alterations.
01/88/00018	CTP	GTD	Demolition of outbuildings, internal alterations to listed building and erection of extensions to provide 25 sheltered homes.
01/88/00017	CTP	INV	Change of use and conversion, and erection of extensions to provide 25 sheltered homes, and alterations to existing access.
01/87/00031		REF	Change of use and conversion of Ashcott House and erection of extensions to provide 30 sheltered homes.
01/87/00027		REF	Demolition of outbuildings, internal alterations and extensions to provide 30 sheltered homes.

01/86/00026		GTD	Alterations to form private nursing home.
01/86/00025		GTD	Demolition of front and rear porches and internal alterations.
01/86/00012		GTD	Change of use from school residential accommodation to residential nursing home.

**Supporting information supplied by the applicant.**

Any potential heritage impacts are addressed in the documentation below accompanying the current application:

Application Form

Cover Letter & Updated Planning, Heritage, Design & Access Statement

Design & Access Statement Incorporating Heritage & Planning Statements

Listed Building Description

Ashcott House Schedule of Repairs

Ashcott House Alterations/Repairs Amended

**Consultation Responses**

<b>Consultee Name</b>	<b>Summary of Response</b>
East Polden - Cllr D McGinty	No Comments or Objections received at time of writing.
Ashcott Parish Council	No objections to how the plans affect the listed elements.  The Parish Council although not objecting, wants it to be noted that the application is misleading, and that the area shown in red takes the access of Kings Lane up to School Hill. This access is a shared access for several houses and agricultural fields and the playing fields and so on. It has a public footpath right of way over it. The whole stretch shown is not the private property of the school.
Planning Enforcement (SDC)	No Comments or Objections received at time of writing.
Conservation Officer (SDC)	No Objections subject to a condition requiring details of building regulations that have potential to restrict permeability of original fabric, increase the risk of interstitial condensation or embed original features behind modern materials to be submitted and agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Historic Environment Service - Archaeology, Somerset Heritage Centre	No Objections.
King Alfred 1 - Matthew Martin	No Comments or Objections received at time of writing.
King Alfred 2 - Harry Munt	No Comments or Objections received at time of writing.

## **Representations**

None Received.

## **Most Relevant Policies**

### National Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework [2023]

National Design Guide

### Sedgemoor Local Plan (2011-2032)

S1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

S4 Sustainable Development Principles

D2 Promoting High Quality and Inclusive Design

D26 Historic Environment

### Ashcott Neighbourhood Plan (2015 – 2027)

Policy 1: Influencing design.

Policy 8: Protecting existing services and facilities.

### Other Material Considerations

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

## **Main Issues**

### **Consideration of the Planning Issues**

The principle of the development, design, residential amenity, drainage, ecological, phosphate, archaeological and highway impacts and any other matters not related to heritage impacts are addressed under the accompanying application for planning consent at the same application site under planning reference: 01/23/00001. The current part-retrospective listed building consent application focuses solely on the heritage impacts including impacts on the historic significance and setting of the Grade II Listed building known as 'Ashcott House'. Therefore, any third party or parish council comments not specifically relating to the heritage impacts are further considered under the accompanying full planning application under planning reference: 01/23/00001.

### Heritage Impacts

Section 16(2) of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended)

states that: In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall 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. Further, under Section 72(1) of the same Act, the Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. The National Design Guide outlines the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics, which emphasises the importance of design within development. Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are designated heritage assets, and chapter 16 of the NPPF contains several paragraphs and policies aimed at conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Policies D2 and D26 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan also echo NPPF requirements.

### External Works

The works carried out make effective use of existing external door, window, and other openings insofar as reasonably possible and minimal alterations have been made to the external appearance of the Grade II Listed Ashcott House. This is because no increase in the footprint of the Grade II Listed application building and no new or additional external features have been installed as part of the current application. The current works only involved stabilising, restoring, painting, repairing, replacing, redressing and relaying of existing external elements of the Grade II Listed Ashcott House including gables, renders, veneers, mullions and quoins, chimneys, pantiles, doors, lead works, slates and guttering all of which are features found within structural and principal elements of the Grade II Listed building itself and which therefore form part of the historic fabric of the Grade II Listed Ashcott House. Such works have therefore assisted in the restoration of the Grade II Listed Ashcott House thereby ensuring that it continues to make a valuable contribution to the character and culture of the wider surrounding area.

### Internal Works and Conservation Office Response

Although a substantial extent of works has been carried out internally, the internal alterations have been carried out in a manner which is sympathetic to the appearance of the Grade II Listed Ashcott House. This is because other than the installation of new plumbing and rewiring works and new dry lining necessary to meet building regulations for the application building to function as a boarding school, no new or additional internal features have been or are to be installed as part of the current application.

The Conservation Officer has been heavily involved with the project and has monitored the repairs to the listed fabric. The Conservation Officer acknowledges that the proposed change of use request will bring forward some demands of the listed fabric that will require some agreements as to methods of insulation and ventilation. Limited details have been provided as to the delivery of building regulations into the fabric of this heritage asset. The use of modern materials to meet building regulations can have a significant detrimental impact if incorrectly assessed or specified for their suitability. The Conservation Officer therefore raises no objections subject to a condition requiring details of building regulations that have potential to restrict permeability of original fabric, increase the risk of interstitial condensation or embed original features behind modern

materials to be submitted and agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

The internal works only involved the removal of additionally installed features such as stairlifts or structural internal elements which are beyond repair such as rotten joists, ceilings, and floors. Minimal significant structural works or alterations were undertaken with the majority of internal works involving either stabilising, restoring, painting, stitching, boxing in, redecorating, repairing, replacing, redressing and relaying of existing internal elements of the Grade II Listed Ashcott House including floors, doors and walls. Furthermore, any internal works had minimal reliance upon the formation of new full walls and preserved most of the existing internal layout by either re-purposing existing rooms for the newly proposed boarding school use or forming additional sub-rooms by sub-dividing existing rooms through the installation of new internal partition walls, and timber studwork and ceilings. The development therefore preserves the character, historic fabric, and appearance of the Grade II Listed Ashcott House.

### Public Benefits

The works are required to provide existing students at the Levels School with the option of boarding. The works when fully completed would therefore lead to the improvement of existing educational facilities within Ashcott Village as per Policy D27 the Sedgemoor Local Plan (2011-2032) and Policy 8 of the Ashcott Neighbourhood Plan (2015 – 2027). A condition requiring details of building regulations that have potential to restrict permeability of original fabric, increase the risk of interstitial condensation or embed original features behind modern materials to be submitted and agreed in writing by the local planning authority has been attached as per the recommendations of the Conservation Officer. It has already been established that the internal or external works preserve the historic fabric and appearance of the Grade II Listed Ashcott House. The above condition acts as further safeguard to ensure that any remaining works which relating to fire and insulation and which are required to be carried out to meet necessary building regulations requirements would not significantly alter the overall appearance or cause harm to the fabric of the Grade II Listed Ashcott House. With the above condition attached, and in accordance with paragraph 201 of the NPPF, the public benefits arising from the development in terms of the improvement of existing education facilities within Ashcott Village would therefore outweigh any limited visual harm which may be caused to the setting, significance and historic fabric of Grade II Listed Ashcott House as a result of the development.

### **Conclusion**

Any heritage impacts have been satisfactorily addressed and would be acceptable. Therefore, subject to conditions, the development is considered to comply with Policies D2 and D26 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan (2011-2032), Policies 1 and 8 of the Ashcott Neighbourhood Plan (2015 – 2027), the aims and provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT**



1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed in schedule A.

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

2 Prior to the installation of any insulation or fire prevention works, details of works required by building regulations that have potential to restrict permeability of original fabric, increase the risk of interstitial condensation or embed original features behind modern materials are to be submitted and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: Inadequate details of these matters have been submitted with the application. Therefore, attachment of this condition helps to ensure that any proposed building regulation works preserve the special architectural and historic interest and therefore safeguard the setting, significance and historic fabric of the Grade II Listed Ashcott House in compliance with Policies D2 and D26 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan (2011-2032), Policies 1 and 8 of the Ashcott Neighbourhood Plan (2015 – 2027), the aims and provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

**Schedule A**

Floor Plan & Location Plan as Proposed Drg No. 100B  
Site Plan as Proposed Drg No. 101B

**Case Officer:** Mr Sarfaraz Khan **Date:** 07.05.2024

**(For\*) Principal Planning Officer/Service Manager**  
**\* Delete as applicable**

**on behalf of** Dean Ttchener **07/05/2024**  
**Manager:** **Date:**

**Planning North Committee Chair/Vice Chair**

**Chair:** **Date:**

**Vice Chair:** **Date:**

**I confirm that the decision notice in respect of the above mentioned application can be issued by delegated powers.\***

**I confirm that the above mentioned application will need to be presented to Planning**

**Committee.\***

**\* Delete as applicable**

***This application is out of time. Please pass to the Development Manager and please write details below of why this is the case.***

Due to ongoing difficulties and negotiations with the current application because of parish and third-party objections, extension of time agreed until 30th June 2024, to allow for chair and vice chair and potential committee referral process.