

Ref: 0793

Design & Access Statement (Roofing Works)

Bisham Abbey
Bisham Village
Marlow Road
Bisham
Marlow
SL7 1RR



Written by:

Oliver Sharpin
Heritage Consultant
MSc, BA (Hons), AssocIHBC

Date of Issue
February 2024

© Janus Conservation Ltd 2024

Please Note: This report is submitted subject to the following conditions:

1. This report is issued only on the condition that it is not used in legal proceedings without the express permission of the author.

Job No	Location	Issue No	Issue Date	Written By	Proof	QA
0793	Bisham Abbey	1	September 2023	OS	RH	RH
0793	Bisham Abbey	2	February 2024	OS	RH	RH

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
The Report	1
Site Description	2
Planning History	2
Proposals	2
Building Description & Proposed Design	3
Access	3
Amenity	3
Parking	3
Construction	3
Conclusion	3
Appendix A: Local and National Relevant Planning Policies & Legislation	4

Introduction

The Report

This Design and Access Statement establishes the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed roofing works at Bisham Abbey. This document demonstrates the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design takes that context into account in relation to the building's proposed use. It has been formulated using the assessment methodology contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraphs 194, 195, 197, 199, 201). It also takes account of the relevant Historic England guidance, most notably their best practice guidance document, Conservation Principles (2008). See [Appendix A](#).

Site Description

Bisham Abbey is a Grade I listed building dating from the 13th century. The core building is located within the Scheduled Monument of the Monastic site along with associated buildings of many dates and styles. The entire site is situated on a flat floodplain along the southern bank of the River Thames and is approached from the east by a private driveway.



Figure 1: Aerial view of Bisham Abbey - Site location highlighted in yellow.

Planning History

(See Heritage Statement).

Proposals

The proposal on which this application is predicated relate to:

1. The first phase of proactive like-for-like replacement of failing (both tiles and fixings) plain clay tiled pitched roofs, and lead covered flat roofs, as part of a longer-term repair and maintenance plan. This is required to protect highly significant timber roof structures and internal finishes.

It is apparent from the varying condition of the tiles, which ranges from fair to very poor, that the roofs are composed of (probably) new and salvaged tiles at the time of the last reroofing scheme – which we suspect was largely undertaken in the 1970s. The use of iron fixings to the east slope of Roof K, which are corroding, suggest that this slope was last re-roofed prior to this, though no earlier than the late 19th or early 20th century.

Due to the relative difficulty of erecting a scaffold at Bisham Abbey, both logistically and for the disruption this would cause to the building's use as an events venue, we are proposing to use new handmade plain clay tiles to each of the pitched roofs encompassed in this phase of works:

- Roof K.
- Roof L.
- Roof H.

- Roof I.

The roof covering should have a life expectancy of 75+ years and it will therefore not be necessary to scaffold again for the foreseeable future. The proposed new tiles are made by Aldershaw in Sussex and would be predominantly restoration red (85%) with a smaller percentage of medium (10%) and dark red (5%) mixed through them to provide a predominantly orange hue whilst avoiding a flat appearance.

2. In undertaking the above, taking the opportunity to significantly improve the building's energy efficiency (and long-term sustainability) through the introduction of technically appropriate and permeable roof insulation (wood fibre).
3. Replacing existing Velux style roof lights, many of which now allow water ingress, with new Conservation Roof Lights of the same dimensions.

The lead covered roofs to be replaced will be renewed on a like for like basis in sand cast code 7 lead sheet to the same details as existing.

Building Description & Proposed Design

Please see Heritage Statement for full building description and analysis of proposed designs.

Access

Access to the building remains unchanged.

Amenity

The proposals would not cause harm or adversely impact neighbouring properties and their occupants.

Parking

Parking on site remains unchanged.

Construction

Appropriate asbestos and ecological surveys will be carried out before commencement of the works.

Conclusion

These proposals are the result of careful consideration of local and national planning policy and aim to ensure the building's long-term future.

Appendix A: Local and National Relevant Planning Policies & Legislation

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990) (“the Act”) contains legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas. The Act sets out the legislative framework within which development affecting listed buildings and conservation areas must be considered by local planning authorities, upon which it imposes a general duty in the exercise of planning functions. Sections 16(2) and 66(1) direct the local planning authority when considering whether to grant consent for any works or development to a listed building or its setting to 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. Section 72(1) imposes the same duty in respect of a conservation area and directs that special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF), the Historic England ‘Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide’ and the Historic England Good Practice Advice documents (advice notes 2 and 3) are relevant to the content of this report and the consideration of any application. The government objective is that heritage assets (which includes listed buildings and their settings) should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 16 ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’. This states that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

Paragraph 194 states that when determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on that significance.

Paragraph 195 identifies that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 197 sets out that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- The desirability of new development makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 201 states that where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide (English Heritage, 2010)

Although the NPPF superseded Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5) as Government Policy, the policies in the NPPF are very similar and the intent is the same, so the Practice Guide remains almost entirely relevant and useful in the application of the NPPF.

Paragraph 58 of the Practice Guide and the Historic England Good Practice Notes 2 and 3 advocate the methods of investigating the significance of a heritage asset. In particular it advocates that three steps should be carried out when preparing an assessment including:

- Check the development plan, main local and national records including the relevant Historic Environment Record, statutory and local lists, the Heritage Gateway, the NMR, and other relevant statutory sources of information that would provide an understanding of the history of the place and the value the asset holds for society.
- Examine the asset and its setting.
- Consider whether the nature of the affected significance requires an expert assessment to gain the necessary level of understanding.

A number of other steps are suggested as appropriate, subject to the nature of the asset and the proposed works.

In the case of this application the records which have been investigated include:

- The Heritage Gateway.
- Historic England Website

Historic England Good Practice Advice Notes and Guidance Notes

Advice Note 2 titled ‘Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment’ and Advice Note 3 titled ‘The Setting of Heritage Assets’ are relevant to the consideration of this application.

Advice Note 2 highlights that there are 4 types of Conservation Principles that an asset may hold, which are aesthetic, communal, historic, and evidential value. The Assessment of Significance at Section 5.0 identifies the value attached to the setting and significance of the surrounding heritage assets.

Advice Note 3 in relation to the impact of development on the setting of listed buildings, highlights the steps which should be taken when assessing the significance of heritage assets. The curtilage, character and context of a heritage asset must be taken into consideration during assessment. This has been carefully considered as part of the assessment provided.