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Our ref: L01571993

29 February 2024

Dear Mrs Jones

**Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2021  
& T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015  
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**LEADEN HALL, 70 THE CLOSE, SALISBURY, SP1 2EP  
Application Nos PL/2024/00720 & PL/2024/00373**

Thank you for your letters of 30 January 2024 regarding the above applications for listed building consent and planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the applications.

**Summary**

The applications seek consent for the creation of a central hub for the Cathedral admin, archival and educational facilities at the grade I Leaden Hall and its grounds.

Historic England supports the full re-use of Leaden Hall, which has been vacant for the past seven years. Neglect and lack of maintenance have led to severe damage which has only become apparent on our recent site visit. In the first instance, we would request that immediate works are carried out, independently of this scheme, to repair and restore the unacceptable levels of damage we have seen and prevent further loss of fabric and structural integrity.

With regard to the proposals, we also support the creation of a hub for the Cathedral and have had extensive pre-application advice to understand what this requires and whether it can be accommodated at Leaden Hall without significantly compromising the Hall and its setting.

Certain aspects of the proposals still require further information for their full impact to be known and assessed.



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Overall, it is clear that the scheme does carry a level of harm on the significance that the Hall derives from its fabric, form and setting. We consider the harm to be less than substantial and, in some instances, capable of being avoided or minimised further.

However, the existence of an alternative and endorsed scheme for the location of some of the above facilities in the form of the 2016 Masterplan, only recently brought to our attention, poses the question of whether harm here can be fully justified.

In order for that question to be answered we would request that this document is revisited in line with the current proposals to ensure that what is being currently considered is indeed the least harmful and most strategically sensible location for the archive building and, ultimately, the hub.

The review of the Masterplan would also ensure a strategic and integrated approach which is critical in addressing the conservation and maintenance needs of all the heritage assets across the wider estate.

## **Historic England Advice**

### **Significance of the designated heritage asset**

Leaden Hall is located on the western side of the Close which surrounds Salisbury Cathedral and is within Salisbury City Conservation Area.

This is the site of one of the earliest buildings on the Close in the 13<sup>th</sup> century: a canonical house built by Elias de Dereham, who was also involved in the design of Salisbury Cathedral.

The building has undergone significant alterations and additions since its original construction. The Hall, as we see it today, was extensively rebuilt in 1717 but some of the earlier stonework was re-used in its fabric and in some of its garden structures.

Behind the early 19<sup>th</sup> century gate and screened forecourt, the building rises for two storeys and a half under a half-hipped tiled roof. The main elevation faces east and presents a stuccoed facade with buttresses and a Gothic style porch. To the rear, the west elevation of the building is in two parts, with a taller element to the south and a lower, later extension and service block to the north.

The setting of Leaden Hall is a unique and layered composition of different spaces and views. It includes its immediate grounds and gardens, with the sequence of enclosed





and intimate spaces contained between the boundary and screen walls, the more open and verdant landscape of the Close to the front, and the long views towards and from the river and water meadows to the rear. This setting, also captured by Constable in a series of paintings, greatly contributes to the overall significance of the Hall.

The premises have been used as a school for a few decades up until 2017. Internally, this has resulted in the removal, re-arrangement or concealment of many historic architectural features. However, much of the floor plan remains legible, as well as the proportions of the rooms and some fine Neo-Classical interiors. Externally, the open setting to the rear has been partially eroded by the accretion of structures such as Stephenson Hall and the array of classrooms around it. Some functional brick structures added in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to the north of the Hall have also further compromised the visual connection of the main building to its historic driveway and stable block, which are now in separate ownership.

Despite those modern interventions and accretions, Leaden Hall retains and embodies in its fabric, form, appearance and setting significant heritage value, warranting its designation as a Grade I listed building, which places it among the most outstanding historic assets in the country.

Its significance is drawn from the historic and evidential values associated with the earliest canonry in the Close, its connection with Elias de Dereham, its surviving 18<sup>th</sup> fabric and form, clear evidence of its development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, its setting and the group value it shares with the other historic structures within the Close.

## Impact of the proposal

The applications seek consent for a number of interventions:

- the proposed change of use of Leaden Hall to offices
- the provision of a new Archive building to the south of the Hall
- alterations to Stephenson Hall and demolition of school classrooms
- installation of solar panels and ground source heat pump
- landscaping works

These interventions stem from the concept of creating a central hub to bring together the Cathedral's administrative, archival and educational functions in order to maximise access and co-ordinate staff operations.

Historic England has provided extensive pre-application advice on many iterations of the scheme. With the benefit of a site visit and wider discussion on the 20<sup>th</sup> February, we can now offer you the following comments.



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### Leaden Hall

The decades of school use have much impacted on the internal character of the Hall with the insertion of modern partitions, fittings, services and décor scheme which have crudely removed or concealed some of the historic features and finishes.

Works to facilitate the conversion into Cathedral's offices include the removal of some of these inappropriate interventions and the re-instatement and repair of some architectural features such as historic cornices, skirting boards, fireplaces and lath and plaster ceilings. These are welcome and are considered heritage benefits.

The general layout of the building, which still reflects the early 19<sup>th</sup> century historic floorplan of the Hall, is mostly preserved through the proposals.

However, some concern is raised for the heavy subdivision of the rooms at the northern end of the building. This is to provide a lift, WCs and kitchen spaces at all levels.

With regard to the larger rooms at the rear, although their character has been compromised by modern adaptations on some floors, they all still retain the large historic proportions associated with their historic use. The proposed compartmentalisation to insert small WCs and kitchen spaces would erode their historic integrity and therefore carries a degree of harm.

We discussed on site that it should be possible to rationalise and re-arrange the proposed facilities to minimise some of that harm, in particular at first floor level.

With regard to the smaller rooms at the front of the building, these are proposed to accommodate a new lift as well as further WCs and kitchen areas.

An extensive option appraisal exercise has determined that this is potentially the least harmful location for such an intrusive intervention, given that the northern end of the Hall is a later extension, possibly dating to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Nevertheless, the rooms that will be affected do retain some interesting historic features. On the ground floor for example, the north eastern study retains its fireplace and evidence of a stone plinth suggesting where the external wall of the earlier house may have been. These features and the expected overall simple character of these spaces would be lost. The creation of the shaft will also result in the loss of historic ceiling and floor joists across all levels. Discussions on site have clarified that the impact at roof level will be limited, as the overrun can be accommodated underneath





the main roof truss. Overall, the introduction of a lift will inevitably cause some harm to the significance that the asset derives from the fabric and the character of these spaces.

Further loss of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century fabric, associated with the demolition of sections of masonry wall to create a lift lobby at ground floor and a break-out space at second floor will also carry a certain degree of harm.

Several interventions are proposed at roof level. These include: the raising of the roof structure at eaves level, strengthening works to the trusses, the replacement of the ridge and tie beams, the replacement of tiles, the removal of dormers and installation of rooflights, the removal of chimney stack and alterations to gutters.

It is understood that these interventions are predicated around the need to remedy the structural stresses brought by the creation of the attic in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as the issues of the problematic water discharge via internal gutters, valleys and outlets which prove difficult to access and maintain.

The roof appears to be of 18<sup>th</sup> century construction and to contain fabric from this time as well as re-used medieval timbers. The interventions outlined above have been presented without the benefit of heritage assessment of either the significance of the roof and how this might be impacted by these extensive proposals. We would request that this is provided to accompany detailed drawings of the interventions to enable us to assess the level of impact and justification for what is being proposed.

### New archive Building

The Cathedral's archival collection is currently stored in different historic buildings within the Close. This arrangement is widely acknowledged as not ideal for such an important collection, because of the sub-optimal environmental conditions and the limited public access afforded by these facilities.

The idea of a new purpose-built facility for the archive at Leaden Hall has first been explored with Historic England in 2018, as part of the wider use of the site as the Cathedral's central hub. At the time, Leaden Hall school had vacated the premises and the building was in need of a new use.

Through an iterative options appraisal exercise, we concluded that this location could potentially accommodate the hub, including a modest new building for the archive.

However, we pointed out that even a small and recessive new building, as it was presented in those proposals, could be visually intrusive in such a highly sensitive and





renowned historic context, causing a certain degree of harm to the significance that Leaden Hall derives from this setting.

We therefore invited the applicant to develop proposals that could demonstrate how that visual harm could be minimised and mitigated through scale, height, design and screening, to ensure that the new archive would not unduly compete with and distract from the Hall, as it is experienced within its grounds, and in short and long views from the Close.

The current proposal includes a new building sitting to the south of the Hall's knotted garden, which, in view of the flood risk of most of the surrounding grounds, was identified as one of the least harmful options among those presented.

The building would include an archive section, a public space element and a linking corridor and service area in-between. The archive is proposed as a simple concrete construction with flat roof and no windows, with an over-hanging slab on the south side. The flat roof will extend over the link corridor/service space. The public space, which accommodates a reception and a reading room, would be a double height space within a limestone construction, featuring a tall, pitched lead roof, a gable end to the front boundary and a stone colonnade to its northern façade, which faces the Hall directly.

The proposed building is a sizeable and prominent new addition in the close proximity of the Hall, and more generally in the Close.

The visualizations submitted are limited to long and peripheral views, in particular from the West Walk. We would welcome further illustrations of the visual impact of the new building from more direct and close-range positions along this important thoroughfare. This will allow us to more accurately assess how the new structure sits in and respond to both the more subtle, intimate quality of the Hall's garden and the more open setting experienced in sequential views from West Walk.

However, the submitted elevations and photomontages already show that, in terms of its footprint, scale and height, this is a departure from the more diminutive and relatively screened building that was previously considered.

We understand from discussions on site that this change is predicated around the need to mitigate flood risk and allow for future proofing, which pushes the height of the archive space alone to over 4 metres above ground, and the Chapter's aspiration to create an important and proud space to reflect the prestigious collection that will be housed here.





This is a sensible and understandable set of needs. It does, however, create questions on whether they can realistically be met on this site without excessively compromising the Hall's setting and significance.

It has been brought to our attention that an earlier, unseen proposal set out in the Master Plan 'Salisbury Cathedral. An Exceptional Place' (2016) located a new purpose-built archive within the Works Department Yard, to the south of the Cathedral.

The existence of this Plan does not appear to have been presented as part of the pre-application process to date, and we are unsure as to the reasoning for this lack of pursuit.

Given this document has been formally approved also by your Authority and is considered as a material consideration in any decision-making, it would be useful to understand the process behind this change of location. Although this endorsed approach may have been disregarded for valid reasons, we consider that, in light of the current proposals, it would be useful to revisit that previous option to ensure it could not provide a least harmful location for the new archive.

### Stephenson Hall

Historic England welcomes the removal of the classroom blocks which, while not unattractive in themselves, negatively impact on the Hall's visual connection with the wider setting to the West, and in views from the Town Path towards the Hall and the Cathedral.

Stephenson Hall also impacts on the setting in a similar manner; however, we consider that its retention and re-use will relieve some pressure for adaptation from the main Hall and is therefore not resisted.

### Energy efficiency

In order to cover the energy requirements of Leaden Hall and the new Archive building, it is proposed to install 216 solar panels to the south-west of Leaden Hall, on an area currently occupied by tennis courts. The array will then be connected to a ground source heat pump (GSHP) housed in a new brick enclosure erected to the north of the Hall.

Historic England is supportive of the Chapter's commitment to improve its buildings' energy efficiency, in line with the Church of England's Net Zero target by 2030. Our draft advice note on climate change acknowledges that "to a greater or lesser degree our historic buildings must continue to change and evolve if they are to contribute to a





greener future' but also that 'changes must be informed by the need to protect [the assets'] historic character, which contributes to make beautiful places'.

We have no concern about the removal of the tennis courts, and we believe that, because of the topography and the boundary wall around them, the panels will be substantially screened from the Hall and the grounds. It will be useful for the applicant to provide verified views of this from the southern end principal rooms at first and second floor level.

However, the array will be visible from the upper floors of the neighbouring properties and, effectively, will re-develop further areas of the Hall's grounds, rather than taking the opportunity to re-establish their well-known and celebrated layout as part of the historic gardens.

Consideration should be given on how that harm can be minimised, in terms of quantum and layout of the development, before it can be weighed in the wider planning balance.

### Ancillary Buildings

Linked to the new GSHP's enclosure is the proposal for the demolition of all ancillary buildings to the north of the Hall and re-use of some of that material for the new structure. This area would also see the introduction of a covered bike sheds, an improved access to Stephenson hall, and is also highlighted as the possible location for a future battery storage unit connected to the proposed solar panel array.

Some of these ancillary blocks appear to have been in existence in some form since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and to have become part of a formalised 'back of house' area when the northern screen wall was introduced.

Although of inherent low architectural interest and altered, they still hold some historic value as they provide an understanding of the wider functional relationship between the main building and its wider ancillary, utilitarian spaces. Their loss will therefore cause some harm to the overall heritage significance of the asset, and consideration should be given to their retention and re-use instead.

### Landscaping

Eight car parking spaces and EV charging points are proposed on the northern end of the Hall's forecourt.

The current layout of this space, with an entrance driveway between soft verges and







mature trees appears unchanged since at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century and represents a typical feature in many historic properties along West Walk. Its simple, uncluttered appearance allows a full appreciation of the House's front, framed by its screen walls and mature vegetation.

The propose alteration would erode this historic feature and that first unencumbered encounter with the house, causing some harm to its significance. Given the opportunity to locate a reduced number of car parking spaces behind the northern screen and the presence of a car park a few minutes' walk away, the harm carried by the proposal cannot be considered justified.

### Archaeological Considerations

Archaeological investigations on site have revealed the presence of medieval and later archaeology associated with the early canonry, including the possible cellar of the 13<sup>th</sup> century cross-wing. Interventions such as the new archive, new drainage, and trenching and pipework related to the solar array and GSHP have all the potential to impact on these important remains. We would recommend that you consult your specialist archaeological advisor to ensure that this impact is fully understood and mitigated.

### Planning Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2023) sets out in paragraph 205 that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated 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.'

According to paragraph 201, 'Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal and should take this into account when considering [its] impact on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.'

Of relevance here is also paragraph 206 which sets out that 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.'

Finally, any residual harm will be considered against the requirements of paragraph 208 which states that 'this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the



proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use’.

### Historic England’s Position

As set out in our pre-application advice, Historic England does not object to the change of use of Leaden Hall and supports the principle of the creation of a central hub for the Cathedral.

Some aspects of the proposals to house this hub at Leaden Hall still require clarification or additional information to allow for an accurate assessment of both their individual impact on the significance of the building and, ultimately, the cumulative impact of the overall scheme.

In particular, we request further information on the proposed alterations to the Hall’s roof structure, including its significance, the impact and the justification for the works, and better, more direct visualizations of new archive building.

However, it is acknowledged that most proposals do carry a certain degree of harm, which we consider to be less than substantial.

In some instances, we consider that this can be avoided or minimised. This includes reducing the fragmentation of the rooms associated with introduction of WCs and kitchen, retaining the historic ancillary structures to the north of the Hall, reviewing the quantum and layout of solar panel array, and the removal of hard landscaping and car parking spaces from the forecourt.

In other instances, such as the introduction of a lift and the principle of a new building on site, there is an inherent measure of harm that cannot be further mitigated.

If the proposals are considered clearly and convincingly justified, this cumulative harm, once exhaustively identified, will need to be weighed within the wider planning balance.

Key to the assessment of that justification is the review of this proposals against the 2016 Masterplan, and, in particular, its alternative location for the archive building, which, if acceptable, could reduce the need for further development within the setting of the Hall.

Our most immediate concern however is the very poor and rapidly deteriorating condition of Leaden Hall. Water ingress through a failed internal gutter and lack of any remedial action and maintenance has led to extensive areas of damage and dry rot within the oldest part of the house, at its southern end. Sections of the historic plaster



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ceiling within the principal historic rooms have collapsed and recent organic growth was noticed across both second and first floor level.

That loss of historic fabric is unacceptable. We would urge your Authority to seek immediate action from the applicant to prevent further deterioration of the condition of the building. We would recommend that, as a minimum, a temporary roof cover and an external discharge for the internal gutter are required, and the repair and make good of the areas that have been damaged.

These works are considered urgent and necessary for the protection of the building and should be undertaken prior to and independently from the current proposals, if necessary through the exercise of the statutory powers that are conferred to your Authority under section 54 or 48 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) 1990 Act. Should these urgent works not be carried out in the next three months we will consider including Leaden Hall on the Heritage at Risk Register.

This level of neglect brings to the fore the concern that we have previously expressed for other highly graded historic assets within the estate which are or are about to become vacant.

It is of the utmost importance that all the heritage assets owned by the Cathedral are fully considered within a strategic and integrated approach that ensures their conservation and maintenance needs are met, while contributing to the delivery of the Cathedral's wider aims and objectives.

The 2016 Masterplan would have provided such a framework at the time but, in light of the changes that have occurred since, we would once again recommend that this should be revisited in line with the current proposals.

## **Recommendation**

Historic England has concerns regarding the applications on heritage grounds. We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the applications to meet the requirements of paragraphs 201, 205, 206, 208 of the NPPF.

In determining these applications you should bear in mind the statutory duty of 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.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material





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changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

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