

Works including gutter repairs, and roof structure repairs. Alterations to chimney, rooflights and rainwater goods at Corinium Museum Park Street Cirencester Glos GL7 2BX

Listed Building Consent 24/01689/LBC	
Applicant:	Cotswold District Council
Agent:	James Slater & Co
Case Officer:	Mr Justin Ayton
Ward Member(s):	Councillor Mark Harris
Committee Date:	11 September 2024
RECOMMENDATION:	APPROVE

1. Main Issues:

- (a) Impact on the listed building and its setting
- (b) Impact on Protected Species

2. Reasons for Referral:

- 2.1 The application has been referred to the Planning and Licensing Committee for determination, in accordance with the Council's adopted Scheme of Delegation, because Cotswold District Council own the building in question.

3. Site Description:

- 3.1 The application site, the Corinium Museum, comprises a three-storey, seven-bay eighteenth-century Palladian house to the east (Abberley House), with a three-bay, nineteenth-century building to the west, with later additions to the rear. The site lies within the Cirencester (Town Centre) Conservation Area.

- 3.2 List entry:

SP0202 PARK STREET 578-1/4/276 (North side) 14/06/48 No.29 Corinium Museum and attached gateway.

GV II

Museum, formerly house. Mid C18 with later alterations. Limestone ashlar, coursed rubble to right side, coursed squared limestone to left side; stone slate hipped parapeted roof, concrete tile to rear range to left; rebuilt brick stacks on gables to left and right of front range, brick left end stack to rear range to left. 7-bay Palladian villa with 3 bays to centre broken forward with pediment over. 3 storey 7-window range. First floor has seven 6/6-pane horned sashes, 3 to centre in moulded stone architraves with keyed lintels and stone cills, to left and right in plain reveals with stone cills. Second floor has seven similar 3/3-pane sashes. Ground floor has six C19 2/2-pane horned sashes in plain reveals with stone cills; Doric doorcase with open

pediment to centre now infilled with C20 glazing. Shallow plinth; chamfered rustication to ground floor forming voussoirs over window heads; band courses over ground and first floors. Bracketed eaves cornice, parapet; blocking course. Entrance is to C20 addition to rear left via round-headed opening in C19 screen wall with moulded architrave, impost bands and bracket keystone; aedicule of 2 Ionic columns, full entablature and dentil cornice, blocking course; pair of C19/C20 iron gates. INTERIOR has undergone major C20 alteration for museum use.

4. Relevant Planning History:

4.1 There is no relevant planning history

5. Planning Policies:

- TNPPF The National Planning Policy Framework

6. Observations of Consultees:

6.1 Historic England: No comment

7. View of Town/Parish Council:

7.1 *'No objection to the proposed works which CTC agrees are required in order to safeguard this historical asset and prevent further deterioration or loss of historical fabric occurring. The applicant (CDC) is proposing to use traditional methods wherever possible and inappropriate cement mortar and plastic rainwater goods, within the scope of works, will be replaced for lime mortar and metal rainwater goods, which is an improvement. Cllr R Hughes and P Coleman declared an interest, as District Councillors, and so abstained.'*

8. Other Representations:

8.1 Biodiversity Officer's comments are included with the Officer Assessment

9. Applicant's Supporting Information:

- Bat Survey Report; received 15 June 2024
- Design and Access Statement & Heritage Statement, received 7 June 2024
- Photograph Schedule, received 7 June 2024

10. Officer's Assessment:

10.1 The application seeks listed building consent for partial reroofing, with various remedial repairs, of the 18th-century Abberley House, the eastern portion of the Corinium Museum.

(a) Impact on the listed building and its setting

10.2 The Corinium Museum is a Grade II listed building. The Local Planning Authority is therefore statutorily required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving

the building, its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest it may possess, in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- 10.3 The building also lies within the Cirencester (Town Centre) Conservation Area wherein the Local Planning Authority is statutorily obliged to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area in accordance with Section 72(1) of the 1990 Act.
- 10.4 Considerable weight and importance must be given to the aforementioned legislation.
- 10.5 Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that Local Planning Authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining or enhancing the significance of heritage assets. Paragraph 205 states that when considering the impact of the proposed works on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to *substantial* harm, total loss or *less-than-substantial* harm to its significance. Paragraph 207 states that where a proposed development will lead to *substantial* harm applications should be refused unless it is demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits. Paragraph 208 states that where a development proposal will cause harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset that is *less-than-substantial* harm, that harm is weighed against the public benefits of those works, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Current condition:

- 10.6 The current condition of the roof of Abberley House is a cause of some concern. The front valley gutter has been leaking, causing decay of the 18th-century roof structure and damage to the lath-and-plaster ceilings, front wall & window lintels at second floor (which has been concealed behind plasterboard linings). The parapet gutter is divided into two by the central pediment, and the western half is not readily accessible for regular maintenance.
- 10.7 The chimney of the house, which are red brick, are in need of minor repairs and repointing, although the rear chimney on the west side of the house has sufficient lean to cause some concern over its structural stability.

Proposed remedial works:

- 10.8 The current proposal, which has been refined following discussions, would entail the reroofing of the front and side slopes of the principal (front) structure with natural stone tile, to match the existing. This would allow a thorough inspection and repair of the roof structure, which would predominantly entail the doubling up of any failing timbers; the existing roof-structure is elm, but due to the scarcity of new elm any new timbers would be oak, which is equally historically appropriate. The falls and leadwork of the front valley gutter would be adjusted to ensure proper drainage; this would be undertaken by adding structure to make additional falls where necessary, retaining existing structure, and the new structure would still be entirely contained behind, and concealed by the blocking course (low parapet). The existing roof-light access to the

eastern side of the front (southern) slope would be reduced to the minimum size necessary, and a matching roof-light would be added to the western side, maintaining symmetry, which would allow access to the entire front parapet gutter; due to the low position of the new roof-lights and the limited long-views available of the building, it would be discrete and their visual impact negligible. A discrete, low-level fall arrest system would also be added to facilitate safe maintenance. The rear of the pediment would be clad in lead to help prevent water ingress; this would be a change from the historic construction, but it would only be visible from the roof itself, and would not harm the special interest of significance of the building.

- 10.9 The chimneys would be repointed as necessary, and vented clay chimney pots would be added. The rear, west chimney, which is leaning, would have the red brick stack carefully dismantled, and then rebuilt perpendicular, reusing any sound bricks, and making good any shortfall on a like-for-like basis. Minor repointing to verges would take place as necessary, all in lime mortar.
- 10.10 Internally, there would be some disruption to the lath-and-plaster ceilings at second floor, in order to repair the existing, decayed joists, but this would be kept to the minimum necessary, and would all be reinstated on a like-for-like basis. The front wall at second floor would have the modern linings removed in order to allow investigation of the wall behind and the window lintels therein; any subsequent repairs that are required would be undertaken on a like-for-like basis. The repaired ceilings would then have new, breathable sheep wool insulation added.
- 10.11 Due to the nature of the building, the precise extent of some of the works will not be absolutely clear until opening-up has taken place; agreeing details of the precise extent and nature of these repairs could be addressed by appropriately-worked conditions.

(b) Impact on Protected Species

- 10.12 Local Plan Policy EN8 seeks to safeguard biodiversity within the district. In particular, development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity will be encouraged. Where there are opportunities for enhancements, which benefit nature conservation and biodiversity, appropriate measures to secure them will be sought. Development that would cause significant harm to biodiversity, which cannot be mitigated or (as a last resort) adequately compensated for, will be refused.
- 10.13 Chapter 15 (paragraph 186) of the NPPF states that when determining applications, local planning authorities should apply the principle that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. Conversely, development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

10.14 A licence can only be agreed if the proposed development is able to meet the three tests:

1. the consented operation must be for 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment'; (Regulation 55(2)(e))
2. there must be 'no satisfactory alternative' (Regulation 55(9)(a)); and
3. the action authorised 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range' (Regulation 55(9)(b)).

10.15 The Council's Biodiversity Officer has reviewed the Bat Survey Support submitted in support of the application, and commented as follows, thereby accepting that the third test is satisfied:

'The agent's response does adequately address my concerns. The ecology report has confirmed the likely absence of roosting bats, however, I would suggest that a bat informative is included on the decision notice, ensuring the applicant is made aware of the legal protection afforded to roosting bats in the event one is discovered.'

Informative: The applicant is advised to consider the legislation surrounding roosting bats. If at any time during the proposed works, bats, or signs of bats (e.g. droppings) are found then all works must stop and advice must be sought from Natural England before any further work proceeds. All bats and their roost sites are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) from disturbance and harm.'

11. Conclusion:

- 11.1 With regard to the first two of these tests, the proposed repairs will secure the long-term future of a listed building which is in the public interest. It is not possible to undertake the works elsewhere as they are specific to the essential repair of this listed building. The works do not result in harm to the designated heritage assets affected.
- 11.2 Overall, the proposals represent an appropriate repair and reroofing of the listed building, and would preserve its special interest, thereby sustaining its significance as a designated heritage asset. The works would also preserve the character, appearance and significance of the surrounding designated conservation area.
- 11.3 The development is not considered liable to exert an adverse impact upon protected species.
- 11.4 The proposed works are considered to accord with the requirements of section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In particular, the works would preserve the special interest of the listed Corinium Museum, thereby sustaining its significance as a designated heritage asset. The works would not impact upon the Cirencester Town Centre) Conservation Area, thereby preserving its character and appearance and sustaining its significance.

12. Proposed Conditions:

1. The development shall be started by 3 years from the date of this decision notice.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Prior to the recladding of the roof, or the reconstruction of the chimney, samples of the proposed natural stone tiles and red bricks used to make up any shortfall shall be submitted to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and only the approved materials shall be used and shall be permanently retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the development will be constructed of materials that are appropriate to the building which is listed as being of architectural or historic interest, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. No repairs to the timber roof structure, or the second-floor ceiling, wall and lintels, shall be undertaken until details of their extent and a specification and method statement for their execution have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained as such at all times.

Reason: To ensure that the design of the aforementioned details are appropriate to the character of the building, which is listed as being of architectural or historic interest, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework. These are important details which need to be undertaken in a manner which ensures that they serve to preserve the special merit of the building.

4. The repointing shall not start until a sample of the proposed repointing has been inspected on site by an Officer of the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing, and all the repointing shall be carried out as approved and shall be permanently retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the building is repointed using materials and a finish that is appropriate to the building which is listed as being of architectural and historic interest, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives:

1. This decision notice relates to the following approved plans and details: Drawings: 22-097-201 (Location Plan); 22-097-202 (Survey Plans, Elevations and Sections); 22-097-203 rev.C (Proposed Second and Attic Floor Plans); 22/097-204 rev.C (Proposed Roof Plan); 22-097-205 rev.C (Proposed Elevations).
2. The applicant is advised to consider the legislation surrounding roosting bats. If at any time during the proposed works, bats, or signs of bats (e.g. droppings) are found then all works must stop and advice must be sought from Natural England before any further work proceeds. All bats and their roost sites are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) from disturbance and harm.'