

Item No	Application No. and Parish	8/13 week date	Proposal, Location and Applicant
(3)	18/02628/LBC2 Pangbourne Parish Council	13 th December 2018 Extension of time 8 th February 2019	To facilitate the safe and permanent removal of the extensive asbestos that exists in the ground and first floors and to enable access to the 15 th /16 th century vaults below the ground floor, we propose to replace the existing wood veneer floor in the drawing room with new oak floorboards and to improve the appearance of the interiors of the dining room and study, we propose to replace the relatively new existing pine floorboards with new solid oak boards. Bere Court, Pangbourne, RG8 8 HT Mr McHugh de Clare

To view the plans and drawings relating to this application click the following link:
<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=18/02628/LBC2>

Recommendation Summary: **The Head of Development and Planning be authorised to GRANT Listed Building Consent subject to conditions.**

Ward Member(s): Councillor Bale

Reason for Committee Determination: Called in by Councillor Bale due to concerns that the proposal would replace a late 18th Century wooden floor with modern oak flooring. Also replacement of the flooring in the Dining Room and the study with modern flooring.

Committee Site Visit: 30th January 2019

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Debra Inston
Job Title:	Principal Conservation and Design Officer
Tel No:	(01635) 519111
E-mail Address:	Debra.inston@westberks.gov.uk

1. Site History

No recent planning permissions.

2. Publicity of Application

Site Notice Expired: 16.11.2018

3. Consultations and Representations

Parish Council:	COMMENT- request that the planning department, as the qualified authority, to satisfy itself as to whether this flooring should be preserved and would follow their guidance in this matter.
Historic England	On the basis of the information available to date, we do not wish to offer any comments. Additional correspondence received confirming their belief that the parquet floor is late C19th at the earliest. No objections have been received,.
Correspondence:	7 letters of objection. Raising the following concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Loss of historic oak parquet floor which is believed to be of C18th origin.- Insufficient justification, as access to asbestos can be gained from the cellar via the trap door in the dining room.- If it is considered necessary to remove the parquet floor it should be replaced with similar parquet flooring. Oak boards would not be in keeping with the character of the building.- New oak flooring in the dining room should be in random widths and not modern click and connect flooring- Study Floor is generally in good condition needs only re- instalment of the panel by the French window. This is the original pine floor, which is integral to the period of the building.

4. Policy Considerations

4.1 The statutory development plan includes the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Housing Site Allocations DPD (HSA DPD) (2006-2026) and the saved policies in the West Berkshire District Local Plan (1991-2006) (Saved Policies 2007).

4.2 Other material considerations include government guidance, in particular:-

- The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) (NPPF)
- The Planning Practice Guidance

4.3 The following policies from the West Berkshire Core Strategy are relevant to this application:-

- CS 14: Design Principles
- CS 19: Historic Environment and Landscape Character

5. Description of Development

5.1 In order to facilitate the safe removal of the extensive asbestos that exists in the ground and first floors and to enable access to the 15th/16th century vaults below the ground floor, the application proposes to take up the parquet floor in the drawing room. Given the condition of the parquet floor it would not be possible to re-install it. Therefore it is proposed to replace the flooring with new oak floorboards. The application also proposes replacing the existing pine floor boards in the study and dining room with new oak boards.

6. Consideration of the Proposal

6.1 Bere Court (including the recently annexed Bere House) is a Grade I listed building and is therefore afforded the highest level of protection. The building was founded circa 1400 with alterations in the C16th and C17th. It was refaced around the mid C18th, and extended further to the west in 1820.

6.2 The special architectural and historic interest of this listed building lies in its age, particularly the original core which dates to the C16th and still contains many original features; architectural form and detailing; internal architectural features; proportions of the principal internal rooms; the story later extensions tell about how the building evolved, responding to changing architectural fashions and needs of the owner; and connection to notable historic figures, such as the 14th century De La Bere family, Sheriffs of Berkshire, and George Tate of Tate & Lyle Sugar Company.

6.3 The main considerations in the determination of this application are the impact of the proposal on the special architectural and historic character of the listed building.

Works to parquet floor in the Drawing Room

6.4 The main concerns with this proposal are regarding the removal of the parquet floor in the drawing room and replacement with oak floorboards. Further information regarding the floor was therefore requested, along with an explanation as to why the asbestos could not be safely removed and without the need to remove the floor.

6.5 Additional information received from the applicants included an assessment of the flooring by a specialist in historic parquet flooring, Jasper Weldon of Weldon Flooring. Jasper Weldon is considered an expert in this field and has written articles on ancient parquet floors including an article for buildingconservation.com entitled 'Parquetry Floors' - <http://datatest.buildingconservation.com/articles/parquetry/parquetry.htm>

6.6 Jasper Weldon concluded that the floor was of late C19th date, rather than C18th, and was not worthy of retention. His findings were as follows:

- Parquet floor typical of an early C20th pattern and style.
- Existing machine cut floor joists are of late C19th early C20th origin
- The parquet is very thin, only 3mm thick applied over a 50x100mm boarded floor (6mm is the normal thickness of parquet flooring). It is likely that this is as a result of heavy sanding in or around the 1960's.

6.7 It should be noted that that parquet floors are commonly understood as wood block floors that can be easily lifted and rest. parquet flooring, however, often includes marquetry floors

such as the drawing room floor at Bere Court, constructed from a wood veneer adhered to structural wood boarding.

- 6.8 The boarded floor beneath the parquet has penny gaps between and the veneer cannot be de-bonded from the boarding without damage. Lifting the floor will damage the parquet floor.
- 6.9 Historic England have been in consultation with the applicant and the case officer and have confirmed that they believe the floor to be of late C19th date. Historic England are not raising any objections to the proposal.
- 6.10 The applicants have also provided further justification for the need to remove the floor in order to safely remove the asbestos below.
- 6.11 The accredited asbestos contractors employed by the applicants, Omega Environmental, have confirmed that the heating services pipework installed around the perimeter of the drawing room, has been lagged with Chrysolite Insulation. The Chrysolite Insulation is in a very poor friable condition the dust from which has spread extensively throughout the basement area and lies under the various rooms above. Omega Environmental have confirmed that the only way to remove all of the asbestos is to remove the top 150mm of dirt and debris across the whole floor so that the substrate can be cleaned. Whilst in theory, it may be possible for the pipe lagged insulation to be removed around the perimeter of the floor this would require containment to be installed between the outer perimeter for the floor (the zone of the mechanical pipework) and the centre. This would prevent future access to the C16th staircase below the floor and given the condition of the floor will leave the applicant at serious risk of asbestos exposure in the future.
- 6.12 It is considered that the removal of the asbestos, so that the cellar can be safely used (thereby ensuring its long-term maintenance), is an important consideration which attracts much weight.
- 6.13 Given the fact that this is a late C19th floor in poor condition (it is unlikely to be able to undergo another round of sanding) and is unlikely to be able to be lifted without significant damage, it is considered that the less than substantial harm that would arise from its removal would be overcome by the benefits of ensuring that the important C16th vaulted chambers below is made safe and accessible for long term maintenance.
- 6.14 The proposed replacement of the parquet floor with oak floorboards to reflect the original C18th flooring is not considered to harm the special interest of this building.

Works to Study and Dining Room

- 6.15 The dining room is within the oldest part of the house and potentially dates to the C16th. However, the room has seen a number of alterations, including the installation of pine floorboards in the late C19th/early C20th.
- 6.16 The study is located adjacent to the dining room, and was formed in the early C18th when the building was refaced. As in the dining room, the floor boards date from the late C19th/early C20th.
- 6.17 Unlike the parquet floor, the floorboards in the study and dining room could be re-laid, however, the applicant wishes to take this opportunity to replace them with higher quality oak floorboards. Given the age of the floorboards, it is not considered that their

replacement with oak boards (the quality, grade and dimensions of which can be conditioned) would cause any harm to the significance of this Grade I listed building.

7. Response to letters of representation

7.1 Letters of representation are noted and have been addressed in the report.

8. Conclusion

8.1 For the reasons given above, and subject to appropriate conditions, it is considered that the proposal accords with the statutory requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF and Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), as it would not cause any harm to the special character of this Grade I listed building.

9. Full Recommendation

9.1 The Head of Development and Planning be authorised to **GRANT** listed building consent subject to the following conditions:-

1) Commencement of works

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2) Approved Plans/Documents

This listed building consent relates only to work described on the drawings/and/or/in the documents identified below:

Drawing number 00101/201 received on 9th October 2018

The works shall be carried out in strict conformity with the approved plans and associated approved submitted professional reports, subject to any necessary minor variations which fall within the scope of this consent arising from specialist input during the course of works, following subsequent discussions with, and the written agreement of, the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To clarify what has been approved under this consent in order to protect the special architectural or historic interest of the building.

3) Schedule of Works

No development (including preparatory or demolition work), shall take place until a detailed schedule of works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include all work required to meet Building Regulations. Thereafter the development shall incorporate and be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the special architectural or historic interest of the building. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) and Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

4) Details of floorboards

No flooring shall be laid until details of the floorboards, including grade of oak, dimensions, and finish, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All materials incorporated in the work shall match the approved samples.

Reason: To ensure that the materials are appropriate to the special architectural or historic interest of the building. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) and Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

5) Building recording

No development shall take place within the application site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of building recording, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall incorporate and be undertaken in accordance with the approved statement. This work will provide a record of the building fabric that is to be removed as part of this application. A copy of the results of the building recording shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within three months of the completion of the works.

Reason: To ensure that an adequate record is made of the building. This condition is imposed in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) and Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).