



## **PLANNING and HERITAGE STATEMENT**

Finchampstead C of E Primary School, The Village, Finchampstead, RG40 4JR

Prepared for: MBP Ltd

*The purpose of this report is to accompany a planning or Listed Building application. A heritage statement sets out the details of the history and development of the asset using photographic, map, archival and fabric evidence. It includes an assessment of the evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value of the heritage asset and the impact of the proposed works upon that significance. In addition to desk based research a site visit was carried out as part of this assessment and a non intrusive survey took place.*

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## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

### **Heritage Asset and its Setting:**

Project Address: Finchampstead C of E Primary School, The Village, Finchampstead, RG40 4JR

Local Authority: Wokingham Borough Council

Conservation Area: None. Area of Special Character

Archaeological Notification Area: None

Building Use: Non-Residential Institution (Use Class D1)

Listing Status: Not Listed      List entry no. N/A

Designated Heritage Asset:

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Scheduled Monument?        | N |
| Listed Building?           | N |
| Registered Park and Garden | N |
| Historic Battlefield       | N |
| Conservation Area          | N |
| World Heritage Site        | N |

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Non Designated Heritage Asset | N |
|-------------------------------|---|

### **Project Overview:**

Front extension to the existing primary school building.



*Photo 1 – View of front elevation (north)*

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*Photo 2 and 3 – View of front/side elevation (northwest)*



*Photo 4 and 5 – View towards school (northeast elevation)*



*Photo 6 – View of side elevation (west)*

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*Photo 7 and 8 – View towards school from The Village (northwest elevation)*

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## **Drawings and Documents provided by Client:**

List of documents provided:

-  22506-7 01 Existing Ground Floor Plan and Elevations
-  22506-7 02 Proposed Ground Floor Plan and Elevations
-  A3 size 1-500 scale Site Block Plan - Finchampstead C of E Primary School (18.07.25)
-  A4 size 1-1250 scale OS Location Plan - Finchampstead C of E Primary School (18.07.25)
-  Community Involvement Statement (04.08.25)
-  Planning Design and Access Statement - Front Extensions (30.07.25)
-  School Grounds Showing Location of Proposed Front Extension

## **Schedule of Intervention:**

In order to achieve the works, the following alterations/ interventions will be required:

Single storey front extensions consisting of:

- Extension forward of existing boys wc with flat roof.
- Extension of existing access corridor with flat roof.
- New Yr5/6 breakout classroom with new single storey pitched roof element.
- Adjustment of existing landscaping.

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### Setting Overview/ Context:

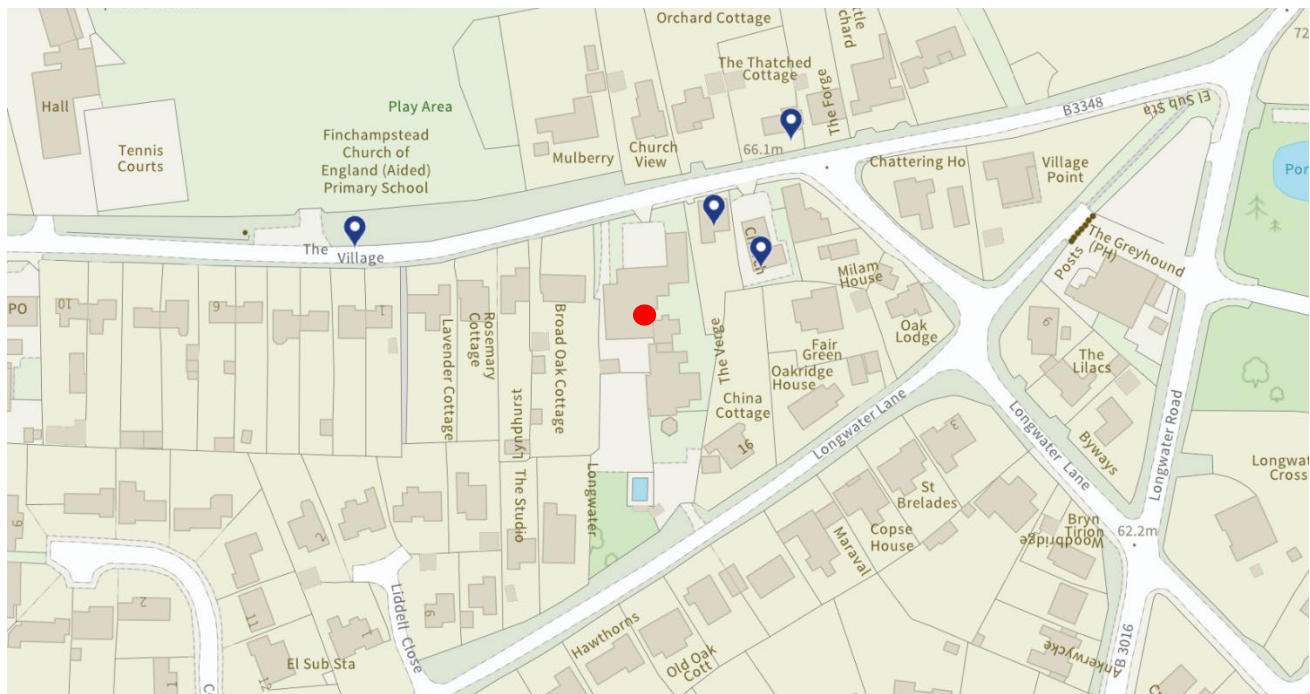
Finchampstead is a rural, largely residential, village in Berkshire situated halfway between the towns of Wokingham and Farnborough.

The single storey village primary C of E school site in question is located in the village centre in a prominent location close to the King George VI Playing Fields, the Memorial Hall and the Sports Club.

It is a small largely single storey school that has been substantially extended and altered over time and sits close to the street frontage. The school is linked with St James Church situated a mile north of the site.

The dominant architecture on the site streetscene is the 1960s and 1970s brick additions to the school with their flat roof forms and deep white painted fascias. These sit substantially forward of the original Victorian two storey brick building that can be seen on the LHS of the site when viewed from the front. In front of the school building is a small area of grass and staff car parking. Black metal railings form the boundary treatment giving transparency. The school playing field lies to the rear of the site.

Setting: Urban Area/ Village.



Map taken from Historic England Listing Database. Property shown with a red dot.

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## Site Planning History:

App. No.: 191229 iLap Ref No.: None  
Description: Full application for the proposed Single Storey Infill Conservatory Extension to school.  
Received: 03/05/2019 Decision Date: 20/06/2019 Decision: Approve

App. No.: 090891 iLap Ref No.: C/2009/0173  
Description: Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent F/2008/2605: 3. Method Statement for avoidance of compacting soil.  
Received: 27/01/2009 Decision Date: 26/02/2009 Decision: Replied

App. No.: 080063 iLap Ref No.: F/2008/2605  
Description: Proposed resurfacing of existing play area, installation of ball court, replacement of existing Trim Trail with a new Trim Trail and erection of new fencing.  
Received: 01/12/2008 Decision Date: 20/01/2009 Decision: Approve

App. No.: 072414 iLap Ref No.: F/2007/2217  
Description: Proposed erection of timber framed Gazebo at rear grounds of school  
Received: 23/08/2007 Decision Date: 17/10/2007 Decision: Approve

App. No.: 022133 iLap Ref No.: F/2002/7774  
Description: Proposed erection of rear extension to school to create hall, changing rooms and toilets plus internal alterations.  
Received: 11/10/2002 Decision Date: 18/06/2003 Decision: Approve

App. No.: 010781 iLap Ref No.: F/2001/3904  
Description: Proposed change of use of school house to school use and staff room.  
Received: 30/04/2001 Decision Date: 20/06/2001 Decision: Approve

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### **Impacted Heritage Assets:**

The building sits neither within nor outside a Conservation Area. It does, however, lie in an Area of Special Character.

The building is not Listed.

The building is within the context of a Listed Building.

#### **Official list entry**

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II      List Entry Number: 1135803      Date first listed: 14-Feb-1986

List Entry Name: THE VERGE

Statutory Address 1: THE VERGE

#### **Location**

Statutory Address: THE VERGE

District: Wokingham (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Finchampstead

National Grid Reference: SU 79444 63157

#### **Details**

FINCHAMPSTEAD THE VILLAGE SU 76 SE (South side) 12/7 The Verge G.V. II

House. Early C19 altered and extended C20. Painted stucco, hipped old tile roof. Irregular plan with later extensions at rear. 2 storeys symmetrical chimneys. Brick dentil eaves. Entrance front:- 2 bays, sash windows with glazing bars and Venetian shutters flanking rectangular pedimented porch with brick dentil eaves and 6-panelled entrance door flanked by small niches, and 2-pane windows in sides of porch. Early C19 railings to road.

Listing NGR: SU7944463157

#### **Official list entry**

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II      List Entry Number: 1118096      Date first listed: 14-Feb-1986

List Entry Name: FINCHAMPSTEAD BAPTIST CHURCH

Statutory Address 1: FINCHAMPSTEAD BAPTIST CHURCH

#### **Location**

Statutory Address: FINCHAMPSTEAD BAPTIST CHURCH

District: Wokingham (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Finchampstead

National Grid Reference: SU 79460 63143

#### **Details**

FINCHAMPSTEAD THE VILLAGE SU 76 SE (South side) 12/6 Finchampstead Baptist Church G.V. II

Chapel. Early C19. Red brick with vitreous plinth, string at base of pedimented gable, eaves string and window arches; slate gabled roof. Rectangular plan with gable facing road. North front:- pedimented with bull's eye window in tympanum, 3 bays on ground floor, outer arched radiating windows with glazing bars flanking central door in pedimented porch. Early C19 railings to road.

Listing NGR: SU7946063143

## Assessment of Significance:

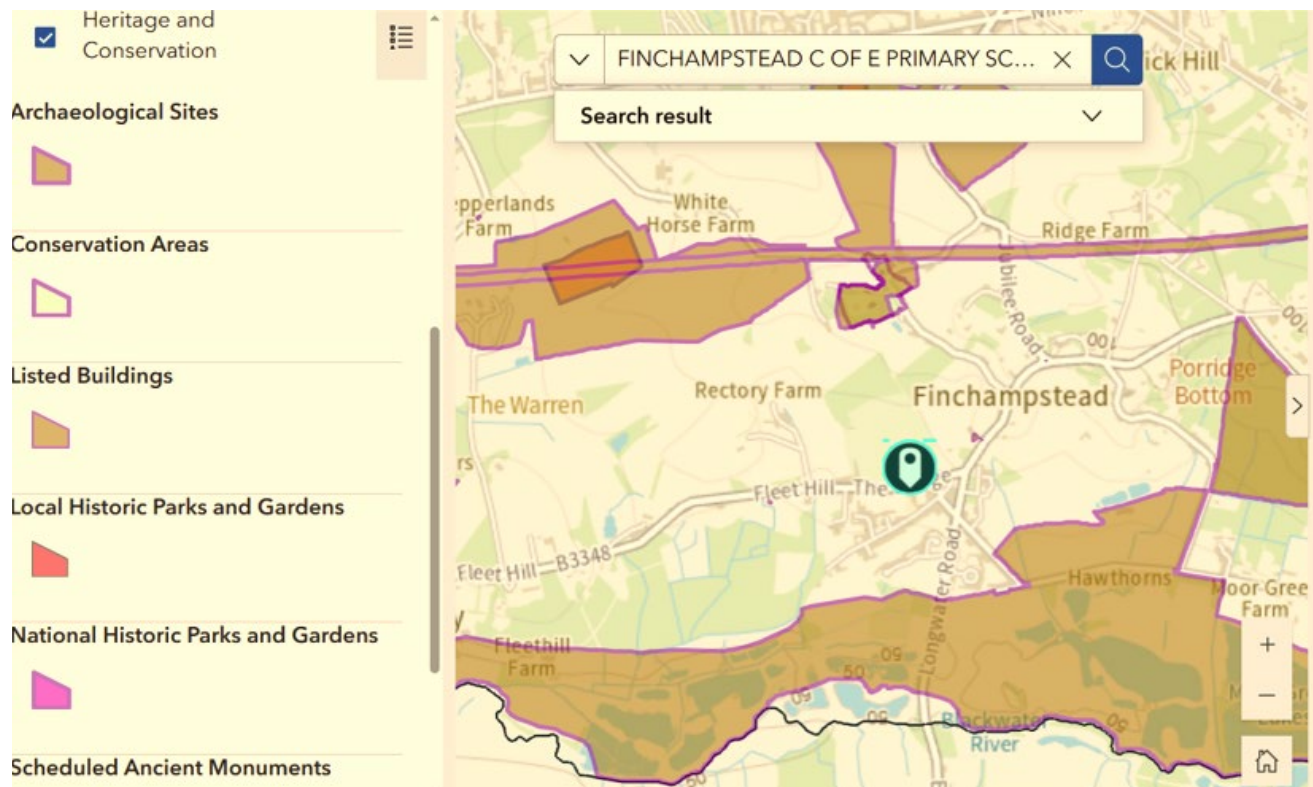
*Heritage has cultural, social, economic and environmental values. The attributes that combine to define the significance of a historic building can relate to its physical properties or to its context. – BS 7913:2013.*

*In 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 their significance – NPPF*

**Archeological:** As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

The site sits outside local areas identified as archaeological sites as per the image below taken from the Wokingham Borough Council Planning Policies and Constraints map.

The site has also been extensively developed in the past and is likely to be of low archaeological significance.



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**Historic:** *An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.*

The following is taken from the school website and outlines the historical development of the site:

*'Until 1857 the School was maintained by the Rector of the Parish in one of the small cottages which used to stand in the Churchyard, but which have long-since been demolished. In 1858 the present school buildings were provided by Mr. John Walter, then proprietor of The Times newspaper and patron of the benefice of Finchampstead. Each year the school celebrates Founder's Day on 8th October which is John Walter's birthday.*

*The Rector and Churchwardens were responsible for the School until 1925 when the Parochial Church Council purchased the buildings from John Walter's successors for the Diocese. The School has been extended over recent years and has now acquired the use of the School House on attached land. This has provided us with an extra classroom, a spacious staffroom and a resources room. In 2004 a new school hall was built which is used for a variety of purposes.'*

The primary school remained largely the same size until 1961 when it was extended to add a new rear classroom and a new entrance. A further classroom was added in 1972 (the one being adjusted as part of this application). The school was extended again with a new school hall in 2004.

**Architectural or Artistic:** *These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.*

The original school roof form is still legible from the streetscene but is substantially concealed behind the 1961 and 1972 modern extensions. The modern additions are of a low architectural significance and reflective of their build era with typical flat roof and chunky fascia boards. The original school is of a higher architectural significance.



Photograph of the school c.1912 Finchampstead Society

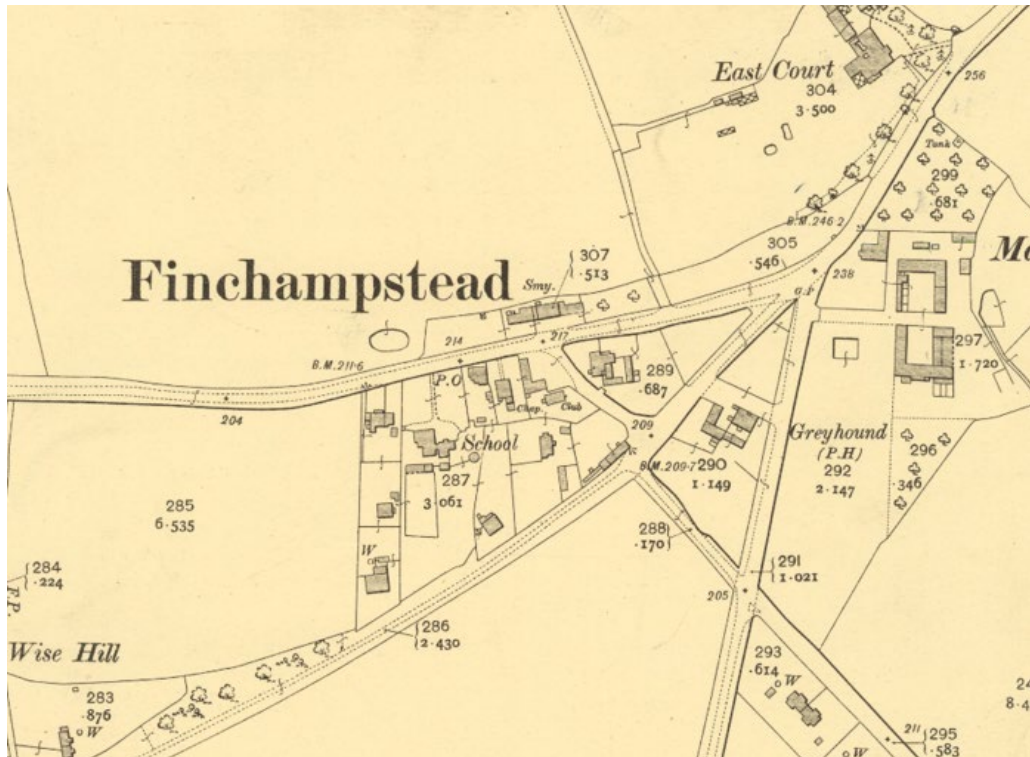
Finchampstead C of E Primary School, The Village, Finchampstead, RG40 4JR

[illegible]

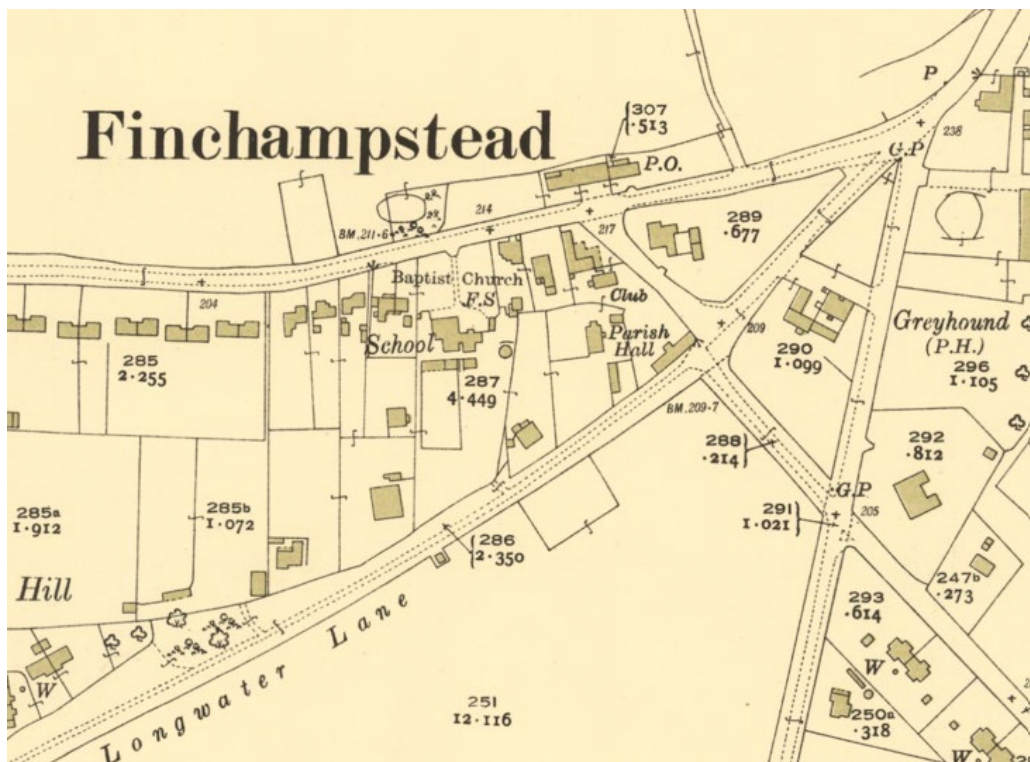
**HERITAGE FUSION**  
CONSERVING THE PAST, INSPIRING THE FUTURE

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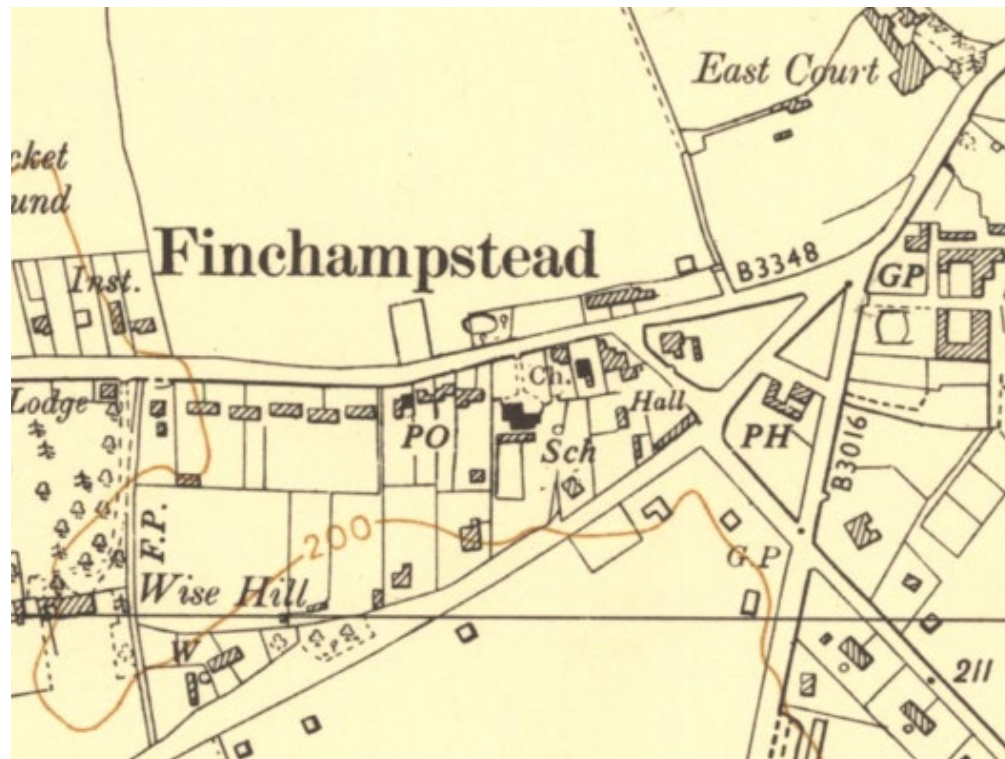
Extract from Berkshire XLVI10 1911



Extract from Berkshire XLVI.10 1932

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Extract from SU76SE 1961

## **Development Impact on the Historical Asset:**

*An assessment of how the proposed works will affect the significance of the heritage asset and the justification for that impact.*

*Proposals should and do:*

- 1 - Avoid, minimise and mitigate negative impact, in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF.*
- 2 - Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance.*

## **Building Elevations and Setting:**

The new extensions sit prominently on the front elevation attached to the modern portion of the single level school. The modern school additions are of a low architectural quality and the new extension gives an opportunity to reintroduce a more traditional roof form and materiality more closely linked architecturally with the original school building. The output of the interventions is a more traditional village school appearance which is of a net visual benefit to the village setting.

The proposals do not result in the sprawl of the existing settlement lines and reinstate some of the character of a village school, reinforcing rather than diluting rural character.

The proposals do not impact upon designated local greenspaces as identified by the local authority.

There is no impact upon any existing trees that form part of the landscape character. The proposals occupy an under utilized part of the site and bringing back a traditional language. The proposals do not sit forward of the adjacent Listed Building and remain subservient to it.

The new extension does not alter the roof form of the original school and still allows it to be clearly legible. The alterations are limited to the 1970 additions to the building.

## **Internally:**

The building is not Listed neither nationally nor locally so the internal impact has not been assessed by this report. The internal alterations improve the functionality of the existing school, which is a modern building, without heritage harm.

## **Scale and Massing:**

The new proposals increase the massing of the existing school building in a prominent location however they reinstate a more traditional village school form so the increased massing is justifiable in this instance in order to achieve an overall visual enhancement.

## **Archeaology:**

The site is of low archaeological significance and the proposals will have no known impact upon below ground archaeology.

## **Use:**

There is no proposed change of use of the site. The proposals improve the functionality of the existing school supporting its original design purpose and supporting its function within the local community.

## Relevant Policy:

The Government has set out its planning policies framework for the historic environment in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlining the framework within which local authorities should consider the importance of conserving, or enhancing aspects of the historic environment within the planning process. This was published in March 2012 and replaced in 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024.

Conservation as defined by the NPPF is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use and as yet undiscovered, undesigned buried remains of archaeological interest.

In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time. In the case of archaeological sites, many have no active use, and so for those kinds of sites, periodic changes may not be necessary, though on-going management remains important.

Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and Listed Building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework defines a heritage asset as, 'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets are either designated heritage assets or non-designated heritage assets.

In 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 their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. 'Significance' in terms of heritage-related planning policy is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent.

The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights of way or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting. The contribution may vary over time.

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When assessing any application which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation.

Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; (b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Historic England 'Conservation Principles' deem new work or alteration to be normally acceptable where the proposals do not materially harm the value of the place. They consider the setting of the heritage asset to contribute greatly to its significance. They accept that a heritage setting changes over time.

The local authority may have location specific guidance also which includes policies which seek to ensure the protection of the historic environment and that development is of a high quality and seeks to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Heritage Asset. In assessing the impact of these proposals local guidance has also been considered.

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 196) requires that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing the optimum viable use of that asset. Where a heritage asset is capable of having a use, then securing its optimum viable use should be taken into account in assessing the public benefits of a proposed development. Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit. Examples of heritage benefits may include: sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting, reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset, securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation

Changes to the setting of historic buildings / Conservation Areas are to be sympathetic in terms of siting, proportion, scale, form, height, materials and detailing. All design work and procedures should follow guidance outlined in BS 7913:2013 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings.

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## **Conclusion:**

The proposals do not impact upon designated local greenspaces as identified by the local authority nor do they result in the dilution of the rural character of the village. The proposed adjustments to the roof forms reinstate the more traditional forms of architecture associated with the original school and allow an architectural improvement to the streetscene as a result.

There is no loss of historic material as a result of the proposals nor any alteration to the original school structure. The proposals still remain subservient to the adjacent Listed building in terms of both scale and positioning and are respectful to their setting.

Overall the proposal do not harm the special landscape character of the village and improve the aesthetics of the 1960/70s form that is dominant to the site.

## **Assessor Details:**

Surveyor: Michelle Purnell BA(hons) BArch RIBA MSc Building Conservation IHBC

A site visit was undertaken as part of the site investigation in order to understand important relationships in the area surrounding the site. Date of Site Visit: 04/09/25 Weather conditions at time of visit: Heavy showers

## **Information Source Checklist:**

*The following information sources have been used when conducting desk based research:*

Historic England List of Protected Historic Sites x

National Planning Policy Framework x

Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment x

Relevant Local Plans x

Conservation Area Character Appraisal x

Local Authority Landscape Character Assessment n/a

The Local List of Buildings and Monuments x

Local Records Office Other (please state):