



## Heritage Statement

---

### Listed Building Consent for Internal and External Works

Bird Place, Henley Bridge,  
Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2LN

On behalf of:  
Mr and Mrs Fawsitt

---

September 2025

Ref: 4686

**Smith Jenkins Ltd**

**Milton Keynes Office:** 7 Canon Harnett Court, Wolverton Mill, Milton Keynes, MK12 5NF

**London Office:** Studio 11.2.1, The Leather Market, 11-13 Weston Street, London, SE1 3ER

**Tel:** 01908 410422

## Contents

|                                                  | <b>Page</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 Introduction                                   | 1           |
| 2 The Heritage Assets                            | 2           |
| 3 Historical Development                         | 6           |
| 4 Significance                                   | 14          |
| 5 Assessment of Proposals                        | 26          |
| 6 Summary and Conclusions                        | 34          |
| Appendix A – Reference Photos                    | 35          |
| Appendix B – Heritage Planning Policy & Guidance | 68          |

## 1 Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Smith Jenkins Planning & Heritage in support of householder planning and Listed Building Consent applications for redevelopment proposals at Bird Place, Henley Bridge, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2LN ('the Site'), located within the remit of the Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), the local planning authority (LPA).

1.2 The application proposals comprise:

*Alterations to listed building (including lowering of the basement floor, refurbishment and repair of historic fabric), demolition of existing rear lean-to extension, erection of single storey rear extension with basement, and erection of a roof terrace.*

1.3 The Site comprises the Grade II listed 'Bird Place' and its associated grounds, situated on the eastern side of the River Thames in Henley-on-Thames. The Site is located within the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area, and within proximity to a number of listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Henley Bridge.

1.4 Smith Jenkins has visited the Site on multiple occasions, most recently the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025, and have observed the key relationships between the Site and the heritage assets in the vicinity. The Smith Jenkins Planning and Heritage teams have been involved with the Site throughout the pre-purchase and pre-application processes and have advised the applicant on the opportunities and constraints relating to the potential development of the Site.

1.5 Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 sets out the information requirements for determining applications and states that:

*'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'.<sup>1</sup>*

1.6 In response to the NPPF, Section 2 of this report identifies the heritage assets which may be affected by the application proposals. Section 3 sets out the historic development of the application site and the surrounding area, whilst Section 4 provides statements of significance for the heritage assets identified within Section 2. These are relative to the scale, nature and effect of the proposed development.

1.7 Section 5 provides an assessment of the application proposals on the significance of the identified heritage assets based on national, regional and local policy and guidance. The Heritage Planning Policy context for the consideration of these proposals is set out in Appendix A. This includes the statutory duties as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF, regional and local planning policy.

---

<sup>1</sup> NPPF (2024)

## 2 The Heritage Assets

2.1 A heritage asset is defined by the NPPF 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. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)’.<sup>2</sup>*

2.2 Due to the Site’s riverfront location in central Henley-on-Thames, there are a large number of heritage assets in the surrounding area. However, the main house at the Site, Bird Place, does not front the river but is situated perpendicular to it, is set back from the riverbank, with intervening trees and riverside infrastructure. As such it is only the outer parts of the grounds which are visible from the surrounding area. Therefore, a proportionate study area of 100m has been utilised to understand the heritage assets with the potential to be impacted by any alterations to the Site.

### **Designated Heritage Assets**

2.3 A Designated Heritage Asset is described by the NPPF (2024) as:

*‘A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation’.<sup>3</sup>*

2.4 Such assets are statutorily identified as having a level of heritage (architectural and/or historic) interest to justify designation. There are then particular procedures in planning decisions to ensure that their special interest is preserved or enhanced.

### **Listed Buildings**

2.5 There are 15 listed buildings within 100m of the Site. However, a Site walkover has confirmed that some of these buildings share no connection to, nor intervisibility with, the Site, and as such the proposals will not impact upon their significance.

2.6 The listed buildings identified as having the potential to be impacted are laid out in table 2.1 below, and their locations in relation to the Site are shown in the heritage asset plan at figure 2.1. Highly graded assets (Grade I and Grade II\*) will be assessed individually, and where proportionate, some of the Grade II listed buildings will be assessed as part of the conservation area in which they are located.

**Table 2.1: Listed Buildings with the potential to be affected by the proposals**

| Key | Name                              | Grade |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1   | Bird Place ( <i>the Site</i> )    | II    |
| 2   | Bird Place Cottage                | II    |
| 3   | Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters | II    |
| 4   | Henley Bridge                     | I     |

<sup>2</sup> NPPF (2024) Annex 2: Glossary

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

|                                                                       |                                              |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----|
| 5                                                                     | Angel Hotel including attached medieval arch | II* |
| 6                                                                     | Rectory                                      | II* |
| <b>Assets which will be assessed as part of the conservation area</b> |                                              |     |
| 7                                                                     | The Little Angel                             | II  |
| 8                                                                     | The Coach House                              | II  |
| 9                                                                     | 12, Thameside                                | II  |
| 10                                                                    | 11, Thameside                                | II  |
| 11                                                                    | The Old Granary                              | II  |
| 12                                                                    | Baltic House                                 | II  |
| 13                                                                    | River Terrace                                | II  |

### Conservation Areas

- 2.7 The Site is located within WBC's Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area (RHBCA) and is located across the river from the South Oxfordshire District Council's Henley Conservation Area (HCA), which covers a large area and is divided into nine 'Character Areas'. The Site shares inter-visibility with 'Character Area 06: Riverside'.
- 2.8 At the outset it must be noted that the setting of conservation areas is not statutorily recognised, and it is only the contribution that the surrounding area makes to the special character and appearance of an area that should be considered.
- 2.9 For the purposes of a proportionate assessment, only 'Character Area 06: Riverside' of the HCA will be assessed as part of this report, as set out in table 2.2 below. The location of the conservation areas relative to the Site are shown in the heritage asset plan at figure 2.1.

**Table 2.2: Conservation Areas with the potential to be affected by the proposals**

| Key | Name                                                            | Council                            |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A   | Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area                        | Wokingham Borough Council          |
| B   | Henley Conservation Area<br><i>Character Area 06: Riverside</i> | South Oxfordshire District Council |

### Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.10 The NPPF identifies that heritage assets not only include those which are designated (often with statutory protection), but also those assets identified by the local planning authority which could include local listing or buildings of townscape merit. Any such designation, for the purposes of the NPPF, are considered to constitute non-designated heritage assets.
- 2.11 WBC does not maintain a Local List of non-designated heritage assets (NDHA); therefore, no NDHAs within WBC have been included within the scope of this assessment.
- 2.12 Whilst SODC does not maintain a Local List, within the Henley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (HCAAMP, 2023) it identifies 'Buildings of Local Note' and 'Henley Important Buildings'. Such buildings are considered to constitute NDHAs for the purposes of the NPPF.

- 2.13 There is one 'Building of Local Note' located within 100m of the Site – Nos. 13 and 15, Thameside. For the purposes of a proportionate assessment, this NDHA will be assessed as part of the conservation area. It is identified within table 2.3 below, and its location is shown in the subsequent heritage asset plan at figure 2.1.

| Table 2.3: Non-designated heritage assets with the potential to be affected by the proposals |                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Key                                                                                          | Name                      |
| i                                                                                            | Nos. 13 and 15, Thameside |

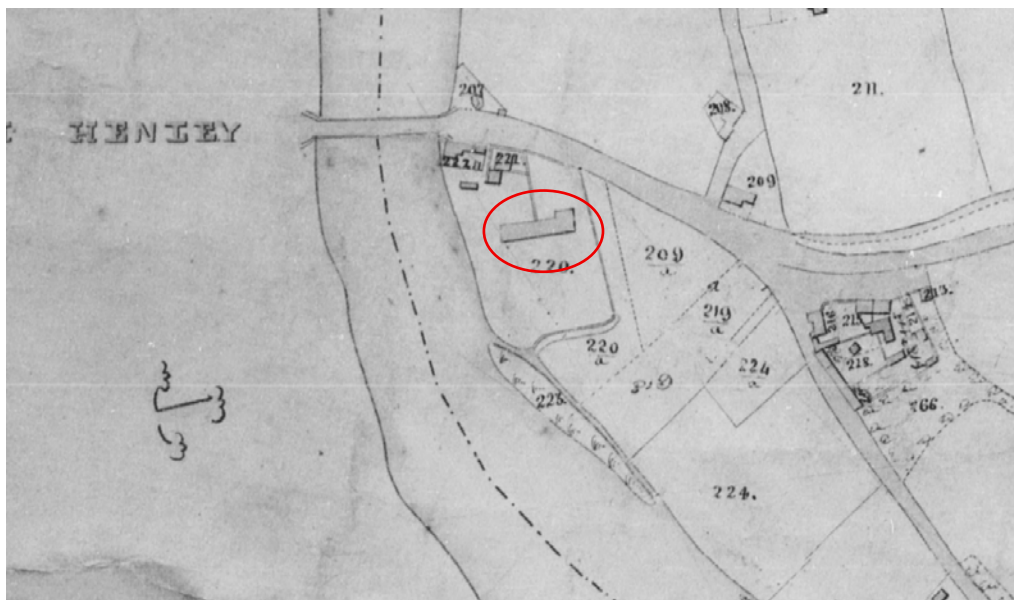


Figure 2.1 - Heritage Asset Plan

### **3 Historical Development**

- 3.1 Henley-on-Thames is a historic market town located on the banks of the River Thames in Oxfordshire, close to the Chiltern Hills. Its development has been shaped by its strategic location along the river, which facilitated trade, industry, and social activity from the medieval period to the present day.
- 3.2 There is archaeological evidence of settlement in the area since the Roman times, and it lay in close proximity to the Roman road from Dorchester, although whether it formed part of an isolated farmstead or a larger settlement is unknown. The town's strategic position at a ford across the Thames made it an important crossing point. By the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the area formed part of the large royal estate of Benson Manor before becoming a separate manor known as Henley Manor by the late 12<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.3 Whilst Henley is not mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, it is believed to have been founded soon after, with the first record of Henley as a substantial settlement dating from 1174. It was formally established as a planned medieval town by King Henry II, who bought land in the area and ordered its development. The street pattern developed at this time remains largely intact, with Hart Street, Friday Street, Bell Street, and New Street forming the historic core. Henley Bridge was first constructed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century to facilitate trade and communication.
- 3.4 By the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Henley had become an important market centre and river port, shipping grain, timber, wool, and stone to London; as such, associated trades such as boatbuilding flourished. Its riverfront location also supported a thriving malting and brewing industries. The town's prosperity enabled the construction of many timber-framed buildings along the main streets, some of which survive today although many have been re-fronted or rebuilt. Today, the presence of long, narrow burgage plots along the main streets reflects the town's medieval origins.
- 3.5 Henley's expansion slowed during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, but it retained its role as a market and trading hub. The town was divided during the English Civil War, with local estates occupied by opposing Parliamentary and Royalist forces. Post-war rebuilding included repairs to the bridge, which survives today and is Grade I listed, and improvements to the market area.
- 3.6 The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries brought intense growth to Henley, with the town serving as a popular staging post for coaches travelling between London and other major towns. The influx of wealth stimulated significant rebuilding of many medieval timber-framed buildings in brick and large-scale public infrastructure projects, including the construction of the new Henley Bridge in 1786. The bridge was designed by William Hayward, and replaced the earlier medieval structure, although some earlier sections remain. This period also saw the construction of several large Georgian townhouses, such as Bird Place, reflecting the town's growing prosperity.
- 3.7 The first available map showing the Site is the Tithe map from 1840 (figure 3.1), which shows Bird Place as comprising the typical Georgian double-pile brick form at the eastern end connecting along a long, rectangular service wing to an earlier 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed cottage at the western end (the separately listed Bird Place Cottage), however previous historic building surveys suggest its proportions and construction of painted timber studs and brick infill panels are more characteristic

of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> Whilst today these are two separate properties, Tithe records indicate at this point these were one residence. The property also comprised much of the land to the south, although the buildings to its north near Henley Bridge were in separate ownership. The public house The Little Angel was also present by the point, within plot 209 to the north-east of the Site.



*Figure 3.1 - 1840 Tithe map, with Bird Place indicated in red. (Source: The Genealogist)*

- 3.8 The arrival of the railway in 1857 initially reduced Henley's role as a staging post but enhanced its popularity as a riverside resort. The establishment of the Henley Royal Regatta in 1839, which received royal patronage in 1851, further elevated the town's status. Purpose-built boathouses, rowing clubs, and hotels were established along the riverfront. As shown in the Ordnance Survey (OS) map in figure 3.2, by 1883 the Site also had its own boathouse on the riverfront. Residential development expanded further across the area during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with large villas and terraces catering to Henley's growing middle-class population.

---

<sup>4</sup> Witchert Heritage Consultancy Ltd, *Heritage Asset Assessment: Bird Place Cottage, Henley-on-Thames, Berkshire RG9 2LT*, 13 October 2013.



Figure 3.2 - 1883 OS map, with Bird Place indicated in red and the boat house in blue. (Source: National Library of Scotland [NLS])

- 3.9 Henley remained a fashionable riverside town into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The construction of the current Town Hall (1899–1901) and the transformation of the riverfront for Regatta infrastructure reflect the town's social and cultural prominence. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as shown in figure 3.3, the Site had an additional boathouse on the riverfront, an indication of its prominence as a high-status residence. There had been additional development to the north of the Site, and the map detail indicates the different sections of the property, with what appears to be a glasshouse at its far western end.

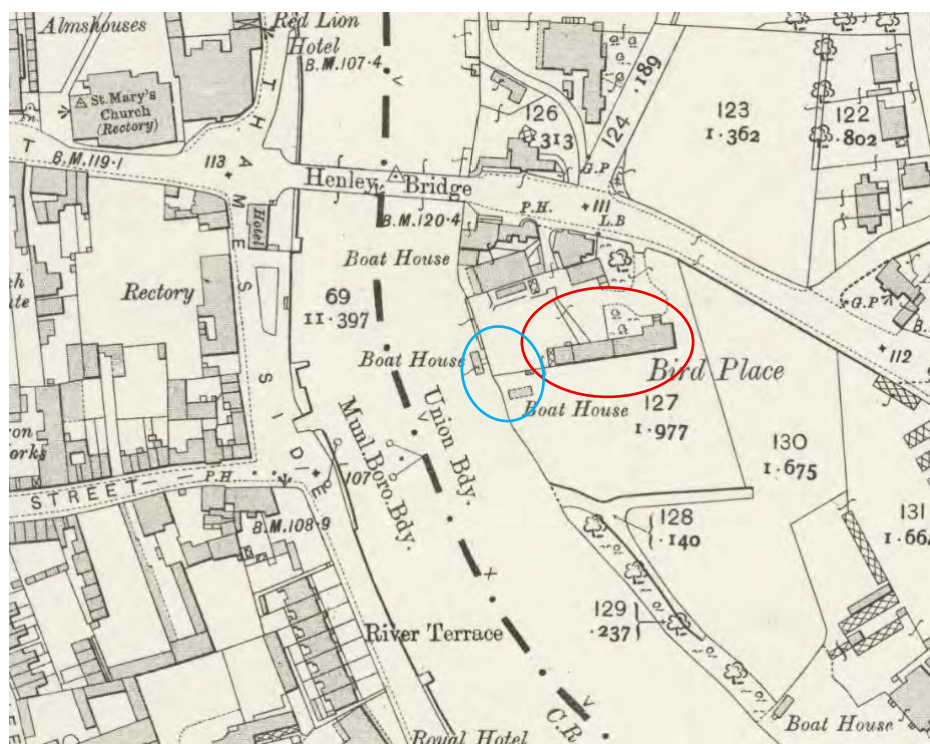


Figure 3.3 - 1913 OS map, with Bird Place indicated in red and the boat houses in blue. (Source: NLS)

- 3.10 The OS maps from 1925 and 1944 show that as the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, Bird Place's form remained largely unchanged and it retained the boathouses along the river. Whilst alterations were likely carried out as the property changed ownership, there are no planning records available for this period.
- 3.11 Residential development in Henley continued into the 1960s and 1970s with new housing estates built on the town's edges, whilst the historic core remained largely intact. The 1960 OS map (figure 3.6) shows the Site still had both boathouses in situ; however the 1968 OS map shows only one smaller dock or boathouse further south along the riverbank. At this point, as evidenced in historic planning records, Bird Place Cottage became a separate dwelling (ref. R/83/68 – 'Conversion of integral wing to separate cottage at Bird Place (Bird Place Cottage)'), however the general plan form of the Site remained unchanged.



Figure 3.6 - 1960 OS map (Source: NLS)



Figure 3.4 – 1925 OS map (Source: NLS)



Figure 3.5 – 1944 OS map (Source: NLS)



Figure 3.7 - 1968 OS map (Source: NLS)

- 3.12 In the mid-1980s, the existing buildings to the north of the Site near Henley Bridge were demolished and replaced by the new Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters. In 1995, the 3 extant detached conservatory to the east of the principal building was granted permission (ref. 95/60688/F). Within the Site, several changes occurred within the grounds in the early 2000s, including a swimming pool by 2004 (figure 3.8) and internal remodelling and landscaping works in 2005. A small lean-to extension at the centre of the southern elevation was also added around this time, visible in the 2009 satellite photo (figure 3.9) (there is no planning record available for these works).



Figure 3.8 - 2004 satellite photo (Source: Google Earth)



*Figure 3.9 - 2009 satellite photo (Source: Google Earth)*

- 3.13 In 2020, the Site received listed building consent for the erection of a carport and store with first floor accommodation to form an artist's studio, to replace the existing (collapsed) coach house. In 2021, a certificate of existing lawful development was granted for the vehicle parking incidental to a mixed residential/commercial use (see sketch of car park plan in figure 3.10). Following this, in January 2024, permission was granted for the demolition of the existing buildings to the north of the Site and the erection of a four-storey apartment block, which is nearing completion today and can be seen behind the conservatory in figure 3.11 below.



*Figure 3.10 - Plan of permitted mixed-use car park*



*Figure 3.11 - New apartment block rising behind the conservatory at the Site*

- 3.14 Over recent years the slipway near the existing conservatory, which served the historic boathouse, has gradually been silted up. The Site itself has been vacant approximately five years and has fallen into a state of disrepair and is now under new ownership.



Figure 3.12 - 2017 satellite photo, indicating slipway in orange and lean-to extension in blue (Source: Google Earth)



Figure 3.13 - Present-day satellite photo (Source: Google Maps)

## 4 Significance

- 4.1 The significance of a heritage asset is defined within the glossary of the NPPF as:

*‘The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting’.*<sup>5</sup>

- 4.2 Listed buildings are statutorily designated and, for the purposes of the NPPF, are designated heritage assets. Recognising this statutory designation, buildings must hold special architectural or historic interest. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport publish the ‘Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings (2010)’ which is supported by thematic papers, ‘Listing Selection Guides’, based on building type, which give more detailed guidance.
- 4.3 Conservation Areas are identified if they are of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which should be preserved or enhanced. Historic England has published guidance on the designation of Conservation Areas which provides a framework for the identification of those features that form the character and appearance.
- 4.4 The identification of a site as a non-designated heritage asset does not provide any legal protection of such asset, however, for the purposes of the NPPF, they are a material consideration in the determination of applications.

### **Assessment**

- 4.5 The following summary statements of significance provide an overview of the identified designated and non-designated heritage assets set out in Section 2, which may be affected by the application proposals. These are proportionate to the importance of the asset and the likely impacts of the proposals.

### **Listed Buildings**

#### **Bird Place – Grade II**

- 4.6 Bird Place was first included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at Grade II on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1983 (NHLE: 1319073). Its list description states:

*‘REMENHAM SU 78 SE 1/9 Bird Place II Large house. C18. Brick, string at first floor level, plain parapet with coping, old tile roof with coped gable end to right, hip to left, pedimented dormers with sash windows, symmetrical chimneys, 2 storeys attic and basement. North front : 5 bays sash windows with glazing bars, stone cills and architrave frames on lower floors, modern half glazed central door with moulded rusticated architrave and voussoir head under Doric porch of 2 pilasters, columns and entablature with triglyph frieze and modillioned cornice, approached by flight of stone steps. To the right hand is a brick service wing of no special interest which continues to west in a late C17 timber framed house which is listed separately under Bird Place Cottage. Interior: contains staircase with turned balusters and square newels with moulded panels, panelling in rooms on ground and first floors.’*

---

<sup>5</sup> NPPF (2024) Annex 2: Glossary

### **Architectural Interest**

- 4.7 The Site derives its architectural interest principally as a surviving 18<sup>th</sup> century manor house. It was constructed in typical Georgian style, with a symmetrical front façade and two-over-two, double-pile plan form, composed primarily of red stock brick with a slate roof. It is connected to its historic ancillary service wings at its western end: Rose Cottage (remains part of Bird Place) and Bird Place Cottage (now a separate dwelling).
- 4.8 Bird Place is set perpendicular to the river and the property is set back and well enclosed within its grounds. Historically, it may have been visible in views looking east when moving up and down the river. However, a combination of the large boundary wall along the rear of Bird Place, the conservatory at the head of the slipway, and the mature planting on the southern boundary means the building is not readily appreciable.
- 4.9 The most visible part of the Site from across the river is the Regency style, white-painted timber and brick conservatory built off the brick boundary wall near the former slipway constructed in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The conservatory is now extremely weathered, and moreover, does not match in style to the rest of the property; nor is it clearly juxtaposed through modern design. As such it detracts from the significance of the Site.
- 4.10 The listed building's grandeur is emphasised primarily through the several large windows on the rear elevation, including the two-storey curved bay at the eastern end, the large arched window opening to the main central staircase, and the large, square bay window at ground floor level. In the Georgian period, glass was an expensive feature to install, and the large expanses of glazing across the rear elevation of the Site send a message of status to those looking towards the Site from Henley. As such, the rear elevation (save for Rose Cottage) makes a strong contribution to the Site's overall significance.
- 4.11 The list description, written in 1983, makes clear that – *'the services wing'* – does not contribute to the interest of Bird Place. It is likely that by the point of listing this area of the building had been substantially altered and lost most of its historic features. Externally, it contains a variety of modern window styles which detract from the overall appearance of the Site. Additionally, there is a poor-quality lean-to extension from the rear elevation containing modern windows and doors. Internally, Rose Cottage has been extensively altered and modernised and contains no historic features of interest; like the main part of the building, it has been vacant for several years and currently in a very poor state of repair. As such, Rose Cottage continues to make no contribution to the significance of the Site.
- 4.12 On the symmetrical front elevation of Bird Place, the central main entrance is approached by a flight of stone steps. and surrounded by a moulded, rusticated architrave and voussoir head underneath a Doric porch with two pilasters and two columns supporting an entablature featuring a triglyph frieze and modillioned cornice. The fine detailing is evidential of the Site as a house of high-status residents; however, the original door has been lost and is now a modern, half-glazed door, and the stone steps are in a very poor condition, detracting from the significance of this area of the Site.
- 4.13 The eastern end of the Site (the primary manor house) has historically been its least visible part, although it does contain some features of interest including two blind windows which provide symmetry to the elevation. There is also a white-painted timber porch extending with a door

providing access from the interior to the garden, indicating the use of the internal space as a 'garden room'.

- 4.14 Elsewhere on the exterior of the Site, the gabled, clay tiled roof is in very poor condition, with a number of broken, slipped or missing tiles. Whilst many of the original window openings have been retained, namely the grand windows on the rear elevation, many have been altered over time. As a result, the sense of hierarchy between floors has somewhat been lost and many windows are in poor condition, together detracting from the Site's overall appearance. Additionally, around the primary rear entrance, with a carved surround supporting an entablature, there is a poor-quality modern stone patio which lacks definition within the grounds. Finally, there are black metal gates and brick piers (the piers in mis-matched construction with evidence of one having been relocated from its original position), both modern, forming an entrance to the Site from the A4130; however, these lack the formality appropriate to a Georgian style mansion house.

#### *Interior*

- 4.15 Internally, the house has retained a number of historic features within the original Georgian section, however a series of alterations and attempts to modernise the property have also resulted in the loss or disruption of some details. Its recent period of disuse and vacancy have also led to the deterioration of internal spaces, with significant areas of damp, mould, and decay resulting from moisture ingress and lack of maintenance.
- 4.16 The plan form of the Site has changed over time, both with the removal and introduction of walls throughout. There is some evidence to suggest there was a wall separating off spaces on the ground floor. On the first floor, modern stud walls have been installed to create additional bedrooms and bathrooms, which is further evidenced by ceiling beams running continuously where rooms have been broken up.
- 4.17 Throughout the property, the timber floorboards show evidence of replacement and repair over time, with the majority of the flooring no longer being original and currently in a poor condition.
- 4.18 Likewise, whilst original window openings and many of the single-glazed, timber sash windows themselves have been retained, many show evidence of being replaced and repaired over time, resulting in a loss of historic fabric. Most of the windows are in a very poor state of repair due to lack of maintenance.
- 4.19 Other historic features which have been retained include some panelling, cornicing, some built-in joinery, ceiling plasterwork, fireplaces with tiled surrounds. There are also some interesting domestic features like service bells and a service hatch to the kitchen opening from a built-in dresser. However, it is unknown to what extent these features are original or were added later by subsequent residents. In several areas, these features have been lost or obscured by modern alterations, such as the surface mounting of cabling and trunking. Although these features contribute to the character of the Site as a Georgian house, many are in generally poor condition and in need of repair.
- 4.20 The cellar has flooded several times over recent years and is another area of the interior in need of repair. It has retained its overall plan form, as well as historic features such as the flagstone floors, wall niches and utility spaces.
- 4.21 The attic space has also been altered over time for use as additional accommodation, although fireplaces and the general plan form appear to have been retained. A small wooden staircase which

opens to the roof is an original feature which has been retained, although now in very poor condition and not usable due to safety concerns.

### ***Historic Interest***

- 4.22 The Site derives its historic interest primarily from its age, its continual use as a private residence, and its associations with notable figures both as guests and owners. The Site was owned by the Sutherland family for over 50 years; Peter Sutherland, the founder of the Upper Thames Rowing Club purchased Bird Place with his wife in 1968, five years after they launched the rowing club. During their tenure, the Site hosted various dignitaries such as Prime Minister Edward Heath and Margaret Thatcher and famous cultural figures. Its prominent position on the Thames, positioned close to the Henley Royal Regatta headquarters and the town centre, underscores its prime location and historical significance within the community.

### ***Setting***

- 4.23 The Site's immediate setting is formed by its extensive grounds which include 400 feet of private moorings, landscaped gardens and lawn, swimming pool, the conservatory situated next to the silted up former slipway, as well as a mixed-use car park to the east of the house. This car park received a certificate of lawfulness in 2021 allowing its use for both residential and commercial purposes and has most recently been actively used by vehicles associated with the construction of the new apartment block to the north of the Site. Immediately to the west of the Site is Bird Place Cottage, which has also been retained although it now forms part of a separate property.
- 4.24 The immediate setting to the rear/south contributes highly to the Site's significance, providing its character as a riverside estate and evidence of its change over time. However, it has lost some important historic features such as the former boat house and the extant lean to and conservatory serve as distracting features. Moreover, the appearance of the mixed-use car park detracts from the appearance of the grounds, and its frequent use by large construction vehicles and other users who are not associated with the Site disrupts its privacy and ambience, detracting from its significance.
- 4.25 The immediate historic setting to the front/north has changed with the construction of surrounding modern buildings including the 1980s Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters and the modern apartment block currently under construction (see Figure 3.11 above).
- 4.26 The historic wall and gates remain but access is now afforded from the north through the modern development. The front elevation of the listed building is well screened from the road.
- 4.27 The Site's wider setting is formed by the River Thames and the surrounding built form, including the Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters and the historic town of Henley-on-Thames. Its position close to the Regatta Headquarters reinforces the area's historic relationship with the river and the Site's own significance as a prominent riverside estate. It is linked to Henley via the historic bridge, and shares a direct visual relationship with the town, with which its development is also closely linked. Whilst there has been change in the area over time, namely the new apartment block to the north, its character has remained predominantly residential and river focussed. As such, the Site's wider setting also makes a high contribution to its overall significance.

### **Summary of Significance**

- 4.28 The Site holds significance as a surviving 18<sup>th</sup> century manor house, which has largely retained its historic plot and position on the riverside and a number of internal and external architectural features. It is of high historic interest through its use as a residence for many prominent residents and host to numerous notable guests. However, the main house has been altered over time, resulting in the loss of some historic fabric, and has been vacant for a number of years which has resulted in its deterioration and general poor condition. Whilst its setting also makes a high contribution to its overall significance, it has lost some key features, namely its historic boathouses, and has witnessed additional development within its setting, principally the mixed-use car park to the east and apartment block to the north, which have degraded its character as a private residential estate.

### **Bird Place Cottage – Grade II**

- 4.29 Bird Place Cottage was first included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at Grade II on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1967 (NHLE: 1154558). Its list entry states:

*'REMENHAM SU 78 SE 1/8 Bird Place Cottage 26.1.67 II Cottage. Late C17, much altered, timber framed painted brick infill, tile roof gabled, 5 framed bays 2 storeys. North front: 2 bays of timber frame to ground level, remaining 3 framed bays replaced with brick on ground floor, 6 sash windows irregularly spaced with glazing bars, the 2 on left hand breaking eaves with gablets, ground floor has C20 casements scattered, some leaded and a C20 square bay with hipped tile roof with entrance door to left under flat hood on cut brackets, C19 chimney in first framed bay from right.'*

### **Architectural Interest**

- 4.30 Bird Place Cottage derives its architectural interest primarily from the survival of historic fabric from at least the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, although it mostly features fabric from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and later, and its architectural relationship with Bird Place. The previous Heritage Assessment on the cottage provides an extensive study of the building, which has been extensively altered both internally and externally over time. The Assessment concludes the general impression of the cottage is of a 'converted non-domestic riverside building of two storeys which at some stage in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was converted into a staff dwelling. There is nothing 17<sup>th</sup>-century of domestic about the older structure . . . it was in fact a service building to Bird Place and by 1875, the date of the first large scale Ordnance Survey map, it was butted to the two storey brick service range attached to Bird Place itself [Rose Cottage]'.<sup>6</sup>
- 4.31 Externally, Bird Place Cottage retains a number of interesting features, including a pair of early 20<sup>th</sup> century eaves breaking gabled oriel dormers with leaded cross casements at its eastern end. At the western end, an upper reception room has been formed with a wide Venetian window and the gable above the tie beam give fake framing. Most windows are modern leaded light or timber casements; however, there is one horizontal sliding Yorkshire casements with glazing bars (similar to the one on the rear elevation of Bird Place), and another 'utilising re-used early 18<sup>th</sup> century sashes with thick glazing bars and original crown glass, possibly an original window from Bird Place'.<sup>7</sup> Internally, there are few features of note apart from some historic beams. More recently, a modern extension has been added at its western end, replacing an earlier extension, obscuring most of its original form from

---

<sup>6</sup> *Heritage Asset Assessment: Bird Place Cottage*, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

view. As such, its architectural interest is held in the survival of its historic fabric, and its relationship as a service wing to Bird Place.

#### ***Historic Interest***

- 4.32 Bird Place Cottage holds historic interest primarily from its age, which according to its list description survives in part from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, although this is disputed and there is no evidence to suggest it was built before the primary manor house at Bird Place. It was likely originally built as an ancillary service wing to Bird Place, before becoming separated from the Site in 1968.

#### ***Setting and Contribution of Site to Significance***

- 4.33 The immediate setting of Bird Place cottage is formed by its riverside plot and the Site, which extends from its eastern side. The cottage holds a prominent position with the RHBCA due to its location next to the Regatta Headquarters and Henley Bridge and visibility along the riverfront. Its wider setting is formed by the river, the surrounding development contained within the two conservation areas. As its position and visual and historic relationship with the surrounding built form and conservation areas has largely been retained, its setting makes a high contribution to its overall significance. However, it has witnessed additional development within its own plot and to the north as well as the construction of a large boundary wall immediately adjacent to it to the south which has resulted in slight encroachment and reduced its legibility as a historic building.
- 4.34 The Site also makes a high contribution to its significance, as the cottage has served as an ancillary service wing to Bird Place for several centuries and thus shares an architectural as well as functional connection.

#### ***Summary of Significance***

- 4.35 Bird Place Cottage holds significance as an ancillary service wing to the manor house at Bird Place which contains historic fabric and series of alterations from at least the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. It shares an important architectural and functional connection with the Site, which contributes highly to its significance. Whilst modern extensions have reduced its legibility as a historic building, it has retained its prominent riverside position and forms an important part of the townscape within the RHBCA and within views from the HCA towards the Site.

#### **Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters – Grade II**

- 4.36 Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters was first included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at Grade II on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018 (NHLE: 1449077).

#### ***Architectural Interest***

- 4.37 The Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters derives its architectural interest principally from its design as a 'festive, yet stately' civic building in the post-modern style, designed by renowned British architect and pioneer of Post-Modernism, Terry Farrell, from 1984-86. The building is three storeys of red brick in English bond to its exterior walls, with stone dressings to the lower storey and cement rendered walls to the upper storey. Its design reflects a combination of a reinterpretation of the temple form, with Thames boathouses and other types of riverside architecture. The western, river-facing elevation is symmetrical, of three bays and alludes to a classical temple front rising above a platform. It incorporates Regatta symbolism through the crossed oars of the balustrades, and the HRR monogram crowning the pediment.

### ***Historic Interest***

- 4.38 The building derives its historic interest from being the administrative headquarters of the Henley Royal Regatta, originally founded in 1839, an important sporting event in the country's history which received royal patronage in 1851. It is a rare example of a permanent building entirely devoted to an annual sporting fixture. As the event's popularity grew, the Regatta was successively expanded in length and finally required a replacement building to accommodate it. Farrell was commissioned in the 1980s to design the existing building, which was built on the site of disused public house, thereby maintaining use of the site as a communal building. The building's historical associations, communal value and continuous functional use as an active headquarters for the Regatta contribute strongly to its overall significance.

### **Setting and Contribution of Site to Significance**

- 4.39 The Headquarters building is located at a prominent position at the eastern end of Henley Bridge, which along with the river forms its immediate setting. Its wider setting is formed of the surrounding RHBCA and HCA, and due to its position, it forms an important part of views to and from the conservation areas. It also has an association with a number of listed buildings on the opposite bank of the river and the Regatta Grandstand through their shared relationship with the river. There have been some changes within its setting, such as the construction of the new apartment block to its east and changes to Bird Place Cottage; however, overall, its key group of listed buildings and its key landmark position have been retained, thus making a high contribution to its overall significance.
- 4.40 The Site makes a moderate contribution to its significance due to the shared historic connection between the plots, emphasised by the fact that the founder of local Regatta lived at the Site for several decades. The buildings do not share an architectural connection as they date from different periods and feature different styles and materials, and inter-visibility is limited to views along the riverbank.

### ***Summary of Significance***

- 4.41 The Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters derives its architectural and historic significance as a rare example of a permanent civic building entirely devoted to an annual sporting fixture and its striking Post-Modern design by renowned architect Terry Farrell in the 1980s. Its position at the eastern end of Henley Bridge makes it a landmark building within the townscape and within views from both the RHBCA and HCA, contributing highly to its significance.

### **Henley Bridge – Grade I**

- 4.42 Henley Bridge is covered by two listings due to its location situated in both WBC and SODC. It was first included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at Grade I on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1951 (NHLE: 1369131) in SODC and was added on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1983 (NHLE: 1117419) in WBC.

### ***Architectural Interest***

- 4.43 Henley Bridge is one of the most important structures in Henley, as it was one of the first major, and only surviving, public works which date to the town's 12<sup>th</sup> century origins. As such its architectural interest derives from some of this very early surviving fabric on its eastern end, as well as the later additions, namely the 18<sup>th</sup> century replacement works by William Hayward.

***Historic Interest***

- 4.44 The bridge's historic interest also primarily derives from its age, as it dates in part to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when it was commissioned by King Henry II as a major piece of infrastructure which helped promote Henley's early development. This royal connection and historic function also make a strong contribution to its significance.

***Setting and Contribution of Site to Significance***

- 4.45 The bridge's setting is formed by the historic towns of Henley and Remenham which lie at either end, the corresponding conservation areas, and the River Thames. It also holds group value with several listed buildings on the Henley side, including the Angel Hotel and St Marys Church, forming the entrance to Henley. As these key areas have been retained and the bridge still performs its historic function providing east-west connections over the river and a formal entrance into Henley, its setting makes a strong contribution to its significance.
- 4.46 The Site is situated within the bridge's wider setting and shares limited inter-visibility between the bridge and its riverside grounds. As such, whilst the Site and the bridge do not share an architectural connection, the Site makes a moderate contribution to the bridge's significance through their shared roles as important historic buildings within the townscape which reflect the role of the river in the area's development over time.

***Summary of Significance***

- 4.47 Henley Bridge holds significance through its age dating in part to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and as an important symbol of the town's development over time and its royal connections, as well as its close relationship with the river itself.

***Angel Hotel including attached medieval arch – Grade II\****

- 4.48 Angel Hotel including attached medieval arch was first included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at Grade II\* on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1951, with its most recent amendment 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011 (NHLE: 1047786).

***Architectural Interest***

- 4.49 The Angel Hotel derives its architectural interest from being a surviving medieval inn which contains historic fabric dating from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In its medieval core it incorporates the westernmost arch and abutments of Henley Bridge which support the north wing of the pub and extend below ground to the north. Together with the surviving arch on the east bank of the river, this arch demonstrates the structure and extent of the early medieval bridge. The hotel's more modern fabric from a 19<sup>th</sup> century remodelling introduced extensive views of the river. Together these features of its design contribute highly to its significance.

***Historic Interest***

- 4.50 The Angel Hotel's historic interest derives from its age and long-term function as an inn and public house; its location at a prominent position at the western end of the Grade I listed Henley Bridge, forming, together with St Marys Church, a visual entrance to the town; and its close association and physical incorporation of the bridge, a strategic medieval river crossing.

***Setting and Contribution of Site to Significance***

- 4.51 The Angel Hotel's immediate setting is formed by the bridgehead and its stone steps leading down to the river terrace, which reinforce the building's landmark position at the entrance to Henley, contributing highly to its overall significance. Its wider setting is formed by Henley town centre and built form along Thameside, which contribute highly to its significance through their continued historic visual and townscape relationship.
- 4.52 The Site contributes to The Angel Hotel's significance as both being important historic buildings within the townscape, with some limited shared inter-visibility with the Site's outermost grounds. However, they do not share an architectural or function connection; as such, this contribution is limited.

***Summary of Significance***

- 4.53 The Angel Hotel holds historic and architectural significance as a public house containing fabric dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, its close relationship with Henley Bridge, and its prominent position at the entrance into Henley.

***Rectory – Grade II\****

- 4.54 The Rectory, No. 17, Thameside, was first included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at Grade II\* on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1951 (NHLE: 1219566).

***Architectural Interest***

- 4.55 The Rectory derives its architectural interest as a surviving 17<sup>th</sup> century grand Georgian building, which was re-fronted in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in plum and yellow stock brick with red brick quoins. Its front railings, dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, are Grade II listed and form a ground with No. 16, Thameside. It has retained these railings along with a number of details to its front elevation which enhance the visual interest of the streetscene along Thameside, contributing strongly to its overall significance.

***Historic Interest***

- 4.56 The Rectory derives its historic interest principally from its age. Its original use as a rectory has been lost, as it now functions as a private residence, detracting from its overall significance.

***Setting and Contribution of Site to Significance***

- 4.57 The Rectory's immediate setting is formed by the neighbouring buildings along Thameside, which contribute highly to its significance as a landmark building within the townscape. Its wider setting consists of the surround HCA and the river, which also make a high contribution to the Rectory's significance through their historic townscape and visual relationship.
- 4.58 The Site makes a limited contribution to the Rectory's significance through their shared historic connections as important buildings within the townscape and some limited inter-visibility with the Site's outermost grounds which form part of important views across the river.

***Summary of Significance***

- 4.59 The Rectory holds architectural and historic significance as a surviving 17<sup>th</sup> century former rectory, which although it now functions as a private residence, has retained many of its characterful features

since its re-fronting during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Its setting makes a high contribution to its overall significance, whilst the Site makes a limited contribution.

## **Conservation Areas**

### **Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area**

- 4.60 The Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area was designated by WBC in 2004. There is no adopted conservation area appraisal available.

### ***Character and Appearance***

- 4.61 The RHBCA's character and appearance is defined by its position across the river from Henley, covering the riverside area of the historic village and civil parish of Remenham on the Berkshire bank of the Thames. The area also forms part of the Green Belt and is designated countryside.
- 4.62 Its appearance is largely rural, as it contains a number of open recreational fields and parks stretching behind the various river infrastructure situated along the shoreline. As such it provides a scenic backdrop to the panoramic river views from Henley towards the green and treed landscape wooded slopes of the Chiltern Hills which contribute to its picturesque character. Its location stretching along the riverside rather than deeply inland also emphasises the character of the area as closely tied to the river itself, and it contains a variety of buildings and infrastructure such as docks, boathouses, clubs and moorings which indicate the river and its banks as the main source of activity and movement in the area.
- 4.63 The RHBCA also contains a number of listed buildings which contribute to its special interest through their historic architecture and townscape role. These include Bird Place, Bird Place Cottage, the Regatta Headquarters, Henley Bridge – a focal point for the otherwise more rural area – as well as the Grade II listed The Little Angel public house. The Little Angel makes a positive contribution to the character of the area as a surviving 18<sup>th</sup> century brick public house, that although highly altered, forms part of the eastern gateway to Henley. Although it does not share inter-visibility with the Site due to their positioning and intervening trees, they share a historic relationship through age and a communal, functional relationship as the local pub for the area's residents.

### ***Contribution of Site to Significance***

- 4.64 The Site makes a strong contribution to the RHBCA's significance as one of the principal listed buildings within it. Its position on the river and its extensive landscaped grounds means it forms a backdrop to the river from Henley and contributes to the RHBCA's overall rural character. However, as the Site's own private riverside moorings and boathouses have been lost, this recreational connection with the riverside has been somewhat diminished. Moreover, the large area of approved mixed-use parking to the east of the Site detracts from the countryside appearance of the conservation area, so too does the modern apartment block which is visible from the western side of the river (figure 3.11 above).

### ***Summary of Significance***

- 4.65 The RHBCA's special interest derives from its location covering a long swathe of Remenham's riverside which provides a picturesque backdrop for views over the Thames from Henley. Its character and appearance are defined by this riverside position, containing a plethora of recreational river infrastructure, and open fields and woodland ascending towards the Chiltern Hills beyond. The Site

makes a strong contribution to its significance as a key listed building within the area, although the loss of some features and construction of modern buildings near the Site somewhat detract from this contribution.

### **Henley Conservation Area**

- 4.66 The Henley Conservation Area was designated by SODC in 1979. Its boundary has been amended and extended since its original designation, most recently in 2004. The Henley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (HCAAMP) was adopted in 2023.

### ***Character and Appearance***

- 4.67 The HCA's special interest lies in its riverside setting; its historic and continuing relationship with the River Thames; the surviving medieval burgrave plot pattern of the town centre, and wide range of historic architecture of a variety of styles and materials which resulted from the wide re-fronting and rebuilding of many buildings during the Georgian and Victorian suburban expansion.
- 4.68 As the HCA covers much of the town centre of Henley, it contains a variety of areas with differing characters. It is divided into nine 'character areas' which represent distinct areas within the larger conservation area. The Site shares inter-visibility with 'Character Area 06: Riverside'; as such, its character and appearance is set out below.

### ***Character Area 06: Riverside***

- 4.69 Henley's connection to the River Thames is central to its identity. The riverside, with its boathouses, rowing clubs, and Regatta infrastructure, remains a focal point for social and recreational activity. As such, it has a distinct character from other parts of the HCA.
- 4.70 The Riverside Character Area features a street pattern oriented along Thameside, which runs parallel to the river in a north-south direction, with the main east-west streets connecting the riverside with the town centre. Development is generally fine-grained but less dense than in the town centre, with terraced rows interrupted by small gaps and converging roads.
- 4.71 The northern section is mixed-use, featuring pubs, shops, and commercial buildings whilst the southern section is primarily residential, with terraced houses and mansion blocks. It contains a number of listed buildings along Thameside, and most importantly, it contains the Grade I listed Henley Bridge, which bisects the street at its midpoint, creating a focal point for the area.
- 4.72 Several listed buildings and one identified NDHA, share inter-visibility with the Site due to their position across the Thames. However, docks, boats, equipment, street furniture, passing traffic, and trees all limit visibility at different levels throughout the year.
- 4.73 These assets, including the Grade II\* Angel Hotel, Grade II\* Rectory, Grade II listed The Coach House (NHLE: 1047728); 12, Thameside (NHLE: 1291426); 11, Thameside (NHLE: 1369144); and The Old Granary; as well as the NDHA at 15, Thameside, enhance the appearance of the riverside and provide the Site with an important view of Henley from across the river. The Coach House at No. 16, Thameside is a 19<sup>th</sup> century red brick building which formerly formed part of The Rectory to the north. Nos. 11 and 12, Thameside both feature an early 19<sup>th</sup> century red brick façade and are listed principally for group value with other listed buildings along the street front. The timber-framed Old Granary dates in part from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, with many later alterations done in different materials, and is formed by a pair of cottages, originally probably merchants' offices and

warehousing, now a single house. No. 15, Thameside features a red brick shopfront with some modern alterations.

- 4.74 Further south down the riverside are the Grade II listed Baltic House and River Terrace, which comprises Nos. 1-7, Thameside, and the building at Nos. 13 and 15, Thameside, an NDHA. Whilst these assets do not share direct inter-visibility with the main house at Bird Place, they have an appreciation of the Site's riverside area and any associated river infrastructure that may be visible throughout the year.
- 4.75 Baltic House, a c.1800 rendered brick house containing 15<sup>th</sup> century timbers as well as several later extensions. It forms part of a group with Nos. 11 and 12, Thameside and the listed buildings on Friday Street. River Terrace is a white stuccoed 19<sup>th</sup> century residential terrace with Doric columned projecting porches to each house, with a prominent position overlooking the river and views towards the Site.
- 4.76 Whilst most buildings along Thameside sit directly against the pavement, reinforcing the street's linear character, there are also some mature trees lining the riverside paths which provide a soft boundary between the built form and the river. One of the most important features of this character area is the important views it offers upon entering the town over Henley Bridge. Likewise, from within the character area it offers panoramic views across the river towards the Chiltern Hills, and the long views up and down the river.

#### ***Contribution of Site to Significance***

- 4.77 Whilst the Site is located directly opposite the HCA and its history is connected to the areas through its association with various residents and local figures, its position turned away from the river frontage and its well-enclosed plot mean its most visible aspect are the outermost grounds and the conservatory. It therefore shares only a limited visual relationship with the HCA and as such the Site makes a moderate contribution to the overall significance of the HCA as part of its setting.

#### ***Summary of Significance***

- 4.78 The HCA's special interest lies in its historic architecture, medieval street layout, riverside setting, and vibrant market town character. These elements combine to create a visually rich and diverse conservation area with a number of 'character areas'. The Site shares limited inter-visibility with Character Area 06: Riverside and makes a moderate contribution to the overall significance of the HCA.

## **5 Assessment of Proposals**

- 5.1 The heritage legal and planning policy relevant to the consideration of the application proposals set out in Appendix A of this report. This legal and policy context includes the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF as well as regional and local policy for the historic environment.
- 5.2 In accordance with paragraph 207 of the NPPF, the significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets that may be affected by the application proposals have been set out in Section 4 of this report.
- 5.3 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify and assess significance of a heritage asset that may be affected by the proposals (paragraph 208). They should take the assessment into account when considering the impact of proposals in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposals.
- 5.4 Account should be taken 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 viability, and the desirability of the new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 210).
- 5.5 When considering the impact of proposals on the significance of designated heritage assets, the NPPF requires (paragraph 212) that great weight should be given to their conservation and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. This is consistent with high court judgements (Barnwell Manor, Forge Fields) where great weight should be attached to the statutory duty.
- 5.6 Where a development proposal causes harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, this should either be treated as less than substantial (paragraph 208), or substantial (paragraph 214). In determining the level of harm, the relative significance of the element affected should be taken into account. Furthermore, local planning authorities are also encouraged to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. According to paragraph 219, proposals that preserve those elements of setting the make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset should be treated favourably.
- 5.7 Paragraph 216 of the NPPF concerns the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset and should be taken into account when considering development proposals with a balanced judgement being required to have regard to the scale of any harm or loss against the significance of the asset.

### **The Proposals**

- 5.8 The application proposals are detailed in the drawings and Design and Access Statement that accompany the application. Set out below is a description of the works and their impact on the significance of the relevant heritage assets, if any.

### **General External Works**

- 5.9 As part of the refurbishment works, a package of general repair works is proposed. These works will improve the appearance of the exterior of the building, improve the functionality of the house for modern living, and improve the ability to maintain the historic building, ensuring its long-term survival.
- 5.10 Across the facades, masonry repairs and repointing is proposed where required, including to the brickwork and the stone front entrance steps and porch which are currently in a state of disrepair. Appropriate techniques and lime-based mortar to match the existing will be used.
- 5.11 Roof repairs are proposed including the like-for-like replacement of the slate tiles. Once a more investigative condition survey has been carried out, it may be that some structural timbers in the roof need to be replaced where defective; this will be done with matching species and section. There would be no raising of the roofline. The roof is also currently un-insulated, therefore, insulation is proposed to be installed between rafters using vapour-permeable materials appropriate for historic buildings.
- 5.12 The existing rainwater goods will be refurbished; where required, these will be replaced in cast iron to replicate existing.
- 5.13 These works will improve the appearance of these areas of the building, improve the functionality of the house for modern living, and improve the ability to maintain the historic building, ensuring its long-term survival.

### **Windows and Doors**

- 5.14 As set out in the accompanying Window Schedule, it is proposed to sensitively refurbish windows where necessary. This will be done using appropriate techniques and materials, including like-for-like spliced timber repairs, breathable paint and appropriate draughtproofing methods. No new window openings will be created.
- 5.15 It is proposed to replace all existing glazing with slimline heritage double-glazing. This will improve the thermal performance of the building whilst preserving the appearance of traditional single glazing.
- 5.16 One window is proposed to be replaced on the rear elevation – the Yorkshire sliding sash in existing Bedroom 6 (proposed Bedroom 1). It is proposed to replace this window with a timber-framed unit of the same size, however it will be two, 2-over-2 panes side by side, in order to take advantage of views over the rear gardens and towards the river and Henley town centre.
- 5.17 The timber entrance door is proposed to be retained and refurbished.

### **MEP Upgrades**

- 5.18 It is proposed to replace the building services. Discrete SVP routing will be installed within existing voids and boxings as much as possible to minimise any alteration of historic fabric. There will be no new external vents. Where fabric is required to be removed or altered, the works will be temporary and reinstated or repaired like-for-like. Where pipework is replaced or rerouted, this will be done with minimal disturbance to historic fabric and concealed wherever possible to avoid impact on historic fabric.

- 5.19 It is proposed to install integrated photovoltaic (PV) glazing within the rooflight of the proposed new extension. The positioning of these new systems will not affect the appearance of the building and will be carefully installed to minimise any impact on historic fabric. This technology will also improve the energy performance of the historic building.
- 5.20 The integrated PV glazing and new MEP fixtures and fittings will improve the condition and functionality of the house for modern living, improve the ability to maintain the historic building, ensuring its long-term survival.

#### **Rear Extension**

- 5.21 It is proposed to remove the existing unauthorised lean-to on the rear elevation of the building (abutting Rose Cottage) which detracts from its significance, and construct a new, high-quality, single storey rear extension. The new extension will be a contemporary design, built of lightweight steel and glazing with a flat roof without parapet edging to reduce bulk and ensure it sits well below the openings at first floor level. It will have a footprint of 67.5 sqm (9m x 7.5m), extending across approximately three bays of the rear elevation where there is currently a mixture of fenestration types which detract from the appearance of the building. The reduced size and scale of the proposed extension since pre-application will also avoid impacting on views from the rear of Bird Place Cottage.
- 5.22 Following pre-application feedback, the scale of the extension was reduced and adjusted to ensure first floor window proportions remain visually intact and historic brickwork remains visible; there will be at least two brick courses between the roofline and the window cills.
- 5.23 The proposed extension will adjoin the existing rear wall and will not require the loss of any historic brickwork or any new openings. The two existing door openings will be used as access to the extension; the existing window opening will be retained and blocked up on the extension side, allowing full reversibility and for the historic opening to remain legible within the building.
- 5.24 Whilst the rear elevation is secondary to its frontage, it is the most visible from the surrounding area. Therefore, the extension's scale and form have been designed to minimise obscuring this elevation and avoid cutting across historic proportions. The use of clearly modern and contrasting materials avoids pastiche and makes it clear where the 'old meets new', with the extension being a high quality yet subservient addition to the main house. The use of large format glazing also allows views through to the original brickwork, windows, and architectural proportions, preserving appreciation of the historic building within views.
- 5.25 It is also proposed to excavate underneath the proposed extension to provide an extension to the basement. There will be no visibility of this new space except from within the extension as it will have a glazed floor. As such there will be no impact on the external massing or appearance of the proposed extension.
- 5.26 Finally, around the new extension it is proposed to replace and extend the existing paved patio areas with appropriate paving materials more in keeping with the character of the building and surrounding conservation area. Additional soft landscaping will also help to improve the appearance of the new extension in views from the surrounding area.
- 5.27 Overall, through the removal of the existing lean-to which detracts from the Site's significance, the preservation of existing openings and historic brickwork, and the high-quality contemporary design of the proposed extension, the significance of the listed building will be preserved.

### **Roof Terrace**

- 5.28 It is proposed to create a new 'sun deck' roof terrace within the roof valley on the historic core of Bird Place. Its placement within the roof valley and use of transparent glazed balustrades will reduce any visibility of this space in views from the surrounding area. A small amount of historic fabric will be removed in order to create a new opening to access this space. The access door will be timber, with discreet metal cladding and be in keeping with the appearance of the property.

### **Internal Alterations**

#### ***General Internal Redecoration***

- 5.29 There is an extensive amount of damage to internal walls due to its disuse for several years, with poor ventilation and moisture build-up. Walls are to be replastered with lime plaster where necessary to ensure breathability.
- 5.30 Decorative cornices, skirting, and architraves will be retained and repaired on a like-for-like basis. Timber wall panelling will be repaired as necessary with matching joinery. The historic timber floorboards will be retained and refurbished. Where required, replacement boards of matching reclaimed timber will be installed. The existing fireplaces will be retained and repaired like-for-like with matching stone/timber where required.
- 5.31 Together these works will improve the condition of the interior of Bird Place and restore its historic appearance, providing a key benefit to the listed building.

#### ***Cellar Refurbishment***

- 5.32 Currently the cellar space is not a usable space due to its poor condition as a result of repeated flooding, and its low head height. Therefore, it is proposed to lower the floor to provide an adequate head height and repair and redecorate to create additional habitable space.
- 5.33 Following the recommendation of the Conservation Officer at pre-application, it is proposed to give a contrasting finish to the walls between the existing and lowered sections to provide visual demarcation of original floor level. Overall, the plan form of the existing cellar space will be retained, including the chimney breasts, wall niches and shelves which provide legibility to the historic use of these spaces. In addition, the historic water pump housing in the cellar is proposed to be relocated slightly and highlighted as a feature. There will be some new services introduced; however these will be mainly limited to the proposed 'plant/services' room therefore preserving the utilitarian character of this space. As such, the retention and reuse of these historic features, preservation of the historic plan form, and clear distinction between 'old and new' will preserve the significance of this space. A full photographic record of the existing space can also be carried out ahead of works commencing to ensure it is captured for posterity.
- 5.34 It is also proposed to extend the main staircase to the lower ground floor level. This will require the loss of the WC at ground floor level; however, this is likely not an original space and does not retain any features of interest. The proposed staircase extension will enable full circulation throughout the house, as would be expected in a building of this period and style. Therefore the significance of this space will be preserved.

- 5.35 Finally, the service staircase linking the existing kitchen (proposed boot room) at lower ground floor to ground floor level is also proposed to be retained, preserving a key feature of interest within the building.

***Lower Ground Floor Alterations***

- 5.36 Elsewhere within the lower ground floor, it is proposed to remove the non-original kitchen units to create a boot room. The existing external door and overall plan form of this space will be retained, preserving its significance.
- 5.37 It is proposed to install rising services/a dumb waiter within the existing utility space, which is in keeping with the utilitarian character of this space. Adjoining this will be a new staircase connecting down to the new games room underneath the proposed rear extension. This will not result in any additional historic fabric being lost and there will be no external visual impact as it will be incorporated within the existing utility room.

***Rose Cottage***

- 5.38 Within the lower ground floor of the Rose Cottage section, it is proposed to lower the floor within the existing WC to create a new entrance porch. A new opening will be formed in this area to create a new access.
- 5.39 Elsewhere within Rose Cottage, two existing doors will be partially blocked up and replaced with windows; these will be timber sash window in keeping with the rest of the windows in the building.
- 5.40 It is also proposed to create a new opening to connect the kitchen and proposed dining room/snug. The existing chimney breast will remain in situ and remain appreciable in the dining room/snug space, preserving legibility of the historic plan form. A new partition wall is also proposed to subdivide the existing living room in order to create a second service kitchen; this will likewise follow the line of the chimney breast so its appreciation is preserved, whilst the existing opening to the existing kitchen in main building (proposed boot room) will become two openings in the same location, allowing the historic plan form to remain intact and legible.
- 5.41 Overall, whilst there will be some alterations to openings and plan form within Rose Cottage, this area of Bird Place, as referenced in the listed description is of no special interest. The proposed changes will improve the usability, appearance and condition of Rose Cottage.

***First Floor Alterations***

- 5.42 In the wing between Rose Cottage and the historic core of Bird Place, it is proposed to remove all of the internal partition walls to create the Principal Bedroom Suite (Bedroom 1). These partitions are not original and have been variously added and altered over time to provide additional bedrooms and bathrooms. The existing exposed timber beams in the ceiling will be retained, preserving a historic feature of interest. New partitions are proposed to create a corridor area and a new en-suite in the general location of an existing bathroom, thereby reducing the impact of any MEP upgrades here, which will involve one new SVP run. Finally, the non-original staircase will be rearranged to provide more efficient circulation directly into the core of the house. The rearrangement of this area will provide a more effective use of space, whilst preserving key features of interest.
- 5.43 As set out in the Windows section above, it is proposed to replace the existing Yorkshire sliding sash window in the south wall with a timber-framed unit of the same size. However, it will have two, 2-

over-2 panes side by side in order to provide uninterrupted views from the bedroom over the garden area and towards the river and Henley. Given the mixture of window styles on the building, it is unlikely this window is original to Bird Place; however, it is of some age and contributes to both the historic and architectural interest of the Site.

- 5.44 It is also proposed to remove the existing historic chimney breast from existing Bedroom 6 (proposed Bedroom 1). Whilst this will result in the loss of some historic fabric and a historic feature, the chimney will be retained on the roof, preserving a key feature of the silhouette. The plan form is already believed to have changed over the decades and so the internal impact of its removal is considered negligible. Structural support will be provided to compensate for the removal of the chimney breast.
- 5.45 There are limited changes proposed to the original core of the house at first floor level. The door within the corridor between existing Bedrooms 3 and 4 is proposed to be removed; this door is not original and currently creates an awkward dead space, however it can be retained on site and reused as needed. In all of the bathrooms, existing modern fixtures and fittings will be removed and upgraded.
- 5.46 The existing partitions forming the en-suite to existing Bedroom 4 will be removed; the partitions are not original and therefore this will not affect any historic fabric.
- 5.47 A new partition will be installed in existing Bedroom 3 to create a new en-suite, and one new opening is proposed for a new SVP route. This will be carefully inserted in order to minimise impact on historic fabric.
- 5.48 Overall, there are no changes proposed to the historic plan form, and the new/replacement partitions will improve the legibility of the historic layout. The general redecoration and repair of historic features throughout this floor will improve the condition and appearance of the listed building.

### ***Second Floor Alterations***

- 5.49 At second floor level, it is proposed to remove the door between the existing store and existing Bedroom 10 to create a new bathroom; whilst this door may be of some age, it can be retained on site and reused elsewhere.
- 5.50 Other alterations include the creation of a new opening for access to the proposed sun deck/roof terrace, as set out above. Whilst these changes will result in a small loss of historic fabric, this area of the building is in very poor condition due to extended disuse, and the proposals will improve this space and enable its use. In addition, the general redecoration and repair of historic features throughout this floor will improve the condition and appearance of the listed building.

### **Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area**

- 5.51 Due to the Site's location within it, the character and appearance of the RHBCA have the potential to be directly impacted by the proposed alterations to Bird Place, which, as set out in Section 4, makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 5.52 However, there is very limited visibility of Bird Place from within the RHBCA due to its set-back, enclosed position. Therefore, whilst the external alterations proposed to the elevations will overall improve the condition and appearance of the Site, there will be limited appreciation of these improvements from within the conservation area. As such the positive contribution the Site makes

to the conservation area will be preserved, and by extension, the character and appearance of the RHBCA will be preserved.

#### **Identified Heritage Assets in Surrounding Area**

- 5.53 The nearby listed buildings and locally listed buildings within the Henley Conservation Area identified within Section 2 have the potential to be indirectly affected by the proposals, principally by the new extension on the rear of Bird Place as it will be visible from some parts of the surrounding area. However, as set out above, given that the extension will be of a high quality design and softened by the addition of new landscaping, and the remainder of the external alterations consist of the repair and refurbishment (and single replacement) of windows, doors, masonry, roof and rainwater goods, it is considered that the proposals will have a neutral-to-positive impact on the setting of adjacent heritage assets, ensuring the appearance of the Site aligns with the character of the area.
- 5.54 There is some visibility of the existing lean-to from the rear elevation of Bird Place Cottage, although this is limited due to intervening boundary treatments and planting. As the existing lean-to currently detracts from the setting of Bird Place Cottage, its replacement with a high-quality design will provide an improvement to its setting.

#### **Overall Impact**

- 5.55 When considering the existing significance of the building, the proposed extension and internal and external refurbishment works are considered to preserve the significance of Bird Place by restoring the listed building which is also a positive contributor to the setting of surrounding listed buildings and conservation areas.
- 5.56 It is important to note, that a number of benefits stem from the proposed works, including:
- i) The replacement of the existing unauthorised lean-to which detracts from the significance of the listed building;
  - ii) improvements and like-for-like repairs to historic fabric;
  - iii) the replacement of less appropriate modern materials with more appropriate design elements; and
  - iv) improving the internal layout through alterations to non-original partition walls, improving circulation and usability of internal spaces.
- 5.57 Overall, these works will improve the condition of the building and provide the opportunity to make historic features more appreciable by removing damaged, inappropriate, and non-original interventions. The works also present the opportunity to improve the general functionality of the house through upgrades to its MEP servicing; refurbishment of windows; and repairs/refurbishment to the internal spaces. These works seek to improve the general standard of living and comfort to the building's occupants, whilst supporting the maintenance and continuous, long-term use of the listed building as a private family residence, which is considered to be its optimum viable use.

#### **Considerations against Legislation and Policy**

##### **Statutory Duties**

- 5.58 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places duty upon the decision maker in determining applications for planning permission to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the character and appearance of conservation areas and the special architectural and historic interest of listed buildings.
- 5.59 This statement has identified the significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets which could be affected by the application proposals and concludes that the significance of Bird Place, Bird Place Cottage, and the other identified listed buildings and locally listed buildings as set out in Section 2 will be preserved. In addition, the character and appearance of the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area and Henley Conservation Area will be preserved.

#### **NPPF (2024)**

- 5.60 The significance of the heritage assets (both designated and non-designated), as required by paragraph 207 of the NPPF, has been set out in Section 3 of this report. In accordance with paragraph 212 of the NPPF, the application proposals will preserve the significance of the Grade II listed Bird Place and the identified listed buildings and locally listed buildings in the surrounding area. Likewise, the character and appearance of the identified conservation areas will be preserved.
- 5.61 The conservation of heritage assets has, in line with paragraph 212 of the NPPF, been given great weight and provides an opportunity for new development to better reveal the significance of the surrounding heritage assets (paragraph 219). As such, the application proposals are in accordance with the NPPF.

#### **Local Policy**

- 5.62 As the significance of the identified designated and non-designated heritage assets will be preserved, the application proposals are therefore in accordance with the Core Strategy Policy TB24: Designated Heritage Assets and Policy TB26: Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character.

## **6 Summary and Conclusions**

- 6.1 In accordance with paragraph 207 of the NPPF, the significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets which have the potential to be affected by the application proposals have been described in this statement. A clear understanding and appreciation of the significance of the heritage assets has informed the evolution of the proposals.
- 6.2 This report has concluded that the application proposals preserve the significance of the Grade II listed Bird Place, and the identified listed buildings and locally listed buildings in the surrounding area. The proposals will also preserve the character and appearance of the identified conservation areas.
- 6.3 The application proposals are in accordance with the statutory duties as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF (2024) and relevant regional and local policy and guidance, including the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery local plans.

## **Appendix A – Reference Photos**

### ***Photos of Site – Exterior and Grounds***



*Front elevation*



*Main entrance, with deteriorated stone steps and modern half-glazed door*



*Rear elevation*



*Eastern elevation with blind windows*



*Modern black metal gates, brick wall and gate piers*



*View from rear lawn looking north-east towards the mixed-use car park*



*View east from rear lawn towards mixed-use car park*



*View south through mixed-use car park opening to rear lawn*



*View south through mixed-use car park*



*View east through mixed-use car park*



*View south across lawn towards private inlet with bridge*



*View west across lawn towards river*



*Poor-quality lean-to extending from Rose Cottage with Bird Place Cottage (white) to left behind brick wall*



*Outermost grounds along river at Site, with evidence of former moorings and other associated river infrastructure.  
The white stucco building is the Grade II listed River Terrace.*



*Mature trees along the Site's riverbanks*



*Looking south along the Site's riverside*



*View east through the landscaped grounds*



*Conservatory with new apartment block rising behind and Site in background to right*



*Looking east past conservatory towards Bird Place Cottage with the main building of the Site concealed behind trees*



*Historic brick boundary wall and conservatory with new apartment block rising behind*



*Silted up former slipway*



*Brick boundary wall along rear of Bird Place Cottage*



*Brick boundary wall along rear of Bird Place Cottage*



*Swimming pool and brown timber pool shed*



*Bay window at Rose Cottage and western side of lean-to extension*



*Bay window at Rose Cottage and western side of lean-to extension*



*Current main entrance drive*



*Main entrance drive, with new apartment block partially visible through trees*

***Photos of Site – Interior***



*Ground floor of Rose Cottage*



*Ground floor of main house where it connects to Rose Cottage*



*Ground floor – kitchen*



*Historic beams on first floor*



*Beams and partition wall on first floor*



*Beams on first floor of Rose Cottage*



*Historic flooring removed*



*Main staircase*



*Historic door surround and cornicing*



*Historic panelling*



*Historic fireplace and tiled hearth*



*Historic panelling, cornicing and bay window in primary bedroom*



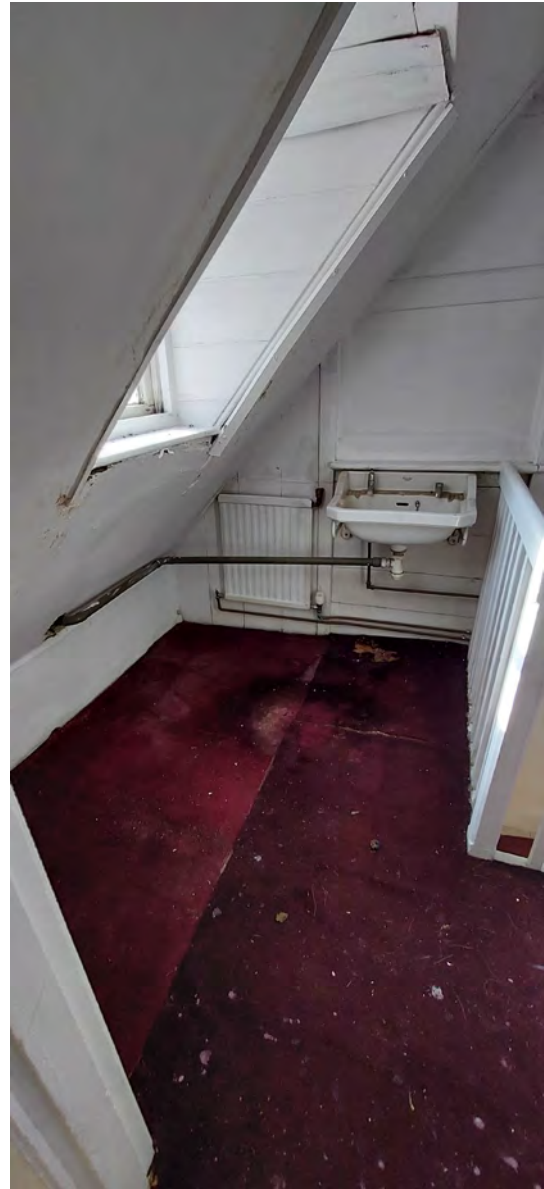
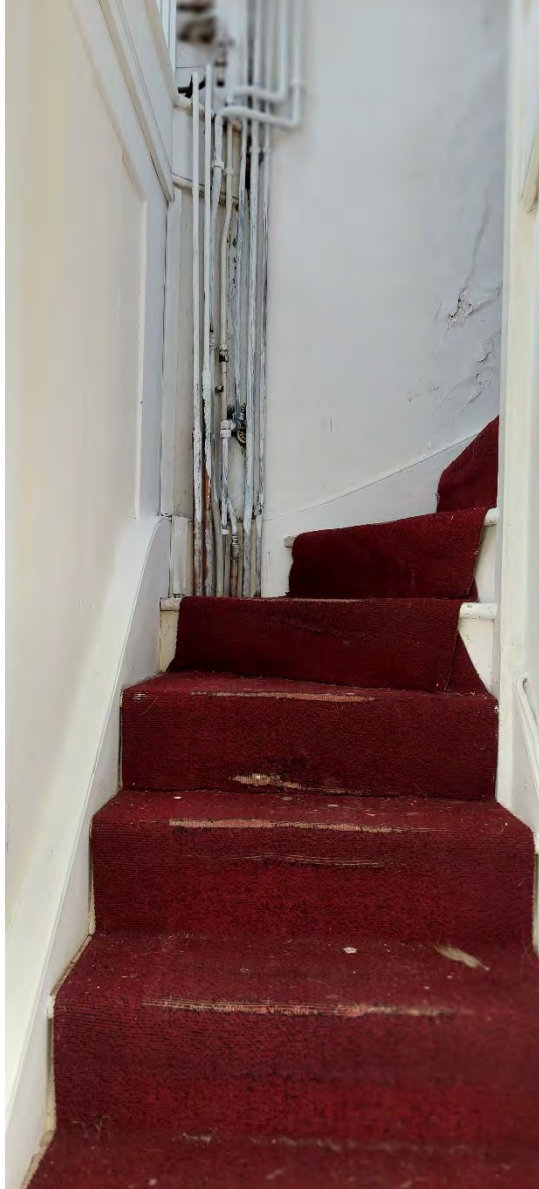
*Primary bedroom*



*A number of alterations to the primary bedroom ensuite has resulted in a loss of historic features*



*Historic flooring removed in bathroom; severe water damage*



*Stairs to attic and exposed pipes; modern carpeting and plumbing in attic landing*



*Water damage in attic room*



*Historic fireplace in attic room*



*Stairs to roof*



*Historic panelling, cornicing and fireplace in first floor bedroom*



*Evidence of changes to historic floorboards in main staircase*



*Example of poor condition of window cills*



*Water ingress in main staircase*



*Evidence of possible former wall to room at left-hand side of ground floor entrance hall, with alterations to floorboards and dog leg walls*



*Room at left-hand side of ground floor entrance hall, with historic joinery*



*Internal soil stack in room to left of historic tiled fireplace*



*Damaged ceiling plaster in ground floor garden room*



*Historic panelling, cornicing, skirting and fireplace in ground floor garden room*



*Historic panelling, cornicing, skirting, columns, fireplace in room to right side of ground floor entrance hall*



*Built-in joinery with service hatch and original fireplace to right*



*View through service hatch to service stairway leading down to kitchen*



*Severe mould and water ingress into ground floor drawing room; historic joinery and window*



*Historic service bell system in kitchen*



*Main entrance hall*



*Damaged ceiling and wall plaster in ground floor drawing room*

***Photos of Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area and Listed Buildings***



*View south-east from Henley Bridge towards the Site, which is shielded behind Bird Place Cottage and mature trees*



*View south-east from western bridgehead at The Angel Hotel towards the Site, which is shielded behind Bird Place Cottage and mature trees*



*Henley Bridge, with the Regatta Headquarters to right*



*Regatta Headquarters (left), Bird Place Cottage, and the Site, only slightly visible behind the trees*



*Henley Bridge, Regatta Headquarters, and the white roof of the conservatory at the Site visible in distance*



*Zoomed in view of the modern extension on Bird Place Cottage, with the conservatory at the Site slightly visible to right*



*Looking north-east towards the Site from Thameside, with the conservatory and new apartment block rising behind*



*Looking north-east towards the Site from Thameside, with the conservatory visible along the riverbank*

***Photos of Henley Conservation Area and Listed Buildings***



*View west from Henley Bridge towards Thameside*



*View west from Henley Bridge towards Thameside - From left: NDHA Nos. 13-15, Thameside; The Coach House; Rectory; and The Angel Hotel*



*The Angel Hotel (centre) and Henley Bridge (right)*



*The Grade II listed The Coach House and Rectory*



*From left: the Grade II listed The Old Granary; 11, Thameside; and 12, Thameside; and NDHA Nos. 13-15, Thameside at far right*



*Baltic House (left) and The Old Granary (right)*



*River Terrace*



*View north up Thamesides towards Henley Bridge*

## **Appendix B – Heritage Planning Policy & Guidance**

### **Legislation**

#### *Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*

Legislation regarding buildings and areas of special architectural and historic interest is contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The relevant legislation in this case extends from Section 16 of the 1990 Act which states that in considering applications for listed building consent, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the Listed Building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 66 further states that special regard must be given by the authority in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing Listed Buildings and their setting.

According to Section 69 of the Act a Conservation Area is an “area of special architectural or historic interest the character and the appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance”. It is the duty of Local Authorities to designate such areas and to use their legal powers to safeguard and enhance the special qualities of these areas within the framework of controlled and positive management of change.

Section 69 further states that it shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly. Adding, The Secretary of State may from time to time determine that any part of a local planning authority’s area which is not for the time being designated as a conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance; and, if he so determines, he may designate that part as a conservation area.

Further to this Section 72 of the 1990 Act states that in exercising all planning functions, local planning authorities must have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. Further provisions are detailed in Section 74 of the Act.

Recent case law<sup>8</sup> has confirmed that Parliament’s intention in enacting Section 66 (1) was that decision-makers should give “considerable importance and weight” to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings, where “preserve” means “to do no harm”. This duty must be borne in mind when considering any harm that may accrue and the balancing of such harm against public benefits as required by national planning policy. This can also logically be applied to the statutory tests in respect of conservation areas. Similarly, it has also been proven that weight must also be given to heritage benefits.

### **National Planning Policy**

#### *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024*

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2024 and sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It has

---

<sup>8</sup> Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited and (1) East Northamptonshire District Council (2) Historic England (3) National Trust (4) The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Governments, Case No: C1/2013/0843, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014

purposefully been created to provide a framework within which local people and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) can produce their own distinctive Local and Neighbourhood Plans which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

When determining Planning Applications, the NPPF directs LPAs to apply the approach of presumption in favour of sustainable development; the 'golden thread' which is expected to run through the plan-making and decision-taking activities. It should be noted however, that this is expected to apply except where this conflicts with other policies combined within the NPPF, inclusive of those covering the protection of designated heritage assets, as set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF. Within section 12 of the NPPF, 'Achieving well-designed and beautiful places', Paragraphs 131 to 141, reinforce the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development by ensuring the creation of inclusive and high-quality places. This section of the NPPF affirms the need for new design to function well and add to the quality of the area in which it is built; establish a strong sense of place; and respond to local character and history, reflecting the built identity of the surrounding area.

Section 16, 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment', Paragraphs 202-221, relate to developments that have an effect upon the historic environment. These paragraphs provide the guidance to which local authorities need to refer when setting out a strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in their Local Plans. This should be a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and should include heritage assets which are most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. It is also noted that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

The NPPF advises local authorities to take into account the following points when drawing up strategies for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. These considerations should be taken into account when determining planning applications:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and preserving them in a viable use consistent with their conservation;
- The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that the conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- The desirability of new development in making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness;
- Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Paragraph 204 of the NPPF states that when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

In order to determine applications for development, Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states that LPAs should require applicants to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution made by their setting. Adding that the level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on this significance.

According to Paragraph 208, LPAs should also identify and assess the significance of a heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal and should take this assessment into account when considering the impact upon the heritage asset.

Paragraph 209 adds that where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

Paragraphs 210 to 221 consider the impact of a proposed development upon the significance of a heritage asset. Paragraph 212 emphasises that when a new development is proposed, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and that the more important the asset, the greater this weight should be. It is noted within this paragraph that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or by development within its setting.

Paragraph 215 advises that where a development will cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Paragraph 216 notes that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. Adding, that in weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly 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.

Paragraph 217 stipulates that local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

In addition, Paragraph 219 notes that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Adding, proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

Paragraph 220 importantly clarifies that not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Adding, loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 214 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 215, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

The NPPF therefore continues the philosophy of that upheld in PPS5 in moving away from narrow or prescriptive attitudes towards development within the historic environment, towards intelligent, imaginative and sustainable approaches to managing change. English Heritage (now Historic England) defined this new approach, now reflected in the NPPF, as 'constructive conservation'. This is defined as 'a positive and collaborative approach to conservation that focuses on actively managing change...the aim is to recognise and reinforce the historic significance of places, while accommodating the changes necessary to ensure their continued use and enjoyment.' (Constructive Conservation in Practice, English Heritage, 2009).

## **National Guidance**

### *Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) 2019*

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was introduced by the Government as a web-based resource on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014 and is updated regularly, with the most recent update on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019. The PPG is intended to provide

more detailed guidance and information with regard to the implementation of national policy set out in the NPPF.

It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle. It also states, conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach. Furthermore, it highlights that neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation.

Importantly, the guidance states that if complete, or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified, the aim should then be to capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance and make the interpretation publicly available.

Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. It states, an important consideration should be whether the proposed works adversely affect a key element of the heritage asset's special architectural or historic interest. Adding, it is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development that is to be assessed. The level of 'substantial harm' is stated to be a high bar that may not arise in many cases. Essentially, whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the NPPF.

Importantly, it is stated harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and may be more extensive than the curtilage. A thorough assessment of the impact of proposals upon setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

The PPG makes clear that the delivery of development within the setting of heritage assets has the potential to make a positive contribution to, or better reveal, the significance of that asset.

Finally, the PPG provides in depth guidance on the importance of World Heritage Sites, why they are important, and the contribution setting makes to their Outstanding Universal Value. The PPG also provides guidance on the approaches that should be taken to assess the impact of development on the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage Sites.

## **Historic England Guidance - Overview**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015 Historic England (formerly English Heritage) withdrew the PPS5 Practice Guide. This document has been replaced with three Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs), 'GPA1: Local Plan Making' (Published 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015); 'GPA2: Managing significance in Decision-Taking in the historic Environment' (Published 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015); and 'GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (December 2017).

The GPAs provide supporting guidance relating to good conservation practice. The documents particularly focus on the how good practice can be achieved through the principles included within national policy and guidance. As such, the GPAs provide information on good practice to assist LPAs, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties when implementing policy found within the NPPF and PPG relating to the historic environment.

In addition to these documents, Historic England has published several core Advice Notes (HEAs) which provide detailed and practical advice on how national policy and guidance is implemented. These documents include: 'HEAN1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (Second Edition,

February 2019); 'HEAN2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets' (25<sup>th</sup> February 2016); and 'HEAN3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans' (30<sup>th</sup> October 2015). In addition to these, 'HEAN4: Tall Buildings' (December 2015); 'HEAN7: Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage (Second Edition, January 2021); 'HEAN10: Listed Buildings and Curtilage' (21<sup>st</sup> February 2018); and 'HEAN12: Statements of Heritage Significance' (October 2019). Collectively, these Advice Notes provide further information and guidance in respect of managing the historic environment and development within it.

*Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 1 (GPA1): The Historic Environment in Local Plans (March 2015)*

This document stresses the importance of formulating Local Plans that are based on up-to-date and relevant evidence in relation to the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of an area, including the historic environment, as set out by the NPPF. The document provides advice on how information in respect of the local historic environment can be gathered, emphasising the importance of not only setting out known sites, but in understanding their value (i.e. significance). This evidence should be used to define a positive strategy for the historic environment and the formulation of a plan for the maintenance and use of heritage assets and for the delivery of development, including within their setting, that will afford appropriate protection for the asset(s) and make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Furthermore, the Local Plan can assist in ensuring that site allocations avoid harming the significance of heritage assets and their settings, whilst providing the opportunity to 'inform the nature of allocations so development responds and reflects local character'.

Further information is given relating to cumulative impact, 106 agreements, stating 'to support the delivery of the Plan's heritage strategy it may be considered appropriate to include reference to the role of Section 106 agreements in relation to heritage assets, particularly those at risk.' It also advises on how the heritage policies within Local Plans should identify areas that are appropriate for development as well as defining specific Development Management Policies for the historic environment. It also suggests that a heritage Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) can be a useful tool to amplify and elaborate on the delivery of the positive heritage strategy in the Local Plan.

*Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 2 (GPA2): Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)*

This document provides advice on the numerous ways in which decision-taking in the historic environment can be undertaken, emphasising that the first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to its significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, this document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged, stating that 'development proposals that affect the historic environment are much more likely to gain the necessary permissions and create successful places if they are designed with the knowledge and understanding of the significance of the heritage assets they may affect.'

The advice suggests a structured staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information, this is as follows:

1. Understand the significance of the affected assets;
2. Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
3. Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;

4. Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
5. Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change; and
6. Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

The advice reiterates that heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Assessment of the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting at an early stage can assist the planning process resulting in informed decision-taking.

This document sets out the recommended steps for assessing significance and the impact of development proposals upon a heritage asset, including examining the asset and its setting and analysing local policies and information sources. In assessing the impact of a development proposal on the significance of a heritage asset the document emphasises that the cumulative impact of incremental small-scale changes may have as great an effect on the significance of a heritage asset as a larger scale change.

Crucially, the nature and importance of the significance that is affected will dictate the proportionate response to assessing that change, its justification, mitigation and any recording which may be necessary. This document also provides guidance in respect of neglect and unauthorised works.

*Historic England Good Practice Advice Note (GPA3): The Setting of Heritage Assets (December 2017)*

This is used to understand the surroundings of a heritage asset which may contribute to its significance. It aids practitioners with the implementation of national policies and guidance relating to the historic environment found within the NPPF and PPG, once again advocating a stepped approach to assessment.

It amalgamates 'Seeing the History in the View' (2011) and 'Setting of Heritage Assets' (2015) forming one succinct document which focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets.

The guidance is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the previous documents, albeit now with a greater emphasis on the contribution that views to and from heritage assets make to their significance. It reaffirms that setting should be understood as the way in which an asset is experienced.

The guidance emphasises that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, and that its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset. It also states that elements of setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.

While setting is largely a visual term, with views considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, setting, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by other environmental factors including noise, vibration and odour, while setting may also incorporate perceptual and associational attributes pertaining to the asset's surroundings.

This document provides guidance on practical and proportionate decision making with regards to the management of proposed development and the setting of heritage assets. It identifies that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset, as well as further weighing

up the potential public benefits associated with the proposals. It clarifies that changes within the setting of a heritage asset may have positive or neutral effects.

It highlights that the contribution made to the significance of heritage assets by their settings will vary depending on the nature of the heritage asset and its setting and that different heritage assets may have different abilities to accommodate change within their settings without harming the significance of the asset and therefore setting should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Although not prescriptive in setting out how this assessment should be carried out, noting that any approach should be demonstrably compliant with legislation, national policies and objectives, Historic England recommend using a '5-step process' in order to assess the potential impact of a proposed development on the setting and significance of a heritage asset, with this 5-step process similar to that utilised in earlier guidance:

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected

Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated

Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it

Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes

*Historic England Advice Note 1 (HEAN1): Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (Second Edition, February 2019)*

First published by English Heritage March 2011 as: Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management and republished as Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management, Historic England Advice Note 1 2016, Historic England Advice Note 1 (HEA): Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (Second Edition, February 2019) continues to support the management of change in a way that conserves and enhances the character and appearance of historic areas through conservation area appraisal, designation and management.

This second edition updates the advice in light of the publication of the 2018 National Planning Policy Framework and gives more information on the relationship with local and neighbourhood plans and policies. It is also re-ordered, to underline the staged approach to the appraisal, designation and management of conservation areas, while continuing to offer advice on managing conservation areas so that the potential of historic areas worthy of protection is fully realised. It has also been updated to give more information on innovative ways of handling conservation appraisals, particularly community involvement beyond consultation, character assessment and digital presentation.

This document identifies different types of special architectural and historic interest which contribute to the significance and character of a conservation area, leading to its designation. These include:

- Areas with a high number of nationally designated heritage assets and a variety of architectural styles and historic associations;
- Those linked to a particular industry or individual with a particular local interest;

- Where an earlier, historically significant, layout is visible in the modern street pattern; Where a particular style of architecture or traditional building materials predominate; and
- Areas designated because of the quality of the public realm or a spatial element, such as a design form or settlement pattern, green spaces which are an essential component of a wider historic area, and historic parks and gardens and other designed landscapes, including those included on the Historic England Register of parks and gardens of special historic interest.

Change is inevitable, and often beneficial, and this document provides guidance in respect of managing change in a way that conserves and enhances conservation areas. It also identifies ways in which suitable areas can be identified for designation as new conservation areas or extensions to conservation areas through historic characterisation studies, production of neighbourhood plans, confirmation of special interest and setting out of recommendations.

*Historic England Advice Note 2 (HEAN2): Making Changes to Heritage Assets (February 2016)*

The purpose of this document is to provide information in respect of the repair, restoration and alterations to heritage assets. It promotes guidance for both LPAs, consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in order to promote well-informed and collaborative conservation.

The best way to conserve a building is to keep it in use, or to find an appropriate new use. This document states that ‘an unreasonable, inflexible approach will prevent action that could give a building new life...A reasonable proportionate approach to owners’ needs is therefore essential’. Whilst this is the case, the limits imposed by the significance of individual elements are an important consideration, especially when considering an asset’s compatibility with Building Regulations and the Equality Act. As such, it is good practice for LPAs to consider imaginative ways of avoiding such conflict.

This document provides information relating to proposed change to a heritage asset, which are characterised as:

- Repair;
- Restoration;
- Addition and alteration, either singly or in combination; and
- Works for research alone.

*Historic England Advice Note 7 (HEAN7): Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage (Second Edition, January 2021)*

First published by English Heritage in 2012 under the title ‘Good Practice Guide for Local Heritage Listing’, HEA7: Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage supersedes the first edition of the published guidance; Historic England Advice Note 7: Local Heritage Listing (2016), reflecting the changes made to the Planning Practice Guidance in 2019.

The updated advice seeks to support communities and local authorities in the introduction of a local heritage list in their area or for those wishing to make changes to an existing list which may have already been adopted. It observes the value of a local heritage list and seeks to adopt a consistent and accountable approach to the identification and management of heritage assets at a local level.

Historic England notes that inclusion on a local heritage list based on sound evidence and criteria delivers a consistent and accountable way of recognising non-designated heritage assets, no matter how they are identified, to the benefits of good planning for the area and of owners, developers and others wishing to understand local context fully. By providing clear and up-to-date information, backed by policy set out in the NPPF (2019), a local heritage list which has been available on the website of a local planning authority and via the Historic Environment Record (HER) provides clarity on the location and identification of non-designated heritage assets.

Regarding the identification of non-designated heritage assets, Historic England builds on the guidance set out in Planning Practice Guidance (2019) in defining a non-designated heritage asset, highlighting that they can be identified in several ways, including:

- Local Heritage Lists;
- Local and Neighbourhood Plans;
- Conservation Area Appraisals and Reviews;
- Decision-making on planning applications.

Whilst the advice notes that planning protections for non-designated heritage assets are not as strong as those for designated heritage assets, it highlights that they are still important, referring to the importance of paragraph 197 of the NPPF (2019), which requires local planning authorities to take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of such heritage assets.

This document draws on good practice across the country in developing a new local heritage list or making improvements to an existing one. Importantly, this advice should be seen as a starting point. In order to remain flexible enough to respond to local needs, decisions on the ways in which assets are identified, and the system adopted for managing the local heritage list, are matters for local planning authorities and their communities. This advice does, however, set out methods for setting up and managing a local list to provide ideas on how this might be done, including providing a clear criterion setting commonly applied selection criteria for assessing the suitability of assets for inclusion in a local heritage list.

*Historic England Advice Note 10 (HEAN10): Listed Buildings and Curtilage (February 2018)*

HE10: Listed Buildings and Curtilage provides advice on assessing whether a building has a curtilage and what that curtilage might/may include. It provides hypothetical examples to assist in that assessment and is based on current legislative provisions in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and consideration of listed buildings and curtilage in legal cases.

In general terms, the guidance defines the curtilage of a building (the principal listed building) as any area of land and other buildings that are around and associated with that principal building. It sets out that the courts have stated that there are three key factors to be taken into account in assessing whether a structure, building or object falls within the curtilage of a listed building:

- The physical layout of the listed building and structure;
- Their ownership, both historically and at the date of listing;
- The use or function of the relevant buildings, again both historically and at the date of listing.

It is important to note that the law (Section 1(5) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) states that listed buildings identified on the National Heritage List for England also includes any ancillary objects or structures within the curtilage of the building, which forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948. Ultimately, it will be for the Local Planning Authority to reach a conclusion as to whether or not buildings are within a particular curtilage, and ultimately a matter for the courts to determine if that decision is thought unreasonable.

*Historic England Advice Note 12 (HEA12): Statements of Heritage Significance (October 2019)*

HEA12: Statements of Heritage Significance covers the National Planning Policy Framework requirement for applicants for heritage and other consents to describe heritage significance to help local planning authorities to make decisions on the impact of proposals for change to heritage assets.

The document states that understanding the significance of heritage assets, in advance of developing proposals for their buildings and sites, enables owners and applicants to receive effective, consistent and timely decisions. It explores the assessment of significance of heritage assets as part of a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance precedes designing the proposal(s).

*Historic England Advice Note 16 (HEAN 16): Listed Building Consent*

HE16: Listed Building Consent provides advice on how to judge whether proposals require listed building consent and how to make informed applications for this. It also advises on what works are likely to need listed building consent or not, and provides guidance on submitting successful applications.

The note emphasises the importance of understanding the significance of a listed building and where it gains its special interest, and recommends the assistance of heritage professionals to increase the likelihood of a successful listed building consent application, as well as utilising contractors who have experience with historic buildings to carry out works.

It provides a reminder of the relevant policies that are laid out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (in particular sections 7,8 and 9), the NPPF and the PPG. The note's 'Annex 1' provides examples of common scenarios involving proposals of works to a listed building, and advises as to whether or not these would require listed building consent. Additionally, a table of potential proposed works is laid out with guidance as to what would not require an application for listed building consent and what exceptions there are likely to be.

## **Local Policy**

### ***Emerging Local Plan***

Wokingham Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan which will put in place a new planning strategy for the period to 2040. Once adopted, it will replace the current Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery local plans.

Most recently, the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040: Proposed Submission Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent Planning Inspector on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

### **Core Strategy**

The Core Strategy is a high-level document setting out WBC's strategy for managing development until 2026. It was adopted by the LPA on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

#### ***Policy CP3 - General Principles for Development:***

Planning permission will be granted for proposals that: are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to heritage assets.

### **Managing Development Delivery**

The Managing Development Delivery local plan builds on the strategy set out in the Core Strategy and sets out more detailed policies for managing development. It was adopted by the council on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2014.

#### ***Policy TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas)***

1. Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas are shown on the Policies Map.
2. The Borough Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings by:
  - a. Requiring works to or affecting heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building, Conservation Area, monument or park and garden including its setting and views.
  - b. Supporting development proposals or other initiatives that will conserve and, where possible, enhance the local character, setting, management and historic significance of designated heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that would improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition or at risk.
3. Proposals for building works shall retain or incorporate existing features or details of historic or architectural significance or design quality into the scheme.

#### ***Policy TB26: Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character***

1. Areas of Special Character are shown on the Policies Map.
2. Planning permission will only be granted for proposals to or affecting Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character where they demonstrate that they retain and enhance the traditional, historical, local and special character of the building or area and its setting.
3. Proposals that involve the demolition of a Building of Traditional Local Character will require strong justification.