

THAMESFIELD RETIREMENT VILLAGE REMENHAM BERKSHIRE

BUILT HERITAGE STATEMENT

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Village, Wargrave Road,
Remenham, Berkshire
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 2 This Built Heritage Statement has been researched and prepared by RPS Consulting UK Ltd, a Tetra Tech Company, on behalf of Retirement Villages Group Ltd. The report identifies the significance of relevant built heritage assets and assesses the likely impacts to their significance arising from the proposed development. The subject of the assessment is land at Thamesfield, Wargrave Road, Remenham, Berkshire (hereafter ‘the Site’). The Site is located on the eastern bank of the River Thames opposite the town of Henley-on-Thames and is approximately centred on NGR SU 76572 82463 [Fig.1]. This report addresses built heritage matters only.
- 3 The Site comprises a near square parcel of residential land of c.1.23ha. with the buildings of a residential care village filling much of the northern, central and north-eastern portions of the Site. The rest of the Site is given over to well-treed, water-fronted lawns and gardens, a driveway, car parking, a lodge and a croquet lawn. The Site is bound by the River Thames to the west (with the waterfront of Henley-on-Thames on the opposite bank), Wargrave Road to the east, a densely treed residential plot to the north (with a red-brick boundary wall) and the grounds of a rowing club (across a more open boundary) to the south. The original house was a later nineteenth-century gentry house which has been profoundly extended, altered and re-modelled over a number of phases through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century.
- 4 The Site includes no designated or non-designated, individual built heritage assets. The Site is, however, wholly within the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area (a small south-western portion) and forms a part of the wider eastern setting to the Riverside Character Area of the Henley Conservation Area and potentially a number of the listed buildings therein [Fig.1].
- 5 This Built Heritage Statement has been prepared to support a full planning application for part demolition of the current buildings and development of a new three-storey block of apartments with extensive enhancements to the existing built form as a building in a conservation area. Fuller details of the proposed scheme are set out in the supporting materials provided with the application submissions.
- 6 This report makes appropriate reference to the relevant legislation, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and national and local planning policy. In addition, relevant Historic England guidance, notably GPA3: *The Setting of Heritage Assets* has been consulted to inform the judgements made. Relevant entries in the Berkshire and the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Records (HER) and listing descriptions for relevant designated heritage assets on the National Heritage List for England has also been consulted. This Statement meets the requirements of paragraph 200 of the NPPF and is sufficient to provide an informed decision on the planning application with respect to built heritage matters.
- 7 The conclusions reached in this report are the result of historic research, walkover surveys of the Site and publicly accessible locations in the surrounding area (including a mid-Winter seasonal views survey), map studies and the application of professional judgement.
- 8 The findings of this report are based on the known conditions at the time of writing. All maps, plans and photographs are for illustrative purposes only.

2 LEGISLATIVE CASE LAW PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The current national legislative and planning policy system identifies, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), that applicants should consider the potential impact of development upon 'heritage assets'. This term includes: designated heritage assets which possess a statutory designation (for example listed buildings and conservation areas) and non-designated heritage assets, typically compiled by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and incorporated into a Local List or recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER).

Legislation

- 2.2.1 Where any development may affect certain designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure proposed works are developed and considered with due regard to their impact on the historic environment. This extends from primary legislation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 2.2.2 The relevant legislation in this case extends from section 66 of the 1990 Act which states that special regard must be given by the decision maker, in the exercise of planning functions, to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings and their setting.
- 2.2.3 The meaning and effect of these duties have been considered by the courts in the Court of Appeal's decision in relation to *Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northamptonshire District Council* [2014] EWCA Civ 137. The Court agreed within the High Court's judgement that Parliament's intention in enacting section 66(1) was that decision makers should give 'considerable importance and weight' to the desirability of preserving (i.e. keeping from harm) the setting of listed buildings.
- 2.2.4 Section 69(1) of the Act requires LPAs to 'determine areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' and to designate them as conservation areas. Section 69(2) requires LPAs to review and, where necessary, amend those areas 'from time to time'.
- 2.2.5 For development within a conservation area section 72 of the Act requires the decision maker to pay '*special attention [...] to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*'. The duty to give special attention is considered commensurate with that under section 66(1) to give special regard, meaning that the decision maker must give considerable importance and weight to any such harm in the planning balance.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Levelling Housing and Communities, December 2023)

- 2.3.1 The NPPF is the principal document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It defines a heritage asset as a: 'building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest'. This includes both designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- 2.3.2 Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment relates to the conservation of heritage assets in the production of local plans and decision taking. It emphasises that heritage assets are '*an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance*'.
- 2.3.3 For proposals that have the potential to affect the significance of a heritage asset, paragraph 200 requires applicants to identify and describe the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected. This is supported by paragraph 201, which requires LPAs to take this assessment into account when considering applications.

- 2.3.4 Under 'Considering potential impacts' the NPPF emphasises that 'great weight' should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, irrespective of whether any potential impact equates to total loss, substantial harm or less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage assets.
- 2.3.5 Paragraph 207 states that where a development will result in substantial harm to, or total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, permission should be refused, unless this harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, or a number of criteria are met. Where less than substantial harm is identified paragraph 208 requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.
- 2.3.6 Paragraph 212 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. It also states that 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.
- 2.3.7 Furthermore, paragraph 213 states that not all elements of a conservation area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. When determining the impacts arising from the loss of a building or element that does positively contribute, consideration should be given to the relative significance of that building and the impact to the significance of the conservation area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

National Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance (DLHC)

- 2.4.1 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has been adopted in order to aid the application of the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle.
- 2.4.2 Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. It states that substantial harm is a high bar that may not arise in many cases and that while the level of harm will be at the discretion of the decision maker, generally substantial harm is a high test that will only arise where a development seriously affects a key element of an asset's special interest. It is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development, that is to be assessed.
- 2.4.3 In addition to full consideration of designated assets, the PPG gives explicit regard to non-designated heritage assets [18a-038]. It notes that, among other site types, '*non-designated heritage assets are buildings identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets*'. It continues that '*a substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets*'.
- 2.4.4 The PPG, at 18a-039, states that '*plan-making bodies should make clear and up to date information on non-designated heritage assets accessible to the public to provide greater clarity and certainty for developer and decision makers. This includes information on the criteria used to select non-designated heritage assets and information about the location of existing assets*'. Additionally, planning authorities '*should ensure that up to date information about non-designated heritage assets is included in the local historic environment record*'. Wokingham Borough Council currently maintain a 'List of Buildings of Traditional Local Character'. This includes no entries for Remenham.

Overview: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning

- 2.4.5 The PPS5 Practice Guide was withdrawn in March 2015 and replaced with three Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs) published by Historic England. GPA1: *The Historic Environment in Local Plans* provides guidance to local planning authorities to help them make well informed and effective local plans. GPA2: *Managing Significance in Decision-Making* includes technical advice on the repair and restoration of historic buildings and alterations to heritage assets to guide local planning authorities, owners, practitioners and other interested parties. GPA 3: *The Setting of Heritage Assets* replaces guidance published in 2011.

GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

- 2.4.6 This document provides advice on numerous ways in which decision making in the historic environment could 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 that significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, the document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged. The advice suggests a structured, staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information:
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 balanced with the need for change; and
 6. Offset negative impacts to significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition; December 2017)

- 2.4.7 This advice note focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. This document replaces GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (March 2017) and Seeing History in the View (English Heritage, 2011) in order to aid practitioners with the implementation of national legislation, policies and guidance relating to the setting of heritage assets found in the 1990 Act, the NPPF and PPG. The guidance is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the 2011 and 2015 documents and does not present a divergence in either the definition of setting or the way in which it should be assessed.
- 2.4.8 As with the NPPF the document defines setting as ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve’. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context. 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, or the ability to appreciate that significance. It also states that elements of setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.
- 2.4.9 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, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, setting also encompasses other environmental factors including noise, vibration and odour. Historical and cultural associations may also form part of the asset’s setting, which can inform or enhance the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.4.10 This document provides guidance on practical and proportionate decision making with regards to the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. It is stated 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, further weighing up the potential public benefits associated with the proposals. It is further stated that changes within the setting of a heritage asset may have positive or neutral effects.
- 2.4.11 The document also states 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 without harming their significance. Setting should, therefore, be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.4.12 Historic England recommends using a series of detailed steps in order to assess the potential effects of a proposed development on significance of a heritage asset. The 5-step process is as follows:
1. Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;

2. Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of a heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;
3. Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
4. Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
5. Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

Local Planning Policy

2.5.1 In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations. In this instance, the local planning context is prescribed by Wokingham Borough Council, whose relevant policies and guidance is reproduced below.

2.5.2 The Wokingham Borough Development Plan document, adopted February 2014, sets out the following policies in relation to the built historic environment:

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

- *The Borough Council will conserve and seek 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.*
- *Proposals or 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

- *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; and*
- *Proposals that involve the demolition of a Building of Traditional Local Character will require strong justification.*

3 HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT APPRAISAL

Introduction

- 3.1 This section summarises the historic development of the Site and its surroundings, and identifies then assesses the significance of relevant built heritage assets potentially affected by the development proposal, including the contribution of setting to their significance. Section 3 assesses how the development proposals may have an impact, if any, on that significance.
- 3.2 The Site [Fig.1] is situated on the eastern bank of the River Thames opposite the town of Henley-on-Thames. The Site comprises a near square parcel of residential land of c.1.23ha. with the buildings of a residential care village filling much of the northern, central and north-eastern portions of the Site. The rest of the Site is given over to well-treed, water-fronted lawns and gardens, a driveway, car parking, a lodge and a croquet lawn. The Site is bound by the River Thames to the west (with the waterfront of Henley-on-Thames on the opposite bank), Wargrave Road to the east (with steep rising, densely treed hills to the east), a densely treed residential plot to the north (beyond a red-brick wall) and the grounds of a rowing club to the south. The original house was a later nineteenth-century gentry house which has been profoundly extended, altered and re-modelled over numerous phases through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century.
- 3.3 The Site has largely level topography lying as it does besides the River Thames. Parts of the garden closer to the River and particularly the croquet lawn to the southwest are at a lower level compared to the areas of the buildings and carparking, which are set on terraces. The garden includes a lower density of mature trees. There is dense mature planting, including mature trees, immediately north of the Site and the eastern margin of the Site is well planted too.

Historic Development

- 3.4 Thamesfield is first seen on historic mapping from 1875. It is formed only of the southern corner of the current building, with a detached glasshouse to the north-west. The Site is well planted with trees and is landscaped with pathways. The lodge can be seen, though the area of the current croquet lawn is in a separate plot of land to the south-east. The northern corner of the current Site is clearly in different use and is occupied by further glasshouses. There is a boat house in the Site's western corner.
- 3.5 Substantial rear extensions, that near double the plan of the house, are seen to Thamesfield by the end of the nineteenth century with further extensions added through the early decades of the twentieth century. By the mid twentieth century glass houses proliferate in the adjacent grounds to the north. By 1962 the grounds extend to the south to include the current grounds of the rowing club and by 1968 the house is labelled as a 'Youth Centre'.
- 3.6 By 1989 Thamesfield is noted as a 'Nursing Home' on mapping with associated extensions to the rear and of the frontage range to the north-west, as the Site now extends to its current northern corner. By the same time the current rowing club to the south-east has been separated from Thamesfield's grounds. Further extensions to and remodelling of Thamesfield were carried out in 1994, 1996 and 2003.

Assessment of Heritage Assets

- 3.7 There are no listed building or non-designated built heritage assets within the Site. Thamesfield itself has not been identified as a non-designated heritage asset by a plan-making body against published criteria and this assessment, similarly, concludes that Thamesfield is not a non-designated heritage asset.
- 3.8 The Site forms a very small part of the southern extent of Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area. The Site also forms a very small part of the wider setting to the Henley Conservation Area on

the western side of the River Thames. There are some filtered views of Thamesfield's western elevation from Boathouse Reach only on the south-eastern edge of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal notes views over the River Thames to the steep wooded slopes of the Chiltern Hills to the east [p.18]. There is no mention of any buildings in these views.

- 3.9 A number of the designated built heritage assets within the wider area can be discounted from further consideration [Fig.1]. These include the Grade I Church of St Mary the Virgin (c.320m north-west of the Site); the Grade I Henley Bridge (c.240m north-west); the Grade II Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters (c.170 north-west); Grade II Bird Place Cottage (c.150m north-west); Grade II Bird Place (c.130m north-west); and the Grade II Little Angel P.H. (c.100m north). These assets, while relatively close to the Site, are wholly screened from the Site by dense planting and mature trees in the grounds to the north of the Site.
- 3.10 This dense planting, together with the dense built form of Henley on the west bank of the River Thames also screens most of the numerous historic buildings and elements of the Riverside Character Area of the Henley Conservation Area from the Site. The Grade II Obelisk to the south of the Henley Conservation Area [Fig.1] is also screened from the Site by the eyot to the south-west of the Site in the middle of the River.
- 3.11 At a greater distance from the Site to the east are a number of Grade II listed buildings set on the crown of the hill to the east of the River Thames. The nearer group of such assets are centred at Park Place (c.1.2km south-east) and wholly screened from the Site by the densely wooded slopes. Park Place is one of the points of focus of the surrounding Park Place and Temple Combe Registered Park and Garden (Grade II*). This is a huge landscape feature extending over 268.7ha. extending, at its furthest, c.2.4km from the Site.
- 3.12 However, the Park's south-western boundary bounds the eastern side of the A321 Wargrave Road immediately north-east of the Site. None of the drives and associated lodges are close to the Site or hold any intervisibility. The designated area's pleasure grounds are described in the designation citation as '*surround[ing] the house to the west, south and east, with pleasure grounds leading away to the south towards the river*'. As such, none of the pleasure gardens hold intervisibility with the Site. Park Place was originally designed to hold views to the west over the River Thames, but these have been wholly screened after the eighteenth century.
- 3.13 As such, the Park Place and Temple Combe RPG is largely screened from the Site. The primary elements of the Site – buildings; pleasure gardens; structures; and designed landscape – are wholly screened from the Site. It is concluded, therefore, that the Site delivers only a negligible contribution to the asset's significance as a minutely tiny part of its setting. The RPG is consequently not considered further in this statement.

Henley Conservation Area – Riverside Character Area (Area 5)

- 3.14 The Character Appraisal notes that the sub-area's character:
- 'is defined by the riverside location and the various boating activities along the riverbank. Whilst all these activities are now all purely for pleasure or sport, evidence of the previous commercial nature of the area is seen in the many late nineteenth-century boathouses and warehouses. [...] [in the part of the Area opposite the Site], there are more Edwardian boathouses, similar to those on the northern fringes of this area, but are set back from the riverbank with a wide, pedestrian-only walkway. Modern development has been successfully provided, marrying in extremely well with the existing buildings'.*
- 3.15 The Grade II Riverside Terrace is the listed building closest to the Site [Fig.1]. The Riverside Terrace has some limited screened and filtered intervisibility with the Site.
- 3.16 The Site and Thamesfield form a very small part of the Conservation Area's wider setting. The Site is largely visually separated (and holds no other historical association) with the core and majority of the built heritage assets in Henley on the west bank of the River Thames (largely those to the north

of Riverside Terrace and set further west beyond the river frontage). These assets, while relatively close to the Site, are wholly screened from the Site by dense planting and mature trees in the grounds to the north of the Site up to the eastern approach to Henley Bridge and/or by the built form of Henley.

- 3.17 Thamesfield has not, as also concluded in this Statement, been identified by a plan-making body as a non-designated heritage asset. Thamesfield is also not referenced in the Henley Conservation Area Appraisal (only views '*over the river to the wooded hill beyond*' are noted). However, the general massing, scale, horizontal rhythms and particularly the white stucco of the river-facing (western) façade of Thamesfield, with the surrounding trees and other planting in the grounds, provide a view into a very small part of its setting that is currently sympathetic to the Henley Conservation Area's character and appearance. Consequently, it can be concluded that the Site, as a very small part of the asset's setting, currently provides a positive contribution to the Conservation Area's character and appearance.

Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area

- 3.18 There is no conservation area appraisal or management plan currently available for the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area.
- 3.19 Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area covers an area of flat land on the eastern bank of the River Thames opposite the Riverside Character Area of the Henley Conservation Area with a backdrop to the east of a continuous range of densely wooded hills. The Site is in the southern extent of the Conservation Area and is separated from the rest of the Area to the north by dense and tall planting. This separation is also reinforced along Wargrave Road by built form to the north of the Site (including the nineteenth-century Marsh Cottages) and the busy road of Remenham Hill.
- 3.20 The southern extent of the Conservation Area (including the Site and the rowing club to the south) is characterised by two well-treed, parkland-like plots (the latter historically also a part of the grounds to Thamesfield). The two plots contrast in that the rowing club has minimal, low-scale built form of no architectural value with informally managed grounds, while the Site includes the monumental, white-stuccoed Thamesfield with well-manicured lawns (including a croquet lawn to the south) and some planting beds around the driveway. The mass of the building is largely screened from Wargrave Road, excepting some of the later twentieth-century extensions, which conflict with the 'back-of-house' of earlier extensions.
- 3.21 The Site forms a small part of the Conservation Area. The Site is visually separated (and holds no other historical association) with the built heritage assets in the wider Conservation Area to the north. These assets, while relatively close to the Site, are wholly screened from the Site by dense planting and mature trees in the grounds to the north of the Site.
- 3.22 The general massing, scale, horizontal rhythms and the white stucco of the river-facing façade (and part of that of the south-facing façade) together with the well-treed nature of the grounds, provide a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. However, this character is almost only legible from directly across the River and within the Site, where these facades can be partly viewed in well-filtered views.
- 3.23 The remainder of the Site, the later extensions to the east and north are not positive contributors to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, although the Site's enclosed, discrete nature largely mitigate any such effects beyond the Site and the immediate section of Wargrave Road. Consequently, it can be concluded that the Site, as a small part of the Conservation Area, currently largely provides a positive contribution to the Conservation Area's character and appearance, while the buildings forming Thamesfield, as an aggregate, provides a negligible/minor negative contribution to the asset's character and appearance.

Non-designated Built Heritage Assets

- 3.24 The relevant plan-making bodies in this case, Wokingham Borough Council and South Oxfordshire District Council do not identify, against published criteria, any non-designated built heritage assets that could be affected by the Site's development. Thamesfield has not been identified as a non-designated heritage asset and this pre-application Statement concurs with this conclusion. While the southern end of the river-facing façade and the western end of the south-facing façade retain a degree of architectural quality, due to the significant, insensitive and multi-phased extensions and remodelling, the building(s) do not retain sufficient heritage value to be considered to be a heritage asset.

4 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

- 4.1 The proposal is described as:

‘Part demolition of the existing building and replacement with a three-storey extension to provide extra-care units (use class C2), with associated soft and hard landscaping works; provision of additional vehicle parking, bin stores and ancillary structures; and alterations to existing basement’.

- 4.2 The proposed development will wholly retain the current character, architectural detailing, horizontal rhythms, general massing, scale and materials (white stucco) of the existing building as perceived from the west and southwest, while looking to enhance (through the use of high-quality design, detailing and materials) the building’s current character within the Conservation Areas. There will be no meaningful perception of the proposal from any other direction (other than the southern edge of the immediate property to the north). In terms of the new north-western element, the material finish will be developed to reference and sit comfortably with the existing character of the building.
- 4.3 The current eaves levels will be maintained in the new extension it will almost entirely sit behind the western range and façade in views from the west. Though of three storeys the roof will be physically and materially made to be visually recessive in these same views.

Assessment of Impact

- 4.4 The proposed development, as set out in the application, will have no impact on the significance of any listed building. As noted above, Thamesfield does not form the notable part of any setting to such a built heritage asset.

Henley Conservation Area

- 4.5 Henley Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset of high (national) significance, with this significance principally derived from the history and morphology of its townscape beside the River Thames, together with the architectural and historic special interest of the listed buildings therein. There is a filtered visual connection between the western façade of Thamesfield and the south-eastern edge of the Area, with only the steep wooded hills of the Chilterns noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal in terms of the Area’s setting in the direction of the Site.
- 4.6 It is anticipated that the proposed development of the Site will not negatively change the current character of Thamesfield where it can be currently viewed, in filtered views, from a limited portion of the Conservation Area (limited parts of the western bank). The scheme will maintain the building’s character within the Conservation Area’s setting. Consequently, the proposed development, as currently understood, will cause no harm to the setting of the Henley Conservation Area and, therefore, to the Area’s character and appearance (significance).

Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area

- 4.7 Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset of moderate (regional) significance, with this significance principally derived from the landscape beside the River Thames in the setting of Henley-on-Thames, together with the architectural and historic special interest of the listed buildings therein. The Site forms a small part of the Conservation Area’s southern extent and is a visually dislocated element from the rest of the Area to the north.
- 4.8 The proposed development of the Site will not harm the current character of Thamesfield where it can be currently viewed from a limited portion of the Conservation Area (largely from the west and southwest within the Site’s grounds). Consequently, the proposed development will cause no harm to the character and appearance of the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area and, therefore, to the Area’s significance. The scheme will maintain the character of the building within the Conservation Area.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This Built Heritage Statement has been researched and prepared by RPS, a Tetra Tech company, on behalf of Retirement Villages Group Ltd, to assess the likely impacts on the historic built environment from development at Thamesfield, Wargrave Road, Remenham, Berkshire. The Site is located on the eastern bank of the River Thames opposite the town of Henley-on-Thames. The Statement is focussed on built heritage considerations only.
- 5.2 This Built Heritage Statement has been prepared to support the planning application. The proposed scheme is for part demolition, construction of new three-storey apartment block. Fuller details of the proposed scheme, as currently understood, are set out in the application documentation.
- 5.3 The Site includes no individual designated or non-designated built heritage assets. The Site is wholly within the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area and forms a small part of the wider eastern setting to the Riverside Character Area of the Henley Conservation Area [Fig.1].
- 5.4 This report meets the requirement under paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for the applicant to explain the significance of the heritage assets likely to be affected by development and demonstrate the level of impact that the proposals would have upon that significance. This report accords with the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy. It provides sufficient information for an informed decision to be made.
- 5.5 The Statement refers, as necessary, to the relevant legislative framework contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as national and local planning policy. In addition, relevant Historic England guidance has been consulted to inform the judgements made. A summary of the relevant National and Local Planning Policy is included.
- 5.6 Relevant information, including from the Berkshire and the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Records (HER), has also been consulted in preparing this Built Heritage Statement. The report is further informed by the findings of historical research, a number of Site and area walkover surveys and assessment, map studies and the application of professional judgement.
- 5.7 This Built Heritage Statement concludes that the proposed development of the Site will result in no adverse impacts to the significance (character and appearance) of the identified heritage assets, namely Remenham Conservation Area (a small south-western portion) and Henley Conservation Area (as a small part of its wider setting). Consequently, the planning application, in terms of built heritage considerations, can be consented.
- 5.8 Notwithstanding this conclusion, the decision maker may take the view, following sufficient assessment against published criteria, that the current building is a non-designated heritage. It is already noted that the Site is in Remenham Conservation Area.
- 5.9 The decision maker may also take the view that there is a degree of harm caused by the proposed development to the significance of Thamesfield (as a potential non-designated heritage asset) and to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. In such an instance, paragraph 209 for the former and paragraph 208 for the latter would be engaged for the decision maker. This harm would be at the lower end of the less than substantial harm spectrum. The planning statement supporting the application shows that the public benefits of the proposal would outweigh the potential lower level of harm to these two assets' significance. These public benefits would also deliver clear and convincing justification for any such harm.

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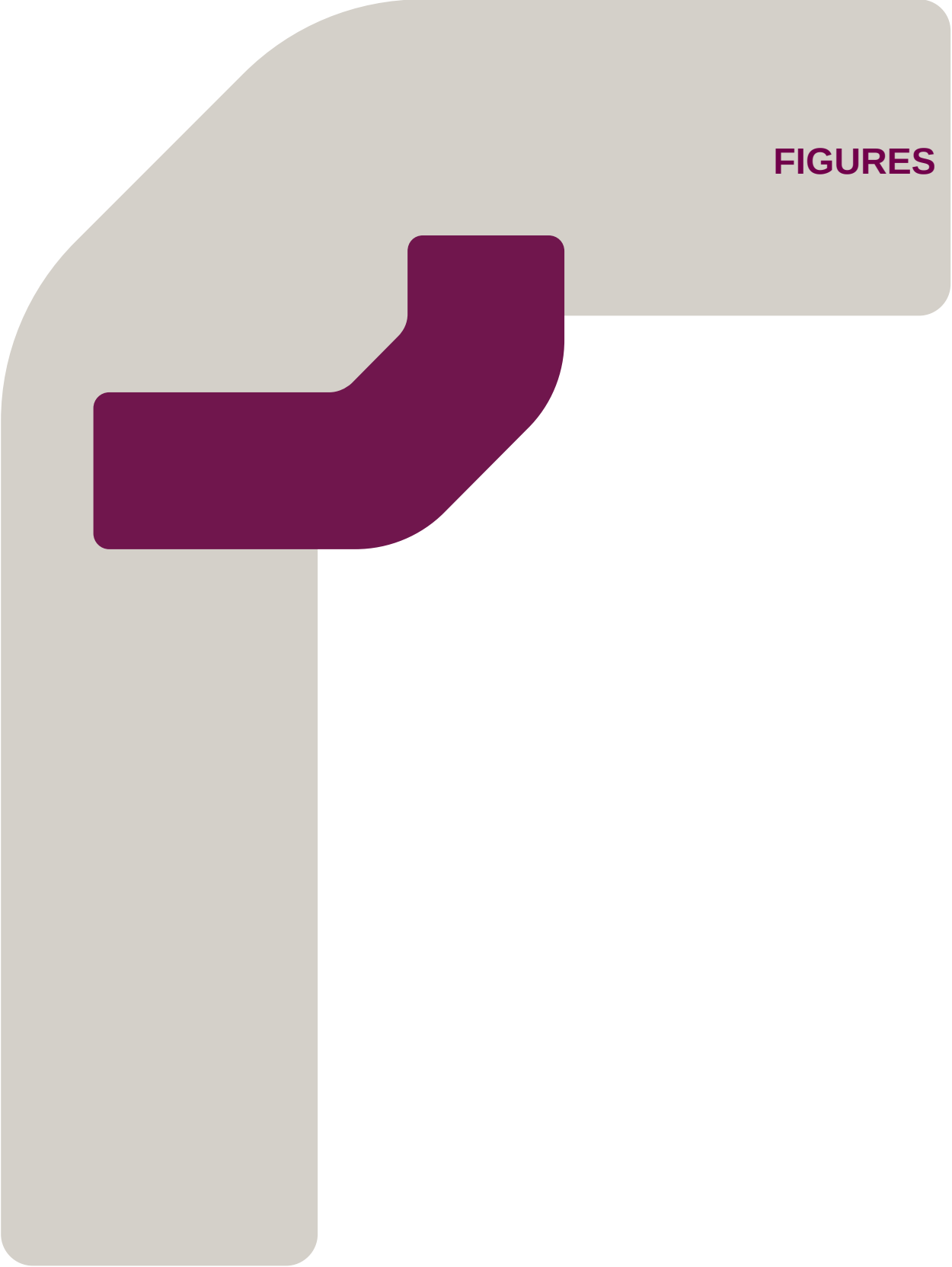
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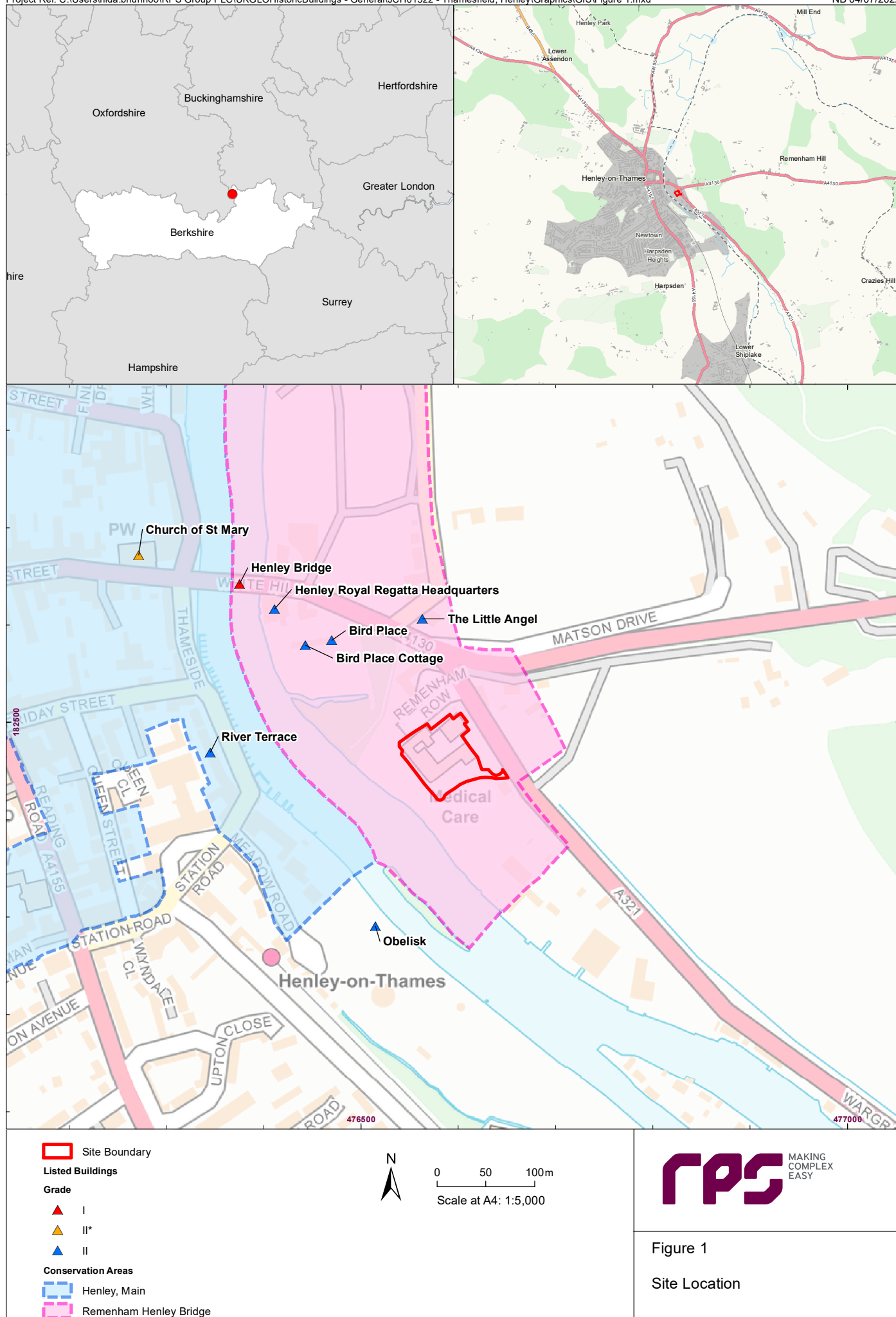
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FIGURES





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