THE ANGEL, HIGH STREET, HEYTESBURY

Heritage Impact Assessment



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Carefully managing change in the historic environment

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Frontpiece : Photo1 – The front elevation of The Angel on a misty December day

1 Introduction

1.1 I have been commissioned by Mr Francise Tieman, working in conjunction with A Harlow & Son, to provide an assessment of heritage issues concerning The Angel PH, High Street, Heytesbury, BA12 0ED. In common with many other pubs and small hotels the viability of the property is under scrutiny and the assessment is needed to help shape and justify any proposals that are emerging.

1.2 The property is listed as having architectural or historic interest and it lies within a designated Conservation Area. National planning policy requires applicants for heritage-related consents to provide information on heritage significance to help local planning authorities make decisions on the impact of proposals for change to heritage assets. Understanding the significance of heritage assets, in advance of developing proposals, should enable the local planning authority to provide a timely response. This study essentially follows the approach advocated in *Statements of Heritage Significance* published by Historic England [i].

1.3 I am a retired chartered town planner with over 40 years experience of appraising development proposals in the historic environment. I am a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and a past member of the Central Council, and Chairman of the South West Branch. In 2021 I joined the Institute's Disciplinary Committee. This assessment has been carried out in accordance with *Conservation Professional Practice Principle*s published by the IHBC in 2017. The report is largely based upon a visit to the building undertaken on the 1st December 2022.

2 General Context

2.1 Heytesbury grew up along the Warminster to Salisbury road, where it is called High Street within the settlement. Heytesbury has been described as being, at one time, "a fairly insignificant market town that saw little expansion beyond its medieval core until the 19th century" [ii].

2.2 The settlement certainly had borough status during the medieval period but in 1766 it was all but destroyed by fire before it was afterwards rebuilt [iii]. It is probable the impact of the fire was extensive as it would be expected that the great majority of buildings would

have been constructed with timber frames and thatched roofs. Incredibly, the rebuilt Heytesbury continued to return two MPs to parliament until it was disenfranchised after the Reform Act of 1832.

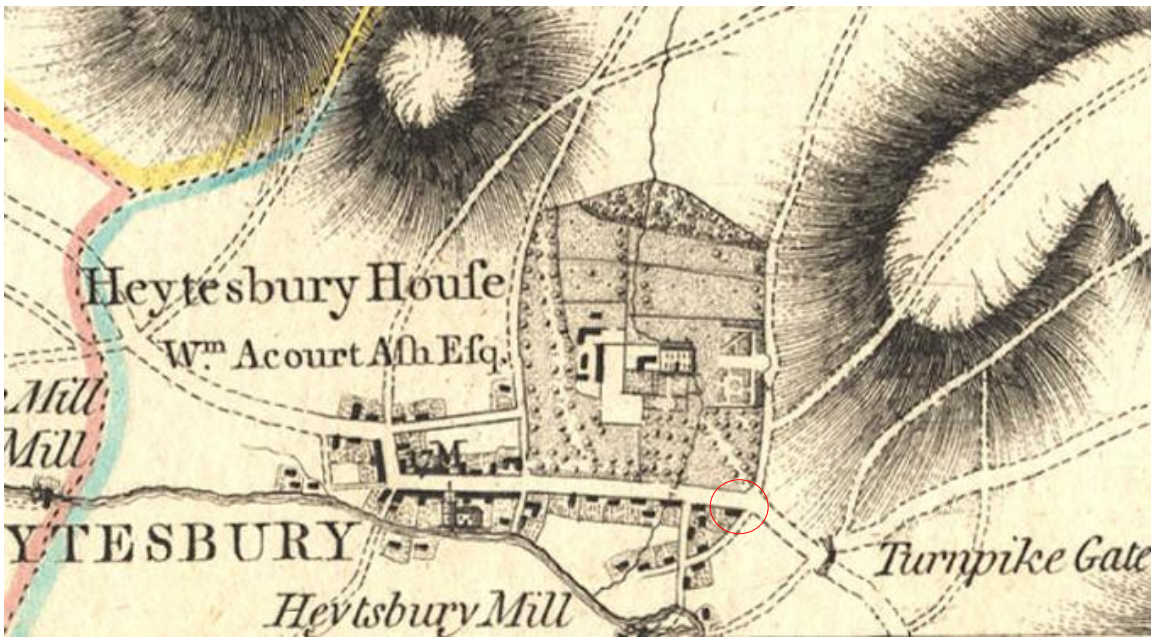
2.3 Two large cloth factories had opened in Heytesbury during the 18th century but it had probably lost its urban nature prior to 1832. The arrival of the railway in 1856 failed to re-stimulate the settlement. Ownership of the village had descended to the A'Court family until the estate broken up in the 1920s [iv]. The railway station closed in 1955.

2.4 The modern village is essentially a quiet backwater settlement, especially since the construction of the northern by-pass in the 1980s. It is now clearly no more than a village, lying beneath the south-west corner of Salisbury Plain. The settlement is located on the north side of the River Wylye within a well-defined chalk valley.

2.5 The opening of the by-pass 1986 benefited most residents of the village but inevitably there were also losers. The High Street became a calm haven but commercial businesses have declined.

2.6 The Angel is located on the south side of the High Street, towards the eastern end of the High Street. The earliest readily available mapping for Heytesbury is from the Andrews and Drury survey of 1773. The cartography is somewhat schematic when it comes to individual buildings but it appears to show that a structure was on the site of the present building at that time.

Map 1. Map of 1773 with subject building circled



2.7 The property we find today fronts onto the High Street near the junction with Mantles Lane which leads in a southerly direction down to the River Wylye. On the south side of the High Street The Angel is surrounded by independent dwellings, whilst immediately opposite on the north side is the Hospital of St John an affordable housing development for people in need but who wish to live independently.

3. Defining the Heritage Assets to be considered

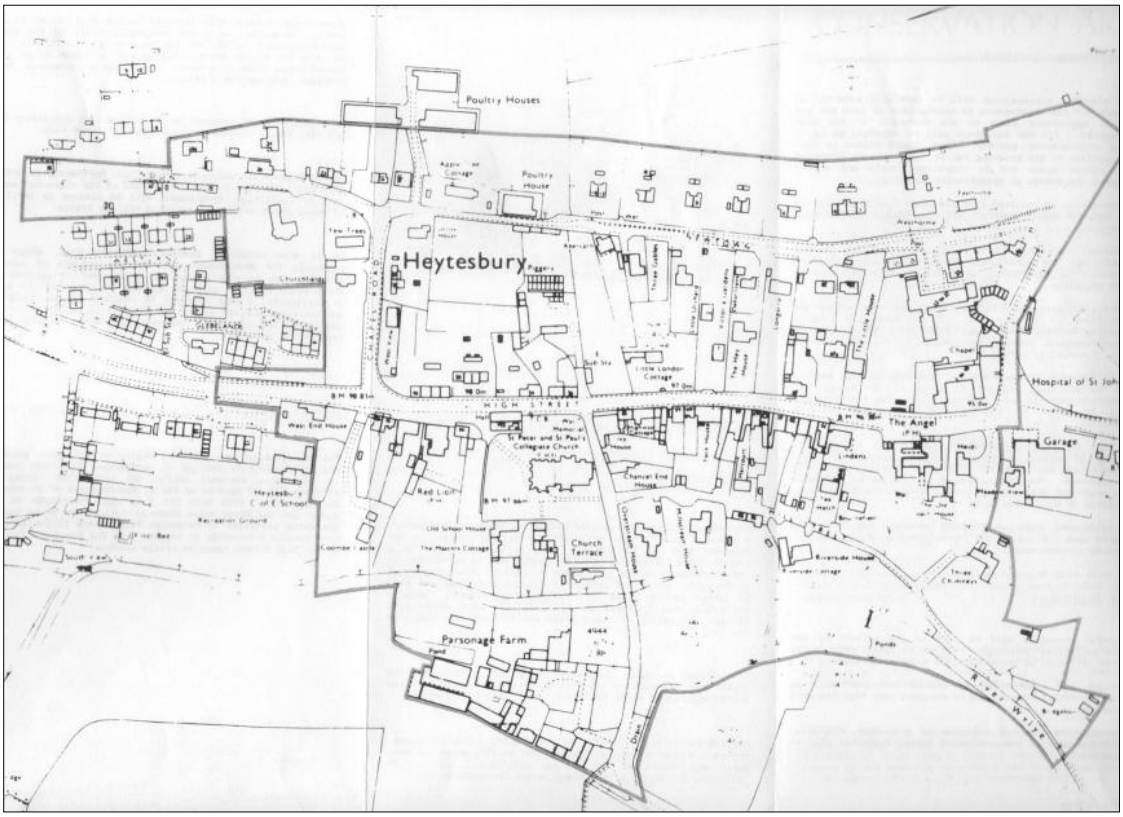
3.1 The Wiltshire & Swindon Historic Environment Record notes archaeological evidence having been found for the medieval origins of Heytesbury, and the possible remains of a medieval longhouse at Old Forge Close on the east side of Mantles Lane. As the subject is a standing building, the archaeological implications of any change are likely to be de minimis.

3.2 As noted above the subject property is listed as having architectural or historic interest, and this will be the main focus of attention. The Angel, and its curtilage, are located within the Heytesbury Conservation Area. Its position within this locally defined heritage asset also requires consideration.

3.3 The property is listed at Grade II and the list description is given below:

Inn. Mid C17, rebuilt late C18 and C19. Painted Flemish bond or English garden wall bond brick, tiled half-hipped roof, brick stacks. Baffle entry to left range. Two storey, 3-windowed; casements. Left range has double doors with 6 fielded panels in moulded architrave with pedimented porch on turned posts, 12-pane flush sash to left, 2-light flush mullioned casement and canted bay with 8-pane sashes to right. Moulded string course carried over pedimented door. First floor has 12-pane sash and two 2-light flush mullioned casements in beaded architraves. Good lead rainwater heads to either side of front, initials RAA/1692; the right one also has lion's head. C19 range to right has blocked carriage entry, now with C20 hotel entrance, double garage doors and C20 cart entry to right, first floor has two 3-light and one 2-light casements. Right return is rubble stone. Left return has plat glazed sash and blocked window to ground floor, 2-light recessed chamfered mullioned casement to attic. Rear range with casements, C20 rear extensions attached to ground floor. Interior of south range has deeply chamfered beams, good doors with two fielded panels in moulded architraves. The last Parliamentary election for a Heytesbsury M.P. was held in the Angel in 1831; the village ceased to be a 'rotten borough' with the 1832 Reform Bill.

Map 2. The Boundary of Heytesbury Conservation Area (Heytesbury Parish Council website)



3.4 There are no other heritage designations such as scheduled ancient monuments, world heritage sites, battlefield sites, historic parks and gardens, or locally listed buildings that need to be considered.

4. Understanding the Property

4.1 It has been written, in 1974, that "The Angel goes back to about 1400" [v]. This was repeated in a history of the village published in 2019. However, it is not clear what evidence is available to suggest such an improbably early date. Even if there was an inn at Heytesbury in the 15th century, I found nothing that might corroborate that it was the current building or site.

4.2 The Wiltshire Council website notes "There are two public houses in the village, The Angel Hotel and The Red Lion Inn. The former was built in the 17th century…….The two pubs were the headquarters of the two political parties, the Tories met at The Angel and the Whigs at The Red Lion. Voting always took place at The Angel", although as Watkin points out Heytesbury was "a truly rotten borough as there were

no contested elections for over 130 years from 1689 down to its abolition in 1832 and the last election was held on 22nd May 1831" [vi].

4.3 This suggests that a property might have been in existence as early as the second half of the 17th century, although it is possible, of course, that "The Angel" was licensed at different premises. An extensive Urban Study of Heytesbury similarly opines that The Angel "dates from the mid-17th century" [vii].

4.4 The mid-C17 date may be based on the floor plan of the main core of the property which has a lobby entry arrangement. The medieval cross passage plan had lost its hold earlier in Wiltshire than further west and by the 16th century it was rarely used as a plan type for new buildings. The lobby entry plan was in many ways more logical and less draughty during the colder months.

4.5 Houses thus had a central chimney stack and living and service rooms heated by two back to back fireplaces, and the main entrance at the junction of these two rooms where fire place jambs and outer walling form a little lobby. Brunskill has pointed out that the staircase usually adjoins the chimney stack [viii]. This is an acknowledged genre of historic houses and the type arrangement, with additional service rooms in an unheated outshut at the rear, became very popular in Wiltshire during the 17th century. The central fire place and chimney stack, as opposed to a gable end or side wall, was particularly suited to thatched roofs.

4.6 It was in the 16th and 17th centuries that the open hearth had first given way to the chimneyed fireplace, and the open hall house was replaced by a structure that was two-storeyed throughout. It was however only towards the end of this period that storeyed houses spread to outlying regions. It is also relevant to note that the use of timber framing as an external material for houses, seems to have died out in Wiltshire by about 1720 [ix].

4.7 The left (east) hand end of the The Angel certainly shares the essential characteristics of a lobby entry house. A lobby entry is sometimes called a baffle entry, as in the list description. However, it is apparent that the existing building has gone through many – seemingly endless – alterations and changes.



Photo 2. The front entrance lobby, with internal low door leading to the cellar stairs

4.8 Within the roof space to the left of the front door a roof truss with a bonnet hip has been left in situ. This appears to mark the former termination of the property about a half bay width east of the stack. The attic space also appears to contain a small number of lightly smoke-blackened common rafters. These may be survivors from a medieval building or, perhaps, they were damaged in the Great Fire of Heytesbury in 1765. Externally the line of the truss is marked by a straight joint in the brickwork. The quality of the brickwork in this area of the front elevation varies inexplicably. Stone quoins however terminate the eastward expansion of the building. These correspond with a date on a rainwater hopper with an inscribed date of 1692. The oldest window however is found to the right of the main entrance door, possibly a survivor from the earliest days.



Photo 3. The "1692" rainwater hopper

4.9 Within the property there is a cellar found beneath the left hand room, reached by a stair leading off the front door lobby. The lobby also contains a slightly enigmatic bulkhead opposite the front door leafs. This may have been created when the access to the cellar was created, or possible may be a throwback to the much smaller cottage that once stood on the site.



Photo 4. The staircase leading up from the cellar to the front lobby

4.10 A number of ceiling downstand beams are found on the ground floor. Spine beams bear onto the central chimney stack. These have considerable size but lack deep chamfers or decorative stops. Beams also return down a south range at the east end of the building. These are, again, of considerably girth but rather crude in appearance perhaps suggesting the rooms served a semi-domestic purpose; perhaps a dairy or cheeseroom. Half the length of an associated cross beam contains empty round mortice holes that probably once supported staves for a wattle and daub screen.



Photo 5. The front bar, with fireplace with two adjacent doors, that immediately to the left leading into a short flight of stairs that merge with another flight leading to the first floor.

4.11 The room immediately to the right of the front door – possibly originally a kitchen now a bar area – features an impressive paved floor with some stone slabs measuring 6’ x 5’. A stair rising to the first floor springs from this room adjacent to the chimney stack. Whilst this arrangement is not unexpected, there is a surprising second flight joining from the room to the left of the stack. In fact, judging by the historic door leaf with forged hinges, the latter flight probably represents the site of the original access route. The flight from the bar area appears to be a later modification.



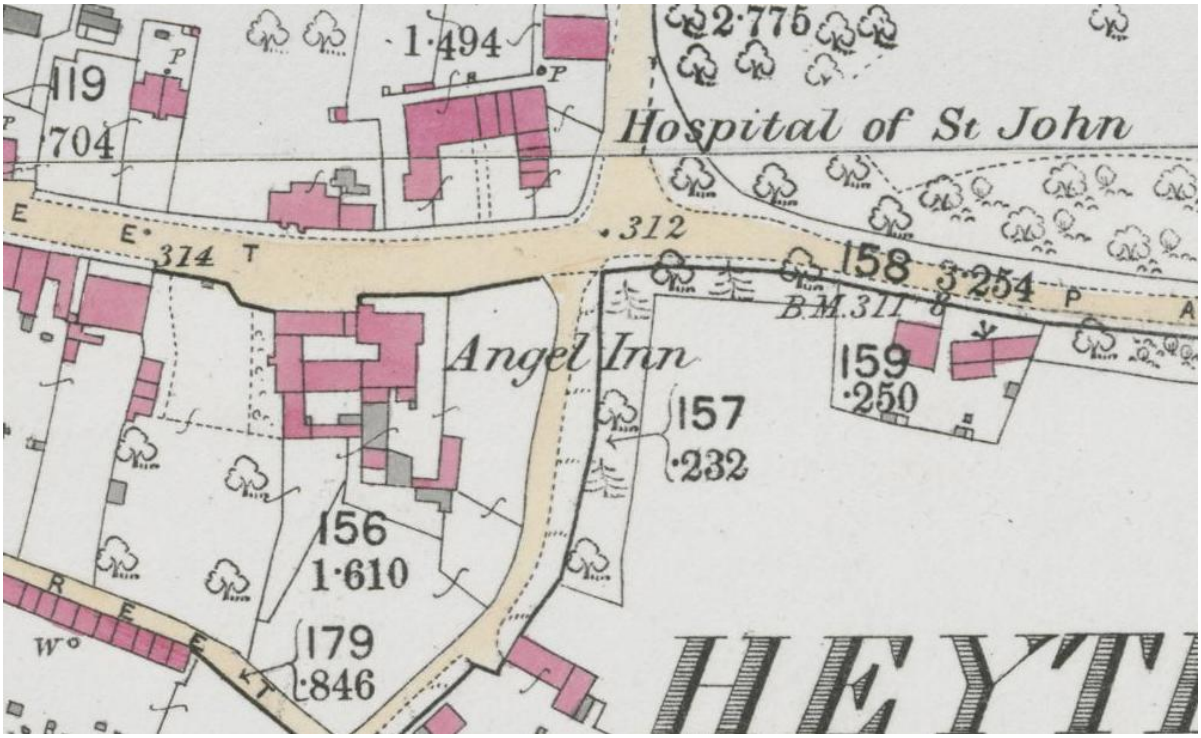
Photo 6. Large flagstones in the bar area, possibly formed of Blue Lias

4.12 It is beyond the scope of this report to unravel the exact evolution of the property but there is a distinct possibility that the core of the building evolved from a much smaller and older cottage that was first upgraded and possibly engulfed by a brick casing at the end of the 17th century. The upgraded building may have, in turn, been re-modelled after the village fire in 1765.

4.13 This however, is by no means, the end of the story. The appearance of the property was dramatically changed when it was extended in-line to the west by a two-storey rubblestone range in the 19th century. The route from Bath to Salisbury diverted from Salisbury Plain to the Wylye valley at the beginning the century and Heytesbury became a minor staging post. Almost certainly the new range provided accommodation for travelers on the new turnpiked road and provision would have been made for stabling of horses in outbuildings deeper within the site. It is recorded that in 1871 a postal service operated twice daily and a carrier was available for journeys to Warminster every day [ii]. The role of The Angel as a coaching inn, however, would have already been on the cusp of decline by this time due to competition from the railway, and then the private motor car and motorized charabancs at the end of the century.

4.14 The First Edition Ordnance Survey map (below) gives an impression of the situation towards in the 1870s.

Map 3. Extract from the First Edition Ordnance Survey



4.15 Changes have continued unabated during the 20th and 21st centuries. When the inn was sold away from the Heytesbury House estate in 1923 the sales particulars referred to "six stables, a coach house, a large club room, a walled garden, poultry run and pigstyes." [iv] There is no sign of these today. On the first floor, letting rooms have been created and en suite bathrooms have replaced outside offices. Timber wall paneling has also been added in various locations on the first floor and, whilst not of any great age, the general ambience displays a comfortable time-honored appearance. The external walls of the property have been painted, and a large flat roofed extension has been built in the yard that separated the front range from single storey outbuildings. Some of the outbuildings shown on the OS map have been demolished and a car park entrance created through the 19th century rubblestone range.

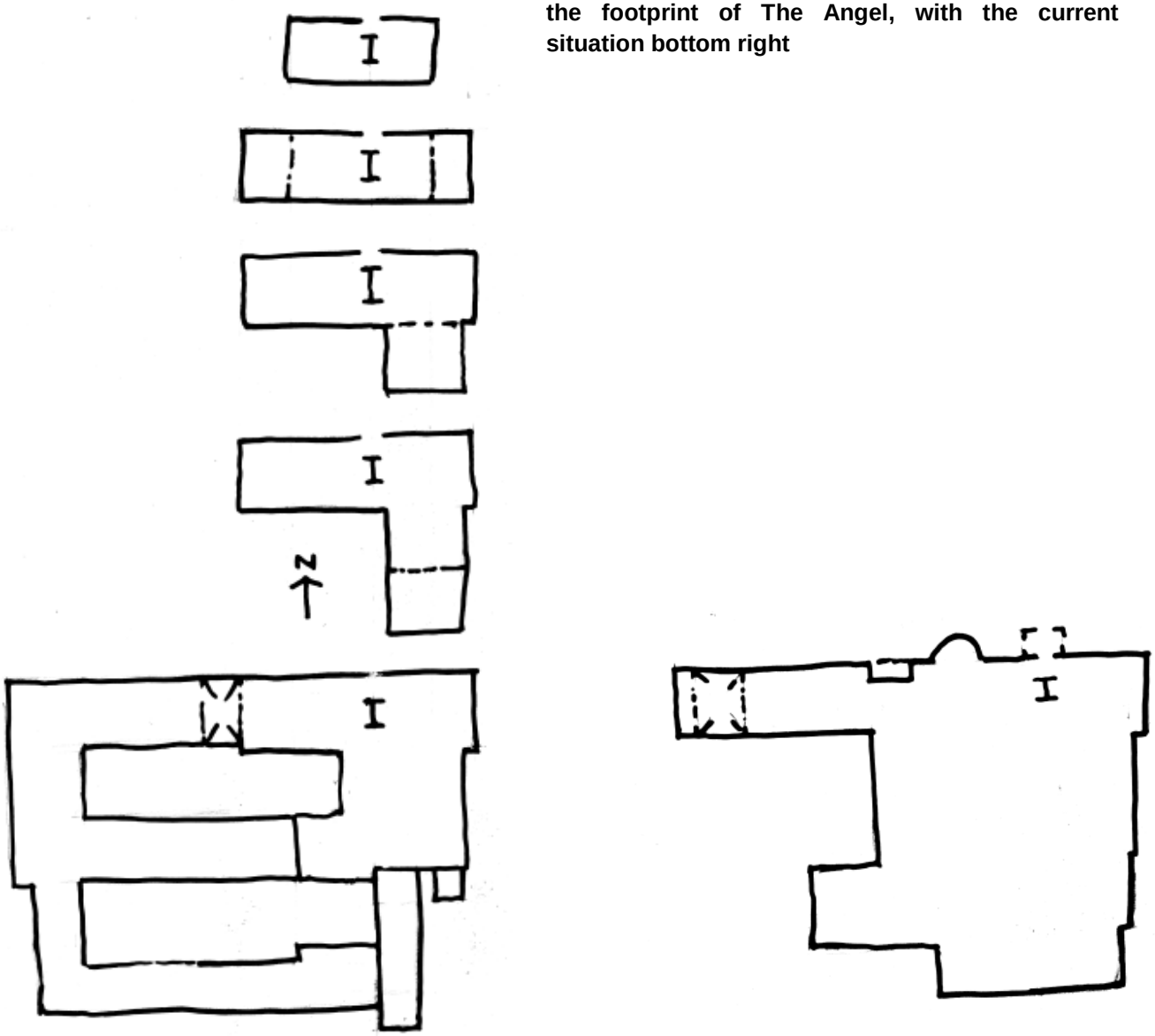
4.16 The surviving outbuildings were affected by another fire in 1983. A report in *The Wiltshire Times* on 9th September suggests that a store building was extensively damaged. The outbuildings seem to have been re-roofed, and minor extensions were

added, during a re-construction. They are now in use as a commercial kitchen and utility spaces.

4.17 The list description makes no reference to the rear outbuildings but technically they must be considered to be listed as S1.(5) (a) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act of 1990 requires any object or structure fixed to the building to be treated as part of the protected structure.

4.18 The evolution of the building is complex with structural changes and minor alterations manifold. The walls and roof of the building form a characterful palimpsest of modifications overwritten by further rounds of adaptation. The sketch plans below offer a possible interpretation of the main phases of change.

Diagram 1. The main phases of the evolution of the footprint of The Angel, with the current situation bottom right



5. Identifying the Heritage Significance of the Building

5.1 The NPPF defines significance as "the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest" [x]. Such interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic, or a combination of these. This is simply a way of analysing its significance. Understanding the extent of that significance is important because this can, among other things, lead to a better understanding of how adaptable the asset may be to change.

5.2 Considering the heritage implications at an early stage allows significance to be taken into account hopefully leading to better outcomes for the applicant by influencing final plans and design by mitigating harmful impacts, enhancing significance where possible, and showing how any remaining harm is justified. The assessment of heritage significance is a matter of qualitative and expert judgment.

5.3 It is improbable that there is important buried archaeology at the site and the proposals under consideration are most unlikely to have implications for any below-ground features that might survive. Heritage assessments have to be proportionate and the archaeology of the site is not considered further here. There is however historical interest in the evolution of the property from a small domestic cottage to an inn. Although the development of the property is complex and confusing it maintains vernacular architectural interest, and the front ranges are reasonably coherent. The lobby entry footprint of the floor plan and the physical fabric of the historic core are important aspects worthy of preservation.

5.4 National Planning Practice Guidance links architectural and artistic interest together, in considering the general aesthetics of a place [xi]. I have not uncovered any indication to suggest an architect or artist was involved with the construction of the building but its vernacular character fits with the traditional narrative of the Wylie valley.

5.5 It is clear, however, that not all aspects of the property are of equal quality and it is therefore best to look at the various phases in more detail.

5.6 The front range of the property to the left (east) of the projecting bay window contains the oldest historic fabric and interesting indications of the early floor plan. This is the area of most heritage significance. There is very little here to detract from

architectural or historic character, although the short flight of stairs rising from the right hand bar area seems to be a rather eccentric misfit. The front brick wall, however, seems to have received many coats of masonry paint. This does not appear to be causing an immediate problem but repeated painting into the future would ultimately harm the substrate and removal may need to be considered at some point.

5.7 The in-line westward extension lacks architectural refinement but is evidence of the expansion of the premises as a coaching inn during the 19th century. The east end south wing contains some historic fabric, particularly the exposed downstand beams seen on the ground floor. The in-line extension and the south range are of heritage interest but with a lower order of significance.

5.8 The flat-roofed bar extension and the single storey outbuildings, now converted into a commercial kitchen and utility areas, are of very low or insignificant heritage interest.

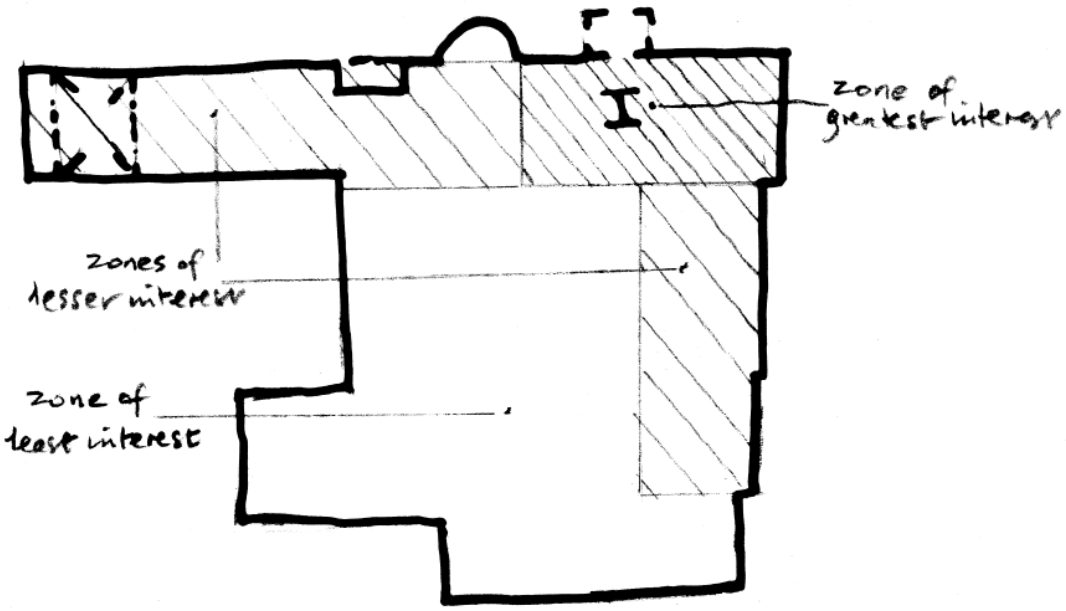


Diagram 2. Sketch plan indicating the heritage significance of the various parts of the existing property

5.9 In general terms, the property has been well maintained and is good condition.

Photo 7. The commercial kitchen in a former outbuilding



5.10 The setting of a heritage asset can also contribute to its significance, although setting is not itself a heritage asset. As a functional building, The Angel never enjoyed vistas or a planned landscaped setting. The rear paddocks, where horses may have been fed and rested, have been back filled with recent dwellings. One of the adjacent properties is called The Coach House which could relate to the building referred to in the sales particulars of 1923. However, the relationship is in name only, as the current building bears no correlation to a traditional building for storing a coach and/or horses.



Photo 8. The Coach House viewed from the car park area at the rear of The Angel

5.11 The wider setting is thus compromised. The immediate relationship of the front of the inn to the High Street however was relevant in attracting customers and defining the interface with the public domain. The Angel however is not referred to as a building of special interest in a leaflet issued by the Local Planning Authority when the Heytesbury Conservation Area was designated in 1986, nor is it mentioned by Orbach in the updated Pevsner Architectural Guide for Wiltshire [xii]. Nevertheless the front range of the building, particularly its scale and clay plain tile roof covering, sits harmoniously in the High Street. In my opinion the building, and activity associated with it, are positive features of the Conservation Area, and its position in the High Street plays a constructive role in helping to understand its significance.

5.12 The NPPF is constructed on the basis that some heritage assets will have greater significance than others. Para 199 points out that the more important an asset, the greater weight it should receive in the decision-making process. From this it is possible to identify a continuum with World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and Grade I listed buildings near the top, other nationally designated assets somewhere near the middle, and locally listed buildings, conservation areas and damaged archaeological sites at the bottom.

5.13 Grade II listed buildings are usually attributed medium to high heritage significance. There are, of course, a wide range of Grade II designated assets and in my opinion having regard to the age of some parts of the building, the vernacular architectural interest, and its contribution to the appearance of the High Street The Angel would sit comfortably in the middle of the heritage continuum. The Heytesbury Conservation Area in which the property sits is of local rather than national heritage importance and as such has lower heritage significance. Heritage significance will therefore be given weight in the decision-making process, but not great weight if balancing is required to reach a decision.

5.14 In summary although The Angel is a multi-phase property, the historic and vernacular architectural interest of the core outlined above justifies its inclusion as a designated heritage asset. The front ranges in particular contribute to the historic environment and local distinctiveness. The status of the subsidiary parts of the building and former outbuildings is however negligible.

6 The Proposals and Impact on Significance

6.1 The above analysis fulfills the requirement in paragraph 194 of the NPPF. Further steps are normally concluded by the LPA but it can be useful for the applicant to be aware of impacts so that they can be mitigated and properly detailed.

6.2 The emerging proposal to convert the pub into a single dwelling has had regard to identified aspects of heritage significance. A landlord's flat already exists at the premises but a change of use permission is required to use the other parts of the inn as a dwelling. The loss of some activity from a village property is often regretted but, as noted above, there are overpowering social and economic trends that dictate change is inevitable. The main objective must be to manage that change is a way that avoids harm.

6.3 Fortunately, the extent of change proposed is minimal. No noteworthy demolitions or extensions are proposed and the main characteristics of the ensemble of buildings will be retained. The main alterations would involve stripping out the mechanical extract ducts and other fittings from the commercial kitchen, the provision of improved interconnectivity of the kitchen with the remainder of the building and the private open space which will be converted from a car park to a garden area, the removal of an external fire escape staircase, improvements to the existing entrance to the flat, and a minor adjustment to the to the entrance to the room immediately to the right of the front door.

6.4 Any adverse impact on items of heritage importance will therefore be low, with the potential for minor enhancement. The details are discussed below.

7 Minimising and Mitigating any Impact

7.1 At any heritage asset the aim should be to evade harm when alterations are under consideration or, where this is unavoidable, to lessen and alleviate the impact so that the overall balance is positive.

7.2 The removal of the rear fire escape stair, and the fire escape door to the flat, will arguably enhancement heritage values.

7.3 The stripping out of the existing commercial kitchen will also result in a minor improvement to historic character. The introduction of glazed doors facing down the proposed garden should not detract from the character of the host building although it

would be best if they are recessed as deep as possible within the thickness of the wall. A proposed opening from the former commercial kitchen into the flat roofed extension area will not harm heritage values but existing brickwork facing into the restaurant should be retained un-plastered and un-painted so that the original outside wall of the outbuilding can still be 'read'.

7.4 The removal of the bar fittings should also be a reasonable adaptation but there could be some merit in leaving them in situ.

7.5 The existing front lobby is in the most sensitive part of the building. The lobby is an important characteristic of the protected building. The adjacent short flight of stairs into the bar, however, is unexpected and probably not a historic feature. The removal of the flight will not harm the historic floor plan but it is important that exposed surfaces are carefully reinstated in sympathetic materials. The removal of this lower section of the main staircase will have the side effect of better revealing the adjacent historic chimney breast.

7.6 It is also proposed to 'open up' the passage from the lobby to the existing bar area. Provided a door and wall is retained in the existing locations, even if the materials are changed, the proportions of the lobby will be maintained. The proposal is for the replacement of the existing bar door with a glazed door and glazed side panel. Provided this is carefully detailed the main characteristics of the lobby would be retained. The new glazing could be contained within a contemporary framing but, on balance, the use of hardwood frames would avoid jarring with the pleasant, historic interior of the bar room and lobby.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Guidance Notes issued by the IHBC comment that "Many listed buildings have been altered to some extent to cater for the evolving requirements of succeeding occupiers and much of their interest may therefore result from the way in which the present form and layout reflects changing uses and architectural, social and economic aspirations" [xiii].

8.1 In this sense The Angel is a typical example. Whilst it is much altered, the front left range has sufficient architectural and historic merit to justify being regarded as having middling heritage significance. The south range returning at the east end, and the

19th century in-line front extension also contribute to heritage values. Very little else on the site, can be said to contribute to heritage interest.

8.2 Planning Practice Guidance indicates – "Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in everyday use." [xi] The emerging proposals will preserve the essential characteristics of the building and should ensure a positive outcome for property and the surrounding Conservation Area. The proposals are therefore compliant with legislative and policy requirements in relation to designated heritage assets.

9 The main References and Sources used

9.1 The following outlines the framework of research and documents consulted considered in the preparation of this assessment**:**

i) Statements of Heritage Significance, Historic England, 2019
ii) Wiltshire Council Communities – Heytesbury – website
iii) Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales John Marius Wilson, 1872
iv) Heytesbury: A Village in Wiltshire, S E Battenshaw, 2009
v) The Ancient Wiltshire Village of Heytesbury, E D Ginver, 1974
vi) A History of Wiltshire, Bruce Watkin, 1989
vii) An extensive Urban Study of Heytesbury, Archaeology Data Service
viii) Vernacular Architecture, R W Brunskill, 1976
ix) Wiltshire Farmhouses & Cottages 1500-1850 P M Slocombe, 1988
x) The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - Section 12
xi) Planning Practice Guidance – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, 2018
xii) Wiltshire – The Buildings of England, Orbach, Pevsner & Cherry, 2021
xiii) Conservation Professional Practice Principles, IHBC, 2017

