TELEPHONE: 01488 73131
FAX: 01488 73207
E-MAIL:
mwarchitects@btconnect.com
WEB:
www.mw-architects.co.uk

The Old Surgery, Crowle Road
Lambourn, Berkshire RG17 8NR

MATHEWSON WATERS ARCHITECTS

Proposed porch canopy over back door, and alterations to French doors.

at:

Basset Down Farmhouse, (formerly known as Roman Walk Farmhouse) Basset Down, Nr Swindon. SN4 9QP

Heritage Statement (and Design & access statement)

Introduction:

The subject of this application submission is Basset Down Farmhouse, which is Grade-II listed and is situated in Basset Down, on the edge of the Marlborough Downs to the south of Swindon. The owners of the property, Andrew & Kate Fraser have instructed Mathewson Waters Architects to prepare design proposals for extending the property at ground floor and for several associated internal alterations.

The application property:

Basset Down Farmhouse is a traditional and imposing dwelling set on high ground commanding rising ground with views to the west.



View of Basset Down Farmhouse from within the curtilage, looking East.

This image was taken prior to the current construction of the consented extension.

The building has an historical core in terms of a range which runs along the southern, (rear) part of the property, which has received extensions along its northern side, culminating in the curved entrance hall and master suite over, which was introduced approximately 20 years ago.

It is a building that has been extensively extended and altered over several periods within the last 30-40 years, including in around the year 2000. Most recently, consent was granted for a significant single-storey extension on the south-west end of the property, under application refs: PL/2021/10387 & PL/2021/10205. That extension is currently under construction.

The resulting building has been rendered and thatched to present a cohesive appearance, although this tends to mask and disguise the various periods of development. A morphology analysis is included a little further on to help understand the main periods of development.

The statutory listing description for Basset Down Farmhouse is reproduced below:

Heritage Category:
Listed Building
Grade:
II
List Entry Number:
1022713
Date first listed:
21-Jul-1988
Statutory Address:
Roman Walk Farmhouse, Bassett Down
The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District:
Wiltshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:
Lydiard Tregoze
National Grid Reference:
SU 11309 79970

SU 17 NW 10/3

LYDIARD TREGOZE BASSETT DOWN Roman Walk Farmhouse

(formerly listed as Roman Walk Farmhouse, BASSETT DOWN, WOOTTON BASSETT)

II Farmhouse. Mid C18, added to and altered C19 and C20. Painted brick in Flemish bond and coursed rubblestone; thatched roof with stone slate eaves courses on entrance front. Three-cell house with baffle-entry; outshut range added to northwest side. Two storeys with attic, outshut one storey with attic; four bays.

Garden (south east) front (the C18 range): brick. Segmental brick-arched ground-floor openings with C20 panelled door to bay two, a two-light window to left on each floor, a three-light and a two-light window to right on each floor, all windows small-pane casements apart from that to ground floor left, thatch rising over first ffoor windows. Half-hipped roof with brick stack to front roof pitch in line with door. Late C20 single-storey garage attached to right not of special interest.

Entrance front (addition): rubblestone with quoins. Doorway to bay two has re-used, C17, nail-studded door with raised borders to panels containing lozenges; a C20 window either side; a C20 doorway above leading onto balcony, this and the mid C20 single-storey addition on right not of special interest.

Southwest end: C20 door, French window, and bow window to ground floor; two segmental brick-arched windows with small-pane casements above; two-light attic window to right, one light leaded.

Northeast end: C20 door, window and French window to ground floor; upper windows as southwest end, those on left small-pane casements.

Interior of C18 range: kitchen, formerly two rooms, now all one, has inglenook fireplace with bread oven, brick jambs and timber lintel (part restored late C20); large-scantling spine-beam, the chamfer with run-out stops either side of former partition wall; plank door with L-hinge to stair. Sitting room has timber-lintelled brick fireplace backing on to inglenook, chamfered spine beam and joists. First floor: some of the timber members of the wall

between this range and addition visible; board doors Attic: wide floor boards; four collared principal rafter roof trusses with two sets of butt purlins.

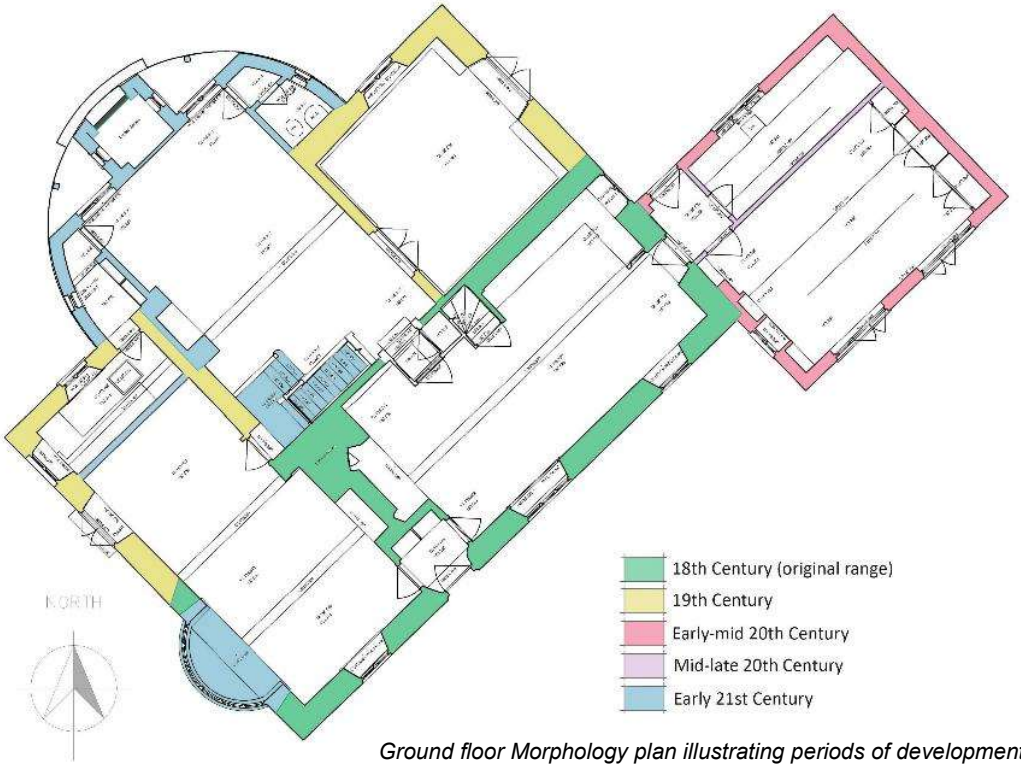
Listing NGR: SU1130979970

Morphology diagrams & historical OS plans:

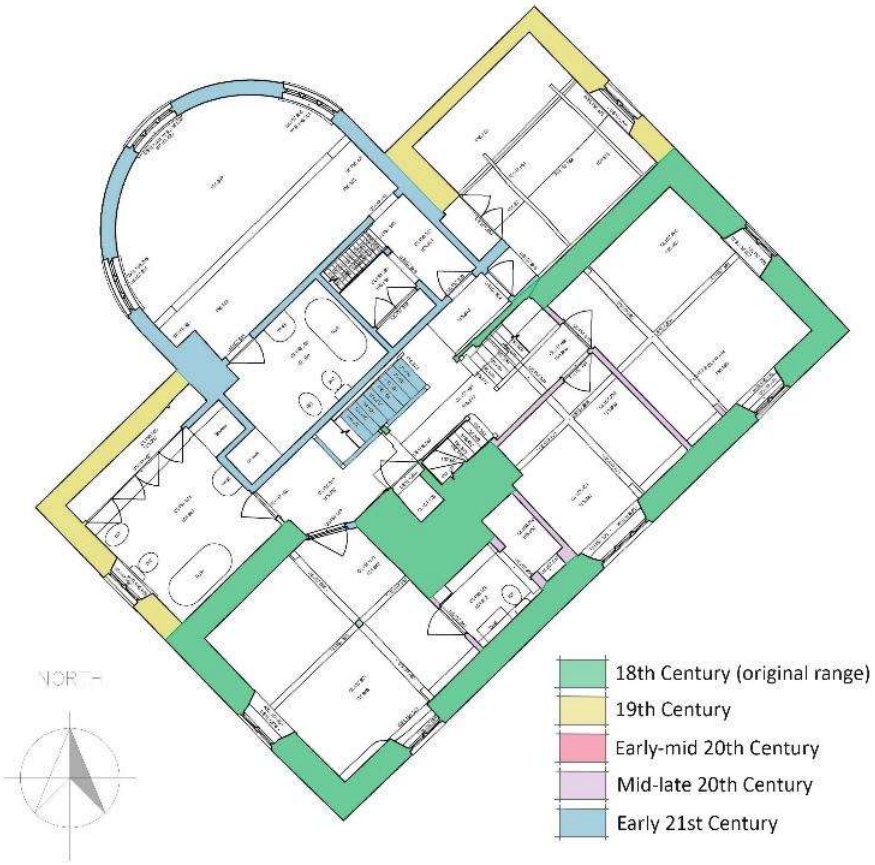
The following plans are morphology diagrams which illustrate the significant phases of the development of Basset Down Farmhouse, followed by OS extracts dating from the late 19th century to the early 20th Century.

Note that, on the ground floor morphology plan, the heavy black line at the entrance, is the 17th Century door mentioned in the listing description, and which seems to have been introduced from another building elsewhere.

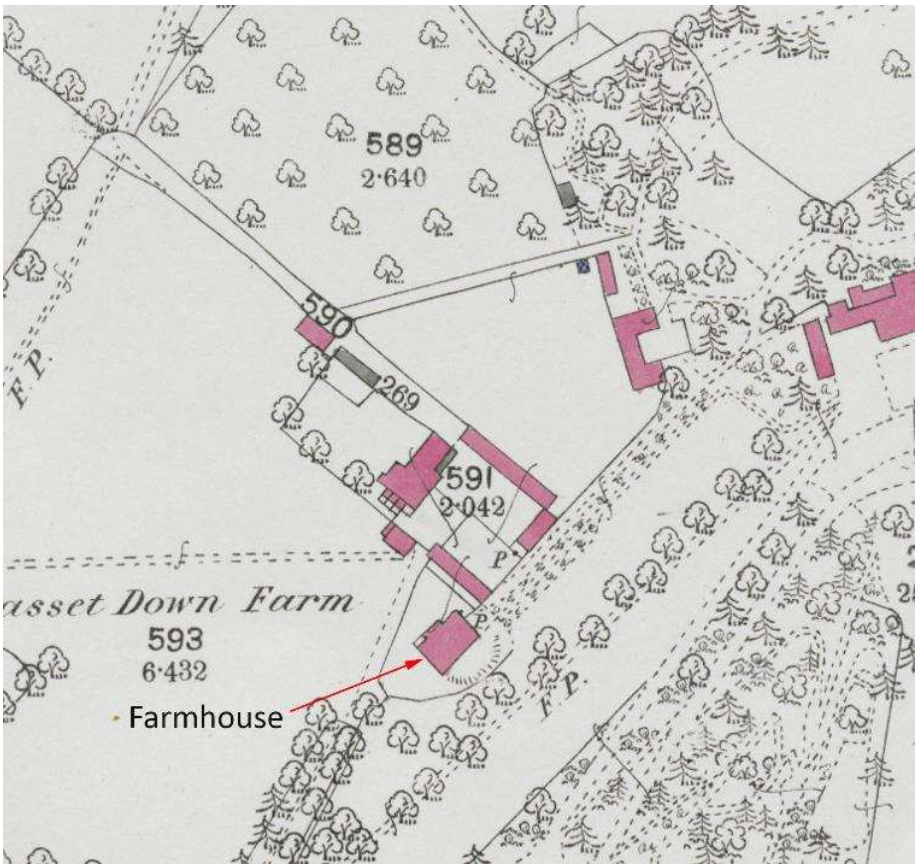
The wall fabric shaded in red is the area affected by this application proposal and is early-to-mid-20th century.



Ground floor Morphology plan illustrating periods of development.

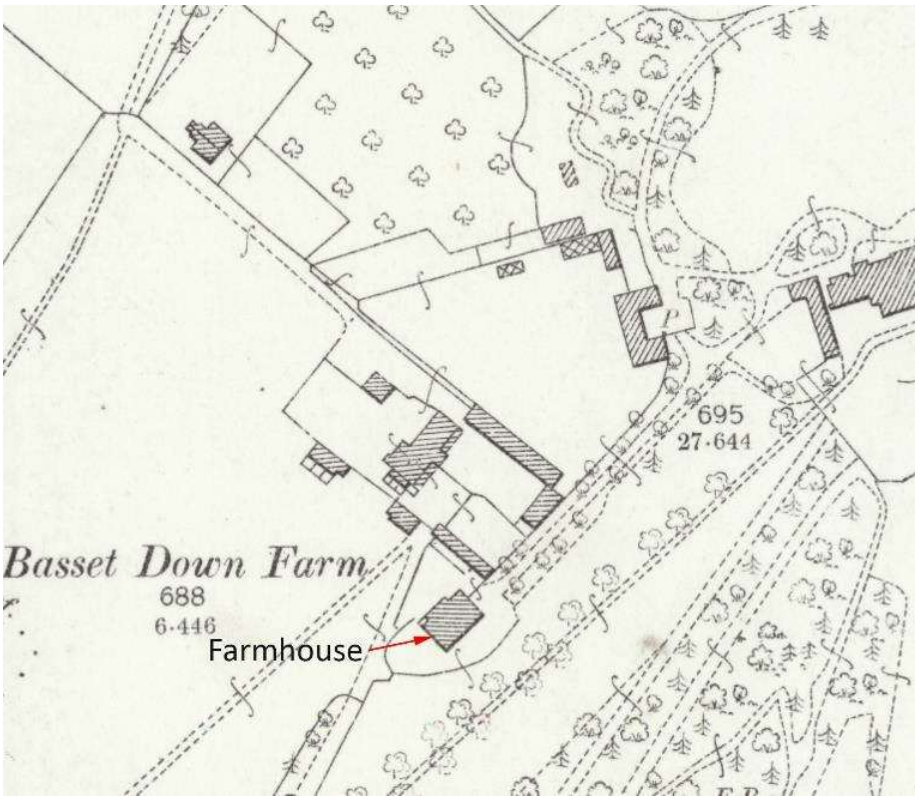


First floor Morphology plan illustrating periods of development.



OS extract showing Basset Down Farm between 1873 and 1888.

The part of the building affected by the application proposal did not exist at that time.



OS extract showing Basset Down Farm between 1892 and 1914.

Again, the part of the building affected by the application proposal did not exist at that time.

Planning History:

There are a number of planning applications relating to the application property or its curtilage, and these are set out in the following table.

	PL/2021/10387 & PL/2021/10205 Proposed single-storey extension to provide family/garden room. Approved April 2022	
	N/08/02564/LBC URL More info STATUS APPCON ADDRESS BASSET DOWN FARM HOUSE, BASSET DOWN, SWINDON, WILTSHIRE PROPOSAL Revision of Original Application for Alterations to Farm House Terrace Wall and Steps. STATUS_TXT Approve with Conditions	
	N/08/02563/FUL URL More info STATUS APPCON ADDRESS BASSET DOWN FARM, BASSET DOWN, SWINDON, WILTSHIRE SN4 0LX PROPOSAL Revision of Previous Planning Application, Introducing Dwarf Walls Adjacent to Existing Garden Walls, with Infill and Planting, Construction of Retaining Walls around Tractor Barn, Construction of Dwarf Wall in Front of Garden Terrace Wall with Soil Infill and Planting STATUS_TXT Approve with Conditions	
	REFVAL N/06/00062/LBC URL More info STATUS APPCON	

	ADDRESS Bassett Down Farmhouse , Lydiard Tregoz, Swindon, SN4 9QP PROPOSAL Alteration to Boundary Wall Associated with Extension of Terrace STATUS_TXT Approve with Conditions	
	REFVAL N/05/02670/FUL URL More info STATUS APPCON ADDRESS Bassett Down Farmhouse , Lydiard Tregoz, Swindon, SN5 0XX PROPOSAL Extension to Front Terrace and Associated Front Wall, Change of Use from Agricultural to Residential STATUS_TXT Approve with Conditions	
	N/08/02562/FUL URL More info STATUS APPCON ADDRESS BASSET DOWN FARM HOUSE, BASSET DOWN FARM, BASSET DOWN, SWINDON, WILTSHIRE PROPOSAL Revision of Original Planning Application for Alterations and Additional Work to Pool Terrace, Pool Power House, North East & South West Steps from Pool Terrace, West Garden Wall, Orangery Wall Including Revised Entrance, Complete Bandstand, Farm House Terrace Wall. STATUS_TXT Approve with Conditions	
	REFVAL N/07/01294/FUL URL More info STATUS APPCON ADDRESS Bassett Down Farm House, Bassett Down, Swindon	

	PROPOSAL Convert Garage to Pool House; Orangery; Wall STATUS_TXT Approve with Conditions	

The application proposal:

The application proposes the introduction of an open porch structure to provide weather protection for the entrance door serving the utility space and study.
Also proposed is the introduction of new doors from the study out onto the small terrace to replace the two pairs of French doors.
These interventions are intended to improve the amenity of the applicant and their family without harming aspects of significance of the host building.

Proposed additional floor area:
There would be no increase in floor area of the property, although the footprint area covered by the proposed porch canopy would be 10m2.

Statutory Legislation and Guidance:

Historic buildings are protected by law and in planning policy. This report is intended to consider the impact that the application proposal would have on the heritage asset, i.e. Bassett Down Farmhouse.

Within this report there is a justification for the proposal according to the relevant legislation, planning policy and guidance.

The Council requires that a heritage statement is undertaken by 'a professional qualified in historic building conservation. I can confirm that I am suitably qualified and experienced, having undertaken 33 years of professional architectural work involving listed buildings and conservation areas as a registered Architect, and I also hold a Masters Degree in the Conservation of Historic Buildings.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision-making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Sections 66 and 72 of the Act impose statutory duties upon local planning authorities which, with regard to listed buildings, require the planning authority to 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'.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision-making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Sections 66 and 72 of the Act impose statutory duties upon local planning authorities which, with regard to listed buildings, require the planning authority to 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*'.

In considering applications for planning permission, local authorities are also required to consider the policies on the historic environment set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. At the heart of the Framework is 'a presumption in favour of sustainable development' and there are also specific policies relating to the historic environment. The Framework states that heritage assets are 'an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations'.

The Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework defines a heritage asset as:

> *A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).*

The Framework, in paragraph 194, 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.*

A later section of this report – the *'assessment of significance'* – meets this requirement and is of a sufficient level of detail to understand the potential impact of the proposals.

The Framework also, in paragraph 199, requires that:

> *When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and that 'the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*

The Framework goes on to state at paragraph 200 that:

> *Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification.*

The Framework requires that local planning authorities categorise harm as either 'substantial' or 'less than substantial'. Where a proposed development will lead to 'substantial harm to (or total loss of significance
of) a designated heritage asset', the Framework states, in paragraph 195, that:

> *… local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*
> *a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
> *b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
> *c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
> *d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

Where a development proposal will lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Framework states, in paragraph 202, that:

> *…this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*

Assessment of Significance

The following table sets out what I understand to be the significance of the heritage asset. These have been discussed in terms of Historic England's *Conversation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008). A heritage asset can have certain values that are part of its significance; these values are classed as: ***Evidential, Historic, Aesthetic and Communal***, which can be briefly explained as follows:

Evidential value: Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity:

Historical value: Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be *illustrative* or *associative*:

Aesthetic value*:* This derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. This can be the result of the conscious *design* of a place, including artistic endeavour. Equally, they can be the seemingly *fortuitous* outcome of the way in which a place has evolved and been used over time:

Communal value*:* The meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

Heritage asset	Significance
The main house:	The main house dates from the mid C18, and was added to and altered during the C19 and C20. The house is generally of painted brick in Flemish bond and coursed rubblestone; with a thatched roof. Further description is included in the listing description although part of this was superseded by the late 20th century alterations. The main house therefore has **Evidential** and **Historical** values because of its surviving historical fabric; In particular, the original core range, external walls, remaining roof structure of original range, chimney stacks, coursed rubble stonework and historical interior joinery. The house has **Aesthetic** value because of its vernacular detailing and carefully conceived additions, particularly on the entrance frontage.

The former farmyard:	. The main house is the key element within a former traditional farmyard which comprised a courtyard of outbuildings, of which a few elements remain but which have been significantly altered over the past hundred years or so. The former yard has **Historical and Evidential** Values because of the elements of surviving historical fabric, but the significance of the farmyard is principally in its setting and its **Communal Value** because of the important part in the local social history that Basset Down Farmhouse, (or Roman Walk Farmhouse) and the yard would have played in terms of the local community and the social history of agriculture in this area.

Impact of the proposals and mitigation:

Proposal	**Potential impact and mitigation.**
A: The Construction of an open porch canopy adjacent to the side door.	The porch canopy is designed to be 'low-key' and visually unobtrusive, whilst also being designed to avoid clashing with existing windows. It would be constructed using Oak posts, eaves beam and braces, and with a zinc covered roof; This will ensure that its appearance is subordinate to the existing pitched roofs. We consider that this porch canopy would help protect the existing side door from the weather and will be a practical solution for an area where logs and boots are placed before bringing them into the house. No historically significant fabric would be affected by the proposed porch as that part of the house is early to mid 20th Century.



View of part of the north-west elevation where the porch canopy would be installed.

B: The alteration of existing French doors within the study space.	The room which the doors serve is a small sitting room used as a study. The fabric of that part of the house is not historically significant and dates from the early to mid part of the 20th century. The proposed set of doors would be in black powder-coated steel and would therefore be visually 'neutral'. No harm to any aspects of significance of the listed building would be caused as the small amount of wall fabric to be removed is very minimal and not of historical interest.



View of the south-east elevation, showing the existing French casement doors as two pairs of three doors in the foreground.



Interior view of the study/sitting room space with the two pairs of French doors leading out on to the small terrace.

Justification of the Proposals:

The application proposal will help the applicant and their family to use the house in a more practical manner suitable for the 21st Century but without altering or removing aspects of historical or architectural significance. I have carefully considered the impacts on the heritage asset and have concluded that there would be no harm, (or at most… negligible harm) to the historical fabric or setting of the asset.

Because we find that no harm, (or negligible harm) is caused, the relevant paragraph (202) of the NPPF is not engaged.

The proposals will enable the applicant to gain increased enjoyment from their continued custodianship of the listed building, just as the earlier phases of alterations reflected the social situation and family needs of the Victorian and Edwardian custodians.

Howard Waters *RIBA*

BA; B.Arch; MSc (Conservation of Historic Buildings)

24th July 2023