

# PLANNING HERITAGE

*Conservation Planning Consultancy*




# HERITAGE STATEMENT

## Project: Grove House, 14 West Street, Lacock, Wilts

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 2 |
| 2 | THE PROPOSAL | 2 |
| 3 | THE APPLICATION SITE | 3 |
| 4 | HISTORIC CONTEXT | 3 |
| 5 | HERITAGE ASSETS | 5 |
| 6 | SIGNIFICANCE | 7 |
| 7 | HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT | 9 |
| 8 | CONCLUSION | 9 |

# 1 INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared to provide appropriate and proportionate information to the local planning authority with regard to the heritage impacts relating specifically to proposed works to the rear elevation and conservatory at Grove House, Lacock (the 'Site'). The purpose of this appraisal is to provide an understanding of the Site's heritage value/historic significance in the context of the existing building as a whole and the contribution it makes to the wider character of the conservation area. The existing building is a recognised heritage asset and lies within the boundary of the Lacock Conservation Area; Character Area 3 Lacock Village, as set out in the 2012 Lacock Conservation Area Management Plan published by Land Use Consultants on behalf of the National Trust. As such, it is within the wider setting of a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

It is listed at Grade II and was first included upon the statutory list in December 1960 and it is attached to a barn leased from the Trust and formerly known as Morell's Yard. The main house is a 5 bay property with basement and attic accommodation. There are three hipped dormers set in to the roof over the classical elevation fronting West Street. The property is set behind a stone wall in which there is a blocked pedestrian entrance and an oak panelled gate that is in poor condition. A short drive off West Street leads to the barn and has a picket style gate. The property forms part of the informal composition of West Street and positively contributes to the character and appearance of the area.

As required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) it sets out paragraph 194 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation**.

In accordance with the legislative and policy requirements, this report identifies the relevant heritage assets within the vicinity of the Site, the significance of which may be affected by direct or indirect impacts from the proposals. Desktop and subsequent fieldwork analysis have confirmed that potential impacts of the proposals are likely to be limited to direct impacts upon the significance of the wider setting which includes theLacock Conservation Area.

# 2 THE PROPOSAL

The scheme seeks to build upon and adapt the previously consented scheme (14/00029/LBC) in which the present arrangement was changed to facilitate the replacement of the existing conservatory and glazed link with a single-storey lean-to extension and conservatory.

The development proposals seek to update the residential accommodation of the ground floor area, more especially the kitchen area to create an open-plan kitchen-dining area extension that sits within the existing footprint of the 1980-90s conservatory but which does not extend as far into the garden as the present structure. The proposals also include works to improve the connection between the kitchen and dining room, relocate the ground floor WC which currently impedes that connection and create a better access out to the garden at the rear.

The proposals offer an opportunity to create a design that is sympathetic and will enhance the property.

# 3 THE APPLICATION SITE

The Site has an exposed rubble stone laid in coarses principle elevation of 5 bays and central porch with pediment detail. It is a two storey property with attic and basement accommodation. The rear elevation was rebuilt and extended in the 1950s and later towards the end of the C20. The timber-framed conservatory which dates from the late 1980s-early1990s, is connected to the kitchen via a matching glazed link along the southern site boundary, which comprises a high brick wall. The conservatory is dilapidated and has been for a number of years. The later C20 dining room extension maintains a consistency of proportion to the original building and ties in with the rear brick gables. The rear garden is enclosed and due to the topography it is on split levels, rising to the east.

# 4 HISTORIC CONTEXT

Given the heritage sensitive nature of the Site, the scheme has been informed by the assessment of the context in which it is located and the archives held in the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office.

West Street and the Site are is described in the Pevsner Architectural Guide to Wiltshire (Pevsner N and Cherry B; 1975) albeit that the Site is referred to as No.13. The description states in '***West Street first nice, even rows of cottages facing one another, those on the E earlier than those on W side. Then No.3 (W0 with a medieval doorway, and No.13 (E) of the late C17, five bays, three domes, two-light windows, porch with pediment***'.

The assessment of the cartographic sources show how the property has evolved and that the rear dining room extension is a relatively modern addition which is not shown on the earlier maps. In combination with the that site inspection, the inspection of the property has shown the character of the building is distinctly different when seen from the rear garden and unlike the front façade, the rear elevation is characterised by red brick. The change isn appearance was implemented as part of the works carried out as part of the works and modifications designed by Oswald Brakspear between 1941-early 1950s.

In addition to those changes, the timber-framed conservatory was added in the early 1990s with its glazed link connecting it through to the main house. The convoluted connection has made it awkward to use and it has a result over time, become dilapidated and it is of no architectural merit and as has been previously recognised by the Authority, it is now detracts from, rather than conserves the quality of the heritage asset and its removal would , enhance that character.




Fig.i: Extract from the Tithe map of 1840

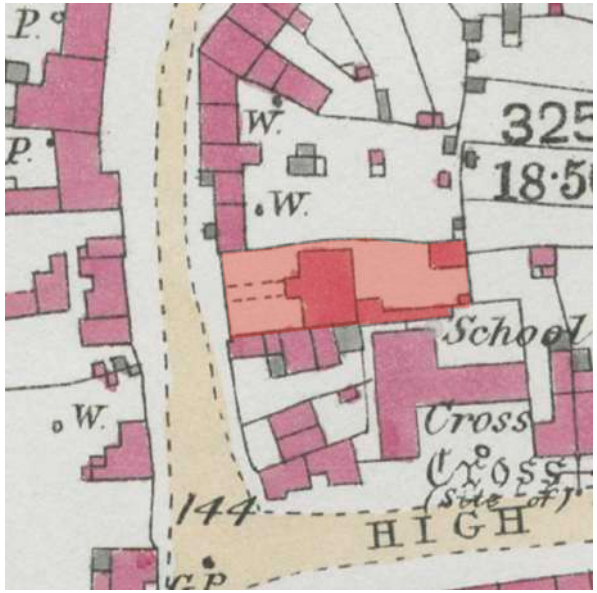



Fig.ii: Extract from 1886 OS map

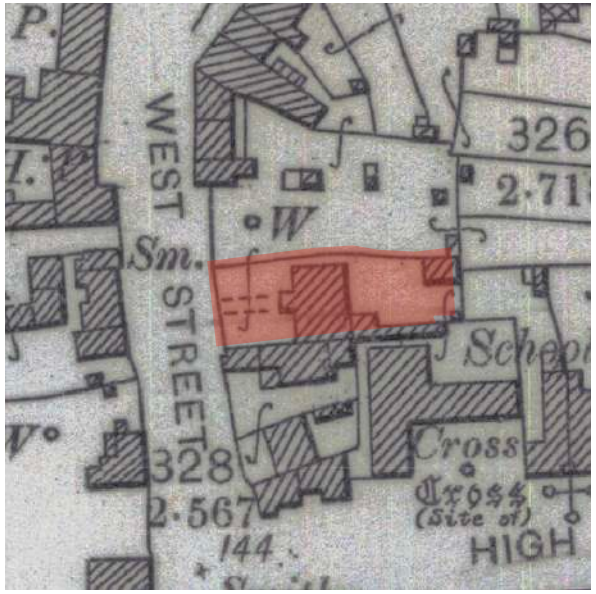



*Fig.iii: Extract from 1900 OS map*

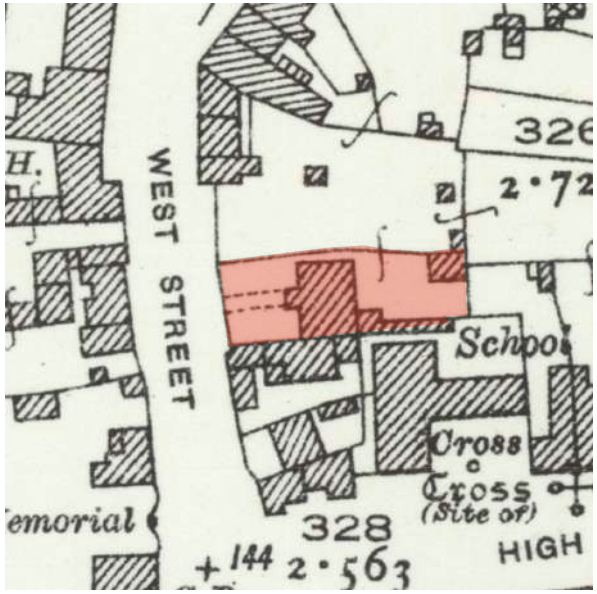



Fig.iv: Extract from 1924 OS map

# 5 THE BUILDING

The NPPF defines a designated heritage asset in the Annex 2 Glossary 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.**

**Listed Building: Grove House 14 West Street**

The Site is listed at Grade II and was included upon the statutory list in December 1960. The listing states **House, mid C18 on earlier core, rubble stone with ashlar dressings, stone slate roof and end stacks. Two storeys and attic, formal near symmetrical 5-window front with 3 hipped dormers. Five first floor 2-light mullion windows in architrave surrounds. Ground floor centre door in architrave set in ashlar pedimented enclosed porch with bolection moulded surround. Twelve-pane sashes each side, with dripcourse over, stepped over slightly taller sashes on left side. Interior has some heavy timbers and large timber- lintel south end fireplace, indicating earlier date. C18 closed- string stair with square newels and C18 fielded panelled north end room with bolection-moulded corner fireplace. Five-bay double- purlin roof. Barn adjoining, property of National Trust, formerly known as Morrell's Yard, is rubble stone with stone slate roof and 2 altered full-height south side openings.**

**Conservation Area: Lacock**

The Site is located within the LCA which covers the village of Lacock, the Abbey and its grounds, and some of the surrounding farmland.

The Council have not appraised the LCA although a Conservation Management Plan was commissioned by the National Trust and published in 2012, the primary focus of which was the management of the organisation of the Trust's ongoing conservation and management of the village and provision of a longterm intent for the village.

West Street and the properties which are located along it form an integral element of the LCA.

**Registered Park and Garden**

Lacock Abbey is registered Grade II on the Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest. The Registered Garden is the land which surrounds the Abbey.

Although the inclusion of an historic park or garden on the Register in itself brings no additional statutory controls, local authorities are required by central government to make provision for the protection of the historic environment in their policies and their allocation of resources. Registration is a material consideration in planning terms so, following an application for development, which would affect a registered park or garden, local planning authorities must take into account the historic interest of the site when determining whether or not to grant permission. Local planning authorities are required to consult English Heritage where a planning application affects a Grade I or II* registered park or garden, and the Garden History Society on all applications affecting registered sites (the latter thus only currently applying to Lacock).

**Scheduled Monuments**

A total of three Scheduled Monuments are located within the village of Lacock; The Conduit House 50m north of St. Anne's Church; the tithe barn and lock up in East Street and Lacock Bridge. All three are not within the setting of Grove House.

**Scoped out Heritage Assets**

Outside the Site's boundary and within the identified surrounding area are designated and non-designated heritage assets. It has been assessed based on desk based research and through the site inspection that the significance of these other heritage assets is unlikely to be affected by the proposed works, taking in to the consideration the potential impacts by existing topography, street pattern and/or built form. Accordingly, they will not be discussed further in this report.

The proposals will affect the rear elevation and garden of the Site. The assessment showed these are areas which have been previously affected by change and their replacement with an alternative design/structure was considered to be acceptable and approved by the Authority in 2014.



1. Grove House, West Street



2. The rear elevation, Grove House



3. The main entrance, wooden gates



4. The internal face of the gates showing the distortion and temporary repairs



5. The drive



6. The kitchen



7. Kitchen window looking towards conservatory



8. The conservatory

# 6 SIGNIFICANCE

Significance is unique to a place and it is vital to identify so that changes within the historic environment can be managed sensitively to ensure that significance is protected, as well as revealed, reinforced and enhanced at every possible opportunity.

The NPPF definition of the significance of a heritage asset (Annex 2: Glossary) as **the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting**.

Likewise, the definition of the setting of a heritage asset is **the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.**

There are occasions when the significance of a building or place may be regarded simply as intrinsic. However, since significance is evaluated as a result of how a building or place is interpreted or perceived at a given moment, there are instances where significance can be regarded as a fluid concept that can either be eroded or enhanced, depending on the consequences of change. Significance can be eroded through, for example, partial demolition or inappropriate alterations. Alternatively, it can be enhanced through informed, considered change which can bring positive benefits. These benefits can include the revealing of heritage values, the re-assertion of historic integrity, facilitating greater public appreciation and the strengthening of communal values and uses – all of which may ultimately raise the level of significance. Thus the aims of managed change to protect, reveal, reinforce or enhance significance can be achieved through a variety of means including conservation, improved interpretation, understanding and/or presentation. The purpose of this section is to consider the significance of the application Site as it is currently arranged.

The following assessment of significance for the identified designated heritage asset(s) is proportionate to the importance of this asset and also provides a sufficient level of description to understand the likely impacts of the proposals. This assessment work has been based on focused map progression, archival research, and on-Site investigative analysis.

**Historical Development**

The Site forms an important element in the history of the development of the village, showing how the village developed away from the Abbey. As discussed in this report, the appearance of the Site is more traditional when seen from West Street whilst at the rear the character is of a red brick house which has been witness to a number of changes.

The Site was remodelled by Oswald Brakspear, son of Sir Harold Brakspear, an English restoration architect and archaeologist who worked in Wiltshire. His practice, established in 1895, was based in Corsham and is noted for the restoration of various notable properties including the abbeys of Lacock, Bath, Shrewsbury and Pershore, he also was involved in projects for residential houses, schools and St George's Chapel Windsor.

His practice was continued by Oswald S Brakspear and his grandson Thomas Brakspear.

It was Oswald Brakspear who was responsible for the alterations at Grove House and these consisted of the remodelling of the rear elevation in brick, which was subsequently altered by the extension in the late 1980's-early 1990s.

The inspection has revealed the Site has been altered internally and as such the current additions detract from the quality of the heritage asset. It was noted by the case officer for the 2014 scheme that the Site **would be enhanced by their collective removal**.

**Contribution of the Site to the Significance of the Conservation Area**

As an integral part of West Street, the Site contributes positively to the overall character of the LCA. This is notwithstanding the limited quality and poor physical condition of the rear extensions, however the these do not in themselves impact upon the wider character of the village.

As such, the replacement of these features would enhance the appearance, which in turn would improve the contribution of the Site to the LCA.

**The Site**

Overall, the significance of the Site is derived from its period of construction, the association with the architectural practice of Sir Harold Brakspear and his son Oswald and the C18 landscape of Lacock.

The assessment of the Site revealed that its present condition is blighting the building as a whole and potentially its immediate neighbours. The existing conservatory is not of a any merit or quality and its replacement would enhance the building.

**Summary of Significance**

The significance of the Site is embodied in its period of construction, the associations with the historical development of Lacock and the contribution the Site makes to the immediate streetscene of West Street.

It is recognised that at the rear, there have been significant interventions made during the 1930s by Oswald Brakspear and that these were again altered in the 1990s, which have impacted upon the historic significance. The architectural significance of the building is derived from the attractive external architectural appearance and detailing which fronts West Street, rather than the brickwork of the rear elevation, which although retains a degree of interest is not of the same significance as the earlier C18 fabric.

Should the dilapidated condition of the property be allowed to continue, the Site will start to have a detrimental impact upon the conservation area but this will be reversed by the proposals, which will result in the ground and garden to the rear, being renovated and repaired.

# 7 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This statement of significance has been prepared to inform the understanding of the property with regard to the proposed works. The scheme advocates changes, which although may be considered to make an impact initially, they are changes which will not be detrimental to the understanding of the property or its understanding. It is considered that the proposed replacement of the conservatory extension is an acceptable one, given the limited quality and poor physical condition of the existing. As such, the current additions detract from, rather than conserve, the quality of the Site, which would be enhanced by the removal of these additions.

The proposed scheme seeks to replace the conservatory with an extension steer proportions that will achieve an improvement to the use and appearance of the rear elevation. It is accepted that the changes will require the removal of a limited extent of C20 fabric in the form of the kitchen window and the replaced brickwork which surrounds, however the new additions will not significantly disrupt the overall form of the rear elevation and, owing to its matching materials, will appear sympathetic to the appearance of the Site.

The proposed structure will be of a scale that will also reduce the overall bulk of the additions by setting it back from projecting beyond the dining room wing, thus maintaining a simple aesthetic that is complementary to the historic property. This is a proposal that will not adversely affect the hierarchy of the building and will be easily understood in the evolution of the building.

The design of the scheme, which has been robustly considered, is one that will introduce positive change that is sympathetic to the property and fabric and will enhance the property and the wider setting especially at the rear.

# 8 CONCLUSION

This statement demonstrates the proposal to renovate and modify the rear elevation and the conservatory extension will enhance the building and not harm the historic understanding of what it was, nor will it harm the appearance of the Site as a whole. The changes will not cause the loss of significant historic fabric or harm to the setting of the listed building(s).

The scheme seeks to introduce a positive physical improvement and one that is without a detrimental impact upon the character or appearance of the host building. The proposals offer an acceptable solution that is appropriately scaled, designed and detailed and one whereby the modest harm which would occur through the removal of some C20 fabric would be outweighed by the enhancement and benefits of removing the existing structure which is recognised by all partied as not being of any real merit.

It is a scheme that has been sensitively considered and designed to ensure a viable, modern addition that is architecturally sensitive and which will provide a viable solution. It is a design that will sit comfortably within the envelop of the building and wider site.

In this regard, the proposed scheme is in accordance with national planning policy and is fully compliant with the Development Plan Policy Framework. The scheme is wholly appropriate and indeed beneficial to grant listed building consent and planning permission.