

HERITAGE STATEMENT

In respect of:

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

At:

LAND AT NOS. 49, 51 & 53 ROWDEN HILL, CHIPPENHAM, SN15 2AJ

On behalf of:

Rowden Hill Holdings

Date:

September 2025



ELAINE MILTON
HERITAGE & PLANNING LIMITED
t: 07979 942042
e: emilton@emhp.co.uk
w: www.emhp.co.uk

CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	3
2.0	HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS	5
3.0	DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDINGS	6
4.0	HISTORY	18
5.0	ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE	27
6.0	PROPOSALS	32
7.0	POLICY CONTEXT	34
8.0	HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	36
9.0	CONCLUSION	39
	SOURCES USED IN THE REPORT	40
	APPENDIX: HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TABLE	41

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig.1: *Location plan*
Fig.2: *Front of No.53 Rowden Hill*
Fig.3: *West side of No.53 (modern link with No.49 on the right)*
Fig.4: *View from the roof of the modern link towards the ivy-clad south wall of No.53*
Fig.5: *West side of No.53*
Fig.6: *Principal staircase in No.53*
Fig.7: *Original fireplace in the main ground floor room of No.53*
Fig.8: *Example of an over-boarded panelled door and original architrave within No.53*
Fig.9: *Unsympathetic screen at the top of the main staircase*
Fig.10: *One of the attic rooms within No.53*
Fig.11: *Front of No.51 Rowden Hill*
Fig.12: *East side of No.51 as seen from the long driveway*

- Fig.13: *Coursed rubble stone wall bounding the east side of the long driveway*
- Fig.14: *Staircase in No.51*
- Fig.15: *Unsympathetic screening around the top of the staircase in No.51*
- Fig.16: *Principal ground floor room of No.51*
- Fig.17: *Example of one of the plainly decorated rooms within the service range of No.51*
- Fig.18: *East side of No.49*
- Fig.19: *West side of No.49*
- Fig.20: *Front of the Chippenham Community Hospital*
- Fig.21: *Courtyard-facing elevation of the hospital*
- Fig.22: *Tithe map of 1848*
- Fig.23: *Ordnance Survey map of 1885*
- Fig.24: *Enlargement of 1885 OS map*
- Fig.25: *Town Plan of 1885*
- Fig.26: *Ordnance Survey map of 1922*
- Fig.27: *Ordnance Survey map of 1937*
- Fig.28: *Aerial photograph from 1950*
- Fig.29: *Recent photograph of the back of No.51*
- Fig.30: *Photograph from 1980, prior to the external staircase*
- Fig.31: *Photograph from 1980 showing a flush panel door being replaced*
- Fig.32: *Photograph from 1980 of the front of No.51*
- Fig.33: *Photograph of the front of No.53 from 1980*
- Fig.34: *Recent photograph of the front of No.53*
- Fig.35: *Proposed site plan*

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement accompanies applications for development of land at Nos. 49, 51 & 53 Rowden Hill, including the conversion of two Grade II listed buildings, No.51 Rowden Hill and No.53 Rowden Hill House.
- 1.2 The site is located south of the A4 Bath road (AKA Rowden Hill) to the south-west of Chippenham Town Centre and immediately west of Chippenham Community Hospital. The site is occupied by Nos. 49, 51 and 53 Rowden Hill, which are grouped together within the north-eastern part of the site. The buildings were until recently in the ownership of the health trust but have been vacant for several years.

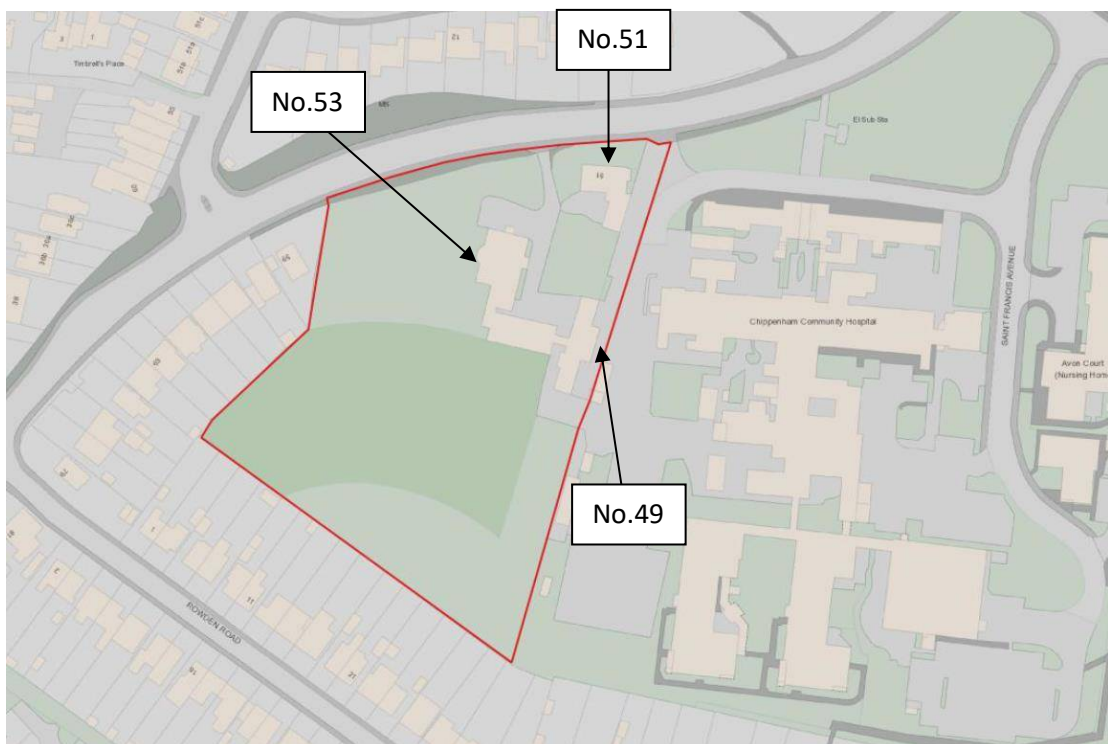


Fig.1 Location plan

- 1.3 The report describes the heritage significance of the site and provides an assessment of the impact of the proposals in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF, revised December 2024) and to meet the council's local validation checklist for applications affecting heritage assets.
- 1.4 The report was commissioned by the applicants, Rowden Hill Holdings, and has been prepared by Elaine Milton BSc (Hons) MSc DipArchCons MRTPI IHBC, an individual with 'appropriate expertise' as advised by paragraph 207 of the NPPF.
- 1.5 The significance of the site was identified using the guidance contained within the Historic England documents *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008),

Statements of Heritage Significance: Historic England Advice Note 12 (October 2019) and Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (December 2017).

- 1.6 Information on the history of the site has been drawn from several sources, a list of which is presented on **p40**.
- 1.7 Prior to the purchase of the site by Rowden Hill Holdings, a pre-application enquiry was made for redevelopment of the site consisting of the conversion of No.51 Rowden Hill to 4 flats, the conversion of No.53 Rowden Hill House to 4 flats, the demolition of No.49 Rowden Hill and its redevelopment for 6 new build houses, and redevelopment within the southern and western parts of the site to provide 10 new build houses (reference ENQ/2023/01224). The response from the Conservation Officer to the pre-application enquiry was:
- Some harm to heritage significance would occur from the loss of historic fabric and changes to plan form of No.51 and No.53 along with impact to the open setting and former landscaped gardens of Rowden Hill House
 - Based on the proposed floor plans, the proposals appear to be sensitively designed to minimise the impact on significance
 - Some degree of harm is capable of being justified on the grounds of securing the restoration of the buildings and securing their long-term use
 - There would be a public benefit from the removal of the poor-quality extensions to No. 53
 - Subject to appropriate dwelling design and materials and given the topography of the site, the impact on the setting of the hospital buildings would be low
 - There may be opportunities to improve the setting of the listed hospital from the reconfiguration of the existing carpark and access areas, and the inclusion of soft landscaping
 - No.49 is far less significant than the other buildings on the site although is deemed curtilage listed through its association with No.53 Rowden Hill House
 - For any proposal for the entire demolition of No.49 to be deemed appropriate, the historical significance and association with the hospital site and No.53 Rowden Hill House would need to be understood.

2.0 Heritage Designations

- 2.1 No.53 Rowden Hill House was added to the *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest* as ‘Wiltshire Area Health Authority Headquarters, 53 Rowden Hill’ at Grade II on 22 June 1978. The list description for the building reads:

‘Large house, now offices. c1870. Limestone ashlar, hipped slate roof with moulded ashlar stacks to the front slope and rear. Eclectic style, mostly Classical with some Rundbogen details. L-shaped plan with C20 wing to the rear. EXTERIOR: 2 storeys; symmetrical 3-window range. Plate-glass sash windows. The entrance facade facing north has chamfered rusticated quoins, eaves band, platband and plinth and a modillion cornice to eaves and pediment. The pediment, over the stepped-forward central bay, has an ornamented oculus to the tympanum. 2-light windows to the 1st floor have semicircular-arched moulded archivolts with ornamented keystones and imposts and triple-bracketed sills to paired semicircular-arched sash windows. Ground-floor windows have moulded architraves and cornices on consoles over segmental-arched sashes. The large chamfered rusticated ashlar porch has an arch to each side with keystones to moulded archivolts on an impost string course. The front arch is flanked by small recesses below the string course. The parapet to the porch is pierced circles between panelled piers. The west garden front is similar but the central bay is wider, a larger pediment has shields in the tympanum over a 4-light window and a canted bay similar to the porch, but with moulded architraves and keystones to full-height segmental-arched sash windows. INTERIOR: not inspected.’

- 2.2 No.51 and ‘attached walls and gate piers’ also became Grade II listed on 22 June 1978. The listing reads:

‘House. Mid C19. Limestone ashlar with hipped slate roof and 2 moulded ashlar stacks to rear. L-shaped plan with a rear left wing. EXTERIOR: 2 storeys; 4-window range. Platband, plinth and chamfered rusticated quoins; raised surrounds; margin panes with small square panes at the corners, to plate-glass sash windows. Left-of-centre 4-panelled door glazed to the top, fanlight with small margin panes, engaged columns to a Tuscan doorcase; a window above is semicircular-arched with similar glazing. INTERIOR: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached to left corner is a high ashlar wall with a semicircular-arched opening to the rear wing. The wall sweeps forward for approx 10m and down to meet a pier at the corner of the garden. The garden is fronted by a low rubblestone wall with freestone coping for approx 30m.

Chamfered gate piers toward the left and another at the right-hand corner have cornices and pyramidal caps.'

- 2.3 No.49 is an unlisted building but has been deemed by the local planning authority, due to its age and association with No.53, a curtilage listed building.
- 2.4 The main hospital building to the east of the site was Grade II listed on 22 June 1978 as 'Front and Main Rear Range of St Andrew's Hospital and Attached Walls'. The listing reads:

'Workhouse, now part of hospital buildings. c1857-9, with many later additions. Square limestone rubble with freestone quoins, plinths and dressings, hipped slate roofs. Tudor Revival style. PLAN: originally of two parallel ranges connected by a bar, now considerably infilled, it had two-light stone-mullioned cast-iron casement windows with hexagonal panes. Some remain. The front range flanking the gatehouse is single storey terminated by Dutch gabled ranges. The gatehouse is two-unit plan. EXTERIOR: two storeys; three-bay range. The central bay is stepped forward under a Dutch gable with an oculus to the apex; C20 windows flank a semicircular-arched carriage entrance. The rear retains the cast-iron windows. The courtyard to the rear is enclosed by attached high walls with chamfered freestone doorways to the gable ends of outhouses. The three-window range central block of the rear range is splayed to the first floor forming an octagon with a large lantern of two semicircular-arched lights with keystones and imposts to each facet which support a cornice and Dutch gabled parapets to four sides. The double entrance doors with sidelights and overlight are under a hoodmould with block stops. INTERIOR: is altered. HISTORY: built as a workhouse, the building became a hospital in 1947.(The Buildings of England: Pevsner N & Cherry B: Wiltshire:London:1967-1975:169).'

- 2.5 The site is not located within a designated conservation area. The western edge of the Rowden Conservation Area is east of the hospital site. Contiguous with that conservation area, to the north-east, is Chippenham Conservation Area.

3.0 Description of the Buildings

No.53 Rowden Hill

- 3.1 The listing in paragraph 2.1 provides a fair current description of the former dwelling, albeit some features have been lost or are in a deteriorated state, such as the stone balustrade that is missing from the porch parapet. Nevertheless, the house displays good limestone ashlar walls, original sash windows, hipped slate roofs and moulded stone stacks. The building has been heavily altered and extended to accommodate an administrative use for the hospital. Partitions and doors have been added, some fireplaces have been blocked and some dropped ceilings have been inserted. Despite that, a sense of the building's original form and layout survives as does a substantial degree of original fabric, e.g., the main staircase with cast iron balustrade, some panelled doors, plaster ceilings, architraves and cornices.



Fig.2 Front of No.53 Rowden Hill



Fig.3 West side of No.53 (modern link with No.49 on the right)



Fig.4 View from the roof of the modern link towards the ivy-clad south wall of No.53



Fig.5 West side of No.53



Fig.6 Principal staircase in No.53



Fig.7 Original fireplace in the main ground floor room of No.53



Fig.8 Example of an over-boarded panelled door and original architrave within No.53

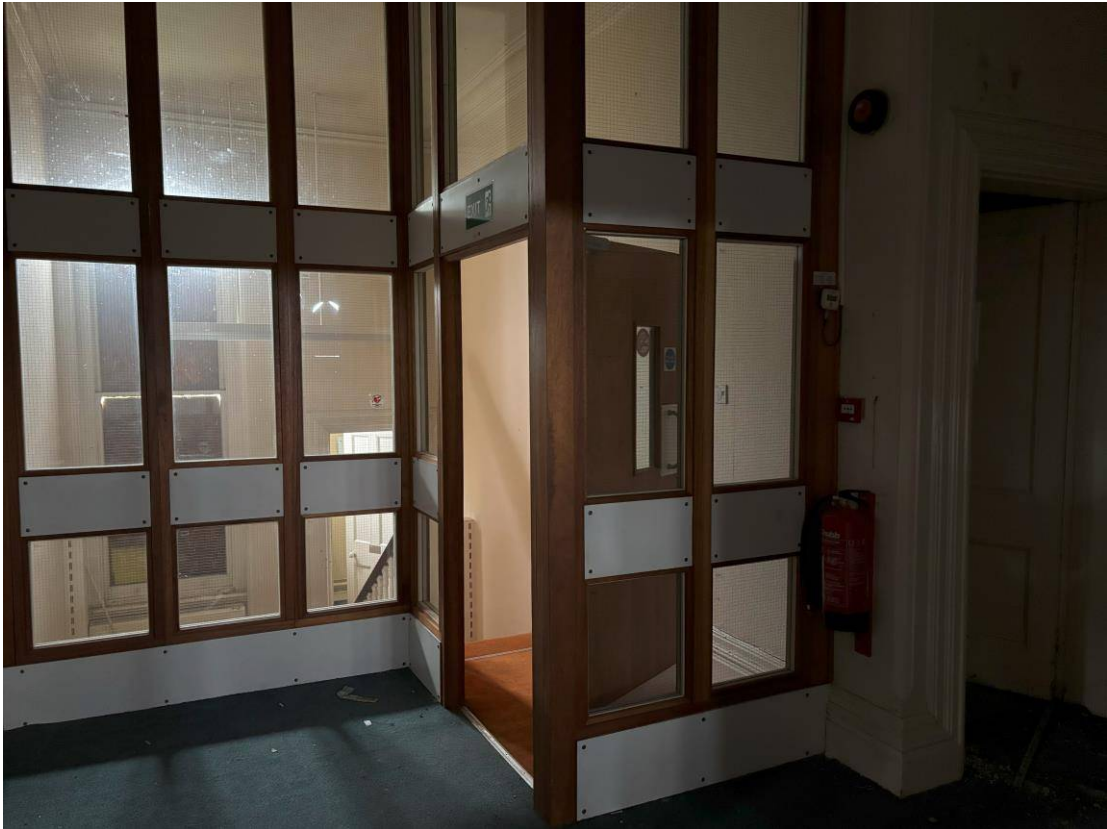


Fig.9 Unsympathetic screen at the top of the main staircase



Fig.10 One of the attic rooms within No.53 – original floorboards and lath and plaster ceilings

No.51 Rowden Hill

- 3.2 The listing for No.51 provides a reasonable current description of the former villa. The exterior of the building has an attractive ashlar stone elevation facing the road and retains sash windows with marginal glazing bars. There are some modern accretions at the rear, including a metal fire escape staircase. Internally, the plan form of the principal rooms is legible. Surviving features include a modest staircase, cupboard joinery, windows and architraves. Original floors and ceilings remain in place although are obscured by modern coverings. Fireplaces have been removed or boarded up.



Fig.11 Front of No.51 Rowden Hill



Fig.12 East side of No.51 as seen from the long, eastern driveway



Fig.13 Coursed rubble stone wall bounding the east side of the long driveway (separation from the hospital site)



Fig.14 Staircase in No.51

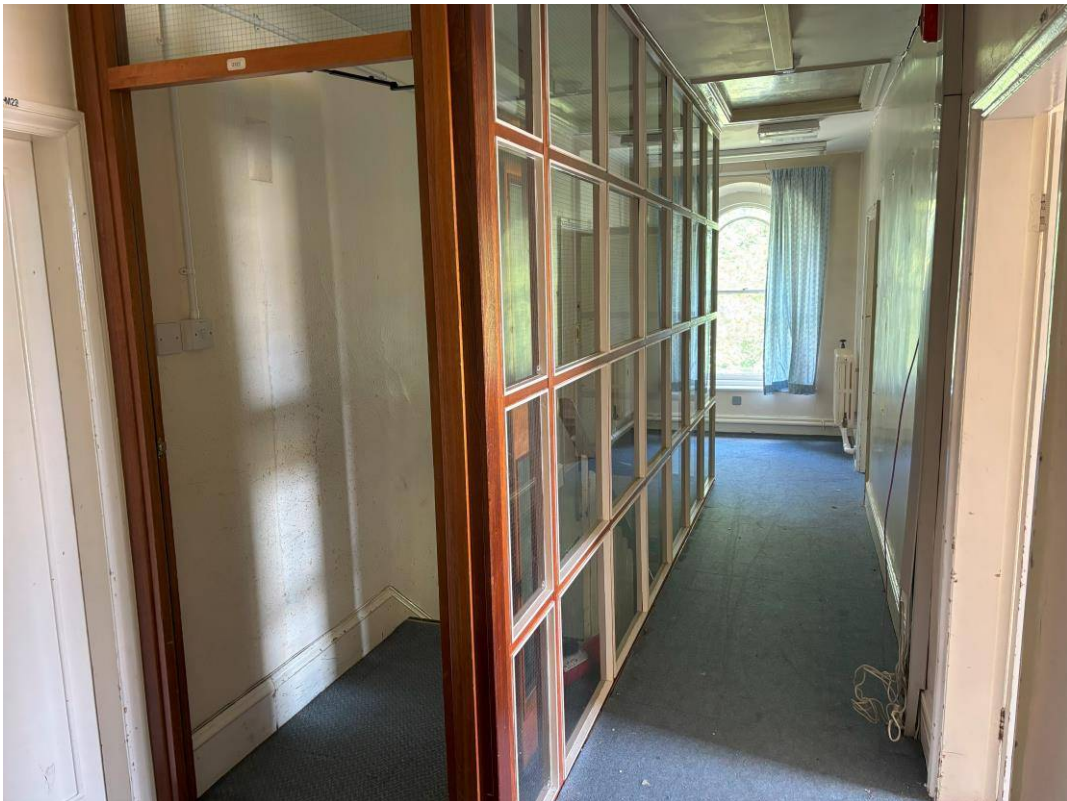


Fig.15 Unsympathetic screening around the top of the staircase in No.51



Fig.16 Principal ground floor room of No.51 – modern ceiling, light fittings and ducting



Fig.17 Example of one of the plainly decorated rooms within the service range of No.51

No.49 Rowden Hill

- 3.3 No.49 is a narrow two-storey building constructed in red brick and with a gabled roof covered in slate. There is a regular disposition of windows – modern aluminium sashes with concrete lintels and cills. On the east façade is a 1 ½ storey brick addition, having an asymmetrical roof with a flat-roofed element. There are no notable features internally.



Fig.18 East side of No.49



Fig.19 West side of No.49

Chippenham Hospital

- 3.4 The main hospital building (former workhouse) to the east of the application site is well described in the listing. It is a large, attractive complex constructed in coursed limestone in the Tudor Revival style, the principal elevation of which faces the road. The building displays some interesting architectural features such as a Dutch gabled entrance, canted bay within the courtyard with lantern light, and some original multi-pane cast-iron windows. The building has suffered from a significant number of alterations and additions.



Fig.20 Front of the Chippenham Community Hospital



Fig.21 Courtyard-facing elevation of the hospital

4.0 History

- 4.1 The archaeology report produced by HPS (July 2025) explains the site consisted of agricultural land prior to development in the mid-late 19th century. It formed part of a pasture field plot 471 on the 1848 tithe map. Plot 515 to the east was also pastureland before development for the future Chippenham Union Workhouse.

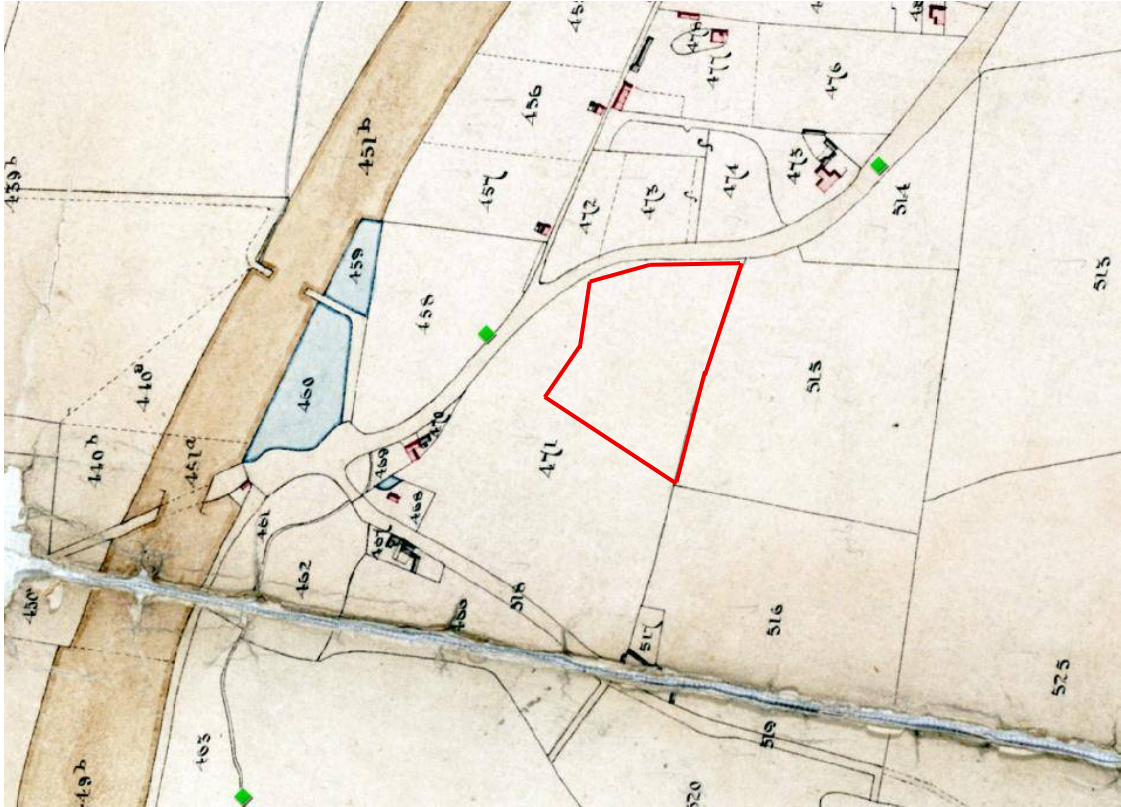


Fig.22 Tithe map of 1848 (source: Know Your Place)- application site outlined in red

- 4.2 The HPS report describes auction details of June 1857 for land at Rowden Hill to be sold in several plots, seemingly that which lead to the development of Chippenham Union Workhouse, built 1857-9, and Nos.51 and 53 Rowden Hill. The auction described land that 'stands on an eminence' and 'commands fine and extensive views for many miles of the surrounding country'.
- 4.3 Rowden Hill House, 53 Rowden Hill was built c.1860 for William Nicholls, a druggist and chemist who invented a substance called annatto, a fluid that gave cheese and butter a creamy yellow colour to make it more attractive to buyers. Manufacturing was undertaken in outbuildings within the grounds of the house until at least 1899. After Nicholls died in 1870, his wife and daughter lived at Rowden Hill House assisted by two live-in servants.

- 4.4 The workhouse complex and Nos.51 and 53 Rowden Hill are depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1885. A group of buildings including a long, linear block are shown on the site of No.49 Rowden Hill.



Fig.23 Ordnance Survey map of 1885

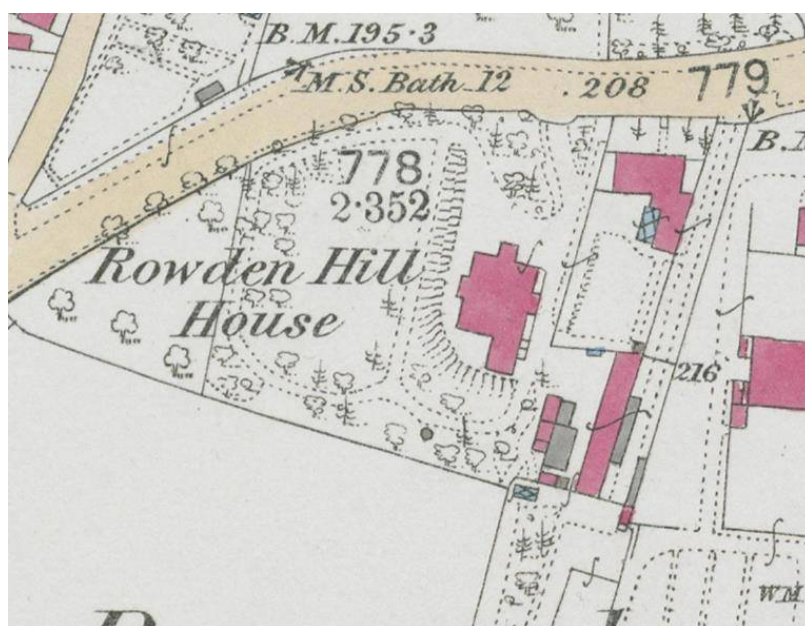


Fig.24 Enlargement of 1885 OS map showing Nos 51 & 53 Rowden Hill

- 4.5 The town plan of 1885 shows the grouping in more detail. Rowden Hill House is shown set back from the road with a curved entrance and planting within the forecourt. Views of the house would have been limited from Rowden Hill but wide views would no doubt have been afforded westwards from its elevated position on the bank. The line of trees to the east would have probably provided screening to the rear garden of No.51. The house itself is depicted as roughly square-plan with a southern projection. The buildings to the south-east appear to be within its plot, with secondary access from the road along the east side of the site.



Fig.25 Town Plan of 1885

- 4.6 The Town Plan depicts No.51 within a smaller plot and fronting the road. To the rear was a projecting range with on the west side a glazed roofed structure, as denoted by the hatching.
- 4.7 The HPS report references sales particulars for Rowden Hill House from 1919 and provides a good picture of the accommodation at that time: 'Large Hall, Breakfast Room, Smoking Room, Dining Room, Drawing Room, 6 Principal Bedrooms, 2 Bathrooms, Excellent Domestic Quarters and Secondary Bedroom Accommodation', the relative grandeur of the house clearly reflecting the wealth and status of the

family. The advert also mentions ‘tastefully Laid Out Matured Gardens & Pleasure Grounds extending delightfully down a natural slope’ with the house ‘well screened from the road, commands charming views to the South and West’. There were ‘Ample stabling, Garage and Cottage’ – likely the group buildings to the south-east depicted on the Town Plan.

- 4.8 In 1910, the HPS notes that No.51 was recorded as having an entrance hall, dining room, drawing room, pantry, kitchen, glasshouse, kitchen coal house and WC at ground floor level, with bedrooms, bathroom, night nursery, day nursery, dressing room, maids' room and linen closet at first floor.
- 4.9 There is no discernible change on the Ordnance Survey map of 1922 (see below). The land to the south-west is labelled Rowden Down.

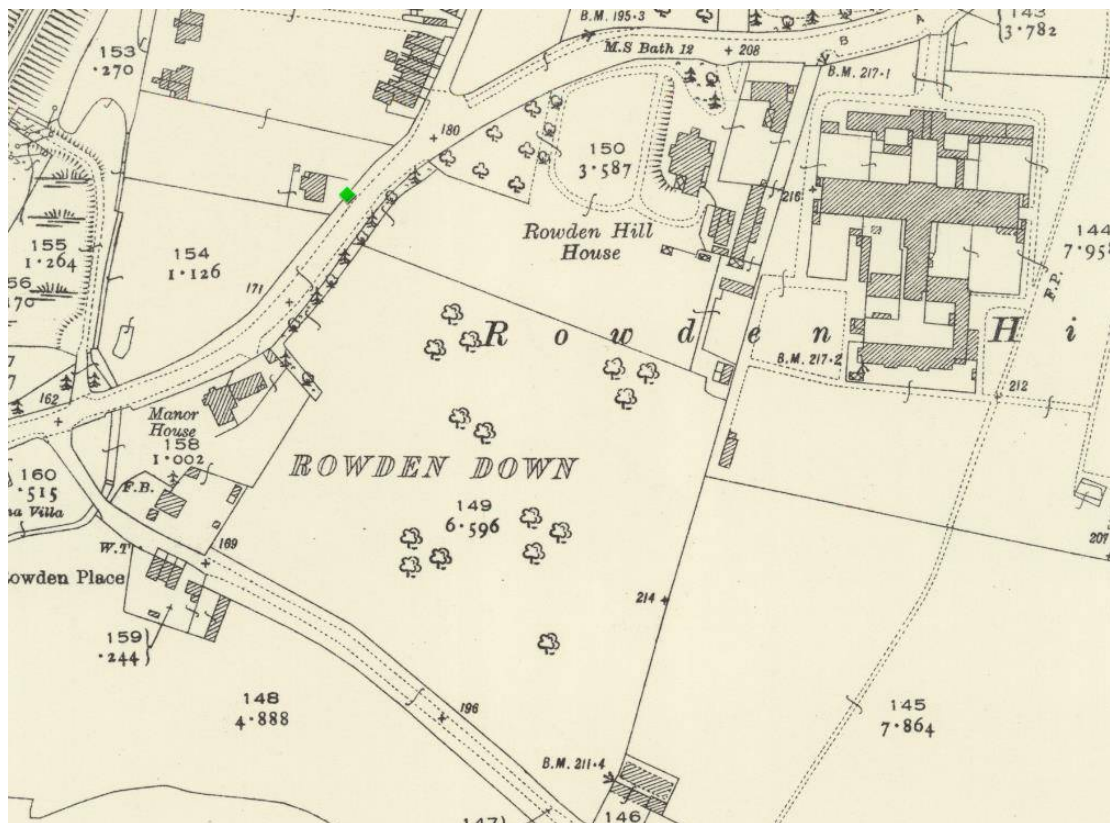


Fig.26 Ordnance Survey map of 1922

- 4.10 By the late 1930s, housing had been built on Rowden Down, creating a more suburban context for the late Victorian houses.

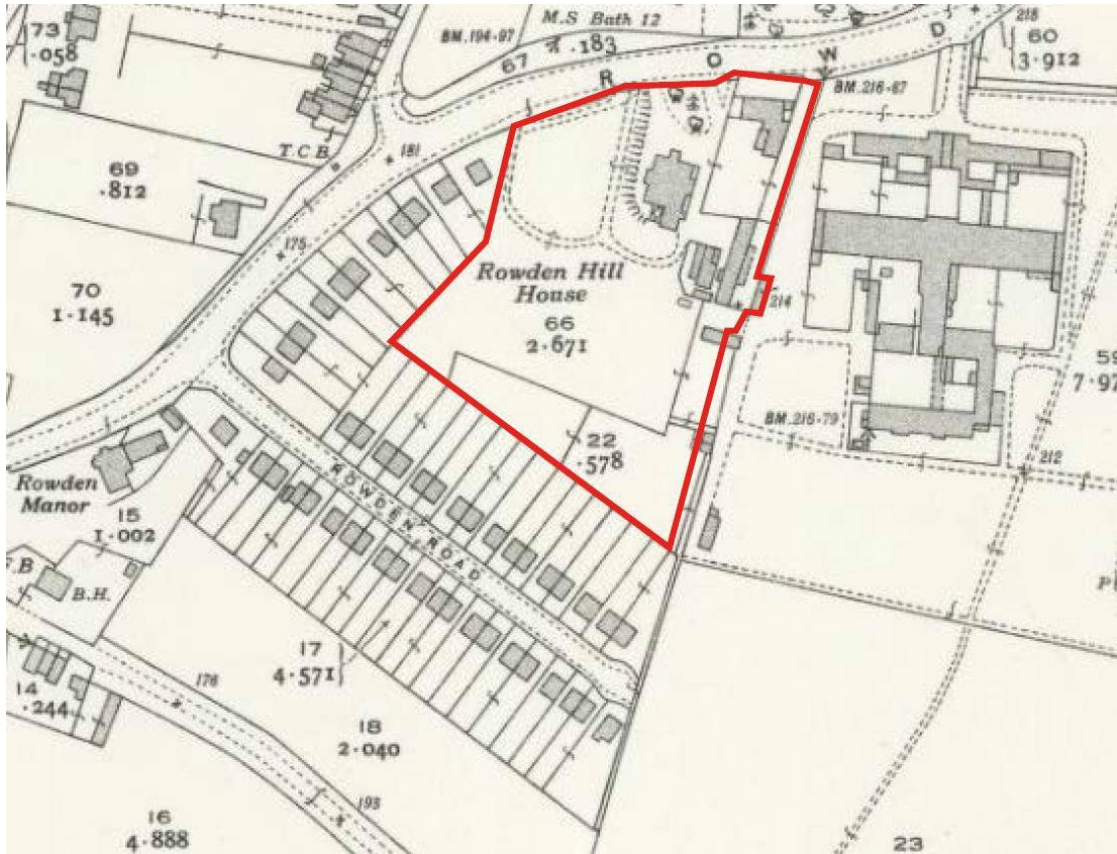


Fig.27 Ordnance Survey map of 1937

- 4.11 The application site became part of the workhouse in 1934, and together with it evolved into St Andrew's Hospital in the 1960s, with the buildings on the site being put into office and ancillary uses for the hospital.
- 4.12 An aerial photograph from 1950 (via the Historic England Archive) appears to illustrate 3 dormers in the loft of No.53 (corresponding with the missing rafters within the roof space). The images also indicate that some rooflights may have existed on the rear projecting wing of the house.

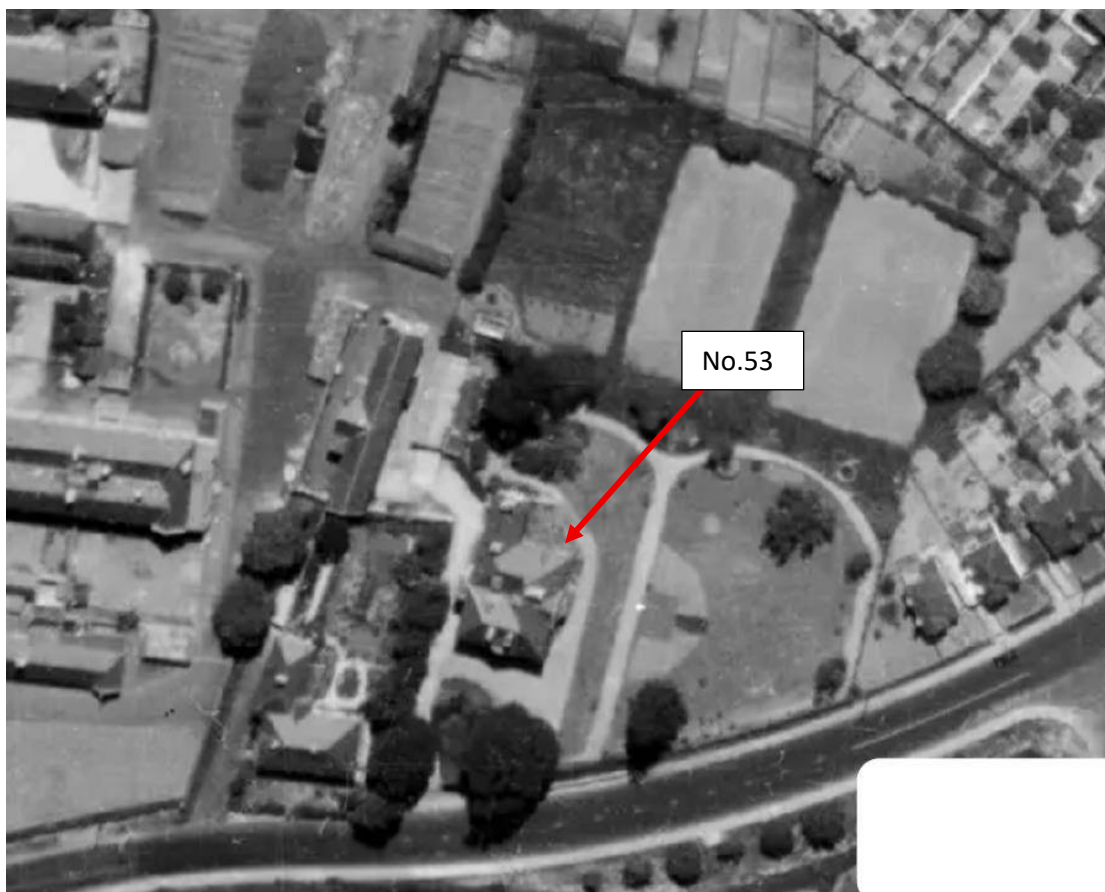


Fig.28 Aerial photograph from 1950 (Historic England Archive)

- 4.13 Photographs deposited within the Wiltshire Buildings Record dated 1980 show No.51 with a pedestrian metal gate and gate piers at the eastern end of the road frontage. Another photograph shows the back of No.51 prior to the external staircase and with the clear outline of the former single-storey structure that existed. One photograph shows the rear flush panel door in 1980 being replaced with the current half-glazed door.



Fig.29 Recent photograph of the back of No.51



Fig.30 Photograph from 1980, prior to the external staircase (Wiltshire Buildings Record)

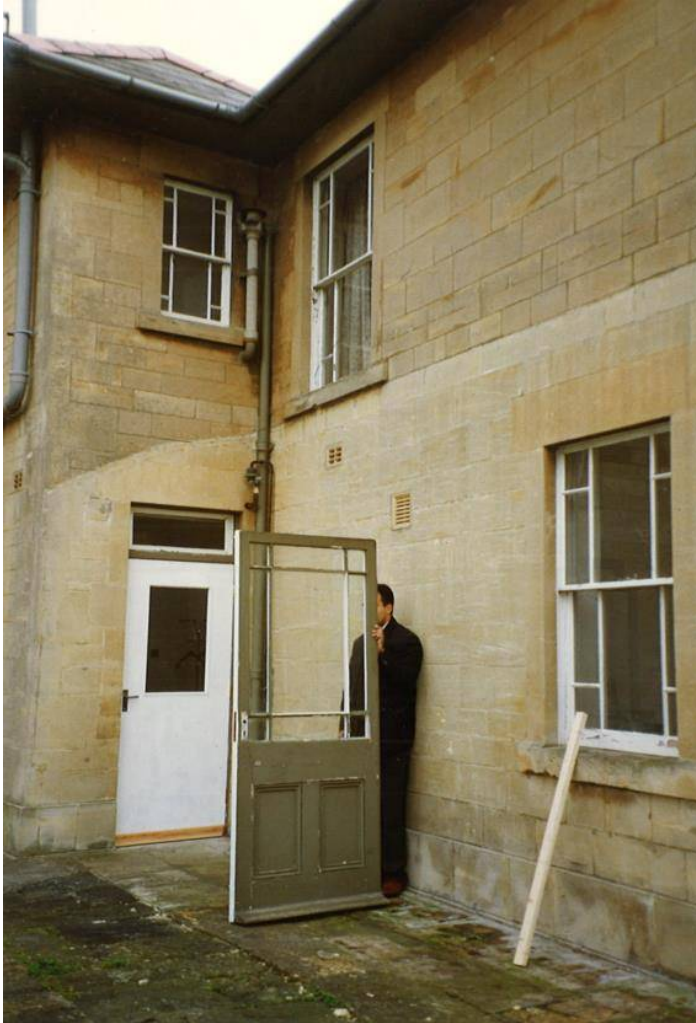


Fig.31 Photograph from 1980 showing a flush panel door being replaced (Wiltshire Buildings Record)



Fig.32 Photograph from 1980 of the front of No.51 (Wiltshire Buildings Record)

- 4.14 A photograph of the front of No.53 from 1980 illustrates the degree of degradation suffered since, including the loss of the pierced circle stone balustrade from the porch parapet.



Fig.33 Photograph of the front of No.53 from 1980 (Wiltshire Buildings Record)



Fig.34 Recent photograph of the front of No.53 – stone balustrade missing from the porch parapet

5.0 Assessment of Significance

No. 53 Rowden Hill House

- 5.1 No.53 is a Grade II listed building and therefore a designated heritage asset of special interest and of national importance. The building is of significance for the following reasons:

Architectural Interest

- No.53 is a good example of a Victorian gentleman's suburban villa designed in the Classical style
- The building has an imposing, symmetrical frontage with limestone ashlar walling, semi-circular arches and timber sash windows typical of the building type and period
- The house is of interest for the materials used in its construction, which provide a good record of local building traditions and techniques
- The building's scale, landmark status and high-quality detailing are indicative of the wealth and standing of its original owners
- The plan form of the house remains little altered and legible. There are well-proportioned reception rooms and bedrooms set around a grand central staircase, typical of the building type and period
- The house contains some good 19th century features including staircase, panelled doors and some fireplaces

Historic Interest

- The layout of the building provides a good illustration of the ways of living within a late 19th century villa
- There is a hierarchy in detail between the principal rooms of the house and the rear service areas. The service rooms have plainer detailing and cellular spaces.

- The scale of the attic and cellar reinforces the emphasis that was placed on service provision in the 19th century

Negative Features

- The large, modern flat-roofed addition detracts from the building's architectural interest
- The changes made to the building in connection with its office use in the mid-late 20th century have resulted in an institutional character, particularly within the rear projection
- The condition of the building has been in decline for several years and significant investment and repair are now required

Contribution Made by Setting

- The house is set within a modestly scaled, mature landscaped garden setting in an elevated position where it stands pre-eminently within the plot and commands views to the west; the views are maximised from the house by the large bay window on the west elevation
- The house is barely seen from the public domain due to its degree of set back from the road and the overgrown vegetation. The filtered views of the house from the road and the spacious and verdant grounds contribute to its significance as a once important Victorian villa
- The surviving stone gate piers and low boundary wall allude to the status of the house from Rowden Hill
- The house contributes to the group value of historic buildings within the application site

No.51 Rowden Hill

- 5.2 No.51 Rowden Hill is a Grade II listed building and therefore a designated heritage asset of special interest and of national importance. The building is of significance for the following reasons:

Architectural Interest

- No.51 is a good example of a Victorian suburban villa
- The building has an elegant and formal frontage with limestone ashlar walling and timber sash windows typical of the building type and period
- The house is of interest for the materials used in its construction, which provide a good record of local building traditions and techniques
- The house displays high quality materials and detail on its exterior
- The historic plan form of reception rooms set around a central staircase remains legible although the layout has been much altered
- The house contains some good 19th century features including staircase, joinery, windows and ceilings

Historic Interest

- The layout of the building provides a good illustration of the ways of living within a 19th century villa
- There is a hierarchy in detail between the principal rooms at the front of the house and the rear service areas. The service rooms have plainer detailing and cellular spaces.

Negative Features

- The changes made to the building in connection with its office use from the 1960s onwards have resulted in an institutional character, particularly within the rear

- A large opening has been created in the gable wall of the rear projection
- The historic pathway and gate and railings are missing from the frontage
- The condition of the building, front boundary walls and gate piers has been in decline for several years and significant investment and repair are now required

Contribution Made by Setting

- The house has a presence on Rowden Hill. Its position and domestic garden contribute to the building's significance
- The original status of the house is signalled by the natural stone boundary walls and ashlar stone gate piers
- The stone wall to the east provides a separation and screening with the former workhouse site

No.49 Rowden Hill

- 5.3 No.49 Rowden Hill is not separately listed although is considered a curtilage listed building. The red brick building probably originated in the late 19th century as a stables, groom's accommodation and coach house serving No.53 but the building has been so altered that its original function is not discernible and is architecturally unremarkable. The openings have been modified, and the brickwork has been poorly patched and re-pointed. Nevertheless, the building is of some albeit modest historic value for its former ancillary use associated with the main house, evidenced by its modesty of design and materials (brick for the walls and slate for the roof), physical relationship and subservience.
- 5.4 The 20th century extension on the east side of the building is not of value. The external fire escape staircase and the flat-roofed element are negative elements that detract from the appearance of the building.

Chippenham Hospital

- 5.5 The front and rear ranges of Chippenham Hospital were listed at Grade II listed as St Andrew's Hospital. The building is of significance for its historic value as a former 19th century union workhouse and for the architectural interest deriving from its high-quality exterior and its planning and layout. The building forms part of the cohesive group of late 19th century buildings constructed in the local limestone.
- 5.6 The hospital has an institutional character and setting in contrast to the domestic settings afforded to the buildings within the application site. It is separated from the application site by intervening buildings and walls, giving it a degree of independence.

6.0 Proposals

- 6.1 The proposals are for the conversion of Nos. 49, 51 and 53 Rowden Hill to residential use, for the erection of a 2-bedroom house to the south of No.49 and for 6 new dwellings within the south-western part of the site.



Fig.35 Proposed site plan

- 6.2 No.53 Rowden Hill is proposed to be converted to 5 flats – 2 on the ground floor, 2 on the first floor and 1 in the attic. The large, flat-roofed link to No.49 would be removed. The entrance, hall and staircase would remain in communal use. There would be some reconfiguration of the layout, mainly involving the removal of recent partitions.
- 6.3 No.51 is proposed to be converted back to a single 4-bedroom dwelling with associated garden and parking. The physical works would involve removal of the external fire escape staircase, removal of modern subdivisions and restoration of the layout.
- 6.4 No.49 is proposed for conversion of the brick building to a terrace of 4 residential units. Works to the building would involve removal of the external fire escape staircase, the replacement of the flat-roofed element on the building's east side with a pitched roof and some internal reconfiguration.
- 6.5 The proposed site plan illustrates 6 new self-build dwellings set in an arc within the southern, lower part of the site. The dwellings would be detached and set within individual garden plots. In addition, a new 2-bedroom dwelling is proposed to the

south of No.49, separated by approximately 3m to allow rear access to the terraced houses.

- 6.6 Proposals for the landscape would include the restoration of paths, gates and railings for No.51, realignment of the vehicular entrance to No.53 and formation of a pedestrian opening in the eastern stone boundary wall. Small groups of car parking are proposed to the north and south of No.53 and to the south of No.51. The historic planting and trees would be maintained.

7.0 Policy Context

Primary Legislation

- 7.1 Statutory duties exist under sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') for the local planning authority in considering whether to grant listed building consent or planning permission for development that affects a listed building or its setting to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

National Planning Policy

- 7.2 National planning policy relating to the historic environment is provided within section 16 of the NPPF (revised December 2024). It advises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 7.3 Paragraph 212 of the NPPF advises 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Any harm or loss to a heritage asset's significance should require clear and convincing justification and needs to be weighed against identifiable public benefits. Substantial harm or loss of a Grade II listed building should be exceptional.
- 7.4 Paragraph 214 of the NPPF advises where proposals would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the proposals should be refused 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 four listed criteria therein apply.
- 7.5 Paragraph 215 advises that where proposals would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

- 7.6 Paragraph 219 of the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas or the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance.

Development Plan Policy

- 7.7 The statutory duties are reflected in the *Wiltshire Core Strategy* (WCS), which was adopted by Wiltshire Council on 20 January 2015. Core Policy 58 of the WCS seeks to promote the conservation and, where possible, enhancement of the county's historic environment.

Best Practice Guidance

- 7.8 It is advisable that proposals for repair, restoration and alteration of heritage assets follow the guidance within the *Historic England Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets* (HEAN2, February 2016). The document acknowledges (paragraph 3) that the best way to conserve a building is to keep it in use, and that a '*reasonable and proportionate approach to owners' needs is therefore essential*'.
- 7.9 As a general principle for adaptation, HEAN2 advises as much of the historic fabric and plan form that contributes to the significance of a heritage asset should be retained as possible, with new work ideally being reversible. Harm to significance may be justified on grounds of overriding public benefit that may accrue including maintaining the building in its optimum viable use.
- 7.10 HEAN2 also advises that some of the issues to consider in respect of new additions are proportion, height, massing, bulk, materials and setting, and that new work should not dominate the existing in terms of scale, material or siting. The guidance advises that an assessment of the asset's significance will usually suggest an appropriate form of any extension.
- 7.11 HEAN2 provides guidance on restoration of lost or damaged features. It advises that restoration is likely to be acceptable if *inter alia* the significance of the elements that would be restored 'decisively outweighs' the significance of those that would be lost, and the work proposed is justified by 'compelling evidence' of the evolution of the heritage asset and is '*executed in accordance with that evidence*'.

8.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

- 8.1 The application proposals have been developed following an understanding of the significance of the heritage assets and the contribution made by their settings.
- 8.2 The detailed proposals and impacts on the Grade II listed No. 51 and No.53 are described within the Heritage Impact Assessment table in the appendix to the report, a summary of which is provided below along with the impacts on No.49 and on the settings of the heritage assets.

Impact from Conversion of No.53 Rowden Hill

- 8.3 A degree of impact on heritage significance would occur from the loss of historic fabric and changes to the plan form of the Grade II listed building from its conversion to 5 residential units. This would equate to 'less than substantial harm' under the terms of the NPPF, at the low-medium end of the scale.
- 8.4 Significant heritage benefits would accrue from the repurposing of the building to residential use and its associated repair and restoration, including the repair of the grand main staircase and the sash windows, the removal of redundant pipework and the re- pointing of the stonework. In addition, the setting of the building would be enhanced through the removal of the large flat-roofed extension. There would be wider public benefits from the provision of 5 much-needed residential units for the Chippenham area.

Impact from Conversion of No.51 Rowden Hill

- 8.5 A degree of impact on heritage significance would occur from the loss of historic fabric and changes to the plan form of the Grade II listed building from its reversion to a single dwelling. Most of the alterations would undo recent, harmful works, with minor changes to original fabric. The impact would equate to 'less than substantial harm' under the terms of the NPPF, at the low end of the scale.
- 8.6 Heritage benefits would accrue from the reversion of the building to a single dwelling – the use for which it was constructed and therefore its optimum viable use - and its associated repair and restoration, including the repair of the original sash windows, the removal of redundant pipework and the re- pointing of the stonework. In addition, the setting of the building would be enhanced through the removal of the unsightly external fire escape and the reconstruction of the stone gate piers, walls and railings

along the Rowden Hill frontage. There would be wider public benefits from the contribution made to the housing provision for the Chippenham area.

Impact from Conversion of No.49 Rowden Hill

- 8.7 The proposal for the conversion of the curtilage listed building would see the retention and reuse of the ancillary building and the contribution that it makes to the significance of the former principal dwelling. There would be minimal changes to the fenestration on the east (front) elevation and minor changes to the west elevation. Slim-profile double-glazed windows would result in minimal change to the external appearance. In general, the proposed works would maintain the character of the building, resulting in the preservation and enhancement to significance, primarily from the removal of the external fire escape staircase and the unsympathetic flat-roofed element on the building's prominent east facade.
- 8.8 There would be public benefits from the provision of 4 new residential units for the Chippenham area and the investment into the restoration and the securing of the future use of the wider site.

Impact from New Dwellings

- 8.9 The proposal for 7 new dwellings would be in the location of what was part of Rowden Down, much of which was developed for housing in the early-mid 20th century. The proposed development would be low-lying, well separated from the house and modest in scale, resulting in a low level of impact on the landscape setting of No.53 Rowden Hill. The impact would be mitigated by the loose-knit arrangement of the self-build houses and the positioning of the development, aided by the topography of the site, which would enable the sense of space and views from the listed building to be maintained. The new dwelling to the south of No.49 would be modest in scale, design and materials and would appear subservient to the historic buildings on the site. It would be in a discreet position with surrounding planting helping it to assimilate within the site. The impact from the new housing development would equate to 'less than substantial harm' to setting and in turn the significance of No.53 under the terms of the NPPF, at the low end of the scale.
- 8.10 There would be public benefits from the provision of 7 new residential units for the Chippenham area and the 'enabling' investment into the restoration and the securing of the future use of the site.

Impact from Car Parking and Landscape Proposals

- 8.11 There would be a minor impact on the historic stone boundary walls from the formation of a pedestrian door opening within the eastern boundary wall and the realignment of the vehicular access to No.53. There would be a minor impact on the settings of No.51 and 53 from the provision of car parking; this would be mitigated by the provision in small groups of parking and the use of a suitable surface finish. The impact from the parking and landscape proposals would equate to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of the heritage assets under the terms of the NPPF, at the low end of the scale.
- 8.12 There would be considerable public benefits accruing from facilitating the adaptive reuse of the site and from the restoration of the paths, gates and railings for No.51, and the retention and augmentation of the existing mature landscaping. The restoration of the site would preserve and enhance the setting of the adjacent Grade II listed hospital.

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 The application relates to the proposed residential conversion and redevelopment of the land west of Chippenham Hospital. The site contains two Grade II listed late Victorian villas, No.51 and No.53 Rowden Hill, and a curtilage listed ancillary building, No.49 Rowden Hill, all of which until recently have been owned and used by the hospital. The main hospital building to the east of the site is Grade II listed.
- 9.2 The proposals would see the reversion of No.51 to a single dwelling, the conversion of No.53 to 5 flats and the conversion of No.49 to 4 residential units. 7 new dwellings are to be built within the grounds to the south.
- 9.3 A recent pre-application enquiry received support in principle for the conversion of the listed buildings and reinvestment in the heritage assets in and around the site. The current proposals compare more favourably to the pre-application scheme in that No.51 is to revert to a single dwelling instead of being converted to 4 flats and No.49 is now being retained and converted instead of being demolished.
- 9.4 The proposals have been informed by a heritage assessment in line with the NPPF and would follow best practice for making changes to heritage assets as set out within the Historic England guidance note HEAN2.
- 9.5 As described in the Heritage Impact Assessment section above, the proposals would result in ‘less than substantial harm’ to the significance of the heritage assets, at the low and the low-medium ends of the scale.
- 9.6 There would be significant public benefits deriving from the from the restoration of No.51 to its optimum viable use as a single residence and the reuse, repair and restoration of No.53 and No.49 and associated structures. The public benefits would weigh heavily against the low level of harm to the significance of the heritage assets.

Sources Used in the Report

Publications

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance, English Heritage (now Historic England), April 2008.

Historic Environment Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets, Historic England, February 2016.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets, Historic England, December 2017.

Statements of Heritage Significance: Historic England Advice Note 12, Historic England, October 2019.

Designation Listing Selection Guide - Domestic 2: Town Houses, Historic England, December 2017.

Historic Mapping

Tithe map of 1848.

Ordnance Survey maps: 1885, 1922 and 1937.

Town Plan of 1885.

Other Sources

Photographs dated 1980 – Wiltshire Buildings Record.

Aerial photograph dated 1950 – Historic England Archive.

Unpublished Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (HPS, 18 July 2025)

Appendix: Heritage Impact Assessment Table

No. 53 - Basement

Proposed works	Significance affected	Impact including potential benefits	Scale and nature of impact	Justification for Works	Mitigation (if considered necessary)
Block 3 doorways in W room	Plan form and fabric of basement	• Restoration of the plan form • Openings blocked in matching materials to the walls to harmonise	Low/neutral	• Would facilitate the use of the basement for the flats above	None required
Formation of doorway in the E wall of the W room	Plan form and fabric of basement	• Minor breach of the wall fabric in the basement	Low/negative	• Would facilitate the use of the basement for the flats above	None required
Insertion of 3 no. metal gates to separate the spaces	Plan form and fabric of basement	• Metal gates would maintain the sense of plan form	Low/neutral	• Would facilitate the use of the basement for the flats above	None required

No. 53 – Ground Floor

Proposed works	Significance affected	Impact including potential benefits	Scale and nature of impact	Justification for Works	Mitigation (if considered necessary)
Retention of entrance, hall and main staircase in communal use	Plan form and architectural interest of ground floor	• Preservation of the plan form and fabric	Low/neutral	• Would facilitate the conversion to flats	None required
Removal of modern partitions in stair hall and rear service wing	Plan form and fabric of ground floor	• Removal of harmful insertions and restoration of plan form	Low/positive	• Would facilitate the conversion to flats	None required
Insertion of new partition to subdivide flats	Plan form of ground floor	• Minor impact on the plan form as most of the hall would remain undivided	Low/negative	• Would facilitate the conversion to flats	None required
Formation of new doorways to create connection within the flats	Plan form, fabric and architectural interest of ground floor	• Minor loss of wall fabric and skirtings • Minor impact on plan form (most of the walls would remain and chimney breasts would be avoided) • Architectural interest maintained	Low/negative	• Would facilitate the conversion to flats	Matching architraves and panelled doors to be inserted
Restoration of door opening on the S wall and in	Plan form, fabric and architectural interest	• Restoration of lost features	Low/positive	• Would facilitate the conversion to flats	None required

Heritage Statement – Land at Rowden Hill, Chippenham

Proposed works	Significance affected	Impact including potential benefits	Scale and nature of impact	Justification for Works	Mitigation (if considered necessary)
the W wall of the service range		• Sympathetic design, materials and detail			
Removal of the large flat-roofed link with No.49	Modern addition and architectural interest	• Better revealing of the building's form and architectural interest	Medium/positive	• For enhancement	None required
Removal of secondary staircase	Non-original service staircase	• Removal of non-original feature	Low/neutral	• Would enable an improved layout	None required
Reinstatement of some missing fireplaces	Architectural interest	• Restoration of lost features	Low/positive	• For enhancement	None required
Replacement of modern or windows beyond economic repair with double-glazed units	Fabric and architectural interest	• Most of the original windows would be retained and repaired • There would be a minor impact from the double-glazed replacements	Low/negative	• For economic and energy saving reasons	Slim-profile double-glazed units would minimise the visual impact

No. 53 – First Floor

Proposed works	Significance affected	Impact including potential benefits	Scale and nature of impact	Justification for Works	Mitigation (if considered necessary)
Blocking up of some doorways (door to be retained, fixed shut)	Plan form and architectural interest of first floor	• Minor impact on plan form • Preservation of the fabric	Low/negative	• Would facilitate the conversion to flats	None required
Formation of wide opening in wall on W side of the first floor	Plan form and fabric of first floor	• Minor impact on plan form (nib walls and ceiling downstand to remain) • Minor loss of wall fabric	Low/negative	• Would enable a kitchen/living/dining space befitting the flat	Architrave and folding doors with simple detailing would maintain the architectural hierarchy
Removal of modern screen around staircase	Plan form and fabric	• Removal of harmful insertions and restoration of plan form	Low/positive	• For enhancement	None required
Reconfiguration of rear service range	Plan form and fabric of service range	• Minor impact on the plan form and fabric	Low/negative	• Would facilitate the conversion to flats	None required
Removal of existing attic stair and formation of new staircase	Plan form and fabric	• Minor impact on plan form and fabric	Low/negative	• Would facilitate the use of the attic for residential use	None required

Heritage Statement – Land at Rowden Hill, Chippenham

Proposed works	Significance affected	Impact including potential benefits	Scale and nature of impact	Justification for Works	Mitigation (if considered necessary)
Reinstatement of some missing fireplaces	Architectural interest	• Restoration of lost features	Low/positive	• For enhancement	None required
Replacement of modern or windows beyond economic repair with double-glazed units	Fabric and architectural interest	• Most of the original windows would be retained and repaired • There would be a minor impact from the double-glazed replacements	Low/negative	• For economic and energy saving reasons	Slim-profile double-glazed units would minimise the visual impact

No. 53 – Second Floor

Proposed works	Significance affected	Impact including potential benefits	Scale and nature of impact	Justification for Works	Mitigation (if considered necessary)
Retention and reuse of existing dormer in E roof slope	Architectural interest of roof	Retention and repair of existing dormer	Low/positive	Would facilitate the use of the attic for residential use	None required
Retention and repair of the lath and plaster ceilings	Character and fabric of the attic	Preservation and enhancement of character and fabric	Low/positive	For use of the attic	None required
Insertion of 2 no. rooflights on the S roof slope	Fabric and external architectural interest	- Rooflights would be in the position of former openings (no loss of roof fabric) - Rooflights would be in a discreet position at the rear with limited visual impact	Low/negative	Would facilitate the use of the attic for residential use	Conservation rooflights would minimise the impact on fabric and appearance
Reconfiguration to create a 2-bedroom flat	Plan form and fabric	Minor impact on the plan form and fabric of the attic	Low/negative	Would facilitate the use of the attic for residential use	None required

No. 51 – Ground Floor

Proposed works	Significance affected	Impact including potential benefits	Scale and nature of impact	Justification for Works	Mitigation (if considered necessary)
Removal of the external fire escape staircase	Modern addition and architectural interest	Better revealing of the building's form and architectural interest	Medium/positive	For enhancement	None required
Formation of large opening in W wall of service range	Plan form, fabric and architectural interest	- Loss of a section of wall fabric on the inner facade of the service range - Minor impact on plan form and appearance	Low/negative	Would provide improved levels of natural light and connectivity to the garden	Bifold doors would provide a contemporary and minimalist opening, preserving the legibility of the building
Replace modern louvred boiler door in S gable of service range	Architectural interest	Replacement fully-glazed door would be of improved design	Low/positive	Would improve the levels of natural light and enhance the appearance	None required
Removal of modern subdivisions	Plan form	Restoration of plan form	Low/positive	Would remove unsympathetic partition and improve the layout	None required
Reconfiguration of the former service range	Plan form and fabric	- Minor impact on historic fabric and plan form - Chimney breast to be retained	Low/negative	Would enable an improved layout	None required

Heritage Statement – Land at Rowden Hill, Chippenham

Proposed works	Significance affected	Impact including potential benefits	Scale and nature of impact	Justification for Works	Mitigation (if considered necessary)
Reinstatement of some missing fireplaces	Architectural interest	Restoration of lost features	Low/positive	For enhancement	None required
Replacement of modern or windows beyond economic repair with double-glazed units	Fabric and architectural interest	- Most of the original windows would be retained and repaired - There would be a minor impact from the double-glazed replacements	Low/negative	For economic and energy saving reasons	Slim-profile double-glazed units would minimise the visual impact

No. 51 – First Floor

Proposed works	Significance affected	Impact including potential benefits	Scale and nature of impact	Justification for Works	Mitigation (if considered necessary)
Restoration of the fire escape door to a window	Modern door fabric and architectural interest	- Better revealing of the building's form and architectural interest - Improved external appearance	Medium/positive	For enhancement	A sash window with marginal glazing bars would harmonise with the other windows
Removal of modern screen and door at the top of the staircase and	Plan form, fabric and architectural interest	- Better revealing of the original staircase - Sensitive restoration	Low/positive	For enhancement	None required

Heritage Statement – Land at Rowden Hill, Chippenham

Proposed works	Significance affected	Impact including potential benefits	Scale and nature of impact	Justification for Works	Mitigation (if considered necessary)
restoration of handrail					
Removal of modern partition in W front room	Plan form and architectural interest	• Restoration of plan form and proportions	Low/positive	• Would remove unsympathetic partition and improve the layout	None required
Formation of door opening between the W front and rear rooms	Plan form and fabric	• Minor loss of wall fabric and impact on plan form	Low/negative	• Would enable an improved layout	None required
Reconfiguration of the former service range	Plan form and fabric	• Minor impact on historic fabric and plan form	Low/negative	• Would enable an improved layout	None required
Replacement of modern or windows beyond economic repair with double-glazed units	Fabric and architectural interest	• Most of the original windows would be retained and repaired • There would be a minor impact from the double-glazed replacements	Low/negative	• For economic and energy saving reasons	Slim-profile double-glazed units would minimise the visual impact