



Moat Bridge, Devizes Castle, Castle Grounds, Devizes, SN10 1HL

Heritage Impact Assessment

13 January 2026



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Non-Technical Summary

Heritage Planning Services has been commissioned to prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment for works to Moat Bridge within the grounds of Devizes Castle, Castle Grounds, Devizes, SN10 1HL (the Project Site).

The Project Site is situated within the private grounds of the Grade I Listed Devizes Castle, a Victorian mansion reputedly erected on the site of the 12th century stone keep of Devizes Medieval Castle.

Moat Bridge is a designated heritage asset, meeting the legal tests for being considered 'part' of a Listed Building within the grounds of Devizes Castle. The heritage asset has formed part of the built landscape since before 1948 and continues to perform an ancillary role within that landscape which remains within the same ownership as Devizes Castle.

The report is required to inform plans for proposed structural engineering works and conservation works to the private road bridge giving access to the Devizes Castle from the south. The programme of work seeks to strengthen the historic bridge whilst preserving the architectural character, through the restoration of historic materials and removal of incongruous and harmful modern materials.

Overall the works have been assessed to be beneficial to a designated heritage asset with any low level impact outweighed by the positive nature of the scheme.

The proposed programme of structural and conservation works are considered essential to ensuring the survival and future use of Moat Bridge. The works will be of overall benefit to the historic structure which makes a positive contribution to the wider historic setting of Devizes Castle.

Recommendation

Samples of replacement mortar pointing and new materials should be provided for approval by a representative of Wiltshire Council's Conservation Team prior to the inception of works.

1. Introduction

1.1. Heritage Planning Services has been commissioned to prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment for works to Moat Bridge within the grounds of Devizes Castle, Castle Grounds, Devizes, SN10 1HL (the Project Site).

1.2. Moat Bridge is a designated heritage asset, meeting the legal tests for being considered 'part' of a Listed Building within the grounds of Devizes Castle. The heritage asset has formed part of the built landscape since before 1948 and continues to perform an ancillary role within that landscape which remains within the same ownership as Devizes Castle.

1.3. The status of Moat Bridge was confirmed in recent correspondence with Helen Garside, Principal Conservation Officer for Wiltshire Council (pers. Comm. 8th January 2026). Whether the bridge should fall under the same listing as the Grade I property or Grade II walls has not yet been established, however considering the setting of Moat Bridge just beyond the boundary of the Castle Walls and the ancillary nature of the structure, for the purpose of this report the status of the heritage asset as a Grade II Listed building is deemed sufficient. Should this change, it is not anticipated that it would affect the conclusions of this report.

1.4. The report is required to inform plans for proposed structural engineering works and conservation works to the private road bridge giving access to the Devizes Castle from the south.

1.5. The report has been completed by Sam Driscoll, MCIfA under Project Code HPS708/26.

2. The Project Site

2.1. The Project Site comprises Moat Bridge, situated within the private grounds of the Grade I Listed Devizes Castle, a Victorian mansion reputedly erected on the site of the 12th century stone keep belonging to Devizes Medieval Castle. Although famously little remains of one of Britain's most impressive strongholds, the 11th century motte is still prominent within the landscape, providing the elevated setting for the 19th century property. The partially infilled moat to the east of the property provides the setting for the Project Site.

2.2. The first phase of significant development of the former castle site was carried out by Valentine Leach, a notable tradesman from Devizes. Having purchased the land in 1838, Leach set about developing a private residence, starting with a round tower in the location of one of two

windmills that occupied the land. The tower was completed by 1843 along with Moat Bridge. Both are featured in contemporary sales particulars.

2.3. The early structure comprised a narrow footbridge allowing passage across the ditch of the former moat, through private gardens and woodland. The southwest elevation preserves the detail and materials of the early tufa clad design, with low mortar capped merlons and embrasures at the same level as the drive (Ayton, 2023).

2.4. The property and grounds passed to Leach's son Robert following his death in December 1842. Robert carried out a series of piecemeal alterations to the house and grounds from c. 1860 and c. 1883. The bridge was widened to the northeast during this time (Ayton, 2023).

2.5. The later northeast elevation has substantial merlons each with arrow loop and embrasures that finish higher above the deck than those to the southwest. A central arch is flanked by windows with Saxon-inspired, triangular heads "[characteristic] of Robert Leach's second phase" (ibid).

2.6. A recent structural survey carried out to inform this project describes the bridge as follows:

"The bridge is constructed in multiple phases from mostly stonework but some brickwork, it spans north to south and has a central brickwork barrel vault. The bridge was originally narrower but was widened on the eastern side to allow vehicle access. There are five chambers in the abutments, one in each corner but two in the north-western corner." (Haywood, 2023).

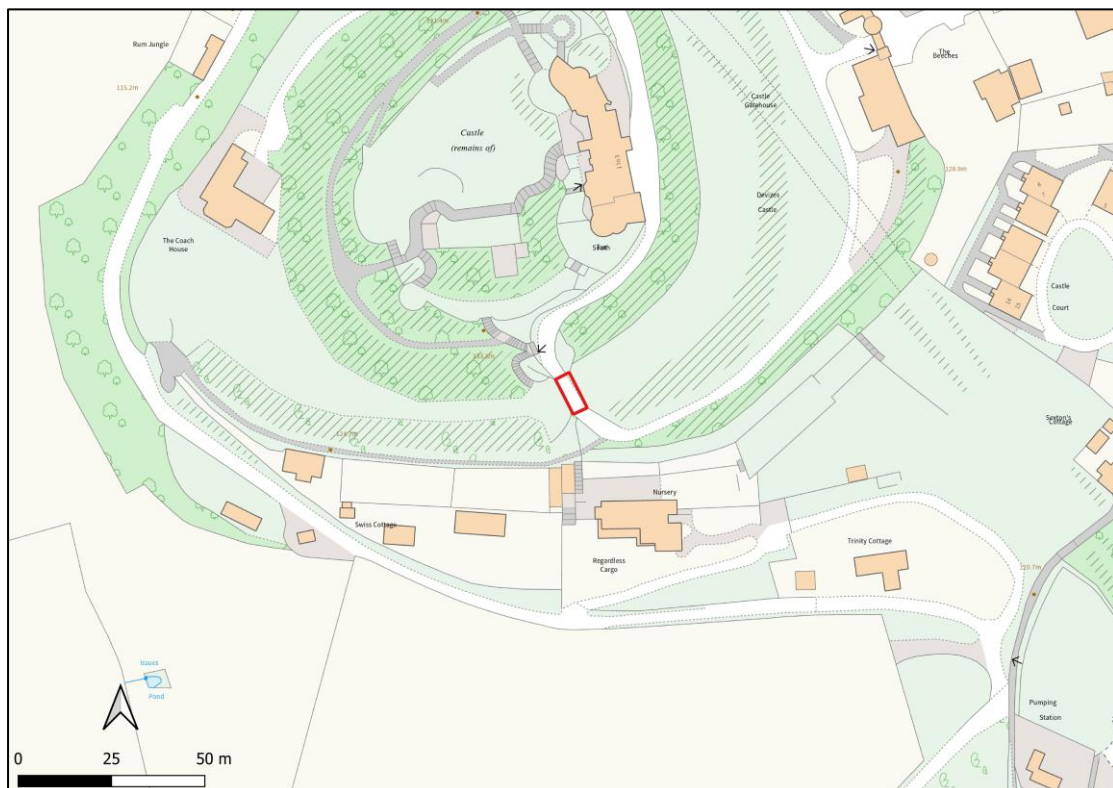


Figure 1 Indicative Project Site redline boundary. Centred on SU 00248 61263.

3. Site Visit & Site Description

- 3.1. A Site Visit was carried out on the 16th October 2025 in dry, bright conditions.
- 3.2. The southwest and northeast sides of Moat Bridge were viewed and photographed. The interior was not viewed in detail due to cracking and displacement between the arches and the outer walls, rendering the interior unsafe for inspection. The author will rely on the Structural Report for details of the internal structure.
- 3.3. The tufa clad exterior of the 1840s footbridge is well preserved on the southwest side. The internal elevation is clad with brick, which was subsequently masked with later brickwork to strengthen the structure. The early brickwork is partially visible and was recorded in the Structural Report, but was not observed at the time of the site visit. The low parapet was substantially overgrown with ivy at the time of the site visit and the state of the masonry was not observed.
- 3.4. A low modern iron guardrail has been installed along the southwest side to act as a safety barrier. However, the low height of the horizontal rail is considered inadequate and likely to be a hazard rather than a safety feature. Replacement is recommended.
- 3.5. The original northeast elevation comprised rough coursed stone blockwork flanked by three-light round headed windows. The brickwork to the rear marks this as an internal elevation (Ayton, 2023). The central arch of the early narrow bridge is now strengthened by modern blockwork piers supporting three steel beams, which are clearly visible from the grounds of Devizes Castle.
- 3.6. The deck has been resurfaced in tarmacadam since 2023.

4. Designated Heritage Assets

Designated Areas

- 4.1. The Project Site is situated within Devizes Conservation Area.
- 4.2. Moat Bridge is situated within the southern extent of Devizes Castle Scheduled Monument ([List Entry Number: 1021375](#)), first designated on the 18th February 1953.

4.3. The Project Site is set within the landscape designated as Monument UID MWI8755, Devizes Castle, Site of Medieval castle.

Listed Buildings

Devizes Castle

4.4. The Project Site is situated c. 38m southeast of the round tower forming the southern range of the 19th century Grade I Listed Devizes Castle. Included in the listing is the Glass House (now demolished) and Garden Walls Encircling West Side of Mound. The heritage asset and associated structures were first Listed in September 1972 under [List Entry 1249366](#) and are described as follows:

"The existing structure was begun in 1842 by Goodridge of Bath. Highly asymmetrical. The ashlar faced keep and turret to the south are Goodridge with paired lights divided by colonettes in narrow openings. The rest to the north is a massive rock faced enlargement of 1860's, 70's and 80's. Crenellated parapet, buttresses, superimposed bays, oriel windows and large mullioned and transomed windows. The north tower however, is partly of C17 brick and was originally a windmill. It's rubble base may be part of the original castle. Around the north tower's base, facing west, is a bowed fernery with stone tiled roof, round interlaced arches forming pointed lights with Norman style shafts dividing. Adjoining the fernery to the north is a fine glass house with octagonal base and a stepped domical roof with crowning finial. The entrances are to the east and west: wooden gables with ornamented bargeboards supported by flanking paired colonettes with foliate capitals, on high pedestals.

A terrace surrounds the castle with a battlemented parapet. On the west side towards the centre are 2 short sections of arcaded wall, one incorporating in arch some original Norman stone work of zig zag pattern. The interior of the castle is designed in a mixture of neo-Norman, Gothic and C16 styles. The drawing room and bedroom in the northern section facing west have the partly original frames of C16 or early C17 ceilings inserted with carved and gilded bosses, small brackets and ribs, the whole completed in plaster.

Listing NGR: SU0024961342"

4.5. Devizes Castle and associated structures are excluded from the Scheduled Monument.

Remains of the Original Castle

4.6. The Project Site is located c. 30 southwest of the Grade II Listed Remains of the Original Castle. The heritage asset was formally listed in September 1972 under [List Entry Number: 124962](#) and is described as follows:

“ In the sunken garden, to the west of present castle buildings, part of the foundations of the original keep are visible.

Listing NGR: SU0022361305”

Walls Encircling Top of Castle Mound (Including Moat Bridge)

4.7. The Project Site is located c. 12m south of the Grade II Listed Walls Encircling Top of Castle Mound. The heritage asset was formally listed in September 1972 under [List Entry Number: 1263774](#) and is described as follows:

“ Extensive rock faced, partly crenellated, walls encircle castle mound and sunken garden. There are several Norman arched gateways under gables with pierced openings.

Listing NGR: SU0020361284”

4.8. For the purpose of this report and future assessments Moat Bridge is considered to be included within the Grade II listing for the Walls Encircling Top of Castle Mound, unless otherwise advised.

4.9. The walls and associated structures are excluded from the Scheduled Monument.

Gate House of Devizes Castle

4.10. The Project Site is situated c. 100m southwest of the Grade II Listed 19th century Gate House. The heritage asset was formally listed in September 1972 under [List Entry Number: 1249360](#) and is described as follows:

4.11. “Dating from the later phase of the present castle's expansion, circa 1860 rock faced gate house. Large round tower and lower square tower flanking gateway with machicolated crenellated parapets. The double gird pattern timber gates are set in a large Norman archway, flanked by heavy shafts with cushion capitals. Above the arch linking the towers a deeply machicolated parapet with zig zag, the centre merlon stepped up with coat of arms. To the town front there are

only slit windows but facing the castle, the round tower has small deeply recessed Norman windows and 3 larger ones with leaded casements, the ground floor one with double gabled dripmould, the others with arched dripmould. Round headed doorway with dripmould decorated with lion head at crown. The square tower has 1 similar small 1st floor window and similar doorway on ground floor, the door with diamond battens and diamond light. Picturesque.

Listing NGR: SU0032861361”

4.12. The Gate House is excluded from the Scheduled Monument.

5. Historic Development

5.1. A detailed description of the historic development of Devizes Castle and Project Site was recently prepared by Justin Ayton (2023) to inform an application for listed building consent for “Internal alterations, reconfigurations, conservation repairs, restorations, refurbishment and redecoration works throughout the interior of Devizes Castle and other associated works (Wiltshire Planning Application Reference [PL/2023/07957](#)). Works were approved with conditions and are ongoing. It is therefore not necessary to give further detail here and the reader is referred to the comprehensive Heritage Appraisals Parts 1-3 which are available on the Wiltshire Planning Website.

5.2. In summary, Moat Bridge was likely developed around 1840 in line with the first phase of building on the former Medieval Castle site, by Valentine Leach who purchased the land in 1838. The bridge shows several phases of development, the most notable being the widening of the structure likely carried out by Robert Leach between 1860 and 1883 (Ayton, 2023).

6. Planning Policy

6.1. With regards to the relevant policy and development framework, the following are considered appropriate to the current proposal:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2024;

“207. 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.

210. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

214. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

218. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

219. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably."

Wiltshire Core Strategy adopted 2015

Core Policy 58 Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment.

"Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.

Designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance, including:

- i. nationally significant archaeological remains;
- ii. World Heritage Sites within and adjacent to Wiltshire;
- iii. buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest;
- iv. the special character or appearance of conservation areas;
- v. historic parks and gardens;
- vi. important landscapes, including registered battlefields and townscapes.

Distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced. The potential contribution of these heritage assets towards wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits will also be utilised where this can be delivered in a sensitive and appropriate manner in accordance with Core Policy 57 (Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping).

Heritage assets at risk will be monitored and development proposals that improve their condition will be encouraged. The advice of statutory and local consultees will be sought in consideration of such applications."

7. Statement of Significance

7.1. Moat Bridge has architectural merit, significantly preserving an example of the differing building styles employed by Valentine and Robert Leach during the piecemeal development of the landscape throughout the 19th century. This is enhanced through aesthetic value, due to the survival of relatively well preserved historic building materials.

7.2. The heritage asset also forms part of a group of ancillary structures set within the wider landscape retained within the historic ownership of the Grade I Listed Devizes Castle, which adds to the significance of the structure.

7.3. The current structure has been strengthened with modern materials that have preserved its function as a vehicular access. These additions have had a harmful impact on the historic character of the heritage asset.

7.4. The use of modern cementitious bonding materials and general lack of conservation work in recent history has impacted on historic materials leaving the heritage asset in a poor state of repair.

8. Proposed Development

8.1. The proposed programme of work seeks to strengthen the historic bridge, whilst preserving the architectural character through the restoration of historic materials and removal of incongruous and harmful modern materials.

8.2. A detailed description of the proposed scheme is set out in table format in Appendix 1- Schedule of Works, at the end of this report along with an assessment of potential impact.

8.3. The proposed scheme will comprise structural works and conservation works. No ground disturbance is proposed.

8.4. The proposed scheme does not seek to alter the appearance of the existing Moat Bridge.

8.5. Proposals to resurface Moat Bridge will form part of a separate application.

9. Impact Assessment

9.1. Overall the works have been assessed to be beneficial to a Grade II Listed heritage asset, with any low level impact outweighed by the positive nature of the scheme.

9.2. Only two areas of potential impact were identified. Plans to establishing a grid in Cintec anchors on the southwest face will have a minor impact on historic fabric. The works are considered necessary to preserve the structural integrity of Moat Bridge and to improve the stability of existing materials. This process is designed to be minimally invasive and will reduce the impact to surviving historic fabric. Any impact will be at the lower end of less than substantial harm and is outweighed by the benefit to the structure.

9.3. Plans to infill internal windows with a masonry 'plug' are considered necessary to improve the structural integrity of Moat Bridge. Any harm to character through the infilling of the window apertures will be at the lower end of less than substantial and will be of overall benefit to the heritage asset.

10. Conclusion

10.1. The proposed programme of structural and conservation works are considered essential to ensuring the survival and future use of the Grade II Listed Moat Bridge. The works will be of overall benefit to the historic structure which makes a positive contribution to the wider historic setting of Devizes Castle.

Recommendation

10.2. Samples of replacement mortar pointing and new materials should be provided for approval by a representative of Wiltshire Council's Conservation Team prior to the inception of works.

11. Bibliography

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12. Appendices

Appendix 1 Schedule of Works

Table 1 Moat Bridge Schedule of Works: Structural Repairs

Moat Bridge Schedule of Works				
	Proposed Work	Loss of Historic Fabric	Potential Impact	Commentary and Justification
1	Structural Repairs			
1.1	Establishing a grid in Cintec anchors on the west face to tie back the outer walls and facings to the arches and bridge internal structure.	Minor	Less than substantial harm at the lower end of that scale.	Necessary works to reinforce the structure through improved stability of existing materials. This process is designed to be minimally invasive and will reduce the impact to surviving historic fabric.
1.2	Removal of debris and vegetation from gaps in structures, with subsequent grouting in conjunction with the Cintec anchors	No significant loss of historic fabric anticipated.	Beneficial	Materials to be agreed with the LPA prior to the inception of works.
1.3	Replacement of missing/collapsed areas of brickwork and stonework to ensure structural integrity of structure.	None	Beneficial	Essential works. Like for like material to be used and agreed with the LPA prior to the inception of works.

1.4	Rebuilding of individual merlons and capping where in poor condition or where displaced due to impact damage.	None	Beneficial	Essential works. Like for like material to be used and agreed with the LPA prior to the inception of works.
1.5	Removal of modern block and steel beam structure from below main arch following Cintec Anchor repairs.	None	Beneficial	Removal of harmful modern supporting structure.
1.6	Rebuilding of internal windows where fractured and collapsed – or consider propping via infilling with masonry 'plug'.	None	Less than substantial – Neutral	Plans to infill internal windows with a masonry 'plug' are considered necessary to improve the structural integrity of Moat Bridge. Any harm to character through the infilling of the window apertures will be at the lower end of less than substantial and will be of overall benefit to the heritage asset.

Table 2 Moat Bridge Schedule of Works: Conservation Repairs

Moat Bridge Schedule of Works				
	Proposed Work	Loss of Historic Fabric	Potential Impact	Commentary and Justification
2	Conservation Repairs			
2.1	Remove debris and stored items in chambers below bridge.	None	Neutral	In the event that ex situ examples of historic masonry are identified, the potential for reuse or storage for future use should be considered.

2.2	Removal of hard cementitious pointing from stone facings where prejudicial to stonework.	Minor	Beneficial	Removal of harmful modern cementitious materials may promote the long term stability of the structure. Care should be taken to protect the historic material during works.
2.3	Resetting of dislodged, loose or missing stones/bricks.	None	Beneficial	Necessary repairs to the bridge are of clear benefit to the heritage asset.
2.4	Repointing of areas of missing or eroded mortar pointing to adequate depth to support masonry.	None	Beneficial	Necessary repairs to the bridge are of clear benefit to the heritage asset.
2.5	Replacement of missing and/or concrete substitute end blocks to merlons.	None	Beneficial	Reinstatement of historic detail in materials to match existing will enhance the aesthetic of the structure.
2.6	Repointing and resetting of stones to merlon capping.	None	Beneficial	Reinstatement of historic detail in materials to match existing will enhance the aesthetic of the structure.
2.7	Repair or replacement of existing timber gate/grilles and frames to Chambers 3 + 4.	None	Beneficial	Reinstatement and repair of historic detail in materials to match existing will enhance the heritage asset.

Appendix 2 Photographs

Photo 1 Northwest facing view of Moat Bridge, northeast elevation.



Photo 2 North facing view of Moat Bridge, southwest elevation.



Photo 3 Northwest facing view of bridge deck, with low parapet and guard rail visible on SW side.



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