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ARCHITECTS - MASTER PLANNERS - PROJECT MANAGERS

HERITAGE STATEMENT

OLD FIRE & AMBULANCE STATION TO THE REAR OF THE TOWN HALL,
THE STRAND, CALNE, WILTSHIRE

Client: Calne Town Council

Date: 10th February 2026

Revision:



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been produced by Alex Oliver Associates Ltd on behalf of Calne Town Council the owners of the Old Fire & Ambulance Station and is to accompany the listed building application for the proposed works to make the building watertight and structurally sound. The Old Fire & Ambulance Station is Grade II listed, mainly for its group value within the Calne Conservation Area.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to support the listed building application by demonstrating that the proposed works have been informed by an understanding of the significance of the building. The report also provides a general overview of the history and development of the property as it stands today and the potential impact of the proposals on the significance/ special interest of the heritage asset and its setting.

The assessment of the heritage assets significance was informed by a site visit in February 2026, when all accessible parts of the old fire and ambulance station were inspected and photographed. The inspection was non-intrusive, and no finishes or surface treatments were exposed as part of the inspection. There was no high-level access to any of the roofs. The photographs included in this report have all been taken by Alex Oliver Associates or provided by Calne Town Council. A desktop study into the history of the building was carried out with information being sought at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Chippenham and the Wiltshire Buildings Record. However, having carried out this exercise, it appears little evidence on the building exists. This research was not exhaustive, and sources of historic information may exist.

1.3 The location of the old fire and ambulance station is to the rear of Calne Town Hall and accessed through the carriage archway under the Town Hall. The building is shown with the blue triangle on the map extract from Historic England's National Heritage List, see below.



Figure 1 - Map extract from Historic England's National Heritage List

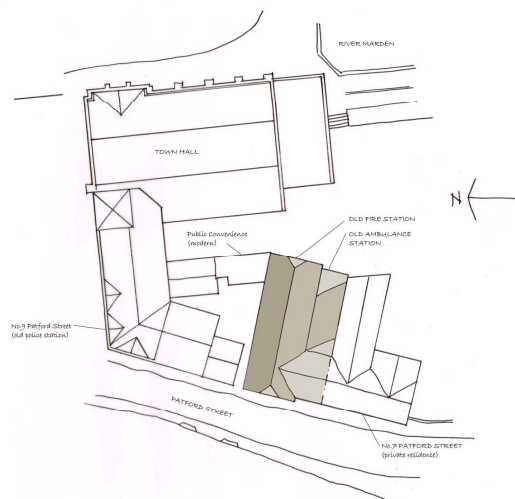


Figure 2 – Calne Town Hall roof plan NTS



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1.4 The Old Fire & Ambulance Station is suffering from a lack of a regular use (other than for storage) and a lack of maintenance. The main problems appear to be water related, with damage resulting from poor maintenance of the roof and walls. The pitched roofs are failing, and the rainwater disposal systems need replacing. The limestone rubble stone is suffering and is wearing away due to rainfall, the mortar has worn away and the stone is soft.

These are just a few of the problems. The lack of regular or adequate maintenance is clearly having an adverse effect on the integrity of the building; if left any longer this decay could create long-term repercussions to the aesthetic and physical value of the listed building. The listed building application is seeking to make the building watertight and structurally secure for future use.

2.0 Policy and Guidance

The assessment of the impact of the alteration on the building has been prepared taking into account the information contained in:

- Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- NPPF (National Planning Policy Guidance (February 2025)
- Wiltshire Councils Core Strategy (adopted 2015)
 - Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment'
 - Policy CP57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping'



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3.0 Historic Background

The Town Hall in Calne today was completed in 1886 and was built on the site of the Town Mill (demolished in 1884), next to the River Marden which runs through the town. The Town Hall was designed by Bryan Oliver, who won a limited competition in 1883. It is in Franco-Flemish late Gothic style and consists of two parts linked by an arched carriage way. The east part, a buttressed block adjoining New Road, contains the hall and, on its north front, has a clock tower facing The Strand. The west part, which may have been built shortly after the east, was originally a police station. The town hall itself is constructed in squared, coursed limestone rubble with a slate roof and the whole complex is Grade II listed.



Figure 3 - A map of Calne in 1900 (Fire and Ambulance station is highlighted in red)

In the nineteenth century, Calne Town Hall was also the public services hub, with the police station (No.9 Patford Street) being built as part of it and from 1888 the towns fire engine was kept in the fire station built at the rear of the Town Hall.

*"Two fire engines were given to the borough by its M.P.s in 1748. The town had only one fire engine in 1822, when the vestry resolved to keep it in the church tower. By 1828 it had been housed in the north-west end of the poorhouse in New Road, later it was housed in Wood Street, and from 1888 it was kept in a new fire engine house built on the wharf behind the town hall. A proclamatory inscription on the doorway of what was the fire engine house in 1828, and the building on the wharf, survived in 1999. A new motorized engine was bought in 1933, the town fire brigade became part of the county brigade in 1947, and a new fire station was built on the north side of Station Road in 1966."*¹

¹ www.british-history.ac.uk



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Figure 4 - Photograph taken of the courtyard elevation c1986 (Historic Englands Listing description)

3.1 Brief Description

The Old Fire & Ambulance Station is east to west facing end to end. With the front doors to the east end facing into the courtyard behind the town hall accessed through the arched carriageway. To the south the building is attached to no.7 Patford Street, a residential house built in the mid-nineteenth century, which is also Grade II listed in its own right. There is a gate to the left-hand side of the building on the Patford Street elevation to access the service yard between the station and no.9 Patford Street.

From the courtyard side the station is attached to the right-hand side to a former public convenience block, which is of modern construction.



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The main building of the fire station is rectangular and open plan over two floors with a staircase to the rear. The attached range is a storage space accessible from both the courtyard and Patford Street.

The Old Fire Station is built of limestone ashlar and coursed rubble, with a stone eaves architrave profile detail that follows the roof line at either end all under a half-hipped pantile roof. The ambulance station to the south is in ashlar limestone with a hipped double roman clay tile roof. The south elevation as appears above no.7 is built in brickwork. The roof arrangement is slightly awkward due to the attachment of the ambulance station with no.7 Patford Street to the south.

The east courtyard end elevation is not quite symmetrical in its detailing. The first-floor round-headed arched window is central to the elevation and has 6 panes. The double doors below are off centre to the left, the opening appears to have been altered at some point probably as the fire engines grew in size and is no longer symmetrical in the elevation or central to the window above. The right side of the door opening lines up with that above and has a chamfered stone detail to the side of the door opening, this is not present to the left. There remains a small part where the opening has been enlarged. The ground steps down to the double doors at the front of the ambulance station to the left.

To the Patford Street elevation the ground floor is in ashlar with a plinth and a full height round-headed archway with rubble between. There are two small louvered window openings in the rubble at first floor level. There is a lower 2-storey range to the right-hand side built in ashlar limestone, at ground floor level there is a single pedestrian door with a small window to its left with paired first floor windows in architraves above.

The Old Fire & Ambulance Station is built in the predominant building material of the nineteenth century in Calne; local limestone. Limestone and lime mortar slowly react with the carbon dioxide in rainwater and wear away, Calne limestone is particularly soft to begin with. The buildings are generally utilitarian in style with some vestigial classical detailing along the eaves and to the first-floor window of the ambulance station.



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Figure 5 - Courtyard Elevation



Figure 6 - Patford Street Elevation



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4.0 Assessment of Significance

4.1 As recommended by NPPF (February 2025), proposals for the alteration or redevelopment of listed buildings should be considered and be based on an understanding of the site's significance. This section provides an assessment of the significance of the old fire and ambulance station in order to identify and to promote the protection and enhancement of significant and character defining features in the heritage asset through the implementation of the proposed repair works.

Paragraph 207 of NPPF states that *'In determining applications local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should also be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on that significance'*.

What is 'significance'?

4.2 'Significance' in terms of heritage-related planning policy is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework definition further states that in the planning context heritage interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. This can be interpreted as follows:

Archaeological interest: As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architectural and artistic interest: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.

Historic interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

4.2 In this case, the significance of the building derives primarily from its architectural, historic, and communal value, as well as its contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The Old Fire & Ambulance Station is a well-preserved example of a late nineteenth-century civic service building, reflecting the growth of organised public services and the development of municipal infrastructure during this period. Its original function, architectural quality, and prominent location collectively contribute to its high heritage value.

Architecturally, the building is significant for its carefully considered design, plan form, layout, and restrained yet purposeful detailing. Constructed in local limestone, the building exemplifies the use of traditional regional materials and craftsmanship that are characteristic of Calne's historic built



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environment. The limestone not only reinforces the building's visual relationship with surrounding historic structures but also demonstrates the local vernacular tradition, enhancing the overall cohesion and identity of the conservation area. The use of lime mortar, appropriate to the original construction, further reinforces the authenticity of the building's fabric.

The building's utilitarian character reflects its original function, yet this is enhanced by subtle classical detailing, particularly along the eaves and around the first-floor window of the former ambulance station. These modest decorative elements elevate the architectural quality of the structure, lending it civic presence and dignity appropriate to its role as a public service building. The restrained architectural expression is typical of late Victorian municipal architecture, where functionality was combined with careful attention to proportion, symmetry, and detail.

The roofscape, incorporating clay pantiles believed to be Bridgwater Double Romans, contributes significantly to the building's historic character. These tiles reflect the strong regional tradition of clay tile production in Somerset and the wider South West, where the industry flourished from the seventeenth century through to the mid-twentieth century. Their survival on the building provides valuable evidence of traditional roofing materials and techniques, reinforcing the building's historic authenticity.

Historically, the Old Fire & Ambulance Station holds considerable significance as a tangible reminder of the development of public safety services in Calne. It illustrates the evolution of fire and medical emergency provision at a time when towns were becoming increasingly organised and civic responsibility was expanding. As such, the building forms an important part of the social history of the town, embodying changing attitudes toward public welfare, health, and safety. Its continued presence within the urban fabric allows for an understanding of how such essential services were historically accommodated within the townscape.

Socially and communally, the building contributes to local identity and collective memory. As a former centre of emergency response, it would have played a vital role in the daily life and safety of the community, fostering a strong association with public service and civic duty. This historic function enhances the building's communal value and reinforces its importance beyond its architectural interest alone.

In townscape terms, the building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Its scale, massing, materials, and detailing harmonise with surrounding historic development, reinforcing the cohesive architectural quality of the area. Its prominent siting and distinctive civic character allow it to act as a local landmark, enhancing legibility and contributing to the overall sense of place.

Overall, the significance of the Old Fire & Ambulance Station is derived from the combined value of its architectural quality, historic function, material authenticity, and contribution to the conservation area. These attributes should be carefully protected and enhanced through sensitive repair ensuring that the building's character-defining features are retained and its heritage value sustained for future generations.



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5.0 The Proposed Works and Impact Assessment

The proposed repair works are considered urgent to ensure the building does not deteriorate any further.

The impact assessment on the special interest of the old fire and ambulance station takes into account whether the proposals cause substantial or less than substantial harm to the heritage asset and its setting by altering or eroding the authenticity and of the heritage values identified in this report.

For the purposes of assessing the likely impact to result from the proposed development on the fabric of the building and its setting, established criteria have been employed.

- "negligible" – impacts considered to cause no material change.
- "minor" - impacts considered to make a small difference to one's ability to understand and appreciate the heritage value of an asset. A minor impact may also be defined as involving receptors of low sensitivity exposed to intrusion, obstruction or change of low to medium magnitudes for short periods of time.
- "moderate" - impacts considered to make an appreciable difference to the ability to understand or appreciate the heritage value of an asset.
- "substantial" - impacts considered to cause a fundamental change in the appreciation of the resource.

The impact of proposals can also be neutral, beneficial or adverse.

Summary of the proposals and impact assessment on the significance of The Old Fire & Ambulance Station, Calne

Note: principal works only, the list is not exhaustive of all works and is not a detailed schedule of works

Location/ Floor Level	Proposal	Impact/ Mitigation
Roof	The roof is in poor condition with numerous slipped, cracked and broken tiles evident to the roof slopes and there is some decay evident to the roofing timbers. New roof covering and roof structure are required urgently to make the building watertight.	Neutral – The proposed works are considered essential to prevent further deterioration and loss of historic fabric. Although the replacement of roof coverings and structural elements will involve a degree of change, this is justified by the poor condition of the existing roof and the urgent need to make the building watertight. By reinstating appropriate traditional materials and construction techniques, the proposals will preserve the architectural character and historic significance of the building. The overall impact is therefore assessed as neutral to positive, as the works will safeguard



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		the building's long-term survival and heritage value
Rainwater Goods	There are a mixture of cast iron and PVCu gutters which are in poor condition and are subject to blockages and leaking joints. The rainwater goods will require immediate replacement. New rainwater goods comprising of alumasc cast iron effect aluminium guttering downpipes and all fittings	Beneficial - Immediate replacement of the rainwater goods is considered necessary to prevent further deterioration of the building fabric and to maintain effective water management.
Leaky valley gutters	These are in poor condition and subject to water ingress. The internal valley boards are subject to extensive decay and saturation.	Beneficial - The defective valley gutters are allowing water ingress, resulting in extensive saturation and decay of the internal valley boards. This significantly increases the risk of continued moisture penetration, progressive timber deterioration, and potential structural weakening.
External walls	Extensive saturation is evident to the right-hand side of the righthand flank wall, caused due to the roof tiles oversailing the defective PVCu gutters. Repairs to the roof and replacement guttering will help alleviate penetrating damp to the walls as well as repointing weathered mortar joints	Beneficial – Once the repairs to the roof and gutters have been carried out the repointing of the wall is a maintenance repair that will need to be made periodically
Windows and doors	The large arched window is in poor condition with each of the single glazed panes being smashed or cracked. The window and frame will require replacement or splice and resin repairs which is considered to be sympathetic to historic fabric.	Beneficial – To prevent further deterioration the replacement of the window or, where appropriate, sympathetic splice and resin repairs is required. These remedial works will restore functionality while preserving the historic fabric of the property.
Floors	The first floors are formed from suspended timber construction and are in poor condition saturated and soiled from pigeon guano. The floor joists are currently supported by acro-	Negligible – The suspended timber first floors are structurally compromised and contaminated with pigeon guano. Replacement of joists is necessary; care should be taken to reuse or match



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	props to prevent collapse to both the main property and the side addition. The first-floor joists will require complete replacement.	historic timber where possible to maintain authenticity.
Internal joinery	The skirtings and the timbers were soft and subject to localised areas of decay. There is localised evidence of woodboring insect attack to the floors and roof timbers.	Negligible - Remedial works should include treatment for insect infestation, repair or replacement of decayed timbers using methods sympathetic to the original construction, and consolidation of affected skirtings and other joinery to preserve the historic character of the property.

Conclusion

The Old Fire & Ambulance Station, Calne, is a significant heritage asset, reflecting late nineteenth-century civic architecture, local building traditions, and the historical development of municipal public services. Its architectural quality, material authenticity, historical function, and contribution to the character of the conservation area collectively establish its heritage value.

The building currently exhibits a range of urgent defects, including water ingress, decayed timber, failing rainwater goods, damaged windows, and compromised floors. Without intervention, these defects pose significant risks to the structural integrity, functionality, and historic fabric of the property.

Overall, the proposed works are sensitive to the heritage significance of the building, prioritising retention of original materials and traditional construction methods. No substantial harm is anticipated; indeed, many of the interventions are beneficial, ensuring the long-term preservation of the asset.

All works should be carried out in accordance with best practice for conservation, using materials and techniques appropriate to the original construction. Regular maintenance post-repair will be essential to safeguard the building's continued heritage value and functional integrity for future generations.



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Appendix

Appendix I - Listing Descriptions



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IoE Number: 457096

Location: OLD FIRE STATION AT REAR OF TOWN HALL, THE STRAND (south side)

CALNE, NORTH WILTSHIRE, WILTSHIRE

Photographer: Mr David Nunn

Date Photographed: 07 April 2002

Date listed: 08 July 1976

Date of last amendment: 08 July 1976

Grade II

CALNE ST9970 THE STRAND 755-1/5/178 (South side)

CALNE ST9970 THE STRAND 755-1/5/178 (South side) 08/07/76 Old Fire Station at rear of Town Hall GV II Fire station. Late C19. Limestone ashlar and coursed rubble, ashlar gable stack and pantile half-hipped roof.

Rectangular plan. 2 storeys; 1-window range. Ashlar clasping corners with a ground-floor cornice, forms full-height round-headed archway, ashlar ground floor with a plinth, rubble above. Patford Street end has a lower 2-storey ashlar right-hand range with a right-hand door and paired first-floor windows in architraves. INTERIOR not inspected. Included for group value



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© Mr Adrian Exton

IoE Number: 457097

Location: TOWN HALL, THE STRAND (south side)

CALNE, NORTH WILTSHIRE, WILTSHIRE

Photographer: Mr Adrian Exton

Date Photographed: 22 June 2005

Date listed: 08 July 1976

Date of last amendment: 08 July 1976

Grade II

CALNE ST9970 THE STRAND 755-1/5/180 (South side)

CALNE ST9970 THE STRAND 755-1/5/180 (South side) 08/07/76 Town Hall GV II Town hall. c1884-6. By Oliver. Squared, coursed limestone rubble, with a slate roof. Tudor Revival style. Irregular plan, with left-hand council chamber and rear hall, central clock tower and carriage archway, and right-hand double-depth plan offices along Patford Street. 2 storeys and attic; 5-window range. An irregular front has a plinth, strings, and coped gables and parapet, with mullion and transom windows: a left-hand full-height gable with paired 3-light ground-floor windows, paired cross windows above a carved panel on the first floor, and a 3-light attic mullion window under blind panelling beneath the gable; beneath the tower is a Tudor-arched doorway, 9-light first-floor stair window, and an ashlar clock tower with clock set in a shallow recess, and a pyramidal roof. A wide Tudor-arched carriageway beneath a 6-light window, and 8- and 3-light windows to the right-hand section beneath a pair of small gables. INTERIOR: details include an open-well stair with a lift inserted to the well, panelled council chamber, and rear meeting hall



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© Ms Margaret Moore

IoE Number: 456753
Location: 7 PATFORD STREET (east side)
CALNE, NORTH WILTSHIRE, WILTSHIRE
Photographer: Ms Margaret Moore
Date Photographed: 08 May 2002
Date listed: 08 July 1976
Date of last amendment: 08 July 1976
Grade II

CALNE ST9970 PATFORD STREET 755-1/5/122 (East side)

CALNE ST9970 PATFORD STREET 755-1/5/122 (East side) 08/07/76 No.7 GV II Attached house. Mid C19. Painted brick with limestone dressings, and pantile roof. 2 storeys; 3-window front with quoins and a small eaves cornice, plain doorway and recessed 6-panel door and 3-pane overlight; tripartite ground-floor windows; 2/2-pane sashes. INTERIOR not inspected. Included for group value



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Appendix 2 – Photographs



Patford Street Elevation ashlar full height round-headed archway with rubble between



Patford Street elevation lower 2-storey range to the right-hand side built in ashlar limestone



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Window facing onto Patford Street



Small window on Patford Street elevation



Single pedestrian door on Patford Street



Patford Street elevation

Old Fire & Ambulance Station



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Side south elevation, town hall clocktower behind



Courtyard elevation



Large doors to the courtyard elevation



Old Fire & Ambulance Station



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Large arched window facing the courtyard



Modern modern former public convenience in front of the side elevation



Internal first floor