

**'Barton Steps'
No. 5 Newton
BRADFORD on AVON
Wiltshire**

Heritage Statement

Prepared on behalf of

Mr and Mrs C. Hill

By

**Michael Heaton MCIfA IHBC
12 Victoria Road
Warminster
Wiltshire
BA12 8HE**

Report reference: MH3910-1v3

March 2024



SUMMARY

Examination of historical sources and visual survey of the building and its surroundings reveals that the house and garden known as 'Barton Steps' / No. 5 Newtown in the Newtown area of Bradford-on-Avon is of late 17th – early 18th century foundation but has been serially and substantially altered since then, to the extent that fabric and architectural character of that date is limited to parts of its external walls.

The applicants seek consents for internal reconfiguration, replacement of existing conservatories with a garden room, and restoration of the roof covering. The proposed reconfiguration would not affect the primary fabric of the external walls or the architectural character of the building or its surroundings; the proposed garden room would replicate adjoining buildings extant as recently as 1910 and a new connecting door through the basement's southwest gable wall into that garden room would affect rubble masonry rebuilt, probably, in the mid 20th century; and the roof restoration would re-fix a defective and technically incorrect limestone slate covering with the correct verge/eaves detailing and functional substrates. The archaeological, historical and aesthetic significance of the building and its surroundings would remain unaffected.

To paraphrase Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy: The proposal would "*..be of the highest standard...(and) ..the form, scale, design and materials of new buildings (would be) complementary to the historic context....(The proposal would) protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment...(and) designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, (and a) distinctive element of Wiltshire's historic environment (that) contributes to a sense of local character and identity (would) be conserved.* To paraphrase the NPPF, the proposal would not result in the loss of a '*key feature of the building's significance*'.

The proposals therefore meet the requirements of Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

'Barton Steps'
No. 5 Newtown
BRADFORD-on-AVON
Wiltshire

Heritage Statement

March 2024

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief

- 1.1.1 This document presents an assessment of the significance of the house and garden known as 'Barton Steps' or No. 5 Newtown in the Newtown area of Bradford-on-Avon in Wiltshire and the likely affect of proposed modifications on that significance. It has been prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs C. Hill – the owners - to support their applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent, as required by Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.1.2 The assessment has been prepared by Michael Heaton MifA IHBC - an archaeologist and building historian – in accordance with the published guidance of Historic England¹, the Institute of Historic Building Conservation / Chartered Institute for Archaeologists² and the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers³. It does not purport to be a detailed narrative history, but an assessment of the significance of the building and its surroundings and the likely effect of the proposals on that significance. It is based on historical research and visual archaeological survey in February 2024, proportionate in scope and detail to the building's statutory significance and the applicant's proposals.
- 1.1.3 Methodologically, the assessment is guided by the professional standards of historical environment assessment promoted jointly by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and the Institute for Historic Building Conservation⁴, which require that studies such as this present an assessment of the likely affect of the proposed development on the significance of affected heritage assets⁵. As that guidance conflicts with current Historic England guidance, which stipulates that assessment of impact should be undertaken only by the LPA's officers, Section 4.3 of this report is intended as guidance, not a definitive conclusion binding on the LPA's officers. The following pages and illustrations explain the methods and criteria used; summarise the site's geographical, historical and statutory context; present relevant primary historical data, and describe the layout, structure and fabric of the structure; and concludes with an assessment of the structure's significance and the likely effect of the proposals on that significance.

¹ English Heritage, 2006; English Heritage, 2001; English Heritage, 2011; English Heritage 2008, Historic England 2015. .

² IEMA 2021.

³ ALGAO, 1997.

⁴ IEMA 2021

⁵ ALGAO, 1994, para 1.5; CIfA, 2017, p2 'Standard'

1.2 Method

1.2.1 Survey

- a. As the proposals would not affect undisturbed subsoils, archaeological data held by the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (HER) has not been examined. The HER holds records of a large number of Listed Buildings within the 1km search radius that is normally applied to studies of this sort of project, most of which are not plausibly within the 'setting' of the subject building – or vice versa – or likely to be otherwise affected by modifications to it. Those are excluded from the study. Approximately 20 Listed Buildings lie close enough to 'Barton Steps' to plausibly be affected by modification of it. These are identified in the text and on Figure 1, but are not described in detail here.
- b. The catalogues of the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre and Nottingham University Library were examined for primary historical records relating to the site. The W&SHC holds cadastral surveys of 1837⁶, 1842⁷, 1864⁸ and early editions of the Ordnance Survey 6" sheets; a postcard of c. 1910 and a history of the house and garden prepared by volunteers of the Wiltshire Buildings Record⁹. Nottingham University Library holds a large amount of material relating to the Wiltshire estates of the Manvers Family of Thoresby Hall, aka The Duke of Kingston, who owned much of Bradford-on-Avon and surrounding parishes until the early 20th century. The collection is not indexed in detail, but the catalogue entries do not mention 'Barton Steps'. In view of the expense that would be involved in examining the collection piece-by-piece without any guarantee of success, it has not been examined for this study.
- c. Following analysis of the historical sources, the building and its surroundings were inspected on the 15th February and 6th March 2024. Inspection examined the interior and exterior of the building and its spatial and visual relationship with surrounding heritage assets. Destructive or intrusive investigation has not been undertaken.

1.2.2 Report preparation

- a. The geographical and historical context of the building is summarised in Section 2 and Figure 1, to assist readers' understanding of the historical sources and criteria against which historical significance have been assessed, followed by a resume of effective heritage law and policy.
- b. The development of the building and its surroundings since 1837 is presented as a map regression on Figures 2.1 and 2.3 with an explanatory narrative in Section 3.1, followed by analysis of the other historical sources illustrated on Figure 2.2. Listed Buildings plausibly affected by the proposals are indicated on Figure 1 and identified in Section 3.2. The building and its spatial and visual relationship with surrounding heritage assets is described in Section 3.3, cross-referenced to the architect's survey drawings and a selection of photographs presented as Figures 3.1, 3.2 and 4. Characterisation and dating of building type and function is based on the typological studies of Brunskill and Slocombe¹⁰; characterisation and dating of roof forms is based on Yeomans and Hall¹¹; characterisation and dating of joinery and other decorative fabric draws upon the chronological typologies of, amongst others, Small and Woodbridge, Alcock and Hall, and Brooking¹²; characterisation of internal 'dry

⁶ W&SHC: G13/990/9L

⁷ W&SHC: Bradford on Avon tithe map

⁸ W&SHC: G13/990/13L

⁹ WBR Ref. B3516

¹⁰ Brunskill, 1999; Slocombe, 1989, 2001

¹¹ Yeomans, 1992; Hall, 1983

¹² Small and Woodbridge, 1930; Alcock and Hall, 1996; Brooking, 1997-8

linings' and renders is guided by, amongst others, Beard, Pavia and Johnson, Lynch and Ayers¹³.

- c. The report concludes with an historical interpretation of the collated data, an assessment of its significance and importance and an assessment of the likely effect of the proposals on that significance and importance. Interpretation is based on the author's published methods¹⁴ and received history; assessment of significance follows the guidances of the *South West Archaeological Research Framework*¹⁵, Historic England¹⁶, Kerr¹⁷ and specifically *Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment*¹⁸ that distinguishes between 'significance' and 'importance'. Assessment is predicated on the acknowledgement that 'heritage assets' such as archaeological remains and historical structures have aesthetic, archaeological and historical significance. Assessing the relative values of those qualities is an essentially subjective exercise dependent on factors such as completeness, scarcity, established historical themes and use. Those values are complementary, but they can also be mutually exclusive: older does not necessarily mean more important. Significance means the '*ability to convey meaning*' and is assessed with reference to archaeology, architectural, social and economic history of this part of the southern of England. Importance means the value a society places on that significance. Both are defined here using a hierarchical terminology based on that established by Kerr¹⁹, viz: *Exceptional, Considerable, Moderate, None/Neutral, Negative*. The three higher levels of that hierarchy correspond broadly to the designation grades applied to 'Listed Buildings', viz: Grade 1 (Exceptional), Grade 2* (Considerable) and Grade 2 (Moderate); 'None/Neutral' means the subject entity neither contributes nor detracts from the site's importance; 'Negative' means the entity detracts from the site's importance.
- d. Assessment of impact or, to be less emotive, affect, requires the factoring of 'importance' and 'change' and follows the guidance of Kerr, ICOMOS, Historic England and IHBC/CIfA²⁰, the latter recommending the use of a ranked hierarchy of impact of c. three levels. Kerr recognises five grades of significance/importance ranging from 'negative' (i.e. undesirable) to 'exceptional'; and ICOMOS recognises five grades of change, from 'no change' to 'catastrophic change'. The of that change is necessarily conditional on the significance/importance of the effected heritage asset: destruction of a structure of no or negative importance being of less concern than partial destruction of one of moderate importance. The terminology used to classify the resultant 'impact' or 'effect' of that change is, in England, obliged to follow that of Historic England and the NPPF, which recognise only two grades of harm: '*substantial harm*' and '*less than substantial harm*'. However, as the accompanying Planning Practice Guidance acknowledges the possibility of '*no harm*'²¹, three grades of 'harm' are used here: 'none', 'less than substantial' and 'substantial'. A suggested correlation between the NPPF/PPG terminology and that used in the rest of the world is presented in Appendix 1.

1.2.3 Archive

¹³ Beard, 1981; Pavia and Bolton, 2000; Lynch, 1994; Ayers, 1998.

¹⁴ Cf. Heaton, 2009, 2014, 2018

¹⁵ Webster, *et al*, 2008

¹⁶ English Heritage, *op cit*

¹⁷ Kerr, J.S., 1996

¹⁸ IEMA, 2021

¹⁹ Kerr, *op cit*

²⁰ IEMA, *op cit*

²¹ Planning Practice Guidance, para: 017 Reference ID: 18a-017-20140306: : "*While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not be harmful at all, for example when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance*"

- a. The archive contains no new primary material. Accordingly, it will not be deposited publicly.

1.3 Caveats

- 1.3.1 This report has been prepared with reasonable skill and care, following the guidances of the professional bodies cited above and based on information publicly available at the time of writing. Archaeological or historical discoveries made in the area after the date of writing, or changes in research strategies effecting the perceived significance of such discoveries, may effect the currency of the report.
- 1.3.2 No person other than the Client named in paragraph 1.1.1 to whom this report is addressed shall rely on it in any respect and no duty of care will be owed by the author to any such third party.
- 1.3.3 The Summary and conclusions contain overviews of the key findings. However, no reliance should be placed on any part of the summary or conclusions until the whole of the report has been read: other sections of the report, particularly the methodological statements contain information that may effect interpretation of the summary. The figures are included for illustrative purposes only. Whilst every care has been taken to ensure metric accuracy, they should not be used for the specification or control of repair or construction works.

2 SITE

2.1 Situation and definition

- 2.1.1 Bradford-on-Avon straddles the valley of the River Avon (Bristol), five miles west and upstream of Bath, in western Wiltshire. The river, having flowed westwards through the low-lying Avon Vale, cuts into the south-west end of the Cotswold Hills to create a steep-sided, gorge-like valley over 50m high from floodplain to summit, in which the entire sequence of the Cotswolds' Jurassic rocks are exposed. The town is situated at the east end of this gorge, at exactly the point the river enters it. It is a nucleated settlement of two halves, bisected by the river and centred around Silver Street and Town Bridge. Ground levels vary a great deal within the town, from c. 35mOD in the southern half and along the river edge, to over 100mOD at the northern edge of the town centre less than 500m north of the river.
- 2.1.2 Newtown is a secondary thoroughfare and eponymous residential area in the northwestern quarter of the town. The road runs along the contours of the steep, southeast-facing slopes of the Avon valley from Winsley c. two miles west of Bradford-on-Avon, to join the A363 at the north end of Market Street and continue eastwards thereafter as the A363. It is one of a tier of southwest-northeast aligned streets lined by rows and terraces of houses interspersed with industrial and civic buildings that ascent – or descend – the slope in a series of terraces, with buildings to the northwest being a storey or more above those to their southeast. The buildings are closely spaced and intervisible. 'Barton Steps' or No. 5 Newtown is towards the western end of Newtown, where the density of buildings begins to open-out slightly and the street pattern is less rigidly aligned. It is a linear building of two structural cells – referred to here as Cells A and B – arranged over four storeys that, together with an enclosed back garden – referred to here as Cell C - occupies a narrow terrace between Newtown thoroughfare and a parallel street to the south and downslope of it known as Barton Orchard.
- 2.1.3 The owners' proposals are essentially five-fold: (a) replacement of the existing conservatories with a single 'garden room' of Contemporary design; (b) installation of an internal staircase linking the Upper Ground Floor living room in Cell 'B' with the First Floor of Cell 'A', requiring widening of the existing opening between Cells 'A' and

'B'; (c) installation of new non-structural partitions in the Lower Ground Floor to form a bedroom; (d) creation of a new opening between Cells 'B' and the new garden room in Cell 'C' at Lower Ground Floor Level, and (e) comprehensive and technically correct restoration of the roof covering.

2.2 Historical context

- 2.2.1 Bradford-on-Avon originated as a monastic centre in the western half of the present town in the centuries before the Norman Conquest, around which a secular settlement developed. Being close to the Cotswolds and the chalk downland of Wessex and on a navigable river, it grew rapidly as a woollen town during the Middle Ages and into the 18th century, with the attendant development of cloth workers houses, mills and industrial workers housing and the gentrification of vernacular dwellings with classical facades. The decline in the woollen industry of southern Britain during the middle and late 19th century was offset in Bradford-on-Avon by the entrepreneurial development of engineering and rubber production on the towns riverside sites, established by the Moulton Family, which initiated the town's fourth major development and architectural boom²².
- 2.2.2 The town's architectural character has been comprehensively summarised by the local authority's Conservation Area Appraisal. Often compared to Bath because of the widespread use of Bath stone in its 18th century buildings, it is actually more varied than its famous neighbour in retaining a larger proportion of its pre-Georgian buildings, its medieval street layout and much of its medieval building fabric. Newtown, as the name suggests, is understood to be a post-medieval extension of the town initiated in the late 17th century²³, possibly by the clothier Anthony Methuen from c. 1693²⁴ to provide workers' housing, on privately enclosed smallholdings and orchards – hence the street name Barton Orchard. The domestic buildings were augmented by chapels and a water filtration plant at Lady's Well in the 18th century and then by Wilkins' Brewery in c. 1855.
- 2.2.3 Comprehensive examination of multiple primary historical sources and visual survey of the building by volunteers of the Wiltshire Buildings Record ('WBR') has established an authoritative chronology of 'Barton Steps': Its documented history commences in a will of 1742, which means it pre-existed that date, when it was owned by a John Palmer who had married in 1705 and would therefore have been in a position to build a house around c. 1700. It passed through multiple owners and tenants throughout the 18th and 19th centuries and by c.1864 its garden was a separate demise owned by Wilkins/Ushers Brewery. The house was occupied by a greengrocer in the mid 19th century and by 1920 the east end of the house was a sweet shop. House and garden were united in 1949 when the building conservationist Charles Underwood bought them from Ushers. The WBR concludes: *"The house was built onto an existing 17th century house on the west side, probably around 1700. The main house is of one build. Dated by wall thicknesses, chamfers and stops, roof form and mouldings. Primary staircase gone, was it one or two dwellings in the 17th / 18th centuries ?."*²⁵

2.3 Status and heritage policy matrix

- 2.3.1 Archaeological sites, historic buildings and conservation areas are protected from deleterious change by the Ancient Monuments And Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The most important are individually identified and designated as Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings. Neither those acts or designations preclude change, merely that the

²² Haslam, 1978

²³ Chettle, 1953

²⁴ Orbach *et al*, 2021, p168-9

²⁵ WBR File B3516.

Secretary of State or the Local Planning Authority must have 'special regard' to the desirability of preserving the 'heritage asset' and its setting from harm, when determining applications for Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent or Scheduled Monument Consent. .

- 2.3.2 That primary legislation is articulated in Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In explaining the purpose of Policy 58 with reference to 'designated heritage assets' such as Listed Buildings, Wiltshire Council states that "...*designation... does not preclude the possibility of new development... (but that) it is expected that development will be of the highest standard... (and that) ..the form, scale, design and materials of new buildings are complementary to the historic context.*" Policy 58 then states that it applies to non-designated heritage assets such as buildings of regional and local interest and that "*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 manner appropriate to their significance*", and that "*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 NPPF requires planning authorities, when determining applications effecting Listed Buildings, their settings, archaeological sites and non-designated 'heritage assets', to give great weight to the conservation of the significance of those heritage assets. The weight given to conservation should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset, so that for instance, 'substantial harm' to or loss of Grade 2 Listed Buildings should be exceptional. The Planning Practice Guidance to the NPPF defines 'substantial harm' as the loss of a key feature of the building's significance.
- 2.3.3 'Barton Steps' is a Grade 2 Listed Building, described as follows by the National Heritage List in 1974: "*C17. Rubble, stone-tiled roof, 2 plain gables. Two-storey plus attics, 2 windows, wood-framed casements to attics, 2-light stone-mullioned casements to ground and 1st floors. Two-storey stone-tiled contiguous sing with one casement per floor, square headed door under wood lintel. Nos 5 and 6 form a group with Nos 27-31 (consec) and wall Newton and Nos 7 and 9 to 19 (consec) Barton Orchard, all the listed buildings in Church Street, The Chantry and Little Chantry, and the Catholic Church of Sty. Thomas More, Market Street*". The protection afforded by the primary legislation (above) extends to all structures attached to the identified building and within its 'curtilage', their fabric and fixtures and fittings.

3 SURVEY

3.1 Historical sources

Figures 2.1-2.3

- 3.1.1 The building identified by the WBR as having existed in 1742 and probably built c.1700, is first recorded graphically by a parish survey of 1837 (Figure 2.3). The purpose of the survey is not recorded, nor has the accompanying schedule survived, but it clearly identifies 'Barton Steps' and its garden as parts 'a-g' of Plot 468 – a building that corresponds now to No. 9 Newtown. The present house comprised three conjoined structural cells – 'f', 'g' and 'h' – the latter clearly identifiable by its triangular plan and corresponding to the present Cell 'A', with parts 'f' and 'g' corresponding to the present Cell 'B'. What is currently the garden – Cell 'C' – was occupied by four structural cells labelled 'c', 'd' and 'e' on the 1837 survey (part 'd', presumably, was bipartite). That layout remained essentially unchanged in 1864 when the town and parish were surveyed again for an amendment of the 1841 tithes commutation survey (Figure 2.3). By then, parts 'e'-h' of the 1837 survey had been re-numbered as '134' and were in the single ownership and occupancy of a Jonah Love and described simply as 'house'. In comparison, parts 'c'-d' of the 1837 survey had been rationalised into two cells re-numbered '133' and were owned by Messrs Wilkins (the brewery), occupied by 'Handy and others' and described as 'three houses'.

Nonetheless, the tri-partite structural division of number '134' is clearly recorded by the 1864 survey.

- 3.1.2 By 1887, when the first geodetically accurate plan of the area was created by the Ordnance Survey (Figure 2.1), Plot 134 of the 1864 survey had been rationalised into two structural cells corresponding to the present Cells 'A' and 'B' with a small open yard at their southwest end. Beyond that, the southwestern c. 50% of that is now the garden – Cell 'C' – comprised two conjoined buildings. The greater part of the present garden of 'Barton Steps', therefore, was occupied by buildings.
- 3.1.3 The form of those buildings and some details of 'Barton Steps' at that time are indicated by a photograph of c. 1910 (Figure 2.2) taken from the base of the Well Path steps c. 50m southwest of 'Barton Steps'. Commencing with 'Barton Steps' itself: Its essential structural form appears to have been as it is today, with a single pedestrian door opening in the north wall of Cell 'B', possibly with a monolithic stone lintel. The soffit of that lintel lay slightly below the lintel of an adjoining window opening to the northeast of the door, and there was a larger window opening to their southwest. Those openings were in what is now the Upper Ground Floor. No window openings are shown on the First Floor or the Second Floor (loft), though there is an enigmatic hint of a labelled window opening within the attic gable that appears to be blocked with rubble on the photograph. The roof was covered with stone slates with well-defined slightly projecting verges and eaves. Adjoining the southwest gable of 'Barton Steps' there was a roofless structure with a boarded-up door opening at its southwest end, its rubble wall heads covered in vegetation and, ascending the southwest gable wall of 'Barton Steps' a chimney breast that appears to have reached c. 50% up that elevation. Adjoining the roofless structure, closer to the viewer were two almost identical gabled elevations, each with a three-light mullioned window opening in the middle of its upper storey that appear to be blocked with rubble and - in the one that is not obscured - an overly tall door opening with a chamfered lintel, also in the centre of the elevation. Allowing for perspective, the position of that door opening is approximately 8.2m from the southwest gable of 'Barton Steps'. The nearest end of the group, relative to the viewer, is in the photograph obscured by the northeast end of what is now No. 9 Newtown.
- 3.1.4 By 1924, the outlines of Cells 'A' and 'B' remained unchanged and separated by a structural wall, but the southwestern half of the block, corresponding to Cell 'C' – the garden – had been cleared of buildings. Curiously, the southwestern end of Cell 'B' was adjoined by a structure shown with the same hatching convention, which suggests that the roofless structure of c. 1910 had been repaired. The date at which that repair was reversed, to create the present configuration, has not been established by this study.

3.2 Visual survey: the house and garden

Figures 3.1-3.2

- 3.2.1 Linear structure approximately 33m long x 5m wide, comprising three structural cells arranged over two and four storeys, set one storey deep into a southeast-facing slope. Cells 'A' and 'B' comprise the house; Cell 'C' encloses the garden, the ground level of which varies. Cells 'A' and 'B' have staggered floor levels and are interconnected by a wide opening in their shared structural wall that, because of their floor levels, opens onto the Ground Floor of Cell 'A' and between the Lower Ground Floor and Upper Ground Floor of Cell 'B', so that upon entering the house, the Upper Ground Floor appears as a mezzanine. There is also an atypical offset inwards of the west gable of Cell 'B' at Lower – and Ground Floor level (cf. 'Lower Ground Floor Plan on Figure 3.1), so that the apparent gable – which is c. 300mm thick at LDF level – and stacks are c. one metre inside the gable end structural joints visible in the south and north walls (i.e. the party wall between Cells 'B' and 'C' at LGF and GF level is not where we might expect it to be). Entered through a door in the south-east wall of Cell 'A' that leads to short stairs down to the Lower Ground Floor and up to the Upper Ground Floor of Cell 'B'. The First Floor of Cell 'A' is accessed via a loft hatch and

retractable ladder; access to the First and Second floors of Cell 'B' is via a winder stair within an enclosure against the middle of the northwest wall of Cell 'B'. Access to the garden is via an inserted door opening in the centre of the southwest Upper Ground Floor gable of Cell 'B', containing an industrial Crittall type glazed steel door leaf. Lit by two tiers of four window openings in the southeast elevation of Cell 'B', a smaller number of asymmetrically positioned window openings in the northwest elevation of Cell 'B' and a tier of two windows in the northeast gable of Cell 'A'. Window opening form varies considerably: most of those in the northwest elevation are spanned by timber lintels; the south-facing Lower and Upper Ground Floor frames have stone mullioned frames, some with secondary concrete lintels, and those on the Upper Ground Floor have very fresh unweathered facets. All contain relatively unweathered cottage-style casements of recent manufacture..

- 3.2.2 Structural walls are of local Corallian rubble with roughly squared quoins, lintels and other dressings, some of which have very sharp, unweathered facets, pointed with cementitious mortars. That structural fabric is exposed in several places within the interior. Each of the three cells appears to be of a single structural build, but there are structural joints between them indicating that Cell 'B' is the earlier of the three and multiple modifications are evident in its fabric. The external and internal face of the southwest gable of Cell 'B' is irregular, there being a convoluted excrescence ascending to a verge scar from the external southwest corner next to a panel of rebuilt rubble, and a pronounced bowing inwards of the Second Floor internal face, while its position at LGF and GF is c. one metre east (i.e inside) of where we might expect it to be. There is a blocked door opening in the northwest elevation of Cell 'A' at its west end; two side by side in the middle of the northwest elevation of Cell 'B', both with massive ashlar lintels, one of which has been modified to form a window opening; and the Lower Ground Floor south elevation of Cell 'B' has been serially rebuilt around the two window openings, with sufficient vertical joints remaining to indicate that they have been formed in modified door openings. The walls of Cell 'C' – the garden – are of multiple builds and are pierced by a large number of redundant and functional openings, specifically: a functional, but abnormally tall, door opening in the northwest wall at its east end, defined by sawn ashlar with very sharp facets; a blocked door opening of normal – i.e. c. 2.20m - at the west end of that wall; a functional garden access door in the middle of the southwest wall and at least three other, blocked, door openings with massive ashlar lintels and surrounds and multiple structural joints within that wall.
- 3.2.3 Roof structure of Cell 'A' is of two purlins laid diagonally between the northeast gable and the connecting wall with Cell 'B', spanned by a redundant collar at their northeast ends, covered with Oolitic stone slates fixed to under-sized battens – actually laths – that project beyond the eaves/verges without under-cloaking or flaunching. The laths bear on a verge rafter of band-sawn oak. The structural timbers are painted black and were not inspected in detail, but appear to be of regular scantling and with straight edges suggesting machine-conversion. The roof covering is badly deflected. The roof structure of Cell 'B' is of 'extended collar' type but formed of incomplete timbers of varying scantling and conditions, most of which have been re-used in this structure. It is covered with the same scheme of stone slates on under-sized battens as Cell 'A' and is badly deflected. The roof structure/GF deck over the east end of the existing conservatory of Cell 'C' is of concrete block-and-beam construction of late 20th century date, that bears on the LGF party wall between Cells 'B' and 'C'.
- 3.2.4 The internal fabric is varied in form and apparent date of installation. The floor/ceiling structures are of re-used or faux beams of varying scantling, some with the redundant sockets positioned for visual affect, or – in the case of the Ground Floor/First Floor of Cell 'B' – inserted beams carried on sprockets to which they are fixed by square headed bolts. The joists are predominantly – if not all – of band-sawn timber (thick paint prevents timber species identification). Floor coverings not accessible, except for that over the east end of Cell 'C', but all are sufficiently even to be of modern construction. The faces of the structural walls are of bare, cement-pointed rubble

(presumably treated to prevent dust), gypsum-based renders, re-used machine-cut panelling of 20th century manufacture and varying detail, or modern linings of varying types. There are flues and tiers of fireplaces at the north ends of the southwest and northeast walls of Cell 'B', most of which are blocked and some – such as that in the northeast corner of the Upper Ground Floor – are formed of re-used and artificially aged materials and overlap – i.e. post-date – the adjacent window lintel. The position of the stack in the southwest corner of Cell 'B' is abnormal with respect to the gable end structural joints visible in the south and north external wall faces.

- 3.2.5 All the secondary joinery - such as stairs, door leaves, window frames etc. - is of machine-cut timber or otherwise demonstrably of recent manufacture. All the wall and joinery finishes are of recent application.

3.3 Visual survey: surroundings

Figure 4

- 3.3.1 'Barton Steps' is within the densely built-up, steep-sloping Newton area, in which most buildings overlook their neighbours to the south, all are closely spaced and most are arranged in rows or terraces along vehicular and pedestrian thoroughfares, and few have attached gardens larger than a few metres square or dedicated parking spaces. Windows are positioned predominantly in south-facing elevations and look down into the windows and curtilages of neighbouring buildings. That 'overlooking' aspect is a characteristic of the area.
- 3.3.2 The surroundings buildings are predominantly domestic and of late 17th – early 19th century styles, the notable exception being the former Wilkins Brewery, and the nearest buildings in each direction are all designated Listed Buildings (cf. Figure 1). The closest of those – No 6 Newtown – is of similar date and vernacular form to 'Barton Steps' ; while the next closest – Nos 9-14 Barton Orchard and Nos 27-31 - are terraces of classically inspired houses that probably served as weavers' out-working houses. Most of these are of a consistent size determined by custom and timber availability and are dominated by the industrial scale of the former Wilkins Brewery that overlooks the Newton area from the northwest.
- 3.3.3 There are no public green or open spaces and sightlines into, across and out of the immediate proximity of 'Barton Steps' are determined by the close mutual spacing of the buildings and the natural relief. From 'Barton Steps' itself the viewer can see only the immediately neighbouring buildings or, from its upper floors, the lower-lying town: from outside its immediate vicinity only its roof and upper elevations are visible. The interior of the garden is not visible from outside its boundaries and only the upper windows of surrounding buildings are visible from within the garden.

4 ANALYSIS

4.1 Historical interpretation

- 4.1.1 There is no reason to dispute the "c. 1700" date ascribed the initial construction of 'Barton Steps' by the Wiltshire Buildings Record: there is little historical evidence of building activity in the area much before that date, it is a marginal site and therefore likely to have been one of the latest utilised, and its basic external architectural form is 'late 17th to early 18th century' type, examples of which can be seen throughout the lower-lying areas of the town. Its form does not fit neatly into any established building typology (cf. Hall, 1983; Slocombe, 1998 and 2001), which suggests its present appearance is the product of changing use and associated structural development. Its present layout and fabric are the products of a complex history and are substantially of much later date than 1700. As the present three-storey layout differs from the two-storeys referred to by the NHL in 1974, it is likely that there has been substantial internal change since then.

- 4.1.2 The house and its present walled garden comprised seven conjoined but separate demises in 1837, all associated with the building that is now No. 6 Newtown and each with an individual Lower Ground Floor access off the alley way between 'Barton Steps' and Nos 9-14 Barton Orchard. By 1864, No. 6 Barton Steps and the westernmost four demises of the present site were owned by Wilkins Brewery and the house known now as 'Barton Steps' was owned and occupied separately by a Jonah Love. Those seven structures survived until 1910, albeit partially roofless in the case of one of them, but by 1924 the present garden of 'Barton Steps' had, to all intents and purposes, been created by the demolition or collapse of four of them. At roughly the same time – i.e. the early 20th century - the easternmost three structures were partially amalgamated to create Cells 'A' and 'B' of the present house, with Cell 'A' functioning as a sweet shop as recently as 1920 and Cell 'B' served by a single door onto Newtown by 1910. Final amalgamation to create the single unified demise therefore happened after 1924. A likely date is c. 1949 when the building conservationist Charles Underwood bought the house and the separately owned garden plot, creating a viable 20th century dwelling and garden. Archaeological evidence of the tripartite origin of the present house survives as the three blocked/modified door openings in the northwest walls of Cells 'A' and 'B', with the latter clearly having been served by two closely spaced doors that were mirrored on the Lower Ground Floor. The structural history of Cell 'C' – the garden – is alluded to by the many openings in its walls and the masonry excrescences at its northeast end, but the unweathered fabric of at least one of those – the door opening in the northeast corner of the garden onto Newtown - suggests that some of those details post-date the nominal 17th / 18th century construction date ascribed by documentary history.
- 4.1.3 Much of the fabric likely to have been present in 1910 has been removed, possibly as recently as c. 1974. The structural cross walls between the two halves of Cell 'B' and between the four constituents of Cell 'C' are no longer present and, significantly, there is no evidence of them on the inner faces of the long north and south walls of the site. This suggests that much of those outer walls has also been rebuilt since 1910. This is corroborated in the case of Cell 'C' by comparison of the 1910 photograph with the present elevational detail: the door openings are in different positions, there are not enough of them and the most easterly of them is clearly of recent construction. Only the cross wall between Cells 'A' and 'B' has survived amalgamation, albeit in a fragmentary state. The southwestern gable of Cell 'B' bears evidence of a similarly complex structural history, particularly at Lower- and Ground Floor level: the gable verge scar is a common feature, but the inclined 'column' of rubble masonry ascending to it is not, and the author is unable to suggest an explanation for it other than amateurish building restoration. Similarly, the inward offset of the abnormally slender LGF and GF southwest gable wall and the abnormal position of the mural 'stack' relative to the vertical structural joints visible in the external faces of the south and north walls of Cell 'B' suggest, perhaps, that the gable wall has been comprehensively, but badly, rebuilt. As the LGF gable wall supports the concrete deck above the conservatory, and much of the GF wall above it has clearly been rebuilt in the 20th century, it is likely that much of this gable wall was rebuilt and probably re-positioned when the deck was added in the 20th century. This also suggests that the mural stack in the northwest corner of Cell 'B' is also a recent fabrication.
- 4.1.4 The roof coverings have been re-laid on under-sized mechanically sawn battens – actually laths – which is unlikely to have happened before the 1960s at the earliest, fixed onto band-sawn verge rafters that are also unlikely to have been used here before the middle of the 20th century. The exposed ends of the laths also suggest it was not done by a roofing contractor²⁶. The roof structure of Cell 'B' is an amalgam of salvaged timbers, some of which are of questionable competence, that relates to the plan layout of the unified house of c. 1910 and is therefore unlikely to be of 17th, 18th

²⁶ Cf. Emerton, 2017, p115)

or even 19th century date. The redundant 'collar' in the roof of Cell 'A' was installed for purely visual affect – a 20th century practice - and it is likely that the rest of the roof structure was constructed at the same time. The roof covering is certainly of later 20th century construction. The floor structures are also constructed of predominantly salvaged beams and wholly new joists; and the joinery, wall finishes and wall linings are of recent installation. The date at which that 'secondary' fabric was installed can not be established without dismantling and destructive investigations disproportionate to the likely affect of the owners proposals, but it would be reasonable to assign it a late 20th century date.

4.2 Significance and importance

- 4.2.1 The house and attached walls of its garden are of moderate significance and importance. That significance is archaeological, aesthetic and - to a lesser degree - historical and resides in the appearance of the external structural walls and the roof covering. The structural fabric is of less significance because much of it has evidently been rebuilt relatively recently. The interior layout and material fabric of the house is of no significance or importance because it is fundamentally a 20th century creation or installation uninformed by architectural history.
- 4.2.2 The archaeological significance derives from the modified openings, structural joints and fabric variations evident in the external walls that allude to the building's complex structural, functional and ownership histories. Though a commonplace of historical buildings, such details are relatively rare in Bradford-on-Avon because of 18th and 19th century re-facing and 20th century re-building – for example the Three Gables/Ravellos restaurant, which was rebuilt after floods in the 1930s. The material fabric of the building and its garden walls is therefore of moderate importance to the post-medieval archaeology of the town and Wiltshire in general: they are articulate, but not hugely or uniquely so (see below: Historical Significance). The internal layout and fabric, however, are of no archaeological significance because they are essentially 20th century creations or installations that tell us little we don't already know. So, for example, the roof timbers could not be used for dendrochronology because they are unlikely to be primary to this building, and the layout of the building could not support meaningful spatial analysis because it is a wholly 20th century creation. Similarly, the LGF and GF southwest gable wall appears to be of 20th century construction and is of no importance.
- 4.2.3 The aesthetic significance derives from the external form of the building and particularly its roof. Though not designed to be pleasing to the eye in the way that, for instance, The Chantry was, 'Barton Steps' has acquired an aesthetic significance and importance because of the value we currently ascribe to vernacular forms. Its multi-gabled roofline, specifically, is a characteristic of Bradford-on-Avon and it is one of only a few that retain its 'Cotswold' stone slates. That aesthetic significance is enhanced by, and contributes to, its setting within the steeply-sloping, densely occupied and architecturally varied Newton area, where *'the foot rarely treads where the eye has already alighted'*. The external appearance of the house, therefore, is pleasing in its own right and important to the general appearance and special character of the town and Wiltshire in general. However, contrary to the assertions of the NHL description, it does not form a 'group' with " *all the listed buildings in Church Street....the Catholic Church of St Thomas More, Market Street*" because it is not intervisible or otherwise spatially associated with them.
- 4.2.4 Its historical significance is less easily codified. It is not demonstrably associated with any established historic themes or persons such as, for example, the woollen trade or the Moulton family. Indeed, we know little about the owners of 'Barton Steps' and its garden apart from the house's occupant in the mid 18th century being a carpenter – a common occupation – and the rest of the site having being owned by Wilkins Brewery. Historically, it is essentially inarticulate. In other words, it is unlikely to be the

subject of a 'Blue Plaque' for the foreseeable future. The interior layout and fabric is of no historical importance.

4.3 Likely effect of the proposals

- 4.3.1 Replacement of the existing conservatories would affect no historic fabric and would have only a minor affect on the external appearance of the house and its garden. Archaeological details evident in the walls of the house and garden would be unaffected. The upper elevations and roof of the proposed garden room would be visible over the garden walls, but the structure would be visibly subservient to the house and similar in size and form to a structure present in 1910. There is, therefore, historical precedent and legitimacy for the proposal. Indeed, in partially restoring a structure known to have been present as recently as 1910, the proposal would enhance the historical significance of the site by informing the viewer of how it looked prior to 1910. Similarly, any 'overlooking' that might be perceived in the proposal would be wholly consistent with the character of the Newtown area. The proposal would cause no harm to the significance of 'Barton Steps' or other heritage assets.
- 4.3.2 Installation of the new internal staircase would require widening of an existing 20th century opening between Cells 'A' and 'B'. It is possible that gable wall fabric of c. 1700 might be affected, but that fabric is of no aesthetic or historical significance and its archaeological significance – if any – has already been compromised. To use the terminology of the NPPF, this would not affect a 'key feature' of the building's significance. It would cause 'less than substantial harm' because there would be change affecting the existing fabric of the building, but that change would be modest and would enable the optimum viable use of the floor area of the house.
- 4.3.3 Installation of new partitions within the Lower Ground Floor would affect a layout of 20th century creation of no significance, and would be reversible: i.e. the partitions could be removed by future owners without historical fabric being affected. This would cause no harm to the significance of 'Barton Steps'.
- 4.3.4 A new door opening between Cells 'B' and 'C' at Lower Ground Floor Level would necessitate the loss of gable wall fabric. This contains no significant archaeological details and, indeed, appears to be partly of 20th century construction. Even if it is of earlier date, the material fabric that would be affected constitutes a very small proportion of the fabric of an already serially altered building. This would cause 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of 'Barton Steps' because it would involve change to existing fabric, but it would be a minor change affecting less than 10% of the building's fabric. It would not affect a 'key feature' of the house's significance nor the house's archaeological, aesthetic or historical significance.
- 4.3.5 Comprehensive restoration of the roof covering would enhance the significance of the building and that of its surroundings and enhance the long-term survival of the building. As the present exposed batten/lath ends are typologically and functionally incorrect²⁷, it is likely that the owners would seek to have this and other defects within the roof corrected. Such changes would enhance the aesthetic significance and functionality of the roof and thereby the aesthetic significance of the building as a whole and its surroundings.

²⁷ Emerton, *op cit*

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 It would be reasonable to conclude that the proposal would cause 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of 'Barton Steps' and no harm to the significance of other heritage assets. That 'less than substantial' harm would be balanced by the optimum viable use of the floor area, restoration of the roof covering and thereby the long-term survival of the house.
- 4.4.2 It would be reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the proposal would satisfy the requirements of Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Assoc. of Local Govt. Archaeol. Officers 1997, Analysis and recording for the conservation and control of works to historic buildings (ALGAO c/c Essex CC)
- Beard, G., 1981, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration in England 1660-1820*. (John Batholomew & Sons, Edinburgh)
- Brooking, C., 1997-8, 'Kent Conservation Officers' Group CPD Workshop Handbooks Nos 1-4'. (The Brooking Collection / Greenwich University)
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2020, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Building Investigation and Recording* (CIfA, Reading University)
- Chettle, H.F. *et al*, 'Bradford-on-Avon', in R.Pugh and E.Crittall (Eds), *A History of the County of Wiltshire, 7. Victoria County History*. (London)
- Department for Communities and Local Government, 2020, *The National Planning Policy Framework*. (HMSO)
- Emerton, G., 2017, *The Pattern of Traditional Roofing*. (Private, Nantwich. ISBN 978-1-78808-099-6))
- English Heritage, 2001, *Informed Conservation: understanding historic buildings and their landscape for conservation*
- English Heritage 2006, *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to good recording practice*.
- English Heritage, 2008, *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*. (English Heritage)
- Hall, L., 1983, *The Rural Houses of North Avon and South Gloucestershire*. (Bristol Museum & Art Gallery)
- Heaton, M.J., 2009, 'Building Palaeopathology: Practical Applications of Archaeological Building Analysis', *Structural Survey*, **27 No. 2**, pp119-137 (Emerald)
- Historic England, 2017, *The Setting of Heritage Assets. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3*. (Historic England)
- Historic England, 2019, *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets. Historic Environment Advice Note 12*. (Historic England)

IEMA, 2021, *Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment*. (Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Institute for Historic Building Conservation)

Kerr, J.S., 1996, *The Conservation Plan*. (National Trust for Australia)

Orbach, J., Pevsner, N., and Cherry, B., 2021, *Wiltshire, The Buildings of England*. (Yale)

Pavia, S., and Bolton, J., *Stone, Brick and Mortar: Historical Use, Decay and Conservation of Building Materials in Ireland*. (Wordwell, Wicklow)

Sandell, R.E., 1971, *Abstracts of Wiltshire Inclosure Awards and Agreements*. **Wiltshire Records Society, Vol 25**. (Devizes)

Slocombe, P., 1988, *Wiltshire Farmhouses and Cottages 1500-1850*, **Wiltshire Buildings Record Mono. 1**. (Devizes Book Press)

Slocombe, P., 2001, *Wiltshire Town Houses 1500-1900*, **Wiltshire Buildings Record Mono. 4**. (Ex Libris Press, Bradford-on-Avon)

Small, T., and Woodbridge, C., 1930, *Architectural Turned Woodwork of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries: A portfolio of full-size details*. (London. The Architectural Press)

Suddards, R., and Hargreaves, J., 1996, *Listed Buildings: The Law and Practice of Historic Buildings, Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas* (Sweet and Maxwell)

Webster, C.J., (Ed), 2008, *The Archaeology of South West England: South West Archaeological Research Framework Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*. (Somerset County Council).

Yeoman, D., 1994, *The Trussed Roof: It's History and Development*. (Scolar Press)