

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A PLOT WEST OF FORD HOUSE, FORD, WILTSHIRE

Heritage Statement



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**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
OF A PLOT WEST OF FORD HOUSE,
FORD, WILTSHIRE**

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Heritage Statement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

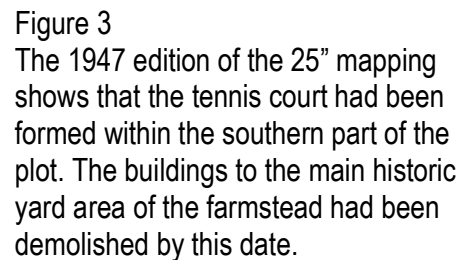
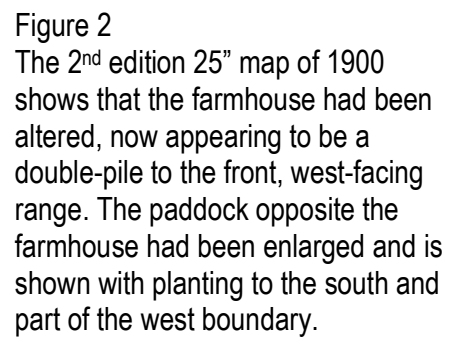
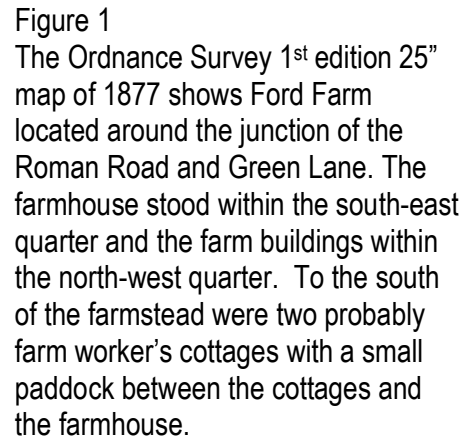
1.1 The owners of a plot of land within the small village of Ford near Salisbury are seeking planning permission to construct a single detached house and have sought pre-application planning advice from Wiltshire Council. The response from the council found that the principle of development was acceptable but noted that the site lay adjacent to an unlisted building, Ford House, which would be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset, that the site was within its setting and so would require assessment.

1.2 Forum Heritage Services has been commissioned to make an assessment of the extent and importance of the setting of Ford House and its contribution to its significance, and to consider the potential impact of the proposals upon the significance of the heritage asset and to prepare a Heritage Statement in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Bob Edwards BSc (Hons) PG Dip IHBC MCIfA, Director of Forum Heritage Services visited the site in March 2025 and subsequently prepared this report.

1.1 This report will present:

- A brief background to the proposed development site using historic mapping
- A description of the setting of Ford House
- Policy and guidance background
- An assessment of the importance of the setting of Ford House and the potential impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage asset following Historic England guidance on assessing the importance of setting in *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2nd edition, December 2017)
- Conclusions

2.1 The background to the proposed development site and its relationship to Ford House is illustrated by historic mapping (Figures 1 -3).



- 2.2 The *Salisbury Historic Environment Assessment* (2009, Land Use Consultants for English Heritage) states that Ford Farmhouse was 'originally built in the mid to late 17th century, and altered in the later 19th century' but provides no evidence to support this assertion.
- 2.4 In 1917 the site of Sarum Airfield was chosen to provide a training station for the Royal Flying Corps. The station was initially known as 'Ford Farm' but shortly afterwards was renamed after Old Sarum. Ford Farmhouse became the house of the camp commander's house.
- 2.5 The area of the farmstead north of the Roman Road has been totally redeveloped for housing, now called The Steadings with all the historic buildings being demolished. There has also been substantial development along Green Lane to the north of the Roman Road, and west of the former farmstead creating a significant area of settlement.

3.0 DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The proposed development site lies on the south side of Roman Road with a Green Lane defining the eastern boundary. The site is currently accessed from Green Lane and is an area of land which has a relatively flat area to the south which has been used as a tennis court in the past, rising up towards the north, where the road-side boundary is between 1.0 and 0.5 m above road level and currently topped by a close-boarded fence (Figure 4). The northern part of the site is partly hardstanding and partly rough grass.



Figure 4 The northern frontage of the proposed development site with part of the roof of Ford House visible to the right of the yew tree.

- 3.2 To the east of the plot on the opposite side of Green Lane is Ford House which has its principal elevation facing west towards the lane (Figure 5). Ford House is a tall 1½ storey house, the two outer windows having gables above allowing them to break the eaves line, the central window having a hipped roof over. Behind the front range is a full two-storey range creating a double-pile plan building. The house has rendered elevations with a plat band at storey height and plain clay tile roofs. At the rear there is single-storey range extending off the back of the house running along the roadside boundary (Figure 6).



Figure 5 Ford House, front, west, and north elevations.



Figure 6 Ford House, rear elevation with the proposed development site beyond the yew tree.

- 3.3 To the west of the proposed development site is Castleford Farm (Figure 7). This building consists of a low two-storey range to the east facing the road which represents the probable labourer's cottage shown on historic mapping. The western part of the house is a large two-storey 20th century addition leaving the earlier part of the house reading as a side wing.



Figure 7 Castleford Farmhouse.

- 3.4 To the north side of Roman Road, and opposite the proposed development site, is an area of modern development on the site of the former farmstead once associated with Ford House. These houses are set on a significantly higher ground above the road and face inwards to the cul-de-sac access road serving The Steadings. The roadside boundary is a tall brick and render wall (Figure 8).



Figure 8 The modern housing development on the site of the former Ford Farm north of the proposed development site and diagonally across the junction between Roman Road and Green Lane.

4.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the statutory approach to the management of historic buildings and areas and requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses, and its setting, under Section 66 – a matter the Courts have held should be afforded considerable importance and weight. Section 72, relating to Conservation Areas requires that ‘special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’.
- 4.2 The statutory approach is reflected in Policy CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted January 2015 (CS) and Policy 99 of the Draft Local Plan Review: Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment which has ‘weight’ following submission to the Secretary of State in late October 2024.
- 4.3 Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (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 be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.*
- 4.4 Paragraph 212 advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation whilst para. 208 states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 4.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (Annexe 2 Glossary) defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

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

- 4.6 The Historic England Guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2nd edition, December 2017) states that:

'Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate that significance' (p.4)

- 4.7 The HE guidance sets out a staged approach to the assessment of understanding the significance of setting:

- 1 Identification of heritage assets and the extent of their settings
- 2 Assess whether, how and what degree the settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage assets
- 3 Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful on the significance
- 4 Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm
- 5 Record the process

- 4.8 The guidance also states that views which particularly contribute to the significance of heritage assets include those where the relationship between the asset and other historic assets or places or designed views.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SETTING TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LISTED BUILDINGS

5.1 This assessment will follow the approach as set out in the Historic England guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets* to identify the importance of the setting of the listed buildings and to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on their significance.

Step 1: Identification of heritage assets

5.2 The heritage asset to be considered in relation to the proposed development within its settings is:

- Ford House

5.3 Ford House has been identified by the local authority as a non-designated heritage asset. To understand the importance of the setting of this building it is necessary consider the significance of the heritage asset.

5.4 The significance of Ford House is primarily derived from its architectural form and character which reads externally as a relatively polite 19th century house which, although its first floor windows break the eaves, creating a 1½ storey appearance, the building is not a 1½ story scale cottage but is a house of full two-storey height. The interior of this house has not been seen, but it is claimed that it may have 17th century origins, which will also add to the evidential historic value of the building. and the local authority .2 the use of this house has

5.5 Ford House became the Sarum Airfield commander's house during World War I. However, whilst this use is of local interest, there is nothing in the building itself that allows an understanding that the building has been in an associated military use and so there is very limited illustrative historic interest derived from its ownership and use by the military.

Step 2: Assessment of contribution of setting to the significance of the heritage asset

- 5.6 Ford House appears to have been the farmhouse once associated with the large farmstead group on the north side of Roman Road and west of Green Lane. There are no historic farm buildings surviving on this farmstead site which has been redeveloped for housing which has totally erased the ability to understand that Ford House was a farmhouse which would have contributed to the significance of the building.
- 5.7 Ford House sits in a generous plot which lies mainly to the south and east of the building and this is its primary domestic curtilage setting. The house presents a gable end to the road to the north, with its principal elevation facing west, presumably as a west-facing orientation was preferred over a north-facing orientation, neither of which would have provided direct oversight of the historic farm yard area originally located diagonally across the crossroads formed by Roman Road and Green Lane.
- 5.8 The proposed development plot to the west of Green Lane opposite Ford House appears to have been no more than a paddock until the late 19th century when its enlargement and tree planting to the boundaries shown on the historic mapping suggest that it may have become a detached part of the grounds of the house, separated from the house by Green Lane, but there is no indication for any formal design or layout that would have specifically related to the front elevation of the house. The marked change in ground level between the lane and the plot, and within the plot also suggest little formality between the house and the plot. By the 1940s a tennis court had been created within the southern part of the plot, and it may have also provided parking around this date. Whilst this plot was in the same ownership as Ford House and has been in an ancillary use with the tennis court and provision of parking, it is considered that this plot makes no material contribution to the limited significance of Ford House itself.
- 5.9 There are no important views to Ford House across the proposed development plot from the public realm. Until recently, the boundary to the eastern edge of the plot was heavily planted meaning that the plot was largely screened from view from the house and so there was, and it is considered unlikely to have ever been, any important or designed views from the house into this area.

Step 3: Assess impact of the proposed development on significance

- 5.10 The proposed development is to consist of a single detached two-storey house which will face north onto Roman Road, the house being set back from the street frontage slightly. The entrance to the property will also be taken off Roman Road with the existing access from Green Lane being closed up. The house is to have rendered elevations and a double-Roman tile roof (Figures 9 and 10).



Figure Proposed north elevation.



Figure Proposed south elevation.

5.11 Taking the NPPF definition of setting as set out in 4.5, above, it follows that the test for whether a development within the setting of a heritage asset will affect significance must be based on the impact on the ability to:

- Experience the heritage asset or
- To appreciate or understand its significance.

Further potential aspects of potential impact on setting include:

- Whether the proposed development would be harmful aesthetically when seen in combination with or adjacent to a heritage asset
- Impact on tranquillity, appearance though light pollution or the experience of a heritage asset through the introduction of smells.

5.12 The historic setting of Ford House, once a farmhouse associated with a large farmstead group on the north side of Roman Road, has been entirely lost through the demolition of the farm buildings and the redevelopment of the site for housing in the late 20th century. The extensive area of modern development along the northern part of Green Lane and west of the area of the farmstead means that the wider setting of Ford House is suburban in character, and makes no contribution to the significance of the unlisted building, which cannot be understood to have been a farmhouse without reference to historic mapping. The loss of farmstead character means that the understanding of the relationship between the former farmhouse and the labourer's cottages to the west is also lost, and further eroded by the alterations to these cottages which leaves their historic character difficult to appreciate from their current appearance.

5.13 The use of Ford House as the house of the commander of the air base at Sarum Airfield is not evident in its form or character – this is a use that post-dates the construction of the house and is of local interest only. There is no aspect of the setting of Ford House that links the building to the military use at Sarum Airfield. Whilst the proposed development plot was utilised as part of the grounds of Ford House, there is no meaningful visible link between this plot and the house that would be considered to contribute to the heritage interest of the unlisted building.

5.14 Although the proposed development plot has been in the same ownership as Ford House, formerly as agricultural land and since c.1900 as an additional part of the domestic grounds (although whether, as it is detached from the house by Green Lane, it would fit the legal definition of curtilage is moot), this plot makes no material contribution to the significance of Ford House. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development of the site to accommodate a single detached house will not result in harm to the significance of Ford House.

5.14 Whilst there is no important view to the front elevation of Ford House when approaching from the west, the proposed position of the house set back into the plot means that the largely screened views towards Ford House, currently available will not be interrupted, although it should be noted that there is no right to a view to this building should planting of a hedge along the roadside boundary be undertaken.

5.15 The pre-application submission presented two options for the proposed house: a 1½ storey chalet type building and a two-storey house. The Council's response suggested that the 1½ storey option would be preferred, although the Conservation Officer stated that:

'providing the proposal isn't oversized relative to its surrounding properties, I don't consider that there are strong grounds for concern.'

Reference was made in the response to the pre-application submission to the 1½ storey form of Ford House, justifying the preference for the chalet form option. However, whilst Ford House has its first-floor windows cutting through the eaves line giving the impression of it being of 1 ½ storeys, these are tall windows and the house is actually equivalent to a two-storey building as shown by the fact that the rear range, which is only slightly taller, is a 2½ storey block. The main block of Castleford Farm to the west is a full two storeys with 1½ storey elements either side. The modern housing to the north is all at two-storey height and set on considerably higher ground. Therefore, it is considered that in the context of this site the proposed two storey house will not be over-sized in relation to other properties in the area, and that there is no justification for demanding a 1½ storey building on this plot.

Step 4: How to maximise enhancement or avoid or minimise harm

- 5.16 It is considered that the proposed development plot does not contribute to the significance of Ford House. Therefore, the proposed development utilising materials that are appropriate to the context, will not harm the heritage values of the non-designated heritage asset. As such, there is no requirement for enhancement or minimising harm.

Step 5: Record the process

- 5.17 This report presents a record of the process of the assessment of the importance of the setting of Ford House and its contribution to its significance, together with the assessment of the potential impact of the proposals.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Ford House presents as a mid-late 19th century house with later additions to the rear. The house may have earlier origins but this cannot be ascertained from its external appearance. The former farmhouse function is also no longer apparent due to the complete loss of the farm buildings of the farmstead which stood diagonally across the cross-roads formed by Roman Road and Green Lane. The house has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset due to its architectural character and historic association with the Sarum Airfield, the house sometime serving as the commander's house – a use and association that is not evident in the form or fabric of the house. As a non-designated heritage asset, its setting should be considered, but it must also be recognised that the levels of significance should be considered at a lower level than a designated heritage asset.
- 7.2 The proposed development plot appears to have been used as part of the domestic grounds of the house since c.1900 but other than a flat area where a tennis court was formed in the mid-20th century, there are no features that evidently link the plot to Ford House or that would be considered to contribute to the heritage interest of the unlisted building.
- 7.3 It is considered that the proposed development will have no impact on the minimal importance of the setting of Ford House, and will not impact on the ability to experience the house or to understand and appreciate its significance – the key test of impact of change on setting. The proposed house is of a design and scale that will not be harmful in terms of the aesthetic qualities of the setting of Ford House.
- 7.4 Accordingly, I can find no conflict in the proposed development with the National Policy in the NPPF or Policy CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted January 2015 (CS) and Policy 99 of the Draft Local Plan Review: Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and conclude that the application should be allowed.