



STATEMENT OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Coach House, 23 High Street, Cricklade SN6 6AP

I SUMMARY & CONTEXT

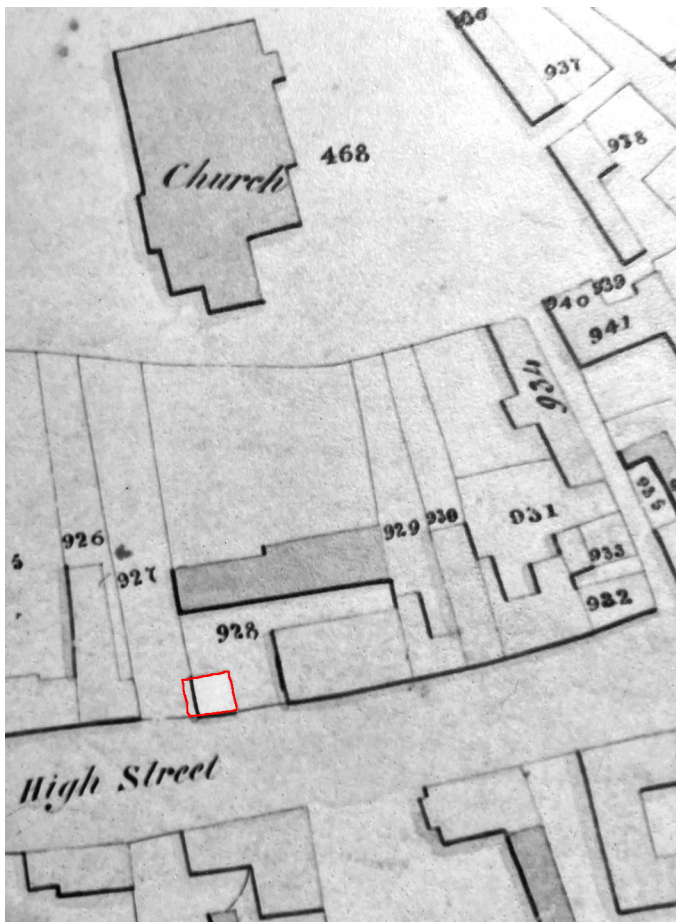
This Statement has been written in support of the application for planning and listed building consent for the change of use and restoration of the former coach-house at 23 High Street, Cricklade, SN6 6AP. The site is within the southwest quadrant of the Cricklade Conservation Area in the County of Wiltshire. The building is listed by virtue of being within the curtilage of the substantial Queen Anne house at number 23 which is listed Grade II*.

Cricklade, like most ancient towns, owes its origins to its geographical position, a terminus on the Thames serving Roman Corinium (Cirencester). Several streams and small rivers converge with the Thames forming a flood plain which made the area difficult if not impassable in winter. The name literally derives from the Saxon for 'place by the river crossing'. Although there had been earlier Iron Age track-ways it

was the Romans who built the metalled road known as Ermin Street to make a permanent crossing.

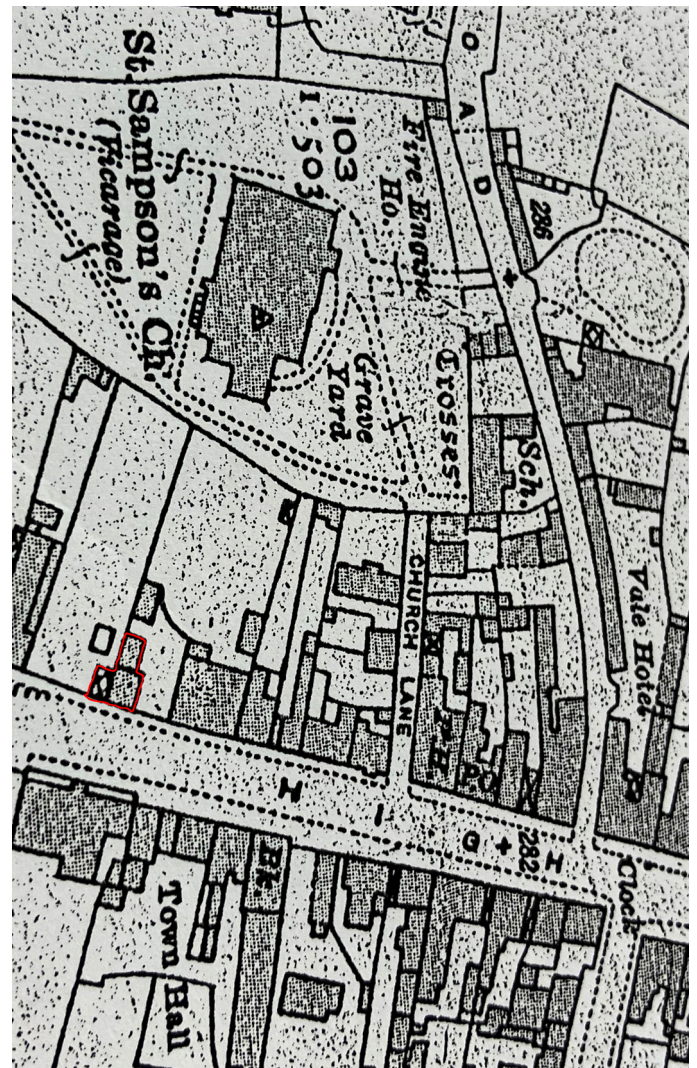
After the Romans the Saxon village became an important site in Alfred the Great's defence of Wessex. Anticipating attacks by the Vikings moving along Ermin Street Alfred built a fortified new town at Cricklade; it became the most intact example of a late Saxon town in Britain. The rectangular layout of the ramparts can still be traced. There would have been gates in each side joined by main streets, a central marketplace and a grid of secondary lanes, with the High Street flanked by burgage plots intended for development.

The property stands on Ordnance Survey Grid reference SU 100 934. From the British Geological Survey map of the area, the underlying ground is Oxford Clay.



Left: 1842 - the coach-house as it was, outlined in red, and above, the building mapped at a similar stage

Below: the coach-house as developed in 1921



PARAGRAPH 194:

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.

2 EXISTING BUILDING

The coach-house was constructed in two distinct phases. The original construction flanks the High Street and first appears on a map dating from 1842.

This roughly square structure is of random rubble faced in brick which was then extended to form three small dwelling houses at some point after 1875, but before 1921, when the edifice was partially demolished and converted into a coach-house, subsequently adopted as the doctor's surgery. Major structural repairs were undertaken in 2001 to secure the building, which had become structurally unsound, but not before substantial damage had been made to the roof and first floor timbers by the ingress of water. However, English Heritage considered the building not to be of sufficient merit to be deemed suitable to be added to the 'at risk' register, it's principal merit being it's relationship with the primary residence at 23 High Street.

The requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (LPPF) is documented in the relevant paragraphs as follows:

PARAGRAPH 195:

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 into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

PARAGRAPH 199:

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and

the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

PARAGRAPH 200:

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

In addition this statement has been written in accordance with the *Statement of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Historic England Advice*, as issued by Historic England.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE

Cricklade is recorded as a settlement the Domesday Book of 1086 and is described as being in the Hundred of *Cricklade* within the county of Wiltshire, but no record of the population is given. Cricklade was created a borough by the Saxon king Alfred the Great in 871, and by the early 10th century it was sufficiently important to have its own mint. Henry II granted the area a charter in 1155. Henry III, who reigned between 1216–72, founded a hospital and granted a weekly market and three-day fair.

3 IDENTIFICATION OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Mount House at 23 High Street is a substantial Queen Anne edifice rebuilt in 1708 and listed Grade II* in 1986. It is constructed of ashlar limestone under a Cotswold stone tiled roof and is of two storeys under substantial attics with a partial cellar. The front door is accessed via three steps, with moulded architrave, bracketed cornice and a tall broken pediment punctuated by an stone urn. It occupies the site of an older Saxon property formerly known as Mumme's House. It seems this previous edifice stood on one of the few original burgage plots apportioned from the late 9th century. The name, which was in descriptive use as late as the seventeenth century, probably derives from an original description, 'Munts House' meaning the 'top house' as the site occupies the highest point in the town, bar the Church and churchyard of St Sampson's.

The former coach-house is a subsidiary building to the original house, the earliest portion of which dates from approximately 1842. Previously it has been part of a range of three humble dwellings which were subsequently altered and converted between 1875 & 1921 into the current form. It is essentially a utilitarian structure with little or no stylistic merit.





Interior and exterior shots of the coach-house, showing structural issues to be addressed



Above: the portion of the coach-house previously serving as the doctor's surgery

Left: the coach-house roof as seen from St Sampson's Church

4 THE PROPOSAL & ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

The proposal is to convert the former coach-house into ancillary accommodation for 23 High Street. The current owner, a widower since 2011, has recently remarried and now has seven grown-up children/step-children, all of whom have partners, and ten grandchildren between him and his new wife. In addition, his mother-in-law is in her eighties, and although currently ambulatory it is anticipated that this may not always be the case. The principal dwelling at number 23 has a substantial staircase and hall that occupies a third of the footprint of the property. The existing accommodation requires the reception rooms to remain as they are leaving no option for a ground-floor bedroom/bathroom. Due to the large extended family, and the fact that family, friends and guests are forever aging, a bespoke bedroom and shower room for people with ambulatory disability is required.

The owner's wife is a passionate gardener, whose previous garden in Wincanton was open for charity with the National Gardens Scheme. She wishes to restore the principal garden and its adjoining 'Reservoir' garden. Both garden plots, restored and replanted, are scheduled to open for charity with the Wiltshire NGS and visits from gardening clubs in 2026. Historically there has been a lean-to glasshouse on the south-facing wall of the coach-house, recorded in the post 1921 map, but this is not sufficient for a garden of this size. The proposal is for a larger glasshouse to make use of the south-facing wall of the coach-house and to be double-glazed to allow tender plants to over-winter and spring propagation to take place without the use of additional heat.

There was a pre-application made to convert the coach-house by the previous owner in 2001, ref: 99-220. The then North Wiltshire District Council Conservation Officer, Varian Tye, expressed concern that the loss of storage space in the coach-house would be detrimental to the overall property although the notion of converting the first floor to residential use was deemed acceptable in principle. As it stands the first floor is accessed by a ladder, which makes it unsuitable for domestic accommodation. The gated portion of the coach-house, ostensibly a garage but in fact used as the doctor's surgery in post-War years, is not deep enough to accommodate a modern vehicle, so not fit for purpose as a double garage. The proposed partition of the double doored space precisely replicates the original division when used as a doctor's surgery until the early 1980s. The current proposal maintains

a storage facility of over 17m², along with additional storage available in the boiler house to the north of the principal residence, the potting shed, outdoor loos and the existing cellar.

The building requires another phase of restoration and continuing maintenance. Several of the first-floor joists and most of the floor itself need to be replaced having become unsound. This is disproportionately expensive when the primary function is merely as a shed. There is a requirement for ancillary accommodation for the principal residence, bespoke for elderly people with ambulatory difficulty. In addition to its horticultural function, the glasshouse will also allow people to sit out in daylight when the weather is inclement.

The elements of the coach-house that face the principal residence at Mount House will remain unchanged visually. The addition of a glasshouse on the garden side of the coach-house is entirely in keeping with the structures required to create and maintain a productive and beautiful garden.

5 CONCLUSION

We consider the proposed development to give useful life to a semi-redundant building in poor condition, with no damage to the heritage asset. A much-altered building, it has served historically as a range of domestic dwellings, stabling and a doctor's surgery. The conversion to a new use will enable the whole listed property, Mount House and gardens, to prosper both as a social and an aesthetic asset to Cricklade.

