

**Ramsbury Manor House Interiors**

**Further opening-up works required to Ramsbury Manor  
House to Facilitate Repair, Reservicing, and Asbestos  
Removal**

**Heritage Statement**

April 2026

Job Number: HE-RMI 263

Issued 30.04.26



*Figure 1: Ground Floor, Salon (GR06) internal southeast facade*

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## Further opening-up works required to Ramsbury Manor House to Facilitate Repair, Reservicing, and Asbestos Removal (HE-RMI 263: Issue V1: 30.04.26)

### 1. Introduction

This document builds on an earlier version of this Heritage statement setting out opening up works required to facilitate the specification of proposed repairs and upgrades to Ramsbury Manor House prepared in 2024, submitted to Wiltshire Council on 06.12.24. The application reference was PL/2024/11184 and Listed Building Consent was granted on 06.06.25. Further to implementing the approval, discoveries have been made. These include the discovery of extensive asbestos containing materials including in floor voids; modern interventions including steelwork and modern mineral wool insulation materials; and other evidence that goes to confirming that floorboards throughout the Manor House have been lifted before. Further details of discoveries are set out below.

It has now become necessary to lift floorboards throughout the Manor House and to undertake further opening up to the lower ground floor concrete slab, and the removal of floor finishes etc. at the lower ground floor which contain asbestos, and asbestos elsewhere within the Manor House including the hoist shaft. This is to enable the removal of discovered asbestos and to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the structure; and to enable the report required under condition 4 of Listed Building Consent PL/2024/11184 to be prepared so that the condition can be discharged. The condition requires that:

Following the lifting of the floorboards, removal of panelling and removal of plaster, a written report outlining all findings, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority (LPA). The report shall include a timeline for works (up to and including the reinstatement of the disturbed surfaces) and any structural issues uncovered, along with recommendations on how these are to be addressed. The LPA shall be informed of the works, and, upon submission of the report, allowance shall be made for an on-site inspection by the LPA, if requested. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To confirm and record the findings once initial investigative works have taken place, to establish an appropriate and sympathetic approach to potential additional works in order to preserve the special interest of the listed building and its fabric.

This heritage statement has been prepared to assess the harm of further opening up beyond that which was approved under Listed Building Consent PL/2024/11184, the majority of which has been implemented on site.

The Ramsbury Manor Estate is owned by a charitable foundation, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation, which is charged with its conservation and presentation to the public. The purpose of the initial opening up was to enable designs to be prepared to make the building safe to open to the public and to address damp issues that have harmed the fabric. The limited opening up approved under Listed Building Consent PL/2024/11184 has not enabled the required structural assessment to be undertaken nor has it been possible to prepare designs to enable the building to be made safe and opened to the public. The discovery of extensive asbestos has further hindered these objectives.

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Opening Ramsbury Manor House to the public is part of the vision of The Ramsbury Manor Foundation and is inextricably linked to its charitable objectives, which are:

- i. to preserve and conserve for the public benefit Ramsbury Manor, Ramsbury, its architectural heritage, gardens, surrounding grounds and park land and its contents being of artistic, historical, architectural or constructional merit; and
- ii. to advance the arts or education, in particular by preserving and making available Ramsbury Manor and its contents to the public for their academic study, educational purposes and appreciation.

The Foundation's vision is to open Mr Harry Hyams's home to the public and to allow his Collection to be viewed in the setting for which it was assembled.

In the past the Foundation has carried out conservation repairs to the Manor House including its reroofing with hand-made pegged clay tiles carried out under listed building consent 19/00649/LBC granted on 18 March 2019 and completed in December 2019. At the same time the Ramsbury Manor Foundation renovated the Courtyard Building between 2018 and 2021 as included in listed building consents 17/11946/LBC, 19/01787/LBC, 19/07279/LBC and 20/02039/LBC granted between March 2018 and March 2020. The Ramsbury Manor Foundation completed these works to a high standard.

More recent works include like-for-like conservation repairs to the Walled Garden's walls and replanting the walled gardens so that they can be opened to the public. The Foundation is also progressing towards constructing the New Estate Yard so that the construction of the Exhibition Centre can follow. Proposals for the Exhibition Centre and Estate Yard were submitted to Wiltshire Council and Listed Building Consent was granted on 11th September 2023 (PL/2022/05380) and planning permission was granted on 06th October 2023 (PL/2022/04972).

The Manor House cannot presently be opened to the public because its electrical services have been assessed as unsafe and other old services are in need of replacement. An initial inspection of the ground, first, and second floors within the Manor House undertaken by the Structural Engineer Clive Dawson of Hockley and Dawson in August 2024 has raised concerns related to their structural stability and load capacity. The stair structure is also known to be fragile. More generally the House is in decorative disrepair. To allow the treatment of a moth infestation the collection has been decanted. With the collection in appropriate safe storage the repairs necessary to the Manor House can be undertaken along with the backlog of maintenance.

The Manor House is viewed by the Foundation as part of the Harry Hyams Collection. By opening it to the public it will be given a long-term future which will justify its conservation as a building of exceptional interest, described by Historic England as barely altered. It is the Foundation's intention to open Harry Hyams' home as opposed to turning the House into a museum. The Foundation intends to conserve the significance of the building as designed and constructed by Robert Hooke (polymath, scientist, philosopher and architect). During the process the team of Specialist Conservation Architects will also record the structure.

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Of the projects, the Foundation intends to carry out, the internal conservation of the Manor House will take the longest and is central to achieving the Foundation's objectives. Before the planning and listed building consents were granted for the Exhibition Centre and Estate Yard the Foundation noted that it intends to commission a further study and report into the condition of the Manor House's fabric and its mechanical and electrical services. These works have progressed and this application to further open-up the fabric relates to this study and is necessary to complete designs to preserve the future of the Manor House.

The limited opening up undertaken has identified that there are additional voids below the floor voids above both the Salon and the Hall. The limitations of the amount of opening up allowed within Listed Building Consent PL/2024/11184 have prevented interpreting why this is so. However, more generally the opening up has revealed that the Manor House has been changed extensively. It is not the unchanged perfect dollhouse it was once thought to be.

It was apparent from discussions with Historic England, prior to the granting of the existing consent, that the perceived possibility that some boards had never been lifted before was a factor limiting Historic England's willingness to allow the general lifting of floorboards. The limited lifting of floorboards carried out under the existing consent has confirmed that all boards lifted have previously been lifted. While it was not previously accepted by Peregrine Bryant Architects that some floorboards had never been lifted, it was not previously possible to make a definite statement to this effect. However, the works undertaken under Listed Building Consent PL/2024/11184, have revealed evidence that boards have been extensively lifted in the past. This evidence includes:

1. How boards lifted were fixed, including concealed fixings
2. Extensive modern services installed within floor voids (electrical, plumbing and sound system)
3. Structural alterations within floor voids (including installation of rolled steel joists)
4. The extensive use of modern insulation and asbestos found within voids

In addition to what was previously approved under Listed Building Consent PL/2024/11184, the study of the House will require:

1. Lifting potentially all floorboards to inspect and record the floor structure including particularly the condition of timbers in external walls and in relation to the cantilevered floor structure
2. Opening-up the floor in the ground floor games room in three further locations

The strategy for the further opening-up is shown on the drawings included with this Heritage Statement. While we are requiring permission to lift all floorboards throughout the Manor House, on a room-by-room basis, only boards that it is necessary to lift will be lifted. We are also seeking to open up the secondary ceiling voids above the Salon and Hall which will require removing areas of lath and plaster between the voids, which will be done working from above, after the floorboards above have been lifted. Further opening up of the ground floor concrete slab is also required. Where it is possible to remove the asbestos and to fully understand and record the structure without removing all floorboards, only those that need to be lifted will be lifted. It may be necessary to remove some skirting boards to allow the lifting of floorboards. Wherever possible this will be avoided.

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Once there is sufficient access to floor voids a report will be prepared identifying the works required enabling the discharge of condition 4 within the current Listed Building Consent PL/2024/11184. The Foundation then intends to undertake the works recommended in the report, and it is intended that descriptions of the works undertaken during the opening-up and subsequent works will inform displays in the Exhibition Centre on the Manor House. Once the works are undertaken the collection can be returned and with other projects completed, the Manor House and wider Estate can be opened to the public enabling the Foundation to fulfil its vision and charitable objectives.

## 2. Short History of Ramsbury Manor

Ramsbury Manor (Grade 1) sits within a Grade II Registered Park and Garden, and within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding National Beauty, along the north side of the flood plain on the course of a Roman road. Endowed by the Saxon Bishopric of Ramsbury, it passed to the Bishop of Salisbury and eventually to the Seymour family, Dukes of Somerset. The present House was probably designed by Robert Hooke for William Jones in 1681-5 and remains remarkably unchanged. The house's setting was transformed c.1776 with the creation of an informal landscape park designed by James Sanderson for Sir William Langham Jones. The distinguished collector Mr Harry Hyams bought the Estate in 1964, to house his collection. After his death in 2015, the Ramsbury Manor Estate and the H J Hyams Collection passed to the Ramsbury Manor Foundation with a substantial endowment. Ramsbury Manor is a nationally renowned exemplar of a late C17 high-status house in a secluded setting transformed into an English landscaped park.

The Estate is an ensemble of exceptional heritage significance in the national context. A full history of the Manor House and Estate is contained in *The History of Ramsbury Manor (Document No: 177-HE-RE-History - V5 (22/10/2019))* prepared by Peregrine Bryant Architects and submitted to Wiltshire Council with the planning and listed building consent applications for the Exhibition Centre and Estate Yard. The following is a summary:

The Ramsbury Estate lies in the Kennet Valley where the River Kennet feeds the Estate's lake. The Manor House sits on the lake's north bank. Early in the C13 the Bishop of Salisbury had a hunting lodge built, where the present house now stands. The Manor House is centred in a valley, which was likely an agrarian landscape of varying intensity for several millennia. A Roman road runs through the valley. Along the flood plain's northern edge a routeway interrupted by the park is likely of pre-Roman origins and subsequently integrated into the main Roman road system at the Romano-British small town of Cunetio (Mildenhall). By the C9 Ramsbury was identifiable as a Saxon Royal Estate and in 909 the King gave the Estate to endow his newly created Bishopric of Ramsbury, which was soon united with Sherborne (1058), translated to Old Sarum (1075), then to Salisbury (1227), Ramsbury Manor, however, remained part of the episcopal estate. In the C13 there is reference to the Bishops' chase at Ramsbury. As land use intensified into the C14 the extensive chase gave way to intensive park land. References to a park at Ramsbury start in 1347, and it evolved and underwent various changes before the creation of the extant landscape park c.1775-8. In 1551, the Manor passed to Edward Seymour, 1st Duke of Somerset, and following his attainder Edward VI granted it to William Herbert, 1st

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Earl of Pembroke. Between 1562 and 1567 he remade the house, gardens and subsidiary buildings.

After restoration in 1660, the 7th Earl of Pembroke sold Ramsbury to Henry Powle, Speaker of the Commons, who broke up the estate. Sir William Jones, Attorney General to Charles II, purchased the house in 1680 and appointed Robert Hooke to rebuild it. Work began in 1681, but Jones died in the following spring, the house was completed by his executors for his heir (a minor) who completed the building in 1685. The double-pile house has an elegant and uncompromised design. Through marriage and inheritance, the estate passed to Sir William Langham Jones, who between 1767 and 1785 replaced the formal setting of the house with the then conventional arrangement of a block standing in an informal landscape park. The park boundaries were extended northwards, to the north-east beyond the line of the earliest medieval park, and the Marlborough Road was further diverted around the expanded perimeter. At the same time the lake was constructed and the Courtyard Building to the south of the Manor House took on their present form. The result was a typical rather than exceptional, although dramatic, change to the setting of the Manor House.

The Estate passed to the Burdett family, who held it until the death of Sir Francis Burdett in 1951, it was then briefly owned by the 7th Earl of Wilton and then Lord Rootes, who died in 1964 before Mr Hyams purchased Ramsbury Manor in December 1964. Mr Hyams purchased the Manor seeking a setting in which to curate and display his collection. Between 1965 and 1977, the contractor George Wimpey and Co Ltd, which Mr Hyams had been a director of since 1958, repaired and modernised the Manor House and Estate. The house was redecorated by Colefax and Fowler. Mr Hyams also had works undertaken to the Manor House by Dennis Crump, Jeremy Benson and Peregrine Bryant.

Mr Hyams bequeathed to the nation the Ramsbury Manor Estate and the H J Hyams Collection, which is of international significance, with a substantial endowment to maintain it and make the Estate and Collection available to the public in perpetuity. The Ramsbury Manor Foundation, a charitable trust, was established. The Trustees commenced a major 'long cycle' repair campaign while continuing the Estate's traditional management and preparing plans for its future, including the conservation and repair of the Manor House interiors so that it can be opened to the public in accordance with Mr Hyams' wishes.

## 3. Statement of significance

The Manor House is listed Grade I, placing it in the most important 2.5% of listed buildings. The list entry is SU2569570992 and is contained in appendix 9. There are c.500,000 listed buildings in England, and c.12,500 of these are Grade I. Grade I listed buildings are of exceptional interest.

The Ramsbury Manor Estate contains other listed buildings and other important designations:

1. The Entrance gates and Lodges are listed Grade II\*, placing them in the most important 8% of listed buildings, and categorising them as particularly important and of more than special interest.
2. The Stable Block, and the bridge and weir over the Kennet, are listed Grade II, categorising them as of special interest.

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3. The gardens and park are registered as Grade II.
4. Ramsbury Manor lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
5. The Kennet Valley is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The Manor House is of exceptional significance nationally for its architectural and illustrative historic interest as a major, almost certainly a rare, surviving work of a leading late C17 architect, Robert Hooke. Its location in an exceptional setting in the Kennet Valley enables its quality to be appreciated in almost complete seclusion. Collectively, the various elements of the Estate are of exceptional significance.

Mr Hyams' stewardship sustained the Manor House and the wider Estate's significance at a time when many suffered from decline, intensive commercial or residential use, or almost equally intensive adaptation to provide public access. Consequently, Ramsbury Manor possesses a special "spirit of place".

Ramsbury Manor House's aesthetic value is exceptional. The quality of the polite architectural design is recognised as of the highest quality and provides both sensory and intellectual stimulation within its historic environment. While it has been considered largely unaltered, there is evidence of change which adds to the building's interest. Its historic value is similarly exceptional and has been well documented, including through association with significant historic figures from William Jones, passing through Sir William Langham Jones and others to Mr Harry Hyams. The House's evidential value is also exceptional, the visible interior fabric of the Manor House reveals panelling from various periods, including early Jacobean and later panelling including Georgian and the Grinling Gibbons panelling in the Saloon. There is also a mix of floorboards with wide oak boards, likely from the original construction. However, the structure is not fully understood. The building's communal value is high, it has great significance to those interested in historic houses, the academic community, and the local community.

The Manor House and wider Estate are therefore of exceptional heritage significance in the national context. While some elements are intrinsically more significant than others, all interventions must have regard to the effect on the heritage asset as a whole, as much as on the individual elements affected, and must be considered in the context of public benefit.

## 4. Need for further opening-up works

The Ramsbury Manor Foundation's objective is to open the Ramsbury Manor Estate to the public, which includes opening the Manor House to small groups of visitors on guided tours. To do this the building must be made safe.

The electrical services within the Manor House have been assessed by QODA Consulting (a firm of Mechanical and Electrical Engineers) and are known to be unsafe. Plumbing services are similarly old and in need of replacement. An initial inspection of the ground, first, and second floors within the Manor House, undertaken by Hockley and Dawson, has identified concerns related to their structural stability and load bearing capacity.

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The replacement of services and the addition of some new lighting are needed as part of the Ramsbury Manor Foundation's intention to open the Manor House to visitors as part of its educational objective and to provide public benefit and meet its obligations as a charity. Before the Foundation can open the Manor House to the public, it also needs to make sure that the structure and fabric are in good order.

Following instruction by the Ramsbury Manor Foundation, a design team, including Specialist Conservation Architects, structural and services engineers, have prepared initial designs to address the replacement of existing services and to install new specialist lighting. Further to the granting of Listed Building Consent PL/2024/11184, most of the limited opening up granted under the said consent has been undertaken. It was initially hoped that this limited opening up would have allowed the design team to confirm, as far as possible, that the installation of new services can be done with minimal interventions into the existing historic fabric. However, despite the specialist engineers informing the areas of opening-up requested as part of the previous application; the opening up has not been sufficient to determine how the replacement services can be installed with minimal interventions to the fabric, nor to determine the condition of the structure. While this is partly due to the discovery of asbestos, it is also the result of restricted minimal opening up permitted under Listed Building Consent PL/2024/11184.

In part due to the discovery of asbestos, the opening-up approved has not allowed the Ramsbury Manor Foundation to achieve its objectives of:

1. Checking the condition of the existing fabric, which includes checking timber floor structures where they pass into external walls, and the cantilever structure
2. Understanding the structure
3. Understanding how proposed works can be implemented with minimal interventions
4. Inspecting lath and plaster ceilings and ceiling pendants/pattresses
5. Understanding the fabric and structure in floor voids and the additional voids below floor voids
6. Reducing health and safety risks to building occupants and maintenance staff

The replacement of services is a major task, and the Foundation understands that there are conservation benefits to the Manor House in undertaking necessary repairs to the fabric while the building is opened-up and while the collection has been decanted to enable moth treatment. The Foundation recognises that dealing with fabric repairs at this time will avoid the need for repeating the exercise of decanting the collection again, and putting it at risk of damage, and reopening the fabric again in the foreseeable future.

## 5. Floor plans showing opening-up works to floors

The opening-up works comprise lifting potentially all floorboards throughout the Manor House at lower-ground, ground, first and second floors and digging trial holes within the solid lower ground floor slab and around the external perimeter of the building. In addition to the Foundation's objectives noted above, the opening up required also enables the removal of asbestos containing materials.

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While this application includes lifting all floorboards, where it is possible to achieve the objectives without so doing, only those boards that it is necessary to lift will be lifted. A detailed methodology is given below in Section 6, describing how floorboards will be lifted so as to minimise harm to the boards.

The extent of proposed opening-up requested under this further application is shown on the following drawings:

- 263 HE-RMI 405 C (lower ground floor plan)
- 263 HE-RMI 406 C (ground floor plan)
- 263 HE-RMI 407 C (first floor plan)
- 263 HE-RMI 408 C (second floor plan)

The previous heritage statement included within application PL/2024/11184 identified that the drawings which accompanied that application did not account for the lengths of floorboards, and that, to lift floorboards without cutting them, it would, in some cases, be necessary to lift a larger area of floorboards. It also noted that, to avoid cutting boards due to the direction of the boards, it may be necessary to lift larger areas of boards than shown on drawings, and, to avoid cutting boards, in corner rooms particularly, it would be necessary to lift further floorboards. It is therefore the case that it would potentially have been possible to lift a greater area of flooring under Listed Building Consent PL/2024/11184, than indicated on the drawings that accompanied that application. Although this was not done, it is worth noting in the context of this new application. It remains the case that the objective of lifting floorboards will be done without the intention of cutting floorboards.

## 6. Discoveries from limited opening up undertaken under approval PL/2024/11184

The findings/discoveries from the opening up undertaken under Listed Building Consent PL/2024/11184 are shown on the following drawings:

- 263 HE-RMI 410
- 263 HE-RMI 411
- 263 HE-RMI 412
- 263 HE-RMI 413

Please note that all dimensions on drawings are shown in mm unless stated otherwise.

Drawing 410 (lower ground floor plan) shows the area of asbestos found in the floor build up together with areas where there is strongly presumed to be asbestos. Due to the discovery of asbestos, the opening up of the concrete slabs granted permission under Listed Building Consent PL/2024/11184 in the lobby, south stair and corridor was not undertaken.

Drawing 411 (ground floor plan) identifies areas of confirmed asbestos in the floor voids and areas of strongly presumed asbestos located in the floor voids. The drawing also shows some of

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what was discovered in the ground floor void, including modern mineral wool insulation and service routes.

Drawing 412 (first floor plan) identifies areas of confirmed asbestos in the floor void and areas of floor voids strongly presumed to contain asbestos. Due to the discovery of asbestos, not all areas of floorboards where permission was granted to lift were lifted. The drawing also shows some of what was discovered within the floor voids, including steel structure and services.

Drawing 413 (second floor plan) identifies areas of confirmed asbestos in floor voids and areas of strongly presumed asbestos in floor voids. Due to the discovery of asbestos not all areas of floorboards where permission was granted to lift were lifted. The drawing also shows some of what was discovered in the floor voids, including modern mineral wool insulation and services.

## 7. Methodology for lifting further floorboards and general approach to trial holes and voids below floor voids

The methodology proposed for lifting further floorboards is the same as that given in the heritage statement that was approved under Listed Building Consent PL/2024/11184.

### 7.1 Lifting floorboards

Floorboards will be lifted by carefully selected competent carpenters overseen by a competent RIBA accredited Specialist Conservation Architect. The reasons for opening-up are given above and the areas where it is proposed to open-up are shown on the drawings referred to above.

The methodology set out below is developed from Guidance provide by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) Technical Advice Note: Patching Old Floorboards by Philip Hughes BSc, MRICS (Chartered Building Surveyor) and the previous experience gained by Peregrine Bryant Architects working on similar historic houses.

1. We have carefully considered which floorboards need to be lifted so as to avoid unnecessarily lifting boards and so reducing the risk of damage.
2. Each board, once lifted, will be numbered and dated (with date lifted) on its underside with a pencil and its position will be recorded on a plan to indicate its position and to allow it to be relayed in the correct position.
3. Once lifted, floorboards will be carefully stacked, face-to-face, to protect the finish, within the room that they have been lifted. Boards will not be randomly piled.
4. Floor fixings, brads, screws etc will be bagged up and labelled so that they can be reused on the boards that they were taken from.
5. While inspections to date do not suggest that any of the floorboards are decayed, it is recognised that it is easy to damage floorboards if the wrong approach is taken to lifting them, and that removing the first board without damage is more difficult than removing subsequent boards.

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6. In each instance, the first board to be lifted will be carefully selected. Where possible, a shorter board will be selected with at least one good end, and ideally one with a gap suitable for the bolster. Wherever possible, the first board lifted will not be next to the wall.
7. A careful, patient approach will be adopted and work will not be rushed.
8. A range of appropriate tools will be available, including:
  - a. Two no. wide-bladed bolsters
  - b. Wooden blocks of various thicknesses
  - c. A flat hardened steel plate
  - d. A hammer
  - e. ½ inch battens circa of various lengths, at least 8 inches longer than the board being lifted
  - f. Nail punches
  - g. A hacksaw
  - h. A crowbar
9. If there is significant resistance when lifting the board, the need for lifting it will be reassessed.
10. Using a block of wood or steel plate to protect the edge of the adjoining board, the carpenter will carefully work around the board to be lifted with the bolster. Levering from side to side slightly to loosen the board.
11. Starting over a joist (by a nail) circa one-third of the way down the board (to avoid splitting the end), lever more vigorously with a pumping action, first one side of the board and then the other, so as to raise the board up by one-third of its thickness. Ensuring that the edge of the adjacent board is protected. Moving towards the middle, then back towards the end, repeat the process until one end of the board comes free.
12. If this does not work and the board must be lifted, attempts will be made to remove the fixings or to drive nails down.
13. Once one end of the board has been freed, place the ½ inch batten underneath it, spanning the two adjacent boards, and gradually move this towards the next set of nails, applying gentle pressure to the free part of the board. This should ease the nail slightly out of the joist. Remove the batten and allow the board to drop to its original position, giving access to the nail heads. Where this does not succeed, the carpenter will try with the bolster again, levering with a pump action under the board near the position of the nail away from the edge of the board.
14. Particular care will be taken with nails at the end of the board so as to avoid splitting the boards.
15. Once the board is free, the nails/fixings will be pulled out with pincers.

It is recognised that the levering process with the bolster against the side of the board is the process most likely to cause damage by bruising neighbouring boards or splitting away the part of the board being lifted. This process can usually be avoided when lifting the second and subsequent boards by placing a block across the joist and to lever against the underside of the board with a crowbar. Once the board has started to lift, the bolster or crowbar can be inserted between board and joist, and levering with a pump action resumed. Again, it is wise to start about one-third of the way along the board and work to the middle and back to the end.

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Where a board is found to be fragile, nails will be cut with a saw.

The experience of the carpenters will also be drawn upon to refine and improve the methodology for lifting the floorboards.

Once the floorboards are lifted, the floor voids will be cleared of all asbestos containing materials. Should this prove not to be possible, guided by the client's health and safety advisor, encapsulating the asbestos will be considered. Once the asbestos is removed from the floor voids and it is safe to do so, the floor voids will be recorded by an RIBA accredited Specialist Conservation Architect. A photographic record will be made and drawings prepared. The structural engineer will work with the Conservation Architect to assess the condition of the fabric within the floor void, and the services engineer will assess the viability for routing replacement services. Should other specialists be required, they will be brought in. It is anticipated, that in most instances, the floors will be relaid within a month of being lifted. It may be necessary to remove pugging or debris from the floor voids to assess the condition of the ceilings. Anything removed will be reinstated other than asbestos containing materials. While permission is sought to lift all floorboards, should it be possible to determine the information needed without lifting all boards, boards which can be left in situ will be left in place.

In some areas, as noted on the drawings, the floorboards are dowelled together using iron or steel dowels. Peregrine Bryant Architects have encountered this before. The dowels in the first board to be lifted will need to be cut with a saw. Then possibly the second, thereafter, subsequent boards will be lifted and eased out with the dowel intact. Should this risk harm to the board, the dowels in subsequent boards will also be cut.

At second floor, in some rooms, it has been discovered that carpet is laid on vinyl. If vinyl is found below carpets, it is possible that its removal may harm the surface of the floorboards if it has not been laid on sheeting boards. In staff bedroom SR17, it is known that the vinyl floor has been laid directly on to the floorboards. Because of this, there is the possibility that its removal will cause some damage to the surface of the floorboards. All care will be taken when removing vinyl.

Any item removed to enable the lifting of floorboards and not replaced immediately will be placed into storage on the Ramsbury Manor Estate in conditions similar to the room they were removed from.

As part of the work already undertaken, as highlighted in our previous application, the doors within the Sewing Room (SR13), which are part of built-in cupboards and have incredibly fine glazing beads, were carefully taken down, protected and put into storage before the approved opening-up commenced. They will be kept in storage until the building works are completed. All items put into storage will be scheduled and labelled and reinstated in the location they were taken from. As this application is for lifting a greater extent of floorboards, a further assessment of fragile fixtures that need to be removed and placed into storage will be made before works start. This will include the glass doors, which are part of cabinetry in the first floor corridor. These will be removed and placed into storage.

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#### 7.2 Digging Trial Holes

Concrete floor slabs will be broken out using a handheld Kango hammer by a carefully selected, skilled operative overseen by a RIBA accredited Specialist Conservation Architect. Once concrete slabs are removed, the remainder of the trial hole will be dug by hand to the minimum depth required by the Structural Engineer. The size of the hole will be kept to the minimum. For practical reasons, it may be necessary to make the excavation larger in plan size than shown on the drawings. The excavation will be recorded on drawings and a photographic record will be taken. All earth removed from the excavation will be back filled into the hole.

#### 7.3 Voids below floor voids

Above the Salon and the Hall there are voids below the floor voids. It is probable that the ceilings to the Salon and Hall were lowered in the mid-twentieth century. These ceiling voids have not been assessed. To allow access to these voids to test for asbestos and to understand their purpose and significance, the laths and plaster to the ceiling separating the voids will need to be cut away locally. The minimum number of holes will be made, and it is anticipated that holes will be no larger than the spacing of the joists by 500mm.

## 8. Plans showing opening-up to walls

The opening-up works comprise removing plasterboard, plaster, panelling and hardboard in six selected locations at lower-ground, ground, first and second floors. Every effort has been made to minimise the extent of opening-up, and opening-up has been kept to the minimum necessary in each location.

The panelling has been assessed, and none of the most significant panelling (Jacobean and Grinling Gibbons) will be removed at this time. The panelling we propose removing is Georgian (type 6 on schedule of panelling contained in appendix 9) or later. We have, in each instance, found discrete locations for removing panelling and are only proposing removing panelling where absolutely necessary.

A detailed methodology is given below in section 8 describing the principles for removing plasterboard, plaster, panelling and hardboard. There may be some need to adjust each methodology in situ. Every effort will be made to minimise harm to the fabric.

The plasterboard, plaster, panelling and hardboard will be opened up to:

1. confirm that proposed services routes are possible with minimal impact on the fabric; and
2. better understand the fabric and construction.

The extent of opening-up required is shown on drawings 263 HE RMI 400 (lower ground floor plan), 263 HE RMI 401 (ground floor plan), 263 HE RMI 402 (first floor plan), and 263 HE RMI 403 (second floor plan). Please note that all dimensions on drawings are shown in mm unless stated otherwise.

## 9. Methodology for opening-up walls

The proposed opening-up to walls has been kept to the minimum number of locations and a minimum area of fabric disturbed. There are different materials affected and therefore different approaches to opening-up will be needed. In each instance, the works will be overseen by a RIBA accredited Specialist Conservation Architect, and where the opening-up involves panelling, it will be undertaken by a carefully selected, competent carpenter, where the work involves removing plaster or plasterboard it will be done by an appropriately skilled, carefully selected builder. The areas selected for opening-up have been guided by the significance of the fabric and, wherever possible, fabric of lesser significance has been selected for opening-up.

The areas of wall finishes proposed for opening-up are shown on the drawings noted in section 7 above and are identified by a “thick-lined” arrow and a number in a circle, and are as follows.

- a) Area 1. The removal of plasterboard in the lower ground floor, Staff Room (LGR05). Our assessment is that this is plasterboard, when tapping it, it sounds like plasterboard. (It is unlikely to be lath and plaster as it sounds too hollow. If, however, the finish is lath and plaster the same general approach will be taken again with great care.)

We propose opening-up in two locations, one above the light switch and one below the light switch on the north wall. In each instance, the opening-up will be a square c.300x300. The opening-up above the light switch will be done first and if this reveals sufficient information it will not be necessary to open up below the light switch.

For the plasterboard, the c.300x300 squares will be marked onto the wall and scored in with a knife. Each corner will be drilled and then an electric saw with a short blade or a hacksaw will be inserted into the hole drilled to cut a neat hole. Damage will be kept to a minimum.

- b) Area 2. The removal of lime plaster applied to masonry in the lower ground floor, Games Room (LGR02). It is impossible to know the thickness of the plaster, but in this location the finish is certainly plaster, and most likely on brickwork.

We propose opening-up in two locations, one above the light switch and one below the light switch on the north wall. In each instance, the opening-up will be a square c.300x300. The opening-up above the light switch will be done first and if this reveals sufficient information it will not be necessary to open up below the light switch.

C.300x300 squares will be marked onto the wall and scored in with a knife. A chisel will then be used to remove the plaster, with great care taken not to harm the brickwork behind.

- c) Areas 3 and 4. The removal of “Georgian panelling” in two locations: 1) at ground floor, the door reveal between the Library (GR01) and the Hall (GR02); and 2) at first floor the door reveal between the Blue Bedroom (FR02) and the North Hall (ST02). In both instances, we propose removing panelling to only one door reveal. The panelling in these

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two locations is similar and the same methodology for opening-up will be used. (The panelling is panelling type 6 on the schedule of panelling contained in appendix 9.)

The beading between the framing and the flat panel will be scored with a knife, cutting through the paint. The beads, which run around all four sides of the panelling, will be carefully eased off to release the panels. In each instance there is dado height panelling. The lower panels will be removed first and the upper panels only removed if we do not learn what we need to from the removal of the lower panels. Door reveals have been chosen as they are discreet locations not unduly visible.

- d) Area 5. The removal of a door lining at first floor to the door between Mr Hyams' Bedroom (FR12) and Corridor (FR11). Only one door lining will be removed.

A sharp knife will be used to score the paint where the lining joins adjacent timbers. The paint will be gently rubbed back at the edges of the frame and lining to find any fixing locations. Fixings will be removed. The frame and lining will be eased off.

- e) Area 6. The removal of hardboard at second floor to one side of the lobby space (SR23). From tapping this panelling, it is clearly thin and most likely hardboard, or a thin plywood. There is no splitting and it is not natural timber.

The framing at ceiling level, at mid-height and the skirting will be carefully rubbed back to reveal the fixings. The fixings to these "frames" can generally be ascertained (they are partially visible on the mid-height frame, where screw heads can be seen). The fixings will be unscrewed and the "framing" eased off. The hardboard will then be removed.

There will be no making good to areas where plasterboard or plaster has been removed until the necessary works to make the building safe so it can be opened for visitors have been completed. Where panelling, door linings and hardboard have been removed, they will be temporarily refixed. When the works necessary to make the building safe, so it can be opened to visitors, are complete, all opening-up will be made good on a like-for-like basis.

## 10. Lifting of fireplace hearths

Should it be necessary to gain access to the floor voids below fireplace hearths then the hearths will be carefully lifted. Before this is done all options for gaining safe access to the voids without lifting the hearths will be considered. The hearth will be recorded before it is lifted. A methodology will be agreed between the conservation contractor and the conservation architect which will consider how to undertake these works minimising the risk of damage to the hearth and surrounding fabric. The surrounding fabric will be protected and due regard will be given to vulnerabilities of damaging the hearth stone. As soon as the void has been inspected and if necessary any asbestos present is removed the hearth will either be reinstated or if it is considered more appropriate they will be placed into storage and reinstated after the main works to the house are complete.

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Rooms known to have fireplace hearths are listed below. There may be other fireplace hearths, if this is so they will be carefully lifted if necessary.

| Room name            | Room number |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Staff Room           | LGR01       |
| Library              | GR01        |
| Hall                 | GR02        |
| Large Dining Room    | GR03        |
| Small Dining Room    | GR05        |
| Saloon               | GR06        |
| Chinese Sitting Room | GR07        |
| Small Chinese Room   | GR08        |
| Blue Bathroom        | FR01        |
| Blue Bedroom         | FR02        |
| Chinese Bedroom      | FR03        |
| Chinese Bathroom     | FR04        |
| Pink Bedroom         | FR05        |
| Yellow Bedroom       | FR09        |
| Mrs Hyams Bathroom   | FR10        |
| Mrs Hyams Bedroom    | FR12        |
| Mr Hyams Bedroom     | FR13        |
| Mr Hyams Bathroom    | FR14        |
| Staff Sitting Room   | SR01        |
| Staff Bedroom        | SR02        |
| Storeroom            | SR03        |
| Bedroom              | SR04        |
| Bedroom              | SR05        |
| Green Bedroom        | SR08        |
| Linen Room           | SR09        |
| Storeroom            | SR11        |
| Restoration Room     | SR12        |
| Sewing Room          | SR13        |

## 11. Removal of built in furniture

Should it be necessary to gain access to floor voids below to remove asbestos, inspect the structure, or to enable the lifting of floorboards, built in furniture including bookcases, window seats, radiator covers, and display cabinets may need to be carefully removed/disassembled. If this is required the “furniture” will be recorded and a methodology will be agreed between the conservation contractor and the conservation architect which will consider how to undertake these works minimising the risk of damage to the furniture and surrounding fabric. The surrounding fabric will be protected and due regard will be given to vulnerabilities of damaging the furniture. The furniture will then be placed into storage and reinstated after the main works to the house are complete.

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Rooms with built in furniture are listed below. There may be built in furniture in other rooms, if this is so it will be carefully dismantled if necessary.

| Room name              | Room number |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Games Room             | LGR02       |
| Cloakroom              | LGR03       |
| Pan Wash               | LGR04       |
| Staff Room             | LGR05       |
| Main Kitchen           | LGR07       |
| Scullery               | LGR08       |
| Corridor               | LGR10       |
| Store Room             | LGR10a      |
| Projection Room        | LGR11       |
| Cinema                 | LGR12       |
| Laundry Room           | LGR13       |
| Library                | GR01        |
| Hall                   | GR02        |
| Butler's Pantry        | GR04        |
| Small Chinese Room     | GR08        |
| North Hall Toilet      | GR09        |
| South Stair            | ST01        |
| Blue Bathroom          | FR01        |
| Chinese Bathroom       | FR04        |
| Pink Bedroom           | FR05        |
| Pink Bathroom          | FR06        |
| Model Kitchen          | FR07        |
| Mr Hyams Dressing Room | FR08        |
| Yellow Bedroom         | FR09        |
| Mrs Hyams Bathroom     | FR10        |
| Mrs Hyams Bedroom      | FR12        |
| Mr Hyams Bedroom       | FR13        |
| Mr Hyams Bathroom      | FR14        |
| Bedroom                | SR05        |
| Bathroom               | SR07        |
| Green Bedroom          | SR08        |
| Linen Room             | SR09        |
| Central Landing        | SR10        |
| Store Room             | SR11        |
| Sewing Room            | SR13        |
| Staff Bathroom         | SR14        |
| Staff Bathroom         | SR15        |

## 12. Requirement for asbestos R and D survey

Under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, there is a legal obligation for buildings constructed before 2000 to have a Refurbishment and Demolition Survey whenever construction work is being planned. This includes refurbishment, remodelling, demolition or partial demolition, intrusive maintenance and any work that disturbs existing building materials.

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The Refurbishment and Demolition Survey is therefore required for the works planned at Ramsbury Manor before any Contractor can start on site. This type of survey is fully intrusive, and the building or areas being surveyed will usually need to be vacated so that samples can be taken.

In accordance with HSE Guidance “Asbestos: The Survey Guide” A refurbishment and demolition survey is needed before any refurbishment or demolition work is carried out. This type of survey is used to locate and describe, as far as reasonably practicable, all asbestos containing materials in the area where the refurbishment work will take place or in the whole building if demolition is planned. Please note, if there are areas that are not accessible and/ or samples cannot be tested, they must be presumed to contain asbestos, managed accordingly and all necessary precautions put in place.

Moreover, under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, The Foundation has a duty to manage asbestos. Besides the proposed works at Ramsbury Manor, to comply with the duty to manage asbestos, an asbestos register must be prepared, and an asbestos management plan must be developed to manage and monitor asbestos-containing materials. The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) and Guidance L143 Note 113 also states:

“Everything that can reasonably be done must be done to decide whether there is (or may be) asbestos in the premises, and if there is asbestos (or could be), to find out where it is likely to be. All documentary information that can be obtained about the premises must be systematically checked and as thorough an inspection, as is reasonably accessible, of the premises both inside and outside must be carried out.”

## 13. Methodology for asbestos removal

All information regarding asbestos contained in this heritage statement, including in Appendix 1: “notes, majority of rooms to assist analysis”, must be read in conjunction with the report “Asbestos Management Survey, Interim Report to Manor House Only” prepared by Asbestos 2Go Limited and dated 11.07.2025; and the report “Asbestos Refurbishment and Demolition Survey to Specific Locations Only” prepared by Asbestos 2Go Limited and dated 28.07.2025

The approval sought is for the removal of all asbestos containing material. While asbestos has been confirmed in various locations as identified on the drawings and the asbestos report that accompany this application, it is strongly presumed that asbestos has spread further. This is because asbestos dust has been found. That dust may have migrated into areas of floor voids where asbestos was not used, as there is air movement within floor voids, it may also be in the secondary ceiling voids above the Salon and Hall. It should also be recognised that there may be further asbestos within the Manor House not yet known about, and the approval should allow for the removal of further asbestos containing material if it arises.

The priority should be to remove the asbestos and therefore to remove the risk, where this is not possible, the risk should be reduced so far as reasonably practical. In terms of risk from asbestos exposure, removal should be the priority. Where this is not possible and the material

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is in good condition it should be encapsulated and protected to avoid disturbance. For material that is not in good condition and cannot be removed then additional remediation is required.

At Ramsbury, the full extent of asbestos containing materials has not yet been established due to restrictions accessing floor voids. Permission to access these voids for asbestos surveying is required before works are carried out, as the Duty Holder is responsible under Regulation 4 of The Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR2012) to make sure anyone who carries out any work is not exposed to asbestos from materials that may be present.

During the asbestos surveying, an experienced carpenter will work alongside the asbestos surveyor so floorboards can be lifted without damage, the void surveyed with any materials suspected of containing asbestos sampled and the extent quantified before boards are re-fitted. Once the full extent of asbestos materials/contamination is known the scope of remediation can be finalised.

Where works are assessed as requiring removal, under fully controlled conditions and 14-day ASB5 notification to the enforcing authority is required there must be an asbestos enclosure. The enclosure needs to be secure, strong enough to outlast the duration of the project and to being placed under the negative pressure required for extraction/filtration. Enclosures are constructed using 1000-gauge polythene. While they are often fixed to the building structure using strong adhesive tape and timber supports, that will not be the case in Ramsbury Manor. Due to the historical importance of Ramsbury Manor alternative ways to seal and support enclosures will be employed to avoid damage to the fabric or finishes of the building. Alternative methods to construct enclosures, include:

- Wedging timbers in place with foam attached to protect surfaces
- Using foam strips attached to enclosure timbers to create seals to floors, walls etc to avoid using high adhesion duct tape
- Fixing enclosure timbers to joists in floor voids (required to secure the enclosure in place and create firm seals)
- Using low tac (non-residue) tape where foam seals aren't possible
- Employing an analytical company to carry out air monitoring whilst works are taking place to prove that the enclosures are fit for purpose

For the works to Ramsbury Manor a combination of these approaches will be used, with the appropriate approach selected for each given situation. Works that require 14-Day notification to the enforcing authority are specific to the proposed enclosed areas not the whole site, areas cannot be added to an existing notification so, it is important that the asbestos survey encompasses the whole project.

Works to remove asbestos fall into two categories, those that are notifiable to the HSE and those that are not. What is set out below is based on what is presently known from the works undertaken under consent PL/2024/11184.

Examples of works not requiring notification to the HSE include:

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- Metal electrical distribution boxes in Mr Hyams, Mrs Hyams, Pink and Yellow Bedrooms. Once the electrical services have been isolated these can be removed and disposed of whole with the asbestos contained within.
- At second floor there are two localised areas where asbestos insulation board has been fitted to the underside of modern timber which has been used to replace original flooring. These areas of modern timber boards can be removed whole and disposed of, the localised void can be vacuumed to remove any small pieces of debris.
- In the Chinese Bathroom a sample taken in the void of the Chinese Bathroom identified a very rare asbestos mineral (Anthophyllite) which is normally only identified in conjunction with other asbestos minerals. The area where the original sample was taken from needs cleaning.

Examples of works requiring 14 Day ASB5 notification to the HSE and removal under fully controlled (enclosed conditions) include:

- Various areas where asbestos insulation board has been used to box in electrical distribution in floor voids, the majority of these locations have areas of debris and will require removal under fully controlled conditions. These include locations in the Salon, a Staff Bedroom, Chinese Sitting Room, Mrs Hyams Bedroom, the Blue Bedroom and the Chinese Bedroom and multiple Locations in Mr Hyams Bathroom.

To enable the removal, localised floorboards will need to be lifted, however an assessment has been made and in all locations this should be possible without having to cut or damage any floorboards.

The following gives a brief outline of the proposed methodology:

- Flooring that has been previously removed (e.g. during modern service installations) will be removed and cleaned.
- The exposed asbestos insulation board will then be sprayed with a fibre suppressant and sheeted to prevent the spread of asbestos.
- Adjacent floorboards that require removal will then be loosened by an experienced carpenter working with the asbestos removal firm who shall ensure that asbestos is not disturbed. Those floorboards will then be removed, cleaned by the asbestos removal firm and the remaining area of contamination sheeted. If any skirting boards might prohibit the removal of the floorboards these can be identified and safely removed by the carpenter without risk of disturbing asbestos.
- The removal of floorboards will expose areas of voids that do not have asbestos present. These will be temporarily boarded over with chipboard/ply fixed into floor joists.
- An asbestos enclosure shall then be installed over the area where the asbestos will be removed from. In essence this is a timber frame which is sheeted with 1000guage polythene to create a chamber. The base of the frame will be fitted with rubber seals and secured down by fixing into exposed joists below floor level. Where joists are not suitable or available for fixing, the frame will be weighted down. Low -Tac tape will be used to seal any leaks.

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- Once in-situ air lock and filtrated extraction systems will be attached to the enclosure. The enclosure will then be tested for integrity and correct air movement/extraction before becoming 'live'.
- Removal will start at points furthest from the location of the insulation board boxing, clearing out the voids to enable the openings along the floor voids to be temporarily sealed with Celotex and prevent spread of asbestos along the length of the floor voids during removal.
- The remaining areas of exposed voids will be cleared and insulation board removed prior to the enclosure and air lock system being cleaned in preparation for the mandatory 4 stage inspection and clearance by a UKAS accredited analytical company.
- Once the 4 Stage Clearance has been completed, a certificate of re-occupation will be issued.

The Asbestos Management survey has identified differing floor coverings on the lower ground floor containing asbestos. Asbestos vinyl floor tiles with asbestos bitumen and sheet vinyl with asbestos paper. There is also a false floor in the basement staffroom which includes asbestos floor tiles used as packers. The intention is to remove all of this asbestos containing material so far as possible.

To remove the asbestos containing bitumen involves using specialist grinding methods with filtered extraction. The paper backing beneath the sheet vinyl will be heavily adhered to the concrete base, which makes complete removal difficult unless there is a screed which can be broken up, which is unlikely in this case. The alternative is to remove it so far as is practical, then a latex coating can be applied to encapsulate anything that remains and a note included on the future asbestos management plan.

## 14. Heritage impact assessment

The electrical services within the Manor House have been assessed and are known to be unsafe. Other services are similarly old and in need of replacement. Asbestos containing materials have been found within floor voids at ground, first and second floors and within the floor coverings at lower ground floor, and elsewhere including in the hoist shaft. The extensive asbestos within floor voids was discovered during the initial opening up, and asbestos was also discovered in the floor coverings to the lower ground floor (asbestos vinyl floor tiles with asbestos bitumen and sheet vinyl with asbestos paper) and elsewhere. For health and safety reasons, the asbestos containing materials require removing. This was not appreciated when application PL/2024/11184 was submitted to Wiltshire Council on 06.12.25. With the collection now in safe storage, there is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to address these issues and the backlog of maintenance. The removal of asbestos and the replacement of services are needed as part of the Ramsbury Manor Foundation's intention to open the Manor House to visitors as part of its educational objective and to provide public benefit within a safe environment.

The proposed opening-up has been carefully considered by a design team experienced in working on Grade I listed country houses. Initially, permission was sought for the minimum

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opening-up required to allow a full assessment of the fabric; however, in this instance, due to the complexity of the structure, this has proved an insufficient approach. It has now been assessed by the design team and the asbestos surveyor that, to fully understand and assess the structure, find the best routes for services and to remove asbestos containing materials, all floorboards require lifting, and floor finishes etc to the lower ground floor need removing.

With the exception of asbestos containing materials, wherever possible, fabric will be reinstated in the location it was removed from. The proposals seek to maximize the retention of historic fabric and to cause no or minimal harm. The opening-up is required to facilitate the necessary reservicing works so that the Manor House can be opened to the public. Appendix 1 contains notes on the assessment made for opening-up on a room-by-room basis (these are working notes), upon which this impact assessment is based.

Opening-up works, including lifting all floorboards and further trial holes in the ground floor slab, although undertaken with great care, will amount to harm to the Grade I Manor House's historic fabric. These works are, however, necessary to secure the long-term future of the Manor House. The harm caused is "less than substantial" and does not approach "substantial harm". "Substantial harm" is a high test, harm which is substantial "would have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced... [it would require that] very much if not all of the significance of the asset was drained away" (Bedford BC v Secretary of State (2013)). Estimating impact on the notional scale of harm from negligible to the fringe of substantial is a value judgement upon which opinions will vary. It is nonetheless evident that the degree of harm caused by the proposed opening-up would not approach the loss of most of the significance of the Manor House.

Reflecting upon the NPPF, we consider the residual harm would be between none and the lower end of "less than substantial" harm. But wherever it lies on the notional scale, less than substantial harm falls to be weighed against the public benefit that would flow from it. The benefits of the opening-up works are that they will lead to the repairing of the Manor House and making it safe for visitors. This, in turn, will allow the opening of the Manor House to visitors so that it and the Collection can be viewed in context, which, from a heritage perspective, provides significant public and heritage benefits, including educational and recreational benefits.

The Manor House, once opened to the public, will provide enjoyment to visitors who visit it specifically as the central attraction within the collection. It will remain part of the ensemble of exceptionally significant heritage assets in the national context in perpetuity. The public benefit of the opening-up and the asbestos removal decisively outweighs the minimal harm to the heritage assets as a whole, and in accordance with Wiltshire Council's policy:

"The potential contribution of these heritage assets towards wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits will also be utilised where this can be delivered in a sensitive and appropriate manner..."

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### 15. Conclusion

There is general agreement that the Grade I listed Manor House and the H J Hyams Collection, are of outstanding significance. There is general agreement that the long-term future of the Manor House, which will safeguard its outstanding significance in accordance with Harry Hyams' wishes when he gifted it to the nation, is best achieved by opening it to the public and allowing them to view the internationally important collection he acquired for the Manor House.

The Foundation's intention is only to carry out changes necessary to safely open the building to the public. Where changes are necessary, sympathetic conservation approaches will be adopted, respecting the approach of minimal interventions and reversible interventions wherever possible. The opening-up proposed, which includes the lifting of all floorboards and further trial holes in the lower ground floor, is to make sure that future works are designed and planned to achieve the best conservation approach for the Manor House. The application also seeks permission to remove asbestos containing materials within floor voids at ground, first and second floors and the asbestos containing materials within the lower ground floor finishes, etc, and hoist shaft, which is required for health and safety reasons.

These proposals are put forward by the Trustees of the Ramsbury Manor Estate as part of their objectives to facilitate public access to the Estate, fulfilling the wishes of Mr Hyams. In the future, once opened to the public, the Manor House will provide an essential visitor attraction, with visitors able to view the Manor House and the collection.