

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

In respect of:

LAND AT HOME FARM, BOREHAM ROAD, WARMINSTER, BA12 9HH

On behalf of:

East Boreham Business and Residents Action Group (EBBRAG)

Date:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The application site consists of a group of three fields at the eastern edge of Warminster.

The site falls within the setting of Bishopstrow House, now Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa, the Bishopstrow Conservation Area and numerous other designated and non-designated heritage assets.

The openness and rural character of the site make an important contribution to the setting of the heritage assets.

The high stone walls on Boreham Road at the southern boundary of the site contribute to the street scene and form part of the special interest of the conservation area and its setting.

Development of the site has the potential to cause an unacceptable degree of harm to heritage assets through the loss of rural identity and backdrop, coalescence of the village and urban area, from the urbanising effect of the environment and the loss of tranquillity from light, movement and noise.

The cumulative effect on heritage assets is a significant concern.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage assessment has been prepared in connection with a proposed housing site for Bellway Homes on a large parcel of land to the north of the village of Bishopstrow, to the east of Warminster. The site comprises three fields to the north of Boreham Road (previously the A36, now the B3414), to the west of Home Farm.



Fig.1 Site location plan (from Bellway Homes consultation, November 2025)

- 1.2 The report describes the heritage significance of the site in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF, revised December 2024). It has been prepared by Elaine Milton BSc (Hons) MSc DipArchCons MRTPI IHBC, an individual with 'appropriate expertise' as advised by paragraph 207 of the NPPF. Site visits were undertaken on 16 September and 19 November 2025.
- 1.3 The significance of the site was identified using the guidance contained within the Historic England documents *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008), *Statements of Heritage Significance: Historic England Advice Note 12* (October 2019) and *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (December 2017).

- 1.4 Information on the history of site has been drawn from several sources including historical map regression. A list of the sources used in the preparation of the report is presented on **p36**.

2.0 Heritage Designations

- 2.1 The application site does not contain any built heritage assets, but the Bishopstrow Conservation Area (the BCA) lies to the south and east, and a small portion of the south-eastern corner of the site on Boreham Road falls just inside the conservation area boundary.

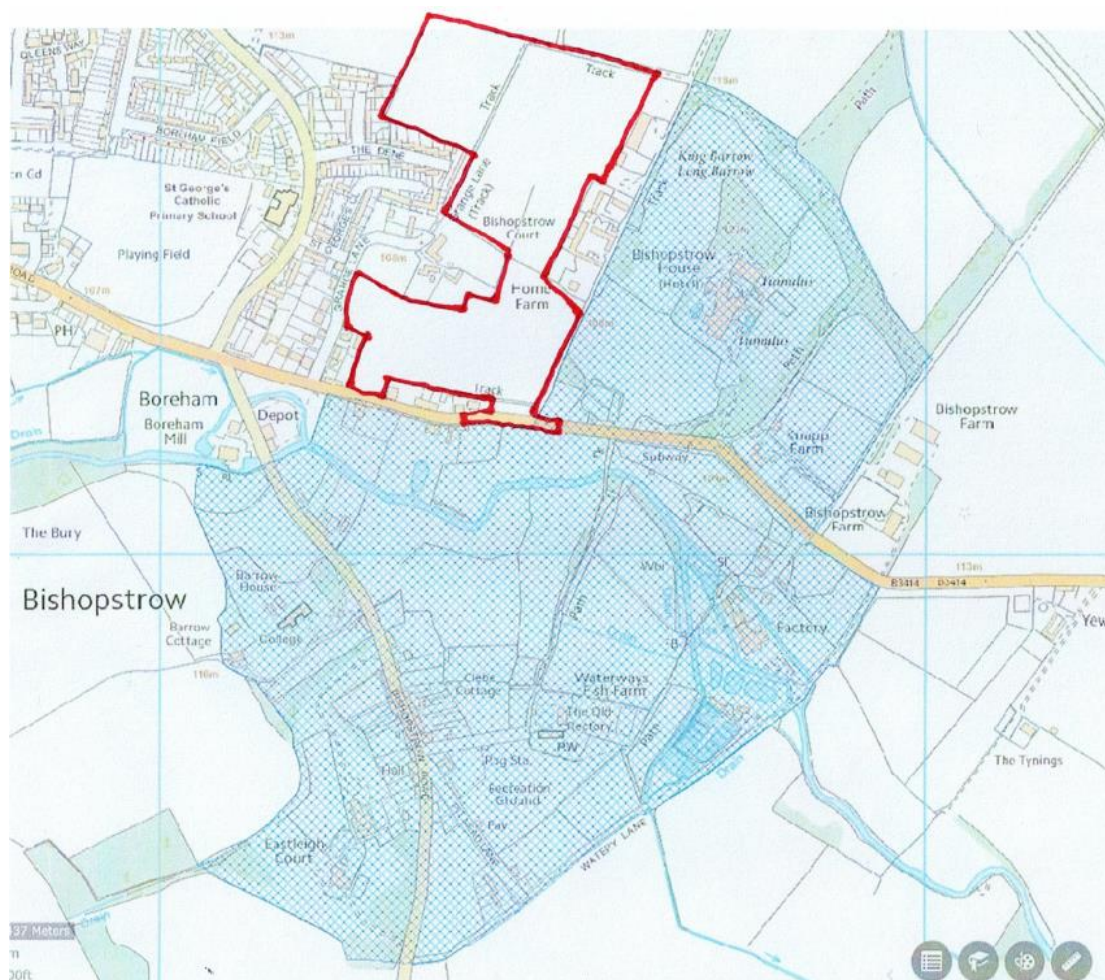


Fig.2 Site in relation to the Bishopstrow Conservation Area (shown hatched)

- 2.2 The BCA was designated by the local planning authority on 2 February 1988. It covers the historic core of the village which lies along the road that branches south from Boreham Road towards Sutton Veny. The BCA includes the village, Bishopstrow Mill, Bishopstrow House and gardens, now Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa, and the water meadows of the River Wylfe. Within the vicinity of the site, the boundary of the BCA follows the lane to the east of Home Farm and the south side of Boreham Road.
- 2.3 Historic England's National Heritage List for England mapping identifies designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the site (see below).

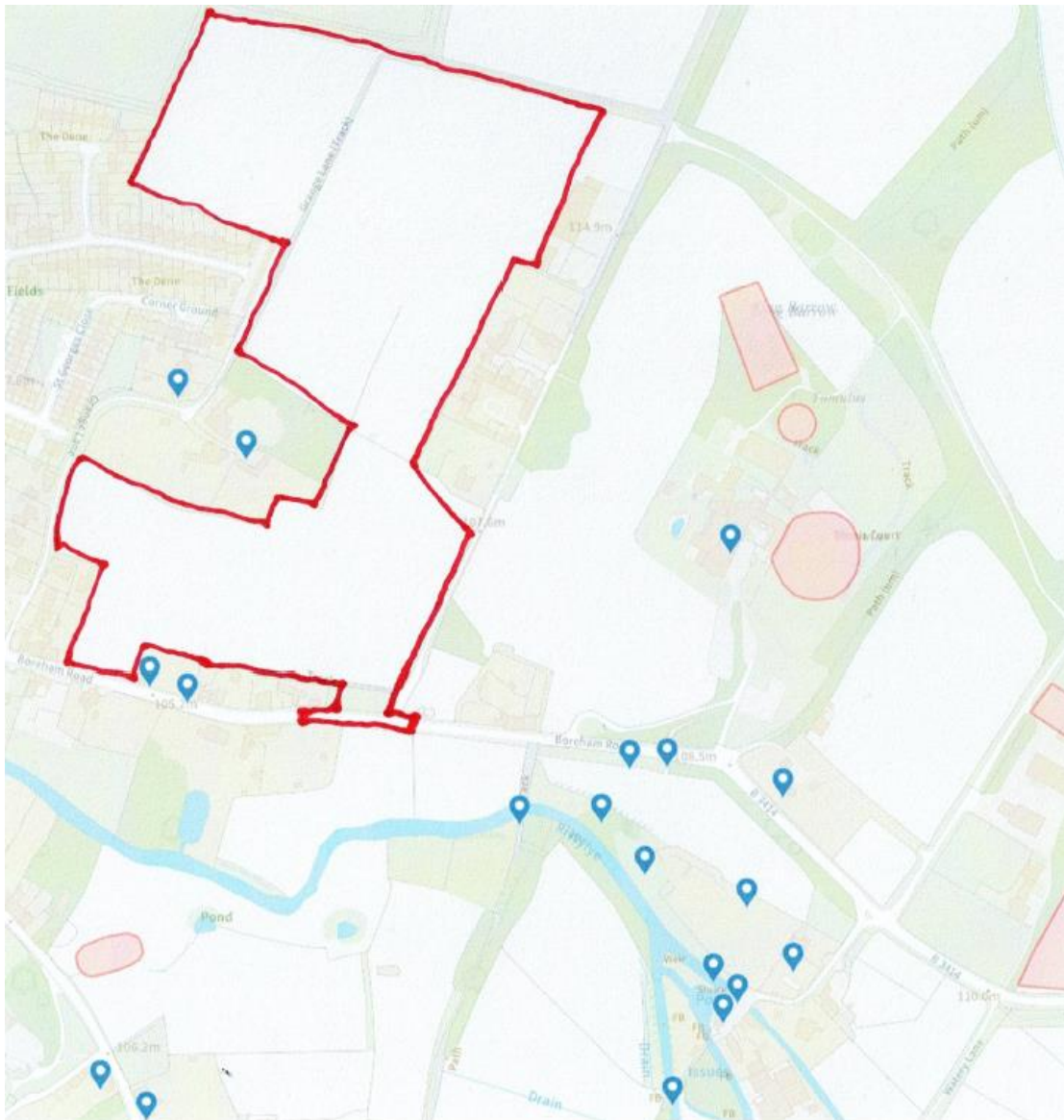


Fig.3 Outline of site superimposed on the Historic England's National Heritage List for England mapping – blue markers identifying listed buildings

2.4 The listed buildings within the vicinity of the site (all Grade II) are:

- Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa (to the east of the site)
- Tunnel Below A36 in the Grounds of Bishopstrow House (within the hotel garden to the south-east of the site)
- Low Wall to Road Enclosing Grounds of Bishopstrow House South of A36 (within the hotel garden)
- Summerhouse in Grounds of Bishopstrow House (within the hotel garden)
- Bridge Over River in Grounds of Bishopstrow House, South of A36 (within the hotel garden)
- Temple in the Grounds of Bishopstrow House (within the hotel garden)

- Garden Walls Enclosing Orchard in the Grounds of Bishopstrow House and the Coach House (within the hotel garden)
- Pump House with Boathouse in Ground of Bishopstrow House (within the hotel garden)
- The Cotes, No.207 Boreham Road (on the north side of the road, to the south of the site) including the boundary wall on the roadside to the west (between The Cotes and No.195 Boreham Road)
- Stable Building to East of No.207 Boreham Road (on the north side of the road, to the south of the site)
- 15 and 17 Grange Lane (within Grange Lane, to the west of the site)
- Pavilion to East of Grange Farmhouse (within Grange Lane, to the west of the site).

2.5 Non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs) are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.¹ There are various buildings within the vicinity of the site that have the potential to be considered NDHAs by the local planning authority, these being:

- Home Farm (immediately east of the site)
- The Grange, 20 Grange Lane (to the west of the site)
- Old Stones, 9 & 9A Boreham Road (to the south-east of the site)
- High Wall to Either Side of Home Farm entrance on North Side of Boreham Road (to the south of the site)
- Nos.209, 211, 213, 215 and 215a Boreham Road (to the south of the site)
- Boreham Manor, No.200 Boreham Road (on the south side of Boreham Road)
- 196 and 198 Boreham Road (on the south side of Boreham Road).

2.6 There are several scheduled monuments within the vicinity of the site including two Neolithic bowl barrows and a Neolithic long barrow in the grounds of Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa, and the Iron Age Battlesbury Camp to the north. The field behind The Cotes is the site of a medieval village Buriton Delamare. NB. the significance of the scheduled monuments and archaeological site does not form part of this heritage assessment.

¹ As defined within the Paragraph 039 of the Government's online national Planning Policy Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment#non-designated>

3.0 Description

- 3.1 The application site comprises an irregular-shaped grouping of three fields to the north of Boreham Road. The land is relatively flat and is undeveloped. It is bounded on the south side by the rear boundaries of The Cotes, Stables to East and Nos.209-215a Boreham Road, and the high stone boundary walls on the north side of Boreham Road, which are predominantly of a type unique to Warminster with two courses of red Warminster brick banding within the middle of the walls (see Fig.23 and Fig.25).² Apart from two modest penetrations, including one for the entrance to Home Farm/Bishopstrow Court the boundary wall is continuous between the groups of properties.



Fig.4 High stone boundary walls on the north side of Boreham Road



Fig.5 Modest farm entrance within the wall on the north side of Boreham Road serving the lane leading to Home Farm and Bishopstrow Court (Home Farm Lane)

² Unfortunately, the brick banding feature has been lost in areas where the walls have been rebuilt but remains evident around the Home Farm entrance and by The Cotes.

- 3.2 The eastern boundary of the site follows the byway (Home Farm Lane) - the ancient route to Imber - and the rear (western) boundaries of the Home Farm and the former courtyard farm complex, now residential development, known as Bishopstrow Court. There are views from the lane south of Home Farm across the southern part of the site.



Fig.6 View looking south-westwards from the lane just south of Home Farm across the open field within the southern part of the site

- 3.3 The northern boundary of the site follows the Public Right of Way between the eastern byway and Grange Lane. There is an almost continuous hedgerow along the northern boundary, but glimpsed views can be had between breaks in the boundary of the northern part of the site.



Fig.7 View looking southwards from the PROW to the north of the site - glimpsed views can be had through the hedgerow of the northern part of the site

- 3.4 The northern part of the western boundary of the site is bounded by hedgerow planting from where there are glimpsed views of the northern part of the site and the mature trees within the grounds of Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa. Further south, the site is enclosed by the properties in Grange Lane and groups of mature trees



Fig.8 View from the PROW to the north-west of the site looking eastwards; the trees within the grounds of Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa on the higher ground beyond



Fig.9 View looking eastwards across the southern part of the site from Grange Lane – part of Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa visible beyond

4.0 History

- 4.1 The Wiltshire Community History website explains that Bishopstrow has an ancient history with evidence of Neolithic barrows at its northern end. The settlement is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 along with reference to a mill upon which the local wool trade prospered.
- 4.2 The village developed in linear fashion to the south of the Salisbury road. The separate settlement of Boreham existed to the north and evidence has been uncovered of a medieval village Buriton Delamare within the southern part of the application site behind The Cotes.
- 4.3 In 1773 the turnpike road from Warminster followed the present line of the main road through Boreham as far as the bend near the entrance to Bishopstrow House and development occurred along that route.
- 4.4 The manor of Bishopstrow was at one time owned by the nunnery at Lacock but was purchased by William Temple in 1635 and remained in his family for the next 300 years (and indeed the Temple family still own part of the application site). The Victoria County History for Wiltshire (the VCH) tells us the original manor house lay north-west of the mill, to the south of the present day Boreham Road. Records from 1736 indicate a modest house that was perhaps added to later in the 18th century when the garden was extensively developed with the circular temple (which is dated 1770), the summerhouse, boathouse and walled garden.
- 4.5 Throughout the medieval period and into the 18th century Bishopstrow's main income was generated through sheep, cattle and various grains. The farmers would grow and harvest the crops after which they would let the sheep and cattle graze the land until the following season where they would begin the process again. The amount of farming in Bishopstrow greatly declined following the enclosure act in 1801.
- 4.6 It was shortly after enclosure that one of the Temples, also named William, decided to build a new manor house north of the Salisbury road. In 1815 he made a tunnel under the road with a brick vault and elaborately decorated entrances of vermiculated stone. The new house was begun in 1817 to the design of John Pinch the elder of Bath. It can be seen within new landscaped grounds on the Tithe Map of 1839 (see below). To the west can be seen some of the agricultural fields belonging to the estate (current application site). In 1833, Bishopstrow Farm consisted of 29 acres of pasture, 40 acres of meadow, 318 acres of arable land and 286 acres of downland.



Fig.10 Tithe map of 1839 - Bishopstrow House circled

- 4.7 In the mid-19th century, the farmhouse and buildings, which had previously been near the old manor house, were moved to the present Home Farm site, and this can be picked up on the Ordnance Survey map of 1886 (see below). The Wiltshire Historic Environment Record states:

'Record MW170333: Farmstead in Bishopstrow, Warminster. Partially extant 19th century farmstead of regular courtyard plan. The farm buildings are dispersed across multiple yards. The farmhouse is set away from the yard. Located within or in association to a village. There has been a partial loss (less than 50%) of traditional buildings.'

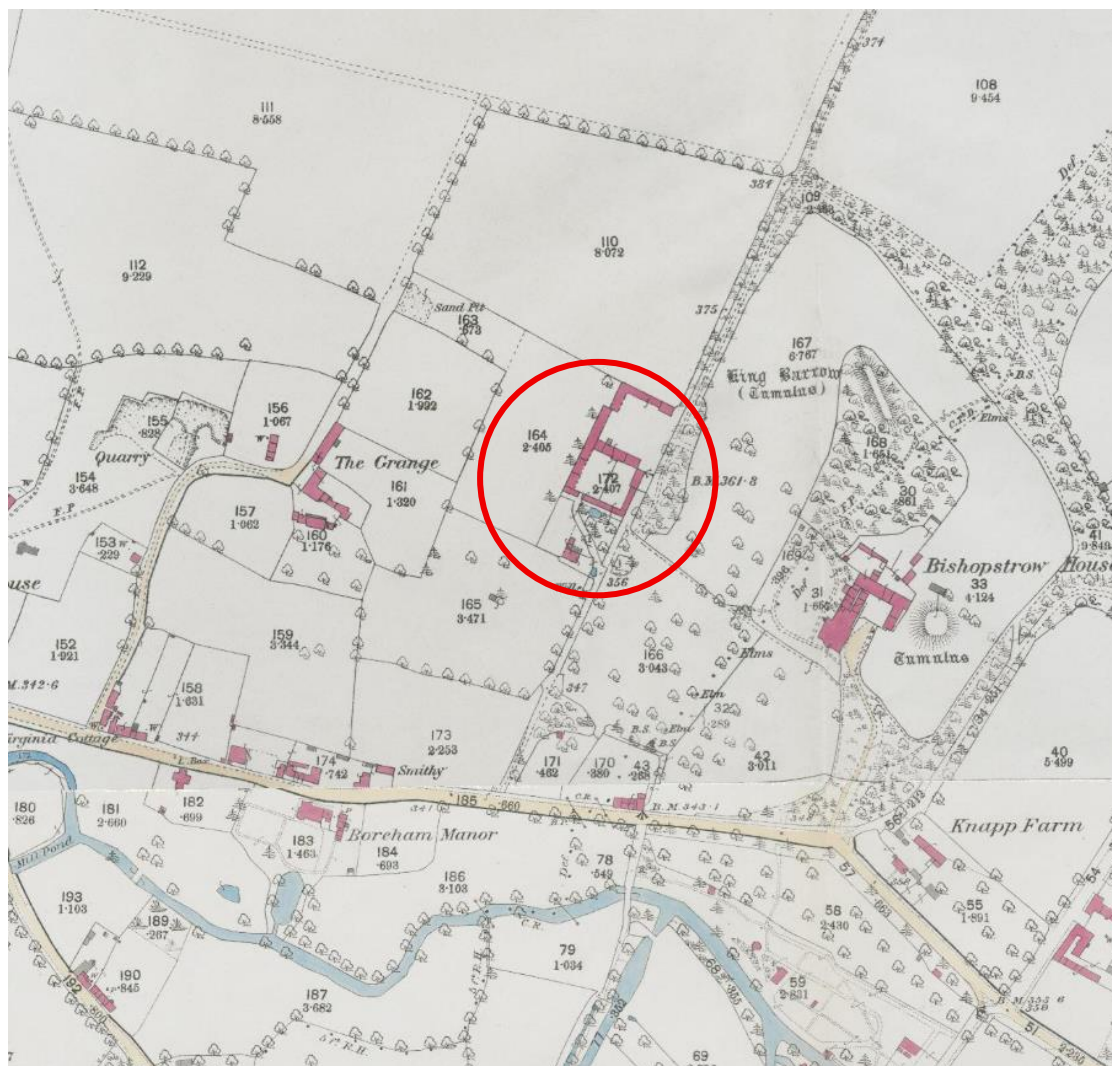


Fig.11 Ordnance Survey map of 1886 – the home farm complex circled

- 4.8 The Ordnance Survey maps from the late 19th century onwards indicate the continued open agricultural land of the application site. Loose-knit development existed on Boreham Road and at The Grange. The mid-20th century onwards witnessed significant housing development effectively amalgamating Boreham with Warminster, while leaving the application site undeveloped.
- 4.9 In 1976, Bishopstrow House was bought by Kurt Schiller and transformed into a hotel. It has since passed through various owners but has remained a hotel and has recently undergone significant improvements.
- 4.10 In respect of the site, an outline planning application was submitted for 135 houses by Hallam Land in 2016 but later withdrawn (ref. 16/10502/OUT). The application attracted an objection from the Council's Conservation Officer due to the adverse impact on designated and non-designated heritage assets.

- 4.11 As part of the 2018 Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan, the site ('Land at the East of the Dene H2.7') was put forward for an allocation of 100 houses. The Government appointed planning inspector at his examination of the Plan determined in January 2020 the site should be omitted from the Plan due to the 'significant cumulative impacts on the setting of both designated and undesignated heritage assets.'

5.0 Assessment of Significance

A) Designated Heritage Assets

Significance of the Bishopstrow Conservation Area (BCA)

- 5.1 While there is no adopted conservation area appraisal for the BCA there is a conservation area statement (the CAS) that was produced by the local planning authority upon designation of the conservation area in February 1988.
- 5.2 The CAS explains that the conservation area centres on Bishopstrow, a small village to the south of Boreham Road to the south-east of Warminster, and the boundary broadly reflects the historic village plus the extent of the Bishopstrow House designed landscape.
- 5.3 The village, south of Boreham Road, is essentially linear in character with modest cottages and terraces on either side of Bishopstrow Road. St Aldhelm's Church (Grade II* listed) is to the east of Bishopstrow Road, accessed via a narrow lane and tucked away from the road.
- 5.4 To the north and the west, the River Wylfe meanders east-west with water meadows adjacent. To the north of the Wyle (south of Boreham Road) and within the demesne of the Grade II listed Bishopstrow House are the pleasure garden and structures associated with former 17th century manor house. The hotel is accessed via a listed tunnel under the road.
- 5.5 There are two significant historic houses to the east of Bishopstrow Road - Eastleigh Court and Barrow House - within their own parkland settings. The mature trees and grounds of the properties contribute to the verdant character of the BCA.
- 5.6 Bishopstrow Road joins Boreham Road to the north of Bishopstrow College. To the east (and north of the former two houses) and adjacent to the River Wylfe is Bishopstrow Mill, an imposing Victorian red brick mill that has been converted to residential use but retains its industrial character. Either side of the mill are two attractive listed stone bridges. The mill is just outside the Bishopstrow Conservation Area, as is a small island formed from the splitting of the River Wylfe into two channels.

5.7 The BCA is of significance as a well-preserved historic village set within the Wylfe valley. The landscape in and around the conservation area, particularly the river, the mature trees and green spaces make a significant contribution to the special interest of the designated heritage asset and give the conservation area a picturesque, Arcadian tranquillity.

5.8 Some of the key characteristics of the conservation area are:

- Village of ancient origins with significant growth in the 18th and 19th century
- Development having a loose-knit, linear pattern within the picturesque setting of the Wylfe valley
- Gaps in and around the buildings providing a sense of the historic agricultural landscape and
- Clear definition between the suburban character of Warminster and the historic settlement of Bishopstrow, with the field to the west of Home Farm acting as a buffer
- Some significant buildings including St Aldhelm's and Bishopstrow House
- Good collection of historic village houses and cottages of local stone or brick
- Modest houses set close to the road and larger houses set back within the plots
- Roadside boundary walls in the local rubble stone
- Presence of the landscaped gardens associated with Bishopstrow House and the former manor house to the south, including fine specimen trees
- The rural setting to the village, comprising the river, water meadows, farmland, quiet lanes and footpaths
- Verdant qualities of the area courtesy of the abundance of green spaces and mature trees
- Modest scale and character of driveway entrances along Boreham Road
- Long views into and out of the conservation area, including an important view of Battlesbury Camp Monuments placing the settlement within the historic, rural landscape



Fig.12 View from Home Farm Lane looking northwards to Home Farm and Battlesbury Hillfort beyond

Contribution of the Application Site to the Conservation Area

- 5.9 The application site is adjacent to a distinct character area of the BCA, defined by the Bishopstrow estate and by vernacular village houses sited close to Boreham Road.
- 5.10 On the north side of the road between the various houses are substantial stretches of local rubble stone walls resulting in an attractive street scape and strongly delineated boundary to the main thoroughfare. The rubble stone walls incorporating two courses of red brick banding are a unique feature of the area, and the high boundary walls make a significant contribution to the streetscape (see Fig.23 and Fig.25). The walls are prominent features that distinguish the historic village from the modern housing of Warminster.



Fig.13 High stone boundary wall by the road to the east of Home Farm Lane

- 5.11 Punctuations in the wall on the north side of Boreham Road in the vicinity of the site are few, and unlike the modern splayed Tarmacked entrances further west at Woodcock Road and Bishopstrow Road, the openings to Grange Lane and Home Farm Lane are modest and have a rural quality.
- 5.12 The presence of Home Farm and Bishopstrow Court, which despite conversion and modernisation remains legible as a farmstead, reinforce the rural character of the area. Access is via the historic byway with its modest opening in the roadside boundary wall, contributing to Home Farm's rural character.
- 5.13 The three fields to the west of Home Farm (i.e., the application site) evidences the working farm element of the estate and forms part of the historic narrative of Bishopstrow House, and the historical functional relationship is of mutual significance to the farmland and main house.
- 5.14 The application site provides an important buffer zone between the tight-knit urban housing to the west and rural backdrop of the village, with the open landscape playing an identifiable role in framing the rural setting of the village and how its historic context can be appreciated.

Significance of Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa

- 5.15 Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa is an early 19th century former manor house in the Regency style with a series of 19th and 20th century additions, and alterations c1980 for conversion to hotel use. The building has recently undergone significant improvement by the current hotel operator.



Fig.14 Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa as seen from the higher ground of the bowl barrow to the east; the hotel has a well-treed and verdant backdrop

- 5.16 The significance of the Grade II listed building derives from its architectural value as good example of a Regency former country house, and for its historic interest as a replacement for the earlier manor house and associations with the notable Bath architect, John Pinch the Elder.
- 5.17 The setting of the building makes an important contribution to its setting. It is surmised the early 19th century house was deliberately positioned on the higher ground to take advantage of the views to the north and west, including Cley Hill and Battlesbury Camp. The scheduled monuments evidence an extensive landscape that pre-dates the current house and associated structures.
- 5.18 In addition, the house is set within extensive landscaped grounds associated with the original house providing a historical connection to the past. A physical link with the southern extent of the grounds is maintained by the tunnel under Boreham Road. The southern pleasure garden and structures typify a grand 18th century landscape evidencing the high status of the manor.

- 5.19 The significance of Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa is also greatly derived from its elevated position overlooking the agricultural land to the west, where there is a direct link with the natural resources of the landscape (the 'home farm' providing produce for the occupants of the house). The inter-visibility of the Grade II listed house and the southern part of the application site reinforce the historic functional association between two entities.



Fig.15 View from the grounds to the south of Bishopstrow House Hotel & Spa looking west towards the agricultural field (southern part of the site)

Significance of Bishopstrow House Garden Structures

- 5.20 The Grade II listed garden structures identified in paragraph 2.4 are of significance not only individually for their age and architectural interest but also for their group value and association with Bishopstrow House, where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
- 5.21 The garden structures evidence the 18th century designed landscape of the former manor house, which due to its proximity to the river Wylde and rural backdrop, would have provided a picturesque and tranquil, landscape setting, the character of which remains legible despite the busy traffic on the Boreham Road. The tunnel provides a physical link between the 'old' and 'new' gardens, reinforcing the intangible historic linkage.



Fig.16 Bridge over the river within the landscaped grounds of the old manor on the south side of Boreham Road



Fig.17 View from the landscaped grounds looking north towards the tunnel and house beyond

Significance of The Cotes & Stable Building to the East

- 5.22 The Cotes is an attractive detached house facing the road, dated early 19th century but possibly a re-fronting of an 18th century dwelling. The front is stone while the sides and rear are of brick. The house set back from the road behind a low stone wall and railings. It is framed by the high stone boundary walls to either side; behind the rubble stone wall to the west of The Cotes was the market garden that supplied the occupants of Bishopstrow House with fresh produce. The former separately listed stable building to the east is an attractive two-storey stone building, positioned end-on to the road.



Fig.18 The Cotes and high stone boundary walls to either side



Fig.19 Stable building and adjacent terrace of brick cottages

- 5.23 The Cotes is of significance as an 18th century vernacular dwelling seemingly aggrandised in the early 19th century to create a more fashionable frontage. The house, former stables and boundary walls form a good group of historic buildings associated with an edge-of-town higher status residence.
- 5.24 The setting of the house and former stables contributes to an appreciation of their significance, specifically the manner in which the imposing house and the stables address the road. The rural backdrop and the separation from the more modest cottages to the east emphasise the relatively higher status of the assets.

Significance of 15 and 17 Grange Lane

- 5.25 15 & 17 Grange Lane comprises a pair of mid-17th century two-storey brick and timber-framed cottages set within an enclosed garden plot on Grange Lane, to the west of the site.
- 5.26 The significance of the pair of Grade II listed buildings derives from their architectural and historic interest as 17th century vernacular cottages constructed in traditional materials and methods.
- 5.27 The aspects of setting that contribute to the cottages are the tranquillity of the rural lane and the verdant backdrop.

Significance of The Pavilion to East of Grange Farmhouse

- 5.28 The Pavilion is a Grade II listed c1700 former stable block that once served Grange Farmhouse. It is a modest structure, the significance of which derives from its age and historic function and associations with the main house.
- 5.29 The building is tucked away from the lane and is well screened in views. The immediate setting (relationship with the farmhouse) and treed backdrop contribute to the significance of the asset.

B) Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Significance of Home Farm

- 5.30 Home Farm is a two-storey mid-19th century brick farmhouse with hipped roof covered in natural slate.



Fig.20 Home Farm as seen from the lane

- 5.31 Although not listed, Home Farm is of value as the historic Bishopstrow estate home farm and is of architectural interest for its pleasing design and proportions and the use of brick and slate to good effect.
- 5.32 The relationship of the farmhouse with the agricultural field that supported it contributes to its significance. The field provides the building with an open, agricultural setting enabling an appreciation of the historic context, along with the presence of the quadrangle of converted farm buildings adjacent. The farmhouse has been positioned to respect Bishopstrow House's setting and key views.

Significance of the High Walls on the North Side of Boreham Road

- 5.33 The high stone walls stretch some c.50m or so along the road to the south of the site. The stonework provides a sense of cohesion with the neighbouring houses and cottages. In addition, the continuous boundary treatment provides a good degree of enclosure along the route and provides a separation between the open, agricultural fields and the urban element of the village, reflecting the historic pattern of development locally.

Significance of The Grange

- 5.34 The Grange (AKA Grange Farmhouse) is a large stone-built farmhouse of 19th century or possibly earlier origins. The house, constructed in rubble and ashlar stone and having well-detailed mullion windows, is of local architectural and historic interest. The quiet rural lane and green backdrop contribute to an appreciation of the vernacular dwelling.



Fig.21 The Grange AKA Grange Farmhouse as seen from Grange Lane

Significance of Nos. 209, 211, 213, 215 and 215a Boreham Road

- 5.35 The terrace of cottages and the former smithy to the east of the Grade II listed stable building are of some heritage value as a group of historic vernacular cottages and smithy constructed in local materials and methods of construction. The buildings and their low walls to the front gardens contribute to the character and continuity of the street scape.



Fig.22 Nos. 209-215 Boreham Road



Fig.23 No. 215a Boreham Road (the old smithy)

Significance of Old Stones, 9 & 9A Boreham Road

- 5.36 The row of cottages set back of pavement on the north side of Boreham Road is of local historic and townscape value on account of the age, construction in local stone and traditional appearance. The cottages contribute to the funnelled views along Boreham Road in conjunction with the walls to the west.



Fig.24 Old Stones, 9 & 9A Boreham Road

Significance of Boreham Manor, No.200 Boreham Road

- 5.37 Boreham Manor is a large 19th century village residence built in the Gothic revival style, constructed in local stone with ashlar detailing and featuring a series of steeply pitched roofs, projecting gables with decorative bargeboards, and timber sash windows. As such the house has a degree of architectural and historic value. The house and tall boundary walls along the road frontage form part of the character of Boreham Road and adds positively to the collection of traditional village houses. The rural setting of the house contributes to its heritage significance.



Fig.25 Boreham Manor and adjacent high, stone boundary walls

Significance of 196 and 198 Boreham Road

- 5.38 Nos. 196 and 198 Boreham Road comprise a pair of 19th century stone-built semi-detached houses set prominently on the south side of Boreham Road. The pair of houses are of interest for their age, construction in the coursed local stone and unusual crow-stepped gables. The properties make a positive contribution to the street scene.



Fig.26 196 and 198 Boreham Road

6.0 Policy Context

- 6.1 Most of the subject site lies outside the BCA although a small area in the south-eastern corner, to either side of the entrance to Home Farm Lane falls within the boundary. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that in considering proposals for development, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 6.2 In addition, the site is considered to contribute to the setting of various listed buildings. A statutory duty exists under section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') for the local planning authority in considering whether to grant planning permission for development that affects a listed building or its setting to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 6.3 The statutory duties are reflected in Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, which was adopted by Wiltshire Council on 20 January 2015. The policy seeks to promote the conservation and where possible enhancement of the county's historic environment.
- 6.4 National planning policy relating to the historic environment is provided within section 16 of the NPPF (revised December 2024). It advises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 6.5 Paragraph 212 of the NPPF advises that 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Any harm or loss to a heritage asset's significance should require clear and convincing justification and needs to be weighed against identifiable public benefits. Substantial harm or loss of a Grade II listed building should be exceptional.
- 6.6 Paragraph 214 of the NPPF advises where proposals would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the proposals should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of four listed criteria therein apply.

- 6.7 Paragraph 215 advises that where proposals would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 6.8 Paragraph 216 says the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 6.9 Paragraph 219 of the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas or the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance.
- 6.10 The NPPF advises (Annex 2: Glossary) that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which it is experienced. The Historic England guidance *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* advises that setting can include visual and non-visual elements like landscape, tranquillity and historic functional relationships.
- 6.11 The judgment handed down in the case of *Catesby Estates Ltd and SSCLG v Steer* [2018] EWCA Civ. 1697 in the Court of Appeal confirms that the setting of heritage assets 'is not necessarily confined to visual or physical impact' but that other considerations are potentially relevant.

7.0 Development Sensitivities

- 7.1 It is clear from the heritage assessment that the scale and nature of the heritage assets is such that the site falls within a highly sensitive context.
- 7.2 The statutory duty requires that considerable importance must be given to harm as part of the planning balance. In this case, there is the potential for a cumulative effect arising from harm to multiple heritage assets.
- 7.3 Proposed development should seek to maintain the spaciousness and openness of the site in order to preserve its rural character and to avoid eroding the settings of various heritage assets including the Grade II listed Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa and the strong sense of group value provided by the associated garden structures, The Cotes and the stables building.
- 7.4 The views looking westwards from the grounds of Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa towards the agricultural fields should be maintained in order to preserve an appreciation of the historic functional association between the house and agricultural hinterland.
- 7.5 Development has the potential to affect the sense of tranquillity that can be presently experienced within the grounds of the Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa.
- 7.6 The strong visual and historical links between Bishopstrow House and the designed landscape of the old manor house to the south could also be threatened by excess noise, movement and lighting.
- 7.7 Development should not harmfully intrude into the landscape. The loss of agricultural land and green buffer between the suburban housing to the west and the grounds of Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa could result in the coalescence of the historically discrete settlements and the undermining of the character of the BCA.
- 7.8 Access to the site is likely to require providing an entrance on Boreham Road. This could result in the loss of part of the high walls that contribute to the street scene and the setting of the conservation area. Proposals should avoid harm to or the loss of the high rubble stone boundary walls on Boreham Road due to the significant contribution they make to the BCA.
- 7.9 Proposals should seek to avoid having an urbanising effect that could alter the rural experience of the area, for example, the quiet rural lane nature of the byway (Home

Farm Lane) from where can be seen Bishopstrow House in the context of the adjacent agricultural fields. Standard highways vehicular entrances, lighting and visibility splays should be avoided.

- 7.10 The views from Boreham Road looking northwards towards Battlesbury Camp should not be impeded in order to preserve the visual connection between the village and the prehistoric landscape.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 The site consists of three conjoined agricultural fields that fall within the setting of Bishopstrow House, now Bishopstrow House Hotel and Spa, the Bishopstrow Conservation Area and numerous other designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- 8.2 The setting of Bishopstrow House contributes to its significance due to its functional association with the surrounding countryside, including the site having been part of the Bishopstrow Estate. The openness and rural character of the site thus make an important contribution to the setting of the heritage assets.
- 8.3 Despite there being no designed views from the house to the site, there is inter-visibility between the house and the southerly part of the site, and the house is perceived within the wider landscape from the public domain.
- 8.4 While proposed development on the northerly part of the site may not necessarily result in a significant impact on important views or the inter-visibility between heritage assets it would cause irreversible harm to the setting of heritage assets through the loss of the intangible connection between the agricultural field and the heritage assets, thus undermining the appreciation of Bishopstrow as a historic rural village reliant on agriculture. Additionally, it is likely that development within the northerly part of the site would erode the wider historic relationship between the site and the designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- 8.5 The high stone walls on Boreham Road at the southern boundary of the site are important elements of the street scape and contribute strongly to the special interest of the conservation area and its setting.
- 8.6 Development of the site has the potential to cause an unacceptable degree of harm to heritage assets through the loss of the rural character and backdrop, from the urbanising effect of the environment and the loss of tranquillity from light, movement and noise.
- 8.7 There is a potential for a significant cumulative effect on the setting and in turn significance of numerous designated and non-designated heritage assets in the area.

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Mapping

Tithe Map c1840

Ordnance Survey maps: 1886, 1899, 1923, 1942.