

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990**

**RELOCATION TO DRYSTONE BOUNDARY WALL AT BREMILHAM MILL
HOUSE, FOXLEY, MALMESBURY, WILTSHIRE, SN16 0JH**

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

AND

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

Prepared by

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Our Reference: SWLC.LPC5071

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Design & Access and Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a householder planning application for alterations to the boundary wall in the residential curtilage of Bremilham Mill House, Foxley, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, SN16 0JH.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Statement is to identify the heritage assets that are relevant to this application, describe their significance, and assess the impacts of the proposed development.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION & RELEVANT HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS

- 2.1 The application site lies in the open countryside a short distance to the east of the village of Foxley and approximately 2 miles to the west of the town of Malmesbury. The whole site is also located within the Cotswolds National Landscape (formally known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).
- 2.2 The main house, Bremilham Mill House, is a Grade II Listed Building and is located close to the river Avon. It lies to the north of Foxley Manor another Grade II Listed Building and is accessed from the Foxley Road and by following a private no through road running northwards from this main road.
- 2.3 The main house sits within a large plot which also contains a parking area and is surrounded by open agricultural land. Inserted on the following page is an Ordnance Survey plan extract of the site together with an up-to-date aerial photograph extract.



3.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Bremilham Mill House has a rich history tied to the evolution of milling in the region. While the exact date of construction is not precisely certain, it is believed that the Mill House was built as part of the wider mill complex that was central to local industry at the time. The mill itself is thought to have been primarily engaged in the grinding of grain, serving the local agricultural community in the Malmesbury area. The building's proximity to the nearby river and its position within the landscape reflect the strategic importance of water mills during this period. Over time, the Mill House would have played a crucial role in the daily life of Foxley and its surrounding villages, both as a place of work and as a site for local trade and commerce.
- 3.2 It is likely that Bremilham Mill House remained in use as a mill for much of its history before transitioning into a solely residential property in the 19th century (although the Mill was continuously inhabited from the 17th Century onwards). The changing use of the building from a place of industry to a private dwelling reflects broader social and economic shifts in the area, including the decline of the traditional milling industry due to advances in technology and transportation.
- 3.3 The development of Foxley and the wider Malmesbury area, which includes notable landmarks such as Foxley Manor, contributed to the historical significance of the Mill House. The local economy, primarily driven by agriculture, would have been supported by such mills, and the development of infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, would have facilitated the transport of goods to and from the mill.

- 3.4 The List Entry Number: 1363876 the date it was first listed was 1st May 1991.



Bremilham Mill House

- 3.5 The official list entry taken from Historic England is provided below:

ST 98 NW ST PAUL MALMESBURY WITHOUT

5/170 Bremilham Mill House

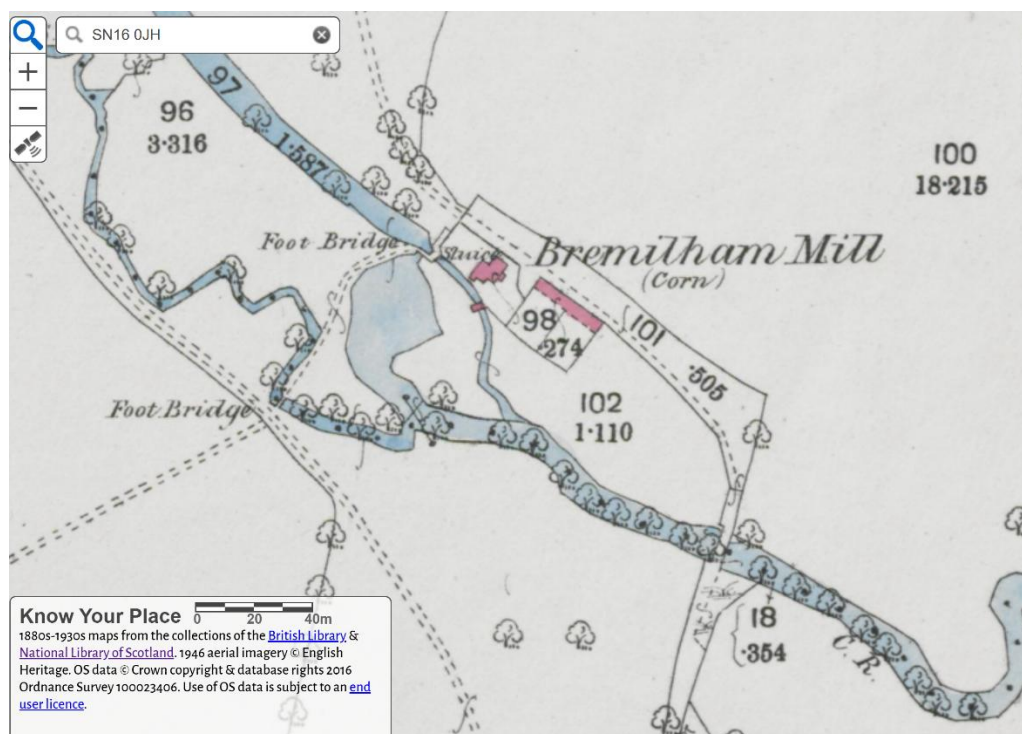
II

Mill House. C17. Coursed limestone rubble; gabled double Roman tile roof; stone left end stack. 2-unit plan. One storey and attic; 2- window range. Timber lintel over C19 beaded plank door to centre, flanked by C17 chamfered and stone-mullioned 2-light windows. Similar windows to first floor of each gable end, one with C19 iron casements. Later rear left outshut and mid C20 brick rear right outshut. Interior not inspected but noted as having open fireplace with chamfered bressummer, plain beams and A-frame roof with chamfered butt purlins. The mill dates from at least the mid C16; milling ceased in the late C19 and the mill buildings were demolished after 1945(VCH).

- 3.6 As described in the above list entry, this house dates from the 17th century with some later 19th and 20th century additions and adaptations including

rear outriggers to the left and right of the building. From looking at the Council's website, there is no recent planning history to be found. Apart from the rear projection, the property has not undergone any significant change or other change of use and remains a private dwelling. The Mill and Cart shed were restored by present owners in 2000. As shown in the photograph on the previous page, the boundary treatment of the plot comprises a drystone wall and it is understood that this was built during the renovations in 2000.

- 3.7 Provided below is an excerpt from an historic Ordnance Survey map from the 1880s. This clearly shows the main house and surrounding land within which it sits and as can be seen by comparison with the OS map of the present day.



1880



2025

Side by side comparison

3.8 As can be seen by the side-by-side comparison, the main house has undergone some changes, as has the cart shed located to the southeast of the main house, which is evident on the above historic map and is also evident on the current OS extract. Clearly the main changes to the house have been the brick rear right and left outshuts from the mid c20th. These can be seen by comparing the historic map with the modern OS map (side-by-side). Additionally, it does appear that the far south-western section of the cart shed has been removed as well. The curtilage of the listed building also appears to be defined on the historic OS map comprising the immediate land around the main mill and then the two smaller rectangular land parcels immediately to the southeast.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 As mentioned, Bremilham Mill House stands as an excellent example of a traditional mill house, built using local materials and employing the architectural styles and techniques of the period. The building is primarily constructed from stone, with a typical rectangular plan and a pitched roof, both of which are characteristic of mill houses in the region. The external façade retains much of its original character. The structure is relatively simple, reflecting the utilitarian nature of its original function, but it also incorporates elements of craftsmanship that elevate its design.

4.2 One of the most significant architectural features of Bremilham Mill House is its integration with the surrounding environment. The building is strategically located near the river/mill stream, which would have powered the mill wheel. This close relationship with the natural landscape is an essential feature of mill buildings and speaks to the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the era. In terms of architectural comparison, Bremilham Mill House shares many similarities with other historic mill houses in Wiltshire and the wider South West of England, yet it remains unique due to its distinctive location and the level of preservation of its original features.

4.3 The cultural and social importance of Bremilham Mill House extends beyond its function as a building. As part of the mill complex, the house would have been integral to the social fabric of the local community. Mills in this period

were not merely industrial structures; they were central to village life, providing livelihoods and facilitating trade. The Mill House likely served as a home for the miller and his family, and it is possible that it hosted other workers who were employed on the site. This makes Bremilham Mill House a significant site for understanding the social dynamics of rural Wiltshire during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

- 4.4 There may also be cultural associations tied to the property, such as local folklore or traditions, that reflect its place in the history of Foxley and Malmesbury. The building's continued presence in the landscape contributes to the cultural identity of the area, embodying the continuity of rural life and the connection between the people and the land. The Mill House's survival also allows for a deeper understanding of the history of milling in the region, which was once a cornerstone of local industry.
- 4.5 Bremilham Mill House is a Grade II Listed Building, which affords it protection under national heritage legislation. As a listed structure, it is considered to be of special architectural or historic interest, and as such, it is safeguarded against inappropriate alterations or demolition. This designation reflects the building's significance both within the context of Malmesbury and Wiltshire as a whole.
- 4.6 The current condition of Bremilham Mill House is generally good, though, like many historic buildings, it faces ongoing challenges in terms of maintenance and preservation. The Mill House, being constructed from natural stone, requires regular attention to prevent the effects of weathering, particularly in the exposed areas of the building. Additionally, any future development in the surrounding area must be carefully considered to ensure that it does not adversely affect the significance of the heritage asset or its setting.
- 4.7 In conclusion, Bremilham Mill House is a significant historical and architectural landmark in Foxley, Malmesbury, Wiltshire. Its history as part of the local milling industry, combined with its well-preserved architectural features, makes it an important site within the local heritage. The Mill House offers valuable insight into the rural economy and social life of the area, and its continued preservation is crucial for future generations to appreciate the

region's industrial past. Through ongoing conservation efforts and careful stewardship, Bremilham Mill House can continue to be a vital part of Wiltshire's cultural landscape.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR HERITAGE ASSETS

Planning Legislation

- 5.1 The most relevant legislation to this application is considered to be the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 5.2 Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority shall 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.

Development Plan

- 5.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that all applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant Development Plan policies applicable to the assessment of this application comprise the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (January 2015). The relevant planning policies therein to the assessment of this application are believed to be Core Policy 57 (Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping) and 58 (Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment). Policy 51 is also relevant as it relates to landscape impacts.
- 5.4 Core Policy 57 makes clear that applications should make a positive contribution, having regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses. A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Proposals should respond positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively

integrate the building into its setting. Additionally, the policy is supported by your Council's adopted Design Guide. Appendix D therein advises that a well-designed householder development that respects the original building and the neighbouring properties by being subservient, should seek to fit into the general street scene too. These aims will usually be achieved by replicating the style, form, rhythm, materials and architectural detailing of the original building.

- 5.5 Core Policy 58's principal aim is to ensure that new developments protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment. This includes buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest and the special character or appearance of Conservation Areas. Overall, Core Policy 58 emphasises the importance of preserving Wiltshire's heritage for future generations.

National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) December 2024 - Latest Version

- 5.6 Section 16 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- 5.7 Heritage assets, ranging from local buildings to internationally recognised World Heritage Sites, are irreplaceable and should be conserved in ways appropriate to their significance, ensuring they can be enjoyed by future generations. Planning policies should support the conservation of these assets, especially those at risk due to neglect or decay. (Paragraph 202)
- 5.8 A positive strategy should be developed for conserving and enjoying the historic environment. This includes sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets; Highlighting the wider benefits conservation brings to social, cultural, and economic well-being; and ensuring new development contributes positively to local character and distinctiveness. (Paragraph 203).
- 5.9 Applicants must describe the significance of any affected heritage assets and their settings. Local authorities should assess the significance of heritage assets when considering development proposals, taking expert advice when needed. Developers should consider whether their proposals will harm the

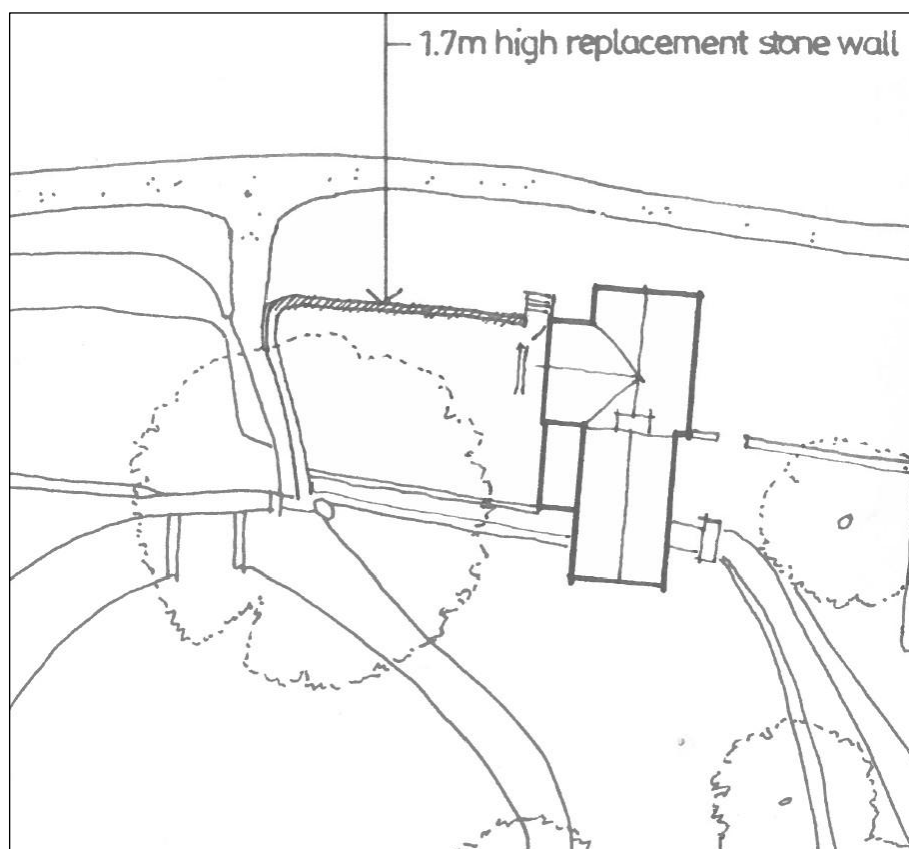
conservation of the historic environment and, where applicable, justify any harm. (Paragraphs 207-210)

- 5.10 Great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset. Proposals that harm the significance of a heritage asset must justify this harm through clear and convincing reasons. Substantial harm or total loss of an asset's significance should be rare and require exceptional justification. Less than substantial harm can be outweighed by public benefits, such as securing the asset's viable use. Development should aim to enhance or better reveal the significance of heritage assets and their settings. Where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. (Paragraphs 212 - 221)
- 5.11 Significance can be defined as the 'value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest'. Significance is unique to a place, and it is vital to identify this, as the aim of conservation is to sensitively manage change to a place to ensure that its significance is protected, and also revealed, reinforced and enhanced at every possible opportunity.
- 5.12 There are occasions when the significance of a building or place may be regarded simply as intrinsic. However, since significance is evaluated because of how a building or place is interpreted or perceived at a given moment, there are instances where significance can be regarded as a fluid concept that can either be eroded or enhanced, depending on the consequences of change. Significance can be eroded through, for example, partial demolition or inappropriate alterations. Alternatively, it can be enhanced through informed, considered change which can bring positive benefits. These benefits can include the revealing of heritage values, the reassertion of historic integrity, facilitating greater public appreciation and the strengthening of communal values and uses – all of which may ultimately raise the level of significance. Thus, the aims of managed change to protect, reveal, reinforce or enhance significance can be achieved through a variety of means including conservation, improved interpretation, understanding and/or presentation.

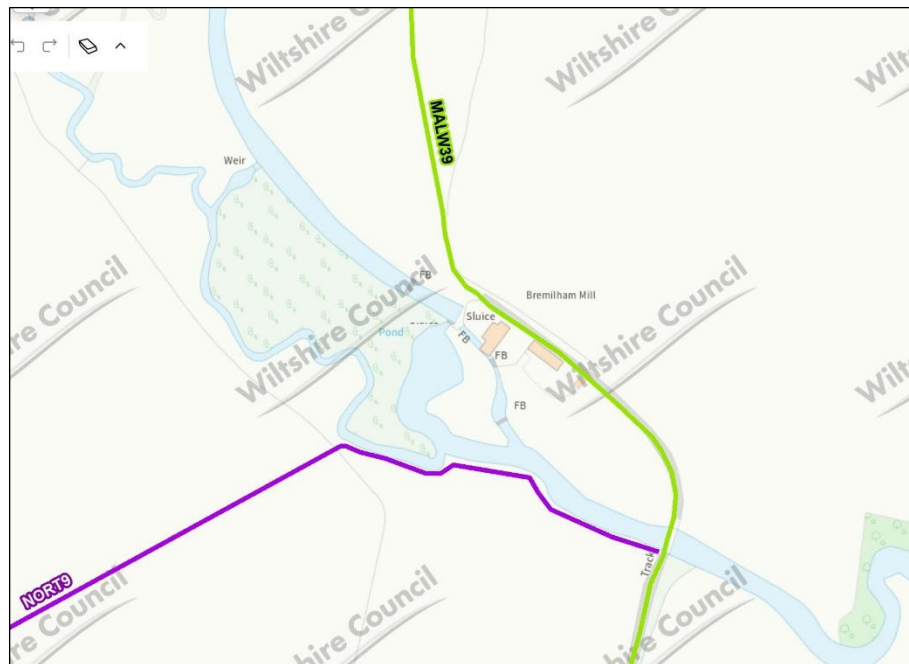
6.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Works proposed

- 6.1 This application seeks householder planning permission for alterations to the boundary wall, comprising relocation of the existing boundary wall some 3.6 metres further into the garden. This would facilitate a space to park a car. The wall will be rebuilt using the same stone as a drystone wall with 'cock and hen' coping stones to a height of 1.7 metres above ground level.



- 6.2 The reason for this application is that the Applicant is getting older and the access to the house is getting harder (all by steps) and not easily managed with grocery shopping. The Applicant's 96-year-old mother-in-law must currently negotiate the existing stepped access with considerable assistance during her regular visits. Additionally, the track that runs past the house in front of the wall is a public bridleway (ref Bridleway - MALW39 – shown below). Business units use this every day, and the applicant would like some privacy; hence the 1700mm height of the proposed wall.



Assessment of proposals

- 6.3 As mentioned, this application represents a modest proposal which is limited to relocating an existing drystone boundary wall approximately 3.6 metres further into the residential curtilage in order to create a parking space adjacent to the dwelling. The wall will be reconstructed using the salvaged natural stone from the existing wall, employing traditional drystone construction techniques and matching 'cock and hen' coping stones to maintain its established appearance. The proposal does not involve any alteration to the listed building itself, nor does it result in the loss of historic fabric associated with the principal dwelling. Instead, the works comprise the careful dismantling and reconstruction of a relatively modern boundary feature within the residential curtilage.
- 6.4 Whilst the existing wall contributes to the character of the immediate setting of Bremilham Mill House, it is understood to have been rebuilt during the restoration works undertaken in 2009 and therefore does not form part of the original historic fabric of the Grade II Listed Building. Its significance is consequently derived principally from its contribution to the wider rural character of the site rather than from any intrinsic historic or architectural value. The proposal retains this contribution by reconstructing the wall using

the same materials with the same traditional detailing and craftsmanship. The visual enclosure of the property will therefore remain largely unchanged, with the principal alteration being the wall's revised alignment.

- 6.5 The repositioning of the wall will not interrupt important views of the listed building, nor will it alter the relationship between the dwelling and its landscape setting in any meaningful way. The traditional drystone construction, reuse of existing stone and matching coping will ensure that the wall continues to read as an established boundary feature appropriate to the age, character and rural setting of Bremilham Mill House. The proposal therefore preserves the architectural and historic interest of the listed building together with its setting.
- 6.6 The proposed relocation has been carefully designed to meet the practical needs of the occupants by allowing the creation of an accessible parking space adjacent to the dwelling. This will significantly improve day-to-day accessibility for the applicant and for elderly family with reduced mobility, whilst also providing an increased degree of privacy from the adjoining public bridleway. These practical benefits are achieved without resulting in any material change to the significance of the designated heritage asset.
- 6.7 Having regard to paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), it is considered that the proposal gives rise to no more than a neutral effect on the significance of the Grade II Listed Building and its setting. The relocation of the wall neither erodes nor diminishes those elements that contribute to the building's special architectural or historic interest. Consequently, the proposal does not result in harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. However, even if the Local Planning Authority were to conclude that the repositioning of the wall gives rise to a very low level of less than substantial harm, that harm would clearly be at the lowest end of the spectrum and would be decisively outweighed by the public benefits arising from the proposal. Those benefits include improved accessibility for an ageing occupier and elderly visitors, safer and more convenient parking arrangements, continued viable occupation of the listed building, and the rebuilding of the wall using traditional materials and construction techniques which preserve the rural character of the site.

- 6.8 Overall therefore, the proposals are considered to comply with Core Strategy policies 57 and 58 together with Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Additionally, the proposals are considered to preserve the special architectural character and appearance of the Listed Building's setting in accordance with Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 6.9 The proposals are also located within the Cotswolds National Landscape. As such, due regard is needed to be had in terms of the effect of the proposed relocation of the boundary wall on the wider landscape setting. In this respect, the proposals will be modest in scale and of a high-quality. Within the setting of this existing residential curtilage, it is not considered that the proposals would have any adverse effects on this national landscape designation.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The proposed relocation of the existing drystone boundary wall represents a modest and sympathetic alteration within the curtilage of Bremilham Mill House. The proposal has been carefully designed to retain the traditional appearance of the boundary by rebuilding the wall using the existing natural stone and traditional drystone construction methods, thereby ensuring that the established character of the site is preserved.
- 7.2 The works do not involve alterations to the listed building itself and will not adversely affect those elements which contribute to its special architectural or historic interest. The proposal preserves the character and appearance of the listed building, its setting and the wider Cotswolds National Landscape whilst delivering meaningful accessibility improvements that will enable the continued comfortable occupation of the property.
- 7.3 Accordingly, the proposal accords with Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies 51, 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.