



THE OLD RECTORY, MERE, WILTSHIRE, BA12 6DS

HERITAGE STATEMENT ADDENDUM
(PL/2026/03798)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Heritage Statement Addendum is formed to accompany the previously submitted Heritage Impact Statement for The Old Rectory, Church Street, Mere, Wiltshire, BA12 6DS, that was submitted to accompany a Householder Planning Application (PL/2026/03798); validated on the 2nd of July 2026, and out to consultation until the 31st of July 2026.

1.2 This statement has been prepared to assess the heritage implications of additional proposals introduced since the original submission, namely the construction of a swimming pool, the erection of a detached oak-framed garage, and the installation of a rainwater harvesting system. This statement has been prepared by The Heritage Consultancy and is written by Adrienne Ridler-Lee MSc on behalf of the applicants, Dr John Middleton and Catherine Stevens.

1.3 This Addendum aligns with policy within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015. Guidance is taken from Historic England's 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' Good Advice in Planning Note 3 (GPA3), 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' Good Practice Advice Note 2 (GPA2), and Historic England's Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance.

2.0 SUMMARY OF PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED WORKS

2.1 The Old Rectory at Mere has recently been purchased by the Applicants who have identified areas of the building that require repair and conservation, as well as carefully considered, modest alterations that seek to improve the function, viability and sustainability of the home for the long-term, safeguarding its future. The details of works are summarised on Planning Application PL/2026/03798 as comprising '*Sundry internal and external repairs and alterations to include replacement and insertion of roof windows, replacement windows and doors, enlarge openings to form new doorways, block internal door opening, replacement of parts modern ground floor floors and removal other modern interventions, form new internal door opening, alterations to partition walls, remove and replace modern ceilings and floor. Install solar panels*'

2.2 This Heritage Statement Addendum does not seek to repeat the information contained within the previously submitted Heritage Impact Statement except if and where it is directly relevant to the additional proposals assessed herein.

3.0 ADDITIONAL PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACTS UPON SIGNIFICANCE; SWIMMING POOL

3.1 The Applicants wish to create a swimming pool within the garden to the west/south-west of the house, providing a leisure facility that will contribute to the health, well-being and long-term enjoyment of the property. The Old Rectory is a historic dwelling of some stature, and the introduction of a carefully sited outdoor swimming pool is commensurate with the scale, status and established domestic character of the property.

3.2 The proposed swimming pool, measuring 9.4 by 4 metres, together with a small shed to house and conceal the operational equipment, will be located within the garden to the west/south-west of the house (Figs. 1, 2 and 3), over 20 metres from the historic fabric of The Old Rectory. The siting has been carefully selected to avoid existing trees and their root protection areas whilst maintaining a generous separation from the listed building. Enclosed within an established part of the garden, the pool will be effectively screened by mature planting, including a substantial beech hedge, such that it remains largely concealed from wider views and is only readily apparent from within the Application Site upon passing through the opening in the hedge.

3.3 To the south, the site is bounded by a substantial hedge within the garden, and a second hedge on the property boundary, beyond which Public Footpath Mere 2 (Path 2) passes. Together with the mature trees and established vegetation, these boundaries provide effective screening, ensuring the pool does not form a visually prominent feature within the wider setting of The Old Rectory.

3.4 By virtue of its scale, siting and enclosure within the existing garden, the proposed swimming pool will preserve the ability to experience and appreciate the architectural and historic significance of The Old Rectory and its setting. Accordingly, the proposal will result in no harm to the significance of the Grade II listed building, whilst enhancing the functionality, amenity and long-term viable use of the property.

3.5 Consideration is given to other designated heritage assets within the wider setting of proposed development or alteration; in this case, the Grade I listed Church of St Michael the Archangel. The Church is located to the east of The Old Rectory, with the historic principal façade of the latter facing towards its formerly associated, ecclesiastical building. The proposed pool will be located over 70 metres to the west of the Church with intervening built form, trees and the public highway providing physical and visual distinction. The

ADDITIONAL PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACTS UPON SIGNIFICANCE; SWIMMING POOL CONT.

3.5 cont. proposed swimming pool will be visible in views from the church tower (Fig. 2), however, the tower does not form part of the public experience of the Grade I listed church, being inaccessible to the public except on rare and controlled occasions, and therefore these elevated views do not materially contribute to the way in which the significance of the church is ordinarily experienced or appreciated. The concept of a swimming pool within the wider setting of the Church is not alien, with a pool associated with the Grade I listed Chantry lying less than 20 metres to the south of the Church and fully visible from the top of the Church tower (seen in Fig.3).

3.6 The proposed swimming pool will have no adverse effect on the ability to experience or appreciate the significance of the Grade I listed Church of St Michael the Archangel, its setting, or its historic relationship with The Old Rectory, therefore there will be no harm upon its setting or significance.



Figure 1. Section of proposed pool site.



Figure 2. View from Church tower. Pool site indicated (not to scale).

ADDITIONAL PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACTS UPON SIGNIFICANCE; SWIMMING POOL CONT.



Figure 3. The Church of St. Michael the Archangel with The Chantry with pool (indicated) less than 20 metres to the south, and the proposed site of The Old Rectory pool indicated. Pool areas not to scale.

3.7 The local Historic Environment Record (HER) identifies no known or potential archaeological remains within the area proposed for the swimming pool. Nevertheless, appropriate archaeological protocols will be followed during excavation works and should any previously unknown or suspected archaeological remains be encountered, works will cease immediately in the affected area, and the Local Planning Authority will be notified to enable an appropriate course of action to be agreed.

4.0 ADDITIONAL PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACTS UPON SIGNIFICANCE; OAK FRAMED GARAGE

4.1 The application also seeks consent for the replacement of the existing garage with a traditionally detailed three-bay oak-framed structure located to the north-west of the site between the greenhouse and range of timber sheds (Fig.4), comprising two open bays and one enclosed bay with timber doors. Constructed from high-quality natural materials, the proposed building will provide a robust and enduring structure that is commensurate with the character and status of The Old Rectory. The former garage, positioned immediately to the west/south-west of the historic coach house, was an aged, lightweight timber structure lined with asbestos and of no architectural merit. It did not reflect the quality or character of the historic buildings and was removed per the response to pre-application ENQ/2026/00357 dated February 25th 2026. As one of the first structures observed upon arrival at the site, it detracted from the appreciation of the historic coach house and the setting.

4.2 The proposed garage site currently comprises an expanse of broken and deteriorating concrete hardstanding, which detracts both physically and visually from the character and setting of the listed building. The existing concrete slab will be removed and replaced with a gravel surface to match the established gravelled areas within the gardens, providing a more sympathetic finish whilst creating a permeable surface that will contribute positively to sustainable rainwater management.

4.3 The proposed garage will utilise the existing access arrangements, with no alteration to the established layout of the garden other than the removal of a C20 raised stone-edged flower bed. This feature is not of historic significance and is not illustrated on historic mapping, indicating that it does not contribute to the heritage significance or historic evolution of the site. The oak-framed garage will be positioned 600 mm from the existing brick and stone boundary wall, ensuring the wall remains legible and allowing for its ongoing maintenance. Owing to its discreet location, the proposed garage will not be overlooked by neighbouring properties and will not be visible from the tower of the Grade I listed Church of St Michael the Archangel, being effectively screened by the canopies of existing mature trees.

4.4 The proposed garage occupies a more discreet location than the previous structure and comprises a higher-quality design constructed from natural materials. The clearance of the deteriorating concrete hardstanding will further enhance the visual quality of the site whilst contributing positively to sustainable rainwater management. Accordingly, the proposal will result in no harm to the significance or setting of the listed building and will provide a positive enhancement to its historic setting.

ADDITIONAL PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACTS UPON SIGNIFICANCE; OAK FRAMED GARAGE CONT.



Figure 4. Proposed location of oak framed, 3 bay garage in front of brick and stone, west boundary wall. Note aged and deteriorating concrete slab.



Figure 5. Existing timber sheds to north boundary wall. Timber log store to west boundary wall. Proposed location of garage to the south of this range, to west boundary wall.

5.0 ADDITIONAL PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACTS UPON SIGNIFICANCE; RAIN WATER HARVESTING GOODS

- 5.1** The proposals include the installation of an underground rainwater harvesting system to improve the environmental sustainability and long-term resilience of The Old Rectory. The system will capture rainwater for reuse within the extensive gardens, reducing reliance on the mains water supply, alleviating demand on local water infrastructure, and reducing the volume of surface water entering the sewerage network during periods of heavy rainfall.
- 5.2** The harvested rainwater will support the management of over an acre of established gardens, helping to sustain planting, mature trees and habitats during increasingly prolonged periods of dry weather, thereby providing tangible biodiversity and ecological benefits. The proposed underground storage tanks have been carefully sited (Fig.6) in the middle of the courtyard to the south of the dwelling, and to east, beneath the lawn to minimise ground disturbance, maximise the efficiency of water capture from existing gutter runs, avoid known underground services and drainage infrastructure, and to avoid the suspected location of the historic well.
- 5.3** Once installed, the system will be entirely concealed beneath the ground with no above-ground structures that would alter the character or appearance of the site. Consequently, the proposal will have no impact upon the significance or setting of The Old Rectory or nearby designated heritage assets, whilst delivering long-term sustainability, biodiversity and water management benefits that support the continued conservation and viable use of the historic property.
- 5.4** As with the proposed swimming pool, the local Historic Environment Record (HER) identifies no known or potential archaeological remains within the area proposed for the oak-framed garage. Nevertheless, appropriate care will be exercised during all groundworks, and should any previously unknown or suspected archaeological remains be encountered, works will cease and the appropriate archaeological protocol will be followed.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 These updated proposals, comprising the swimming pool, oak-framed garage and underground rainwater harvesting system have been carefully conceived and sensitively sited to respect the architectural and historic significance of The Old Rectory and its setting. Each element has been informed by a thorough understanding of the significance of the designated heritage assets, ensuring that the proposals remain subordinate, discreet and appropriate to the scale, character and status of the historic property.

6.2 The swimming pool will provide significant benefits to the functionality, amenity and long-term enjoyment of the dwelling whilst remaining visually contained within the established domestic garden. The replacement oak-framed garage will facilitate the removal of the deteriorating concrete hardstanding to the north west, thereby enhancing the setting, improving the sense of arrival and introducing a high-quality building of natural materials in a more discreet location. The underground rainwater harvesting system will deliver long-term environmental benefits through sustainable water management, reducing reliance on the mains water supply, alleviating pressure on local infrastructure and supporting the continued health and biodiversity of the extensive historic gardens, all whilst remaining entirely concealed below ground.

6.3 Collectively, the proposals will preserve the significance and setting of The Old Rectory, resulting in no harm to the Grade II listed building or its setting. Furthermore, the proposals will have no impact upon the significance, setting or historic relationship of the Grade I listed Church of St Michael the Archangel. The carefully considered design, siting and materiality of the proposals ensure that the significance of both designated heritage assets will continue to be fully appreciated, whilst delivering clear and enduring benefits to the property's functionality, sustainability, biodiversity and long-term conservation.