

Heritage Statement

Former Ashlyn's Farm Site, Chesham
Road, Berkhamsted

January 2015

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Client

Grand Union Investments

January 2015

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Turley Heritage on behalf of Grand Union Investments (hereafter referred to as 'the client') to assess the impact of the proposed residential development of Ashlyn's Farm (hereafter referred to as 'the Site') upon the significance of nearby heritage assets and the purported non-designated heritage asset of Ashlyn's Farm, identified by Dacorum Borough Council.
- 1.2 The proposals are submitted as an outline planning application with access details included and all other matters reserved for later approval. The application consists of detailed parameter plans to demonstrate the principles of land use, scale and height. In addition, indicative plans and elevations have been provided, on an illustrative basis only, to provide clarity on the anticipated form and appearance of the detailed design to be submitted at the Reserved Matters stage.
- 1.3 No buildings on Site are statutorily listed or located within a conservation area. In addition, it is understood the Dacorum Borough Council have not included the existing building on the adopted 'Local List' i.e. as a non-designated heritage assets for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework, ('the Framework'). Whilst the Site is included in the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER)¹, this does not automatically confirm that the building is a non-designated heritage asset.
- 1.4 The application has been prepared following extensive pre-application discussions between the client and officers of Dacorum Borough Council, including a number of meetings on Site. The application proposals have been refined in response to pre-application feedback received.
- 1.5 During initial pre-application discussions with the Local Authority, the client was advised to undertake an assessment of the potential heritage interest of the remaining altered, late 19th century farm building that forms Ashlyn's Farm. Turley Heritage prepared a Heritage Assessment (November 2014), which informs this Statement and concluded that the building does not warrant consideration as a heritage asset for the purposes of the Framework.
- 1.6 The Site was visited on the 4th November 2014 and consisted of a complete external visual inspection as well as the accessible internal areas. The surrounding area was also inspected to understand the context of the existing building, including Ashlyn's Hall and stable block (grade II* and grade II listed buildings) and associated structures as well as the nearby Ashlyn's School (grade II listed building). Full list entries are included at *Appendix 1*.
- 1.7 The Framework provides the Government's national planning policy on the conservation of the historic environment. In respect of information requirements for applications, it sets out that:

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution

¹ 16129

made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance²

- 1.8 To comply with these requirements, Section 2 of this statement firstly identifies the relevant heritage assets within the Site and its vicinity.
- 1.9 Section 3 then provides statements of significance for Ashlyn's Hall, Ashlyn's School and Ashlyn's Farm. This assessment is undertaken on the basis of published information, historical research and on-site visual survey. This assessment is focussed and proportionate to both the importance of the heritage asset (designated and purported non-designated) and the likely impact of the proposals on this.
- 1.10 Section 4 assesses the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the listed buildings and purported non-designated heritage asset, in light of the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy in the Framework, and regional and local planning policy (identified in full at *Appendix 2*) for the historic environment. Whilst the conclusion at Section 5 summarises the findings of the report.

² DCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 – para. 128

2. The Heritage Assets

Introduction

- 2.1 The Framework defines a heritage asset as:

“A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest³.”

Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.2 Designated heritage assets are those which possess a level of interest that justifies designation and are then subject to particular procedures in planning decisions that involve them. There are no designated heritage assets within the Site.

Statutorily Listed Buildings

- 2.3 Ashlyn’s Hall and stable block (plus other ancillary structures, which could be considered to be curtilage listed) are located to the south of the Site (Figure 2.1). Ashlyn’s School is located to the north of the Site (Figure 2.1).

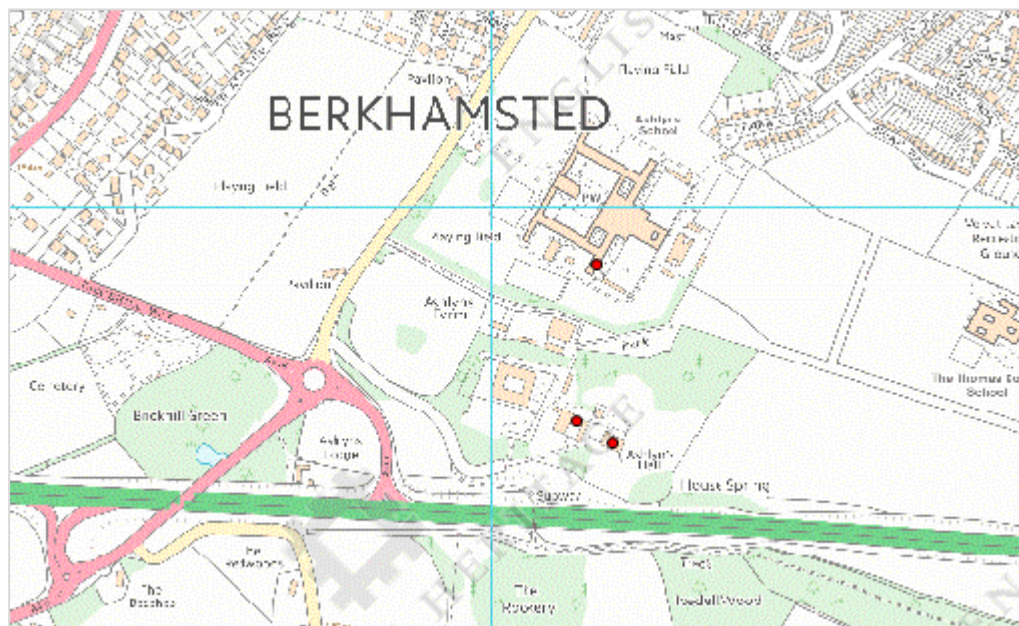


Figure 2.1: Map of Nearby Listed Buildings (Source: National Heritage List)

- 2.4 Ashlyn’s Hall was included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at grade II* in July 1950. The full list entry is included at *Appendix 1*, however, the list description is provided below for ease of reference:

“Dignified early C19 house. Stucco, Welsh slate roof and 2 storeys and attics, roughly rectangular plan. South west garden front has central. 3 storeyed semi-circular bow with

³ DCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 - Annex 2: Glossary

let floor cast iron verandah South east garden front has central pediment Sash windows, glazing bars only to 1st floor. North east wing added since 1930. Interior circular entrance hall and room above, fine staircase hall, Set in small landscaped park with fine cedars.”*

- 2.5 The stables associated with Ashlyn’s Hall were included on the statutory list at grade II in May 1973. The full list entry is included at *Appendix 1*, however, the list description is provided below for ease of reference:

“C18, altered. Red and grey brick, tiled roofs 2 storeys, corbelled cornices. Irregular fenestration of sashes and casements. Half H plan. Small louvred and tiled C19 Steeple astride roof of north east wing.

Included for group value.”

- 2.6 Ashlyn’s School was added to the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at grade II in November 2003. As a comparatively recent addition to the statutory list, the school has a comprehensive list entry, which is provided in full at *Appendix 1*. The summary of significance from this list entry is provided here for ease of reference:

“Ashlyns's School has special interest as a fine Neo-Georgian style school complex of 1932-5 by John Mortimer Sheppard, organised around a central courtyard with the Chapel most prominent, it also has a very special historic interest for its associations with the famous 1745 Foundling Hospital in London, now demolished, but which was partly incorporated into the new school building.”

- 2.7 The client has sought legal advice to confirm that the site is not located within the curtilage of these listed buildings. The Council has confirmed that they are in agreement with the findings of this legal opinion.
- 2.8 For the purposes of this report, it is the contribution, if any, of the Site towards the significance of these listed buildings as an element of their setting, which is relevant in considering the impact of the proposed development. Any potential impact will therefore be indirect.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.9 The Framework⁴ identifies that heritage assets include both designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- 2.10 Dacorum Borough Council has an adopted ‘Local List’, which it is understood is scheduled for review in 2014/15. It is understood that the existing buildings are not included on the adopted Local List.
- 2.11 In selecting buildings/structures for addition to the ‘Local List’ the Council utilises the assessment criteria contained in national best practice⁵. This report will also utilise these criteria for ease of reference and the sake of completeness.

⁴ DCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 - Annex 2: Glossary

3. Historic Development

- 3.1 In this section, the historic development of Ashlyn's Hall (and stables), Ashlyn's School and Ashlyn's Farm, is considered and a description of the architectural character of the relevant farm buildings is provided.

Historic Development

Ashlyn's Hall and Stable Block

- 3.2 The hall (a grade II* listed building), was built (or remodelled an existing building) in the late 18th/early 19th century to the design of Matthew Raper and accessed from a drive located to the southwest. It is a dignified country house (essentially a large villa – Figure 3.1), nearly square, rendered in stucco, comprising two storeys with attics and a semi-circular projection on its southern elevation, which was part of the original entrance hall. The north east wing of the building was added in the 1930s.



Figure 3.1: Front Elevation of Ashlyn's Hall (c. 1907)

- 3.3 James Smith lived in the house in 1801, and his second son Augustus Smith then took over the Hall. When he died in 1872, his brother Robert, who married Mary Ann Dorrien from a neighbouring estate, took on the property. The family name consequently changed to Smith-Dorrien or Dorrien-Smith. The hall was then leased to William Longman, a publisher, who lived there until his death in 1877.
- 3.4 Historic inventories and lease documents clarify the occupation of the estate in the late 19th and early 20th century:
- From c.1877 to 1896 the estate was occupied, under lease, by Colonel Lucas.

⁵ English Heritage. Good Practice Guide for Local Listing: Identifying and Managing Significant Local Heritage Assets (2012)

- The lease was then taken up by Sir Richard Cooper, a chemical manufacturer, in 1896 until 1911.
- In 1912, a 14 year lease was granted to AJ Ryder.
- In 1919, Ashlyn's Hall was leased to Gerald Kingsley.

3.5 The Victoria County History provides a brief description of Ashlyn's Hall in the early 20th century with no mention of the model farm:

*"Late Georgian house of two stories with a central bow in the front, is surrounded by a park in which are many well-grown beech-trees. The house and grounds belong to Mr. Smith-Dorrien, but are let to Mr. R. A. Cooper."*⁶

3.6 The half 'H' plan stables to the west of the hall (Grade II listed), date from the 18th century and are constructed, over two storeys, in red and grey brick with irregular windows and a 19th century steeple to the north east wing. The stable block has been comprehensively remodelled during the late 20th century to facilitate a new use. There are also the remains of the walled garden, also likely of 18th century date, which have been significantly altered through the construction of a substantial residential nursing home.

Ashlyn's School

3.7 The history of the school is based on the early-18th century work of Captain Thomas Coram who campaigned to establish a charity in London to care for the high number of abandoned babies. His work resulted in the granting of a Royal Charter in 1739 to establish the London Foundling Hospital for the 'Maintenance and Education of Exposed and Deserted Young Children'.

3.8 Construction of the institution began c.1742 and served 400 children, with a focus on the teaching of crafts. The institution was a success throughout the mid-18th and 19th centuries, however, as a result of increasing levels of pollution in London and growing interest in the benefits of cleaner air in the countryside encouraged the hospital to seek a new site. The original hospital was sold in 1925 and was soon demolished; only the southern colonnaded range and the pedestal for Thomas Coram's statue survived. The highly decorative interiors of the three principal rooms were relocated within the London Headquarters in Brunswick Square, with some material salvaged for use in new school buildings.

3.9 The school site in Berkhamsted was purchased in 1929, chosen for its convenient proximity to London and the railway, the sufficient acreage and its good land. The school design, by John Mortimer Shepherd, was influenced by contemporary school design but also with the intent to reflect the original, London hospital building in spirit and detail (Figure 3.2).

⁶ Page,W (ed). (1908) A History of the County of Hertford: volume 2



Figure 3.2: Undated Aerial Photograph

3.10 It was reported in The Times in November of 1929 that “The governors of the Foundling Hospital in Bloomsbury, had purchased Ashlyn’s Hall”. The hall was sold to the Thomas Coram Charitable Foundation by Gerald Kingsley (Figure 3.3), including the Site and cottages. On 30 June 1933, the first foundation stone of the new building of the Foundlings School was laid (Figures 3.2 and 3.4).



Figure 3.3: 1929 Conveyancing Plan



Figure 3.4: Undated Plan of Ashlyn's School

- 3.11 The school became part of the Hertfordshire Education Authority after the Second World War and is set within an expanded school complex consisting of ancillary buildings, hardstanding and sports pitches. The extent of the development of the school site included a middle school located to the northeast of the site (Figure 3.14).

Ashlyn's Farm

- 3.12 The first buildings on Site were first represented on the 1898 OS Map (Figure 3.5) to the north of Ashlyn's Hall and to the south of land that would later be occupied by Ashlyn's School. A note providing details of the lease, dated 16th January 1889, refers to the 'new homestead & farm buildings & the 2 labourers' cottages recently erected thereon by the lessee'. The lessee in 1889 was Colonel Lucas, and it therefore seems probable that he was responsible for erecting the farm and cottages in c.1888. The Site is identified as a model farm, accessed via a narrow track that also provided access for two small cottages. There were changes to local field patterns to facilitate this new access and an enclosure.

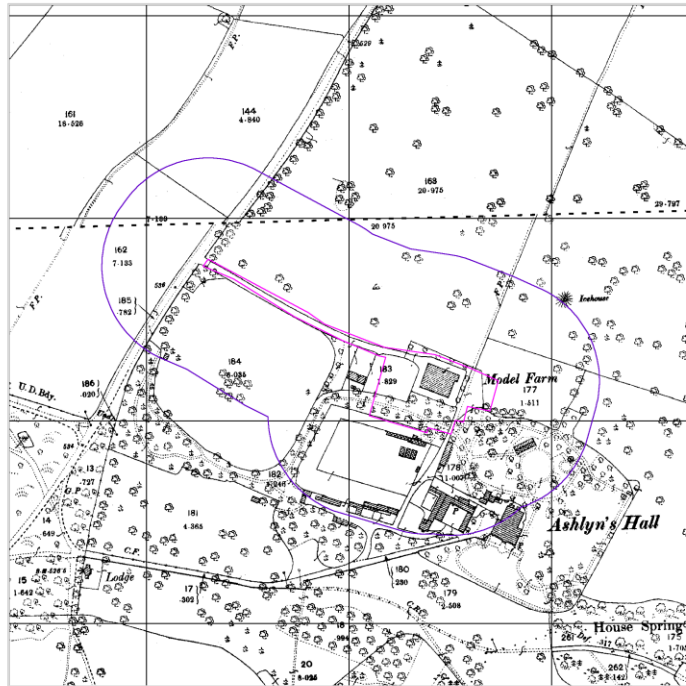


Figure 3.5: 1898 OS Map

- 3.13 In 1911, correspondence between the agents of Sir Richard Cooper and Arthur Algernon Smith-Dorrien Smith states that the lessee erected/installed a sheep shearing shed, galvanised iron shed, vertical engine and a baler/winning machine. As the documentation is non-specific, it is possible that this relates either to Ashlyn's Farm or nearby Bottom Farm, which also appeared to form part of the estate at this time.
- 3.14 As noted earlier in this Section, the tenancy of Ashlyn's Farm passed to Albert Ashby. The inventory and valuation prepared in June 1912 notes, amongst other things, a covered yard with iron troughs, a large steam engine and farm stables.
- 3.15 A 1919 conveyance plan associated with sale of Ashlyn's Hall by Major Arthur Algernon Smith-Dorrien-Smith to Gerald Kingsley, indicates that whilst the Site formed part of the sale, the cottages and enclosure to the east were separate from the wider estate (Figure 3.6). This would be consistent with the separate lease for Ashlyn's Farm, assigned to Albert Ashby in 1912.



Figure 3.6: 1919 Conveyancing Plan

3.16 There is little change by the early 20th century, with two ancillary structures located to the west of the Site, replacing the previous enclosure (Figure 3.7).

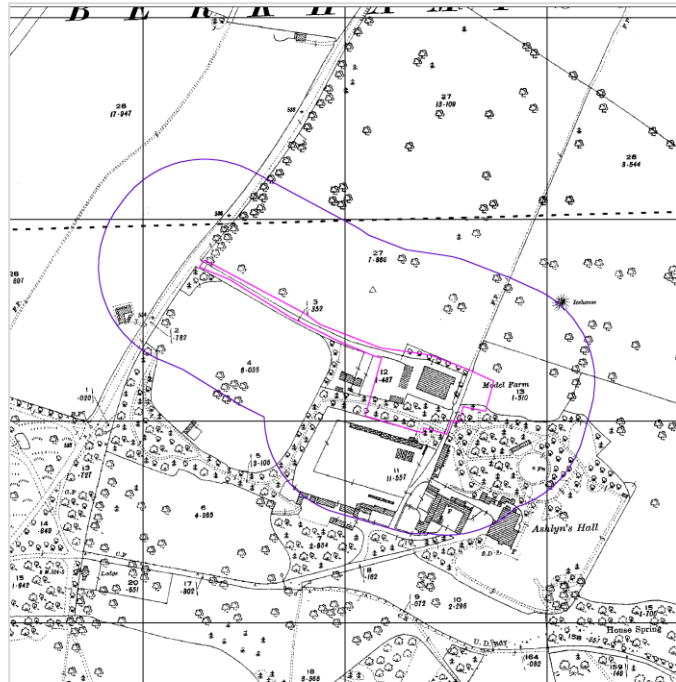


Figure 3.7: 1925 OS Map

3.17 In 1937, following Albert Ashby's retirement the live and dead stock and equipment associated with Ashlyn's Farm was sold at auction to George Stanbridge. At the same time the lease was reassigned to George Stanbridge. The lease plan showing the

extent of land ownership shows the complex overlapping of interests between Ashlyn's Hall, Ashlyn's School and Ashlyn's Farm (Figure 3.8).



Figure 3.8: 1937 Lease

3.18 The inventory and valuation indicates the nature of the farm at this time (Figure 3.9) being associated, principally, with the rearing of cattle but also pigs and poultry. A number of buildings were specified perhaps corresponding with those shown on Figures 3.7 and 3.8:

- House;
- Cowhouse for 18 cows
- Stable for 5 horses
- Dutch barn;
- Covered yards;
- Mixing house;
- Granary;
- Mill house;
- Engine house;
- Barn;
- Cooling house;
- Sterilising houses; and
- Piggeries



Figure 3.9: 1937 Auction Catalogue

3.19 By the middle of the 20th century there had been significant changes to the Site's wider context with the erection of the Foundling Hospital School (now Ashlyn's School) to the north (Figures 3.2 and 3.10).



Figure 3.10: 1940-47 OS Map

- 3.20 In 1941, George Stanbridge put the live and dead farm stock up for sale at auction (Figure 3.11). The size of the dairy herd had increased since 1937 but there appears to have been a gradual reduction in the diversity of animal's reared/used.

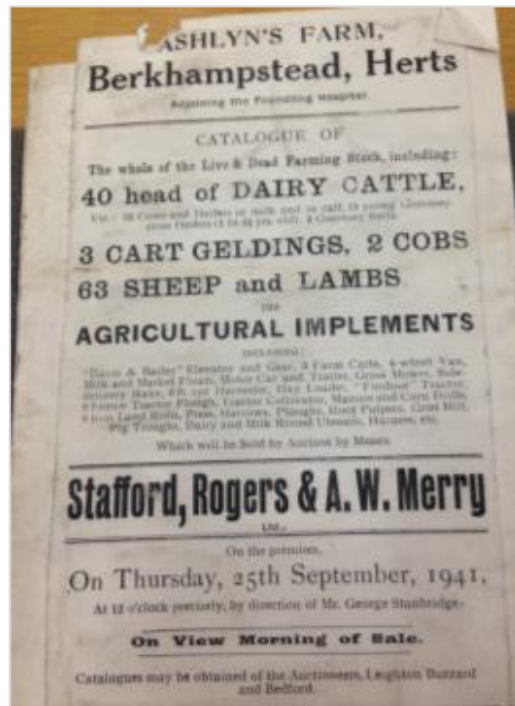


Figure 3.11: 1941 Auction Catalogue

- 3.21 A 1947 aerial photograph (Figure 3.12), demonstrates that in addition to the earlier access track from the west, there was also a route leading from the model farm linking to Swing Gate Lane to the east.



Figure 3.12: 1947 Aerial Photograph

- 3.22 There appears to have been no significant changes to the Site between 1960 and 1970/71, (note the track heading northeast is now, in part, represented (Figure 3.13)). The school's facilities have expanded to include sport pitches to the north of the Site.

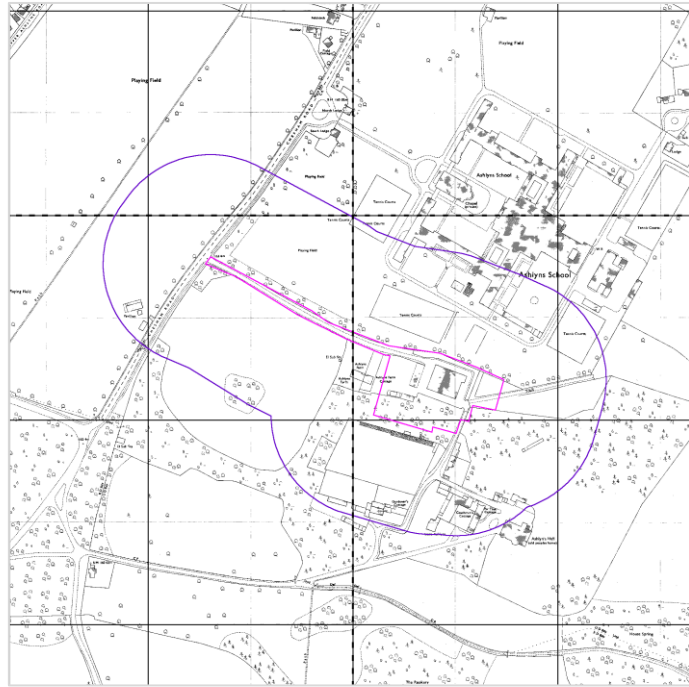


Figure 3.13: 1970-71 OS Map

- 3.23 By the late 20th century, Berkhamsted had significantly expanded. The former track linking the site to Swing Gate Lane appears to have been straightened and 'regularised', possibly as a consequence of the construction of the middle school (Figure 3.14).

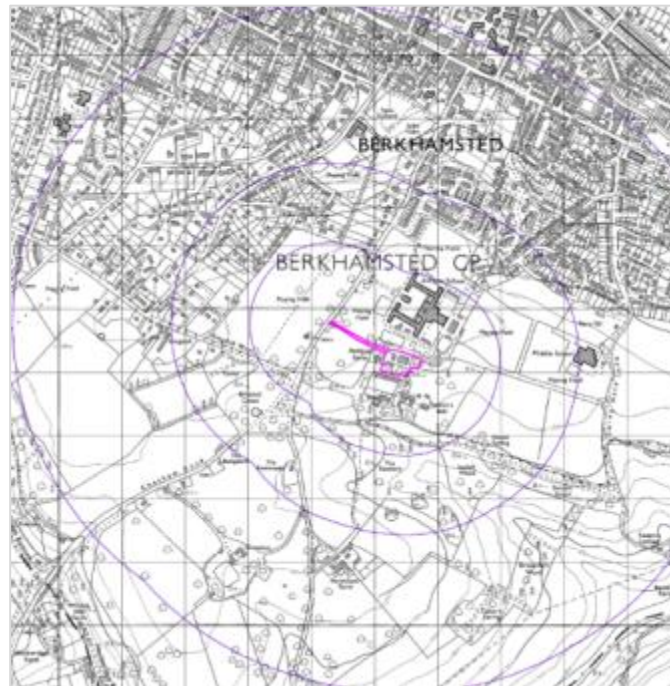


Figure 3.14: 1981 OS Map

3.24 By 1994, the Site was largely in its current configuration (Figure 3.15). To the south of the Site, a building (or potentially two buildings) had been erected and the earlier structure to the west had been demolished. More significantly, in terms of the wider setting of the farm, was the construction of the A41 bypass and associated transport infrastructure, which severed Ashlyn's Hall and the site from the wider rural context to the south.



Figure 3.15: 1994 OS Map

3.25 It is understood that the Site was most recently used for equestrian purposes but this use has now ceased and the building is vacant and used for storage.

4. Significance of the Heritage Assets

Significance and Special Interest

4.1 The Framework defines the significance of a heritage asset as:

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”⁷

Statutorily Listed Buildings

4.2 Listed buildings are defined as designated heritage assets that hold special architectural or historic interest. The principles of selection for listed buildings are published by the Department of Culture Media and Sport⁸ and supported by English Heritage’s Listing Selection Guides for each building type⁹.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

4.3 In order to assess the purported heritage significance of Ashlyn’s Farm identified by officers during the course of pre-application discussions, the criteria and guidance contained within the following documents are of relevance:

- *Historic Farmsteads Preliminary Character Statement: East of England Region* (August 2006) published by the University of Gloucestershire in association with English Heritage and the Countryside Agency;
- *Listing Selection Guide: Agricultural Buildings* (April 2011) published by English Heritage; and
- *The English Model Farm: Building the Agricultural Ideal, 1700-1914* (2002) by Susanna Wade Martin.

4.4 As the Council utilises English Heritage’s best practice guidance¹⁰ to identify buildings for inclusion on their Local List, these criteria are identified in this Section for the sake of completeness.

4.5 These documents have been selected to provide an objective basis upon which the merits of the Site, as a late 19th century agricultural building, can be determined. The following section provides a summary of the relevant guidance from these documents, which provides the context against which the purported heritage significance of the Site can be assessed.

⁷ DCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 - Annex 2: Glossary

⁸ DCMS Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings, 2010

⁹ English Heritage, Listing Selection Guide: Education Buildings and Domestic 3: Suburban and Country Houses, 2011

¹⁰ English Heritage. Good Practice Guide for Local Listing: Identifying and Managing Significant Local Heritage Assets (2012)

Historic Farmsteads Preliminary Character Assessment: East of England Region (August 2006)

- 4.6 This document is one of eight Preliminary Character Statements, which provides information on the characteristics of traditional farm buildings in each of the regions identified by English Heritage.
- 4.7 It provides a summary of the national historic context in which farm buildings developed and then a discussion on how regional characteristics relate to this. Whilst focussing primarily on farmsteads it also contains general guidance on the historical development of farming in southeast England as well as descriptions on common farm building types.

General Historic Context

- 4.8 The guidance notes that the East of England region, along with south-east England, retains some very early examples of surviving complexes of loose courtyard farmsteads dating from the 17th century, often with groups of two or more barns, granaries and stabling. Regular courtyard plans are documented in the East of England region from the mid-18th century, although no surviving groups can be dated before the 1780s. On smaller dairy farms, the planning is generally less formal and consists of a scattered group of buildings arranged around a yard.
- 4.9 The Agricultural Revolution (1750-1880) saw significant changes in farming practices and a shift towards estate improvement and the introduction of scientific methods to improve productivity and efficiency. The Agricultural Revolution can be further subdivided into two periods: before and after 1840. The earlier phase was the most important phase of farm building development, arising from the introduction of scientific approaches to fertilisation, grain selection, improved drainage, increases in the rate of enclosure and higher grain & meat prices.
- 4.10 The buildings on Site were erected during a period of sustained agricultural decline (1880-1940), arising from the significant imports of American grain into the British market from the early 1870s (as a result of the opening up of the Canadian and American prairies), poor harvests and the invention of refrigeration and iron steam ships allowing the importation of beef and mutton, principally from Argentina, New Zealand and Australia.
- 4.11 As a result, there was little fresh investment in farm buildings during the period. Notable exceptions included some established estates with income derived from sources other than agriculture and continuing developments in dairying areas. Whilst there was little fresh investment in new farm buildings existing buildings were repaired and modified. New buildings constructed tended to be of the cheapest materials. Many of these building, such as Dutch barns, were prefabricated, whilst concrete, corrugated iron or asbestos sheet were being increasingly used for the refitting of cow and dairy units and the repair of traditional roofs. Reduced rents and growing building costs meant that only the wealthiest farmers and landowners continued to invest in model or experimental farms, and many of these concentrated on the production of meat and dairy produce. Most landowners, however, built very little, perhaps investing in dairy buildings or cattle sheds in an attempt to attract tenants or meet increased demand in some areas for meat and dairy produce.

- 4.12 The continued promotion of scientifically based agriculture in the period was matched by the application of new ideas on ventilation and farm hygiene to farm buildings, such as the regulations for dairying introduced in 1885. This was brought into effect mostly through the conversion of existing buildings (especially stabling into dairies) and to a small degree through new-build, notably on the smallholdings owned by county councils.
- 4.13 Planned steadings and buildings in some areas during this period reflected the increased importance of dairying, particularly of liquid milk – the steadings of the Tollemache and Westminster estates in south Cheshire being examples. County councils entered the scene as a builder of new farmsteads, built in mass-produced materials but in traditional form, in response to the Government's encouragement of smallholdings of up to 50 acres (20 hectares). Alongside the construction of new farm buildings, traditional farm buildings were adapted to new needs, and the use of corrugated iron (mostly for repair) has guaranteed the survival and reuse of earlier buildings, particularly the increasingly redundant threshing barn.

Regional Context

- 4.14 Whilst much of the East of England region was characterised by mixed farming, taking advantage of its good transport connections and access to extensive markets, some areas were suited to specialisation.
- 4.15 The Chilterns are sometimes labelled as a sheep–corn area but the farming of this locality differs markedly from that of other chalk down areas in having smaller-scale and more ancient patterns of enclosure and farms. The clay capping the chalk meant that the area was heavily wooded and pig keeping was a speciality in the beech forests. There was an emphasis on timber growing, especially in the south-west where coppice industries were important. There was more arable in the south-west part of the Chilterns than the north-east part. This difference may be explained by the reduction in woodland in the south-west from around one half to one third of the area between 1600 and 1800 whilst in the north-east the wheat acreage declined in the period 1640 to 1750 to be replaced by fodder crops enabling heavier stocking. This north-east/south-west split may also be due to the easier access to the Thames and London enjoyed by the latter area. The north-east had no waterway to the capital and so concentrated on fattening stock that could be driven to market.
- 4.16 In the claylands, farms specialised in raising cattle and dairy from at least the 15th century. Higher land prices close to London meant that farms and estates in the south of the Region were generally smaller than elsewhere, often specialising in fruit growing and the export of a great variety of products to the capital. During the 19th century, the influence of London was even more firmly felt with market gardening and dairying increasing in importance.
- 4.17 In Hertfordshire, enclosure was an issue in the early 19th century. Many 'improving' farmers felt hampered by the antiquated common fields system. By 1846, things had changed. The chalky soils were nearly all enclosed and farmed and large flocks of sheep were fattened for the London market. Isolated farmyards had been built where cattle were fattened but still it was thought that the buildings, even on these newly enclosed farms, were 'defective' in having too many barns

- 4.18 By adapting to the needs of the London populous, the farmers of the Region did not suffer from the depression in grain prices at the end of the 19th century as much as those in other southern English Regions. This meant that new farm building was likely to continue, especially in facilitating the supply of liquid milk and cheese. Perhaps the most obvious, if late, examples of this are the farms built by the Ovaltine Company, outside Bishops Langley, in 1931.

Building Techniques & Materials

- 4.19 The dominant building technique in the region, from the medieval period until the early 19th century, was timber framing. The use of brick for walling became widespread for farm buildings from the mid-18th century onwards, being most commonly used on estates undertaking capital improvements with high rental values. The brick in the region varies in colour from deep red to yellow and was often used in conjunction with flint.
- 4.20 During the course of the 19th century, much of the region's thatch was replaced with plain clay tiles or pantiles but thatching in water reed continued in the broads and parts of the Fens. Thatched farm buildings are now rarely encountered in the region.

Building Types: Combination Barns

- 4.21 The heyday of barn building in the region was the period 1700 to 1850. The increase in grain production stimulated after the 1796 war with France, created a need for increased capacity. This resulted in the adaptation, rebuilding or enlarging of existing barns or the erection of additional barns.
- 4.22 Barns are often the oldest and most impressive buildings within a farmstead and are characterised by:
- Internal space for the storage of un-threshed crop and a threshing floor for beating the grain from the crop with a flail and for winnowing the grain from the chaff in a cross draught. There was also normally an area for the storage of straw after threshing; and
 - Blank external walls.
- 4.23 The distinctive form and plan of barns remained comparatively little altered between the 13th and 19th centuries. In the typical plan of a barn, the threshing floor was centrally placed. A greater span could be enabled by aisled barn construction, either in single or double aisles, and was particularly common in East Anglia and the southeast.
- 4.24 The size of a barn can be indicative of the former extent of arable and holding size. The practice of mowing rather than cutting by sickle the corn crop, widespread by the 19th century, also had an impact on barn size as large quantities of straw would need to be accommodated. Most barns had large, opposed doors to the threshing bay.
- 4.25 On the dairy farms of the region's claylands 16th century and later pre-1750 barns were typically of three bays with a central threshing floor and a fourth bay containing lofted stable or cattle accommodation. This development in building plan was the direct result of both the need to house additional dairy cattle and the reduced requirement for crop storage in these pastoral areas.

- 4.26 From the early 19th century, the traditional barn began to be replaced by large multi-functional buildings with threshing and fodder-processing areas linked to granaries, straw storage and cattle housing. Documentary and archaeological evidence shows that barns in many parts of the Region were multi-functional buildings. This was the result of both the need to house dairy cattle and the reduced requirement for crop storage. Only as corn production increased in the 19th century did barns become dedicated crop storage and processing buildings.
- 4.27 Whilst machine threshing was introduced from the late 1780s onwards, with the adaptation of barns to accommodate the new equipment, this was not common in the southern counties until the 1850s or later, as labour was abundant and cheap. As a result, few barn buildings in the eastern region bear evidence for the introduction of machinery. After 1850, where mechanisation was used, it was more often in the form of portable threshing machines powered by horses or mobile steam engines.

Building Types: Cattle Housing

- 4.28 Evidence for cattle housing is very rare before the 18th century and in many areas uncommon before the 19th century. The agricultural improvements of the 18th century emphasised the importance of farmyard manure in maintaining the fertility of the soil. It was also recognised that cattle fattened better and were more productive in milk if housed in strawed-down yards and buildings, and fed with carefully measured quantities of nutritious turnips and imported feed. There is hardly a farmstead without 19th century adaptations for increased livestock accommodation. Characteristic features of cattle housing include:

- **Externally**, lower and wider doorways than stabling, with wall ventilation slits (adjustable sliding ventilators from the early 19th century) and holes in gable ends or side walls for the throwing out of muck (especially in areas with limited straw for bedding, where cattle were wintered indoors);
- **Internally**, ceilings were typically low and there was very little light. Hay was stored above in lofts, and in some examples on either side in 'sink mows', increasing the warmth and airlessness. It was not until the later 19th century that the importance of a well-ventilated cow house became fully appreciated. The size of the haylofts increased as more cows were kept and the production of hay rose; their ceilings were higher and air ducts went from the cow house up on to the roof above the hay barn.
- **Interior stalling and feeding arrangements.** Cows were usually tethered in pairs with low partitions of wood, stone, slate and, later, cast iron between them. As the breeding of stock improved and cows became larger, the space for the animals in the older buildings became limited and an indication of the date of a cow house can be the length of the stalls or the width of the building. Feeding arrangements can survive in the form of hayracks, water bowls and mangers for feed.
- **Variations in internal planning**, cattle being stalled along or across the main axis of the building and facing a wall or partition. They were fed either from behind or from a feeding passage, these often being connected to fodder rooms from the late 18th century.

- 4.29 Shelter sheds were often sited around straw yards where manure would build up during the winter. The earliest examples of these, as recorded in Norfolk, comprise lean-tos on the south walls of barns. These brick buildings were usually roofed with pantiles and supported along the open front with brick, cast-iron or wooden piers. There were troughs and racks along the back wall, the troughs sometimes supported on chains so that they could be lifted as the level of litter in the yard rose. Regular U- and E-plan yards are to be found across the predominantly estate-owned areas of the Region. They are also found in the areas where brick and stone building predominated but are less usual in the timber-framed parts of the Region and are unusual in the claylands of South Norfolk, Suffolk and North Essex. In these areas, free-standing buildings were roughly grouped around a yard and linked by walls or temporary hurdles to form an enclosure.
- 4.30 By the 1850s, it had been proved by agricultural chemists that the nutritional value of manure would be better preserved if it were under cover, and as costly feeds produced richer manures; the incentive to protect them was great. The problem was that it could be difficult to provide enough ventilation, but this could be overcome by complex systems of louvers and shutters. Some continued to be built as the depression in grain prices focused attention on livestock production. The best known examples of covered yards are on the most expensively designed model farms of the mid- to late 19th century, almost all of them being estate-owned. The introduction of roofs to existing yards became general in fatstock areas from the late 19th century and especially after 1940. Covered yards, are documented throughout the Region from the 1850s. Some covered yards were still being built as the depression in grain prices focused attention on livestock production. They were expensive and were mostly found on estate farms. After the mid-1870s, many landlords were building extra yards for cattle to persuade tenants to stay.

Listing Selection Guide: Agricultural Buildings (April 2011)

- 4.31 This document provides historical context in which agricultural buildings should be considered as well as summaries of the characteristics of typical traditional farm buildings. These matters have been outlined earlier in this section and are not repeated.
- 4.32 The guidance does, however, provide useful criteria against which the potential significance of agricultural buildings can be assessed. Whilst utilised primarily for buildings considered for national designation, these criteria are equally applicable to the consideration of all agricultural structures.
- 4.33 The listing selection guide makes clear that very little from the period 1880-1940 fulfils the listing criteria. It states that buildings tended to be of the cheapest materials such as corrugated iron and many were prefabricated, such as Dutch barns. Only the wealthiest farmers and landowners continued to build model or experimental farms, which could be of some architectural sophistication.
- 4.34 Cattle housing was well-documented in the medieval period. Any evidence for cattle housing from before the late eighteenth century is exceptionally rare and significant. As with barns, there is marked regional diversity in building types, and the names used to describe them. Cow houses, either free standing or as part of a combination barn, were

typically built for dairy cattle. They can take the form of shelter sheds built around yards. The folding of stock (animals, principally cattle) in yards became more general in the nineteenth century and manifested itself in distinctive building types. Very few cow house interiors of the nineteenth century or earlier have survived unaltered because hygiene regulations for the production of milk have resulted in internal arrangements being altered.

4.35 The most significant examples of covered yards – developed to house cattle and conserve their manure - are on the most expensively designed planned and model farms of the 1850s to 1870s. Examples dating from this period are of national note. It became increasingly common from the 1880s to roof over former open yards with timber- or metal-framed superstructures.

4.36 The selection guides outlines the following specific considerations for determining heritage significance of agricultural buildings. The following criteria are considered to be relevant in this instance:

- **Architectural quality, survival and group value:** The guidance is clear that individual buildings must be assessed on their own merits. It does note, however, that a building which stands in a group with one or more listed structures (including a farmhouse) is more likely to be of interest than a sole survivor. The presence of a group of historic farm buildings, if of early date, or exceptional architectural quality, or which clearly represent local farming traditions over time, can sometimes strengthen claims to potential heritage interest.
- **Assessment by date range:** It is noted that complete planned, or model, farmsteads of the period up to and including the 1830s are of national significance and should normally be designated where they survive in good condition. It goes on to note that greater discrimination should be applied to buildings from later periods, with attention being focussed on:
 - Farmsteads that are exceptionally complete (including those with internal fittings and so forth)
 - Distinguished examples of estate architecture
 - Farmsteads that in terms of their planning (the housing of steam – or water-powered machinery in projecting mill barns, and the conveyance of fodder to livestock along clear flow-line principles etc.) are at the cutting edge of development of farmstead design
- **Regional diversity and character:** The diversity of building types, and of farmstead form and scale, are the direct result of how developments in farming practice varied from place to place through time. Careful consideration is necessary to ensure that the special values of characteristic regional farm buildings are given appropriate weight in designation assessments. The guidance also states that regional and local countryside character also derives from field systems, and some buildings may possess extra interest because they relate to an especially intact field system that is strongly representative of the character and development of a regional farming pattern.

- **Fixtures and alterations:** Where features such as horse engines and structural alterations to accommodate significant innovative changes in existing farming practices, these will normally contribute to a building's interest. This normally applies to buildings dating before 1840. Late 19th century alterations and adaptations to provide increased livestock accommodation rarely contribute to the significance of a building.
- **Historic interest and dated buildings.** Well-documented historical associations of national importance may increase the case for listing, although the building will still ideally possess intrinsic interest as well. Farmsteads may be the location where new machinery or farming systems were pioneered or promoted, for example, or where a clear connection can be proven with an improving landlord of interest. Where agricultural buildings are clearly dated (whether by datestone, documentation, or tree-ring dating) this is likely to add to their interest although it is made clear that this will not in itself be a reason to designate.

The English Model Farm: Building the Agricultural Ideal, 1700 -1914 (2002)

4.37 As this building has been identified as a 'model farm' (discussed in more detail later in this report) it is appropriate to consider the characteristics of model farms of the late 19th/early 20th century.

4.38 Model/planned farms are the products of the landlord-tenant system of capitalist farming, whereby the landlord provided the fixed infrastructure for the farming enterprise, and the tenant worked the farm, providing the stock, seed and machinery.

4.39 Model farms were consciously built and planned as complete units, whether to the designs of architects, engineers, landlords or their agents. A model farm is defined as:

"A steading built for a landowner who wanted to set an example to the tenantry on his estate and society at large, invariably in addition to satisfying his own taste for classical or picturesque buildings."

4.40 Model farms generally fall into one of two categories:

- New buildings erected as home farms or exemplary tenant farms on estates where the latest techniques would be displayed to impress both the tenantry and the owner's friends. The kudos associated with these farms would often be enhanced by the work of an architect of national or regional note; or
- Those built for tenants along more purely functional lines as part of enclosure or land reclamation schemes, often in association with the schools and cottages that form part of the distinctive estate landscapes.

4.41 It has been noted earlier in this Section that the years 1870-1940 represented a period of sustained agricultural depression. This sustained depression heralded, at a national level, the decline of interest in model farmsteads on all but the most affluent estates, most noticeably in the period after 1900. In this regard, the period represents a significant decline from the heyday of the design and construction of model farms between 1840 and 1875.

- 4.42 It was only in dairying districts that profits were maintained during this period. Elsewhere, there was a process of gradual conversion from arable to pasture, particularly in the traditional pastoral areas with good and/or improved transport links to facilitate the delivery of feed grain and the export of dairy products/livestock.
- 4.43 The growing urban populations resulted in increased demand for meat and dairy produce, specifically liquid milk. The number of dairy cows steadily increased during the last quarter of the 19th century, whilst store cattle also increased. There was also a shift in the practice of cattle rearing with stock cattle sold during their second year, younger than previously, thus allowing for a quicker financial return.
- 4.44 The principal consequence of this agricultural depression was the development of new building types. In this regard, cost had become the main consideration in the design of agricultural buildings. There was also a shift towards greater emphasis on labour saving in the mixing/preparation of food and maximising efficiencies in building design and use. Covered stock yards become a characteristic feature as well as integrated means to collect, store and disperse manure.
- 4.45 The period also saw the progress of innovation in the use and application of cheaper materials such as concrete, corrugated iron roofs, iron frames, roofing felt, rubber roofing, and 'Willesden roofing paper'. New building types became popular, including Dutch barns constructed of iron frames and corrugated iron roofs and 'American Barns' where barns, feed stores and buildings for stocks were incorporated under one roof in a single, multi-level building. There was also innovation in aspects such as the provision of tramlines and turntables to move and deliver feed and hygiene through ventilation, cast-iron stalls and tile cladding.
- 4.46 The large landed estates of long-established families were largely immune to vagaries in the agricultural economy and continued to build model farmsteads of significant scale and ambition i.e. the Duke of Westminster's and the Tollemarche's estates in Cheshire. By contrast, other landowners whose wealth was derived from more mixed sources developed farms of more modest scale, including 'hobby farms' associated with the 'improvement' of dairy breeds.

Good Practice Guide for Local Heritage Listing (2012)

- 4.47 The good practice guide identifies the following commonly applied selection criteria for local heritage listing:
- Age;
 - Rarity;
 - Aesthetic value;
 - Group Value;
 - Evidential Value (consistent with archaeological interest and therefore not in this instance);
 - Historic Association;

- Archaeological Interest (not relevant in this instance);
- Designed landscapes;
- Landmark status; and
- Social and communal value (not relevant in this instance).

4.48 Whilst we have had regard to these suggested criteria it is noted that there is a significant degree of overlap with those utilised at a national level.

Heritage Assets Generally

4.49 English Heritage has published guidance¹¹ on the identification of four types of heritage value that an asset may hold: aesthetic, communal, historic and evidential value. Together, this guidance provides a framework for assessing the significance of designated or non-designated heritage assets.

Setting

4.50 The Framework defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral¹².”

4.51 English Heritage has published guidance¹³ in respect of the setting of heritage assets, providing detail on understanding the setting and the associated assessment of the impact of any changes.

Assessment of Heritage Significance

4.52 The following statements of significance are proportionate to the importance of the identified and purported heritage assets and sufficient to understand the impact of the Proposed Development, given their nature and extent. Assessment is based on existing published information, archival research and on-site visual survey.

4.53 In light of the nature of the Proposed Development and the likely scale and nature of the potential indirect impact upon the significance of the identified listed buildings it is considered necessary to provide only a high level summary of heritage significance and contribution made by setting to this significance.

4.54 A more detailed assessment of potential heritage significance of Ashlyn’s Farm is contained within this Section to establish the nature of any such interest and the likely greater direct impact arising from the Proposed Development.

Ashlyn’s Hall and Stables (grade II* and II listed buildings)

4.55 In light of their historic and functional connections, proximity and disposition the significance of these statutorily listed buildings is assessed as part of a group. These

¹¹ English Heritage, Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance, 2008

¹² DCLG, NPPF, 2012 – Annex 2: Glossary

¹³ English Heritage The Setting of Heritage Assets, 2011

buildings form a cohesive group with functional, historical and aesthetic associations, which enhance the heritage values of the individual buildings.

Architectural Interest

- 4.56 As noted in Section 3.0 the building is, in essence, a rectilinear late Georgian, stuccoed villa with a bow fronted centre with an iron veranda (Figures 4.1 and 4.2). Documentary sources provide conflicting accounts of the age of the building, some identifying it as 18th century whilst others, notably Pevsner, view it as early 19th century (c.1800). It appears that the core of the listed building is a typical mid-late 18th villa, set under a unifying pediment (Figure 4.2) with a later 'Regency' style full height bowed front and phase of remodelling dating from the early 19th century.



Figure 4.1: Southern Elevation of Ashlyn's Hall (Source: England's Places)



Figure 4.2: Western Elevation of Ashlyn's Hall (Source: England's Places)

- 4.57 In this instance, the interior of the building is of less relevance to the consideration of the building's significance although the list entry notes the presence of a circular entrance hall and room above with a fine staircase hall (Figure 4.3). Presumably, these internal spaces were the rationale for the building's listing at grade II* and amplified the building's architectural interest at the time of listing. It is not clear the extent to which these internal elements have survived the successive uses and periods of vacancy.



Figure 4.3: Staircase Hall

- 4.58 The building was extended to the north in the 1930s as a projecting 'wing'. Whilst superficially of a similar character to the parent property it is of a substantial scale and has unbalanced the previous, carefully balanced composition. It is not considered to make a strong contribution to the special interest of the listed building.
- 4.59 The building is an attractive example of a Georgian country house and illustrates the changing trends in domestic classical design. It is considered that its architectural value makes the principal contribution towards its special interest.
- 4.60 As noted earlier in this report the stables are late 18th century in date. This would support the presence of a contemporaneous house on the site of Ashlyn's Hall during this period. The building is constructed of a red-brown brick and arranged in a u-shaped plan around a central courtyard. Whilst the original utilitarian character remains broadly legible the building has been significantly altered to facilitate its late 20th century conversion to commercial use (Figure 4.4), to the detriment of its architectural integrity. The special interest of the building is now principally as part of a consistent group and by illustrating the former operation of a small country house.



Figure 4.4: Stables at Ashlyn's Hall

Historic Interest

- 4.61 The historic interest of the group is largely derived from their age as an example of a Georgian country house and associated ancillary buildings. Intrinsic historic value is largely derived from the fabric of the listed buildings but also, to a lesser extent, from the disposition of the buildings relative to each other, which provides evidence of the hall's development and function. This value has been eroded through the fragmentation in the use of the buildings during the course of the 20th century and the associated conversions to separate uses.

Contribution made by Setting to Significance

- 4.62 In assessing the contribution made by setting to the particular heritage significance of Ashlyn's Hall and stable we have had regard to the relevant English Heritage best practice guidance¹⁴ identified earlier in this Section.
- 4.63 The listed buildings are located at the edge of the expanded settlement of Berkhamsted. Ashlyn's Hall and the stable form part of a much reduced historic estate that has been disposed off in a piecemeal fashion during the course of the 20th century (see Section 3.0), not least through the construction of Ashlyn's School, and further fragmented by the construction of the A41 (Figure 4.5). The expansion of Berkhamsted during the course of the 20th century has also eroded the distinction between town and hall such that Ashlyn's Hall is no longer a country house in its original sense i.e. a house set within its own grounds, in a predominantly rural context and at the heart of a functioning estate that provided the means to support its owners/occupiers.
- 4.64 The construction of the A41 in particular has had a significant and adverse impact on Ashlyn's Hall. It has truncated the extent of the parkland/formal gardens associated with the house, particularly to the south, where a line of trees has been planted in a prospect that was historically, more open (Figures 3.12 and 4.5). Whilst more open views across the small, historic parkland survive to the east these will still be impacted by awareness of the A41 to the south i.e. through associated traffic noise and movement. In addition,

¹⁴ English Heritage The Setting of Heritage Assets, 2011

the experience of accessing the grounds of the hall is now very different from the historic situation. As noted earlier, the expansion of Berkhamsted means that the approach from the north is through typical 20th century suburban development whilst to the south it is accessed from the significant transport infrastructure associated with the A41. Whilst the adverse impact of this experiential aspect of setting is mitigated to a limited extent by the retention of the curving driveway and open land to the west of the stables it is not removed entirely.

- 4.65 What remains is a small area of attractive parkland to the north with attractive cedar trees (clearly legible as a designed landscape from the footpath to the northeast of the hall), a curved driveway lined by mature trees and enclosed by traditional estate railings, historic ancillary structures associated with the function of the estate i.e. walled garden and small areas of incidental green space (Figure 4.5). These elements contribute positively to the heritage significance of the listed buildings as tangible elements of the former function of the hall as a cohesive estate. However, this contribution has been eroded via the changes associated with the shift to commercial and care home use, including the provision of extensive areas of hard standing; the distinct and separate curtilages of these different commercial and care home uses; and the construction of a substantial and highly visible care home within the former walled gardens.



Figure 4.5: Aerial Photograph of Ashlyn's Hall and Environs

- 4.66 It is clear from the analysis in Section 3.0 that the Site originally formed part of the Ashlyn's Hall estate and was erected by Colonel Lucas in 1888/89. It may have been a 'hobby farm' for an industrious member of the family or an attempt to diversify the family's income as a small commercial enterprise. As outlined in this Report, Ashlyn's Farm has not operated as a going agricultural concern for many years and does not survive as an intact late 19th century farmstead. It is therefore, not the same functioning farmstead that was associated with the hall in the late 19th century.

4.67 In any event, the farm was historically separated from the main grounds of the hall by a large planting belt with the principal access via a separate drive but also with a secondary access running north-south past the walled garden (Section 3.0). This would be consistent with the original function of the Site for rearing cattle with the attendant noise and smells, which the occupier of the hall would want to keep very separate from the remainder of the 'polite' estate. From the outset, the Site did not form part of the designed, landscaped grounds of the hall that were associated with its function or upkeep and there is no visual interaction between the listed buildings and the Site. This distinction between the designed grounds of the hall and the Site remains legible today in the form of the remains of the raised tree belt (albeit in a denuded form) and as a result of the wider, extensive changes to the Ashlyn's Hall estate during the late 20th century (Section 3.0 and Figure 4.6).



Figure 4.6: Late 20th Century Changes to Ashlyn Hall Estate

4.68 Accordingly, whilst there may have once been a historical connection between the Site and Ashlyn's Hall it was always intended to be distinct from the main house and its grounds. Moreover, this historic connection has ceased by virtue of the changes in ownership, notably in the form of separate leases from 1912, and the significant changes to the use and character of the Ashlyn Hall estate during the course of the 20th century.

4.69 It is considered that the Site does not contribute positively to the particular significance of these heritage assets.

Ashlyn's School (grade II listed building)

Architectural Interest

4.70 The school is designed as an axial composition of pale brick in an austere Neo-Georgian style. The buildings are connected by colonnades (Figure 3.2), with the central chapel as the most prominent element with classroom ranges to the sides and rear of the chapel and the main block (administration functions, dining room, assembly hall etc.) to the centre at the rear. The choice of a restrained neo-Georgian architectural character was a deliberate reference to the character of the original hospital designed

by Theodore Jacobsen and provides a degree of continuity between the original institution and the new school site.

- 4.71 The school forms part of a total and integrated design, where each of the elements associated with the operation of the school are articulated through a shared, common language and materials palette as part of a formal composition. The differing functions and (original) relative status of these elements is also clearly articulated as part of the composition. The chosen architectural language allows for the articulation and modulation of the mass of what would otherwise be substantial buildings whilst still allowing for the expression of civic pride and dignity associated with school design of the period and the status/role of the charity. The building also retains a range of high quality interior spaces that complement the architectural quality and cohesive design of the school complex.
- 4.72 In addition, the chosen neo-Georgian language allowed for the successful integration of significant elements of the original Foundling Hospital, following its demolition in 1925. This design approach provides an element of time-depth to the building and reinforces the continuity between the original hospital and the school.

Historic Interest

- 4.73 The building has special historic interest derived from its strong associations with Thomas Coram and the original Foundling Hospital, as reflected in the building's fabric and retained and reincorporated into the school building. These historic associations have been weakened to a minor extent by the sale of the school to Hertfordshire County Council in the 1950s, although it remains legible through the building fabric and artefacts.

Contribution made by Setting to Significance

- 4.74 In assessing the contribution made by setting to the particular heritage significance of Ashlyn's School we have had regard to the relevant English Heritage best practice guidance¹⁵ identified earlier in this Section.
- 4.75 The school was designed as an integrated architectural ensemble with little reference to the surrounding context. From the outset, the school appears to have been conceived as an inward-looking institutional use, set away from the formal boundaries and within heavily landscaped grounds that provide a clear distinction from the surrounding context (Figure 4.5). Whilst there is a formal axis providing an attractive view of the chapel from Chesham Road this reinforces the institutional character and distinctiveness of the school from the surrounding area. A secondary access from Coram Close, marked by gate piers, gates and a lodge provides a less formal aspect into the school grounds. This aspect of significance is consistent with the scale and extent of the original architectural ambition and the school's function and contributes positively to the significance of the listed building.
- 4.76 The grounds associated with the school are institutional in character, being used for playing fields and other complementary uses. These spaces provide an opportunity to appreciate the school complex in the round as well as being consistent with its function.

¹⁵ English Heritage The Setting of Heritage Assets, 2011

In this regard, the formal gardens associated with the school buildings are considered to amplify their intrinsic architectural interest.

- 4.77 However, areas of extensive hard landscaping to the rear of the school buildings, at least partly used for car parking, are considered to be inconsistent with their grand architectural character and detract from the significance of the listed building. In this regard, ancillary structures and areas turned over to enclosed playing courts have eroded the spacious setting of the school, albeit in a manner consistent with the school's use and the original intent to use the large plot to expand the school.
- 4.78 The presence of mature trees, possibly remnants of the Ashlyn's Hall estate, contributes positively as remnants of an earlier historic landscape.
- 4.79 Whilst the majority of the surrounding residential development does not contribute to the heritage interest of the school, being of an unrelated phase of suburban expansion and of a different architectural character, the evidence provided in Section 3 shows that Coram Avenue was developed on land owned by the school, possibly as staff housing. The contemporaneous housing does not, however, survive intact (with much being redeveloped during the course of the 20th century), with the remaining elements being attractive albeit typical examples of suburban 20th century housing. In light of this extensive pattern of change, and cessation of a strong functional connection between the school and this housing, this aspect of setting is not considered to contribute positively to the listed building.
- 4.80 As discussed later in this Section, the construction of the school significantly reduced the land associated with the operation of Ashlyn's Farm. There was an early tree belt established to the north of the farm on the shared boundary of a school (Figure 3.3), set atop an earthen embankment (Figure 4.7). This results in heavily layered views between the school and Site. Whilst there is a minor degree of intervisibility there was clearly a strong intention to ensure a robust and clear distinction between farm and school; a sensible separation of uses.



Figure 4.7: View North from Site towards Ashlyn's School

4.85 It will be demonstrated in this Section that the existing buildings are not distinguished examples of farm building design, being of a plain and utilitarian character, and do not appear to be innovative in terms of farming practice. They do not form part of a distinctive estate landscape.

Age, Rarity and Historic Interest

4.86 It has been established in Section 3.0 that the Site dates from the late 19th century, likely erected c.1888/89. The selection criteria identified earlier in this Section make clear that in such circumstances historic interest is a secondary consideration to architectural interest; however, it can amplify any claims to heritage interest arising through architectural and/or technical interest.

4.87 It is noted that as a county, Hertfordshire is unusual for the number of late (post-1900) model farms (mostly dairy) and in particular those providing for the new food factories such as Ovaltine¹⁷. However, the building is not part of the earliest phases of the period of re-entrenchment in the agricultural economy, which began c.1870, such that particularly careful selection is required in considering its potential heritage interest.

4.88 There are a number of model farms identified in Hertfordshire (25 when surveyed in 2002)¹⁸ with a number associated with the Ovaltine factory near Welwyn Garden City, constructed in the late 1920s and 1930s, which were considered to be pioneering in terms of hygiene and scientific production techniques. By contrast, the Site is conservative in its appearance, plan and character with no evidence of the display of innovation or virtuosity. Instead, the Site remains consistent with the principles established in the heyday of agricultural development in the mid-19th century and the subsequent development of building typologies associated with the rearing of cattle.

4.89 As an example of late 19th century shelter sheds, yard and combination barn the Site is not considered to be rare or of any particular, intrinsic historic interest.

4.90 No details of the designer of the existing buildings has been identified that would give rise to historic interest via association.

Architectural/Aesthetic Value and Integrity/Survival

4.91 As found today, the existing buildings, the remnants of a wider farm complex, are of an agricultural character, albeit as a non-descript group, arranged in a standard 'u' plan. It consists of:

- A two storey combination barn arranged perpendicular to the shelter sheds (Figure 4.9) to the south with a single storey addition on western flank (Figure 4.10) and the scars of a similar demolished element on the eastern elevation (Figure 4.11);

¹⁷ Wade Martin, S. (2002) *The English Model Farm: Building the Agricultural Ideal, 1700-1914*

¹⁸ Wade Martin, S. (2002) *The English Model Farm: Building the Agricultural Ideal, 1700-1914*



Figure 4.9: Northern Elevation of Combination Barn



Figure 4.10: Western Elevation of Combination Barn



Figure 4.11: Scar on Eastern Elevation of Combination Barn

- To the south are two single storey ranges, the shelter sheds, separated by what was likely to have been an open yard (covered a later date) but in any event the southern elevation is now entirely infilled with 20th century blockwork and timber weatherboarding (Figure 4.12). The shelter sheds are separated from the combination barn by a passageway running east-west.



Figure 4.12: Shelter Sheds and Covered Yard

Exterior

- 4.92 The original buildings are constructed of a simple, shared materials palette: red/brown brick under pitched slate roofs (replaced in areas with corrugated metal – Figure 4.18) with ventilation incorporated into the ridge (Figures 4.9 – 4.12). Later alterations utilise functional materials such as different coloured brick, blockwork and steel (Figures 4.11 and 4.12), which contrast poorly with the overall consistency of materiality.
- 4.93 Typically, the windows and doors are of simple, traditional timber joinery (i.e. plank doors at Figure 4.13) with cambered, brick on end window/door heads. Much of this

original joinery has either been removed, damaged or is in poor condition. The rainwater goods were originally of iron and of a surprisingly domestic and *retardataire* character (Figure 4.14). Again, a significant amount of these rainwater goods have been removed or are in poor condition.



Figures 4.13 and 4.14: Typical Door and Remaining Rainwater Good

- 4.94 Whilst the differences in form, appearance and character provide a clear indication of the differentiation in functions associated with the original use of the Site this is not considered to be of intrinsic architectural interest, being consistent with all agricultural buildings of the period. The character of the buildings is utilitarian, albeit robustly detailed, typical of many late 19th and early 20th century agricultural buildings. The Site does not display the architectural quality, scale, ambition and detail associated other farm buildings of the period constructed by landed estates (Figures 4.15 – 4.17). The buildings are therefore not considered to be noteworthy examples of estate farm architecture. Instead, they are a typical example of functional agricultural architecture of the late 19th century.



Figure 4.15: Saughton Lane Farm, Cheshire¹⁹



Figures 4.16 and 4.17: Saughton Lane Farm, Cheshire²⁰

- 4.95 Moreover, the integrity of the external appearance of the buildings has been undermined through subsequent later alterations of alien character and materiality i.e. new doors to the shelter sheds, removal of windows and doors and the demolition of the single storey eastern range of the combination barn (leaving unattractive building scars and remedial works). Given the simple character of the buildings and their late date, integrity and cohesiveness are important factors in considering architectural interest (Section 4.0). In this instance, the cumulative effects of the external alterations are considered to be significant and adverse.

Interior

- 4.96 It is noted in the first instance that as unlisted buildings the interiors of the building do not fall within the remit of the planning system and are not relevant to the consideration of a building's potential heritage interest. A description of these spaces is provided within this report for the sake of completeness only.

¹⁹ Wade Martin, S. (2002) *The English Model Farm: Building the Agricultural Ideal, 1700-1914*

²⁰ Wade Martin, S. (2002) *The English Model Farm: Building the Agricultural Ideal, 1700-1914*

- 4.97 The interior of the building is, as to be expected for a building of this typology and date, utilitarian and functional in character. The combination barn retains, in part, the distinctions between the double height space (likely the cart entrance) with former access to the hayloft above (Figure 4.18). There are smaller spaces at ground floor level likely associated with preparation of feed and storage (Figure 4.19). The interior of the combination barn has, however, been altered with the introduction of later blockwork partitions (Figure 4.18), which impairs the ability to understand the specialist functions of the barn.



Figure 4.18: Double Height Cart Bay



Figure 4.19: Ground Floor of Combination Barn

- 4.98 At first floor level is the former hay loft with some evidence of mechanisation, possibly a pulley system for moving feed/hay (Figures 4.20 and 4.21). It is noted, however, that

the age and provenance of this machinery is unknown (with mechanisation well-established by this date) and it is also incomplete with no evidence of the power source or its complete, original function.



Figures 4.20 and 4.21: First Floor Combination Barn

4.99 As noted earlier, the shelter sheds are separated from the combination barn by an east-west passage (Figure 4.22). Access from the combination barn is via sliding doors (Figure 4.23). The shelter sheds and yards have raised concrete floor slabs (possibly a later insertion) and are separated by 20th century blockwork walls (Figures 4.24 and 4.25). The blockwork alterations have adversely affected the integrity of the internal spaces and the legibility of the original function of the site.

4.100 There are no remaining fixtures and fittings such as troughs, stalls or ventilation that would contribute to an understanding of the function of this space or provide interest to what are otherwise entirely typical interiors of farm buildings of this date.



Figures 4.22 and 4.23: East-West Passage and Doors to Combination Barn



Figure 4.24: Interior of Covered Yard



Figure 4.25: Interior of Shelter Shed

- 4.101 As noted earlier, the plan form of the building is of a typical ‘u-shape’, which was long-established by the time the Site was constructed in the late 19th century. There is no evidence for the display of innovation in plan form or practice i.e. tramways, integrated middens/manure tanks or other measures associated with the increasing drive for efficiency and hygiene, which characterised the late Victorian period of farm building.
- 4.102 In addition, whilst the plain, utilitarian character of the building could be seen as reflective of the difficult economic conditions there is no evidence of the use of innovative materials and/or plans that were being developed from the 1870s onwards and well-established by the 1890s (Section 3). The Dutch barn formerly associated with the Site (Section 3), has been demolished.
- 4.103 Accordingly, the building, whilst not unattractive is not considered to be of sufficient architectural/aesthetic value to be of heritage interest. Moreover, the degree of alteration and the lack of surviving fixtures and fittings associated with its original use have further eroded any claims to architectural merit.

Contribution made by Setting to ‘Significance’

- 4.104 As noted, the existing building does not form part of a complete/intact farmstead. There are no ancillary agricultural buildings that would enhance claims to special interest. The existing ancillary building is of late 20th century date and manifestly not of any heritage interest (Figure 4.26). The existing condition of the Site as a whole does not provide any strong indication of its historic function or relationship to the combination barn and shelter sheds.



Figure 4.26: Late 20th Century Ancillary Building

4.105 There are two residential properties nearby that are contemporaneous with the Site and accessed via the shared lane. There were historic, functional association between these properties and the Site (Section 3.0). The properties are attractive, albeit typical examples of their type, however, they are now in separate residential use with clearly defined residential curtilages that do not relate strongly to the site (Figure 4.27).



Figure 4.27: Ashlyn's Farm and Ashlyn's Farm Cottage

4.106 The Site, as a former agricultural building, would have had a functional connection to the wider landscape. It has been noted in Section 3.0 how Berkhamsted expanded during the course of the 20th century. The construction of the substantial Ashlyn School in the mid-20th century, and its subsequent expansion, fundamentally changed the Site's relationship to its wider context. The extent of nearby development means that the Site now has the character of a sliver of land sandwiched between the school and Ashlyn's Hall estate. Even the character of the former lane connecting the site to Swing Gate Lane has been changed through the expansion of the school and the construction of the A41 bypass (with the associated noise and activity). The Site does not form part of a

distinctive estate landscape. There no longer remains a strong relationship between the Site and wider context, although the narrow access lane from the west maintains a degree of this original character.

Ashlyn's Farm: Summary of Assessment of Heritage Significance

- There is some ambiguity as to whether the existing building, in its current condition, in the absence of associated structures and separation from the farm cottages, satisfy the definition of a 'model farm'. It is possible that the existing building was a small commercial venture or 'hobby farm', likely for raising cattle, associated with the wider Ashlyn's Hall estate. In any event, the building does not now form part of a complete farmstead and were separated from the estate in the early 20th century (c.1912).
- The building is of no particular historic value, being a very late example of traditional farm building, displaying no innovation in terms of plan, typology, materiality or operation or the transition towards more modern materials that the tough economic climate of the period engendered.
- Whilst the building is typical of the traditional, utilitarian farm building tradition they are of no particular intrinsic architectural interest. Moreover, the cumulative impact of later alterations, alterations, demolitions and the current poor condition has further eroded claims to heritage interest.
- As a result of the significant mid-late 20th century changes, the building does not have any strong group value and does not form part of an estate landscape. For the same reasons, setting does not enhance any claims to heritage interest.

4.107 In light of this analysis, it is our view that, overall, the building does not warrant consideration as a heritage asset for the purposes of the Framework.

5. Impact Assessment

Introduction

- 5.1 In this Section the acceptability of the Proposed Development is demonstrated in relation to their effect on the significance of the identified heritage assets, comprising Ashlyn's Hall (grade II* listed building), stable block at Ashlyn's Hall (grade II listed building) and Ashlyn's School (grade II listed building).
- 5.2 Notwithstanding the conclusion of the assessment of the potential heritage significance of Ashlyn' Farm, the Council maintains their position that building is a non-designated heritage asset for the purposes of the Framework. Accordingly, the impact of the Proposed Development in this regard is considered for the sake of completeness only, without prejudice to the findings of this report.
- 5.3 The proposed development has been submitted as a comprehensive outline application with access submitted for approval and all other matters reserved for approval at a later date. Whilst the application is submitted in outline, the proposals are accompanied by an appropriate level of information, including detailed parameter plans to demonstrate the principles of land use, scale and height. In addition, indicative plans and elevations have been provided on an illustrative basis only, to provide clarity on the anticipated form and appearance of the detailed design to be submitted at the Reserved Matters stage. It is noted that both outline and 'hybrid applications' (outline applications with elements submitted in detail) are now increasingly common in a range of heritage contexts.
- 5.4 Accordingly, this assessment has been undertaken on the basis of the application material submitted for approval as well as the illustrative material, which has been submitted for the sake of completeness.

Impact on Significance

- 5.5 In considering the effects of the Proposed Development upon the significance of the designated heritage assets, it is important to note that this is indirect in nature, arising from impact on their setting and thereby, potentially on their significance.
- 5.6 Setting is not a heritage asset and not a heritage designation. Its importance lies in what it may, or may not, contribute to the significance of a heritage asset. As established in Section 4 the contribution made by elements of setting to the significance of the identified heritage assets varies.
- 5.7 The impact of the Proposed Development on Ashlyn's Farm will be direct and indirect; however, this impact has to be considered in light of the assessment of significance contained within Section 4.
- 5.8 The impact of the Proposed Development on the significance of the identified designated heritage asset must be considered in light of the statutory duties and national policy for the historic environment, in addition to local policy considerations (as

set out in *Appendix 2*) and the particular significance of the identified heritage assets (as assessed in Section 3 of this report).

Ashlyn's Hall and Stable Block (grade II* and grade II listed buildings)

- 5.9 The application proposals relate to the conversion of the existing combination barn, the rebuilding of the existing shelter sheds, removal of the covered yard and erection of 3no. houses. The proposed development is therefore of a modest scale and will give rise to a commensurate minor impact.
- 5.10 As noted earlier in this report, the functional, historic relationship between Ashlyn's Farm and Ashlyn's Hall lasted for a period of c.20 years and ceased c.1912. Moreover, Ashlyn's Hall ceased its original use as country house in the 20th century and has been put to a range of uses, most recently commercial. Together with the wider changes to the estate, including the introduction of commercial uses and a nursing home within the walled garden the proposed residential use of the Site would not adversely impact a historic relationship that contributes positively to the significance of the listed buildings. In any event, the existing farm buildings are retained and partially rebuilt, such that the fabric associated with the short period of functional associations between the Site and listed building will remain legible (drawing refs: 700 P_741, 700 P_747 and 700 P_748).
- 5.11 It has been noted in Sections 3 and 4 that the existing barn and shelter sheds formed part of a larger group of structures and hardstanding and that these have been largely demolished and, in some instances, replaced by modern structures of no architectural or historic merit. As a matter of principle, the erection of structures and built form of a commensurate scale to the former farm complex would be consistent with the historic character and function of the Site and would not give rise to an incongruous relationship with Ashlyn's Hall.
- 5.12 Whilst there will be a limited degree of intervisibility between the grounds associated with the listed building and the proposed development, such views will be through extensive interposing mature landscaping (to be retained and reinforced) and seen in the context of existing structures on Site as well as Ashlyn's Farmstead and Ashlyn's Cottage (drawing ref: 700 P_740). The proposed development is of a commensurate scale and form and is consistent with this aspect of the setting of the listed buildings (drawing refs: 700 P_741, 700 P_747 and 700 P_748).
- 5.13 Houses A & B are located in that part of the Site located to the north of the service road and associated structures used by the Ashlyn's residential care home (drawing ref: 700 P_739). This is a part of the Site with extensive vehicle hardstanding and ancillary structures, which for the context in which the glimpsed views will be experienced (drawing ref: 700 P_739). As a 'back of house'/service space this relationship is considered to be consistent with the significance of the listed buildings.
- 5.14 Proposed House C is located to the north of the densely planted grounds associated with Ashlyn's Hall and sited on a former paddock associated with a previous stable/livery use (drawing ref: 700 P-739). As a domestic scaled, two-storey building this element of the proposed development will not be readily visible from the hall, from the 1930s extension, and will sustain the remaining legibility of Ashlyn's Hall as a villa set within a small landscaped park.

- 5.15 There will be a change in the character and nature of activity associated with the proposed residential use. As a former farm and later agricultural uses there would have been a high degree of activity associated with the movement of machinery, people and livestock with the attendant noise etc. As discussed earlier in this Report, the siting and separation of the farm from the listed buildings was a desire to minimise the impact of the activities associated with a farm on the 'polite' character of the hall. As such, the character of activity associated with a residential use will not be incongruous or harmful to the particular significance of the listed buildings.
- 5.16 As described in the application documentation, the scale and siting of the proposed development has been carefully considered to ensure that it is not prominent, dominant or conspicuous within the setting of Ashlyn's Hall and stable block. Given the extensive 20th century changes to the setting to the listed buildings, the presence of a small amount of residential development will not have a harmful effect on significance. The legibility of Ashlyn's Hall as a villa set within landscaped grounds, with contemporaneous, functional structures associated with its original use as a polite, country house will be sustained.

Ashlyn's School (grade II listed building)

- 5.17 It has been noted in Section 4 that Ashlyn's School is a largely inward-looking institutional use with robust and well-defined boundaries that provide a strong sense of enclosure. In addition, it has been noted that the Site does not contribute positively to the particular heritage significance of this listed building.
- 5.18 The provision of a small number of residential properties within the Site would be consistent with the character of the majority of the school's setting, including the nearby Ashlyn's Farmstead and Ashlyn's Cottage, in terms of activity and character (drawing refs: 700 P_747 and 700 P_748). This residential use is complementary to that of the school.
- 5.19 The proposed development will be set within generous green space and landscaping (drawing ref: 700 P_740). Whilst there will be a limited degree of intervisibility between the grounds associated with the school and the proposed development, such views will be through extensive interposing mature landscaping (to be retained and reinforced) and across a raised embankment. The distinction between school and surrounding context will be maintained by the proposed development.
- 5.20 There will be a significant separation distance between the proposed development and listed building such that there will be no impediment to the prominence of the school buildings within their grounds (drawing ref: 700 P_739). The proposed development is of a commensurate scale and form and is consistent with this aspect of the setting of the listed building (drawing ref: 700 P_741). At its closest proximity, proposed house C would be sited to the south of the Ashlyn's School Air Training Corps building and interposing mature landscaping and will, therefore, not be a major element from within the context of the school and its grounds (drawing ref: 700 P_739).
- 5.21 Accordingly, the siting and scale of the proposed development have been carefully considered to ensure that it is not prominent, dominant or conspicuous within the setting of Ashlyn's School. As a largely inward-looking, institutional building typology set within well-defined, mature and spacious grounds the proposed small-scale residential

development will be a minor element and not detract from this particular heritage significance.

Ashlyn's Farm

- 5.22 In the first instance, it is noted stressed that the proposed development seeks to retain the existing combination barn and rebuild the single storey shelter sheds to match the existing footprint, height, materiality and form (drawing refs: 700 P_740, 700 P_746, 700 P_747 and 700 P_748). As an unlisted building, located outside of a conservation area and not in residential use, planning permission is not required for the demolition of these structures. The retention, selected re-building and conversion of the buildings is therefore be welcomed from a policy perspective, in light of the Council's stated position that the buildings are non-designated heritage assets for the purposes of the Framework.
- 5.23 The Design and Access Statement provides the rationale for the demolition of the existing shelter sheds. In summary, it is noted that the buildings are in poor, altered condition and were originally designed for the shelter/feeding of cattle. This is reflected in the nature of their construction, which would be prohibitively costly and problematic to convert to residential use in an appropriate manner. By the taking the opportunity to rebuild these wings, to match the scale, footprint, massing, height and character of the existing there is an opportunity to provide high-quality residential accommodation that integrates successfully with the converted barn in a manner that is consistent with the existing architectural character. This targeted approach is consistent with the building's purported, minor local heritage value.
- 5.24 It is proposed to remove the altered structure enclosing the yard and associated slab and floor finishes creating an open landscaped courtyard to facilitate access to Houses D and E (drawing refs: 700 P_740 and 700 P_746). This approach sustains the legibility of the plan of the barn and shelter sheds and its associated function. The proposed alterations will, subject to careful detailing and appropriate selection of materials, also maintain the utilitarian, agricultural character of the existing buildings (drawing refs: 700 P_747 and 700 P_748).
- 5.25 Whilst it is considered that the buildings are not of sufficient heritage interest to warrant identification as a non-designated heritage asset the proposed development will enhance the appearance of these structures by removing later, inappropriate finishes, materials and alterations and will ensure their sustainable re-use. Irrespective of any purported heritage interest the proposed development is considered to be an enhancement upon the current declining condition of the building and the neglected 'air' of the Site as a whole.
- 5.26 In addition, later structures such as the utilitarian 20th century barn to the south the 19th century building (drawing ref: 700 P_736) is to be demolished resulting in a lawned area providing a more generous spatial setting to the farm building and new views across the formerly covered yard (drawing ref: 700 P_740).
- 5.27 The extent of proposed residential development is minor and consists of 3no. new houses (a pair of semi-detached houses and a detached house). The disposition of the proposed new houses would ensure that the existing building will remain the dominant element within the Site (drawing refs: 700 P_740 and 700 P_741). As noted earlier in

this report, the Site historically consisted of a complex of buildings, which have been demolished and replaced over years. The proposed informal layout of the proposed development relative to the barn is consistent with this pattern of development and that of the nearby Ashlyn's Farmstead and Ashlyn's Cottage.

- 5.28 When the Site was a working agricultural concern there would have been extensive areas of hardstanding. Some of this hardstanding remains legible on Site today, particularly to the west of the existing building, but is of an unattractive and utilitarian appearance and contributes to Site's neglected 'air' (drawing ref: 700 P_736). The character of the Site has, however, changed over the years and includes a greater degree of soft landscaping, including the mature boundary trees (which will be retained and enhanced), and a redundant paddock (drawing ref: 700 P_736). This change in the character of the Site is reflective of its evolution and changes in use. The proposed approach to landscaping incorporates a mix of hard and soft landscaping, the details of which can be secured via condition, and would enhance the appearance of the Site.
- 5.29 The existing drive connecting the Site to Chesham Road retains an element of its original agricultural, edge of settlement character given the enclosing trees to the north and open land to the south. This character of the will be maintained and extended into the Site with matching materials and the number of vehicle movements associated with the small-scale of the proposed residential development.
- 5.30 Overall, notwithstanding the assessment in this report that the building does not warrant consideration as a non-designated heritage asset, it is considered that the proposed development will sustain and enhance its purported heritage significance.

The 1990 Act and Framework Policy

- 5.31 Considerable weight must be given to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed buildings potentially affected by the application proposals and this must be borne in mind in the subsequent balancing exercise required by national policy. In the case of non-designated heritage assets the Framework requires a balanced judgement.
- 5.32 The Framework's core planning principle with respect to planning and the historic environment is that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.
- 5.33 In accordance with the requirements of paragraph 128 of the Framework, the significance of the heritage assets (and the contribution made by setting to that significance), proportionate to the asset's importance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the application proposals on that significance has been described in Section 4
- 5.34 With respect to paragraph 131 of the Framework the absence of any direct physical impact on the significance of the heritage assets and the retention of those elements of setting that contribute to its significance, ensure that they will be sustained and remain in a viable use consistent with their conservation.

- 5.35 Whilst the proposed development would give rise to a change in the character of the Site it would preserve the significance of the designated and purported non-designated heritage assets in accordance with paragraphs 132, 135 and 137 of the Framework.
- 5.36 In summary, the application proposals do not affect, through potential impact setting, the heritage significance of the identified designated heritage assets. In these instances, those elements of setting which contribute positively to significance of the heritage assets will be preserved in line with the statutory duties of the 1990 Act and paragraphs 131, 132 and 137 of the Act.
- 5.37 In the case of Ashlyn's Farm, notwithstanding the findings of the detailed assessment within this report, the Council have confirmed that they consider this to be a non-designated heritage asset for the purposes of the Framework. Whilst it is our contention that this purported heritage interest is misplaced, the proposed development would secure an appropriate new use for these buildings, which are in a poor and deteriorating condition and a range of enhancements to its appearance and setting in accordance with paragraphs 135 and 137 of the Act. Accordingly, the proposals would deliver a range of public benefits for the purposes of the Framework and Planning Practice Guide.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Turley Heritage on behalf of Grand Union Investments to assess the impact of the proposed residential development of Ashlyn's Farm upon the significance of nearby heritage assets and the purported non-designated heritage asset of Ashlyn's Farm.
- 6.2 The proposals are submitted as an outline planning application with access details included and all other matters reserved for later approval. The application consists of detailed parameter plans to demonstrate the principles of land use, scale and height. In addition, indicative plans and elevations have been provided, on an illustrative basis only, to provide clarity on the anticipated form and appearance of the detailed design to be submitted at the Reserved Matters stage.
- 6.3 The application has been prepared following extensive pre-application discussions between the client and officers of Dacorum Borough Council, including a number of meetings on Site. The application proposals have been refined in response to pre-application feedback received.
- 6.4 No buildings on Site are statutorily listed or located within a conservation area. In addition, it is understood the Dacorum Borough Council have not included the existing building on the adopted 'Local List' i.e. as a non-designated heritage assets for the purposes of the Framework. Whilst the Site is included in the Hertfordshire HER²¹, this does not automatically confirm that the building is a non-designated heritage asset.
- 6.5 During initial pre-application discussions with the Local Authority, the client was advised to undertake an assessment of the potential heritage interest of the remaining altered, late 19th century farm building that forms Ashlyn's Farm. Turley Heritage prepared a Heritage Assessment (November 2014), which concluded that the building does not warrant consideration as a heritage asset for the purposes of the Framework.
- 6.6 The Site was visited on the 4th November 2014 and consisted of a complete external visual inspection as well as the accessible internal areas. The surrounding area was also inspected to understand the context of the existing building, including Ashlyn's Hall and stable block (grade II* and grade II listed buildings) and associated structures as well as the nearby Ashlyn's School (grade II listed building). Full list entries are included at *Appendix 1*.
- 6.7 The impact of the proposed development on built heritage will therefore be both direct and indirect in nature. As such the proposed development will affect the significance of identified heritage assets through impact on their setting rather than having a direct effect on their fabric/structure.
- 6.8 Section 4.0 of this report, assesses the significance of these heritage assets, including any contribution made by the Site and setting to this significance, in line with relevant statutory provision, planning policy and best practice. This understanding of the

²¹ 16129

significance of the heritage asset informs the assessment of the impact of the proposed development at Section 5 of this report.

- 6.9 This report demonstrates that whilst the proposed development would give rise to a change in the character of the Site it would preserve the significance of the heritage assets (notwithstanding our assessment of the heritage value of Ashlyn's Farm) given their particular significance and the contribution made by the Site and setting to this significance.
- 6.10 In conclusion, the proposed development will preserve the significance of the relevant designated and purported non-designated heritage assets. Overall, the significance of these heritage assets will be sustained. The proposals will therefore meet the objectives of the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the Framework (policies 131, 132, 135 & 137), 'saved' policy 119 of Dacorum Borough Council's Local Plan and policy CS27 of the Council's Core Strategy and other relevant material considerations.

Appendix 1: List Entries

Name: ASHLYNS HALL

List entry Number: 1078164

Location

ASHLYNS HALL

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County District District Type Parish

Hertfordshire Dacorum District Authority Berkhamsted

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II*

Date first listed: 29-Jul-1950

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 355421

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

1. 839 Ashlyns Hall SP 90 NE 7/43 29.7.50.

II* GV

2. Dignified early C19 house. Stucco, Welsh slate roof+ 2 storeys and attics, roughly rectangular plan. South west garden front has central. 3 storeyed semi-circular bow with 1st floor cast iron verandah South east garden front has central pediment* Sash windows, glazing bars only to 1st floor. North east wing added since 1930. Interior circular entrance hall and room above, fine staircase hall, Set in small landscaped park with fine cedars.

Included for group value.

Listing NGR: SP9915606690

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SP 99156 06690

Name: STABLES AT ASHLYNS HALL

List entry Number: 1078165

Location

STABLES AT ASHLYNS HALL

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County District District Type Parish

Hertfordshire Dacorum District Authority Berkhamsted

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 09-May-1973

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 355422

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

839 Stables at Ashlyns Hall 1. SP go NE 7/100 TI GV

2. C18, altered. Red and grey brick, tiled roofs 2 storeys, corbelled cornices. Irregular fenestration of sashes and casements. Half H plan. Small louvred and tiled C19 Steeple astride roof of north east wing.

Included for group value.

Listing NGR: SP9910806720

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SP 99108 06720

Name: ASHLYNS SCHOOL BUILDING INCLUDING THE CHAPEL, MAIN BLOCK AND CLASSROOM WINGS

List entry Number: 1390739

Location

ASHLYNS SCHOOL BUILDING INCLUDING THE CHAPEL, MAIN BLOCK AND CLASSROOM WINGS, CHESHAM ROAD

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County District District Type Parish

Hertfordshire Dacorum District Authority Berkhamsted

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 19-Nov-2003

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 491293

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

BERKHAMSTED

814/0/10025 CHESHAM ROAD 19-NOV-03 Ashlyns School Buildings including the Chapel, Main Block and Classroom Wings

II Former Foundling School, now Foundation School owned by Herts County Council. John Mortimer Sheppard for the Foundling Hospital. 1932-35 with minor later-C20 alterations. Multi-coloured narrow bricks with Bath stone dressings; hipped tiled roofs behind parapets. A symmetrical and linked group of school buildings aligned NE-SW in an austere Neo-Classical style and organised around a courtyard with central CHAPEL, flanking CLASSROOM ranges to sides and rear, MAIN BLOCK to the centre at rear.

CHAPEL: Advanced porch has shallow steps and 4 tall Doric columns below large pediment filled with the school coat of arms, influenced by that of the Foundling Hospital, with 2 women flanking a plaque that incorporates a baby, a lamb and 'HELP'. Behind this, stone face with pilasters, central door and flanking windows. Brick walls continue to each side forming the front range that has parapet with urns flanking pediment and tall hipped roof. To centre, a tall open tower comprising plinth with clock capped with urns and corner piers surmounted by elongated copper dome. To each side of this a single storey double colonnade of 4 stone columns connecting to classroom ranges and incorporating drive through to courtyard. Main Chapel range behind is sparser with stone eaves, brick quoins and lower apse to rear. Windows have brick architraves and mostly rounded arch heads. Lower narrow ranges to sides with secondary doors within stone architraves. Foundation stone on outside wall. INTERIOR: Stone lined entrance has memorial to Thomas Coram (1668-1751) in niche transferred from original Chapel. Wide nave of 6 bays terminating in apse, with shallow aisles to each side. Stone lined with pilasters defining each bay from which spring ribs for barrel vaulted ceiling. Wood panelled gallery supported on wood columns and with re-used C18 pews from original Chapel. Stained glass windows include several re-used from original Chapel. Flying curved dogleg stair in rear corner with alternating stick and zig-zag iron balusters and stone monuments on the walls leads to crypt. Ashlar arcade with quoins leads to central space that incorporates numerous C18 and C19 memorials transferred from the C18 Chapel, many referencing tombs in the St. Georges, Bloomsbury churchyard that was near the original Chapel. Bust of G.F. Handel. Apsidal end includes re-used ornate iron Communion Rail from original Chapel.

CLASSROOM RANGES: Linked by a colonnade to each side of Chapel are 2 long ranges of 2-storeys and 17 bays with 6-over-6 pane sash windows, stone plinth, brick quoins, brick parapet and steep hipped roof and end chimneystacks. To central 3 bays, slightly advanced entrance with 4 stone pilasters, central door within stone architrave with urns, parapet with central plaque and flanking urns, pair of ridge chimneystacks. Return elevations to Chapel have high circular windows over colonnade. Return elevations to outside have stepped stone architrave, a stone plaque to left range, and sash windows. Projecting to the rear from the centre of these ranges are 2 long 2-storey ranges forming the sides of the courtyard. These have a spine corridor to rear where the ground floor windows are under round brick arches. Facing courtyard, the central 3 bays are slightly advanced with stone pilasters and scrolled stone pediment over central window with keyblock plaques including infant motif. At both sides, a long single storey double colonnade of stone columns links to the front of the Main Block. To rear at each side is another

classroom range parallel to that at the front and linking to the Main Block, enclosing the courtyard.

MAIN BLOCK: Front range is of 2-storeys under steep hipped roof with central tall cupola similar to that on Chapel. 5 bays wide with single window bay to each end, the 3 central bays recessed behind colonnade of stone columns, continuous stone cornice and frieze, brick parapet with tall end chimneystacks, stone balustrade with corner urns over central 3 bays. Recessed entrance has stone architrave with broken segmental pediment within which foliate swags and figurative plaque, architrave extends to include sash window above. 6-over-9 sashes to ground floor and 6-over-6 sashes to first floor. Flanking lower ranges with sash windows and 2-storey classroom range connects to rear. **INTERIOR:** Entrance hall has Deco style stepped wood architraves. Stairs to right are re-used from the Girl's Wing of original Foundling Hospital and heavy square plan newels, wide moulded handrail and short vase balusters. Board Room at first floor is believed to have wooden fireplace surround. Assembly Hall has dado wood panelling and raised ceiling along spine in shallow elliptical arch, gallery over entrance and stage to opposite end with the school's coat of arms above, stained glass incorporates re-used windows from original Chapel. Behind this, the Dining Hall of 2 identical sides with central folding wood partitions formerly separating girls from boys, dado panelling below paned windows, shallow tray ceiling with glazing. To left, Swimming Pool is intact with raised segmental arch clerestory roof. To right, Gymnasium, with raised lantern ceiling. Kitchen continues to rear. Extending from the back of the rear Classroom range are 2 long single storey ranges of bicycle sheds with brick end and rear walls and wooden column colonnade of 10 bays.

HISTORY: In the early-C18, Captain Thomas Coram had campaigned to establish a charity that would care for the high numbers of abandoned babies in London. His work resulted in a 1739 Royal Charter that established the London Foundling Hospital for the 'Maintenance and Education of Exposed and Deserted Young Children'. Designs for the hospital were made without charge by Theodore Jacobsen in an restrained Georgian style as a three sided courtyard. The institution would serve 400 children with emphasis on the teaching of crafts; girls were expected to go into domestic service, boys into apprenticeships. The institution flourished from the mid-C18 through the C19 caring for many abandoned foundlings, but by the early-C20 increasing amounts of pollution and changing ideals about the benefits of cleaner air in the country encouraged the Foundling Hospital to look for a new site. The building in Lamb's Conduit Fields was sold in 1925 and soon after Jacobsen's hospital was demolished; only the southern colonnaded range and the pedestal for Thomas Coram's statue survived. The interiors of the three principal rooms, which had been decorated to a much greater degree than the austere children's rooms, were reconstructed within the Grade II London Headquarters in Brunswick Square (q.v.), and some materials were salvaged for use in the new school buildings.

The Ashlyns site in Berkhamsted was purchased in 1929, chosen for its proximity to London and the railway, the sufficient acreage and its good land. The architect John Mortimer Sheppard was selected to design the new school buildings. While also looking to contemporary school design, the school was intended to reflect the original hospital both in spirit and in detail. The original Arms designed by Hogarth were the model for the new arms, the main staircase from the Girl's Wing was re-erected, columns were to match an original from the old building, and busts of musicians were to be installed in the new band room. In addition, the original light pedestals were sited on the new drive and twenty boundary posts with a lamb motif, modelled on the originals, were stationed at the edges of the estate. The most extensive and extraordinary incorporation of material from the original hospital was in the new Chapel. Here

are the earliest original stained glass windows and some of the original seating including the 'Governor's pews'. The Crypt was built to hold the remains of Thomas Coram, the Communion Rail, numerous memorial tablets and the bust of Handel. Coram's remains were removed to St. Andrew's Holborn after the School was sold to Hertfordshire County Council in the 1950s, but the rest of the historical artefacts survive.

Ashlyns's School has special interest as a fine Neo-Georgian style school complex of 1932-5 by John Mortimer Sheppard, organised around a central courtyard with the Chapel most prominent, it also has a very special historic interest for its associations with the famous 1745 Foundling Hospital in London, now demolished, but which was partly incorporated into the new school building.

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SP 99136 06925

Appendix 2: Planning Policy Context

Legislation and Statutory Duties

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

With regard to applications for planning permission which may affect the significance of a statutory listed building, the Act outlines in Section 66 that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development that affects a listed building or its setting the decision maker shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting of any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 of the Act states that in the exercise of planning powers within a conservation area, the decision maker is required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Thus the statutory provision is satisfied if the development does one thing or another, and there will be cases where proposals will both preserve and enhance a conservation area. The meaning of preservation in this context is taken to be the avoidance of harm. Character relates to physical characteristics but also to more general qualities such as uses or activity within an area. Appearance relates to the visible physical qualities of the area.

Recent case law²² has confirmed that Parliament's intention in enacting section 66(1) was that decision-makers should give "considerable importance and weight" to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings, where "preserve" means to "to do no harm" (after South Lakeland). The findings of this judgement apply to the statutory duty at section 72(1) of the Act with regard to conservation areas. These duties, and the appropriate weight to be afforded to them, must be at the forefront of the decision makers mind when considering any harm that may accrue and the balancing of such harm against public benefits as required by national planning policy.

National Policy

NPPF: National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

The Framework was introduced in March 2012 as the full statement of Government planning policies covering all aspects of the planning process. One of the twelve core planning principles of the Framework is that planning should:

"conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations."

The Framework (Annex 2: Glossary) defines conservation (for heritage policy) as:

"The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance."

Chapter 12 outlines the Government's guidance regarding conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 128 outlines the information required to support planning applications affecting heritage assets. It states that applicants should provide a description of

²² Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited and (1) East Northamptonshire District Council (2) English Heritage (3) National Trust (4) The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Governments, Case No: C1/2013/0843, 18th February 2014

the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Paragraph 129 sets out those local planning authorities should also identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets that may be affected by proposals. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of proposals in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 131 states that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 132 further outlines that local planning authorities should give great weight to the asset's conservation when considering the impact on a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight should be.

It is also specified that any harm to, or loss, of significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 133 outlines that local planning authorities should refuse consent where a proposal will lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance, unless it can be demonstrated that this is necessary to deliver substantial public benefits that outweigh such harm or loss, or a number of other tests can be satisfied.

Paragraph 134 concerns proposals which will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. Here harm should be weighed against the public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use.

In considering development affecting non-designated heritage assets (it is stressed that the assessment contained within this report confirms that the existing building is of negligible architectural or historic interest) paragraph 135 only requires that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. It requires decision makers, in weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, to make a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Paragraph 137 encourages local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. It also states that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset should be treated favourably.

Paragraph 138 sets out that not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area should be treated as either substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial under paragraph 134, as appropriate taking into account the relative significance of the building affected and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area as a whole.

The Development Plan

For the purposes of this application the elements of Dacorum Borough Council's Development Plan consists of the 'saved' policies of the Local Plan (adopted 2004) and the Core Strategy (2013). The Council is at an early stage of preparing the Development Management Policies DPD and as such it cannot be afforded significant weight in the determination of applications. The Council have also indicated that they will undertake a partial review of the Core Strategy following adoption of the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD; however, this is unlikely to happen in advance of the determination of the current application.

Local Plan 'Saved' Policies (2004)

The control of development affecting listed building is considered in Policy 119. The majority of this policy relates to the control of works to listed buildings, requiring listed building consent. This is not relevant in the particular circumstances of this application. The policy states, with regard to development affecting **adjacent** [our emphasis] listed buildings:

"Every effort will be made to ensure that any new development liable to affect the character of an adjacent listed building will be of such a scale and appearance, and will make use of such materials, as will retain the character and setting of the listed building."

Core Strategy (2013)

Policy CS27 of the Core Strategy relates to the quality of the historic environment

"All development will favour the conservation of heritage assets."

The integrity, setting and distinctiveness of designated and undesignated heritage assets will be protected, conserved and if appropriate enhanced.

Development will positively conserve and enhance the appearance and character of conservation areas. Negative features and problems identified in conservation area appraisals will be ameliorated or removed.

Features of known or potential archaeological interest will be surveyed, recorded and wherever possible retained.

Supplementary planning documents will provide further guidance."

National Guidance

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014)

This web based practice guide was made available online in March 2014. It provides detailed guidance to accompany the policies set out in the Framework.

PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (2010)

This practice guide from 2010 accompanied PPS5 and its purpose was to assist in the implementation and interpretation of PPS5 policies. Although PPS5 has now been replaced, the practice guide remains extant as a material consideration until it is eventually replaced with new guidance issued by English Heritage.

English Heritage, The Setting of Heritage Assets (2011)

This document sets out English Heritage guidance on managing change within the settings of heritage assets. It elaborates on guidance set out in the Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide to PPS5 (paras. 113-124). Firstly, Section 2 seeks to define setting and some of the key concepts and then Section 3 outlines how plan-making can be used to aid the conservation and enhancement of setting.

Paragraph 2.3 states that the contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset is often expressed by reference to views. The setting of any heritage asset is likely to include a variety of views of, across, or including that asset, and views of the surroundings from or through the asset. It also outlines that some views may contribute more to understanding the significance of a heritage asset than others. Paragraph 2.4 also acknowledges that most of the settings within which people experience heritage assets today have changed over time.

Section 4 provides a tool kit for assessing the implications of development proposals affecting setting. A series of steps are recommended for assessment, these are:

- Step 1: identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
- Step 2: assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
- Step 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;
- Step 4: explore the way maximising enhancement and avoiding or minimising harm;
- Step 5: make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

Assessment Step 2 sets out a check-list of potential attributes of a setting that may help to elucidate its contribution to the significance of an asset, including; physical surroundings, experience of the asset, and its associative attributes.

Assessment Step 3 sets out a check-list of the potential attributes of a development affecting setting that may help to elucidate its implications for the significance of an asset, including; location and siting, form and appearance, effects, permanence, and longer or consequential effects of development.

English Heritage: Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance (2008)

This guidance sets out English Heritage's approach to making decisions and offering guidance about all aspects of England's historic environment. The contribution of elements of a heritage asset or within its setting to its significance may be assessed in terms of its "heritage values":

- Evidential Value: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.
- Historical Value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.
- Aesthetic Value: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

- Communal Value: the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

Local Guidance

Environmental Guidelines SPG (2004)

Chapter 7 of the SPG provides guidance relating to development in conservation areas and of listed buildings.

“Proposals to alter, paint or extend a listed building, or to erect a new building in close proximity to a listed building, must not adversely affect the character, appearance or setting of the listed building (see Policy 119). In preparing a scheme, the same considerations will apply as for buildings or proposals in conservation areas.”

This chapter also notes that the Council may require applications affecting a listed building to be accompanied by a historic building assessment in order to arrive at an informed judgement on the impact on its particular significance.

Turley
The Charlotte Building
17 Gresse Street
London
W1T 1QL

T 020 7851 4010

Turley
Heritage