80 Highgate West Hill
Highgate
London (ex-Middlesex)
NGR: TQ 2818 8716

A
Heritage Impact Assessment

Text
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Summary

Proposals are being developed for some minor alterations to No.80 Highgate West Hill, in Highgate, north London. These are mainly associated with changes to the main entrance and some internal changes. The Grade II-listed house was built in 1834 and radically altered in the late-19th century and afterwards. This report is a heritage statement and an outline assessment of the potential impact of the proposals on designated and non-designated heritage assets within and adjacent to the study area under the guidelines of the NPPF. It is not concerned with other planning matters. It concludes that the proposals will have no significant impact on any designated or non-designated heritage assets or the conservation area – and will, in fact, enhance rather than harm such assets.

1. Introduction

Proposals have been made for minor changes to No.80 Highgate West Hill, Highgate, a Grade II-listed building set within a conservation area and adjacent to many other listed buildings in the village.

This Consultancy was commissioned to assess the potential heritage impact of the proposals on both designated and non-designated heritage assets within and adjacent to the study area. The remit does not extend to any other planning matters. This work was undertaken in March 2019 and observations were made entirely on and from the site and from the public domain.

1.1 Report Format

The report format is quite simple. After this brief introduction, there are short sections on the requirements of NPPF (Section 2) and Heritage Impact Assessments (Section 3). These are followed by an outline of the setting and history of the site (Section 4) and a description of it (Section 5). Section 6 is a short discussion and suggested phasing of the development of the site and Section 7 is a short heritage statement.

The proposals and heritage impact assessment is in Section 8; Section 9 is a short conclusion and Section 10 a list of the references used for this report. Section 11 is an Appendix containing much-reduced versions of the survey drawings.

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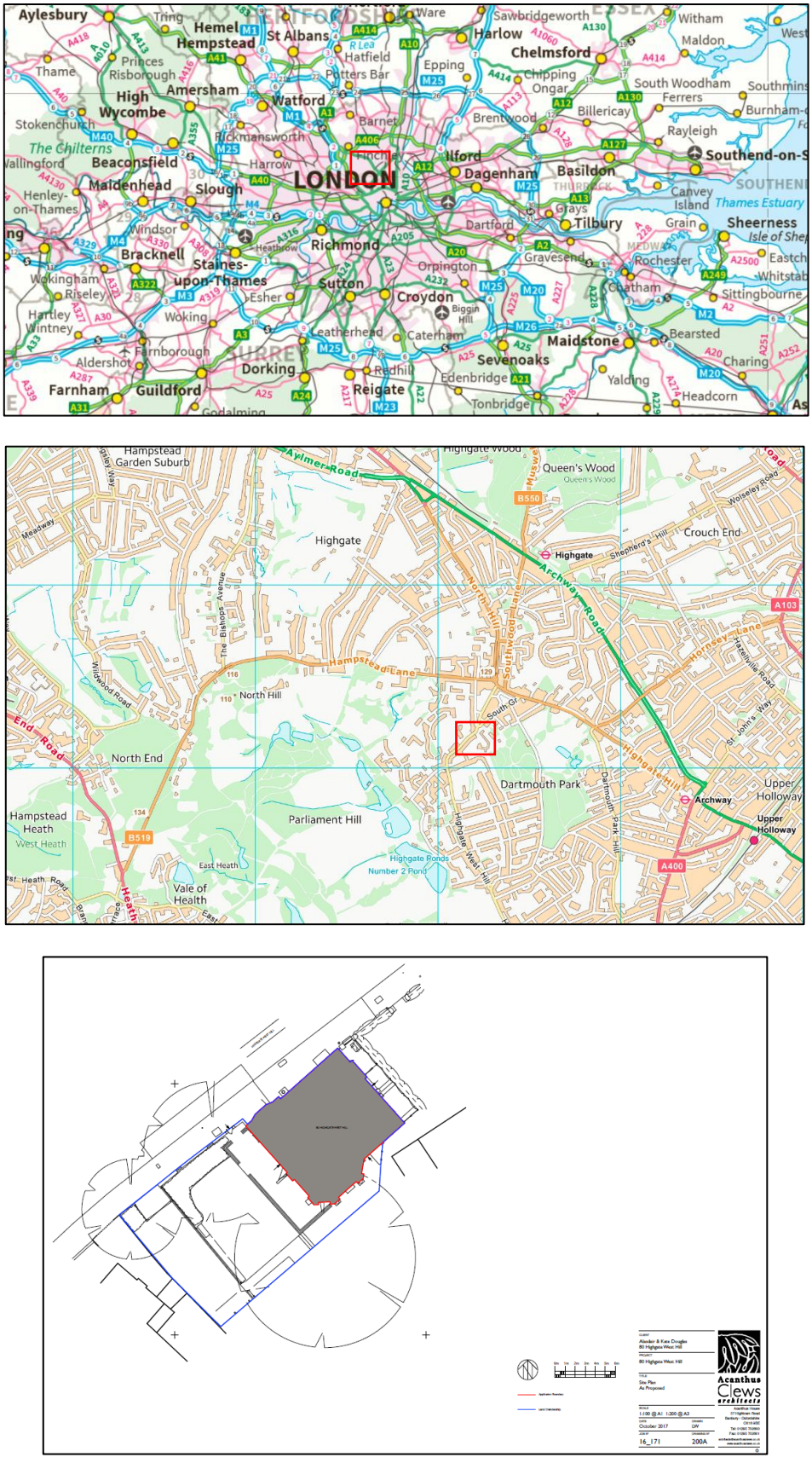

Fig.1: Location plan
(Ordnance Survey Open Data).

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2. National Planning Policy Framework Guidelines

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework

Planning law relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 66 of the Act deals with the responsibilities of local planning authorities – the decision makers - when dealing with planning applications that could impact on heritage assets and states that:

> '*In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*'.[1]

Section 72 of the same Act states that, in relation to conservation areas:

> '*with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*'.[2]

Government guidelines regarding the listed buildings and conservation areas legislation in the 1990 Planning Act changed twice in two years, resulting in the introduction of a new *précis* of planning guidance published in March 2012 – the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) – which replaced all other separate *Planning Policy Guidelines* and *Planning Policy Statements*.[3]

A revised version was published in July 2018 and yet another a few months later in February 2019.[4] In regards to the potential impact of proposals on heritage assets, the NPPF states that local planning authorities should require applicants:

> '*...to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution 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 proposals on their significance*'.[5]

[1] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 c.9 section 66 (1), 41
[2] *Ibid.* section 72
[3] Department for Communities & Local Government, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*.
[4] Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2018, *National Planning Policy Framework*;
[5] *Op. cit.*, para. 189

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3. Heritage Impact Assessments

3.1 General Introduction

The purpose of a heritage impact assessment (HIA) is to meet the relevant guidance given in the NPPF. This outlines the need to inform the planning decisions when considering proposals that have the potential to have some impact on the character or setting of a heritage asset. It is not concerned with other planning issues.

The nature of the heritage assets and the potential impact upon them through development are both very varied. The heritage assets include both designated heritage assets – such as listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and conservation area – and non-designated heritage assets, a rather uncomfortable and sometimes subjective category that includes locally listed buildings, field systems, buried archaeological remains and views.

The degree of impact a development could have on such assets is variable and can sometimes be positive rather than negative. The wide range of possible impacts can include loss of historic fabric, loss of historic character, damage to historic setting, and damage to significant views.

Under the requirements of the NPPF and of other useful relevant guidance, such as English Heritage's *Conservation Principles* and *Informed Conservation,* and recent material from the newly formed Historic England, the process of heritage impact assessments can be summarised as involving three parts:

1. understanding the heritage values and significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets involved and their settings;

2. understanding the nature and extent of the proposed developments;

3. making an objective judgement on the impact that the proposals outlined in Part 2 may have on the information outlined in Part 1.[6]

3.2 Definition of Setting

Setting, as a concept, was clearly defined in PPS5 and was then restated in the NPPF which describe it 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 neutral.*'

[6] English Heritage, 2008, *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*; Clark, K, 2001, *Informed Conservation*

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The latest version of the Historic England guidance on what constitutes setting is virtually identical to the former English Heritage guidance:

> '*Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance.*'[7]

The new Historic England guidance also re-states the earlier guidance that setting is not confined entirely to visible elements and views but includes other aspects including environmental considerations and historical relationships between assets:

> '*The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each. The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting. This will vary over time and according to circumstance*'.[8]

In terms of the setting of heritage assets the approach is the same but the latest Historic England guidance - *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3* (GPA3) of 2017 - suggests a five-step approach.[9]

The steps 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) or allow significance to be appreciated;

Step 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it;

Step 4: explore the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm;

Step 5: make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

[7] Historic England, 2017, *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2nd ed.)*, para.9
[8] *Op.cit.*, Part 1, reiterating guidance in the PPG of the NPPF.
[9] *Op.cit.*, para.19

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3.3 Definition of Significance

The glossary of the *Planning Practice Guidance* (PPG) to the NPPF defines significance 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*'.

The PPG also states that:

> '*Local planning authorities may identify non-designated heritage assets. These are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated heritage assets. In some areas, local authorities identify some non-designated heritage assets as 'locally listed*''.[10]

but cautions that:

> '*A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage interest for their significance to be a material consideration in the planning process*'.[11]

3.4 Definition of Harm

Current guidance by Historic England is that 'change' does not equate to 'harm'. The NPPF and its accompanying PPG effectively distinguish between two degrees of harm to heritage assets – *substantial* and *less than substantial*. Paragraph 195 of the revised NPPF states that:

> '*Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*
>
> *a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable use of the site; and*
> *b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
> *c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
> *d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use*'.[12]

[10] Planning Practice Guidance, 2014, paragraph 39
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019, *op. cit.*, para.195

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Paragraph 196 of the revised NPPF states that:

> '*Where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use*'.

Recent High Court rulings have emphasised the primacy of the 1990 Planning Act – and the fact that it is up to the decision makers in the planning system to *'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the* [listed] *building or its setting*'.

As stated by HH Judge David Cooke in a judgment of 22 September 2015 regarding impact on the setting of a listed building:

> '*It is still plainly the case that it is for the decision taker to assess the nature and degree of harm caused, and in the case of harm to setting rather than directly to a listed building itself, the degree to which the impact on the setting affects the reasons why it is listed.*'

The judgment was agreed by Lord Justice Lewison at the Court of Appeal, who stated that:

> '*It is also clear as a matter both of law and planning policy that harm (if it exists) is to be measured against both the scale of the harm and the significance of the heritage asset. Although the statutory duty requires special regard to be paid to the desirability of not harming the setting of a listed building, that cannot mean that any harm, however minor, would necessarily require planning permission to be refused*'. [13]

[13] Court of Appeal (PALMER and HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL & ANR) in 2016 (Case No: C1/2015/3383) para.34.

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4. Setting & Outline History

4.1 Highgate

Highgate is an elevated suburb of north London, the core of which retains much of its Georgian character. It was situated on the Great North Road and traditionally takes its name from a toll gate established by the Bishop of London to obtain money from travellers in the medieval period – though the road only became the principal highway to the north out of London in the 16th century.

There was some settlement at Highgate by the 15th century and it later became a popular spot for the wealthy to build country retreats just outside the metropolis – such as Lauderdale House which has 16th century origins. Despite this it was not a large settlement and only appears to have developed into a sizeable village in the 18th century, its economy largely based on the traffic passing through it.

The opening of the new Archway Road in 1813, effectively a new by-pass to the east of the village, was opposed by the local innkeepers and impacted on the through traffic and on their trade. It did result in the village acquiring a greater degree of exclusivity and separateness, which it still retains. On the southern side of the settlement, at the top of the slope down towards London, was what seems to have been a particularly grand Baroque mansion, Ashurst House, with equally impressive grounds.

Lying just to the south of Highgate West Hill and the study area, it was probably built at the end of the 17th century and its formal gardens are shown on an engraving of *circa* 1710 by John Harris published in Kip's *Britannia Illustrata* of 1715. The house was demolished and its site used for a new church, St. Michael's, designed by Lewis Vulliamy and opened in 1832. The land to the south of the new church was subsequently developed as the famous Highgate Cemetery, consecrated in 1839.

In the 1830's, Lewis' *Topographical Dictionary* stated that:

> '*The village or town stands on the great north road, and is remarkable for the purity of its air, the diversified scenery of its neighbourhood, and the extensive and beautiful prospects which its lofty situation commands; the streets are lighted with gas, and the inhabitants are amply supplied with water, chiefly from wells*'.

Fig.2: Extract from the original Ordnance Survey drawings, begun in 1807 (British Library).

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4.2 No.80 Highgate West Hill

No.80 Highgate West Hill lies towards the top of that hill close to the centre of the village. The origins of the road are unclear but assumed to be medieval, appearing to part of a route to Kentish Town. It was, confusingly, also referred to as Highgate Hill around 1800 and later simply as West Hill until about 1941 when the present name started to be used.

The origins of the present house are fairly well documented. The property immediately to the east, No.79 Highgate Hill West, is, despite appearances, a conversion from three cottages, the easternmost one of which was the White Hart – an inn recorded in the 17th century; the building apparently contains some 17th century timber-framing.

In 1780 the White Hart had been leased, along with five acres, to William Bowstread who had a nursery on the site by 1804 – the Inn having closed; the nursery had been taken over by William Cutbush by 1822.

No.80 Highgate West Hill was built in the grounds close to the road side in 1834 as a combined house and shop by Cutbush, and there were extensive nurseries and glass-houses to the rear; the family continued to operate the nursery until 1918. Subsequently it became a private dwelling and most of the former nursery grounds were sold off.

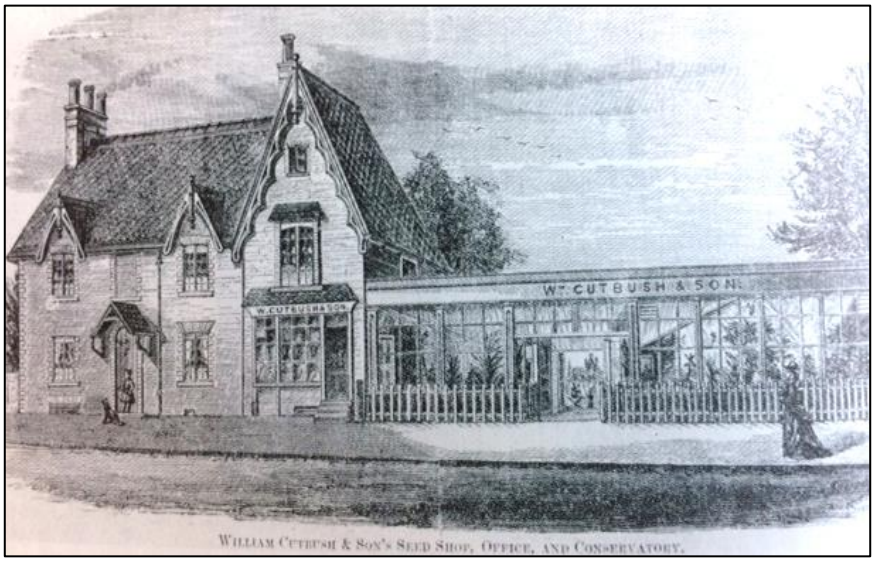

Fig.3: A late-19th century engraving of No.80 Highgate West Hill.

Fig.4: The cover of Cutbush & Son's 1894 Spring Catalogue.

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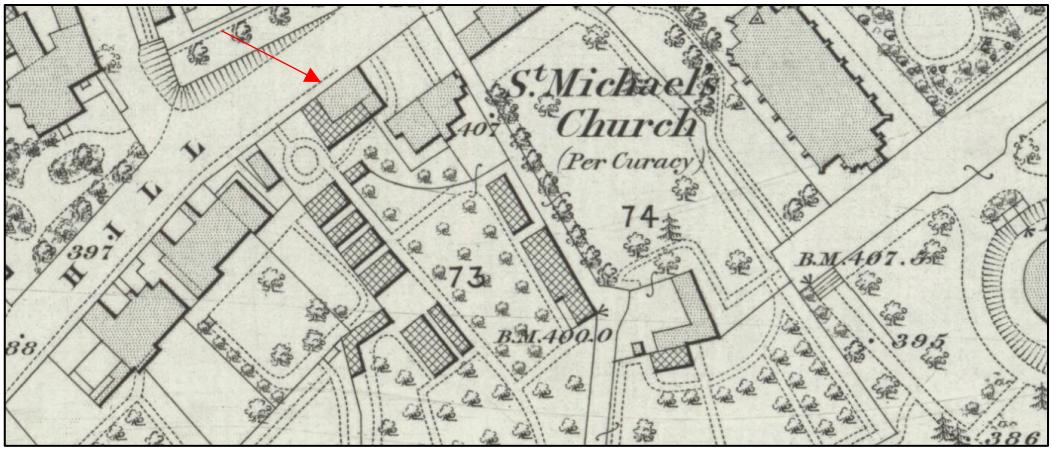

Fig.5: Extract from the 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in 1863 (NLS).

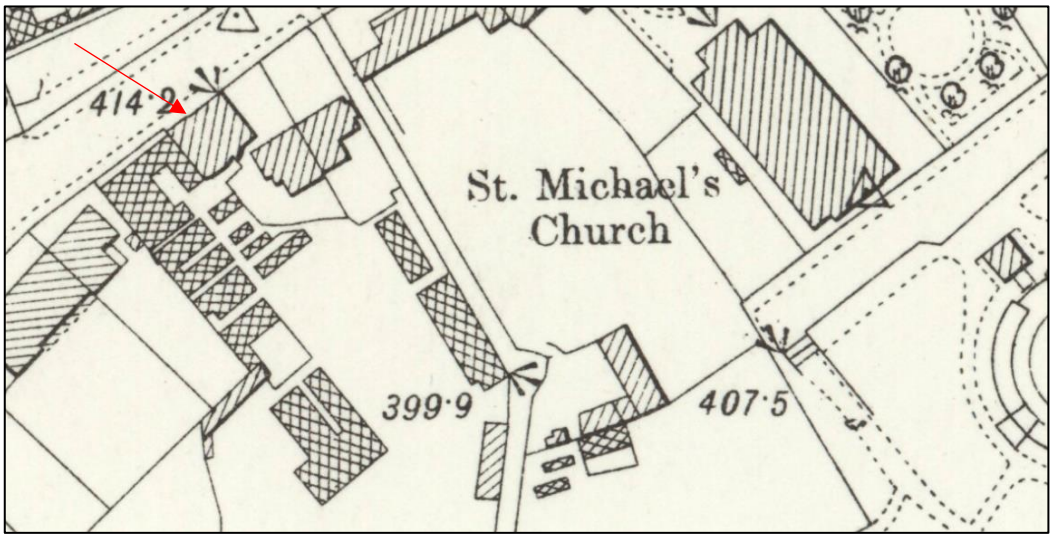

Fig.6: Extract from the 2nd edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map, revised in 1893-4 (NLS).

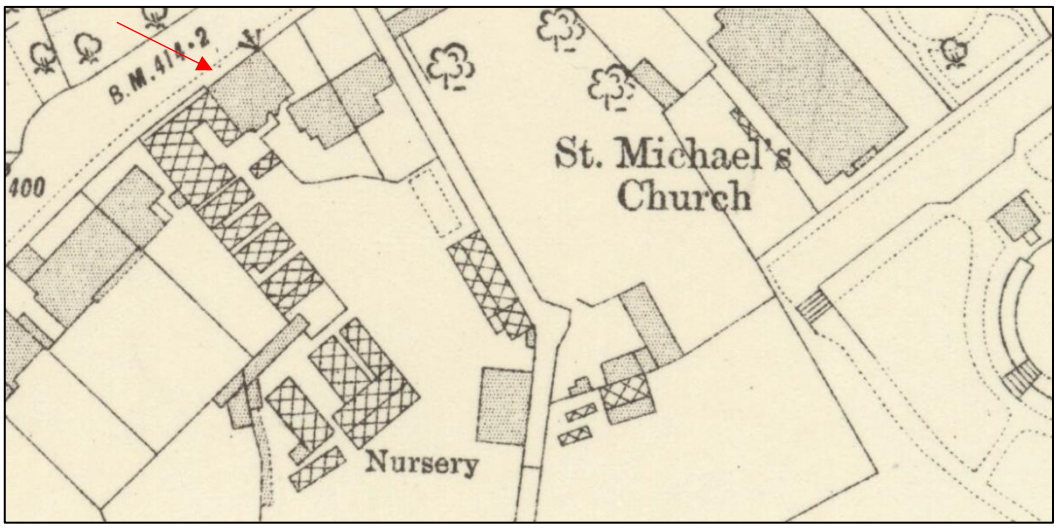

Fig.7: Extract from the 3rd edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map, revised in 1913 (NLS).

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The later-19th century map evidence shows the general development of the house and its setting. The 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1863 shows the site in detail for the first time (*see* Fig.5).

The house was then a simple rectangle with a small rear projection at the east end. An 'L-shaped' glass house wrapped round the west gable and rear wall of the house, ending at the projection. To the west was a formal approach off the road to the nursery beyond – which had a large area of open ground with trees or shrubs, flanked by more glass houses.

By the time the 2nd edition of that map was revised in 1893-4, the house had been extended by a larger rear addition beyond the whole of the front section and extending as far as the back wall of the earlier small wing (*see* Fig.6).

This evidently led to the demolition of a section of the original glasshouse, but the western section may have been retained. To the west of the house the old entrance to the nursery had been covered over by a new glasshouse – possibly the one shown on the late-19th century engraving (*see* Fig.3).

The layout had changed little by the time the 3rd edition of the map was revised in 1913 – just a few years before the nursery was closed (*see* Fig.6). The glass house then seem to have been cleared away, and none are shown by the time of the 1930's editions of the maps.

Pl.1: The house from the north-west, with the spire of St. Michael's church to the left.

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Pl.2: The house from the north-east.

Pl.3: The house from the south-west.

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5. Description

The house, fronting the side of the road, now consists of two main sections – the Original House and the later Rear Extensions. It is built of brick, assumed to be locally made and hand-made, and either painted or roughcast and painted. To the south are the gardens, with limited addition garden to the south-east – but none now to the south or to the east due to changes in property boundaries.

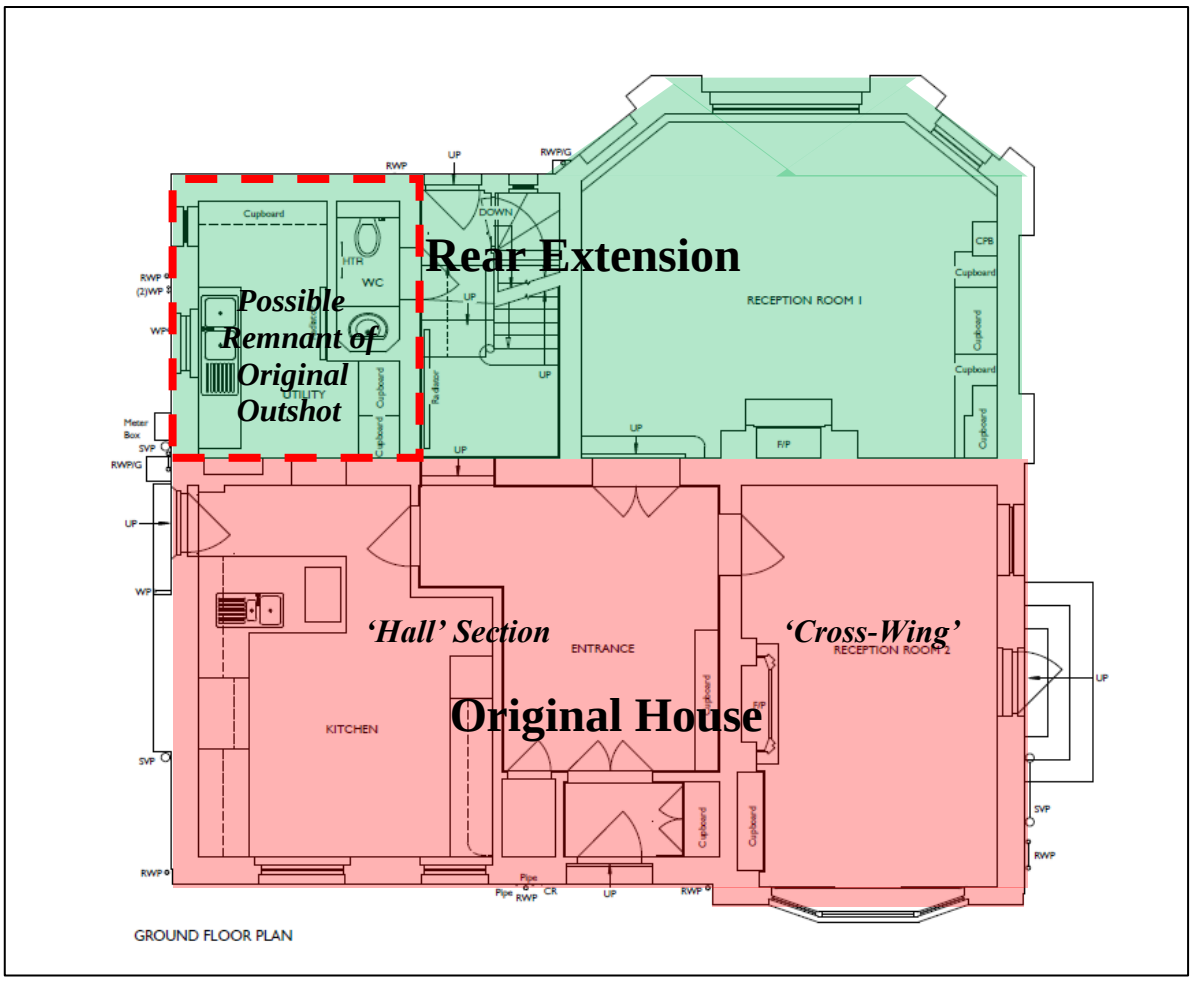

Fig.8: Ground-floor plan, showing basic components.
(north to bottom).

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5.1 The Original House

The Original House is evidently that built in 1834 for William Cutbush. It was built in the then still just fashionable cottage orné style that had developed from the Romantic movement of the late-19th century, though the decoration was clearly not particularly elaborate. It was presumably considered to be an appropriate style for the nursery business – echoing the many gate lodges and model estate cottages then being built to copy book designs.

The house was also built to a standard 'hall and cross-wing' plan, an echo of medieval house forms. In this case the 'hall' was the two-storey, three-bay dwelling, whilst the slightly taller 'cross-wing' at the right-hand end contained the shop and stores.

5.1.1 The Exterior

The exterior retains much of the original design and fabric of the original house, but there have been changes – and the rear elevation is no longer external or visible due to the addition of the rear extension.

5.1.1.01 The Front, or North, Elevation

On the north side, the 'hall' section is still of three bays but the fenestration has been altered. There was originally a central doorway beneath a projecting canopy; these have been removed and there is now a window in the upper blocking of the original doorway. Above, the blind window on the first floor always seems to have been blind.

The main distinction now between the window in the former central doorway and those to either side is in the fact that it is narrower, though the two-light balanced multi-paned sash echoes that of the other windows. All of the openings in this section, except the blind central first-floor window, have plain brick flat arched heads, and the windows have projecting sills.

At ground-floor level, the present entrance doorway is to the right of centre; this has been inserted into the position of one of the original windows and the relatively modern door is actually too narrow for the openings – and so has rather wide jambs. The two upper sashes are set within raised brick dormers protected by boldly moulded timber bargeboards. Between these, in the roof slope, is a slightly utilitarian and obviously inserted flat-roofed boxed dormer lighting the attic.

To the right, or west, the north gable end of the 'cross-wing' has a shallowly canted almost full-width bay window on the ground-floor level; this has been remodelled and the window itself is relatively modern – but it retains some of the spirit of that shown on the late-19th century engraving.

Above, the first-floor window is set in a slightly projection beneath a shallow hipped lean-to canopy. It has the same double sash as the windows in the main section, though this would presumably have replaced an original taking-in door to the stores. Above is a small window lighting the top of the attic. This cross-wing gable is enriched with ornately cusped timber barge-boards and a finial.

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5.1.1.02 The West Elevation

The west elevation of the 'cross-wing' section is now roughcast and painted, making assessment of its development difficult. There is a plain doorway centrally positioned on the ground floor, accessed by external steps; this is of uncertain date but probably inserted. The half-glazed door is modern. To the south of this is what appears to be an inserted window. The window above the doorway could be primary but given its position, this seems unlikely. The original roof above this elevation has been radically altered (*see below*).

5.1.1.03 The East Elevation

The east gable end of the main 'hall' section is roughcast and devoid of openings other than a ground-floor doorway to the left of the projecting shouldered chimney stack. The doorway has a four-centre arched head under a bracketed canopy – similar in form to that shown above the front door on the late-19th century engraving. The door is 'antique' and hung on elaborate, but *faux*, strap-hinges. The overhanging verge of the roof now has very plain bargeboards – presumably replacements for more elaborate originals.

5.1.2 The Roof

The original roofs were of two sections, one over the 'hall section' with the other at right-angles to that above the 'cross-wing'. From the front, most of the former seems to have survived and is steeply pitched and plain gabled; it is covered in 'fish-scale' and diamond patterned slate. There are tall triple shafted brick ridge chimneys at either end of this section of the roof.

The appearance of the roof is slightly misleading, because the rear slope has been removed and raised to a flat roof associated with the flat-roofed dormer on the front slope and the second floor in the Rear Extension.

Similarly, the front section of the roof over the 'cross-wing' appears to be intact and unaltered – but wish fish-scale slate only on the eastern slope and plain slate to the west. However, at the rear this has been altered to merge into the steep-sided flat roof addition over the Rear Extension.

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Pl.4: The present entrance hall and weather lobby.

Pl.5: The kitchen, showing original door in possibly original position in the east gable.

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5.1.3 The Interior

The interior was originally on two main floors above a basement; a more capacious second floor has since formed at attic level. The interior has been considerably altered and the basic primary plan floor has been lost.

5.1.3.01 The Ground Floor

It is evident that the residential portion of the original house was within the 'hall' section, and that it was on two floors. The original layout probably consisted of a central entrance-cum-stair hall, accessed through the lost central front doorway, with rooms to either side; the present stairs to the rear belong to the later Rear Extension.

The ground-floor is presently accessed through a narrow weather-lobby inside the present inserted front entrance and divided into two by a cranked partition wall – which appears to be made of plasterboard.

The western space now serves as a large entrance hallway and presumably has done so since the front doors were rearranged. The panelling is plain and painted and in places doesn't quite fit the openings; its date is unclear – and could range from the late-19th to a modern import. That assertion could be supported by the fact that the glazed pair of doors in the weather-lobby are clearly modern, as is the plastic coving around the room. There is evidence visible in the basement of a brick hearth base against the rear wall of this space, suggesting that its fireplace was on this wall rather than on the western wall.

That coving is also found in the eastern room, now the kitchen, the decoration of which is entirely modern and lacking any fixtures and fittings of note except for the door and doorway in the east gable wall. In this room the original fireplace appears to have been at the east gable end.

The former shop-cum-office at this level in the 'cross wing' is now a single large space. Its decoration appears to be modern and there are inconsistencies in the relationships between skirting boards and door architraves. The coving again seems to be plastic. In the possibly primary fireplace position against the east wall is an imported ornate chimney-piece, possibly French in style.

5.1.3.02 The First Floor

The first floor is now accessed by the stairs in the later Rear Extension and the original layout at this level has been altered – due in no small part through the removal of the original stairs and landing. There is nothing of interest at this level in the former domestic section of the building, and the former seed store in the 'cross wing' has been converted latterly into a bathroom.

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Pl.6: The former office and showroom, converted to domestic use in the 20th century.

Pl.7: Part of the basements, formerly in domestic use.

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5.1.3.03 The Second Floor or Attic

The height of the first-floor part-dormered windows in the front elevation of the house seem to preclude a primary attic level in the rest of the roof space. The present attic floor is a later alteration of unknown date – in which the rear slope of the main roof has been removed and replaced by a flat roof at ridge height running into the flat roof over the Rear Extension. The dates of these changes is unclear.

5.1.3.04 The Basement

The basement is fairly low but extensive. The fact that there were three 'pots' to each ridge stack on the late-19th century engraving – and clearly three shafts in each of the chimneys as they survive today – suggests that each served three fireplaces.

As there were no rooms in the attics originally, this would suggest that there were fireplaces in the basement and that this was used as part of the dwelling – presumably for servants. Little of any significant survives at this level, however, and it would always have been very plain in character.

5.2 The Rear Extension

In its present iteration, the Rear Extension is an extremely clumsy composition under a flat roof. The map evidence indicates that the lower portions, at least, of this addition had been built by the end of the 19th century, but it seems likely that the top section and flat roof could have been slightly later. It is unclear how much of the original small outshot at the south-eastern corner of the house was incorporated into the present Rear Extension.

5.2.1 The Exterior

The Extension is built of brick but covered in painted roughcast. The most dominant feature of the extension is the full-height canted bay projecting from the western half of the south wall. This is articulated by broad flat and distinctly ungainly roughcast pilasters and it is not clear whether these were part of an original design or part of subsequent remedial works. The fenestration of the rest of the south elevation, and of the east elevation, is utilitarian and there are no windows on the west elevation of the Extension.

5.2.2 The Roof

The roof is flat, with steep-sided edges covered in slate. In terms of its proportions, massing and scale it is extremely crudely designed and impacts adversely on the original building – especially where this roof structure abuts the original roofs. The design was necessary to create the second or attic floor within.

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Pl.8: Main ground-floor room in the Rear Extension.

Pl.9: The stairs in the Rear Extension.

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5.2.3 The Interior

The interior is divided into two on each floor level. The western rooms are full-depth and lit by the windows of the canted bay in the south wall. The decoration is fairly simple in the lower rooms but the top rooms has the same type of painted wainscot as the present entrance hallway (*see above*).

The stairs are of simple dog-leg form with half landings. They do appear to be consistent from ground floor to second floor level and the turned balusters and simple if rather chunky mouldings suggest a late-19th to early-20th century date. To the east of the stairs is a utility room on the ground floor and bathrooms above.

Beneath the eastern end of the Rear Extension, and probably a relic of the original small south-eastern wing of the property, is a brick-vaulted cellar accessed by steep stone steps in rather poor condition.

6. Discussion & Outline Phasing

6.1 Phase I: 1834

The building seems to be of two distinct phases – the original building of 1834 built for William Cutbush, and the later rear extension to it. As built in 1834 it was a fairly simple cottage orné combining a house and the office and stores needed for the nursery. The design was a logical 'hall and cross-wing' one with the house in the 'hall' and the business in the 'cross-wing'.

Within the house there was probably a central entrance hall flanked by rooms to either side; the main family rooms would have been on the ground and first floors with service rooms, perhaps including the kitchen, in the basement; it appears that the basement beneath the 'cross-wing' was also part of these domestic arrangements. In the cross-wing above the basement, the shop and office were on the ground floors with store rooms on the first and attic floors.

6.2 Phase II: Late-19th Century to Early-20th Century

The property was radically extended and altered at some time in the late-19th century when the rear extension was added, probably subsuming the earlier small rear wing; this also led to a complete change to the original circulation pattern and to the original entrance.

The extension was added by the time the Ordnance Survey map was revised in 1893-4, but it is unclear if this was originally of two storeys or whether it included the second floor, the flat roof and the new second floors in the original building – or whether these elements were slightly later still.

Whilst attempts were evidently made to try and minimise the visual impact on the principal elevation – perhaps including the roughcast finish to blur the distinction in the material palette - this was not entirely successful.

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The re-positioning of the front door led to the unbalancing of the original façade. The rather clumsy designs of the flat roofs could and can be seen in three-quarter views and the views of these from the side and rear are most unsatisfactory.

Internally, the changes were quite radical, with the loss of the original simple plan form centred on the entrance hallway. The western room in the 'hall' section became the entrance hall instead, generously proportioned and providing access to the new stairs in the rear extension.

The former fireplace position on the rear wall in this room was removed to allow room for an inserted doorway into the new extension and other doorways inserted through what had been the rear wall. It is possible that the basement was effectively abandoned at this time and that the kitchen was relocated to the eastern end of the original house.

The nursery was still operating at this time and the main conservatory was attached to the house; it is likely, therefore, that the 'cross-wing' was still used as part of the business after these changes were made.

6.3 Later Changes

After the nursery ceased trading in 1918 and the glasshouses were removed, the domestic accommodation of the property could and did expand into the 'cross-wing' previously being used for the business. The impact that this may have had on the internal circulation pattern is unclear but there would have been more permeability between the two formerly separate sections of the house.

Subsequently, the house has been subject to the different changes that the changing aspirations of different owners and occupiers bring to such properties. Much of the present internal décor and the fixtures and fittings appear to date to the later-20th century and there is little of real heritage value surviving within the property.

7. Heritage Statement

The house is Grade II listed and this means that it is of national rather than just local or regional significance. Its significance lies in the design and surviving fabric, to a degree, but mainly to its historical importance as the home of the Cutbush's, an influential and long-lasting firm of horticulturalists, especially noted for their topiary plants. They occupied this site for over a century and formed an important element in the village.

That aspect of the property is no longer evident in the physical evidence of the site – with the glasshouses all gone; only the otherwise enigmatic former 'taking-in' doorway in the gable end of the 'cross-wing' facing the road provides a non-domestic element in the appearance of the house from the street.

Externally, though mainly from the street, the house retains much of its original cottage orné style, despite the somewhat over-bearing later roof structures; their impact is at least mitigated by design in the principal elevations – though unfortunately not from the private grounds of the house.

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The surviving primary character of the house and its place in the streetscape of the conservation area are both important elements of the significance of the building and the main reasons why, other than its historical importance, it is listed.

There is, however, little of significance inside the building. The present plan form is a mixture of the radical changes wrought when the lumpen rear extension was added towards the end of the 19th century and of later changes.

Some of the wainscot in the present hallway and on the upper floor of the rear extension could date from this later period – but it is not of high quality and could, in fact, be slightly later still and certainly has been altered. Otherwise there is nothing of significance in terms of fixtures and fittings within the property.

8. The Proposals & Impact Assessments

Proposals are being developed to update the property and to make a few minor alterations to the interior to meet the aspirations of the present owners in the 21st century. The main changes are to the ground floor, with some associated external alterations.

8.1 The External Proposals

8.1.1 The Proposed Changes

The external proposals relate to the inserted front entrance. This is now directly off the narrow pavement of a busy main road, with no additional protection for those using it – and potentially dangerous if used by children exiting the property without adult supervision. There are also obvious issues of pollution arising from a doorway opening directly off a busy road. The house has three other external doorways, one in each elevation, and it is proposed to block the existing front doorway.

The doorway is to be carefully infilled in brick and a window added in the blocking to match the one at the opposite, left-hand, end of this part of the façade. As part of the scheme, two sections of vertical moulded architrave will also be fixed to the wall beneath the ends of the sill of the present central ground-floor window – which marks the original doorway position of the property.

The main new entrance will be on the west side of the property, in the position of an inserted window opening. To access this, an appropriately detailed and proportioned gateway will be formed in the brick boundary wall of the garden.

The existing doorway on this elevation is of uncertain date but possibly inserted as well – it being odd to have such an opening between the former conservatory and the retail/office section centred on a fireplace. This will be converted into a window opening.

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8.1.2 Heritage Impact Assessment

The doorway that is to be blocked was inserted towards the end of the 19th century when the Rear Extension was added to the property; it was formed within the reveal of a primary window and is thus not an original feature.

The proposal will, in blocking the doorway and re-instating a window in its place, restore an original feature to the elevation. This aspect of the scheme will be further reinforced by the simple addition of the two sections of vertical architrave beneath the present central window – which is, itself, the result of the blocking of the original doorway carried out when the entrance was altered.

The combination of these proposals will restore the original degree of symmetry to the 'hall' section of the original building; the three-bays will again be logical and symmetrical with the slightly narrower central bay flanked by the wider window bays. The applied sections of architrave will hint at the former central doorway of the composition and the overall appearance of the façade will again reflect the late-19th century engraving (*see* Fig.2).

On the west elevation the swopping round of the present doorway and window openings, both of which are possibly inserted, with have a very limited impact, if any, on historic fabric or on the external appearance of the property and offers a logical solution to the issues of safer access to it.

The piercing of the present garden wall in order to provide access to the doorway in the west wall of the house will have limited impact in heritage terms. The wall has to post-date the demolition of the former conservatory show room in this position, which probably survived until the nursery closed in 1918.

Overall, the impact on these proposals on the external appearance of the property is considered to be a distinct enhancement of both the significance of the listed building and of the conservation area – restoring one of the key buildings within the historic streetscape to a more satisfying appearance and more akin to its original intended design.

8.2 The Internal Proposals

8.2.1 The Proposed Changes

The internal changes are associated with the external ones related to safer access and egress in and out of the property, and to the aspiration to make better use of the little used basement area and to restore it to the domestic accommodation of the house.

The main change is on the ground-floor of the 'hall' section of the original house. With the front doorway removed the present entrance hall will become redundant. It is proposed to remove the modern plasterboard wall separating the hall and the present kitchen to create one large kitchen-diner. At the western end of this, a new stair is to be created to access the basement, replacing the rather dangerous access through the rear extension and the brick-vaulted cellar.

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In the 'cross-wing' section of the original house, a new entrance hall is to be formed to be accessed by the new side doorway. The new hallway is formed by the simple expedient of adding a partition across the present room – with double-doorways off it into the remaining section of that space; this is considered to be the most appropriate approach and one which causes no harm to the much altered character of this part of the building.

8.2.2 Heritage Impact Assessment

The changes proposed are to relatively modern fabric unrelated to the original phase of the building. Apart from a small number of joists to be removed to make room for the new access down to the basement, the oldest fabric to be altered is probably the weather lobby, which could date in its basics to the late-19th century but could equally be later – as, certainly, are the paired glazed doors. The main element to be removed is the partition between the two main rooms, which is modern.

There will be a change in the plan form – but the existing plan form is of little heritage value. It bears no relation to the original plan form of the 1834 house and is, instead, partly of the late-19th century changes and later alterations. Consequently, the creation of a larger open space within the ground-floor of the original house is not considered to impact on the present very limited heritage value of the interior.

The creation of a new entrance hall within the former office and shop section in the 'cross-wing' has even less heritage impact. The changes are additive and to a space that was significantly altered after the closure of the nursery in 1918 – and that has been altered since.

The changes to the basement are considered to be of little heritage impact. It is a space of no architectural merit but is one that had formerly been in use domestically. The re-use of this space for the purposes for which it was designed is to be welcomed and the changes will result in no 'harm' to the fabric of any significance of this space.

9. Conclusions

For the reasons outlined above it is considered that the minor proposals for the property will result in little or no 'harm' to the fabric, character or significance of the listed building. Instead, there will be an overall enhancement of the building through the restoration of the original symmetry of the 'hall' section of the building trough the removal of the inserted front doorway, its replacement with a window (as the opening was originally), and the hint of the position of the original blocked front door through the addition of the two sections of architrave.

These proposed external changes will also enhance the character of the surrounding conservation area and the setting of the adjacent heritage assets, designated and non-designated. The impact of the internal changes is considered to be extremely limited in heritage terms.

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Change does not equate to harm. In the statement in the pioneering 2008 document, *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* that: '*Change in the historic environment is inevitable, caused by natural processes, the wear and tear of use, and people's responses to social, economic and technological change*'.

The prospect of change, even to listed buildings, is anticipated in the government's *National Planning Policy Framework* but was more clearly outlined in earlier guidance from 1996, *Planning Policy Guideline No.15* (PPG 15), which stated – in relation to listed buildings that:

> '*Many listed buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing or new uses. Indeed, cumulative changes reflecting the history of use and ownership are themselves an aspect of the special interest of some buildings, and the merit of some new alterations or additions, especially where they are generated within a secure and committed long-term ownership, should not be discounted.*'

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11. Appendix: Survey Drawings

These much-reduced survey drawings were produced by Acanthus Clews of Banbury.

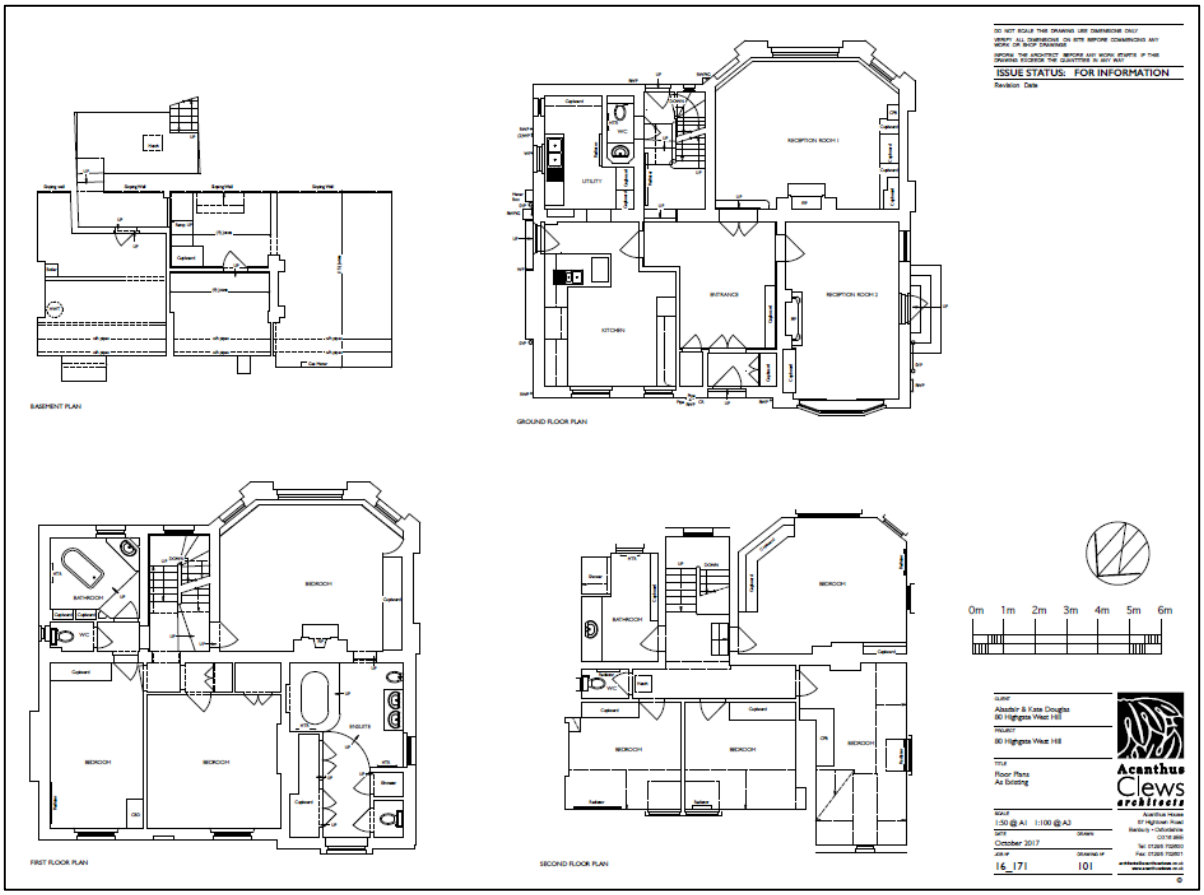

Fig.9: Floor plans.

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Fig.10: North and West Elevations.

Fig.11: South and East Elevations.

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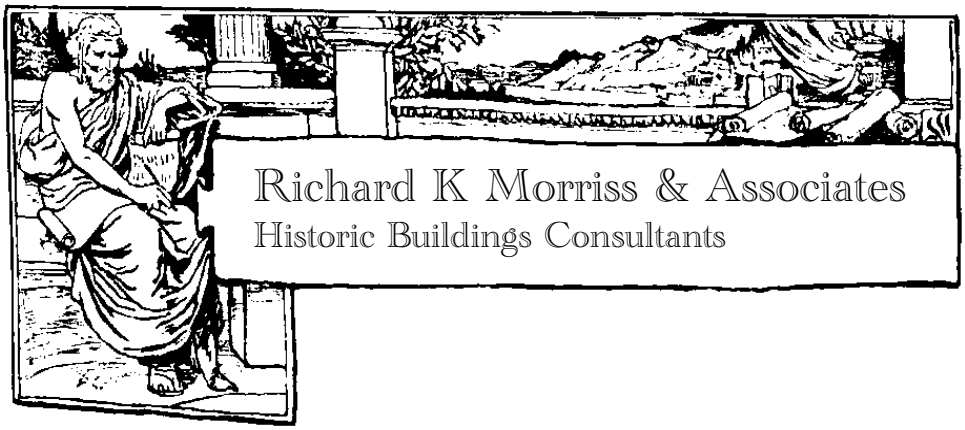

The Consultancy

Richard K Morriss founded this Consultancy in 1995 after previously working for English Heritage and the Ironbridge Institute of the University of Birmingham and spending eight years as Assistant Director of the Hereford Archaeology Unit. Although Shropshire-based the Consultancy works throughout the UK on a wide variety of historic buildings for clients that include the National Trust, the Landmark Trust, English Heritage, the Crown Estates, owners, architects, planning consultants and developers. It specialises in the archaeological and architectural analysis of historic buildings of all periods and planning advice related to them. It also undertakes broader area appraisals and Conservation Management Plans.

Richard Morriss is a former Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and of the Association of Diocesan and Cathedral Archaeologists, archaeological advisor to four cathedrals, occasional lecturer at Bristol and Birmingham universities, and author of many academic papers and of 20 books, mainly on architecture and archaeology, including The Archaeology of Buildings (Tempus 2000), The Archaeology of Railways (Tempus 1999); Roads: Archaeology & Architecture (Tempus 2006) and ten in the Buildings of series: Bath, Chester, Ludlow, Salisbury, Shrewsbury, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick, Winchester, Windsor, Worcester (Sutton 1993-1994). The latest work is an Historic England funded monograph on the Houses of Hereford (Oxbow 2018). He was a member of the project team responsible for the restoration of Astley Castle, Warwickshire, winner of the 2013 RIBA Stirling Prize.

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