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Ref: 0683

Heritage Statement & Impact Assessment

Old Grove House
St Barnabas Road
Reading
RG4 8RA

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Introduction

The Author

Katherine Harrison, the author of this report, is a fully accredited member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), holds a Master's degree in Building's History from Cambridge University, a Postgraduate Certificate in Historic Conservation from Oxford Brookes University, and a Bachelors in Fine Art from Goldsmiths University of London.

Prior to her employment at Janus Conservation, she worked for 7 years as a specialist Conservation Officer advising on all aspects of the management of historic buildings and areas at South Northants District Council.

The Report

This Heritage Statement & Impact Assessment has been produced to support future planning applications and listed building consents for Old Grove House. The property is a Grade II* listed building (listed 22nd March 1957) .

This Heritage Statement establishes the historic development and significance of the structure to inform any future assessment of the impact of the proposed repairs on that significance. It has been formulated using the assessment methodology contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraphs 194, 195, 197, 199, 201) and local planning policies within the Reading Borough Local Plan (Appendix D). It also takes account of the relevant Historic England guidance, most notably their best practice guidance document, Conservation Principles (2008 and revised 2017). The knowledge of the site has been derived from a site visit undertaken by Senior Heritage Consultant Katherine Harrison.

Figure 1: Aerial view of Old Grove House, approx. site outlined in red

Designated Heritage Assets

Figure 2: The distribution of Listed Buildings in 100m of the site is shown in the aerial map above (Google Earth-Image date 29.05.2020)

Old Grove House is a Grade II* listed property located within the suburbs of Reading. The property sits on the eastern side of St Barnabas Road alongside the separately listed barn to the north-east (Grade II). Old Grove House dates from the early 17th century however was restored and altered in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The barn is the only other listed building within 100m of Old Grove House however to the south and east of the assets, there are a number of listed buildings which include Caversham Grove (Grade II) and Caversham Park (Grade II) respectively.

Number on Plan	Name	Designation
1	Old Grove House	Grade II*
2	Barn to the North-east of Old Grove House	Grade II

Historic Map Regression

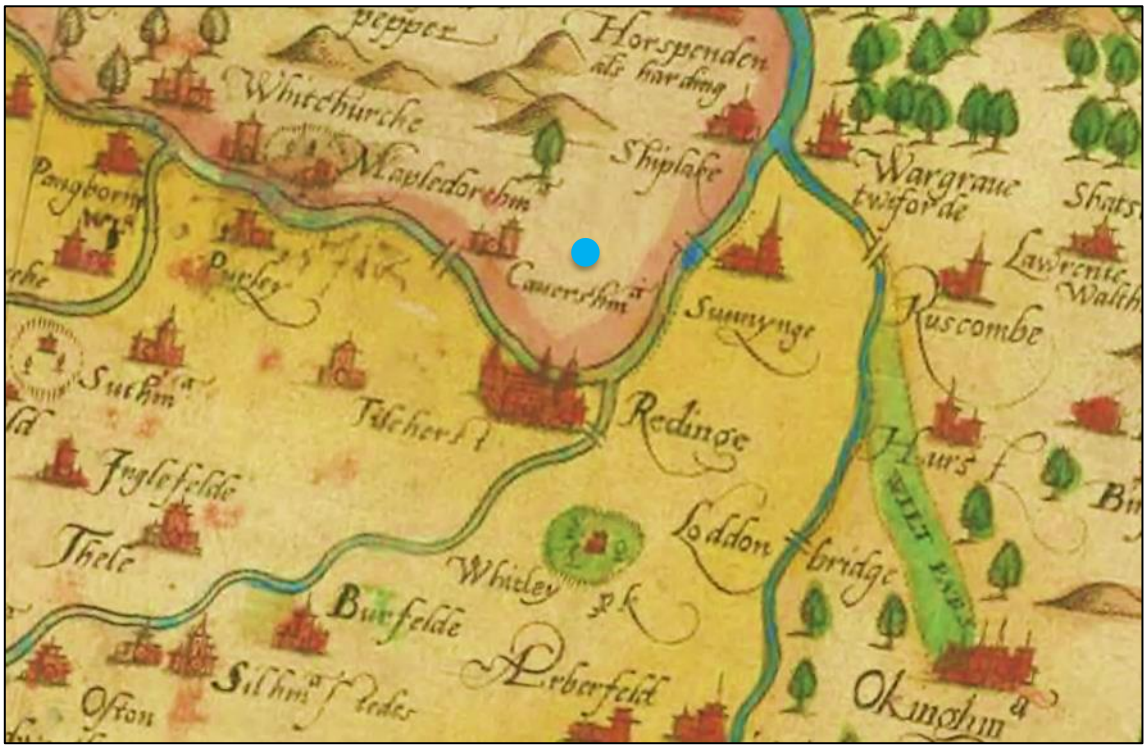

Figure 3: Christopher Saxton Map of Oxfordshire which dates from 1574, it forms part of an atlas that belonged to William Cecil Lord Burghley, Elizabeth I's Secretary of State. The atlas is of great significance to British cartography as it set a standard of cartographic representation in Britain and the maps remained the basis for English county mapping, with few exceptions, until after 1750 – Old Grove Houses' approx. location is highlighted in blue

Historic maps are helpful in identifying contextual changes to heritage assets, from the wider landscape scale down to the streetscape level and even to the changes in the footprint of the asset. This all contributes to the understanding of character and significance.

Old Grove House is located within the boundaries of Reading, however the property was once an isolated farmhouse and part of the wider parish of Caversham (
Figure 4). The two were connected by Surley Row (south of the property)- once one of the main routes out of Reading centre, and Emmer Green (east of the property- a once separate village). At the time of the Domesday survey (1086) Caversham was located in the hundred of Binfield and appeared as *Cavesham*; the village name is thought to derive from the name *Cafhere* (a personal name), and ham (a village/community hemmed in by water or marsh).

In the 17th century, the time of construction for Old Grove House, the area was predominantly populated by tenant farmers, smallholders and laborers. Affluent yeomen were a small minority, most tenants being of limited means however it is thought that Old Grove House was likely built by a wealthy yeoman given the detail of construction.

Caversham Grove (Grade II), to the south of the house, was one of the large estates outside of Reading which was responsible for many of the houses built in the surrounding countryside to house the estate staff during and throughout the 18th and 19th century. There is potential that during this time Old Grove House and its adjacent barn (now a separate private residential property) became part of/or were involved in the larger complex of the Caversham Grove estate.

In regard to the wider area, it is evident from the OS maps overleaf that in the late 19th century through to the early 20th century the area remained sparse in development, being primarily a collection of small-medium properties situated along the through road; a handful of larger properties (Caversham Grove and Caversham Park) bookending Reading to the north. Modern development appears to have begun in earnest in the mid-20th century with infill starting to become evident to the east and south of the Old Grove House connecting the property to Emmer's Green and Reading (**Figure 7**).

In terms of Old Grove House, the earliest map from 1761 illustrates what appears to be two semi-detached properties in the centre of the plot suggesting that Old Grove House may have once been part of a larger pair of buildings or that the building standing today was once two attached dwellings (
Figure 4).

The later OS map dating from 1877 illustrates a detached building with a northern courtyard delineated by outbuildings to the west and an L-shaped barn complex to the north and south. Also visible on the map is a landscaped garden to the south-east of the principal building and orchard to the west (**Figure 5**).

Little change is annotated on the 1899 map save for a handful of extensions; the western most outbuilding has been extended eastwards almost joining the principal house whilst the L-shaped barn has been extended to the north- the detached outbuilding to the east on the earlier map has been demolished (**Figure 6**).

The 1936 OS map shows the plot being extended northwards to incorporate the building there- interestingly it was part of the original plot in the late 19th century but was enclosed separately at the beginning of the 20th century (**Figure 7**). There is now an extensive range of outbuildings to the north creating a fully enclosed courtyard whilst the orchard to the east has been reduced in size. Old Grove House appears to have been slightly extended to the south and east; it is likely the former is the conservatory still present on site today (**Figure 7**).

Over the subsequent centuries the majority of the outbuildings have been demolished leaving only Old Grove House and the barn to the east (which is now a separate private residence). However, it is clear that throughout the decades Old Grove House has been a substantial agricultural complex and it is only in recent decades that this has been diminished to facilitate the expansion of Reading.

Figure 4: Rocques Map of Berkshire published 1761- Old Grove House highlighted in red, Caversham Grove highlighted in blue, Caversham Park highlighted in green

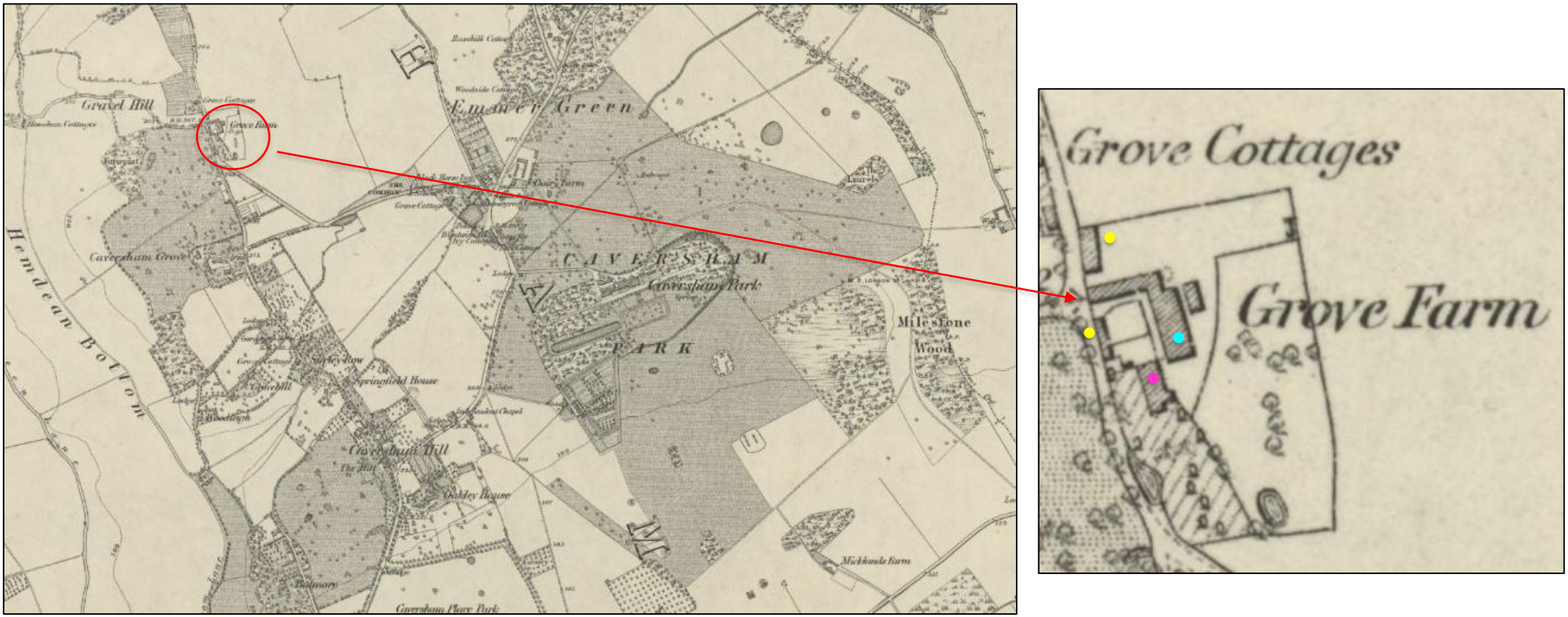

Figure 5: Extract of Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map: ***Oxfordshire Sheet LVI*** *Surveyed:* ***1877*** *& Published* ***1882****. Approx. site location highlighted in red Detail (right): Old Grove House highlighted in pink-note the small extension along the eastern elevation and small attached building to the north west, the L-shaped barn which is part of the existing barn today is highlighted in blue, further outbuildings associated with the property are highlighted in yellow. Note the orchards and landscaped gardens to the east and south*

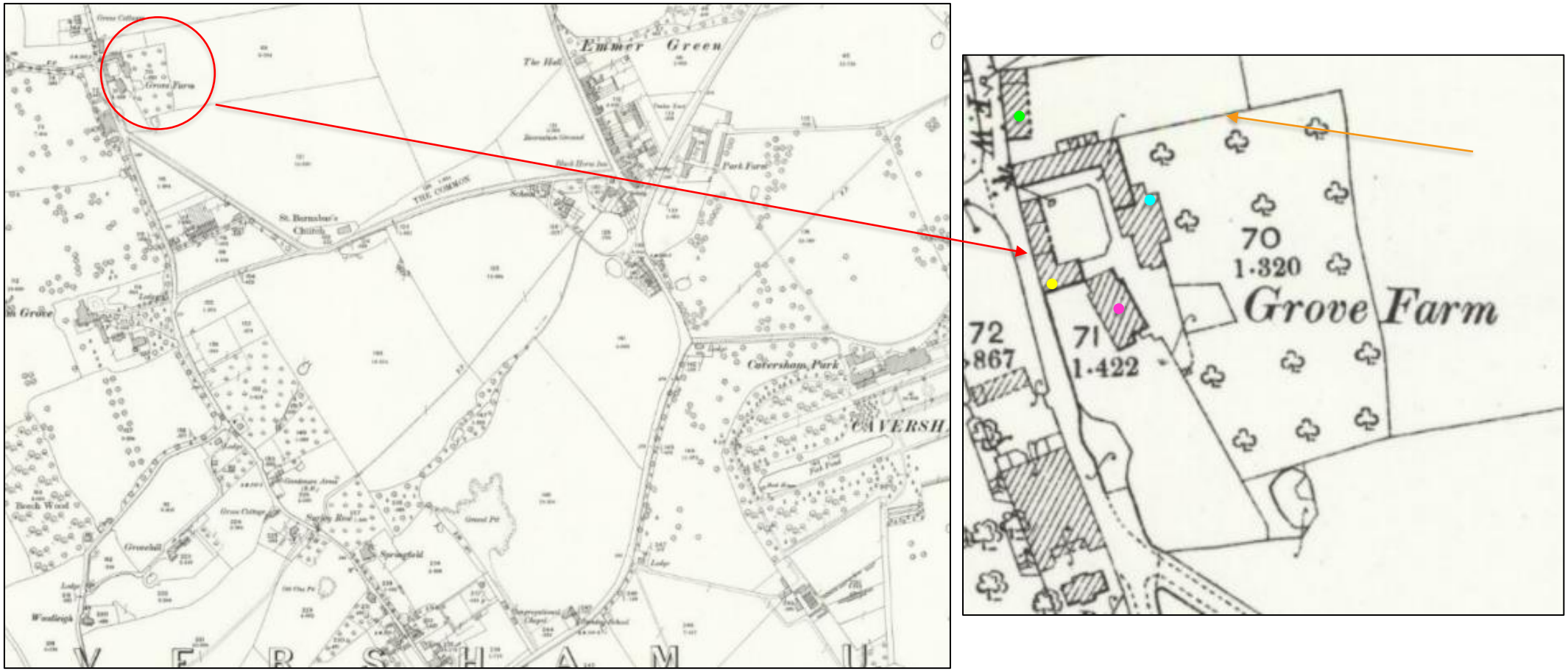

Figure 6: Extract of Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map: ***Oxfordshire LVI.11*** *Revised:* ***1897*** *& Published* ***1899****. Approx. site location highlighted in red Detail (right): Old Grove House highlighted in pink- note the projecting eastern extension visible on the above map has been demolished, the western most outbuilding which is highlighted in yellow has been extended eastwards creating an L-shaped building attached to the house (this is visible on the early 20th century photograph below* ***Figure 16****), the north-eastern L shaped barn highlighted in blue has been extended slightly along its northern elevation, the northern most outbuilding highlighted in green has been removed from the immediate boundary of the house (see orange arrow). Note the annotation of the formal garden to the south has been removed, and the orchard formalised to the east.*

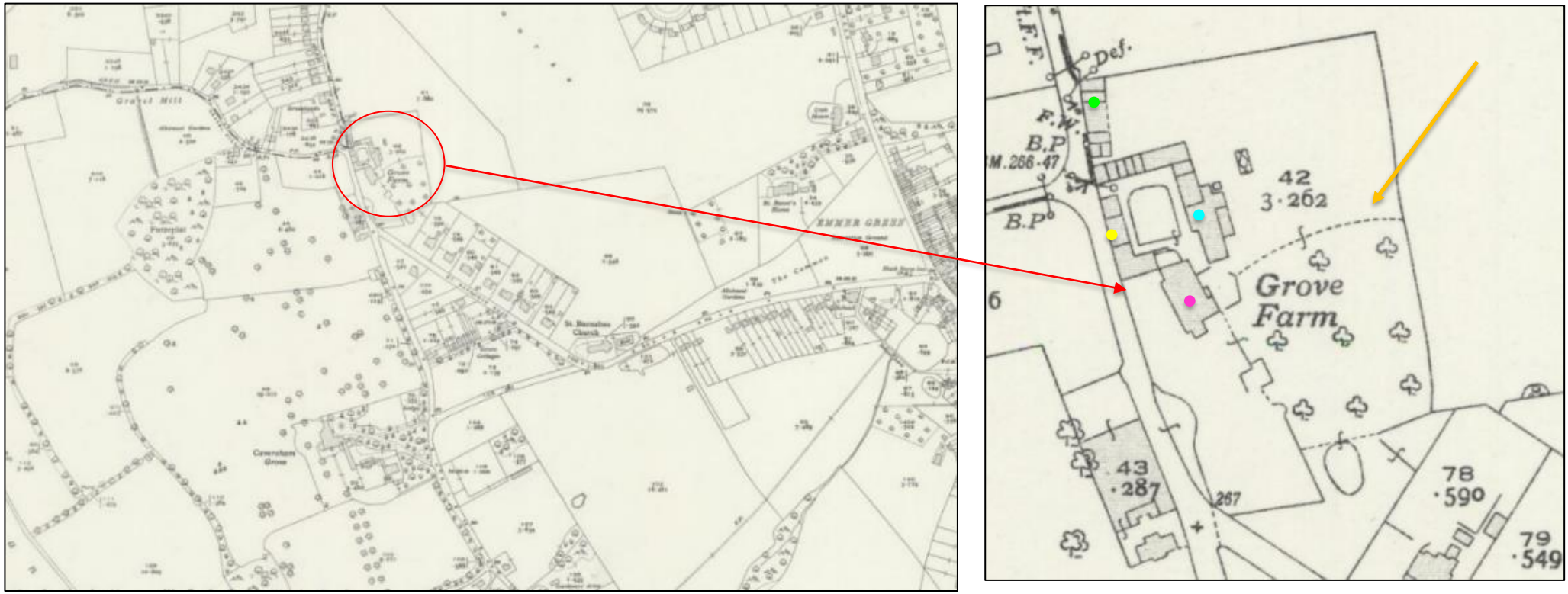

*Figure 7: Extract of Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map: **Berkshire XXIX.11** Revised:**1936** & Published **1938**. Approx. site location highlighted in red Detail (right): Old Grove House is highlighted in pink- note the eastern projection and northern infill (likely to be the boiler room today), the western most outbuilding which is highlighted in yellow has been further extended eastwards creating an enclosed small garden to the front of the northern end of the house (this building is visible on the early 20th century photograph below **Figure 16**), the north-eastern L shaped barn highlighted in blue has been further extended slightly along its north-eastern elevation, the northern most outbuilding highlighted in green has been included once again within the immediate boundary of the house (see orange arrow). Note the annotation of the formal garden to the south has been removed, and the orchard reduced in size to the east.*

Drone Aerial Images

Figure 8: Drone photo overlooking the west and south elevations

Figure 9: Drone photo overlooking the north and east elevations

Figure 10: Drone photo overlooking the east elevation

Figure 11: Drone photo overlooking the south elevation

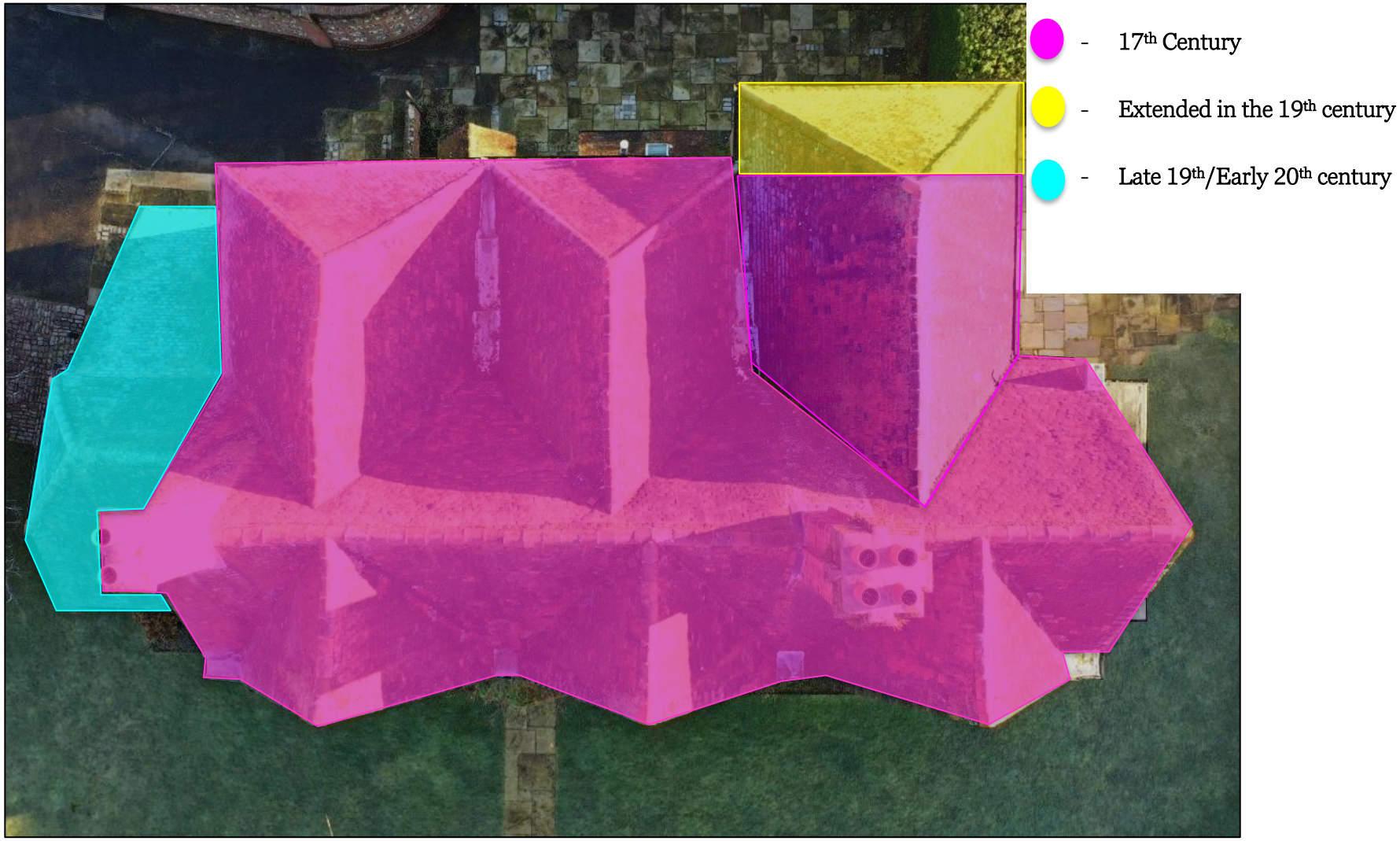

Figure 12: Drone photo of clay tile roof- The entirety of the main roof was re-covered last in a single phase of development, as evidenced by the presence of non-permeable bitumastic sarking felt, which probably took place in the 1970s or 1980s.

Figure 13: Potential phasing plan of Old Grove House

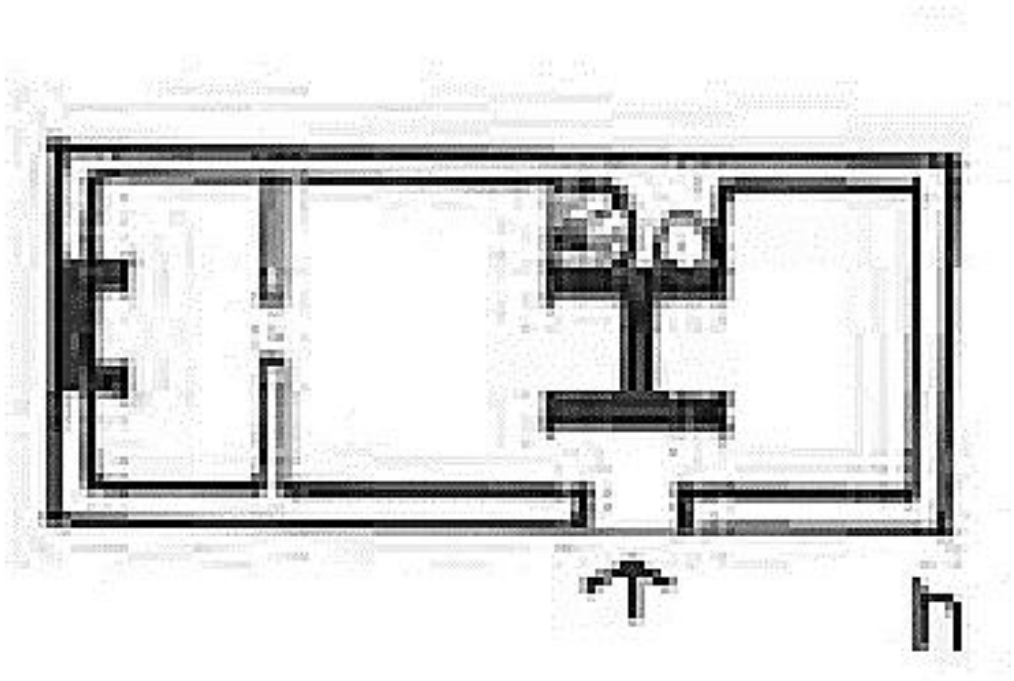

Figure 14: The early 17th century part of Old Grove House is potentially based upon lobby/baffle entry plan form- taken from "Vernacular Architecture: An Illustrated Handbook (2000) by R. W. Brunskill.

The original early 17th century dwelling may have consisted of an attic, 2 units at ground floor and two units at first floor with a separate unit, likely to be a service area, to the north of the property (likely to be the current main reception room and part of the current kitchen).This would also be replicated at first floor level. Entrance to the property may have been where the two casement window is to the right of the porch (Error! Reference source not found.) with a l obby present directly on entry with doors leading both left and right, as is typical for a baffle / lobby entry house (**Figure 14**). The staircase to the property may have been located to the side rear side of the fireplace, evidence of which could be read in the space/void behind the fireplace where there is high ceilings within which could have facilitated the necessary head height (**Figure 29 & Figure 30**).

The rear east range was potentially constructed during the mid- late 17th century and appears to have been a single storey annex/lean-to at first which may have served as a further service area, and then later extended in the early 18th century to the full height – evidence of which can be read in the varying styles of brick work visible on the east elevation (**Figure 19**).

The OS maps suggest that the southernmost projecting gable of the east elevation was extended in the late 19th century (**Figure 18 & Figure 30**) alongside the kitchen at the northern end of the building which appears to have replaced a smaller extension to wrap around both the northern and eastern sides (**Figure 21**). By the early 20th century the property had been extended further to the south to include the existing conservatory/garden room thought to date from the 1930s (**Figure 22**). Over the course of the 19th and 20th century the house has been altered both externally and internally.

It should be noted that there is no documentary evidence to support the original plan form theory- this is just one analysis of the buildings potential morphology based on evidence visible in the existing built fabric.

Heritage Appraisal: Old Grove House

Figure 15: West elevation of Old Grove House

Old Grove House is a Grade II* listed property thought to date from the early to mid-17th century. The property consists of 3 bays, 2 storeys high with an attic. There are two chimney stacks; the stack to the right of the centre has projecting brick panels on each side and a corbelled head.

Predominantly constructed of brick under a clay tile roof, the timber frame structure is visible (in part) both internally and externally. It is likely that the timber frame was re-used from a medieval timber framed building elsewhere in close proximity. The house that stands today may well have been built as part of a wholesale reorganisation of the farm which included the construction of the adjacent seventeenth century barn

The west elevation is constructed of brick in horizontal and vertical banding with staggered flint panels, brick quoins, and a dentil string course at first floor level. To the eaves there are small cut brick dentil cornicing which is continued up the gable verges (**Figure 15**).

The windows throughout the property have been replaced in the late 20th-21st Century with modern timber frame units. Across the west elevation the windows are a mix of mullion and transom 4 light casement windows in segmental relieving arches (which have been raised to incorporate wider and taller casements- see **Figure 16** where the windows are smaller) and 2 light casements under hood mouldings (**Figure** 17). There appears to be one surviving original single glazed leaded window which can be seen in the wine cellar (**Figure 32**). There is also a 17th century 6 panel door to the left of the centre of the building set within a modern porch (**Figure** 17 **& Figure 25**).

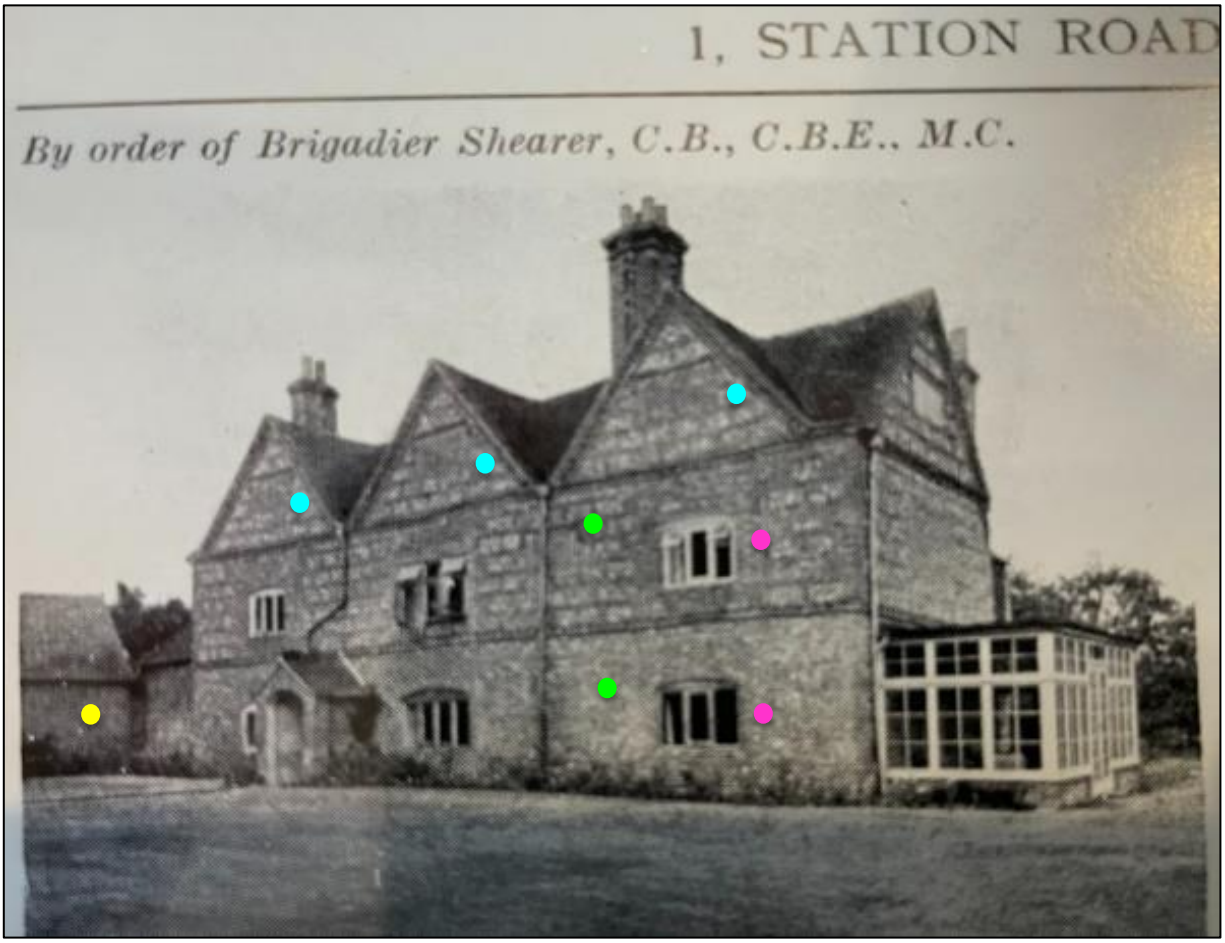

Figure 16: Early 20th Century photograph from Country Life- blocked off windows in the 3 projecting gables now open (highlighted in blue), example of smaller windows in situ at the beginning of the 20th century- these have been replaced with larger, wider units (highlighted in pink), blocked off window on the first floor under a hood moulding but no evidence of a hood moulding on the ground floor- both now open windows (highlighted in green), evidence of former outbuilding (now demolished) which once ran east-west to the north of the principal building and kitchen (highlighted in yellow)

The east elevation has been noted as being 'irregular' in the Historic England listing (see Appendix A). It consists of 3 hipped gables which, as discussed above, are thought to be later 17th century additions to the property; the irregular brick work across the façade (**Figure 19**) and internal roof timbers suggests this (**Figure 51**). The ground floor boiler room and projecting porch are 20th century additions (**Figure 15 & Figure 20**). The timber framed and brick infilled northern section of the east elevation appears to be part of a later refacing contemporaneous with the hipped gable single storey extension to the left of it (**Figure 20**).

The west elevation has a projecting conservatory/garden room on the ground floor (**Figure 22**) and a large blocked off window on the first (**Figure 22**). The rear projection of the west elevation is again, a combination of later alterations. An exposed chimney stack suggests that there was once a fireplace along this wall of the house, however this appears to have been substantially reduced in height and width (**Figure 23**). The variation in brick work also suggests that this part of the house may have been further extended eastwards in the 19th or 20th century (**Figure 23**).

West Elevation

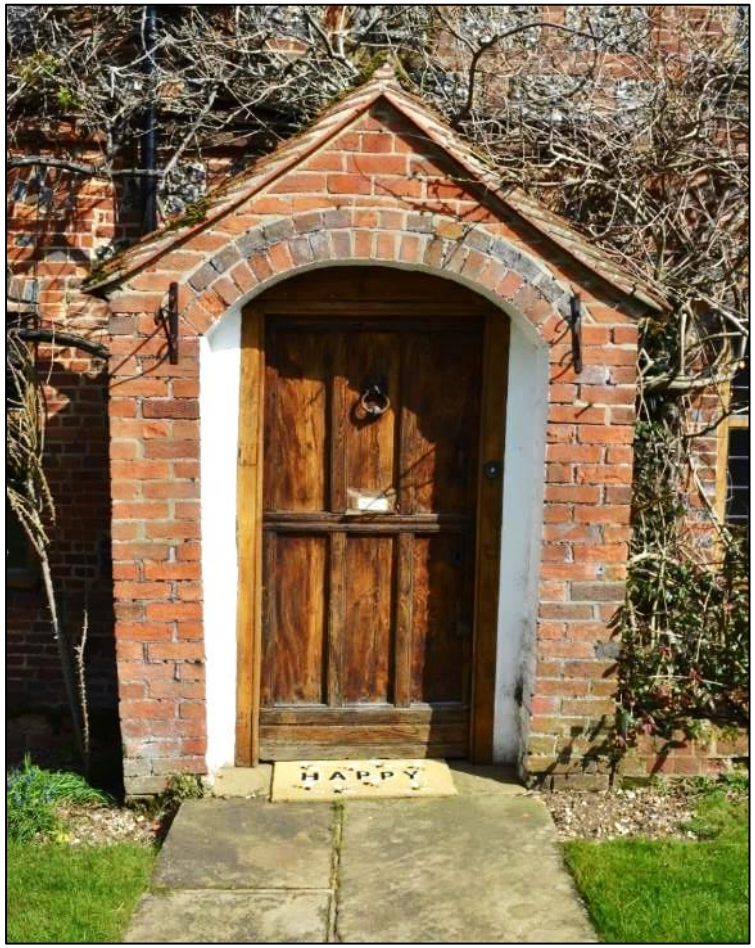

Figure 17: Details of the west elevation- (left) 20th century porch inset with 17th century door, (right) when compared to ***Figure 16*** *the fenestration alterations become clear, the inserted two light casement windows under hood mouldings (highlighted in green), and the 4 light mullion and transom windows which have been increased in size from the early 20th century*

East Elevation

Figure 18: East elevation- (left) view of the 19th century extension , it was once in line with the two adjacent projecting gables but curiously was extended eastwards by a small amount in the Victorian period

Figure 19: Details of east elevation-the variation in brick work along this elevation suggests contemporary alterations- it is clear that the first floor brick work can be divided into three distinct sections (highlighted in green), the central section does not tie into the neighbouring section suggesting a late 20th/21st century alteration/repair-possibly when the windows were altered (highlighted in yellow)

Figure 20: Details of east elevation- (left) 20th century extension now boiler room (highlighted in pink), surviving single glazed leaded window (highlighted in yellow), (centre) details of 20th century porch, (right) evidence of potential location of former doorway (highlighted in blue), exposed timber framing thought to be contemporaneous to the adjacent kitchen extension (highlighted in green)

North Elevation

Figure 21: Details of north elevation- 20th century kitchen extension thought to have replaced a smaller structure previously in that location

South Elevation

Figure 22: Details of south elevation- (left) note the 1930s garden room/conservatory and blocked off window (highlighted in green), (right) note the remains of a chimney stack that would have been wider than it is at present (highlighted in purple), and 'seam' of where the small 19th century extension was added (highlighted in yellow)

Figure 23:Details of south elevation- it is not entirely clear why the building was extended by such a small amount in the 19th century (highlighted in yellow)- however it is likely that the chimney stack would have served a further 'service room' before being part removed.

Old Grove House: Interior

Figure 24: Tudor fireplace in reception hall with moulded timber lintel- note the cupboard to the left (highlighted in pink) and the location of a former door to the right-now blocked (highlighted in green)

Internally, the Historic England listing suggests that the layout has been rearranged. The ground floor consists of three principal rooms to the front (reception room, dining room, & sitting room). The reception room is thought to have been part of original service wing to the house. A large brick lined inglenook with carved timber lintel above is situated on the northern wall- next to which are two cupboards, one of which was originally a doorway has been blocked off to facilitate a cupboard within the kitchen extension on the other side (**Figure 24**). The floor within the reception room is laid in tile which is exhibiting a pattern of salt efflorescence – which in itself is a sign of excessive ground water (**Figure 26**).

Within the adjacent dining room is another large fireplace with depressed brick Tudor arch and timber lintel with two mask brackets above (**Figure 27**). Similar to the reception room, the timber panelling along the walls is exposed. To the right of the fireplace would have potentially been the original lobby entrance to the building, whilst to the right would have potentially been the original staircase- blocked off now (dining room side) by surviving 17th century timber panelling (**Figure 27 & Figure 29**).

The sitting room which adjoins the dining room, also has a smaller brick lined fireplace set within a wall part covered in surviving 17th century timber panelling (**Figure 28**). It is likely that at one point either one of these rooms (or both) were covered in the timber panelling. Where now only parts of it survive within these rooms, interestingly panelling that has been removed has been used elsewhere in the house. The main staircase in the centre of the building utilises parts of this original timber panelling, as does the staircase in the attic (**Figure 34 & Figure 44**).

The family room and bar have exposed timber framing throughout (**Figure 29).** The family room is situated within what is thought to be part of the south-eastern projecting gables 19th century extension. Whilst there is limited evidence of this internally there is a lintel on the wall connected to the bar suggesting a former doorway into what is now the boiler room (**Figure 30**). The wine store adjacent to the boiler room has what appears to be the only surviving original single glazed leaded window (**Figure 32**).

The kitchen is part of the later 20th century extension which appears to have replaced a similar structure in that location- evidenced by the exposed beam that runs just inside the doorway upon entering (**Figure 33**).

As mentioned above, the stairs may be a later insertion and have been lined with parts of the early 17th century panelling from the sitting room (**Figure 34**). On the first floor bedrooms 2,4 and 5 all have exposed fireplaces and timber plank floors under the carpet. Bedroom 2 appears to have a door also made out of decorative wood panelling (**Figure 43**) whilst in bedroom 5 there is no visible evidence of the blocked off window in the plaster work (**Figure 37**). All the rooms, including bedroom 3 have exposed timber framing. The master bedroom, which is adjacent to bedrooms 4 and 5, is located in the south eastern gable that was extended in the late 19th century (**Figure 36**). Curiously the en-suite to the bedroom has 5 leaded coloured stained glass panels which look out onto the central hallway (**Figure 35**).

Two family bathrooms are located along the hallway which interestingly has an arched doorway (**Figure 39**). Parts of the exposed timber frame throughout the house suggest that much of it was re-used from another timber framed building elsewhere evidenced by carpenters marks and plaster notches in unexpected areas (**Figure 41 & Figure 42**).

The attic is accessed by a timber stair, that as discussed earlier, utilises unexpected timber elements such as 17th century panelling and what appears to be part of an agricultural partition (**Figure 44 & Figure 45**). All of the timber roof structure is exposed- with some infilling both historic and modern in certain sections (**Figure 48 & Figure 49**). The historic plaster appears to have been laid upon willow lathes which is interesting to note. There is also evidence of some of the roof timbers having been repaired in the 20th century (**Figure 46**) whilst the floor has been completely covered in 20th century timber boards and mdf.

The most fascinating features of the attic however are the apotropaic burn marks found on the timbers closest to the two chimney breasts (**Figure 47 & Figure 53**). Apotropaic marks are most often inscribed on buildings. The markings are believed to have turned away evil, providing protection to the building and those who lived or worked within it. The evil that was being 'turned away' may have been demons, witches or the then ever present evil eye. These burn marks are commonly misinterpreted as accidental candle burns.

Recent studies have shown that these purposeful markings are to be found all over the timbers of many early houses, and often in places where there is little chance of a candle having been left alone, such as high up in roof timbers, on joists under the floor boards or even on furniture. The very distinctive tear-drop shaped burns have a very specific purpose, that being to protect the dwelling and its occupants from the devastating rages of fire, a very real and destructive threat in times past when building materials were highly flammable and heating, lighting and cooking within the home all had to be achieved with a naked flame. Which would explain why the burn marks found with Old Grove House are all located around the chimney breasts.

Despite the diminished setting created by the surrounding housing development, the in situ structure of Old Grove House retains a high significance. This significance is related to the rarity of its 17th century architectural fabric – in particular through the survival of its lobby plan form and timber framing and as an archaeological asset which is indicative of socio- economic agricultural livelihood. The occupants were clearly wealthy yeoman and as such a potentially integral part of local community life.

Ground Floor -Porch

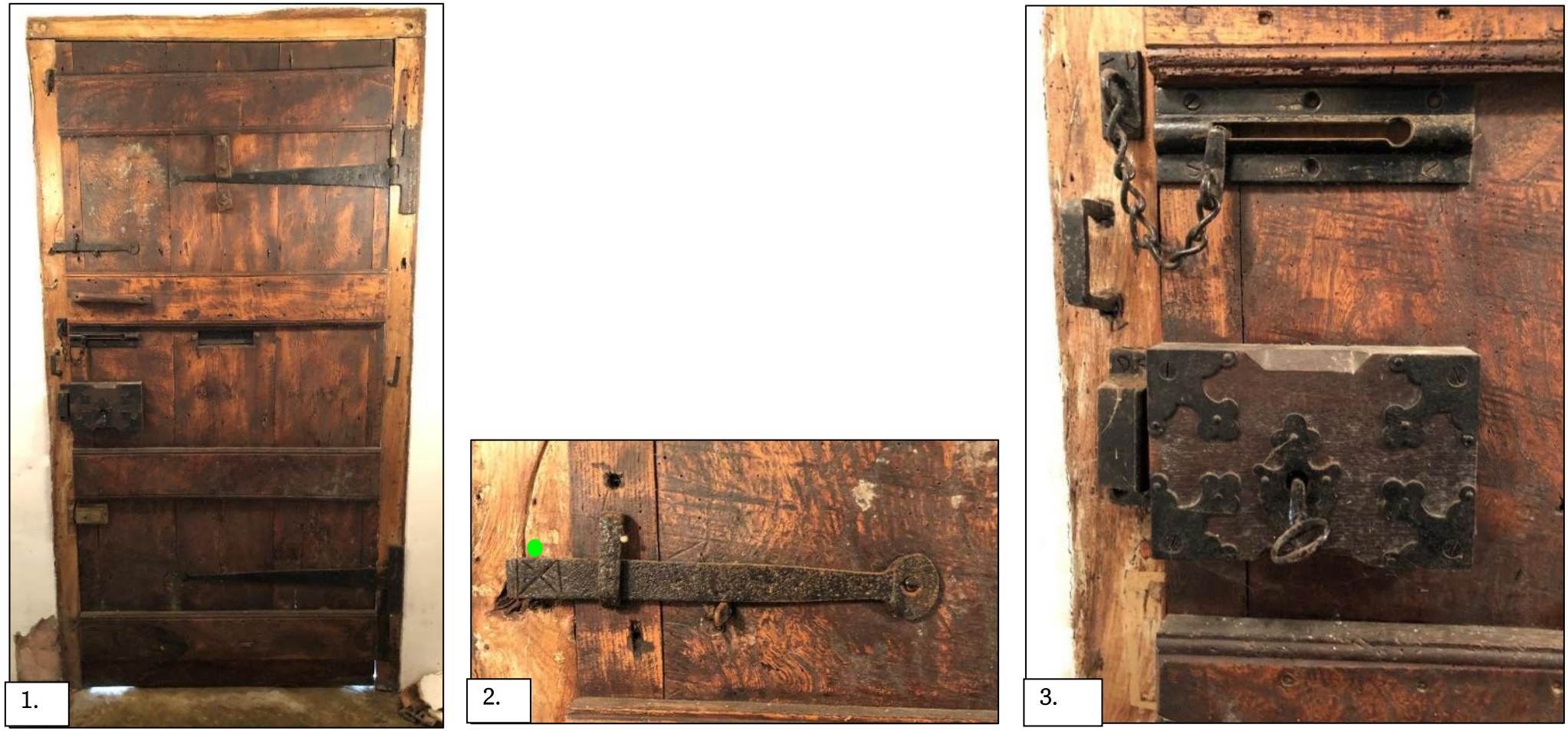

Figure 25:Detail of porch door- 1. 17th century plank timber door, 2. Detail of iron latch on door-interestingly this design with a 'X' is seen throughout the house on other latches, 3. Detail of further ironwork on the door

Ground Floor- Reception Hall

Figure 26:Exposed timber framing and panels are evident throughout the reception room, (right) detail of salt efflorescence – which in itself is a sign of excessive ground water

Ground Floor- Dining Room

Figure 27: Exposed timber framing throughout, (right) remains of 17th century timber panelling (highlighted in pink) and large Tudor depressed brick arch fireplace and moulded mantel with masked brackets (highlighted in yellow)

Ground Floor-Sitting Room

Figure 28:Exposed open timber framing, (right) detail of brick lined fireplace surrounded by the remains of 17th century timber panelling- interestingly parts of this panelling have been re-used elsewhere within the house

Ground Floor- Family Room & Bar

Figure 29: (left) Extended in the 19th century (limit of extension highlighted in yellow), (right) location of former fireplace (highlighted in pink), potential location of original stair when the property was a lobby entrance plan form (highlighted in blue)

Figure 30: Bar located within the family room, blocked off doorway (highlighted in pink) which would have led out to what is now the location of the boiler room

Ground Floor- Wine Cellar

Figure 31: (left) Entrance hall from east doorway, (right) internal view of the wine cellar

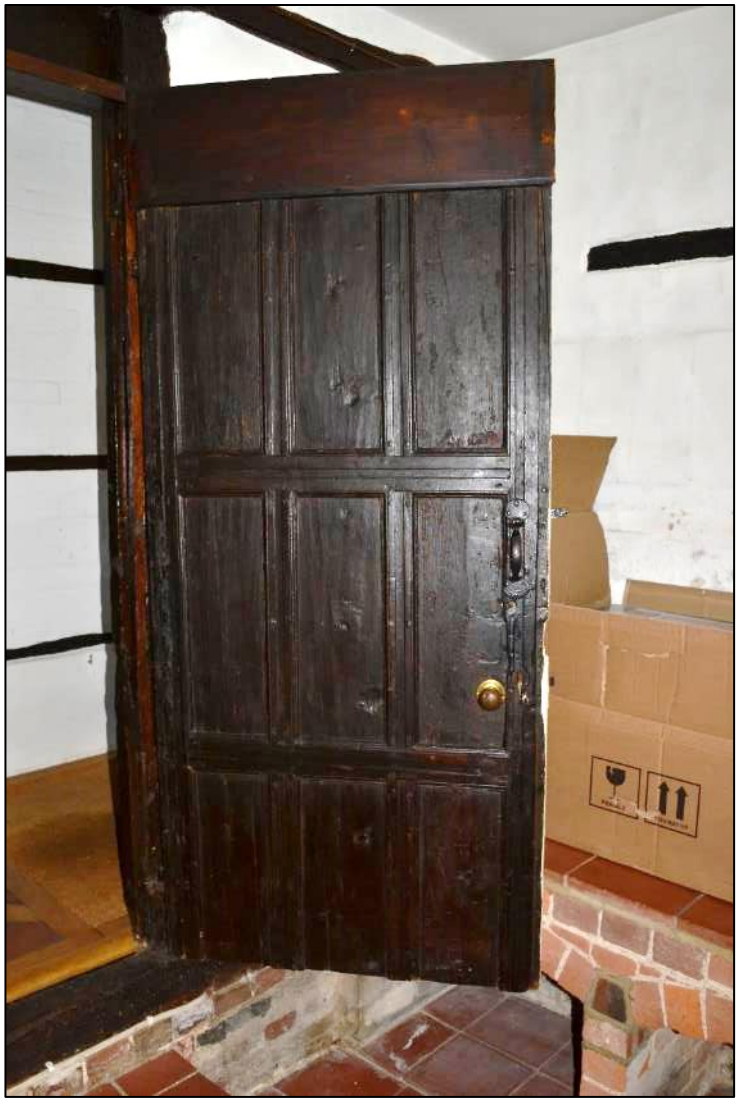

Figure 32: (left) Original timber single glazed leaded window, (right) example of one of the many timber panelled doors within Old Grove House

Ground Floor- Kitchen

Figure 33: (left) View of kitchen from north-western corner of the room, (right) timber panelling and brick infill along wall shared with the reception room

First Floor- Hallway and Stairs

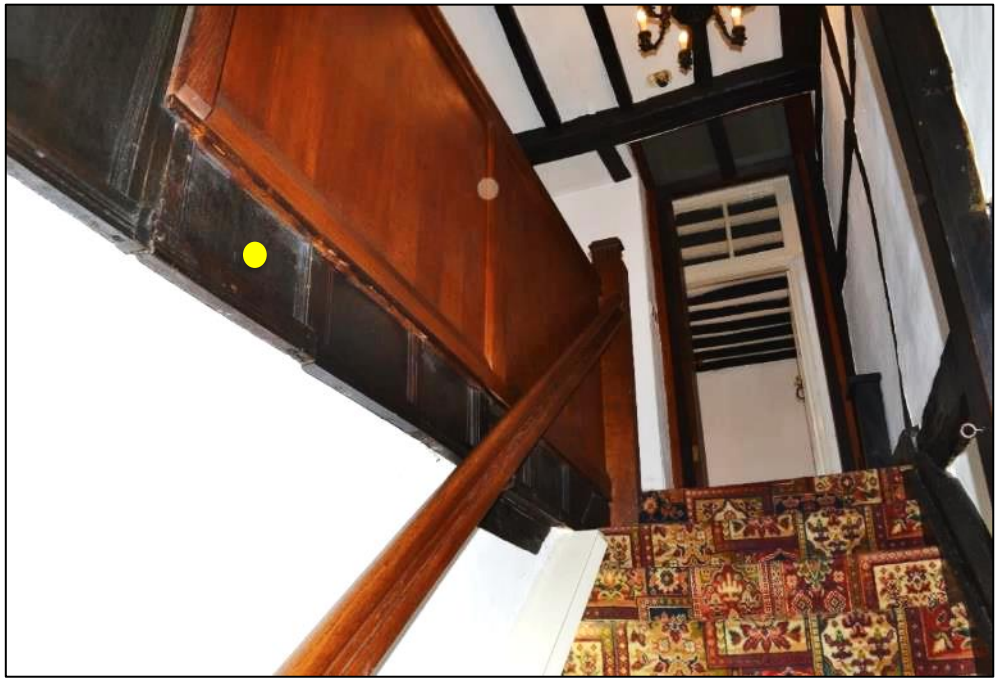

Figure 34: (left) View of hallway leading to the main central staircase which is thought to have potentially replaced an earlier one thought to have been located in the family room, (right) detail of timber wall panelling reused along the staircase as some of the panels are now drawers (highlighted in yellow)

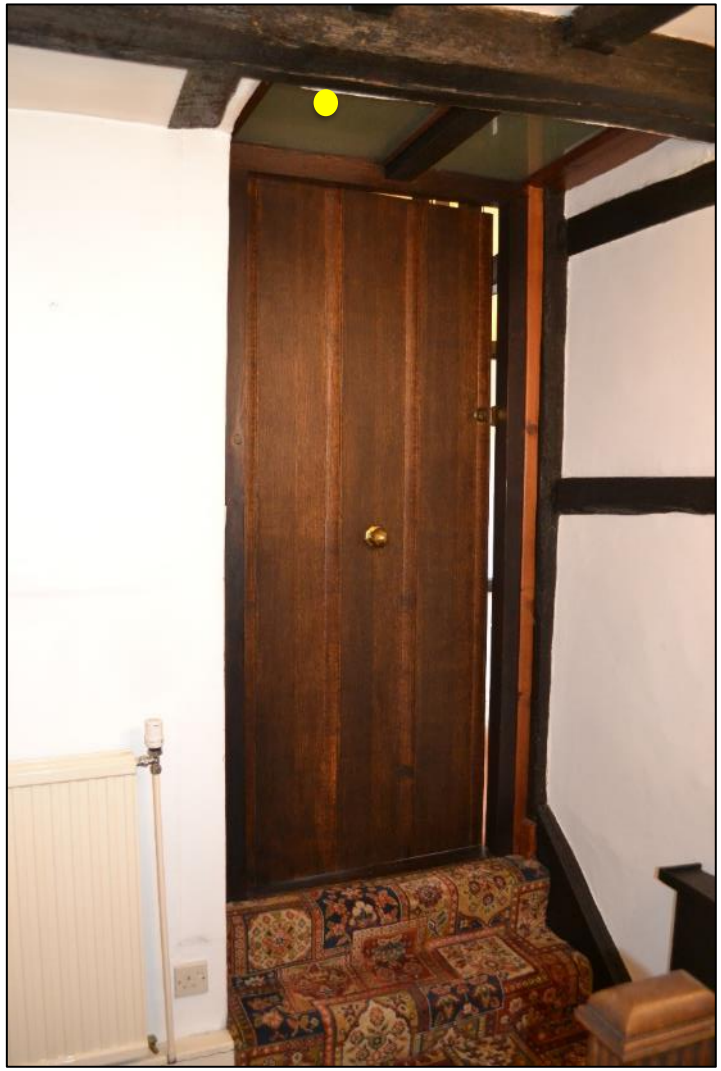

Figure 35: (left) Detail of stained glass windows not thought to be original but an interesting feature along the first floor hallway, (right) 21st century timber door leading into 3 of the 5 bedrooms- note the glazed panels above (highlighted in yellow)

First Floor- Master Bedroom & Ensuite

Figure 36: (left) View of timber framing and panelling- note the glazed panels above the entrance door (highlighted in yellow), (right) view into connected en-suite which shares the stained glass window into the hallway

First Floor- Bedroom 5

Figure 37: (left) Exposed brick lined fireplace, location of where the original stair would have emerged (highlighted in yellow), (right) internal wall of where the blocked off window on the southern elevation is located (highlighted in pink)

First Floor- Bedroom 4

Figure 38: (left) Exposed timber framing and panelling- it is within this room that original timber floorboards were discovered under the carpet, (right) exposed brick lined fireplace and adjacent cupboard

First Floor-Family Bathrooms

Figure 39: (left & centre) The family bathrooms located just off the main hallway, (right) interesting four centre timber arch located at the end of the hallway (highlighted in pink)

First Floor- Bedroom 3 & Ensuite

Figure 40: (left) Exposed timber framing and panelling, (right) en-suite bathroom located above 20th century kitchen extension

First Floor- Bedroom 2 & Ensuite

Figure 41: (left) Exposed timber framing and panelling, (right) example of carpenters marks found on timbers throughout the house

Figure 42: (left) Example of plaster notches found on some of the timber framing throughout the house, (right) brick lined fireplace with timber lintel and adjacent cupboard.

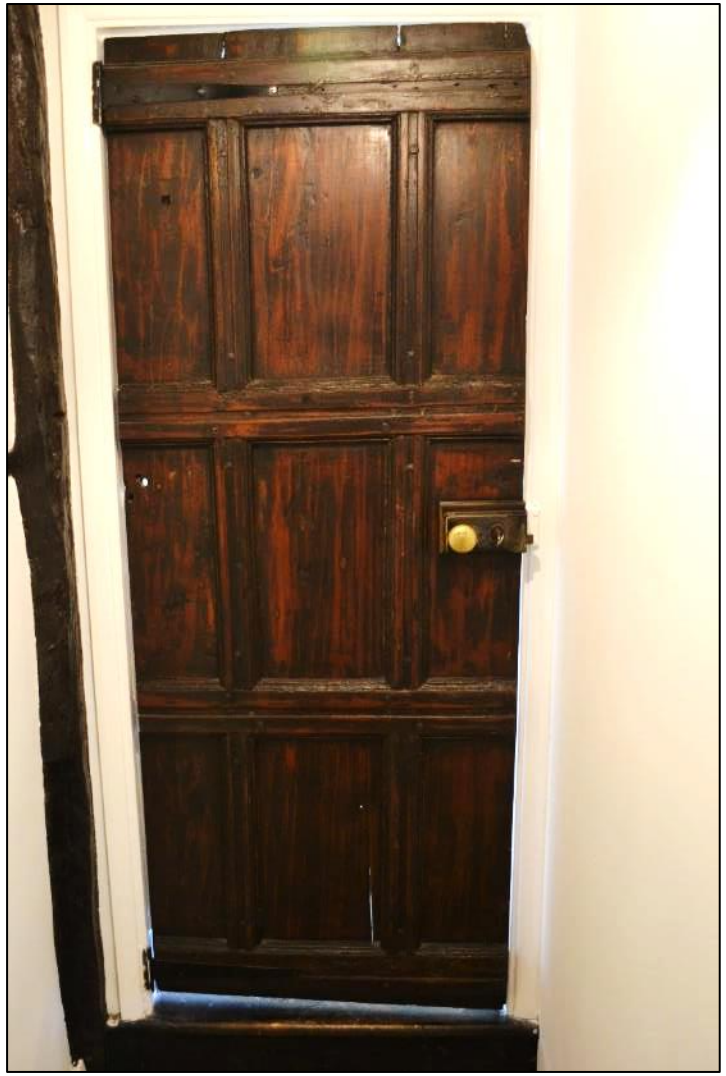

Figure 43: (left) Door separating bedroom 2 from the en-suite- note the door appears to be re-used timber panelling, (right) ensuite bathroom located above 20th century kitchen extension

Attic

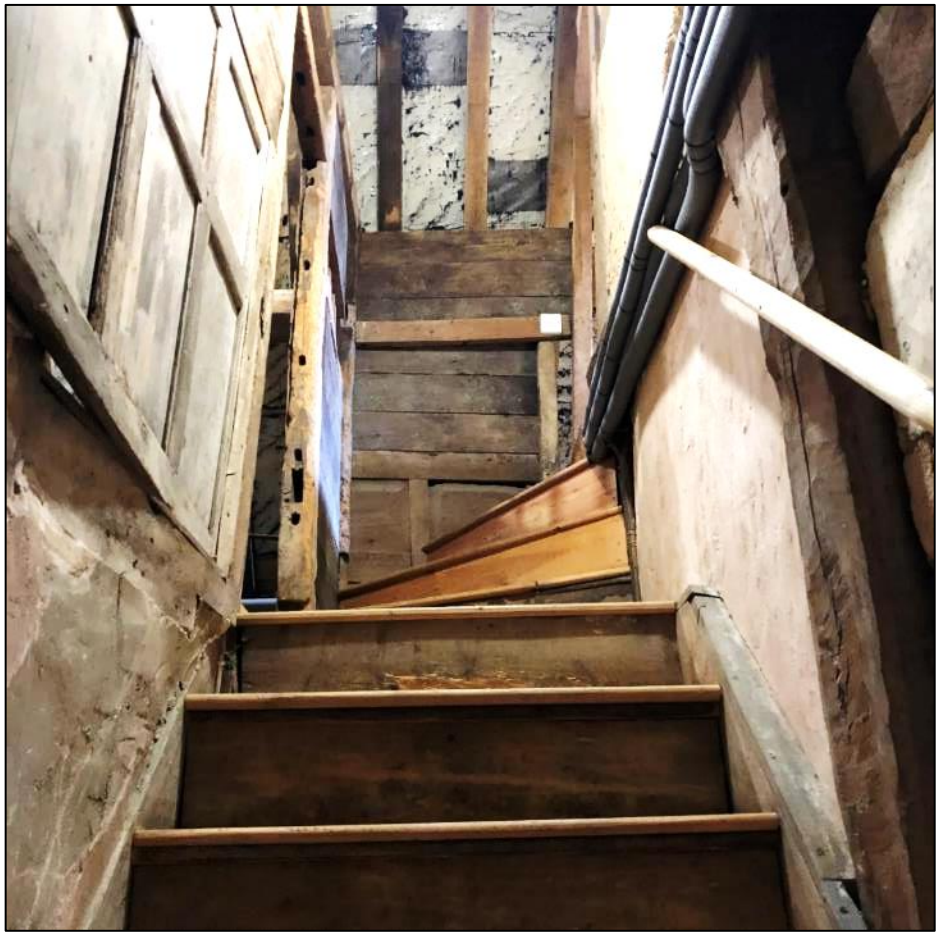

Figure 44: (left) Stairs leading up to attic rooms, (right) example of 17th century timber panelling (similar to that found downstairs in the principal rooms) being used as a partition

Figure 45: (left) Note the different elements- agricultural and formal- that create the timber partition, (right) view of internal roof structure of central gable along the eastern elevation

Figure 46: (left) Internal view of central roof space- note the original plaster infill panels, (right) example of where the roof structure has been repaired and new timbers spliced in

Figure 47: (left) View of timber framing and original infill around the central chimney stack, (right) example of apotropaic burn marks found throughout the attic space

Figure 48: (left) Further examples of historic plaster panels, (right) detail of the lathes thought to be made out of willow upon which the plaster has been applied

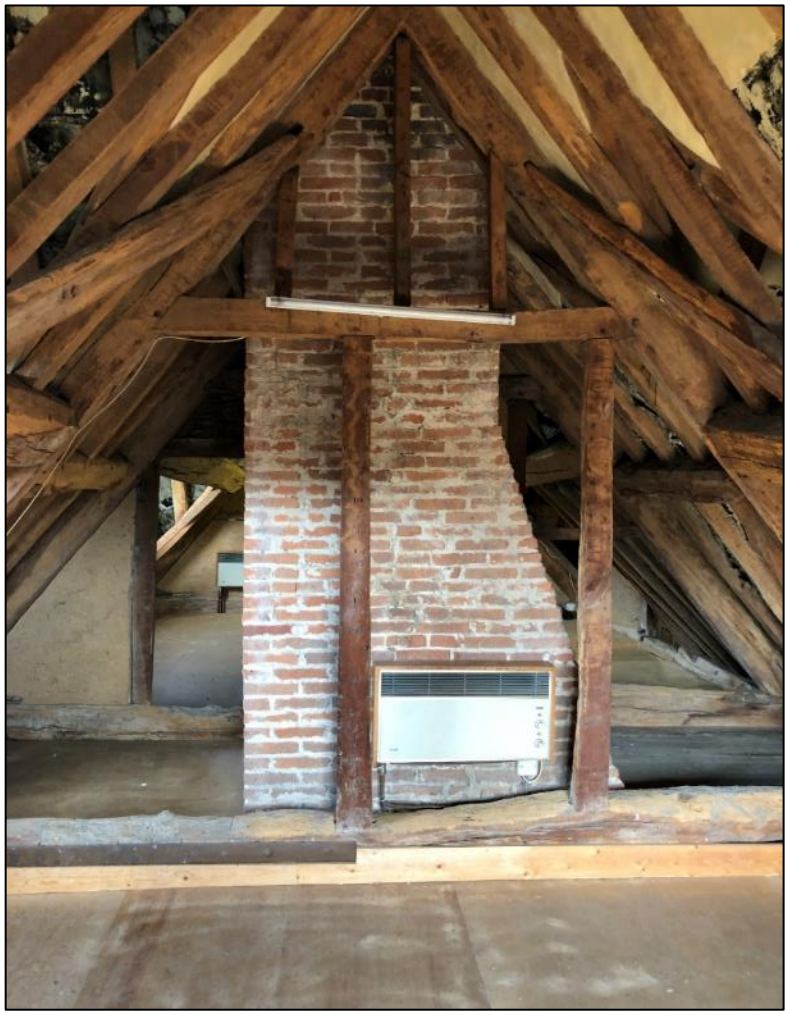

Figure 49: (left) View of internal roof space and central chimney stack, (right) example of modern infill plaster which has been attempted in various locations within the attic

Figure 50: View inside the southernmost gable along the east elevation- note that this has been extended in the 19th century

Figure 51: View inside the internal roof void- note the historic plaster panels and 20th century sarking (highlighted in pink). The details highlighted in blue are evidence to suggest that parts of the timber frame (throughout the entire building-not just the attic) may have been reused from a different building

Figure 52: View of internal attic space, (right) evidence of apotropaic marks (highlighted in blue)

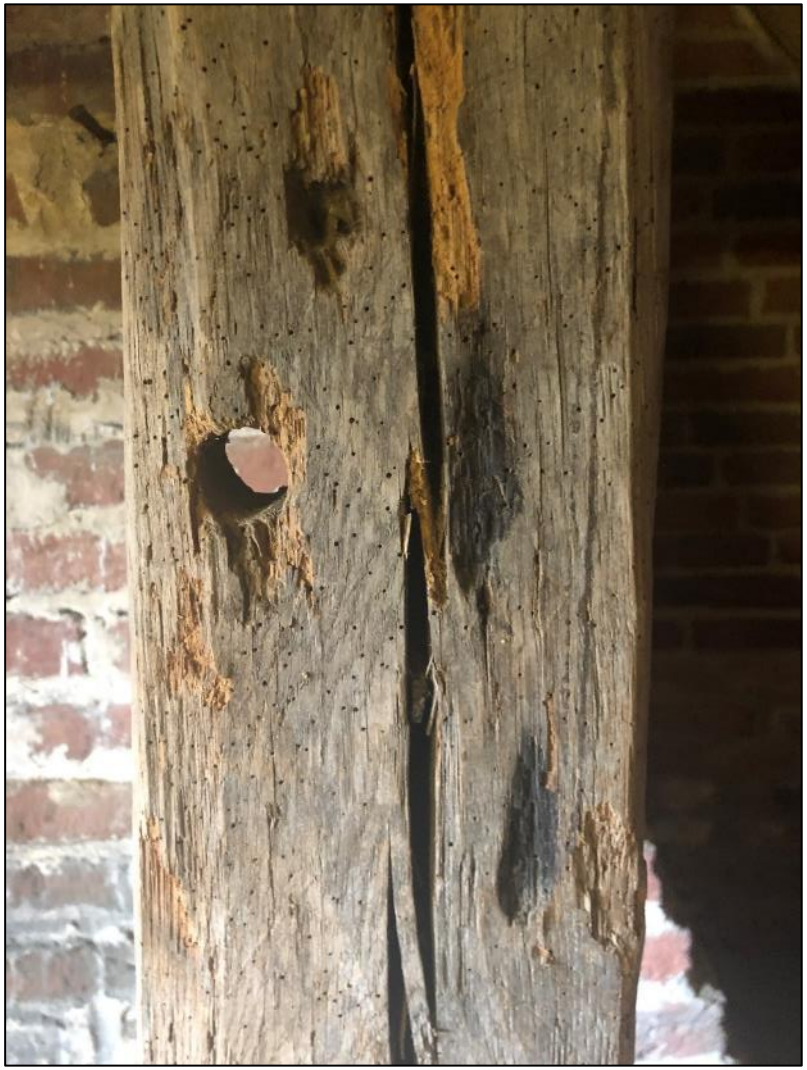

Figure 53: Detail of the apotropaic marks identified above

Wider Context- Gardens and Garage

Figure 54: (left) View looking northwards across the garden which is located to the west of the house, (right) view of northern elevation and driveway- historically an enclosed courtyard (see OS Maps)

Figure 55: (left) View of shared garage- 2 are owned by Old Grove House, (right) view of the 17th century Old Barn historically associated with Old Grove House, now in separate private ownership

Critical Assessment

The assessment of significance is based on the characteristic of heritage values as expressed by Historic England in Conservation Principles (2008 Revised 2017), which defines value as 'an aspect of worth or importance… attached by people to qualities of place'. See Appendix B for criteria.

Heritage Value:	Rating:
Evidential	High

Explanation:
The structure and external fabric (brick, flint, timber framing, lime plaster panels) of the property have intrinsic evidential value as an exceptional example of this type vernacular form of construction which dates from the early 17th century and is typical of the wider Berkshire area.

The 20th century kitchen extension and conservatory/glasshouse have intrinsic evidential value as later phases in the morphological development of the property and its change from an agricultural complex to a more residential property, which is still of significant historicity.

Whilst elements of the original (potential) lobby plan form are still legible, the property has undergone various phases of alteration over the centuries. The evidential value of remaining architectural features remains high however as much of the original fabric has survived.

Heritage Value:	Rating:
Historical	High

Explanation:

Old Grove House has a high historical value as a very fine example of a high-status agricultural yeoman's property dating from the early 17th century .

The form and style of the building reflects the social and economic status of the original owners and their position, standing. High illustrative historic value is derived from the surviving historic fabric such as:

• Externally- traditional means of construction- brickwork/flintwork/timber framing, blind windows, hood mouldings, clay roof, and decorative architectural features such as the corbelling under the eaves

• Internally- decorative features such as the moulded fireplaces, solid wood floors, solid timber doors of various designs and former uses dating predominantly dating from the 17th - early 19th centuries, timber wall panelling, and the apotropaic marks in the attic

Heritage Value:	Rating:
Aesthetic	High

Explanation:

Its aesthetic significance lies in the collective survival of its high value architectural detailing. The principal west façade is of particular note due to the craftsmanship and traditional means of construction.

The remaining facades, whilst not as decorative, demonstrate different phases of building and social taste throughout the subsequent centuries.

This is complimented internally by several principal modest rooms with fireplaces, exposed timber framing and panelling, and doors of various forms and designs dating predominantly from the 17th -19th century.

Notwithstanding the surviving structural 17th century elements such as the timber structure- particularly the roof timbers. Unfortunately, the loss of original windows does impact the overall aesthetic value of the house.

The kitchen extension is sensitive and mimics the character of the principal house whilst the conservatory, a later element, is clearly of its time and is not considered to adversely impact the overall aesthetic value of the property.

Heritage Value:	Rating:
Communal	Negligible-Low

Explanation:
Since the building was constructed it is assumed, due to lack of documentary evidence, that it has predominantly been in private occupancy as an agricultural based residence.

Communal significance may be drawn from the contribution the building makes to the composition of the wider Caversham area as a whole, forming an illustrative history from where the local population can draw a sense of history and understanding.

Summary of Significance

The **evidential, historical, and aesthetic value** of Old Grove House is considered to be **high**. The significance of the building is related to its status, plan form, and exceptional surviving architectural detailing. The private nature of the property has resulted in its **communal value** being defined as negligible.

Impact Assessment

A condition survey was undertaken by Janus Conservation on the 25th January 2022. In the report the condition of the internal floors were assessed. On the ground floor a solid floor construction was discovered -'a mixture of concrete to the kitchen block and family room/bar and tiles laid directly onto the earth in the front reception room…and a suspended timber floor within the dining room and sitting room'

No evidence of defects to the concrete floor were discovered however the following was noted:

> '…retrospectively installed concrete floors have a very low permeability coefficient and are at odds with the technology employed by traditionally constructed buildings as a response to water. They effectively push groundwater to the side - and as any damp proof membrane installed beneath the floor cannot be chased into solid walls – up the base of the wall.
>
> High moisture meter readings associated with this phenomenon were indeed detected, but perhaps more worryingly and certainly of higher risk, high moisture meter readings were detected to the base of the historic timber posts relating to the original phase of construction - which can precipitate decay.'

Furthermore, within the reception hall evidence of efflorescence- a sign of excessive ground water- was found which in turn has begun to warp the historic tiles (**Figure 26**).

The overall recommendation from the report, to mitigate the high levels of damp across the ground floor, was the removal of the concrete floor and its replacement with a floor system based on an insulative lightweight aggregate and limecrete floor with incorporated under floor heating.

A new air dam was also recommended externally as the report noted that the ground levels were considerably higher than they were originally (**Figure 15**). The report stated:

> '…there is evidence that this has historically caused an issue with damp as a large air dam has been constructed to the front of the property which is generally done so to alleviate this issue.
>
> There is evidence though that penetrating damp caused by high external ground levels continues to be an issue.'

As such, the proposals internally are as follows:

- **Kitchen**- Carefully lift existing clay tiles for insertion of insulated limecrete floor. Re-lay a natural stone tile
- **Living Room-** Carefully number and lift existing clay tiles for insertion of insulated limecrete floor. Re-lay salvaged clay tiles
- **Dining Room & Living Room**- Carefully number and lift existing floorboards for insertion of insulated limecrete floor. Re-lay salvaged floor boards
- **Living Room and Bar Area-** Carefully lift existing clay tiles for insertion of insulated limecrete floor. Re-lay a natural stone tile
- **Wine Cellar-**Carefully number and lift existing clay tiles for insertion of insulated limecrete floor. Re-lay salvaged clay tiles.
- **Hall-** Carefully lift existing clay tiles for insertion of insulated limecrete floor. Re-lay a natural stone tile

The justification for the internal ground floor works is to help mitigate the high levels of damp as assessed and noted in the Condition Survey. The current cement flooring is actively contributing to this damp and without appropriate intervention could precipitate decay along the base of the historic fabric timber posts- the main structure of the building.

An insulated limecrete floor is considered to be the most appropriate option as it is not only sustainable, but also semi-permeable which will help actively restore an optimum internal environment. The retention and relaying of the salvaged clay tiles and timber floors will ensure that, where possible, historic fabric will be preserved. Where new tiles are proposed these will be a natural stone and in keeping with the traditional means of construction of the property (**Figure 59**).

Externally it is proposed to carefully excavate around the east and south of the house (part of the existing air dam) to allow a new air dam to be inserted as shown on Drawing A18 (**Figure 58**).

The justification for the air dam is, as above, to mitigate the high levels of damp currently recorded at the property- particularly in the oldest parts of the structure. Along the southern elevation this new air dam will go along the existing trench currently in place- a new air dam will also run along the eastern elevation. The works are considered to necessary to ensure the longevity of the building and its historic fabric (**Figure 57**).

No archaeological finds have been discovered within the immediate vicinity and curtilage of Old Grove House, however given the history of the wider context there is potential- albeit low- for possible below ground archaeology which should be considered.

Finally, it is also proposed to carefully break out the wall beneath an existing timber lintel to allow for installation of new door between the living room and technical room in the north of the house. The door is proposed to be of a secret bookshelf design (**Figure 57**). The proposals are considered to not only restore part of the historic plan form by re-opening the former doorway but it will be in a sophisticated 21st century way in keeping with the 'secret opening' features seen elsewhere within the house (**Figure 34**).

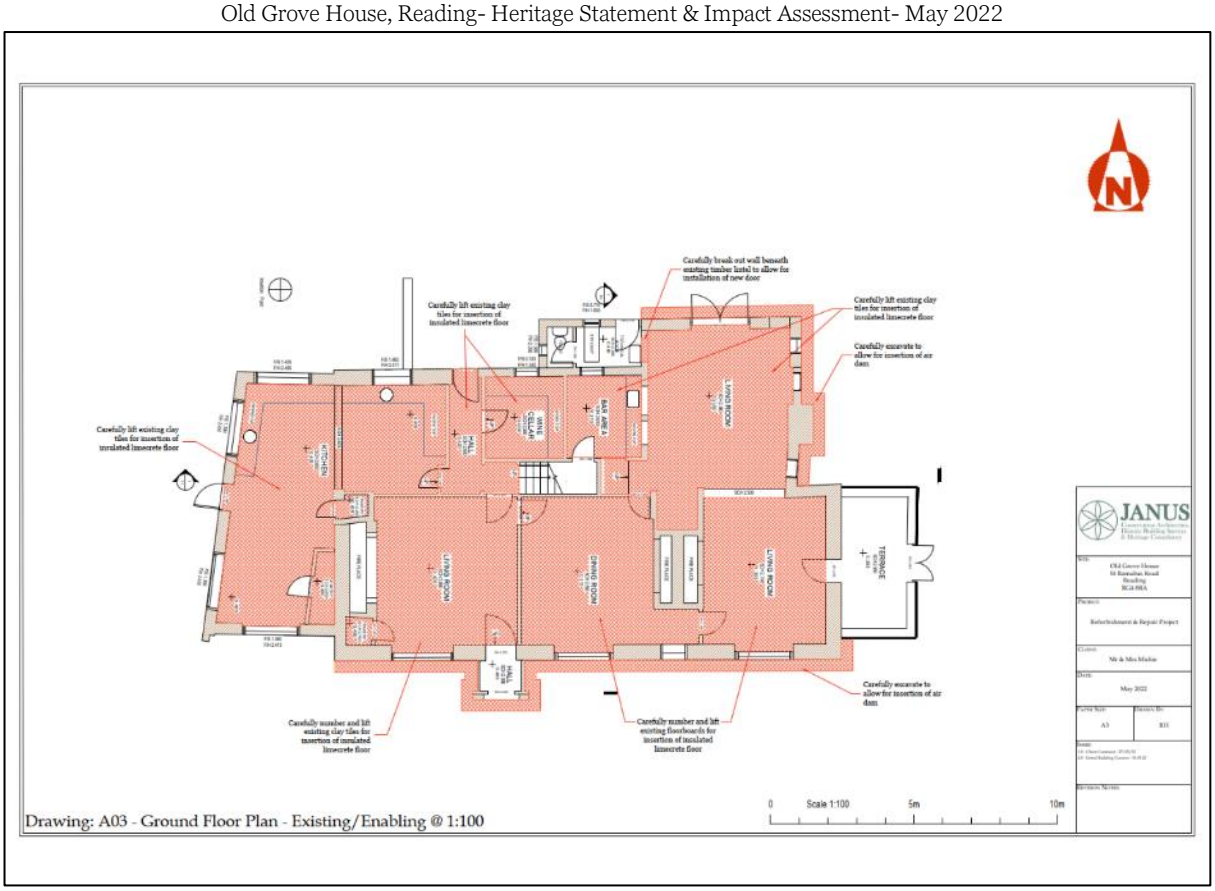

Figure 56: Existing ground floor

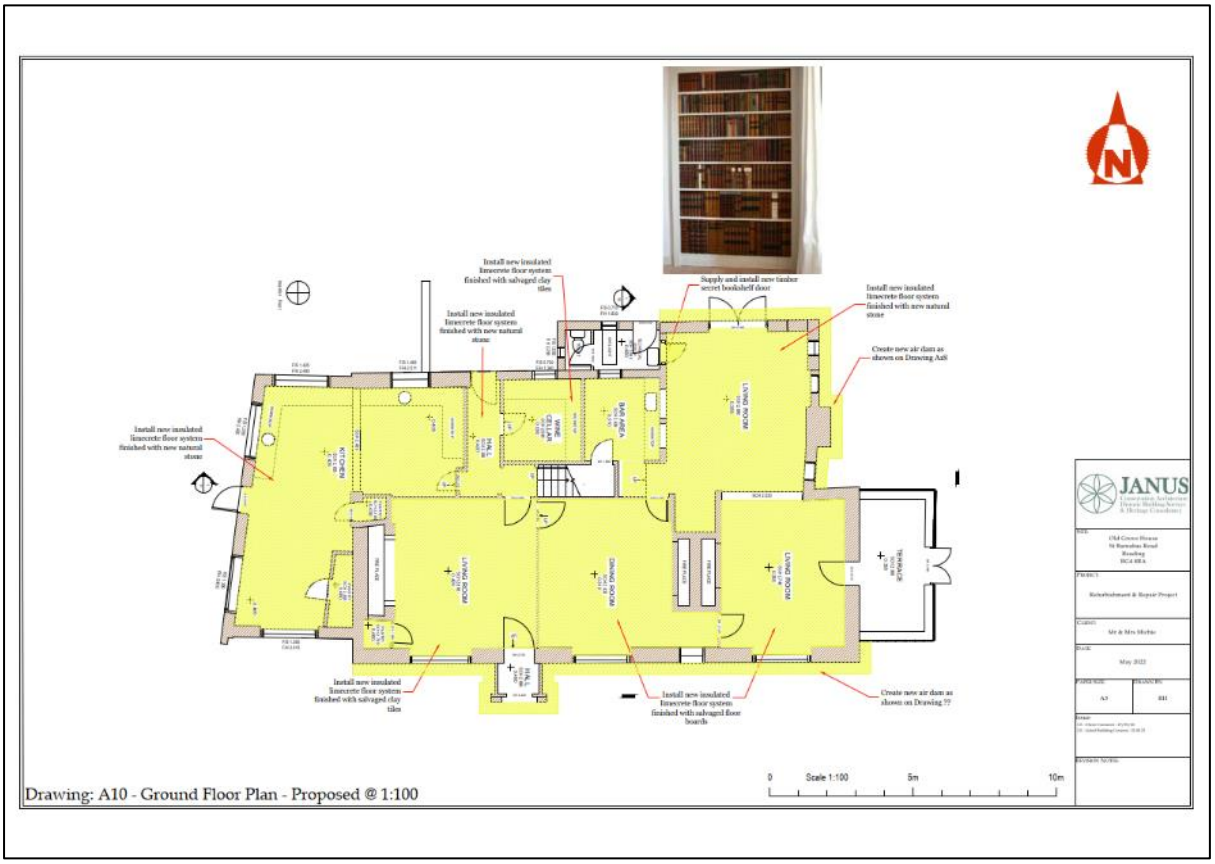

Figure 57: Proposed ground floor

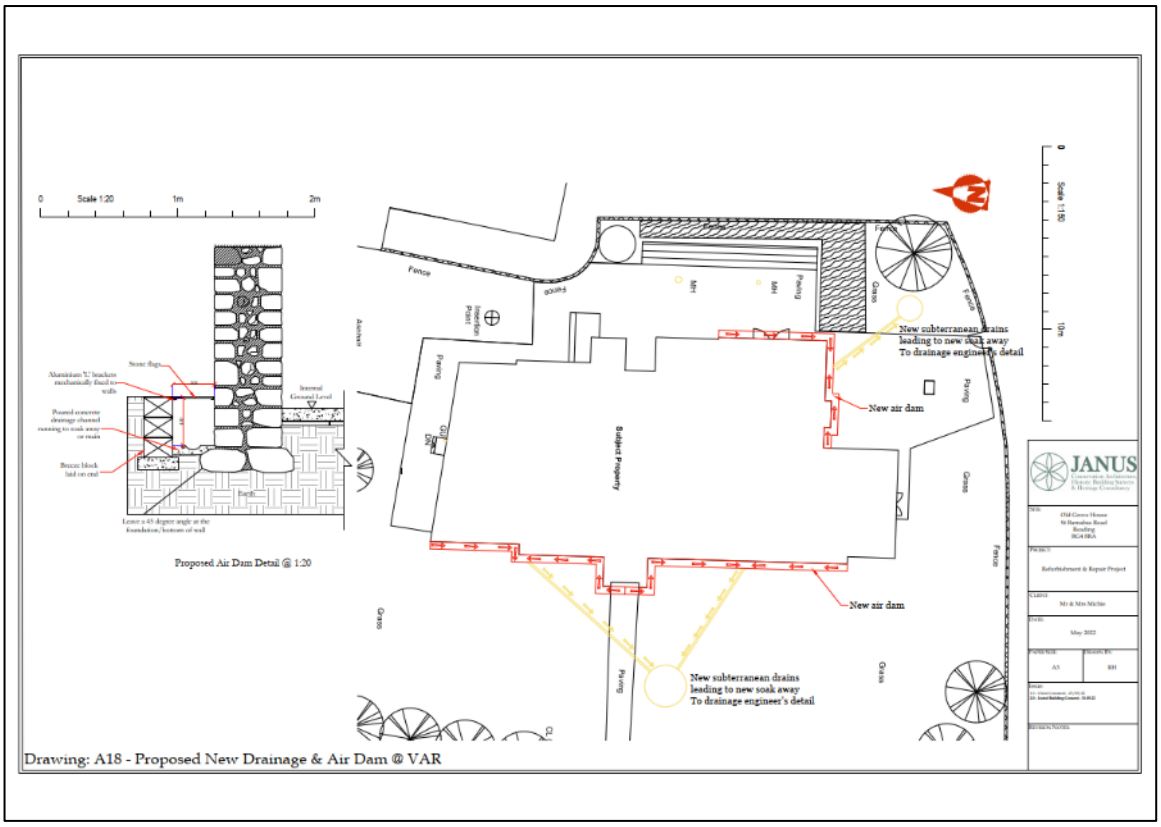

Figure 58: Proposed drainage and detail

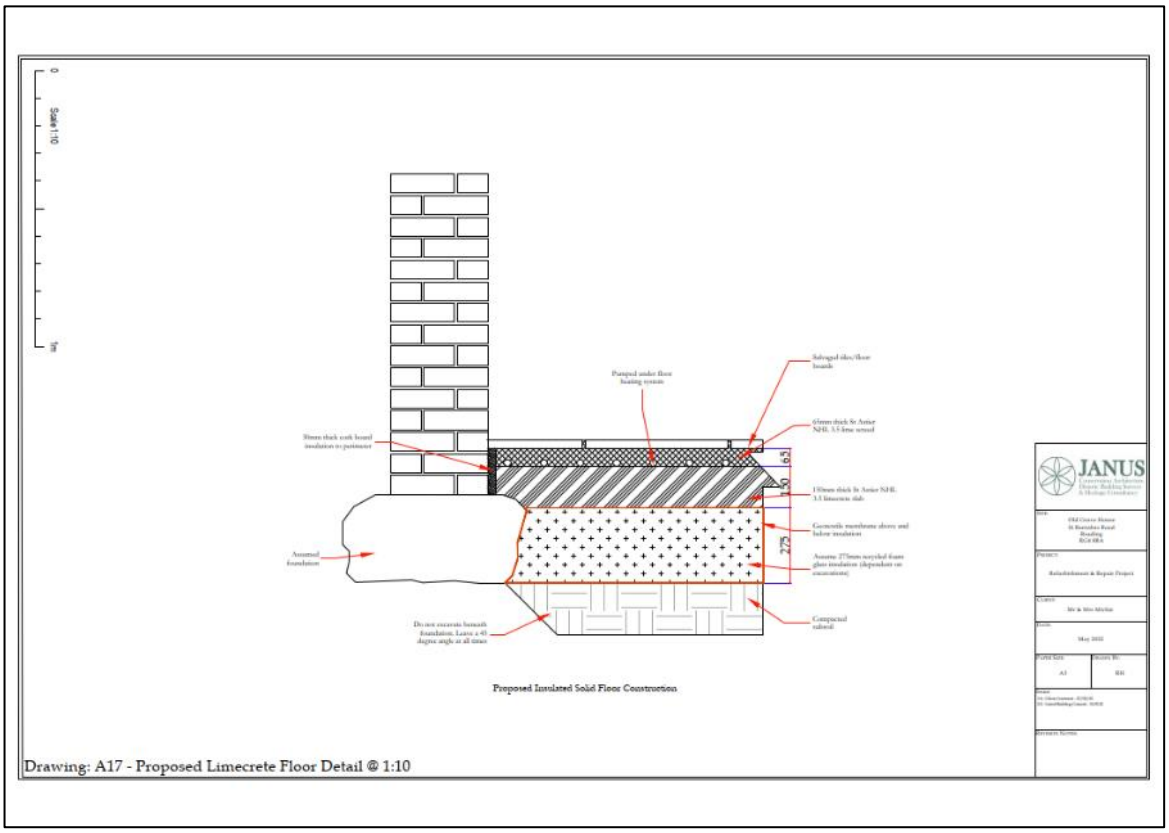

Figure 59: Proposed limecrete floor detail

Impact Table

This impact assessment deals with the impact of proposed change across the site on the heritage value of Old Grove House and its wider historical context in both direct and indirect terms. Both adverse and beneficial impacts are assessed.

The impact assessment adopts ICOMOS assessment criteria to provide a logical assessment of the proposed changes to help inform the planning decision.

See Appendix C for further details and criteria.

Proposed Works and Area of Impact	Heritage Value	Level of Change	Overall Impact
Removal of concrete floor, installation of insulated limecrete (with under floor heating), relaying on salvaged historic floor materials, and proposed new stone tiles where appropriate	Aesthetic- High Historic- High Evidential- High Communal- Negligible/Low	Minor Change	**Slight Beneficial Impact**- The removal of the concrete floor is necessary to address the damp issue currently being exacerbated by the inappropriate material and to ensure the longevity of the historic fabric. The semi-permeable limecrete floor is in keeping with the traditional means of construction, as well as being sustainable. Where appropriate- historic floor coverings will be retained and re-laid. The works are considered to not only enhance the significance of the building by improving its overall breathability, but also sustain the significance through the re-use of historic materials.
Insertion of new air dam along south and eastern elevations	Aesthetic- High Historic- High Evidential- High Communal- Negligible/Low	Minor Change	**Slight Beneficial Impact-** The new air dam is, in part, proposed along the existing trench of the south and east elevations. As above, the air dam is considered necessary to mitigate the current damp issues. The impact on the overall significance of the building is considered to be slight beneficial as the proposals will help restore the natural balance and environment within the building. No archaeological finds have been discovered within the immediate vicinity and curtilage of Old Grove House, however given the history of the wider context there is potential- albeit very low- for possible below ground archaeology on site. The impact (if any) is at present unknown until work begins- however it is considered that the impact on possible archaeological finds would be outweighed by the overall benefits to the building and site.

Reopening of former doorway with proposed 21st century 'secret bookshelf' door	Aesthetic- High Historic- High Evidential- High Communal- Negligible/Low	Minor Change	**Slight Beneficial Impact-** The proposed door is within a currently sealed former opening- evidenced only by the existence of a timber lintel. The opening will restore part of the historic plan form whilst the design of the door will introduce a stylish 21st century feature in keeping with the 'secret openings' seen elsewhere in the property.

Conclusion

Through the process of impact-assessment, we have found that the proposals would have all a **slight beneficial impact** on the significance of the designated heritage asset. In regard to para 197 of the NPPF it is considered that the proposals would sustain and enhance the significance of the building.

In regards to Local Plan Policies the proposals would be in line with the following (see Appendix D for further details):

- *EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT*
- *EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT*

Appendix A: Historic England List Descriptions

OLD GROVE
HOUSE, Non Civil Pa

Appendix B: Significance Assessment Criteria

Historic England in Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008 revised 2017) identify four principal heritage values:

Value	Description
Evidential	Deriving from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.
Historical	Deriving from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.
Aesthetic	Deriving from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
Communal	Deriving from the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience and memory.

The National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF, Updated 2021) suggests that for planning purposes, the significance of heritage assets should be assessed under the headings of archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic which are essentially the same as the Historic England values. The NPPF also points out that significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting, being the surroundings in which it is experienced.

Assessing the significance of heritage assets is to a great extent based on knowledge of the asset type, a comparison with what exists elsewhere, and the extent to which it may be distinctive or have special meaning for different groups of people. The incorporation of a values-based benchmark within the assessment helps to ensure a consistency of approach when determining significance in the context of managing change to significant places.

Value / Criteria	Description
Very High Building/site/area of international significance.	Sites, buildings, monuments, or landscapes of international significance and listed on the World Heritage Site List, or other sites, buildings, monuments, or landscapes of comparable quality.
High Building/site/area of national significance.	Listed Buildings Grade I, Grade II*, Conservation Areas (containing very important buildings) Scheduled Monuments, non-designated sites or assets of comparable quality, Registered battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens Grade I and Grade II*. An aspect (e.g., structure or feature) that strongly contributes to significance.
Medium Building/site/area of national significance.	Listed Buildings Grade II, Conservation Areas, Historic Townscapes, Registered Parks and Gardens Grade II. An aspect (e.g., structure or feature) that makes a moderate contribution to significance.
Low Buildings/sites/areas of regional / local significance.	Buildings and areas of local interest, sites and archaeological remains which are not of national importance, historic landscapes of regional/county importance. An aspect (e.g., structure or feature) that makes a lesser contribution to significance.
Negligible Buildings /Sites / Areas of little or no significance.	Buildings/sites/areas of little or no significance. An aspect (e.g., structure or feature) that has little or no value and therefore does not impact significance, either positively or negatively.
Negative	An aspect (structure or feature) that detracts from the significance of the building.

Appendix C: Impact Assessment Criteria

Changes that may affect these heritage assets (both negatively and positively) as a result of development include:

• Alterations to the external appearance of the property
• Internal alterations to the property

To fully understand the effect of the impact of the proposed changes on the heritage value of the properties, we have used criteria based on that recommended by ICOMOS. This defines:

Level of Change proposed
Effect of Overall Impact

This latter is in the form of a matrix setting the "Level of Change" against "Heritage Value" to determine the subsequent "Effect of Overall Impact", which ranges from "Neutral" to "Very Large", and on a scale of beneficial or adverse.

The table below clarifies what is meant by 'Level of Change' and is adapted from guidance set out by ICOMOS.

Level of Change	Description
Major Change	Substantial visual or physical change (i.e. loss of historic fabric) to the form, appearance or context of a heritage asset
Moderate Change	Significant visual or physical change (i.e. loss of historic fabric) to the form, appearance or context of a heritage asset.
Minor Change	Some visual or physical change (i.e. loss of historic fabric) to the form, appearance or context of a heritage asset.
Negligible Change	Negligible visual or physical change to the form, appearance or context of a heritage asset.
No Change	No change to the visual or physical elements of the heritage asset

By establishing the heritage value (significance) of a heritage asset and the Level of Change as a result of proposed development; the two can be combined to reach an overall impact.

Heritage Value + Level of Change = Overall Impact
(Significance)

Effect of Overall Impact (Adverse or Beneficial)					
Significance/ Heritage Value	Level of Change				
	No Change	Negligible Change	Minor Change	Moderate Change	Major Change
Very High Value	Neutral Impact	Slight Impact	Moderate/Large Impact	Large/Very Large Impact	Very Large Impact
High Value	Neutral Impact	Slight Impact	Moderate/Slight Impact	Moderate/Large Impact	Large/Very Large Impact
Medium Value	Neutral Impact	Neutral/Slight Impact	Slight Impact	Moderate Impact	Moderate/Large Impact
Low Value	Neutral Impact	Neutral/Slight Impact	Neutral/ Slight Impact	Slight Impact	Slight/Moderate Impact
Negligible Value	Neutral Impact	Neutral Impact	Neutral/Slight Impact	Neutral/Slight Impact	Slight Impact

Appendix D: Local and National Relevant Planning Policies & Legislation

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990) ("the Act") contains legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas. The Act sets out the legislative framework within which development affecting listed buildings and conservation areas must be considered by local planning authorities, upon which it imposes a general duty in the exercise of planning functions. Sections 16(2) and 66(1) direct the local planning authority when considering whether to grant consent for any works or development to a listed building or its setting to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 72(1) imposes the same duty in respect of a conservation area and directs that special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF), the Historic England 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' and the Historic England Good Practice Advice documents (advice notes 2 and 3) are relevant to the content of this report and the consideration of any application. The government objective is that heritage assets (which includes listed buildings and their settings) should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'. This states 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 existing and future generations.

Paragraph 194 states that when determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant 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 proposal on that significance.

Paragraph 195 identifies that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 197 sets out that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to 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 makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 201 states that where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide (English Heritage, 2010)

Although the NPPF superseded Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5) as Government Policy, the policies in the NPPF are very similar and the

intent is the same, so the Practice Guide remains almost entirely relevant and useful in the application of the NPPF.

Paragraph 58 of the Practice Guide and the Historic England Good Practice Notes 2 and 3 advocate the methods of investigating the significance of a heritage asset. In particular it advocates that three steps should be carried out when preparing an assessment including:

- Check the development plan, main local and national records including the relevant Historic Environment Record, statutory and local lists, the Heritage Gateway, the NMR, and other relevant statutory sources of information that would provide an understanding of the history of the place and the value the asset holds for society.
- Examine the asset and its setting.
- Consider whether the nature of the affected significance requires an expert assessment to gain the necessary level of understanding.

A number of other steps are suggested as appropriate, subject to the nature of the asset and the proposed works.

In the case of this application the records which have been investigated include:

- The Heritage Gateway.
- The planning records and planning policy Documents held by Westminster Council
- Historic England Website

Historic England Good Practice Advice Notes and Guidance Notes

Advice Note 2 titled 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' and Advice Note 3 titled 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' are relevant to the consideration of this application.

Advice Note 2 highlights that there are 4 types of Conservation Principles that an asset may hold, which are aesthetic, communal, historic, and evidential value. The Assessment of Significance at Section 5.0 identifies the value attached to the setting and significance of the surrounding heritage assets.

Advice Note 3 in relation to the impact of development on the setting of listed buildings, highlights the steps which should be taken when assessing the significance of heritage assets. The curtilage, character and context of a heritage asset must be taken into consideration during assessment. This has been carefully considered as part of the assessment provided.

Reading Local Plan Adopted November 2019

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. This will include:

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Scheduled Monuments;
- Historic parks and gardens; and
- Other features with local or national significance, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and assets on the Local List.

All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.

Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those

elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings.

Applications which affect Historic Parks and Gardens will safeguard features which form an integral part of the special character or appearance of the park or garden. Development will not detract from the enjoyment, layout, design, character, appearance, features or setting of the park or garden, key views out from the park, or prejudice its future restoration.

Applications which affect, or have the potential to affect, the significant features of heritage assets should be justified by a Heritage Statement.

The Council will monitor buildings and other heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, proactively seeking solutions for assets at risk including consideration of appropriate development schemes that will ensure the repair and maintenance of the asset, and, as a last resort, using its statutory powers.

Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect or of damage to a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas. These may include:

- Reducing visual clutter caused by negative factors, such as poles and overhead wires, satellite dishes or unnecessary street furniture;
- Restoring original building features;
- Removing inappropriate additions or alterations to buildings;
- Protecting and encouraging the maintenance of green spaces and important trees,
- particularly where they are intrinsic to the history and character of the area;
- Improving signage and street furniture;
- Restoring or re-establishing appropriate paving, railings or walls;
- Sympathetic landscaping and planting;
- Improving or restoring green spaces, including front gardens, that are appropriate to the historic interest of a Conservation Area;
- Signage that reveals and promotes the Conservation Area and its boundaries;
- Interpretation panels to inform the public of the area's historical significance.

Where a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been adopted for a particular Conservation Area, this will be a material consideration in determining applications for development.

EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

In areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development. New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. When determining planning applications for new development, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

a. The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and views, and open space);
b. Sensitivity to historic context;
c. Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g. patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing);

d. Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance.

Appendix E: Planning History

The planning history for Old Grove House is limited online. When searching under the properties address only one entry appears (see below). A more in depth planning search has been requested as applications online only go up to 1988.

Planning Application Number:	041077
Site Address:	Old Grove House St Barnabas Road Emmer Green Reading RG4 8RA
Description:	To fit solar panels to conservatory roof
Case Officer and Phone No:	
Date Received:	27 September 2004
Date Valid:	27 September 2004
Decision Level/Committee:	N/A
Decision Type:	
Application Status:	Determination Made
Applicant Name & Address:	Mr And Mrs Jansen St Barnabas Road Emmer Green Reading RG4 8RA
Agent Name & Address:	Simplee Solar 50 Azura Close Woolsbridge Ind. Estate Wimborne BH21 6SZ
Agent Phone No:	01202 828264
Decision Date:	27 January 2005
Sent Date:	27 January 2005

Appendix F: Table of Figures

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