

LAND ADJACENT TO
43 UPPER REDLANDS ROAD,
READING

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

PREPARED BY PEGASUS GROUP
ON BEHALF OF HURST GROVE ESTATES

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DESIGN | **ENVIRONMENT** | **PLANNING** | **ECONOMICS** | **HERITAGE**

BUILT HERITAGE STATEMENT

LAND ADJACENT TO 43 UPPER REDLANDS ROAD, READING

ON BEHALF OF: HURST GROVE ESTATES

Prepared by: A Robinson MRTPI, IHBC

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Pegasus Group have been commissioned by Hurst Grove Estates to prepare a Heritage Assessment to consider the proposed construction of a new detached dwelling at land adjacent to 43 Upper Redlands Road, Reading as shown on the Site Location Plan provided at Plate 1.



Plate 1: Site Location Plan

- 1.2 The application site comprises an irregular plot of land which currently forms part of the curtilage of 45 Upper Redlands Road, and a separate plot adjacent to 43 Upper Redlands Road. The site is located within the boundaries of the Redlands Conservation Area, and to the south of the Wantage Hall, which is a Grade II Listed Building.
- 1.3 The application proposals, as detailed within Section 3 of this Report, comprise the construction of a new detached dwelling, with associated access and landscaping.
- 1.4 This Report provides information with regards to the significance of the historic environment to fulfil the requirement given in paragraph 189 of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF¹) which requires:
- "an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting."*²
- 1.5 In order to inform an assessment of the acceptability of the scheme in relation to impacts to the historic environment, following paragraphs 193 to 197 of the NPPF, any harm to the historic environment resulting from the proposed development is also described, including impacts to significance through

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* (London, February 2019).

² MHCLG, *NPPF*, paragraph 189.

changes to setting.

- 1.6 As required by paragraph 189 of the NPPF, the detail and assessment in this Report is considered to be “*proportionate to the asset’s importance*”³
- 1.7 This application follows the previous dismissal of an appeal for the construction of four new dwellings on the site and subsequent, detailed pre-application discussions with Officer’s at Reading Borough Council regarding the proposals for the construction of a single dwelling.
- 1.8 Both the Inspector’s conclusions from their assessment of the previously refused four dwelling scheme and the advice received from Reading Borough Council, as well initial, independent advice given by Pegasus Group have contributed to the development of the proposals to which this application relates, and will be discussed in detail within this Report.

³ MHCLG, NPPF, paragraph 189.

2. Site Description and Planning History

- 2.1 The application site is located in south east Reading, and currently forms part of the grounds of 45 Upper Redlands Road, along with a vacant, undeveloped plot adjacent to 43 Upper Redlands Road.
- 2.2 The site is in a primarily residential area, with built form to the north, east, south and west of a variety of ages and architectural design. Characterful brick walls provide boundaries to the site with the main roads to the north, west and south, with boundaries with the adjoining plots being in a variety of materials, but reinforced with mature tree planting and landscaping.

Site Development

- 2.3 At the time of the production of the Tithe Map in 1840, the application site formed part of a wider landholding running along the eastern side of what was then known as Red Lane (now Redlands Road) and was noted as being 'Garden' land, occupied by William Wickes and owned by The Trustees of Thomas Newell. The Trustees owned a large swath of land known at that time as Whiteknights Park which extended from Red Lane to the east (see Plate 2).

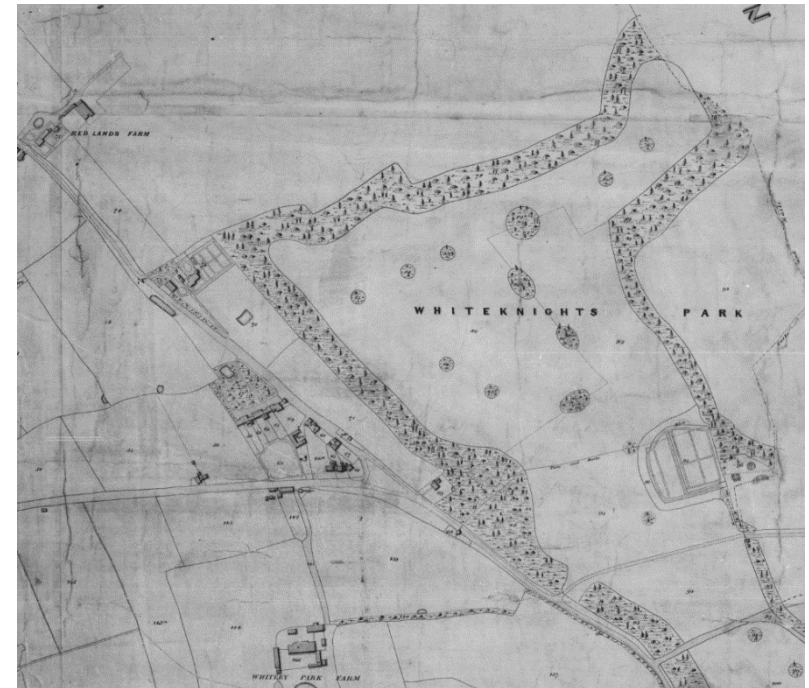


Plate 2: 1840 Tithe Map Extract

(Source: the genealogist)

- 2.4 The land, including the application site was comprehensively redeveloped during the late 19th century, with the application site being shown in detail on the 1877-79 map at Plate 3 in a similar form as it is today.
- 2.5 Within their assessment of the boundary walls within the area, Historic England set out a description of the development of the area at this time, stating that:

"Built development on the site bounded by New Road, Redlands Road and Upper Redlands Road was started in the 1850s by speculators called Pemberton and Vine who had combined to buy a rectangular plot of four acres. They divided this into a sequence of narrow plots along New Road with three bigger plots for large houses at the north-western, north-eastern and south-western corners. Building of houses along New Road took place between 1854 and 1856 and all of the corner houses had been completed by 1865. The development was apparently the first planned development beyond the Borough boundary as it then existed. By the time of the survey for the Ordnance Survey map published in 1883, the rectangular site was entirely built up."

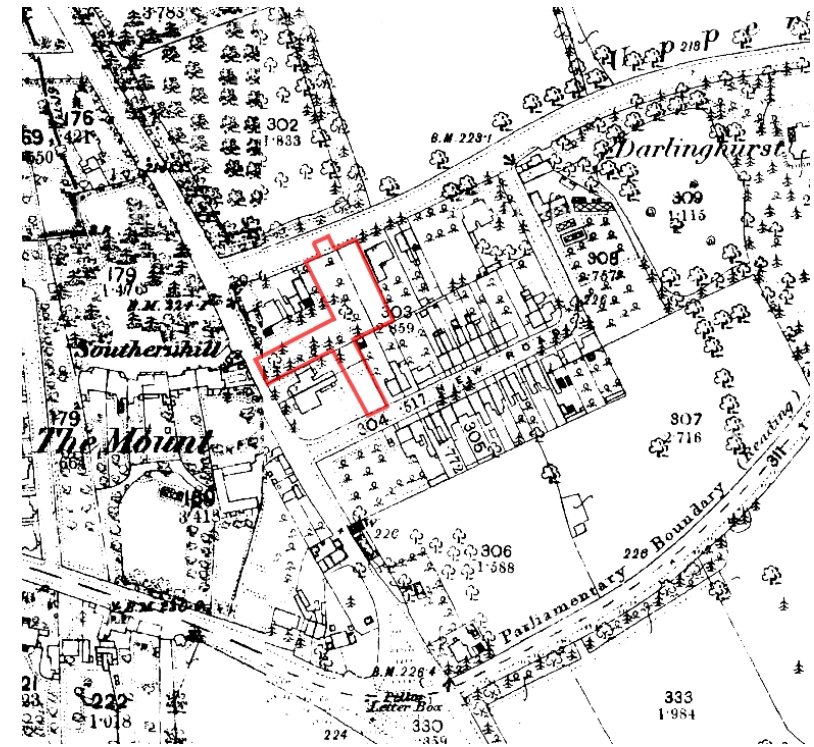


Plate 3: 1877-79 Mapping

- 2.6 The city continued to expand around the site during the 20th century, including the creation of Wantage Hall (as discussed in detail below) to the north of the site in 1981, on the northern edge of Upper Redlands Road, which itself was formed when the area was first laid out in the late 19th century.
- 2.7 This progressive redevelopment of the area has led to the presence of varied architectural styles throughout the area.

- 2.8 The evolution of the area is depicted on the plans provided at Plate 4 to Plate 8.

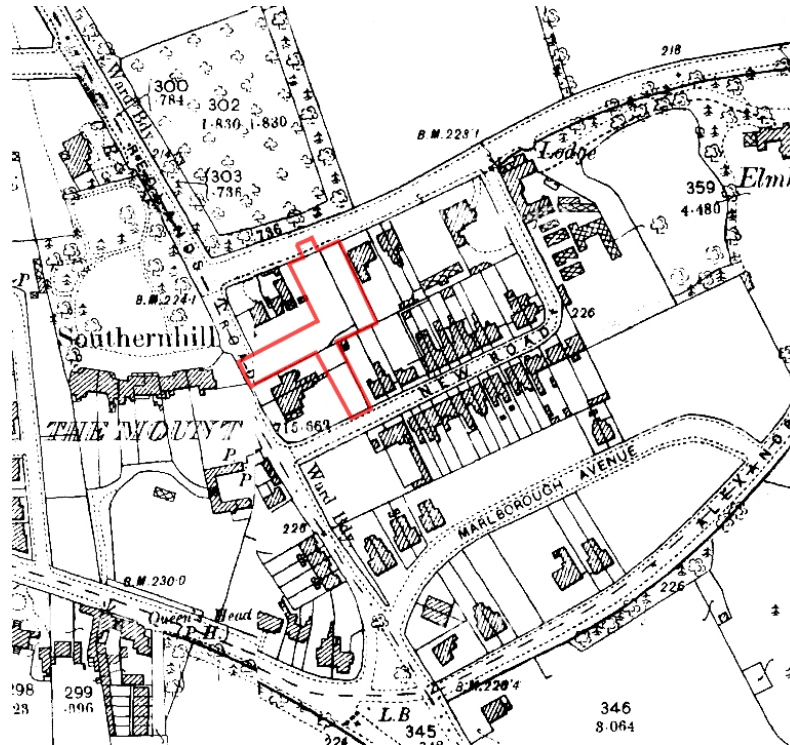


Plate 4: 1899 Site Plan

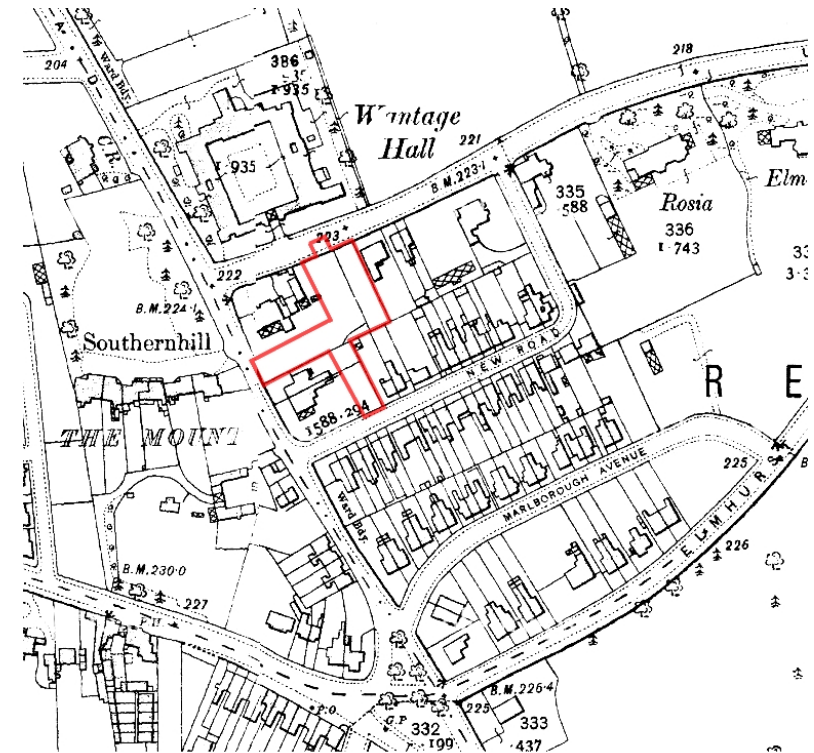


Plate 5: 1912 Site Plan

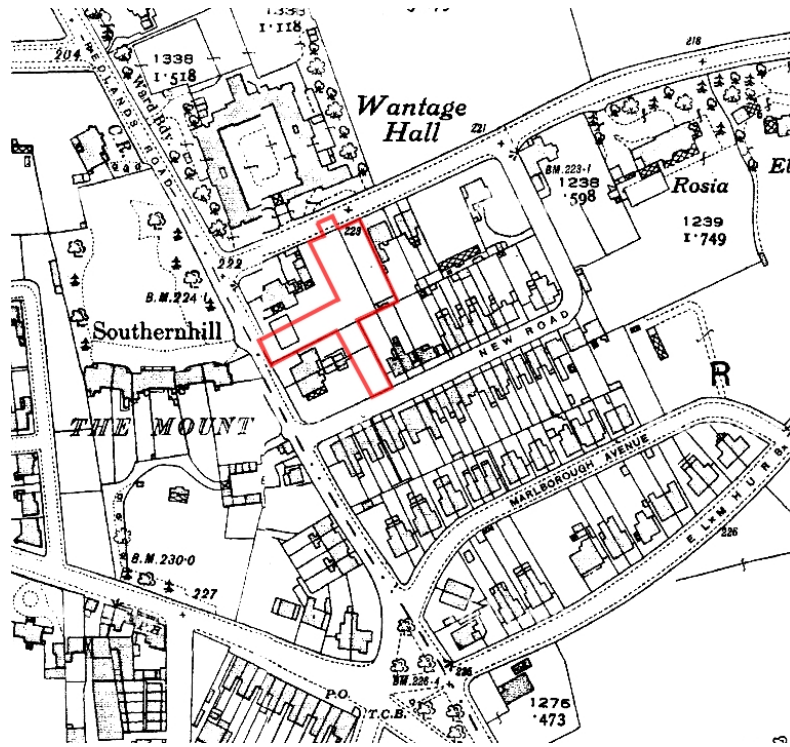


Plate 6: 1931 Site Plan



Plate 7: 1958 Site Plan



Plate 8: 1972 Site Plan

Planning History

- 2.9 Whilst the historic mapping described above indicates the development of the local area, a review of the recent planning history records for the site reveals that the most recent Planning Application (LPA ref: 182214) and the subsequent Appeal (PINS Ref: 3237840) provide a material context against which the current proposals should be considered.
- 2.10 The previously refused scheme, sought the construction of four new dwellings on the site, as shown in the extract of the refused, proposed site plan for the site at Plate 9.



Plate 9: Extract of previously refused scheme

3. Proposed Development

- 3.1 The application seeks the construction of a new detached dwelling, set within a generous plot of land, along with new vehicular access and associated hard and soft landscaping.
- 3.2 The new dwelling is to be positioned behind the retained brick wall, adjacent to the existing property at 43 Upper Redlands Road, contained within the area of the vacant plot, following the existing building line and maintaining a generous spacing between it and 45 Upper Redlands Road on the corner.
- 3.3 As noted above, the proposals have been developed following detailed pre-application discussions with officers at Reading Borough council, and are detailed on the following plans which form the application package and which this assessment considers:

- **Existing Location Plan – ref: P01;**
- **Proposal – Site Plan – ref: P02;**
- **Proposal - Site Plan – ref: P03;**
- **Proposals Street Elevation and Longitudinal Section – ref: P04;**
- **Proposals – Floor Plans – ref: P05;**
- **Proposal – Front Elevation – ref: P06;**
- **Proposal -Side Elevation – ref: P07; and**
- **Proposal – Elevations – ref: P08.**

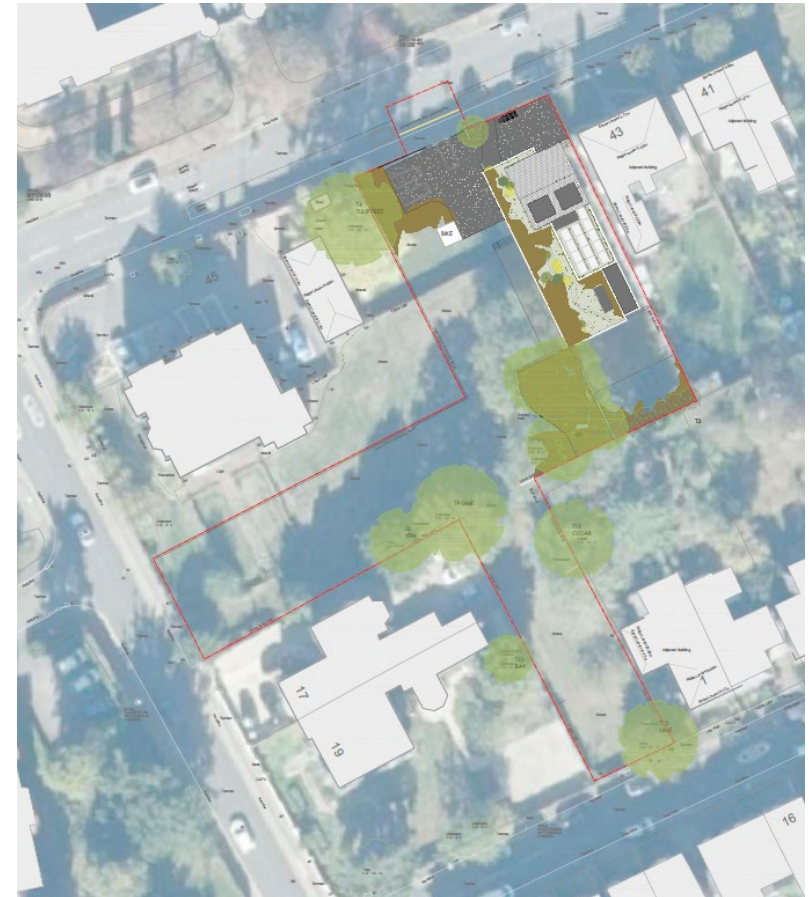


Plate 10: Proposed Site Layout

(extract from drawing ref: P02)

4. Methodology

- 4.1 The aims of this Heritage Statement are to assess the significance of the heritage resource within the site, to assess any contribution that the site makes to the heritage significance of the identified heritage assets within its vicinity, and to identify any harm or benefit to them which may result from the implementation of the development proposals, along with the level of any harm caused, if relevant.

Sources

- 4.2 The following key sources have been consulted as part of this assessment:
- **The National Heritage List for England for information on designated heritage assets;**
 - **Heritage Gateway for information on the Historic Environment Record (HER) and information on the recorded heritage resource within the area;**
 - **The Redlands Conservation Area Appraisal as prepared by Reading Borough Council dated March 2008; and**
 - **Archival sources, including historic maps and aerial photography, held online.**

⁴ MHCLG, *NPPF*, p. 71.

Site Visit

- 4.3 A site visit was undertaken by a Heritage Consultant from Pegasus Group on the 3rd June 2020 and 9th December 2020, during which the site and its surrounds were assessed. Selected heritage assets were assessed from publicly accessible areas.

Assessment of significance

- 4.4 In the NPPF, heritage significance is defined 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. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance."*⁴

- 4.5 Historic England's *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2*⁵ (hereafter GPA 2) gives advice on the assessment of significance as part of the application process. It advises understanding the nature, extent, and level of significance of a heritage asset.

⁵ Historic England, *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2* (2nd edition, Swindon, July 2015).

4.6 In order to do this, GPA 2 also advocates considering the four types of heritage value an asset may hold, as identified in English Heritage's *Conservation Principles*.⁶ These essentially cover the heritage 'interests' given in the glossary of the NPPF⁷ and the online Planning Practice Guidance on the Historic Environment⁸ (hereafter 'PPG') which are **archaeological**, **architectural and artistic** and **historic**.

4.7 The PPG provides further information on the interests it identifies:

- **Archaeological interest:** "As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point."
- **Architectural and artistic interest:** "These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture."

⁶ English Heritage, *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (London, April 2008). These heritage values are identified as being 'aesthetic', 'communal', 'historical' and 'evidential', see *idem* pp. 28–32.

⁷ MHCLG, *NPPF*, p. 71.

⁸ Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), *Planning Practice Guidance: Historic Environment (PPG)* (revised edition, 23rd July 2019),

- **Historic interest:** "An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity."⁹

4.8 Significance results from a combination of any, some or all of the interests described above.

4.9 The most-recently issued guidance on assessing heritage significance, Historic England's *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*, Historic England Advice Note 12,¹⁰ advises using the terminology of the NPPF and PPG, and thus it is that terminology which is used in this Report.

4.10 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are generally designated for their special architectural and historic interest. Scheduling is predominantly, although not exclusively, associated with archaeological interest.

Setting and significance

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>.

⁹ MHCLG, *PPG*, paragraph 006, reference ID: 18a-006-20190723.

¹⁰ Historic England, *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*, Historic England Advice Note 12 (Swindon, October 2019).

4.11 As defined in the NPPF:

*"Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."*¹¹

4.12 Setting is defined 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."*¹²

4.13 Therefore, setting can contribute to, affect an appreciation of significance, or be neutral with regards to heritage values.

Assessing change through alteration to setting

4.14 How setting might contribute to these values has been assessed within this Report with reference to *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3*¹³ (henceforth referred to as 'GPA 3'), particularly the checklist given on page 11. This advocates the clear articulation of "what matters and why".¹⁴

4.15 In GPA 3, a stepped approach is recommended, of which Step 1 is to identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected. Step 2 is to assess whether, how and to what degree

settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated. The guidance includes a (non-exhaustive) checklist of elements of the physical surroundings of an asset that might be considered when undertaking the assessment including, among other things: topography, other heritage assets, green space, functional relationships and degree of change over time. It also lists aspects associated with the experience of the asset which might be considered, including: views, intentional intervisibility, tranquillity, sense of enclosure, accessibility, rarity and land use.

4.16 Step 3 is to assess the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the asset(s). Step 4 is to explore ways to maximise enhancement and minimise harm. Step 5 is to make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

4.17 A Court of Appeal judgement has confirmed that whilst issues of visibility are important when assessing setting, visibility does not necessarily confer a contribution to significance and also that factors other than visibility should also be considered, with Lindblom LJ stating at paragraphs 25 and 26 of the judgement (referring to an earlier Court of Appeal judgement)¹⁵:

Paragraph 25 – "But – again in the particular context of visual effects – I said that if "a proposed development is to affect the setting of a listed

¹¹ MHCLG, *NPPF*, p. 71.

¹² MHCLG, *NPPF*, p. 71.

¹³ Historic England, *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3* (2nd edition, Swindon, December 2017).

¹⁴ Historic England, *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3* (2nd edition, Swindon, December 2017), p. 8.

¹⁵ *Catesby Estates Ltd. V. Steer* [2018] EWCA Civ 1697, para. 25 and 26.

building there must be a distinct visual relationship of some kind between the two – a visual relationship which is more than remote or ephemeral, and which in some way bears on one's experience of the listed building in its surrounding landscape or townscape" (paragraph 56)".

Paragraph 26 – "This does not mean, however, that factors other than the visual and physical must be ignored when a decision-maker is considering the extent of a listed building's setting. Generally, of course, the decision-maker will be concentrating on visual and physical considerations, as in Williams (see also, for example, the first instance judgment in R. (on the application of Miller) v North Yorkshire County Council [2009] EWHC 2172 (Admin), at paragraph 89). But it is clear from the relevant national policy and guidance to which I have referred, in particular the guidance in paragraph 18a-013-20140306 of the PPG, that the Government recognizes the potential relevance of other considerations – economic, social and historical. These other considerations may include, for example, "the historic relationship between places". Historic England's advice in GPA3 was broadly to the same effect."

Levels of significance

- 4.18 Descriptions of significance will naturally anticipate the ways in which impacts will be considered. Hence descriptions of the significance of Conservation Areas will make reference to their special interest and character and appearance, and the significance of Listed Buildings will be discussed with reference to the building, its setting and any features of special

architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

- 4.19 In accordance with the levels of significance articulated in the NPPF and the PPG, three levels of significance are identified:

- **Designated heritage assets of the highest significance**, as identified in paragraph 194 of the NPPF, comprising Grade I and II* Listed buildings, Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wreck Sites, World Heritage Sites and Registered Battlefields (and also including some Conservation Areas) and non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments, as identified in footnote 63 of the NPPF;
- **Designated heritage assets of less than the highest significance**, as identified in paragraph 194 of the NPPF, comprising Grade II Listed buildings and Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens (and also some Conservation Areas); and
- **Non-designated heritage assets**. Non-designated heritage assets are defined within the PPG as "buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets".¹⁶

- 4.20 Additionally, it is of course possible that sites, buildings or areas have **no heritage significance**.

¹⁶ MHCLG, PPG, paragraph 039, reference ID: 18a-039-20190723.

Assessment of harm

- 4.21 Assessment of any harm will be articulated in terms of the policy and law that the proposed development will be assessed against, such as whether a proposed development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, and articulating the scale of any harm in order to inform a balanced judgement/weighting exercise as required by the NPPF.
- 4.22 In order to relate to key policy, the following levels of harm may potentially be identified for designated heritage assets:
- **Substantial harm or total loss.** *It has been clarified in a High Court Judgement of 2013 that this would be harm that would "have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced";¹⁷ and*
 - **Less than substantial harm.** *Harm of a lesser level than that defined above.*
- 4.23 With regards to these two categories, the PPG states:
- "Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated."¹⁸*
- 4.24 Hence, for example, harm that is less than substantial would be further described with reference to where it lies on that

spectrum or scale of harm, for example low end, middle of the spectrum and upper end of the less than substantial harm scale.

- 4.25 With regards to non-designated heritage assets, there is no basis in policy for describing harm to them as substantial or less than substantial, rather the NPPF requires that the scale of any harm or loss is articulated. As such, harm to such assets is articulated as a level of harm to their overall significance, with levels such as negligible, minor, moderate and major harm identified.
- 4.26 It is also possible that development proposals will cause **no harm or preserve** the significance of heritage assets. A High Court Judgement of 2014 is relevant to this. This concluded that with regard to preserving the setting of a Listed building or preserving the character and appearance of a Conservation Area, 'preserving' means doing 'no harm'.¹⁹
- 4.27 Preservation does not mean no change; it specifically means no harm. GPA 2 states that "*Change to heritage assets is inevitable but it is only harmful when significance is damaged*".²⁰ Thus, change is accepted in Historic England's guidance as part of the evolution of the landscape and environment. It is whether such change is neutral, harmful or beneficial to the significance of an asset that matters.

¹⁷ *Bedford Borough Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2013] EWHC 2847 (Admin), para. 25.

¹⁸ MHCLG, PPG, paragraph 018, reference ID: 18a-018-20190723.

¹⁹ *R (Forge Field Society) v Sevenoaks District Council* [2014] EWHC 1895 (Admin).

²⁰ Historic England, GPA 2, p. 9.

4.28 As part of this, setting may be a key consideration. For an evaluation of any harm to significance through changes to setting, this assessment follows the methodology given in GPA 3, described above. Again, fundamental to the methodology set out in this document is stating “what matters and why”. Of particular relevance is the checklist given on page 13 of GPA 3.

4.29 It should be noted that this key document also states that:

“Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation...”²¹

4.30 Hence any impacts are described in terms of how they affect the significance of a heritage asset, and heritage values that contribute to this significance, through changes to setting.

4.31 With regards to changes in setting, GPA 3 states that:

“Conserving or enhancing heritage assets by taking their settings into account need not prevent change”.²²

4.32 Additionally, it is also important to note that, as clarified in the Court of Appeal, whilst the statutory duty requires that special regard should 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.²³

²¹ Historic England, GPA 3, p. 4.

²² Historic England, GPA 3., p. 8.

Benefits

4.33 Proposed development may also result in benefits to heritage assets, and these are articulated in terms of how they enhance the heritage values and hence the significance of the assets concerned.

4.34 As detailed further in Section 6, the NPPF (at Paragraphs 195 and 196) requires harm to a designated heritage asset to be weighed against the public benefits of the development proposals.

4.35 Recent High Court Decisions have confirmed that enhancement to the historic environment should be considered as a public benefit under the provisions of Paragraphs 195 and 196.

4.36 The PPG provides further clarity on what is meant by the term ‘public benefit’, including how these may be derived from enhancement to the historic environment (‘heritage benefits’), as follows:

“Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy Framework ([paragraph 8](#)). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to

²³ *Palmer v Herefordshire Council & Anor* [2016] EWCA Civ 1061.

a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.

Examples of heritage benefits may include:

- sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting*
- reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset*
- securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long-term conservation."*

4.37 Any 'heritage benefits' arising from the proposed development, in line with the narrative above, will be clearly articulated in order for them to be taken into account by the Decision Maker.

5. Planning Policy Framework

5.1 This section of the Report sets out the legislation and planning policy considerations and guidance contained within both national and local planning guidance which specifically relate to the site, with a focus on those policies relating to the protection of the historic environment.

Legislation

5.2 Legislation relating to the built historic environment is primarily set out within the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*,²⁴ which provides statutory protection for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

5.3 Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

*"In considering whether to grant planning permission [or permission in principle] 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."*²⁵

²⁴ UK Public General Acts, *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*.

²⁵ *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, Section 66(1).

5.4 In the 2014 Court of Appeal judgement in relation to the Barnwell Manor case, Sullivan LJ held that:

*"Parliament in enacting section 66(1) did intend that the desirability of preserving the settings of listed buildings should not simply be given careful consideration by the decision-maker for the purpose of deciding whether there would be some harm, but should be given "considerable importance and weight" when the decision-maker carries out the balancing exercise."*²⁶

5.5 A judgement in the Court of Appeal ('Mordue') has clarified that, with regards to the setting of Listed Buildings, where the principles of the NPPF are applied (in particular paragraph 134 of the 2012 draft of the NPPF, the requirements of which are now given in paragraph 196 of the revised NPPF, see below), this is in keeping with the requirements of the 1990 Act.²⁷

5.6 With regards to development within Conservation Areas, Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:

"In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability

²⁶ *Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v (1) East Northamptonshire DC & Others* [2014] EWCA Civ 137. para. 24.

²⁷ *Jones v Mordue* [2015] EWCA Civ 1243.

of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

- 5.7 Unlike Section 66(1), Section 72(1) of the Act does not make reference to the setting of a Conservation Area. This makes it plain that it is the character and appearance of the designated Conservation Area that is the focus of special attention.
- 5.8 In addition to the statutory obligations set out within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Area) Act 1990, Section 38(6) of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* requires that all planning applications, including those for Listed Building Consent, are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.²⁸

National Planning Policy Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

- 5.9 National policy and guidance is set out in the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in February 2019. This replaced and updated the previous NPPF 2018 which in turn had amended and superseded the 2012 version. The NPPF needs to be read as a whole and is intended to promote the concept of delivering sustainable development.
- 5.10 The NPPF sets out the Government’s economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Taken together, these

policies articulate the Government’s vision of sustainable development, which should be interpreted and applied locally to meet local aspirations. The NPPF continues to recognise that the planning system is plan-led and that therefore Local Plans, incorporating Neighbourhood Plans, where relevant, are the starting point for the determination of any planning application, including those which relate to the historic environment.

- 5.11 The overarching policy change applicable to the proposed development is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This presumption in favour of sustainable development (the ‘presumption’) sets out the tone of the Government’s overall stance and operates with and through the other policies of the NPPF. Its purpose is to send a strong signal to all those involved in the planning process about the need to plan positively for appropriate new development; so that both plan-making and development management are proactive and driven by a search for opportunities to deliver sustainable development, rather than barriers. Conserving historic assets in a manner appropriate to their significance forms part of this drive towards sustainable development.
- 5.12 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and the NPPF sets out three ‘objectives’ to facilitate sustainable development: an economic objective, a social objective, and an environmental

²⁸ UK Public General Acts, *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, Section 38(6).

objective. The presumption is key to delivering these objectives, by creating a positive pro-development framework which is underpinned by the wider economic, environmental and social provisions of the NPPF. The presumption is set out in full at paragraph 11 of the NPPF and reads as follows:

"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For plan-making this means that:

- a. plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;*
- b. strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:*
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or*
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

For decision-taking this means:

- a. approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- b. where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - i. the application policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."*²⁹

5.13 However, it is important to note that footnote 6 of the NPPF applies in relation to the final bullet of paragraph 11. This provides a context for paragraph 11 and reads as follows:

"The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 176) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in

²⁹ MHCLG, NPPF, para. 11.

*footnote 63); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.*³⁰ (our emphasis)

5.14 The NPPF continues to recognise that the planning system is plan-led and that therefore, Local Plans, incorporating Neighbourhood Plans, where relevant, are the starting point for the determination of any planning application.

5.15 Heritage Assets are defined in the NPPF as:

*"A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)."*³¹

5.16 The NPPF goes on to define a Designated Heritage Asset as a:

*"World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under relevant legislation."*³² (our emphasis)

5.17 As set out above, significance is also defined as:

"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value

*described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance."*³³

5.18 Section 16 of the NPPF relates to 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' and states at paragraph 190 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."*³⁴

5.19 Paragraph 192 goes on to state that:

"In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a. the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b. the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*

³⁰ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 11, fn. 6.

³¹ MHCLG, *NPPF*, p. 67.

³² MHCLG, *NPPF*, p. 66.

³³ MHCLG, *NPPF*, p. 71.

³⁴ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 190.

- c. *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*³⁵

5.20 With regard to the impact of proposals on the significance of a heritage asset, paragraphs 193 and 194 are relevant and read as follows:

*"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."*³⁶

"Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a. *grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b. *assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional."*³⁷

³⁵ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 192.

³⁶ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 193.

5.21 Section b) of paragraph 194, which describes assets of the highest significance, also includes footnote 63 of the *NPPF*, which states that non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

5.22 In the context of the above, it should be noted that paragraph 195 reads as follows:

"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 uses 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."*³⁸

³⁷ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 194.

³⁸ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 195.

5.23 Paragraph 196 goes on to state:

*"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."*³⁹

5.24 The NPPF also provides specific guidance in relation to development within Conservation Areas, stating at paragraph 200 that:

*"Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably."*⁴⁰

5.25 Paragraph 201 goes on to recognise that *"not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance"*⁴¹ and with regard to the potential harm from a proposed development states:

"Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph

*196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole."*⁴² (our emphasis)

5.26 With regards to non-designated heritage assets, paragraph 197 of NPPF states that:

*"The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."*⁴³

5.27 Overall, the NPPF confirms that the primary objective of development management is to foster the delivery of sustainable development, not to hinder or prevent it. Local Planning Authorities should approach development management decisions positively, looking for solutions rather than problems so that applications can be approved wherever it is practical to do so. Additionally, securing the optimum viable use of sites and achieving public benefits are also key material considerations for application proposals.

5.28 As set out later in this Report, it can be demonstrated that the proposals would serve to protect the character and appearance

³⁹ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 196.

⁴⁰ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 200.

⁴¹ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 201.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 197.

of the Conservation Area, as well as the setting of the Listed Wantage Hall. Thus, Planning Permission should be granted as per the requirements of paragraph 38 which state that:

*"Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decisions-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible."*⁴⁴

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 5.29 The then Department for Communities and Local Government (now the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)) launched the planning practice guidance web-based resource in March 2014, accompanied by a ministerial statement which confirmed that a number of previous planning practice guidance documents were cancelled.
- 5.30 This also introduced the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which comprised a full and consolidated review of planning practice guidance documents to be read alongside the NPPF.
- 5.31 The PPG has a discrete section on the subject of the Historic Environment, which confirms that the consideration of

⁴⁴ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 38.

'significance' in decision taking is important and states:

*"Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals."*⁴⁵

- 5.32 In terms of assessment of substantial harm, the PPG confirms that whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgement for the individual decision taker having regard to the individual circumstances and the policy set out within the NPPF. It goes on to state:

"In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less

⁴⁵ MHCLG, *PPG*, paragraph 007, reference ID: 18a-007-20190723.

than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm.”⁴⁶ (our emphasis)

Local Planning Policy

- 5.33 Planning applications within Reading are currently considered against the policy and guidance set out within the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
- 5.34 The Council have previously confirmed that, with regards to the Historic Environment, the following policies of the Local Plan are specifically relevant to the application site:

"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

⁴⁶ MHCLG, PPG, paragraph 018, reference ID: 18a-018-20190723.

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.”*

5.35 The Appeal Inspector also considered that these Policies were those which were relevant in the consideration of development on this site, stating that the previous proposals conflicted with them.

6. The Historic Environment

- 6.1 The following Section provides an assessment of elements of the built historic environment that have the potential to be impacted upon by the proposed development.
- 6.2 As set out in Section 1, the application site is located within the boundaries of the Redlands Conservation Area, and located to the south of the Grade II Listed Wantage Hall.
- 6.3 With regards to additional built heritage assets within the surrounds of the Site, Step 1 of the methodology recommended by the Historic England guidance *GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (see *Methodology: Section 4*) is to identify which designated heritage assets might be affected by a proposed development.
- 6.4 Development proposals may adversely impact heritage assets where they remove a feature which contributes to the significance of a heritage asset, or where they interfere with an element of a heritage asset's setting which contributes to its significance, such as interrupting a key relationship or a designed view.
- 6.5 Consideration was therefore made as to whether any of the built heritage assets present within the surrounding area may include the Site as part of their setting which contributes to their overall heritage significance, and therefore may potentially be affected by the proposed scheme.

- 6.6 Initial consideration has concluded that due to the scale of the development proposals, the only assets which will be assessed in detail will be Grade II Listed Wantage Hall to the north of the application site has the potential to be most affected by the development proposals and will thus be considered in detail within this assessment.

- 6.7 It is also important to note that the brick boundary walls along Redlands Road, Upper Redlands Road and New Road were assessed by Historic England under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for their special architectural and historic interest, which concluded that they did not meet the criteria for listing, although were noted as being of local interest and added to the built texture of this part of Reading. In the context of this, any impacts to the brick boundary walls will be proportionally assessed as part of the wider assessment of the Conservation Area as a whole.

Wantage Hall

- 6.8 As a Grade II Listed Building, Wantage Hall is a designated heritage asset of less than the highest significance as defined by the NPPF. It was first designated in April 2008 for the following reasons, as set out within the List Description:

"Wantage Hall was the first hall of residence at the University of Reading opening in 1908. It is

designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

** A handsome and intact hall of residence in a Tudor style with an interesting quadrangle plan-form, quality materials and detailing.*

** A very early hall of residence which drew on the historic Oxbridge college tradition but was a pioneer of C20 university collegiate accommodation, and which was to become the model for subsequent university colleges and halls of residence."*

- 6.9 A full copy of the List Description, which details the history, design and layout of the building is provided at Appendix 1.

APPENDIX 1: WANTAGE HALL LIST ENTRY



Plate 11: Wantage Hall

- 6.10 The significance of Wantage Hall was also specifically considered by the Inspector in his assessment of the previous Appeal scheme, whereby he stated at paragraph 8 of his Decision Letter that:

"...Wantage Hall, an imposing hall of residence set within generous and landscaped ground, which is situated opposite the appeal site. As the first purpose-built all of residence in Reading constructed after the Oxford and Cambridge colleges, the significance of this Grade II Listed Building resides in both its historic and neo-Tudor architectural interest. As Wantage all is experienced within the leafy residential surroundings situated on the opposite side of Upper Redlands Road in particular, the spaciousness of development contributes to the suburban character of the locality, and thus the setting and significance of this Listed Building"

- 6.11 Whilst this of course was in relation to the previously refused appeal scheme, it clearly highlights that the application site, and in particular, its open character, forms part of the setting of the Listed Building which contributes to its significance, although this contribution is considered to be much less than the historic and architectural interest of the building itself.
- 6.12 Similarly, it is also considered that the existing historic built form within the Conservation Area including the brick boundary walls along the northern boundary of the application site contribute to the historic setting and thus significance of the Listed Building.

Redlands Conservation Area

- 6.13 The Redlands Conservation Area was first designated in February 1991, prior to the Listing of Wantage Hall, although this is within its boundaries. The boundaries of the Conservation Area are shown on the plan provided at Appendix 2, and encompass a Victorian/Edwardian suburb of Reading, centred around the roads of New Road, Upper Redlands Road,

Marlborough Avenue, Kelmhurst Road and Redlands Road.

APPENDIX 2: CONSERVATION AREA PLAN

- 6.14 The Conservation Area Appraisal, which was produced by the Council in 2008, and seeks to “record and analyse the various features which give the Redlands Conservation Area its special architectural and historic interest”.
- 6.15 The appraisal summarises the special interest of the Conservation Area, which was reiterated by the inspector in his Decision Letter, whereby he stated:

“this is a tightly drawn, essentially Victorian/Edwardian suburb or Reading. The special interest of this designated heritage asset derives to a large extent from the sheer variety, exuberance and blending of the architectural styles of the Victorian period in such close proximity. The Appraisal adds that this is reinforced by the retention of boundary walls and railings throughout the area which, together with mature tree cover, give the area its coherence. It also makes particular reference to the corner buildings, which strictly have a more commanding presence.”

- 6.16 The Conservation Area Appraisal goes on to describe how the Conservation Area can be divided into four character areas, with the application site sitting within Upper Redlands Road and 17-19 Redlands Road Character Area.
- 6.17 The character of this area is described as being characterised by:

“large detached and semi-detached houses standing in extensive and well-treed grounds....The

architectural styles vary from the simple plain red brick style of the 1850s to later stucco villas (some very large) with Italianate and classical features, in particular, 17 and 19 Redlands Road. 35a Upper Redlands Road is an interesting gothic style building which turns the corner of New Road.....Properties here and throughout the Conservation Area are “linked” by frontage brick walls and/or low brick walls with railings above, and good tree cover.”

- 6.18 This assessment of character was also ratified by the Appeal Inspector who confirmed that:

“by reason of the size of the building itself and its siting within spacious and verdant grounds, there is no doubt that that no 45 Upper Redlands road reflects this part of the conservation area and therefore makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of this designated heritage asset.”

- 6.19 It is clear from this assessment, that significance of the Conservation Area is most importantly embodied in both the historic built form and layout of the area (including the spaces boundary treatments within its boundaries) and that the application site positively contributes to this significance.

Summary

- 6.20 Whilst the above assessment, which has been informed by the previous assessment of the site by the Appeal Inspector, concludes that the application site contributes positively to both the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the significance of the Listed Wantage Hall, via setting, this does not mean that the site cannot accommodate any change or new

development undertaken in a sensitive and well-designed manner.

7. Assessment of Harm or Benefits

- 7.1 This Section addresses the heritage planning issues that warrant consideration in the determination of the application for the construction of a new detached dwelling within the north east of the site, in line with the proposals set out in Section 3 of this Report.
- 7.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The policy guidance set out within the NPPF is considered to be a material consideration which attracts significant weight in the decision-making process.
- 7.3 The statutory requirement set out within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, at Sections 66 and 72 confirms that considerable weight should be given to the preservation of the historic and architectural interest of Listed Buildings and their settings, as well as the protection of the character and appearance of a Conservation Area. In addition, the NPPF states that the impact of development proposals should be considered against the particular significance of heritage assets such as Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, and therefore this needs to be the primary consideration when

determining the proposed application. It is also important to consider where the proposals cause harm. If they do, then one must consider whether any such harm represents 'substantial harm' or 'less than substantial harm' to the identified designated heritage assets, in the context of paragraphs 195 and 196 of the NPPF.

- 7.4 The PPG clarifies that within each category of harm ('less than substantial' or 'substantial'), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.⁴⁷
- 7.5 The guidance set out within the PPG states that substantial harm is a high test, and that it may not arise in many cases. The PPG makes it clear that it is the degree of harm to the significance of the asset rather than the scale of development which is to be assessed.⁴⁸ In addition, it has been clarified in both a High Court Judgement of 2013⁴⁹ that substantial harm would be harm that would *"have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced"*.
- 7.6 As set out above, the application site is located within the boundaries of the Redlands Conservation Area and also directly

⁴⁷ MHCLG, Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 018 (ID: 18a-018-20190723 Revision date: 23.07.2019)

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ EWHC 2847, R DCLG and Nuon UK Ltd v. Bedford Borough Council

to the south of the Grade II Listed Wantage Hall. The following assessment will consider the impact of the proposals on the identified significance of these designated heritage assets in turn. Whilst Historic England have previously confirmed that the boundary walls in this location are not of such significance to warrant designation in their own right, due to any impact to them will also be specifically considered.

The Conservation Area

- 7.7 When considering potential impacts of the proposed development on the Conservation Area it is important to recognise that the Conservation Area covers a large area, and as noted within the Appraisal document is characterised by a wide variety of architectural detailing and design, albeit with an overriding Victorian / Edwardian character. The Site itself represents a small portion of the total area covered by the Conservation Area, whilst built form is only proposed on one small part of the wider site and as noted in the NPPF at paragraph 201, it is necessary to consider the relevant significance of the element which has the potential to be affected and its contribution to significance of the designation as a whole, i.e. would the application proposals undermine the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole?
- 7.8 The application site has been assessed as positively contributing to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, although this does not mean that no development would be appropriate within its boundaries.

- 7.9 The proposed development has significantly evolved since the previous refusal of the four dwelling scheme and the subsequent dismissal of the related appeal. It is now proposed to construct a single dwelling within the plot, set in line with the neighbouring properties at 42 and 43 Upper Redlands Road, and reflecting the proportions of the Victorian dwellings within the locality.
- 7.10 As detailed within the accompanying design statement, the proposals have also evolved in response to the advice received from Officers at Reading Borough Council as part of the pre-application process. This includes reducing the scale of the proposed footprint of the building, the detailed design of the building and the proposed material palette, in order to ensure that the building harmonises into its context and is of a coherent design.
- 7.11 The Appeal Inspector previously identified that any departure from the established building line along Upper Redlands Road would be detrimental to, and detract from, the character of the area.
- 7.12 In direct response to this, the proposed new dwelling is sited such that it aligns with the building line formed on the southern edge of Upper Redlands Road, although it is to be set back behind the existing boundary wall which is to be retained in order to maintain the sense of enclosure and general streetscene along the road. It therefore sits comfortably within the established urban grain of the area, maximising the amount of open space between it and the corner property at 45 Upper

Redlands Road.

- 7.13 The property has been designed with a larger ground floor footprint set behind the retained boundary wall, and with a biodiverse green roof to reduce the mass and scale of the building, with the proportions of the upper floors, which are visible in the streetscene, being in keeping with the Victorian properties against which it is set.
- 7.14 The ground floor footprint is constrained in width such that it aligns with the existing division between the vacant plot adjacent to no. 43 and the wider curtilage of no. 45, again conforming with the general grain of the locality. The use of a biodiverse green roof on the ground floor, and the fact that the building is to be set down within the site, ensures that the green openness of the site is maintained when viewing the property from the Conservation Area.
- 7.15 Within the pre-application response, officers raised concerns regarding the proposed new dormer window on the rear roof slope. This has now been replaced by two smaller dormers which breaks up their mass and better relates to the form of the proposed new building.
- 7.16 The design detailing of the property is such that it utilises contemporary design and detailing on a traditionally proportioned building. The design details and material palette, as discussed within the Design Statement, have sought to draw inspiration from the local historic context, and are considered to be appropriate to the character and appearance of the

Conservation Area.

- 7.17 As noted within the Conservation Area Appraisal, it is the rich variety of architectural detailing which contributes to the significance of the Conservation Area and this scheme is considered to add to that variety in a contemporary manner.
- 7.18 The proposals maintain the open nature of the site as a whole, ensuring the characteristics of the Conservation Area which are identified as positively contributing to its significance within the adopted Appraisal document are preserved.
- 7.19 Whilst some trees will be lost in the grouping to the south of the proposed new dwelling, the main character trees within the site and which most dominantly contribute to the character and appearance of the area will be maintained. Similarly, the scheme will be supported by a detailed landscaping scheme which see the protection of the existing open spaces fronting on to New Road to the south and New Road to the west and the planting of additional trees and landscaping to boost that which is currently located within the site and which contributes to the identified character of the area.
- 7.20 The design, scale, form and siting of the proposed new dwelling will ensure that despite it representing new build development on the site, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area will be protected and preserved, in accordance with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and local policy requirements.

Wantage Hall

- 7.21 As discussed above, the application site is located opposite Wantage Hall, to the south of Upper Redlands Road, and whilst it has no functional or historic connection with the Listed Building, the site, as a whole, has been assessed as positively contributing to the significance of the Listed Building via setting.
- 7.22 During their consideration of the previously refused four house scheme for the site, the Inspector felt that the construction of four new dwellings within the site would “*lead to the substantial loss of garden space*” within the existing plot of 45 Upper Redlands Road (paragraph 9), and that the construction of two large, detached dwellings between the outbuilding to 45 Upper Redlands Road and no 43 Upper Redlands Road would “*further diminish the prevailing sense of place in the locality*”, to the detriment of the significance of the Listed Wantage Hall, albeit noting that this would be to a lesser extent than the Conservation Area as a whole.
- 7.23 The application now proposes the construction of only a single dwelling on the site, located to the north east corner, adjacent to 43 Upper Redlands Road. This positioning allows for a significant gap to be maintained between the new house and the built form of 45 Upper Redlands Road (including its outbuilding), and significantly reduces the loss of garden space which the Inspector had concerns about.
- 7.24 The design and detailing of the new dwelling, with the ground floor set down below the retained boundary wall ensures that

the open character of the site, which is considered to contribute to the setting of the Listed Building is protected.

- 7.25 Similarly, and as discussed in detail below the use of the brick clad sliding gate will ensure that the character of the existing brick boundary wall is maintained whilst allowing for a new vehicular access into the site, again preserving the contribution that this makes to the setting of the Listed Building.
- 7.26 As detailed within the supporting documentation prepared by Trace Architects, the proposed new dwelling is set in line with the neighbouring properties at 43 and 42 Upper Redlands Road, maintaining the line of built form in the streetscene opposite the Listed Wantage Hall.
- 7.27 The design of the new dwelling has drawn on the surrounding architecture, with the proportions being in keeping with the Victorian neighbours, utilising a locally appropriate palette of materials including brick detailing. As such, the proposals will sit comfortably within the setting of the Listed Building, forming a coherent addition to the more historic streetscene.
- 7.28 Overall, the proposals are considered to respect and preserve the setting of the Grade II Listed Building and the contribution that this makes to the significance of the designated heritage asset. As such, the proposals are considered to accord with both the statutory requirements set out within the Planning (Listed Buildings Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as the local policy requirements. The proposals have also addressed the concerns raised by the Inspector in his determination of the

previously refused Appeal.

- 7.29 It is also important to note that no concerns regarding the principle of the proposals or the general design approach adopted were raised by the Local Authority during their consideration of the scheme at pre-application stage in relation to any potential impacts to the setting of the Listed Wantage Hall.

The Boundary Walls

- 7.30 As seen from the proposed plans, the application proposals now only seek the construction of a single dwelling on the site, which ensures that the number of openings required in the existing boundary walls are significantly reduced since the previously refused scheme, now only requiring a single new opening in the northern boundary wall, whilst also utilising the existing pedestrian access gate.
- 7.31 The brick boundary walls to the site are accepted as positively contributing to the significance of both the setting of Wantage Hall and the Redlands Conservation Area as a whole. However, it is noted that the northern walls of the site are much less detailed than those in other parts of the Conservation Area, being laid in simple Flemish Garden Wall bond, with a dentilled band to the top and coping (See Plate 12). As confirmed in the Historic England report detailing the decision not to List the walls in the area, the brick boundary walls are of no consistent design, with this detailing that walls:

"appear to have been built to form a boundary to each property as each house was finished and this would account for the wide variety in their patterns and in their height and the bonds used. They do not form a continuous boundary to the larger site which was developed by Pemberton and Vine and there are interruptions to the circuit or replacement boundaries formed by C20 or C21 railings."

- 7.32 Indeed, a clear break in the construction of the walling along the northern boundary of the site can be seen, as shown in the image at Plate 12.
- 7.33 The proposals seek to replace a section of the existing walling with a new sliding brick faced gated vehicular access to the without compromising the integrity of the existing boundary wall. This innovative solution will ensure that the proposals will have no impact on the overall contribution that the boundary walls provide to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, nor the setting of the Listed Building, and would assimilate into the established wider character of the area and associated walling, being divided into different sections responding to the different plots.
- 7.34 As confirmed by the Council in their pre-application response to the proposals as now submitted, the revised proposals will now address the concerns raised by the Inspector in his Appeal Letter relating to the more prevalent loss of sections of the boundary walls to facilitate numerous access into the site, with the proposals now only seeking consent for a single new access.



Plate 12: Existing break in boundary walling

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Overall, it is considered that the application proposals for the construction of a new detached dwelling within the site, along with the associated hard and soft landscaping proposals would represent an acceptable form of development in this location when considered against the current site context and the relevant local and national planning policy, including the statutory obligations set out within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 8.2 As discussed above, the proposals have addressed the concerns raised by the Inspector in respect of the previously refused four dwelling scheme, most notably through the reduction in the quantum of development proposed and the specific design details of the new proposals, including drawing on the local historic context for the design, siting and proportions of the development, as well as the retention of the boundary walls.
- 8.3 Similarly, the proposals have addressed the elements of the scheme which previously led them to raise concerns in their pre-application advice that the proposals would impact the Conservation Area.
- 8.4 Whilst being of a contemporary design, the proposals compliment the variety of architectural styles within the Conservation Area and retain those aspects of the locality, such as the boundary walls and mature tree cover, which give the area its coherence.
- 8.5 The new dwelling, as now proposed, preserves the contribution that the site makes to the setting and the significance of the Listed Wantage Hall and also those aspects of the Conservation Area which positively contribute to its character and appearance and thus significance.
- 8.6 The proposals are thus considered to accord with both local and national policy guidance in relation to the historic environment, and it is thus considered that there is no heritage related reason why Planning Permission for the development as proposed cannot, and should not, be granted.

Appendix 1: Wantage Hall List Entry

Wantage Hall

Overview

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1392496

Date first listed: 02-Apr-2008

Statutory Address: Wantage Hall, Upper Redlands Road

Map



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This copy shows the entry on 21-Jan-2021 at 22:54:09.

Location

Statutory Address: Wantage Hall, Upper Redlands Road

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

District: Reading (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: SU7268172289

Reasons for Designation

Wantage Hall was the first hall of residence at the University of Reading opening in 1908. It is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * A handsome and intact hall of residence in a Tudor style with an interesting quadrangle plan-form, quality materials and detailing. * A very early hall of residence which drew on the historic Oxbridge college tradition but was a pioneer of C20 university collegiate accommodation and which was to become the model for subsequent university colleges and halls of residence.

Details

934/0/10065 UPPER REDLANDS ROAD Wantage Hall 02-APR-08

II Wantage Hall, 1908. Hall of residence at the University of Reading. Neo-Tudor design by Charles Steward Smith, architect, commissioned and endowed by Lady Wantage. Addition of New

Court to the north in 1970, by Peter Ednie & Partners is not of special interest.

MATERIALS: red brick in English Bond with stone dressings and tiled roofs.

PLAN: a quadrangle, known as 'Old Court': largely of two storeys but with an additional basement level in the northern half given the sloping site. Roof is largely double pitched with a central concealed valley. Main entrance gate through a three storey clock tower in the south elevation. Dining Hall range, housing student common room on the ground floor and the dining hall above, on the north side of the quadrangle. Student accommodation mainly in the west and east ranges over two floors. Warden's study and offices in the south-east corner, formerly the Principal's residence. Service rooms largely confined to basement level. Red brick 1970s addition, known as 'New Court', forms a further quadrangle to the north but is not of special interest.

EXTERIOR: main façade to the south on Upper Redlands Road. Of two storeys under a pitched tiled roof with pairs of gabled bays at the south-west and south-east corners. Windows are leaded casements with stone surrounds and moulded drip-moulds; those to the ground floor are conjoined to form a narrow string course. Rainwater hoppers decorated with a 'W' for 'Wantage'. Central, three-storey crenellated clock tower, again in red brick with stone dressings: there are stone string courses between floors and gargoyle corbels to the machicolation. Polygonal stair towers at each corner. Handsome canted oriel window to the first floor. Entrance is through a large Tudor arched gateway in stone with carved spandrels; paired solid panelled gates.

Similar features are employed in the quadrangle although it is more decorative. West and east ranges have a series of

prominent projecting chimney stacks, with clustered pots, stone dressings and diaper work decoration, dividing up the elevations. Entrance bays have Flemish gables with carved stone coats of arms and banded diaper work detailing. Two-storey dining room range to the north dominates both given its axis opposite the entrance but also for its greater height: symmetrical range of three bays, all with gables, decorated with diaper work. Large mullion and transom windows with leaded lights and some coloured glass. Central bay has a decorative canted oriel with a Flemish gable topped with a carved stone finial. Foundation stone beneath this window. Carved sundial added to the oriel in the 1980s inscribed to the memory of Sydney Taylor.

INTERIOR: interiors differ dependent upon function with the principal spaces more decorative than the student accommodation, service accommodation or circulation spaces. Student accommodation is in small study bedrooms largely in the west and east ranges where they are arranged either side of a central corridor on the ground and first floors. Each has a fireplace (some now blocked) with a wooden mantle and original picture rails. Elongated doors to the student rooms are replicas of the originals given fire prevention requirements. Corridors and staircases have exposed red brick walls. Main staircase, leading up to the Dining Hall, has a solid brick balustrade topped with a moulded stone banister and terminating in a carved stone newel. Tudor arches with stone mouldings are also employed internally. Interiors of particular note are the former Principal's lodgings and the Dining Hall. The former contains stone fireplaces decorated with the shell motif of the University and original panelling. Present Warden's study, originally the parlour of the Principal's lodgings, retains its original fireplace which has a timber surround, decorative mantle, and glazed green tiles. Wallpaper in a green leaf design may be original Morris & Co. Most impressive Dining Hall with solid timber hammer-beam roof and attractive curved braces. Original wooden and metal chandeliers. Panelling to picture rail level and carved door surround. Windows

with coloured glass shields and crests. Large open fireplace with stone Tudor surround and carved spandrels. Substantial decorative carved timber fire surround and overmantle including carved human heads, shells and a Latin inscription.

ANCILLARY FEATURES: red brick walls and railings to Redlands Road and Upper Redlands Road.

HISTORY: although a School of Art was established at Reading in 1860 with a School of Science following in 1870, it was not until 1892 that Reading was founded as a University Extension College under the patronage of the University of Oxford. It became a University in its own right in 1926 by Royal Charter. Wantage Hall was built relatively early in the life of the university; it was designed in 1906 and opened in 1908. It is believed to have been the first purpose-built hall of residence built after the Oxford and Cambridge colleges. It was the gift of Harriet, Lady Wantage (1837-1920) a wealthy local benefactress. Lady and Baron Wantage owned Lockinge House, near Wantage, as well as considerable land holdings in Berkshire. They were artistic connoisseurs and patrons and were heavily involved with the British Red Cross Society. Lady Wantage was closely associated with her husband's work at Reading University College of which he was the first president and after his death in 1901 she was appointed vice-president and live governor. She donated nearly £150,000 to the University including the building and endowment of Wantage Hall as a men's hall of residence and £50,000 to an endowment fund in 1911. She was also a benefactor of the Royal Berkshire Hospital and was the first woman to receive the freedom of the Borough of Reading. Charles Steward Smith (1858-1923), who designed the building, was a local Reading based architect.

During the First World War Wantage Hall was used by the Royal Flying Corps School of Instruction, training instructors to, in turn,

train the increasing numbers of RFC squadrons required. Classes were held in the building and practical training took place along Upper Redlands Road where old fuselages were suspended in the trees for this purpose.

The hall of residence expanded in 1970 with additional accommodation provided by New Court, an extension added to the north of the original building (now known as 'Old Court'). New Court was designed by the architectural firm Peter Ednie & Partners but is not considered of special interest.

Wantage Hall remains in use as a fully catered residential hall which accommodates approximately 245 students.

SOURCES: Reading Standard 31 October 1908

REASON FOR DESIGNATION: Wantage Hall was the first hall of residence at the University of Reading opening in 1908. It is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * A handsome and intact hall of residence in a Tudor style with an interesting quadrangle plan-form, quality materials and detailing. * A very early hall of residence which drew on the historic Oxbridge college tradition but was a pioneer of C20 university collegiate accommodation, and which was to become the model for subsequent university colleges and halls of residence.

Legacy

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

Legacy System number: 504291

Legacy System: LBS

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

End of official listing

Appendix 2: Conservation Area Plan



Source: Redlands Conservation Area Appraisal