

HANDFORTH

HERITAGE

Sir John Falstaff, Higham
Heritage Statement

November 2023

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1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement ('report') has been produced by Handforth Heritage for Punch Partnerships (PML) Ltd, to accompany a planning application for the creation of a dwelling within the grounds of the grade II listed Sir John Falstaff, Higham labelled 'No. 1' for reference purposes as shown in figure 1.

This report has been produced in accordance with Historic England's *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA 3)*. The purpose of the report is to identify any heritage assets and their settings that may be affected by the proposals. Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights that the significance of these heritage assets needs to be assessed including any contribution made by their settings to determine what the potential impact of changes to the site may have on them.

This report has been undertaken in accordance with Historic England's guidance on heritage assessments, namely *Statement of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 12*. The legislation and policy framework applicable to this application is set out at Appendix 1.

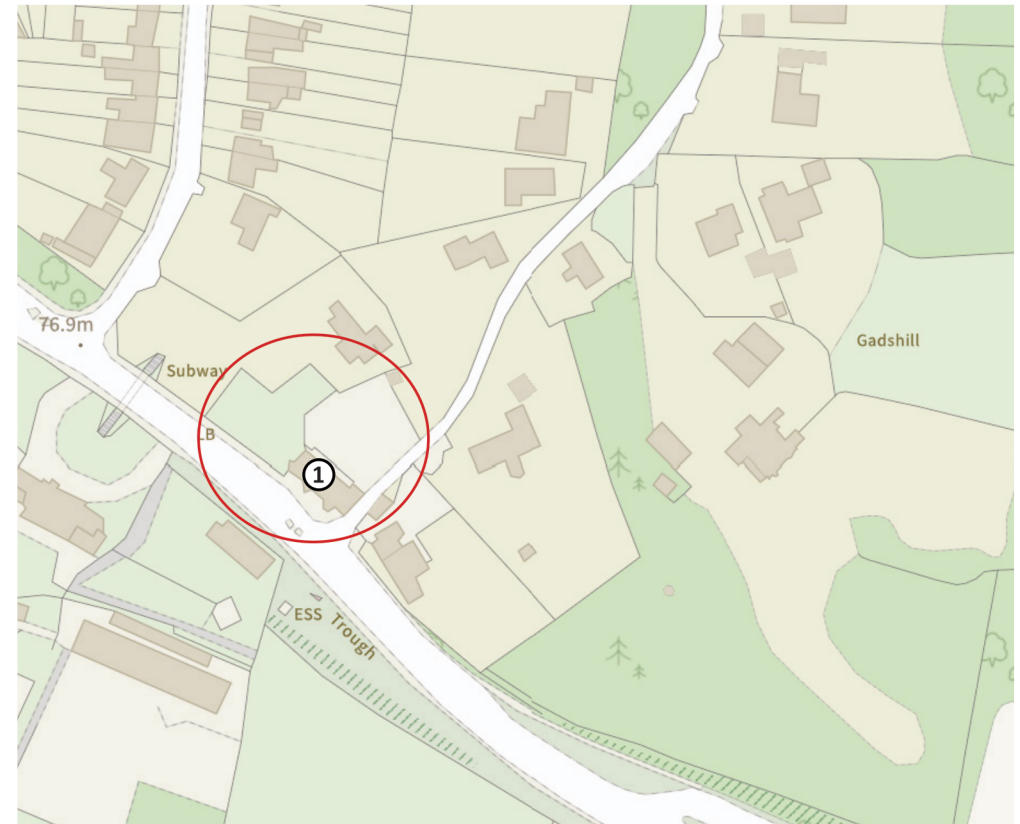


Figure 1 Indicative location of site highlighted in red. The principal building is labelled 1.

2. Historic Development

The site is located within Higham, part of Gravesham Borough, within the county of Kent. Higham is formed of two parts, the first being the original Saxon village to the north (known as Lower Higham) and a settlement to the south (known as Upper or Mid Higham).

Higham derives its name from the Anglian word 'hēh' meaning 'high, tall, important' with the Old English 'hām' a 'village, an estate, homestead' and therefore means 'high village'. The Domesday Book records that Higham and Lower Higham had a population of 56 households, putting it in the largest 20% of settlements recorded at the time.

The site is located in Upper/Mid Higham on the north side of the Gravesend Road, in an area known as Gads Hill. Gads Hill has historically been known as a notorious place for robberies as far back as 1558, as described in a ballad entitled The Robbers of Gad's Hill.

The principal building on site dates to the late 18th/early 19th century and takes its name from a fictional character, Sir John Falstaff, who featured in four of Shakespeare's plays. Falstaff was



Figure 2 1829 Johann Heinrich Ramberg watercolor of Act II, Scene IV: Falstaff enacts the part of the king.

Prince Hal's (the future Henry V), companion who organised a highway robbery at Gad's Hill. Falstaff is said to have been partly modelled on Sir John Oldcastle, a soldier of the Hundred Years' War, with the character named as such, up until the play was registered when it was altered to Falstaff.

As the Sir John Falstaff Inn was constructed on the old Dover Road, about halfway between Rochester and Gravesend, it was a popular place to stay for the many travellers who used the road. A former resident at Gads Hill wrote in 1833 "Between 70 and 80 coaches, vans and mail carts passed that way, besides private carriages, specially those of travellers posting to or from Dover. Regiments too, often passed on their way to Gravesend before they embarked for India; and ships' companies paid off, rowdy and half-tipsy, made the road really dangerous." (Higham Parish Council)

Gads Hill Place, which is Grade I listed and located opposite the Inn, was once the home of Charles Dickens. He bought the property in 1856, planning to rent it, however he ending up living



Figure 3 Engraving of a man outside Sir John Falstaff, circa 1895 from the book "The Old Dover Road."

2. Historic Development

there until he died in 1870. Dickens describes the Falstaff Inn in his book 'The Uncommercial Traveller' and noted that "a little hostelry which no man possessed of a penny was ever known to pass in bad weather."

Outlined below and on the following page, is a detailed cartographic view of the building within the site to show how it has evolved.

Figure 4 clearly shows The Falstaff as a rectangular building set close to the highway on the junction of the principal road (now known as Gravesend Road) and a perpendicular road (now known as Telegraph Hill). This extract shows that there are two projecting bays to the front and



Figure 4 1870 OS map. Indicative location of site in red.

a rear projection set against the roadway. A number of ancillary structures are seen within the grounds of the building, likely used for housing horses and other ancillary functions of the Inn. Gadshill Place is shown to the west, to the south of Gravesend Road. The 1898 map shows the site in slightly less detail but now labels the building an Inn.

The rear projection is no longer present but the building appears to have a greater depth suggesting an additional rear wing has been added by this time. The outbuildings appear to have been extended/alterd, with the smallest outbuilding one seemingly demolished. However, the 1909 (Figure 6) again shows three outbuildings, with the small outbuilding in the same location a that seen in the 1870 map, so it is likely the scale of the map in Figure 5 does not show the site

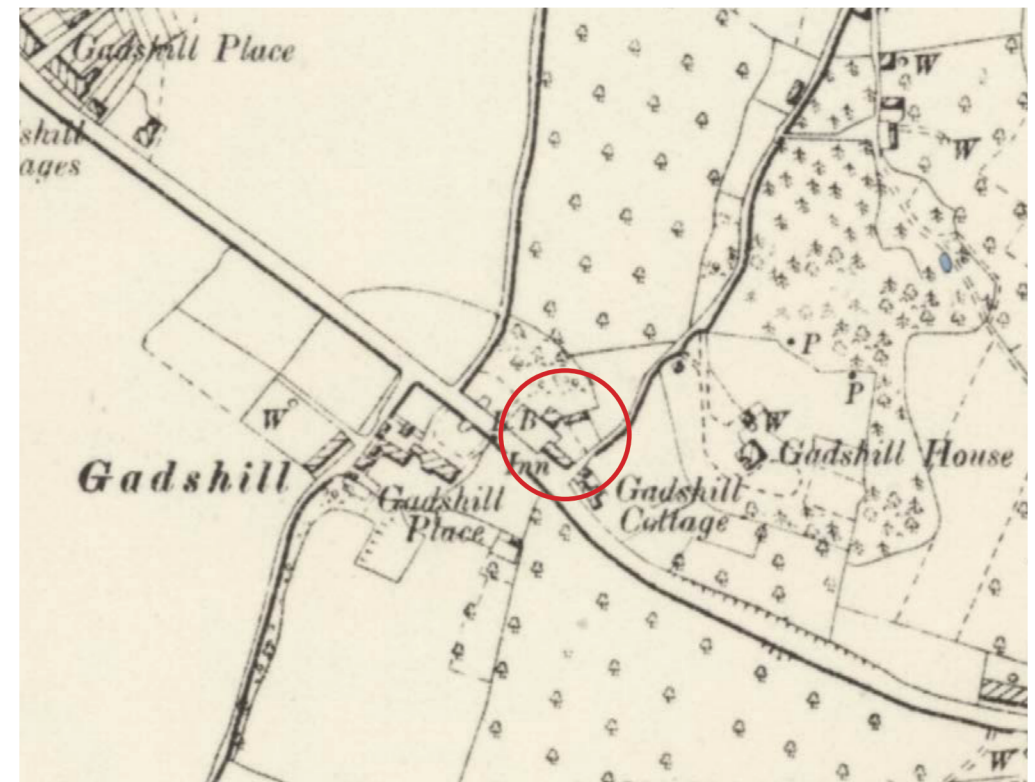


Figure 5 1898 OS map. Indicative location of site in red.

2. Historic Development

in clear enough detail. The 1909 map shows the site in more detail once again. The deeper plan of the building is again more evident here and a small projection to the rear is now shown. Little changes occur to the building, or the site, over the following 50 years. However, the contemporary map shows the outbuildings have been demolished.



Figure 6 1909 OS map.



Figure 7 1946 OS map.



Figure 8 1961 OS map.



Figure 9 Contemporary OS map.

3. The Site

The Falstaff is two storeys in height, above a basement, with accommodation in the attic. The main body of the building is rectangular in shape, constructed in painted brick with a tile roof. There are two projecting canted bays, which are two storeys in height, set either side of the central entrance. To the south-east end there is a gambrel style gable whilst to the north-west end the roof has a hipped end, suggesting this end may have been modified at some point. There are three dormers set into the roof, fronting onto the highway.

Beyond this original phase is another rectangular range, running parallel to the first which is three storeys in height. This range is also constructed in brick with a hipped tile roof and is likely the late 19th century extension evidenced in the historic mapping. This structure has a combination of yellow and red brick and appears to have been altered externally overtime.

To the north and south of the original phase are further additions to the building. To the south is a lean-to structure which ranges in height from 1.5 storeys to 1 storey as the topography rises. This can be seen in Figure 11 with the words 'Good Stabling' painted onto to the front. The northern addition can be seen in Figure 10 and is a two storey structure constructed in brick. It has a simple facade, consisting of three cambered blind windows and a single sash window at ground floor with lintel. The return elevation features another two storey canted bay window which adds visual interest to this element of the building. Adjacent to this is another single storey lean to.

Internally, the building has been altered in various phases to accommodate its continued use as a public house. The plan form of the original/principal phase of construction is appreciable, however it has been altered with a number of walls removed to create an open plan arrangement. This type of alteration is seen to both the ground and first floor levels.

Although all the chimney breasts are retained across the building no original fire inserts remain. The remainder of the features appear to be 20th century with modern bar fixtures throughout the ground floor level.



Figure 10 Etching showing the Inn, date unknown.



Figure 11 1905 postcard

3. The Site - External photographs



Plate 1 South western elevation showing original phase constructed in painted brick. The gambrel style roof is visible in this view.



Plate 2 South western elevation showing side addition.



Plate 3 North western elevation.



Plate 4 View showing 19th century full height rear extension constructed in yellow stock brick.



Plate 5 North eastern elevation showing an area which has been rebuilt in red brick.



Plate 6 Single storey lean to and flat roof type additions to the south.

3. The Site - Internal photographs



Plate 7 Interior photograph showing central bar area.



Plate 8 View towards bay window looking onto Gravesend Road.



Plate 9 View of retained chimney breast with modern insert and mantle.



Plate 10 Bay window within later extension.

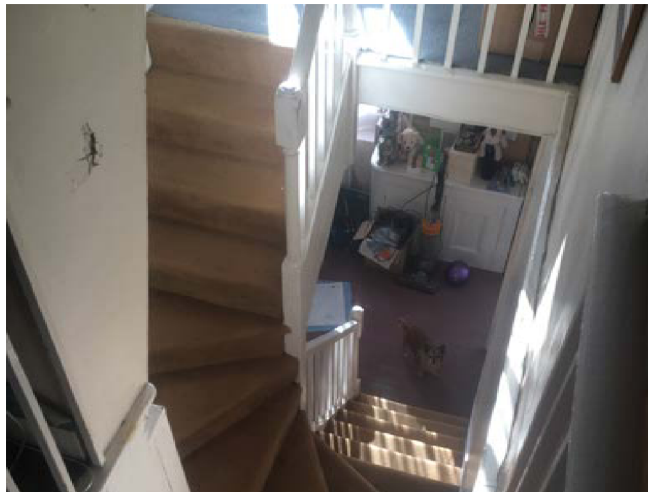


Plate 11 Stair between first and second floor.



Plate 12 Attic level room.

4. Identification of Heritage Assets and Significance Assessment

An inspection of the relevant databases and sources, including the Historic Environment Record (HER), the National Heritage List for England (NHLE), and the Council's website, has identified the relevant heritage assets within the wider context of the site. Following desk based research and analysis, professional judgement has been used to identify and select Heritage Assets whose significances may be affected by changes to their settings or direct impacts.

This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with Historic England's *The Setting of Heritage Assets* GPA 3. In accordance with Paragraph 194 of the NPPF the level of detail is proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

The Heritage Assets that have the potential to be affected by the proposals are outlined below and correspond with the numbering in figure 12.

A. Sir John Falstaff Public House- Grade II

Gadshill Place (Grade I), is located within the wider setting of the site however, due to the intervening distance, built form and vegetation, the proposed scheme is not considered to impact the setting, and therefore special interest of the building. As such, it is not considered further within this report. It is noted on figure 12 as 'B' for clarity.

The following section provides an assessment of significance of the identified Heritage Assets including an assessment of the contribution that its setting makes to this.

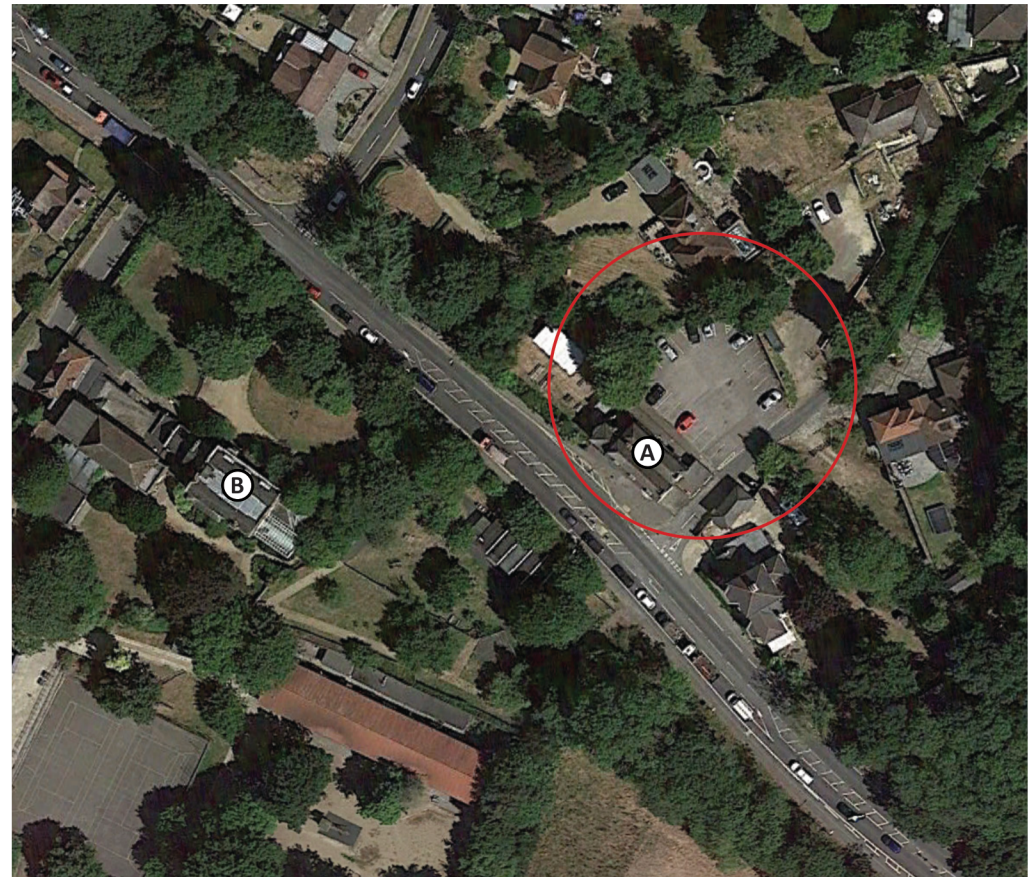


Figure 12 Showing relevant heritage assets.

4. Identification of Heritage Assets and Significance Assessment

Sir John Falstaff - Grade II

The Falstaff was first listed in 1983. The list description reads as follows:

TQ 77 SW HIGHAM GRAVESEND ROAD 3/155 Sir John Falstaff Public House

Late C18 to early C19. Two storeys and attics painted brick. Mansard tiled roof with 3 dormers. Eaves cornice. Three windows including two 3-light bays through 2 floors. Sashes with glazing bars intact. Simple central doorcase flanked by narrow windows. The name of the Inn derives from the fact that Shakespeare made this hill the scene of one of Sir John Falstaff's exploits.

Listing NGR: TQ7109470881.

The building is of architectural interest as being an example of a roadside Inn dating to the 18th century and 19th century. The exterior of the building remains, to a large extent, intact. It still conveys the architectural style and the constructional detailing of the original design, although areas have been altered with additions also added over time. A number of original features have been lost or altered internally with it largely modernised as part of its continued use as a public house.

The structure also holds historic interest demonstrating typical craftsmanship of the periods in which it was constructed. The building does not appear to be associated with a person or architect of interest although it does have connections with Charles Dickens as well as Shakespeare (through its name). The historic interest is also strengthened through its communal value as a public house.

The building retains its original relationship with the road although it has lost its connection with the ancillary buildings to the rear which were demolished during the late 20th century. These structures have been replaced with an area of hardstanding used for parking, the stark appearance of the parking area detracts from the appearance of the building and has reduced the sense of enclosure along the streetscape.

The overall setting of the building is considered to positively contribute to the building's significance although there are elements within its immediate context which clearly detract from this contribution including the loss of its ancillary structures, the stark appearance of the car park area and lack of enclosure in the location. The key element of significance in terms of its setting, is its relationship with the road, as reflected in its higher quality architecture and original and present function.



Plate 13 South western, principal elevation.



Plate 14 Car parking area to the rear.

5. Proposals and Assessment of Impact

Proposal

This section should be read in conjunction with PLC architect's Design and Access Statement, which provides a rationale behind the proposed development.

The proposals seek the construction of a two storey dwelling, with the first floor level partly set within the attic level. The materials employed within the new structure are a combination of painted render and hanging clay tiles with timber doors/window.

Impact

The proposed building is located to the rear of the principal building. Although not located in the exact position of the original outbuildings, the proposal is located within the general positioning, i.e. set away from the Inn and back from the highway. The overall height of the proposed scheme is, as a result of the topography of the landscape, similar to the listed building however, the massing has been carefully considered in order to reduce the visual impact. This is achieved by setting the first floor within the attic space and utilising dormers to provide daylight/sunlight into the property at this level. The proposed positing and massing creates a physical separation between the built form allowing the historic building to be seen as a separate structure.

Architecturally, the proposed building has been designed with a simple traditional palette of render, clay tile and glazing. The use of these materials replicates and complements the main building positively connecting them together.

It is also proposed to install a brick wall with a metal railing above, along the highway. This creates a sense of enclosure in this location which helps to funnel views along the streetscape and create a defined boundary to the listed buildings curtilage.

When considering the impact of the proposed building on The Falstaff, there is an increased awareness of the massing on the site however, this mass has been carefully placed and designed to limit impacts on the setting. The traditional design approach ensures the built form sits comfortably with, and makes reference to, the historic building through its materiality and detailed design.



Figure 13 Proposed site plan

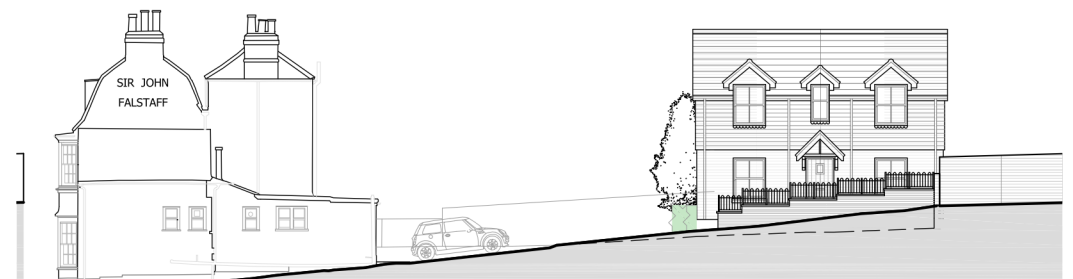


Figure 14 Proposed street scene.

5. Proposals and Assessment of Impact

The re-establishment of built form to the rear of the building recreates a sense of the grouping that the former outbuildings had with the main building and reduces the amount of car parking present to the rear of the building providing a visual enhancement.

There would be a low level of harm caused to the building's historic setting from the increased awareness of massing on site, however, due to the careful consideration of the placement, massing, detailed design and materiality of the building the scheme has sought to mitigate the impact it has on the contribution that setting makes to the special interest of the building. In addition to this, the rear element of the site provides an overall lower contribution to the building's significance when compared to views of the principal elevation and as such it is considered to have a greater capacity for change.

The harm caused is considered to be "less than substantial" in nature, at the lower end of the spectrum and should be considered alongside the benefits brought forward by the scheme including the re-establishing of a built form grouping with the listed building, reduction in car parking and the creation of a sense of enclosure to the streetscape. The planning benefits, discussed within the accompanying statement, should also be considered.

In the preparation of this Heritage Statement, the proposed development has had special regard for the desirability of preserving the building or its setting in accordance with Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The proposals have also been evaluated in the terms of NPPF paragraphs, as well as local policies, and are not contrary to either and we therefore see no reason why the application should not be viewed favourably by the council from a heritage perspective.

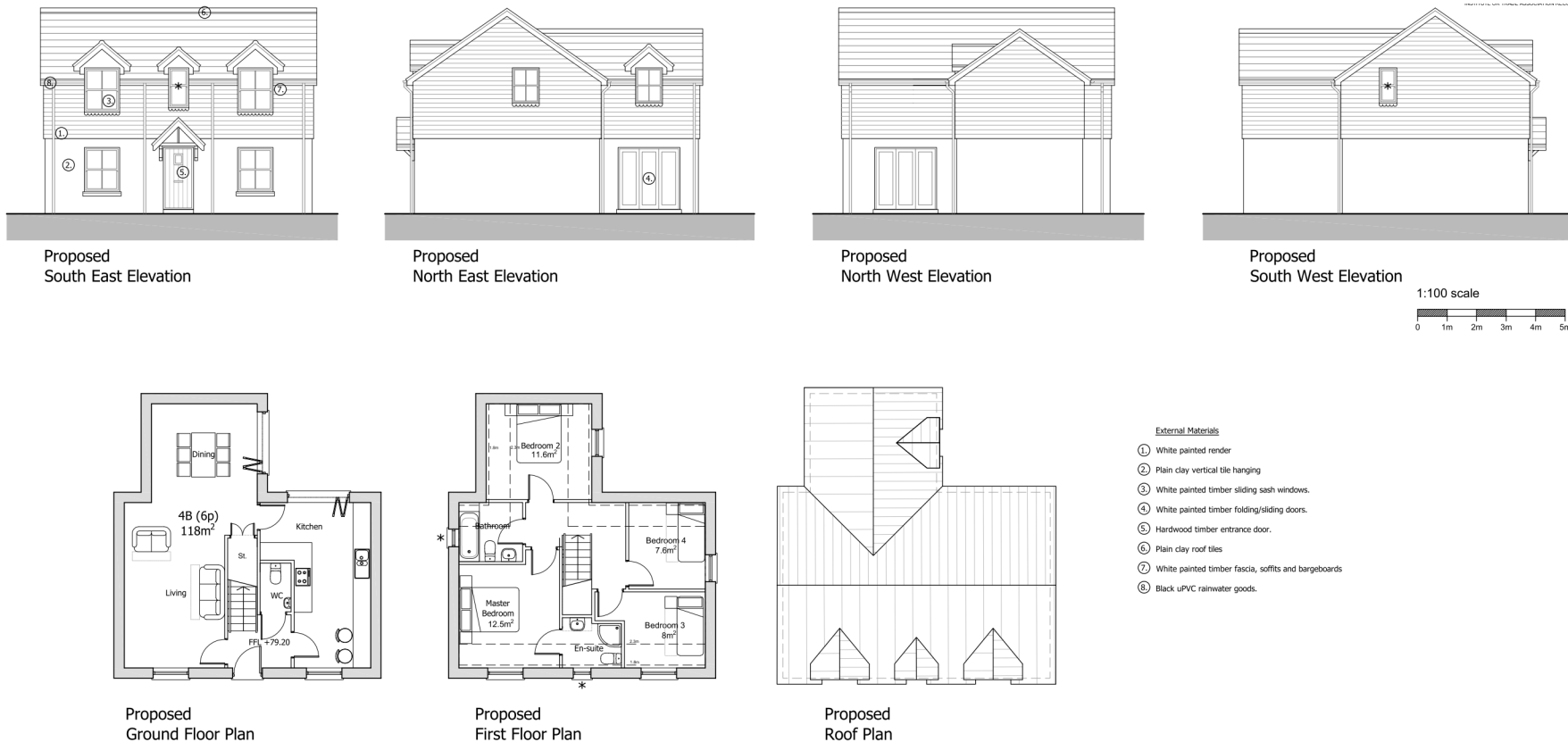


Figure 15 Proposed elevations and plans.

Appendix 1: Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

Legislation

Legislation regarding Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the 1990 Act).

Section 16(2) states that in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or 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.

Section 66(1) states that, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development that affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority (LPA) or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Section 72(1) states that, in the exercise of planning functions, special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

The term “preserve”, within the context of Section 66, has been defined within *South Lakeland District Council v Secretary of State [1992]*, where it was held that the “desirability of preserving” creates a presumption against harmful changes, but not a presumption against any change. Case law has established that the preservation of the setting of a listed building requires considerable importance and weight (i.e. the Barnwell Manor judgment) and that a decision-maker who has worked through the paragraphs of the NPPF in accordance with their terms will have complied with the statutory duty set out in the 1990 Act (i.e. the judgment in *Jones v Mordue & Others [2015]*).

In the judgment for *Palmer v Herefordshire Council* ([2016] EWCA Civ 106), a discussion on the balance between harm and benefit to a listed building was undertaken. It was accepted that “where proposed development would affect a listed building or its settings in different ways, some positive and some negative, the decision-maker may legitimately conclude that although each of the effects as an impact, taken together there is no overall adverse effect on the listed building or its setting”. In essence, where there is some harm and some benefit, these should be given the same weight, and where they are equal in measure, the effect on the listed building would be neutral, and thus its significance would be preserved.

This approach was confirmed in *City & Country Bramshill Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities And Local Government & Ors [2021]*. In this case Lord Justice Lindblom concluded that ‘the considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preservation [of the special architectural or historic interest of a listed building or its setting], should tip the scales to produce an unequal balance in its favour. However, the SoS should still take account of the actual severity of any change, or scale of change as the Mayoral SPG puts it, and so the extent of impact, as well as the relevance to its significance, and the importance of the asset. The overall weight to be given to any harm, and the

conflict with policy, should be a product of these factors.’

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

The policies relevant to heritage are outlined within chapter 16, ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’. The NPPF places much emphasis on ‘significance’ which it defines as:

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

The NPPF directs local planning authorities to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting and the level of detailed assessment should be ‘proportionate’ to the assets’ importance. (Paragraph 194).

Paragraph 195 states that the significance any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal should be identified and assessed. This includes any assets affected by development within their settings. This Significance Assessment should be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal, ‘to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal’.

Paragraph 199 requires 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.’

It is then clarified that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, either through alteration, destruction or development within its setting, should require, “clear and convincing justification” (Paragraph 200). This paragraph outlines that substantial harm to grade II listed heritage assets should be exceptional, rising to ‘wholly exceptional’ for those assets of the highest significance such as scheduled monuments, Grade I and grade II* listed buildings or registered parks and gardens as well as World Heritage Sites.

Paragraphs 201 and 202 discuss different levels of harm caused to heritage assets and requires a balance to be applied in the context of heritage assets, including the recognition of potential benefits accruing from a development. In the case of non-designated heritage assets, Paragraph 203 requires a Local Planning Authority to make a “balanced judgement” having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

With regards to conservation areas and the settings of heritage assets, paragraph 206 requires Local Planning Authorities to look for opportunities for new development to enhance or better reveal their significance.

Planning Practice Guidance

This guidance supports the NPPF and reiterates the importance of conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. An important consideration should be whether development proposals adversely affect a key element of the heritage asset’s significance:

‘it is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development that is to be assessed’. The level of ‘substantial harm’ is stated to be a high bar, which may not arise in many cases. Whether development proposals cause substantial harm will be a judgment in the decision-taking process, having regard to the circumstances of the case and by applying the relevant NPPF policies. Such harm may arise from works to the heritage asset or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as:

the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, and may be more extensive than the curtilage.

A thorough assessment of the harm development proposals will have on this setting needs to consider, and be proportionate to, the heritage asset’s significance and the degree to which any changes enhance or detract from that significance, and the ability to appreciate and experience it.

Local Planning Policy

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy - Adopted September 2014

Policy CS 19: Development and Design Principles

The policy states (*inter alia*):

New development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It will conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment, integrate well with the surrounding local area and meet anti-crime standards.

Policy CS20: Heritage and the Historic Environment

The policy states (*inter alia*):

Proposals and initiatives will be supported which preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of the Borough’s heritage assets, their setting where it contributes to the significance of the asset and their interpretation and enjoyment, especially where these contribute to the distinct identity of the Borough.

and

When considering the impact of a proposed development on a designated heritage asset, the weight that will be given to the asset’s conservation value will be commensurate with the importance and significance of the asset.

Appendix 1: Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

Guidance Notes

Conservation Principles, Policies, and Guidance (English Heritage, April 2008)

This document outlines Historic England's approach to the sustainable management of the historic environment. While primarily intended to ensure consistency in their own advice and guidance through the planning process, the document is commended to LPAs to ensure that all decisions about change affecting the historic environment are informed and sustainable. This document was published in line with the philosophy of PPS5, yet remains relevant with the NPPF and PPG, the emphasis placed upon the importance of understanding significance to properly assess the effects of change to heritage assets. Guidance within the document describes a range of 'heritage values' that constitute a heritage asset's significance to be established systematically; the four main heritage values include: aesthetic, evidential, communal or historical. The document emphasises that:

considered change offers the potential to enhance and add value to places...it is the means by which each generation aspires to enrich the historic environment

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes

GPA 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

This document provides advice on the numerous ways in which decision-making in the historic environment can be undertaken, emphasising that the first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to its significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, this document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged, stating that:

...application proposals that affect the historic environment are much more likely to gain the necessary permissions and create successful places if they are designed with the knowledge and understanding of the significance of the heritage assets they may affect.

The advice suggests a structured staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information, this is as follows:

- Understand the significance of the affected assets;
- understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
- avoid, minimise, and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF
- look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
- justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change;
- offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

The advice reiterates that direct physical change may affect heritage assets, or by change in their setting. Assessment of the nature, extent, and importance of the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting at an early stage can assist the planning process resulting in informed decision-taking.

This document sets out the recommended steps for assessing significance and the impact of application proposals upon a heritage asset, including examining the asset and its setting and analysing local policies and information sources. In assessing the impact of a development proposal on the significance of a heritage asset the document emphasises that the cumulative impact of incremental small-scale changes may have as great an effect on the significance of a heritage asset as a larger scale change.

GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (December 2017) (2nd Edition)

This advice note focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. This guidance updates that previously published by English Heritage (The Setting of Heritage Assets 2011) in order to ensure that it is fully compliant with the NPPF and is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the 2011 document. It does not present a divergence in either the definition of setting or the way in which it should be assessed.

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'. The guidance emphasises that setting is not a heritage asset or a heritage designation and that its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset itself. Elements of setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of a heritage asset.

While setting is largely a visual concept, with views considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, setting, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by other environmental factors, including historic associations.

This document states that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset. It is further stated that the contribution made to an asset's significance by their setting will vary depending on the nature of the asset and its setting. Different heritage assets have the capacity to accommodate changes and, therefore, setting should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Although not prescriptive in setting out how this assessment should be carried out, Historic England recommend using a '5-step process' to assess any effects of a development proposals on the setting and significance of a heritage asset:

- Identifying the heritage assets affected and their settings;
- Assessing whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
- Assessing the effect of the development proposals on the significance of the heritage asset(s);

- Maximising enhancement and minimising harm;
- Making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes.