

Alford Manor House Alford, Lincolnshire.



**Conservation Plan: Volume One
Cultural Significance: Issues & Policies
October 2006**

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Alford Manor House Conservation Plan: Volume One

ALFORD MANOR HOUSE

CONSERVATION PLAN

OCTOBER 2006

**Volume One:
Cultural Significance, Issues, and Policies**

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Conservation Architects , Yew Tree Nurseries, Frampton West, BOSTON**

**ALFORD MANOR HOUSE CONSERVATION PLAN
VOLUME ONE**

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INTRODUCTION

This Conservation Plan has been prepared at the end of a long and complicated repair and alterations project, which commenced with a feasibility study produced in April 1999 and for which the building work was completed in May 2006. The process of achieving this end involved extensive research and increased knowledge of both the history and development of the Manor House. A full list of the detailed reports that were prepared and presented by a variety of specialists can be found in Volume Two. The outcome of this work is that the understanding of the Manor House site, its significance and issues affecting it can now be much more effectively gauged. This also enables the formulation of policies for adoption by the owners, the Alford and District Civic Trust, to be a close match to the needs of the site.

The ultimate aim of this Plan is to ensure that any future changes to the buildings and site, both physical and managerial, are considered in a way that can both enhance and conserve the asset in an appropriate way. This Plan replaces in full the earlier Plan that was produced by Heritage Lincolnshire. That document should be clearly marked as superseded.

Heritage Assets

The principal asset is the grade II* listed Manor House. This sits on a large site in the centre of Alford, on the north side of West Street. The grounds, with mature trees, gardens to front and rear, boundary walls and railings are also a key heritage asset. The combination of the house and its mature and attractive setting makes this an essential part of the Alford Conservation Area (designated 1970). The site also contains two secondary buildings, both from the nineteenth century, a coach house and wash house. These are part of the domicile quarters of the site and also part of the heritage assets. These buildings are not listed in their own right but form part of the curtilage.

Use and Ownership

All of the site and buildings come under the ownership of the Alford and District Civic Trust Ltd. The registered office is at this address.

The house is open to the public and functions in part as a heritage attraction and local museum. There is a fully equipped kitchen which allows refreshments to be offered to the public. It also provides opportunities for private hire for functions and weddings. Not all of the building is fully used at present; in particular the eastern extension. Further changes may result from as yet unplanned uses for this area.

The wash house and coach house are ancillary to the house and may be developed further to provide additional functions.

The grounds provide a parking area for visitors and also a pleasure garden which can provide fruit, herbs and vegetables for sale.

Purpose and Scope

The Conservation Plan is intended to assist the Trust in both understanding and managing these heritage assets. By defining the significance of the assets and exploring the threats which may face them, it is possible to define policies which will help to ensure that the heritage of the site is safeguarded. This is not intended to prevent any future changes or development but rather to allow potential to be unlocked in a way which is sensitive to the whole site and the part that it plays not only in the local community but as one of the small percentage of buildings which are considered nationally to be of this level of significance.

This document deals with the house as the main asset and also the other buildings on the site. The setting within the town and Conservation Area is also considered as factors outside the direct control of the Trust may have a bearing on the future of the house.

The Plan consists of two volumes. These are intended to relate to each other as follows:

Volume 1 : 'Cultural Significance, Issues and Policies' is intended to be used as a working document by those involved in the management and development of the site. This also includes an introduction and gazetteer.

Volume 2 : 'Understanding the Site', also includes the two reports produced by Field Archaeological Services so that all current material relating to the history, form and development of the building is located together for ease of reference.

Whenever changes or decisions need to be made regarding the site, they should be measured against these documents. It is crucial that the Plan and all of its recommendations is adopted by the full Trust Council and that copies are provided for all decision makers.

The documents have been prepared by Anderson and Glenn, conservation architects in conjunction with Field Archaeology Services. The preparation and publication of the Plan has been made possible by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

PART 1 CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The small market town of Alford has been described by Nikolaus Pevsner as 'small and uneventful'. Being well away from any large towns or cities it has not been engulfed in large suburban developments nor has it required any trunk roads to it or around it. Although medieval in origins, with its market charter dating from 1283 and a parish church of the fourteenth and fifteenth century periods, much of the historic fabric of the town is of the eighteenth century. The street pattern is informal and there is a focus of buildings and activity both around the curiously shaped market place and also the raised churchyard.

The town's peak of development came in the second half of the nineteenth century when there were four windmills and also a railway connection made in 1848. In this period of prosperity the church was significantly enlarged by the prolific architect with Lincolnshire connections, Sir George Gilbert Scott. St. Wilfrid's church remains at the heart of the town, one windmill, still working, survives, but the station and the railway line were axed by Dr Beeching in the 1960s as the former road to it 'Beeching's Drive,' now ironically attests.

Alford Manor House is close to the town centre but stands back from the relatively wide West Street, creating an imposing and attractive presence. It is thought to have been one of a number of manors in the old town. It has been known as Alford Manor House since the eighteenth century and is the only known manor surviving within the town itself.

The most distinguished owner in the mid seventeenth century, the lawyer Sir Robert Christopher was an important benefactor to the town and is buried along with his wife in St. Wilfrid's Church with a fine alabaster monument and recumbent effigies. Links between the town and the manor house remain strong today.

Of the forty four listed buildings in the town of Alford two are listed in grade I (the Parish Church and Hoyles windmill) and two are grade II* (Alford Manor House and Hanby Hall, Church Street). The star rating only applies to less than ten percent of all listed buildings.

The 'Understanding the Place' set out in Volume Two provides the basis for establishing the values of significance – what makes the place special. This section of the Plan demonstrates how the significance of the site has been assessed and is then followed by a general statement of significance for each element of the site. These values are weighted to assist the Trust should competing or conflicting elements link to a decision requirement in the future. Generally the higher the level of significance the more weight should be given to that element.

BASIS FOR ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following documents have been used to identify cultural significance:

The Conservation Plan (1996) James Semple Kerr
Conservation Plans for Historic Places (1998) Heritage Lottery Fund
Conservation Plans in Action (1999) English Heritage
Informed Conservation (2001) Kate Clark
Conservation Management Plans (2005) Heritage Lottery Fund

These documents provide a useful basis but the essence of each Conservation Plan is that it must relate to the unique set of criteria which define the individual site. This is why the research already carried out, which seeks to understand Alford Manor House, has to be the principal basis for selection of significance.

As well as ranking the values of significance this section also explains and describes why each element is important so that those using the Plan can enter fully into the process. A detailed and structured knowledge of the asset is essential to formulating and developing future management plans.

Each element is assessed on the basis of how it can demonstrate significance in the following categories:

History: *British; local; connections with notable persons or events; industrial; social.*

Archaeology: *Potential sites; information from finds/discoveries; the historic development of domestic plans.*

Architecture: *Character; aesthetic qualities; innovations in structure; phasing; vernacular survival.*

Townscape: *Sense of place; group value; wider context; visual impact.*

Conservation: *Conservation practice; ecology; landscape; craft techniques.*

Community: *Local pride and identity; community use; amenity value.*

In order to weight the performance of each element a table of ranking has been developed, from high to low:

International Significance – demonstration of connections with international history and culture.

Exceptional Significance – relevance to British and local history culture and/or are of extraordinary or unique archaeological or architectural merit.

Considerable Significance – elements which can be strongly shown to demonstrate several areas of cultural significance.

Moderate Significance – elements which can be shown to relate to more than one area of cultural significance but do not demonstrate any one area to a strong degree.

Some Significance – elements which have at least one area of cultural significance.

Intrusive – these may include some elements which of themselves have a degree of cultural significance but detract from areas of greater significance.

No scoring system has been used in this Plan. The weighting of significance is not a scientific process; it is a matter of value judgement based on the knowledge and experience of the contributors to the Plan. The ranking is provided to assist in understanding the relative importance of different elements of the site. This is not to imply that something of a lesser significance can be swept away, because all parts make the whole, but it should serve as a management tool for setting priorities and policies.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Alford Manor House was described by the distinguished architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner as 'the best house in the town'. When it was initially constructed around 1611 as the main house for one of the manors of Alford it must have made a great impression on the local inhabitants because of its size and construction. At that time few buildings would have been constructed in brick. It is known from the contemporary account of John Leland that in the seventeenth century most of Alford was constructed of mud and straw.

The most notable owner of the house was Sir Robert Christopher in the mid seventeenth century, who made some alterations to the property in his time. He had a close association with the town and left money to the school, almshouses and church where his fine tomb still stands. Although after his death the house was tenanted it was clearly well looked after and updated and in the nineteenth century the land agent John Higgins who lived in part of the house was a distinguished and well respected man in the local community.

Since 1967 it has played a vital role in the town and district of Alford. The Alford and District Civic Trust was especially formed to save the building for the town and it has played a part in local life since then as museum, tourist information centre and a place where community events such as the annual craft market can take place. It has also brought trade and tourists into the town for the many visitors to the area who have spent time at the Manor House Museum.

The Manor House has therefore played a significant part in the local history of Alford and this area of East Lindsey in Lincolnshire. The house is also important in this context of the historic core of Alford and its conservation area. It forms the largest and most spectacular thatched structure in a group of thatched buildings which are all found in West Street to the west of the Manor. Such a large group of thatched properties surviving within an urban context is unusual and makes the setting of the Manor House important in townscape terms.

The form of construction of the manor house is distinctive and unusual being neither a fully timber framed structure nor a coherent masonry structure but a hybrid. This form of composite structure is not well known. As far as we are aware there is no other similar structure in the county of Lincolnshire and although there are others in the country of which one has been documented in Hertfordshire, they are not well enough documented to know how common this type of building was. Alford is the earliest securely dated example. It seems very likely that the time period in which this type of structure would have been built would be fairly restricted and located in areas where timber structures were in decline and brick was in ascendance. This means that the construction of the manor house is both architecturally and archaeologically significant.

Although not of itself unusual in terms of material or style, the thatched roof of the Manor House is a large example of this type of roof covering. Many old manor houses would originally have been thatched but in the fashions and changes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the thatch was usually replaced with the local manufactured material – plain tiles, pantiles or slate. The survival of this roof covering, (even though it is not the original material), and much of the historic roof structure that was designed to take the thatch, is also of significance architecturally and archaeologically.

It seems likely that the site area on which the house stands is still at the extent which it was when first built. It also retains some of the outbuildings from the nineteenth century and the plan form of the garden from that period. Internally changes in its use and layout can be traced. It therefore with its internal plan and external relationships demonstrates how a manor house has changed and evolved since its construction in the early seventeenth century up to its last domestic tenancy in the early twentieth century. This is of significance historically, architecturally and archaeologically.

To summarise the manor house site is of considerable regional significance in terms of its setting and in terms of its constructional form it is of exceptional significance to the region and the nation.

STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR EACH ELEMENT

Alford Manor House

Alford Manor House original H plan structure is of exceptional significance for the following reasons:

- It is an example of an unusual form of composite brick and timber construction that was built in one main phase in the early seventeenth century around 1611. Sufficient evidence exists within the fabric of the building for expert archaeologists to provide convincing conjectural reconstructions of both the plan form and principal elevations of the gable ends. (*archaeological potential; innovations in structure; vernacular survival;*)
- The survival of this large area of thatched roofing on a manor house makes it an important object in terms of thatching history and craft. Photographs of the early thatch exist as do those of the actual rethatching taking place in the late

1960s. Although the 1960s work removed some of the rafters in the central range and all of the historic long straw thatch, sufficient evidence was found during the recent project by the thatching archaeologist to establish the original thatching material (long straw) and methods. All of the original roof structure that had survived has been retained in the newly repaired building and the new long straw roof covering was laid using traditional craft techniques. Care was also taken to preserve a layer of the reed thatch from the 1960s on the east wing roof. (*archaeological potential; architectural character; vernacular survival; craft techniques, conservation practice.*)

The Manor House is of considerable significance for the following reasons:

- The building retains and exhibits its original H plan and also shows clearly the later alterations that have taken place throughout its existence. These can demonstrate different periods of English domestic architecture and fittings. These fittings and details have been repaired and conserved. It was also the home of Sir Robert Christopher in the mid seventeenth century who was of national importance in the Civil War period. (*British history; social history phasing, vernacular survival; aesthetic qualities; conservation practice.*)
- The house retains much of its early seventeenth century domestic plan form, an interesting period of transition from the medieval plan form. (*historic development of domestic plans, social history, archaeological potential*)

The following elements are of considerable significance:

The stair in the west range

- This staircase exhibits three phases of development throughout its progress from ground floor to attic floor. The lowest section is early nineteenth century, the first attic section is late seventeenth century and the top section dates from the original first phase of construction. (*archaeological information; architectural character; phasing, vernacular survival*)

The wall paper in F6

- This paper, found beneath later linings, is a considerable area of original early nineteenth century hand blocked paper with borders. It is high status paper that was probably chosen by former land agent John Higgins. It has been expertly conserved. (*local history; aesthetic qualities; conservation practice.*)

Roof and floor structures

- The seventeenth century roof structure is of pegged A frames with collars and morticed and tenoned clasped purlins. The rafters are numbered with five separate sequences of carpenter's marks. The first and attic floor structures also have carpenters marks in both Roman and Arabic numerals. (*archaeological information; phasing; vernacular survival*)

The Eastern Extension

The eastern extension, possibly built off the earlier boundary wall in the early nineteenth formed additional offices to the Manor House when it was used as residence and offices for the Manners family land agent John Higgins. It is of moderate significance for the following reasons:

- It shows the development of the house in the later period and has a curious plan form allowing it to function on a constricted site. It retains some architectural features and also preserves within it the outer eastern wall of the Manor House. It demonstrates some of the out offices that were required by the house in the nineteenth century. (*social history; local history; the historic development of domestic plans; phasing.*)

Coach House and Wash House

These buildings constructed in the local Farlesthorpe brick in the early nineteenth century are of moderate significance for the following reasons:

- These are typical simple outbuildings of the period and show the type of additional functions that were required with the increasing affluence of land owners and tenants in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. (*social history; architectural character; group value.*)

The Grounds

The grounds comprise the rear garden area with its boundary wall, the front garden with its reconstructed front wall and railings and the western area between the house and the drain. The grounds are of considerable significance for the following reasons:

- The area to the west contains a number of mature trees, which are protected by tree preservation orders. They also provide a habitat for local wildlife. The gardens exhibit some aspects of garden planning from the nineteenth century. Little is known about either the earlier layout of the grounds or any previous structures, which may have existed on this site. However the absence of major recent development in the grounds would suggest that preservation of earlier features might be very good. The grounds also play a significant part in local community activities. (*potential archaeological site; sense of place; ecology, landscape; community use; amenity value.*)

Within the grounds is the twentieth century structure Hackett's barn which is considered to be intrusive although it has got some community use value.

Setting in Alford

The site as a whole is of considerable significance to the context of Alford for the following reasons:

- The house, with its front garden and railings, is a key building in the wider setting of Alford Conservation Area and also part of an important group of

thatched buildings within an urban context. (*vernacular survival, sense of place; group value; visual impact; wider context; local pride and identity*)

- The Manor House has played a significant part in the history and development of the town of Alford throughout its existence. (*local history; connection with notable persons; community use; amenity value*)

PART 2 ISSUES AND VULNERABILITIES

SUMMARY

This section is required in order to understand how the site can become vulnerable to change through man made decisions or natural processes. Some changes can be beneficial, others may cause harm. Sites can face problems due to location, management or condition which may require active solutions to ensure that the heritage asset is not harmed. By exploring these issues, looking at past, present and future vulnerabilities, the Trust can be prepared for problems in the future, and apply policies designed to assist in their resolution.

As a Grade II* listed building the house and its built structures are to a certain extent secured by legislation affecting listed buildings. The site is also in the Conservation Area which affords additional protection particularly to the setting of the site. The Tree Preservation orders also covers the major trees. However there are unfortunately many examples of listed buildings falling into disrepair and neglect and also of well meaning but inappropriate works being undertaken. The Conservation Plan therefore offers additional help in highlighting potential issues before they may otherwise become apparent.

ISSUE 1: UNDERSTANDING

The Manor House

The opening up of the building, during the two recent contracts (opening up and repairs and alterations), has allowed considerable advances in the understanding of the site. The constructs of the history of the Manor House and its phasing and development have radically changed as a result of this work and demonstrate the importance of the process of archaeologically recording structures as they are opened up during building works. Had that investigative work not been undertaken a huge amount of new information about the house would have been lost.

There are still areas of uncertainty within the early house and in particular the layout of the lower part of the original eastern staircase.

Further photographs of the building may become available and also new leads on documentary research may present themselves. There is for example an archive relating to the Higgins Collection the whereabouts of which have not yet been established. Further information may be discovered from local sources as yet unknown or unexplored.

The house has not as yet been refurnished or fitted with significant interpretation panels. It was previously rather cluttered with objects which did not directly relate to the house or its development. Interpretation information was poorly displayed and sometimes inaccurate due to earlier misunderstandings of the history and form of construction of the house.

The Eastern Extension

Hardly any opening up work was undertaken in this area. It is the part of the house most likely to undergo further alterations. Future intervention here may lead to additional information about the later period of the house.

The Coach House and Washhouse

Although relatively simple structures these may yield additional information if they are explored or opened up in the future. The suggestion to establish WCs in the coach house may include disturbance of floors, which could lead to the potential for new archaeological discoveries.

The Grounds

Little is understood about the development of the grounds and also about any earlier structures on the site. Works to replan the grounds and gardens are very likely to reveal additional evidence about the earlier buildings, layout of grounds and also plant materials.

Setting in Alford

Further early maps, documents and photographs could shed further light on the earlier environs of the house and the town as a whole.

ISSUE 2: AWARENESS AND SETTING

The house and its site are prominent within Alford and with the improved landscaping at the front it is now even more apparent. Previous self sets and clutter of inappropriate external furniture and planting formerly concealed the splendour of the front setting of the Manor House.

Signage in and around the house required to attract new visitors and functions may if not thought through coherently, bring back clutter and disarray.

As a result of the publicity from the repair project for the house, increased use and visitor numbers may result. It is important for the house to sustain itself to ensure that it is well known and promoted throughout the region. This may require careful management to ensure that the building, with its sensitive historic finishes, is not overwhelmed by visiting crowds.

There has been a tendency by the Highways Authority to place traffic and other signage inappropriately in relation to an important listed building such as this. There are also issues of the type of materials used for pavements and road coverings in front of the building. Harsh modern materials do not sit happily with the historic brickwork and natural stone paving.

Fortunately adjacent buildings do not impinge significantly on the actual setting of the house. The nearest building, the Methodist Church, is also listed and has had a

conversion to new uses of the front of the building meaning that its future is potentially reasonably secure.

ISSUE 3: CONDITION

The Manor House

The house is now in a good condition following the extensive repair and building works. In the past however essential maintenance of crucial issues such as rainwater goods was overlooked. There was also a problem with well meaning amateur involvement in exercises such as repointing which caused untold damage to the fabric.

Numerous creepers were allowed previously to grow up the front of the building meaning that vital maintenance could not be done to brickwork in this area and some windows were largely covered by growth and so could not be decorated.

The thatch will in its initial seasons produce straw debris which will be liable to clog up gutters to the rear of the building. It will also require re-ridging within fifteen years and may need attention to clear leaves and other matter out of the wire netting to avoid decay to the thatching material.

Cast iron although a durable material needs regular maintenance and paintwork.

On the rear of the building in particular, the external ground level is higher than the interior ground floor level. Special lime plasters have been used here to contain salts and also breathable paint finishes. These areas could suffer if adequate ventilation is not maintained and also if they are incorrectly painted.

Storm damage may result in the odd slipped tile or slate even on newly covered roofs leading to water or snow damage.

All systems such as lightning conductor, fire extinguishers, alarms, and all services and equipment need regular testing and maintenance to ensure effectiveness.

In the past records may not have been kept of building repairs nor of materials used. As a result of the recent building projects there are now health and safety files which list works undertaken and materials used.

The Eastern Extension

Essential repairs and redecorations have also been carried out to this wing. It has not however been fully refurbished. There are areas where there are layers of nineteenth century wall paper for example, which need attention.

The loft space in this wing is difficult to access by an existing tortuous staircase route. It may get overlooked in routine checks.

Coach House and Wash House

These buildings have had basic repairs carried out only. Roof coverings have not been removed and so these may be more prone to storm damage.

Both buildings have build up of ground levels on their rear walls and will be prone to damp without adequate ventilation.

The Grounds

Prior to work commencing some of the trees were not in good condition and had not been regularly inspected or maintained.

As a result of the building works the gardens at the rear had not been able to be maintained to the normal standard. That is now being addressed.

ISSUE 4 : SECURITY

As a result of the recent works the building now has first rate fire and security alarm systems together with CCTV cameras in key locations.

In the past too many fire exit signs were installed, mostly in inappropriate and visually intrusive locations

Previously many people have had copies of the keys to the building thus reducing the security of the premises.

The rear yard is locked to protect the rear area and the external doors have high level security locks.

There have been problems in recent times prior to the construction works with the coach house area in particular attracting local youths for out of hours drinking sessions. The new fencing and gates may have put a stop to that.

ISSUE 5: ACCESS

The Manor House

Access for the disabled was improved during the recent project. There is now a lift to the first floor and the extent of disabled access has been improved. There are still some areas where this is not possible because of the nature of the historic construction of the building where each room is at a slightly different level from its neighbour. It has not been technically feasible to provide access to the attic floor for other than the able bodied.

One disabled WC has been provided within the building.

Intellectual access is currently available using photos and CCTV. Further and more detailed interpretation and displays will be made in the future.

The Eastern Extension

This has steps up between each room and narrow corridors. The first floor is reached from the main house but again via a large step up. The first floor attic room is reached by a very awkward narrow winding staircase. This area cannot be made accessible for the disabled without considerable alteration.

The Grounds

A ramped access has been provided from the rear courtyard to the upper gardens level. Routes around the gardens are not easy to use as these are on grass.

Within the grounds new paving has been laid to give access to the front door and side garden entrance. The route to the car park however is not way marked and is a long and awkward route for a disabled person. There is no parking bay set aside for disabled use.

There are no lavatories in the grounds available for functions that may be held there.

ISSUE 6: CONFLICTS

The increased use of the house for visitors and other functions could cause a conflict with the need to retain floor surfaces and friable decorative surfaces where original materials have survived. There have already been some issues where high heels have caused damage to timber floors.

There may be a need to increase revenue to support the building which could lead to pressure for changes to the plan form or room use.

ISSUE 7 RESOURCES

Keeping the building maintained to a suitable standard will require significant resources.

The Trust membership has a relatively high age profile and membership has dropped off during the period that the house has had to be out of operation.

PART 3: POLICIES

A VISION FOR THE ALFORD MANOR HOUSE SITE

The Key Issues

The Manor House site is an important heritage asset which is significant locally, regionally and also nationally. It has recently undergone a transformation in terms of repairs to the fabric, the understanding of its history and development and improvements to its accessibility. It is crucial that the momentum gained by this work is not lost and that high standards are adopted for all future development and continuing maintenance of the site is afforded the highest priority.

The Key Solutions

THE BASIS FOR CONSERVATION POLICES

These are derived from four key ideas that have become evident from the study of the site and the understanding of the place as follows:

1. Alford Manor House is of great importance to the town of Alford in terms of its local history, sense of place and attractive environment.
2. The significance of the site should be understood and retained for future generations.
3. Policies must provide a framework to guide the Alford and District Civic Trust in how to look after the site, and how to evaluate future proposals for the development or enhancement of the site.
4. Policies must recognise the contribution, support, concerns and aspirations of the members of the Alford Civic Trust.

Aims of the Conservation Policies

- To secure the setting, character and significance of the Alford Manor House site for present and future generations by placing conservation at the heart of all decisions affecting the planning and management of the site.
- To protect the significance and historical integrity of the site by developing and implementing effective regimes for repair, conservation, maintenance and security in line with current best conservation practice.
- To enhance the heritage assets of the site for public benefit without physical or visual detriment to historically important features.
- To promote better understanding of the significance of the site through interpretation, education and promotion.
- To continue to improve access to the site in both physical and intellectual ways.
- To encourage the Trust to develop further detailed policies to simplify the running of the Manor House and make the acquisition of new participating members a possibility.

POLICIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

It is unlikely that in the near future there will be any proposals for new development of any great extent within the grounds of the Manor House. There may however be a need to provide some additional facilities to serve the house and garden events. Changes to the existing outbuildings and the eastern extension will constitute development, and so will modifications to the house. There may also be changes to the setting of the building that are not in the control of the Trust but on which they may be consulted by the Local Planning Authority. These policies are intended to cover these issues.

- D1 Development which would adversely affect the site or setting of the Manor House and its associated buildings should not be permitted. Any proposals for development in the vicinity of the Manor House should ensure that the dominance of this building is maintained and no new work should impinge on important views of the Manor House.**

Reasons: The setting of this site is one of its key significant factors. Its relationship to the other historic buildings on West Street is of paramount importance. The view of the frontage of the Manor House from all aspects of West Street presents an attractive historic building that is clearly an asset to the town. These views are part of the sense of place and civic pride for the townspeople of Alford.

- D2 Development proposals within the grounds, including works to improve the gardens, should be accompanied by an archaeological evaluation.**

Reasons: There is evidence that there have been other buildings on this site. There may also have been earlier phases of a manor house on this site. The development and layout of the gardens that accompanied the original early seventeenth century building are not known.

- D3 All proposals for works to the principal listed building or to a curtilage building that require listed building consent, will need to demonstrate, as part of the listed building application, how significance, as defined in Part I of this document, will be retained and protected.**

Reasons: Any historic fabric, once removed and destroyed cannot be replaced. A facsimile is not the same as the original. It is therefore crucial that these finite cultural resources are protected and great care in the planning of any alteration projects needs to be taken, to ensure that this policy is thoroughly tested before any application is made.

- D4 Ensure that any alteration, however minor, is discussed in advance with the Council's Conservation officer so that compliance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is assured. It is important to note that changes to materials and replacement rather than repair, needs listed building consent as well as more obvious alterations.**

Reasons: Advance discussion of any proposals can ensure that they are prepared in a conservation complaint manner.

- D5 Any major development scheme in the Conservation Area should be discussed by the Trust to ensure that any effect that it may have on the Manor House is fully considered and reported.**

Reasons: In a small town such as Alford major schemes may change the balance of the town, effect traffic or pedestrian movements and these could have a knock on effect on the viability of the Manor House. Similarly a large vacant or derelict site in the vicinity could have an adverse effect on the Manor House site. The Trust therefore needs to be pro active in promoting conservation not only of the this site but of Alford in general. This policy also needs to apply to watching for proposals by the Highways Authority for street signage, furniture or paving materials which may be unsuitable for sensitive locations.

REPAIR AND CONSERVATION

As Volume Two and section 1 of Volume One demonstrate, the Manor House site is an asset not only of local importance, but of national importance because of its unusual form of construction. Organised maintenance will be vital and this is dealt with under its own policy heading. Where repairs as a result of maintenance checks need to be carried out the following policies are relevant.

- RC1 Where practicable, historic architectural or archaeological features uncovered during conservation works, or discovered by other means should be conserved in situ, consolidated and conserved as found, or infilled, depending on architectural, archaeological or practical considerations.**

Reasons: A major purpose of archaeology is to elucidate and display the history of a site. Removal of structural archaeological remains and architectural features should therefore, in the interests of sustainability, be resisted. Exposure of archaeological and architectural features has the potential to enhance visitor understanding and appreciation of the site whilst also acting as an aid to interpretation.

- RC2 The approach of 'minimum intervention' should generally be the keynote for repair work, except where this relates to the removal of inappropriate and damaging material. The removal of historic fabric should only be undertaken where it can be shown to be no longer fulfilling its original function.**

Reasons: It is critical that as much of the historic fabric is retained as possible. Only in circumstances where historic fabric has deteriorated beyond repair or stabilisation should replacement be considered.

- RC3 Take samples from existing fabric where this will not cause undue damage to identify original materials for matching purposes.**

Reasons: Materials such as mortars or plasters have specific characteristics. They should be carefully matched in any repair and conservation work.

- RC4 Appoint where necessary independent specialist firms to advise on timber treatments and other related fields rather than commercial firms with vested interests.**

Reasons: Unnecessary and potentially damaging work could be commissioned without independent advice. Historic oak members for example often look poor but are in fact sound within.

- RC5 All works to repair structures should be carried out by building firms with a proven track record and known reputation in historic building work.**

Reasons: The requirements and skills required for work on historic buildings are usually different from those needed for general commercial work and require special training.

- RC6 Maintain a photographic record of repair works being carried out and retain this, fully dated as part of the Manor House archive. (refer to policy AI 3) Ensure that details are retained of all materials used on the building, and log these with the Health and Safety Files from the previous project.**

Reasons: The preparation and archiving of records of repair work are crucial for informing future requirements and interventions in the historic fabric.

- RC7 Take precautions to screen and protect important historic features from accidental damage when works, however minor, are being undertaken in their vicinity.**

Reasons: Historic features are easily accidentally damaged when works are taking place. Basic precautions can save unnecessary damage and expense.

- RC8 Ensure that all future works are specified and inspected by an accredited conservation architect or surveyor.**

Reason: the requirements for conservation work require special skills and training. All accredited professionals have to demonstrate training and experience in this field.

ACCESS AND INTERPRETATION

Works carried out in the previous access plan have now been largely implemented apart from those regarding car parking and access around the grounds.

The plan for the interpretation for the house and grounds needs to be developed further and must include responses to the intellectual access needed for those areas where physical access is not possible. New audiences for the site are also being developed and new functions, all of which need to be assembled in a comprehensive strategy for the whole site.

- AI1 The Access and Interpretation Plan for the whole site needs to be developed further. Proposals for the grounds and for other uses within the buildings need to be included. Disabled access requires to be extended to the garden and car parking areas. Interpretation should be unobtrusive and complement and enhance the character of the building.**

Reasons: It is important that there is a co-ordinated access and interpretation plan for the whole site. This should be sensitive to visitor needs, management requirements and displayed in a way that considers the fabric of the buildings and grounds. Location of new facilities, signage, and information boards, footpath materials, seating areas and other issues all need to be brought together in this plan.

- AI2 A formalised Manor House archive that is available for members of the public to study by arrangement should be provided. This needs to be fully catalogued and recorded and should include all past and future reports on the site, old photographs, post cards, interesting letters and press articles.**

Reasons: The Manor House is an important site as the section on significance demonstrates. A properly organised archive will enable future students to better understand the part that it plays in local history and in the national understanding of English vernacular architecture and domestic house planning.

- AI3 Car parking for the site needs to be reviewed.**

Reasons: There is a parking provision on the site but it is not well defined nor are there any places set aside for disabled use. Consideration may need to be given to locating these closer to the building. Care is required however to ensure that this does not compromise the setting of the outbuildings.

- AI4 Additional visitor facilities need to be integrated into existing structures without causing visual damage.**

Reasons: the house itself cannot provide room for further WC facilities. When the garden is also in use and there are events at the site, further facilities will be required.

- A15 Improve the physical accessibility of the site in a manner which is consistent with the significance identified. All draft proposals should be vigorously tested against the likely impact on the historic nature of the site as a whole.**

Reasons: Necessary changes should not impact on the significance of any buildings or the site as a whole.

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

It is vital that, having had a comprehensive repair campaign, the site does not slide back into a state of disrepair due to poor or inadequate maintenance. Historic buildings are rather like the Forth Road Bridge – they need constant attention. The biggest risk is that because it has been repaired, no maintenance is undertaken until a

problem becomes strikingly evident. Buildings of this age and complexity need to be checked systematically to ensure that everything is in order. This approach should mean that minor problems are caught before they become major ones and the costs of maintenance are manageable.

- M1 Five year (quinquennial) reviews of the condition of all elements should be undertaken by relevant professionals in order to identify repair and conservation requirements. These should be carried out by conservation accredited professionals. Repair priorities should focus on those elements identified as in most urgent need of attention.**

Reasons: This is a well tried method which has been adopted for many years by the Church of England and model forms of quinquennial reports are available to view. Such reviews should also include the major trees on the site by a qualified arboriculturist.

- M2 An on going and organised programme of maintenance should be implemented to ensure the continued protection of key heritage asserts.**

Reasons: Some items require regular checking such as gutters and rainwater outlets and all services. A planned system of regularly checking all of these items means that they do not get overlooked.

- M3 A suitable budget should be provided to ensure that base level funding is available to cover the day to day running of the site. This should allow for maintenance of fabric and services, grounds maintenance, site security and staffing, and public access needs.**

Reasons: When members of the public are visiting the building health and safety demands require that there are adequate people on duty to attend to their needs. All facilities must be serviced and funds must allow for maintenance of all running mechanisms – fire doors, alarms, lights etc.

- M4 Sustainable long term provision must be set aside for future repairs and these should be programmed for in the long term plan for the site.**

Reasons: The mechanisms for providing funds to secure future works must be firmly established. This must have priority over development funding.

- M5 Train staff and volunteers to note down and report any defect. Observe the house in difficult weather conditions to check if all systems are working correctly. Do not leave dripping taps or gutters but attend to them straight away. Provide a polite notice for visitors and temporary slippers for their use so as to protect vulnerable historic flooring from damage by high heels.**

Reasons: In the words of William Morris founder of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings 'Stave off decay by daily care.'

- M6 Be vigilant with security. Put in place a checklist for closing up the building and the site and ensure all staff and visitors are trained to follow the procedure. Keep a record of all key holders and restrict these to an agreed number.**

Reasons: There have previously been security problems on the site. Vandalism and opportunistic theft can do untold damage. The Lincolnshire Police architectural liaison officer can give advice on the protection of historic buildings.

- M7 Ensure that all staff and volunteers working at the site are aware of the site's significances and are appropriately trained in the conservation and management of these significances.**

Reasons: A variety of tasks and functions are undertaken at the site by a varied group of people. These people need to be made aware of the importance of the site and the sensitivity of the whole complex. Apparently insignificant actions – such as sticking up notices with blue tack – for example, should be discouraged. The significance of a site can so easily be eroded by uncoordinated small changes.

Encourage the ventilation of all rooms, including outbuildings on a regular basis. Check all cleaning materials used to ensure that they do not cause harm to historic materials. The National Trust Manual of Housekeeping is a must for all managers of historic houses.



- M8 The implementation of the Conservation Plan and its effectiveness as a management tool needs to be regularly reviewed. It should be formally reviewed every five years and after any major project.**


Reasons: It is designed to provide a framework to assist the Trust in managing the site. In order to achieve this it must be kept up to date. New policies will be required from time to time as circumstances change. Others will need to be removed. Only by monitoring the effectiveness of the Plan can such amendments be made to ensure that it remains a useful and user friendly working document.


PART 4 GAZETTEER


This part of the Plan provides a summary of each of the different elements which make up the heritage asset. A brief description of each element has been provided, while a more detailed description and history of these elements can be found in Volume Two of the Plan, Understanding the Site. The significance and reasoning for each element has been summarised, in addition to the statutory status. Policy numbers, which have a direct bearing on the element have also been listed, the full text of which is contained in part 2 of this volume. More general policies not listed in the Gazetteer should also be considered when planning the future treatment of individual elements.



ELEMENT	THE MANOR HOUSE
DATE	1611, later 17 th century, 18 th century and 19 th century alterations and additions.
DESCRIPTION	 <p style="text-align: center;">South front of the Manor House</p> <p>The construction of the Manor House has been dated by dendrochronological analysis to 1611. It was built as an H plan house, two storeys with attic, and in a composite brick and timber construction with a thatched roof. Archival research indicates that the likely builder of the house was John Hopkinson. The most notable owner was the royalist Sir Robert Christopher in the mid 17th century. He was a benefactor to Alford town and has a fine monument in the parish church. The Manor House was tenanted after his death and the house was altered internally with new doors, fireplaces and some panelling in the 18th century. In the early 19th century the house was divided in two and the eastern part was occupied by the owner's land agent John Higgins. During this time it appears that a western and larger eastern extension was built. In 1958 the house was bought by the grand daughter of John Higgins and in 1967 sold for a nominal sum to the newly formed Alford and Civic Trust. The house was repaired and rethatched and then partly laid out as a folk museum with upper floors used for offices. Eventually the office tenants moved out and the house was used for the Tourist Information Centre and folk museum. Between 2003-6 a major repair project was undertaken and minor alterations to improve accessibility. This project was funded by the HLF, English Heritage and WREN.</p>
STATUS	Listed grade II*; part of Alford Conservation Area.
SIGNIFICANCE	Exceptional and considerable significance
JUSTIFICATION	<p>The Manor House is the earliest securely dated example of an unusual form of composite brick and timber construction. It is also a manor house that retains its large thatched roof structure in an urban context.</p> <p>The building retains its original H plan and shows clearly later alterations that have taken place. It was also the home of Sir Robert Christopher who was knighted by Charles II.</p>
POLICIES	D1, D3, D4, RC1-8. A11, A12, M1-8.
SOURCES	Refer to FAS reports one and two bound into Volume 2. Anderson and Glenn photographic archive, LCC local history library.


ELEMENT	THE STAIRCASE IN THE WEST WING	
DATE	1611, late 17 th century, early 19 th century	
DESCRIPTION	 <p>The ground floor part of the staircase</p>	 <p>The upper section of the staircase</p>
	<p>This staircase extends from the ground floor up to the attic. It is in the original staircase location in the eastern wing. The full flight to the first floor and the flight to the half landing on the upper level all date from the early 19th century. This is typical of the period with plain stick balusters and polished wreathed hardwood handrail. The upper flight dates from the late 17th century with its acorn finial and the top section with its faceted newel and oak finial is likely to date from 1611.</p>	
STATUS	Part of Grade II* building.	
SIGNIFICANCE	Considerable	
JUSTIFICATION	The position of the staircase is original and the phasing is of relevance and interest.	
POLICIES	RC2, RC4, RC5, RC6, RC7,	
SOURCES	FAS Report 2003, page 34.	



ELEMENT	THE WALLPAPER IN F6
DATE	Early 19 th century
DESCRIPTION	 <p style="text-align: center;">East wall of F6</p> <p>This wall paper is hand blocked paper made from single sheets of paper joined in the traditional way to form a roll. It was then grounded with a grey distemper and printed in two colours from hand carved wooden blocks. The design is based on a floral motif. It has a separate fine foliate border strip at top and bottom, printed in six colours. The paper survives on areas of the east and north walls of F6. It has been expertly conserved by a wall paper specialist. It is likely that it related to the period when John Higgins occupied this part of the house. The east wall also shows various phases of construction of the house including timber posts and braces and a blocked early window opening.</p>
STATUS	Part of Grade II* listed building.
SIGNIFICANCE	Considerable
JUSTIFICATION	The wall paper expert believes that this is high quality paper and that a significant area has been found and conserved.
POLICIES	D3, D4, RC2, RC6, RC7, RC8
SOURCES	Wall paper report by Allyson McDermott, dated January 2006

ELEMENT	ROOF AND FLOOR STRUCTURES
DATE	1611
DESCRIPTION	<p>Despite later alterations the roof form is retained across the whole of the original H plan with the best survival being in the eastern wing. The structure is oak with pegged A frames and collars, with morticed tenons and purlins. Rafters are numbered with five separate sequences of carpenter's marks. The first and attic floor structures also have carpenters marks in both Roman and Arabic numerals. Some of these floors also had an unusual form of construction with sub joists set on packing pieces on top of the main joists. All floors have been repaired and the historic floorboards replaced.</p>  <p>East wing roof</p>
STATUS	Part of grade II* listed building
SIGNIFICANCE	Considerable
JUSTIFICATION	The roof and floor structures are part of the original construction. They show interesting details of vernacular architectural construction and the sequences of carpenters marks are of particular archaeological interest.
POLICIES	D3, D4, RC1 - RC8,
SOURCES	FAS report 2006, section 3.4, and report 2003, sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.

ELEMENT	THE EASTERN EXTENSION
DATE	Early 19 th century; the ground floor element may be earlier and is possibly part of the original boundary wall.
DESCRIPTION	 <p>The eastern extension is on the right.</p> <p>The original H plan house has the frontage aligned to West Street. Park Lane, on the east side is at an angle to West Street. This allowed room for a tapering extension to be constructed on that side, infilling the space between the Manor House and the frontage of the Lane. The front portion is one and a half stories high and under a slate lean-to roof. The northern half is a low two stories high and has a double pitched roof which gets wider from north to south. It has a lead valley gutter between it and the east wall of the Manor House. Internally it is an awkward plan form and has a very narrow winding stair to the attic of the south part and a steep rear stair to the two storey section.</p>
STATUS	Part of the Grade II* listed structure
SIGNIFICANCE	Moderate significance
JUSTIFICATION	It was possibly built by John Higgins to provide estate offices and additional domestic accommodation. It shows the development of the house in the later period and preserves within it features of the original eastern wall of the Manor House.
POLICIES	D3, D4, RC1, RC2, RC3, RC4, RC5, RC6, RC8, A14, M1 – M8
SOURCES	FAS Report 2003, P.15

ELEMENT	COACH HOUSE AND WASH HOUSE	
DATE	Early 19 th century	
DESCRIPTION	 <p>The coach house from the garden</p>	 <p>The wash house seen from the first floor</p>
	<p>These buildings were added in the early nineteenth century and demonstrate the increased affluence of this period and the additional complexities of domestic life. Both are built in the local Farlesthorne buff brick. The coach house has been altered in the twentieth century but still retains much of its original character.</p>	
STATUS	Not listed in their own right but part of the curtilage of the principal listed building.	
SIGNIFICANCE	Moderate significance	
JUSTIFICATION	Typical additions of the period that form part of the character and history of the whole site	
POLICIES	D1, D2, D3, D4, RC1, RC2, RC3, RC5, RC6, RC8, AI1, AI3, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8	
SOURCES	Maps in Volume Two	

ELEMENT	THE GROUNDS
DATE	The site area dates almost certainly from the date of the manor house. In its present form it is a 19 th century layout
DESCRIPTION	 <p data-bbox="675 1129 1295 1158">Rear garden looking south towards the Manor House</p> <p data-bbox="505 1192 1471 1392">These comprise the rear garden area with its boundary wall, the front garden with its reconstructed front wall and railings and the western area between the house and the drain. The garden layout has box edgings around a plan form that is shown on the map of 1879. There may be evidence of earlier garden layouts and buried structures from earlier phases of building on the site. The front wall and railings were reconstructed in 2006 based on earlier photographic evidence.</p>
STATUS	Part of the listed building curtilage. In the Conservation Area. Some trees are covered by Tree Preservation Orders.
SIGNIFICANCE	Considerable Significance
JUSTIFICATION	The gardens provide an important setting for the Manor House and an area in which the local community can take part in a variety of activities. They show some aspects of garden planning from the nineteenth century and may also provide further information about the history of the site if works are undertaken in these areas.
POLICIES	D1, D2, RC1, AI, AI2, AI3, AI4, AI5, M1, M2, M3, M6, M7, M8.
SOURCES	Maps in Volume Two

LEMENT	SETTING IN ALFORD
DATE	From early 17 th century to the present day
DESCRIPTION	 <p>Early twentieth century photograph of some of the thatched cottages that form part of the group of thatched buildings with the Manor House</p>  <p>The Manor House on West Street</p> <p>The wider setting is defined as both sides of West Street as far as the junction with Commercial Street, High Street, Park Lane to include the group of houses that back onto the site and the open land to the rear of the Manor House. It is on West Street that there is an important group of historic buildings with thatched roofs on both sides of the street.</p>
STATUS	The majority of this area is included in the Conservation Area apart from the area to the north of the site. Many buildings are listed grade II.
SIGNIFICANCE	Considerable significance
JUSTIFICATION	This wider context provides a positive contribution to the Alford manor House site and provides its historic, physical and visual context.
POLICIES	D1, D5, A12,
SOURCES	Anderson and Glenn library

