

Heritage Statement for

# **THE OLD SCHOOL, 23 THE STREET, MELTON**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Bob Kindred Heritage Consultants were commissioned by East Coast Planning Services and Patrick Allen & Associates Architects to undertake Heritage Statement in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework in support of planning proposals for residential development at a site - The Old School, 23 The Street, Melton.

1.2 The site falls within the Melton Conservation Area, which is a designated heritage asset.

1.3 An inspection of the site and environs was undertaken on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015.

1.4 The report may be deposited with Suffolk County Council Historic Environment Record and a copy sent to the National Monuments Record maintained by Historic England if required.

## 2. POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 This Heritage Statement comprises an assessment of the site against the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] paragraphs 126, 127 and 135 and sets out the implications for the proposed development.

2.2 The NPPF states *inter alia* that:

*In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. (Paragraph 126).*

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

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and,*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. (Paragraph 127).*

*The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgment will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. (Paragraph 135).*

2.3 The NPPF requires a proportionate level of detail sufficient to

understanding of the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the conservation area and the setting of other adjacent (listed) designated assets. This heritage statement therefore evaluates the impact on the significance of the Melton Conservation Area; the relationship to and setting of adjacent Listed buildings and the merits of buildings on the site.

### 3. SITE CONTEXT

3.1 The site is located on the west side of The Street, a typical linear Suffolk village street with generally continuous frontages on both sides. The Melton townscape has been eroded in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by redevelopments, some of which break this formerly consistent building line.

3.2 The site forms one notable break of frontage on the west side by The Street comprising two adjacent vehicular accesses divided by a low (part demolished) boundary wall. The left-hand (south) one is an unmade track leading to an area of rough ground comprising the majority of the site while the right-hand (north) one is surfaced and leads to a former Victorian school classroom.



*Fig. 1 Double vehicular access from The Street looking west*

3.3 The development site is defined as The Old School as a consequence of 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings that still exist on the site. These were indicated on the 1881 Ordnance Survey Map (Fig. 2). On an adjacent site to the north was a small iron foundry typical of those making and repairing agricultural equipment and also shown on editions of the Ordnance Survey from 1881 to 1948 as an Iron Foundry or Iron Works. This industrial use continued for much of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century although none of this is referred to as part of the history of the area in the Appraisal.

3.4 Within the main part of the site to the south and south west there are a number of dilapidated single storey sheds and open cart lodges of various sizes and in varying states of dilapidation. To the west of the site there is a large modern single storey timber-clad barn.

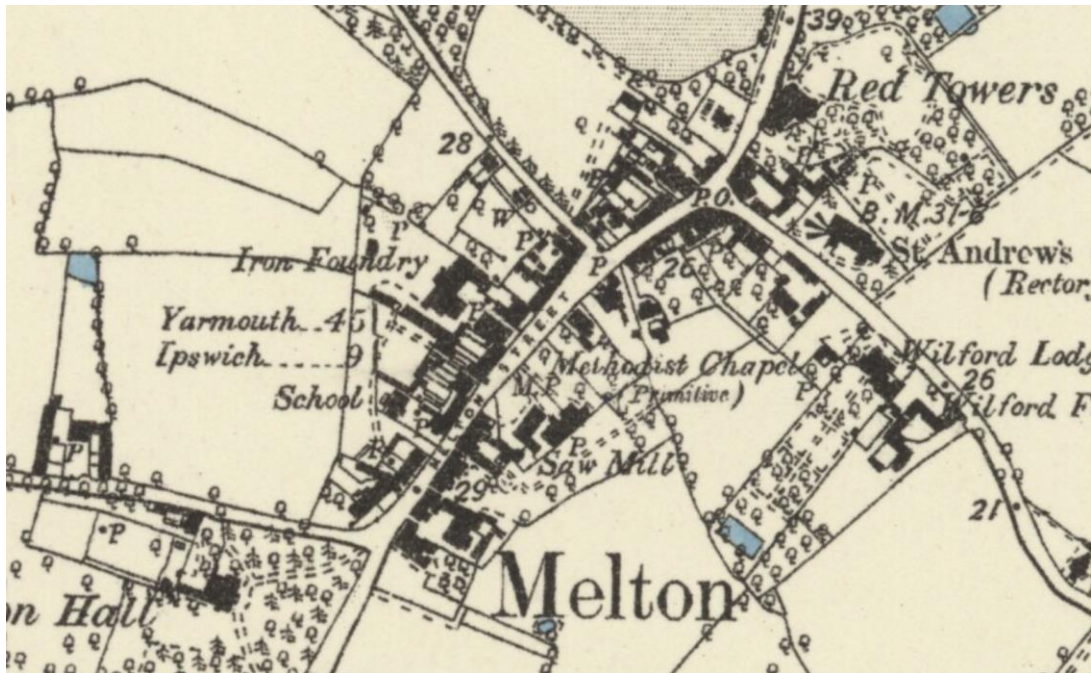


Fig.2 Ordnance Survey Map, Six Inch Series First Edition 1881 (Not to scale)



Fig. 3 Ordnance Survey Map, Six Inch Series Revised 1938, Published 1949 (Not to scale)

3.5 To the north is the most interesting and attractive building on the site. This is a former school (now a joinery workshop) and is typical of small village schools built in the mid Victorian period. The precise date is unknown. It is almost intact and unaltered externally and retains its attractive crow-stepped gables and two tall chimneys. The original arched east and west entrance doors with scrolled metal strapwork survive and the internal entrance passageway has dado-height pale grey glazed brickwork (or tiles).

3.6 The crow-stepped gables are very characteristic of the work of the significant Ipswich architect Edward Fernley Bishopp [1850-1921] (and can be seen on his work at for example Gatacre Rd School, Ipswich (now the Suffolk

County Record Office) and a fine detached house at 15 St Edmunds Road, Ipswich (both Listed Grade 2); and the community building almost opposite in The Street (not identified as significant in the Conservation Area Appraisal). The building would appear to be too early to be obviously by Bisshopp notwithstanding the similarities in detailing.

3.7 Although a National School was built in Melton in 1845 designed by William Bilby Jr. [1806-66] a surveyor and builder (who's firm continued as contractors into the 20<sup>th</sup> century) this is described in the County Record Office School Buildings inventory as "simple with a slate roof" and cannot be the building on the site.

3.8 The National School had an additional classroom added by William Patterson [1805-1878] architect of Woodbridge, and appears to be the other large single storey brick building on site, although this is bigger than a single classroom, but if this building has the correct attribution this would date from c.1860.



*Fig. 4 Older school (left), rear wing of later school (right) showing unduly close & unsatisfactory physical relationship, poor condition & modern re-roofing*

3.9 The existing spatial relationship between the older and newer school buildings is awkward and visually unsatisfactory (not helped by the general setting) but this has been addressed by the alteration and conversion of the buildings in the current proposals.

3.10 The later schoolroom[s] comprises two large gabled plain red brick buildings back-to-back, in use as an artist's studio. The southeastern half retained some of original classroom partitions but a (part) mezzanine floor had also been inserted. There is an attractive southeast main elevation with a range of five large classroom windows, two with buttressed gables and this part of the building is to be retained and refurbished. By being set back from the road, and of domestic scale, the building has only a limited impact on the setting of the Grade 2 Listed Old Schoolhouse.

#### **4. MELTON CONSERVATION AREA**

4.1 Suffolk Coastal District Council has designated 34 conservation areas, the Melton Conservation Area being declared in 1990 and a Conservation Area Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document adopted in May 2010.

4.2 The purpose of the Appraisal is to explain the purpose of designation, describe the area, outline its history, its particular physical qualities, construction materials and character; highlight issues needing to be addressed in order to ensure the area's preservation and enhancement and put forward management proposals.

4.3 The designated area of the Melton Conservation Area is extensive with two large areas of open space: a recreation ground to the south and a former hospital site to the north and these are connected by a narrow isthmus of a historic village street. The development site leads off this narrowly defined connecting section with the conservation area boundary running to the rear (west) boundary of the site beyond which are modern houses in Hall Farm Road.

4.4 Somewhat surprisingly, the Conservation Area Character Appraisal does not refer specifically to the quite large development site nor to the two former school buildings within it, notwithstanding its visibility from the road and the evident architectural merit of the earlier of the two buildings with its distinctive Victorian crow-stepped gables.

4.5 Although the Appraisal has a sequence of street-by-street descriptions, the one for The Street (Section 12.3 page 19) states only: *"There are two prominent sites in the centre of the village which, due to their present layout and appearance, severely undermine the character and appearance of the Conservation Area"* - but the Appraisal does not state which these are, nor are they identified for their development potential in the text or the map of the conservation area.

4.6 From immediately opposite the access points in The Street, there is a wide view into the site and the large un-surfaced yard and storage and workshop buildings, some of which are overgrown with vegetation. Beyond the site (outside the conservation area, two storey residential buildings in Hall Farm Road form a distant backdrop to the west.

4.7 Neither the section of the Conservation Appraisal concerning Proposed Enhancements (p.11) nor the Conservation Management Plan (p.26) addresses ways in which this site might be improved or developed to meet the statutory requirement to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area; and of the enhancements that are identified (p.28) they are confined to such matters as signage, overhead wires, the highway and footpaths.

#### **Impact of the proposals on the conservation area**

4.8 As the current Conservation Area Appraisal is silent regarding the development site it might be assumed that there is no impact on its character and appearance, but the open nature of the entrance and the view to the site at the rear detract from the townscape comprising mainly attractive or



historic frontages in The Street, notwithstanding that the wide double access does allow a good view of the Grade 2 listed Old School House, a timber-framed and plastered building (not part of the site).

4.9 It is clear that the present physical condition of the development site detracts overall from the view towards it within The Street and that the westward view to the premises beyond the conservation area boundary, have a similar if limited detrimental visual impact by not being screened or properly developed.

4.10 The design of the development is explained in the accompanying Design and Access Statement however in conservation area terms the intention is to retain both former school buildings. The northern, earlier former school building retains the principal block but with a new rear extension to replace a former subsidiary school toilet block; while the eastern, later former school building retains the principal block facing the road but with a new rear extension to replace the utilitarian parallel wing.

4.13 Five new dwellings are proposed to the west and south of the site aligned with the axis of the school buildings to create an intimately arranged small rectangular courtyard. From within the conservation area, in the confined view from The Street, the main front elevation of the later school building will dominate the view (see Fig.1) with the new houses on the west side forming a backdrop and screening the modern houses in Farm Hall Road located beyond the conservation area boundary, while the two houses to the southern end of the site will be almost entirely hidden from The Street.

4.13 Overall, the visual impact of the development proposals by virtue of their layout, design and scale, and the retention of the principal features of interest of the two former school buildings are considered to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and Melton more generally.

## **5. LISTED BUILDINGS**

5.1 There are few listed buildings near to the site, the closest of which is known in the National Heritage List as 'Elton' No.25 The Street, but bears a boundary wall plaque as "The Old School House". This is a 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed and plastered Grade 2 listed building adjacent to the site access. The building is a much altered single-storey house with an attic and an axial brick stack with a gable to the street frontage.



Fig. 5 No. 25 The Street, Listed Grade 2

### **Setting of the Listed buildings**

5.2 While government guidance advises that setting should not be interpreted too narrowly, only No.25 The Street has a clear visual connection with the development site. None of the remaining listed buildings in Melton have any visual or obvious historical relationship with the development site and their setting is not visually affected by it.

5.3 The relationship between No.25 The Street and the front elevation of the retained and refurbished later school building in terms of the setting of the former does not materially change as the main part of the latter is essentially unchanged. The backdrop to No.25 will be enhanced by the development of the currently untidy vacant site.

5.4 Towards the junction of The Street and Woods Land, Wilford Bridge Road and Melton Road there two other listed buildings: The Beeches (No.3 The Street) and The Bowery (Grade 2) a short terrace of Late 18<sup>th</sup> century or early 19<sup>th</sup> century two-storey houses in red brick with a mansard roof and attics; and Melton House (Grade 2) a 16<sup>th</sup> century timber framed and plastered house with an early C19 brick wing at rear. The development has no implications for the setting of these buildings.

### **Buildings of local interest.**

5.5 Suffolk Coastal District Council does not currently have a schedule of buildings of special local interest (a 'Local List') identifying buildings as undesignated heritage assets. In relation to English Heritage (sic)<sup>1</sup> guidance on the matter; were such a List to be prepared in future, the crow-stepped gabled building would certainly be worthy of inclusion and the latter school building might also be worth including in such a List. They should in any case -

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<sup>1</sup> Good Practice Guide for Local Heritage Listing, May 2012, not yet re-issued or revised by Historic England

for the purposes of the policies in the NPPF - be considered as undesignated heritage assets worthy of retention, repair and adaptation.

## 6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The proposed development sits to the rear of The Street accessed by two parallel entrances. These form a notable gap in the traditional alignment of this historic village street. The present site is untidy and overgrown and has a number of single storey outbuildings in various states of disrepair. To the northeast of the site are two 19<sup>th</sup> century former school buildings of local architectural interest now in business use.

6.2 The proposals retain the two school buildings and adapt and convert them to residential use. The frontage of the later school building closest to the adjacent Listed building remains as at present and the relationship to the setting of the adjacent Listed building (No.25 The Street] is unchanged.

6.3 Five other dwellings form a rectangular courtyard with three dwellings to the west of the site terminating the view from The Street and two dwellings to the southern end of the site largely hidden from the street view.

6.4 The scheme affords the opportunity to address issues regarding a site that may be one of those noted to '*severely undermine the character and appearance of the Conservation Area*' on page 19 of the Conservation Area Appraisal that it did not specifically define.

6.5 In relation to the requirements of paragraph 127 of the NPPF it is considered that the development of the site to the rear of The Street will help to sustain and enhance the significance of the two 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings of local interest (as non-designated heritage assets) on the site and put them to viable uses consistent with their conservation by ensuring appropriate refurbishment and ensure that the site development makes a positive contribution to the sustainability and economic vitality of Melton and that y; and by including the former school buildings, the development makes a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of Melton as envisaged in the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.6 This contextual approach incorporating the existing 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings is therefore considered to enhance the character and appearance of the Melton Conservation Area.

Bob Kindred MBE BA IHBC MRTPI  
November 2015

Appendix 2

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The Old School, The Street, Melton

Original School Building Photographs



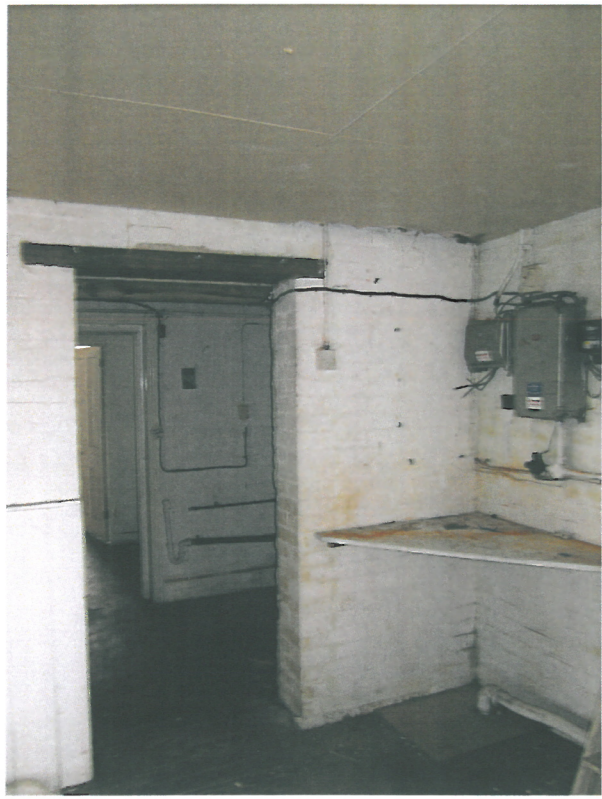


Appendix 1

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The Old School, The Street, Melton

Additional School Rooms Photographs







## OASIS ID: johnnewm1-266052

### Project details

Project name	The Old School, The Street, Melton, Suffolk- Historic Building Report
Short description of the project	Melton, The Old School, The Street (MTN 075, TM 2814 5048) prior to their conversion to residential use the school building of mid to late 19th century date, which more recently had been partly stripped out to become a workshop, and an associated classroom building of later 19th century date were examined and described and a photographic record was taken (Bob Kindred Heritage Consultants for George Homes)
Project dates	Start: 05-11-2015 End: 05-11-2015
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	ESF 24936 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	MTN 075 - Related HER No.
Any associated project reference codes	DC/16/0015/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	johnnewm1-265310 - OASIS form ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Other 3 - Built over
Monument type	SCHOOL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BRICK Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Part Survey"
Prompt	Planning condition
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	SUFFOLK SUFFOLK COASTAL MELTON THE OLD SCHOOL, THE STREET
Postcode	IP12 1PL
Study area	2640 Square metres
Site coordinates	TM 2814 5048 52.10495539853 1.331797499878 52 06 17 N 001 19 54 E Point

Height OD / Depth	Min: 7m Max: 8m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Bob Kindred Heritage Consultants
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Bob Kindred Heritage Consultants
Project director/manager	Bob Kindred
Project supervisor	Bob Kindred
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Suffolk CC Archaeological Service
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Suffolk CC Archaeological Service
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Report"
Project bibliography	
1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	The Old School, The Street, Melton, Suffolk- Historic Building Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Kindred, B
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	Bob Kindred Heritage Consultants
Place of issue or publication	Ipswich, Suffolk
Description	Loose bound client report and pdf

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