



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

A Heritage Impact Assessment of proposed new outbuildings adjacent to Harlestone Stables

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Summary

Harlestone Stable block is an early 19th-century Grade II* listed building by Humphrey and John Adey Repton, formerly associated with Harlestone House which was demolished in 1940. The current owner of the stables wishes to construct an outbuilding in scrubland to the west, which was formerly part of the kitchen gardens to Harlestone House.

The stables lie adjacent to the club-house and car-park of Northampton Golf Club. The associated golf-course surrounds the stables on three sides. The modern club-house lies approximately where Harlestone House formerly stood. The site is largely screened from public view by high brick boundary walls. It is considered that there will be a negligible/very minor impact to the setting of the stables.

It is considered that while there is a moderate potential for below-ground archaeology that could potentially date from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods, the later post-medieval and modern uses of the site as kitchen gardens are likely to have limited survival of all but the most deeply-buried archaeological deposits.

Introduction

Harlestone Stables lie in Lower Harlestone, located to the north-west of Northampton and just to the south-west of St Andrews' Church (NGR: SP 700 645; Fig 1). The south-western quarter of the stables has been converted into a domestic dwelling by the current owner; the remaining three-quarters are currently empty but permission exists for their conversion to dwellings too.

Planning permission for a new L-shaped outbuilding to the south-west of the stables, within an area which was formerly part of Harlestone House's kitchen gardens, is being sought. The proposed single-storey outbuilding will be constructed in stone under a slate roof.

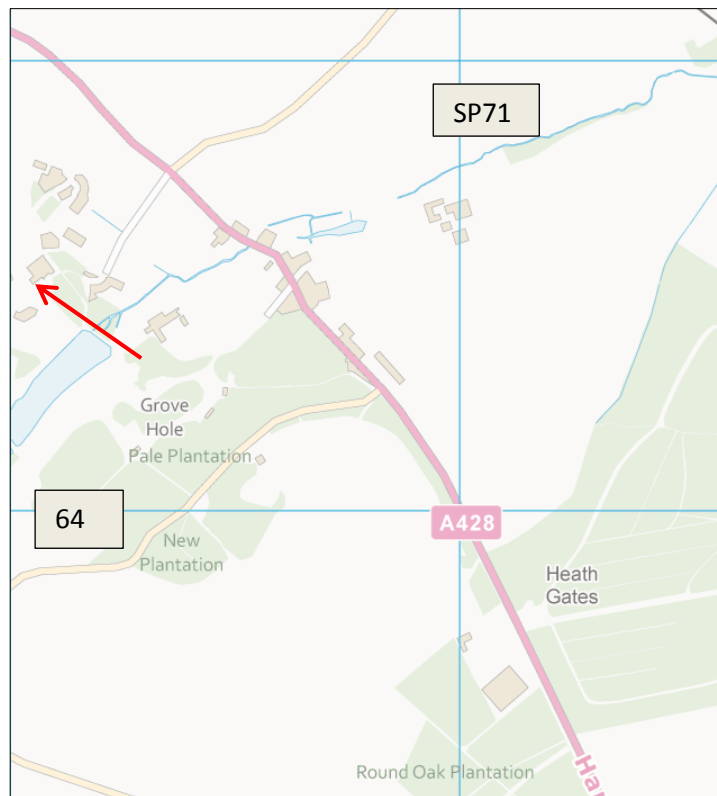


Fig 1: Site location (arrowed). Contains Ordnance Survey data ©Crown Copyright and database right 2014

Site location, topography and geology

The site is located within the small village of Lower Harlestone, situated just beyond the north-western edge of Northampton. To the north-east is the Church of St Andrew and immediately to the south-west is the club-house and car-park of Northampton Golf Club. The club-house occupies the same position as Harlestone House before its demolition in 1940. The associated golf course surrounds the stables and site on three sides.

The site lies within the curtilage of Harlestone Stables, in an area formerly used as part of the kitchen garden for Harlestone House (Fig 2). The majority of the kitchen garden was destroyed when the current car park of Northampton Golf club was laid out, leaving only a small part (the current site), which is now overgrown and unused (Fig 3).

Parts of the northern and southern and the eastern boundary walls of the former kitchen garden form the current boundary of the site, while to the west is a modern boundary wall separating the site from the golf club car-park, which lies immediately to the west. Beyond the former kitchen garden walls to the north, is a curving boundary wall which was also associated with Harlestone House. A modern building lies within the area delineated by the curving wall.

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The bedrock geology of the site is part of the Northampton Sand Formation, with deposits of sandstone, ironstone and limestone (bgs.ac.uk). No superficial deposits are recorded.



Fig 2: The south front of the stables; a private drive approach



Fig 3: View of the stables from the area of the proposed outbuilding, looking north-east towards the stables and church (beyond, left). This glimpsed and still-restricted view is only possible by holding a camera over a high golf-club car park wall.

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Fig 4: The golf-club car-park, looking east towards the site boundary wall and stables beyond. This restricted view is the maximum possible of the stables on this side



Fig 5: The north-western corner of the stable-block and adjoining curving boundary wall; from this side (the church) the site cannot be seen.

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Designated heritage assets

The proposed outbuilding lies in the former kitchen garden of the now demolished Harlestone House and adjacent to the former stables. The stables are a Grade II* listed building:

Stables. Early 19th century probably by Humphrey and John Adey Repton. Lias ashlar, originally slated roof, part felted. Courtyard plan. South facade symmetrical with large central carriage arch having Palladian portico of twin Ionic columns supporting an entablature with pediment above. 2-storey corner pavilions, arched recess containing first floor lunette and ground-floor sash with flat arch head. Right hand pavilion has blind window. Moulded stone cornice with pyramid roof. Pavilions linked by single storey range of 3 double recessed arcades with segmented heads. The left hand pavilion is used as the house. Corresponding carriage arch on north elevation has moulded stone cornice, parapet and pyramid roof. North, east and west elevations similar, without arcading. (Pevsner, Buildings of England : Northamptonshire, 247).

The only other surviving structure associated with Harlestone House is the lake dam, c 150m to the south. It is Grade II listed and appears to have been at least modified, if not entirely created, during Repton's work in the early 19th century (as depicted in his illustrations).

A number of other listed buildings are located in the vicinity, including St Andrew's Church to the north-east, Grade I listed with three chest tombs within its graveyard, all Grade II listed. The Old Rectory is located to the north-east and is Grade II listed. Further south-east lie associated Grade II listed gatepiers. Lake Cottage and 5 and 6 Lower Harlestone are also Grade II listed and lie to the south-east of the stables. None enjoy views of or from the application site.

Archaeological and historical background

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic 450,000 BC-10,000 BC

Mesolithic 10,000 BC- 4,000 BC

Neolithic 4,000 BC- 2,500 BC

Bronze Age 2,500 BC- 600 BC

Iron Age 800 BC- 42 AD

Historic

Roman 43 AD- 409 AD

Anglo-Saxon/early medieval 409 AD- 1066 AD

Medieval 1066 AD- 1485 AD

Post-medieval 1485 AD- 1800 AD

Modern 1800 AD- Present

Earlier prehistoric

A large complex of features, identified via aerial photography, is situated to the west of the site and is known as the East Harlestone Complex (Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) no 4478). It covers an area of c24 ha at the north-eastern corner of the parish straddling the road to

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Church Brampton and extending as far east as the railway line. The features lie to the north and south of a possible prehistoric trackway. Features dating to the earlier prehistoric period include possible Bronze Age barrows and two pit-alignments. The mapped area of the settlement features extends to about half a kilometre of the stables.

Further evidence of the extensive prehistoric landscape around Harlestone has been recovered at Harlestone Quarry to the south, where Bronze Age pits and late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pit alignments have been excavated (Field and Chapman 2007; HER 4611). Possible Bronze Age earthworks have also been recorded in woodland to the south. These may be associated with the complex of prehistoric features at Dallington.

It is considered that there is a moderate potential for further remains of this date to lie nearby.

Iron Age/Roman

Elements of the East Harlestone Complex also date to the Iron Age and/or Roman period and include conjoined rectangular enclosures and hut circles. Part of the complex is designated as a Scheduled Monument (SM no: NN175). The scheduled area includes two of the rectangular enclosures, both of which contain a number of smaller circular features, probably the remains of roundhouses, and internal subdivisions.

Further evidence of Iron Age activity has also been recorded at Harlestone Quarry to the south, including the remains of a possible middle Iron Age open settlement (Field and Chapman 2007). Roman finds have been made in Upper Harlestone and a Roman building was excavated near Newbottle Wood in the 1920s.

Although no Iron Age or Roman remains have been found in the close vicinity of the current site, there is ample evidence of activity in the immediate area and it is considered that there is a moderate possibility for remains of this date to lie nearby.

Medieval-modern period

At Domesday, in 1086, the King held half a hide in Harlestone, his half-brother, the Count of Mortain held half a bovaté, which was waste (uncultivated) at that point, as well as one and a half hides and a mill. William Peverel held a further one and a half hides; a priest is also listed, indicating the presence of a church by this date.

The remains of many quarry pits still survive in and around the village and, while most are likely to be post-medieval in date, some may be considerably older. Morton suggested in his history that the name Harlestone was derived the Saxon words meaning 'to draw' and 'stone', although this claim was later repudiated by Bridges in his history of the county (Bridges 1791). However, the superior quality of the stone around Harlestone has certainly been long known. The medieval form of the

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village appears to have been somewhat obscured by the creation and expansion of the estate around Harlestone House, but the two hamlets that now survive were probably once connected more closely prior to the closure of the road. No village earthworks have been recorded.

In 1500, one of the manors of Harlestone, known as Lumley Manor, was purchased by Thomas Andrew for the eldest son of his second wife. The manor descended through multiple generations of the family and in 1753 John Andrew purchased the other, main manor of the parish, consolidating the estate.

The main manor of Harlestone had existed since at least c1200. Known as the de Bray manor, its former landscape and manorial organisation benefits from a remarkable set of surviving accounts, published at the beginning of the 20th century (Willis 1916). Compiled by or for Henry de Bray in the late 1330s, just before the Black Death, they also note earlier events and collate earlier documents, going back to the 1220s. Although the golf-club has supplanted the site, it provides context for any buried medieval manorial remains within Harlestone.

Apart from these singular accounts for the house and estate, little else is known about the original manor, but a new one appears to have been built in the early 18th century, since when the house was demolished in the 20th century a board dated 1728 was found. The style of the new building appears to have been very much in the manner of Francis Smith of Warwick, who had gained prominence in many rebuilding projects in Warwick after the town was destroyed by fire in 1694. Many of Smith's buildings were of a strikingly similar style, generally possessing three storeys with the central three bays emphasised by a slight projection and a balustraded parapet. However, this attribution has not been proven. A *new building adjoining my mansion* mentioned in Robert Andrews will (written in 1792) may have been the crenelated two-storey extension visible on the right-hand side of the main frontage on Repton's drawing of the house prior to alteration (Fig 6). The function of detached buildings in an older style to the left of the main house is not known- perhaps stables or remnants of an earlier phase, maybe even the medieval.



Fig 6: Harlestone House and estate, prior to Repton's alterations

In the early 19th century, further alterations were undertaken by Humphrey Repton and his son John Adey Repton. Humphrey Repton employed a holistic approach, redesigning not only the interior and exterior of the house, but also designing new outbuildings and the surrounding landscape. The improvements to the house and landscape were clearly meant to be viewed from the south, with the bridge, stables and boat house all contributing to the whole (Fig 7).

In his treatise on landscape gardening and architecture, Repton briefly described the work undertaken at Harlestone:

The house was formerly approached and entered in the south front, which was encumbered by stables and farm-yards: the road came through the village, and there was a large pool in front: this pool has been changed to an apparent river and the stables have been removed. An ample garden has been placed behind the house; the centre of the south front has been taken down, and a bow added, with pilasters in the style of the house: the entrance is changed from the south to the north side, and some new rooms to the west have been added. Of the useful and modern appendages to this house, the drawing can give little idea: the more essential part of landscape gardening is apt to be overlooked in the general attention to the picturesque, which has often little affinity with the important objects of comfort, convenience, and accommodation.



Fig 7: View of Harlestone House and park, subsequent to Repton's alterations

In speaking of Harlestone Park, I cannot omit mentioning a remarkable fact, connected with its improvement. This park abounded in large oaks, irregularly scattered over its uneven surface; but amongst them were everywhere intermixed many very tall elms, not all planted in avenues, but some in single rows, casting their long shadows over the lawn, oppressing the venerable oaks by their more lofty growth, and spreading shade and gloom over the surface of the park. I could not help observing, that the greatest improvement of which the place seemed capable, might be deemed too bold for me to advise, as it was no less than the removal of almost all the elms, to shew the oaks, and diffuse sunshine over the lawn. A few days after having delivered this opinion, on the 10th November 1810, a furious storm of wind tore up by the roots eighty-seven of the largest elms, and only one oak; producing exactly the effect of improvement which I had anticipated, but had not dared to recommend. This occurrence is recorded on a tablet inscribed – GENIO LOCI [to the genius of the place].
(Repton and Loudon 1840)

The kitchen garden and curving boundary walls were probably added as part of Repton's improvements and were certainly present by 1829 (Fig 11). A conservatory was also added to the western side of the house at around this time or just afterwards and was illustrated by George Clarke in the 1830s.

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Fig 8: George Clarke illustration, early 19th century

By the mid-1820s Robert Andrew's debts had amounted to £85,000 and in the latter part of the decade, the decision was made to sell Harlestone House itself. The sale was agreed with Earl Spencer, whose Althorp Estate lies adjacent, but the negotiations were protracted and Robert Andrews died before the sale went through. The estate descended to his brother-in-law Colonel Henry Packe in 1831 and the sale was concluded shortly afterwards.

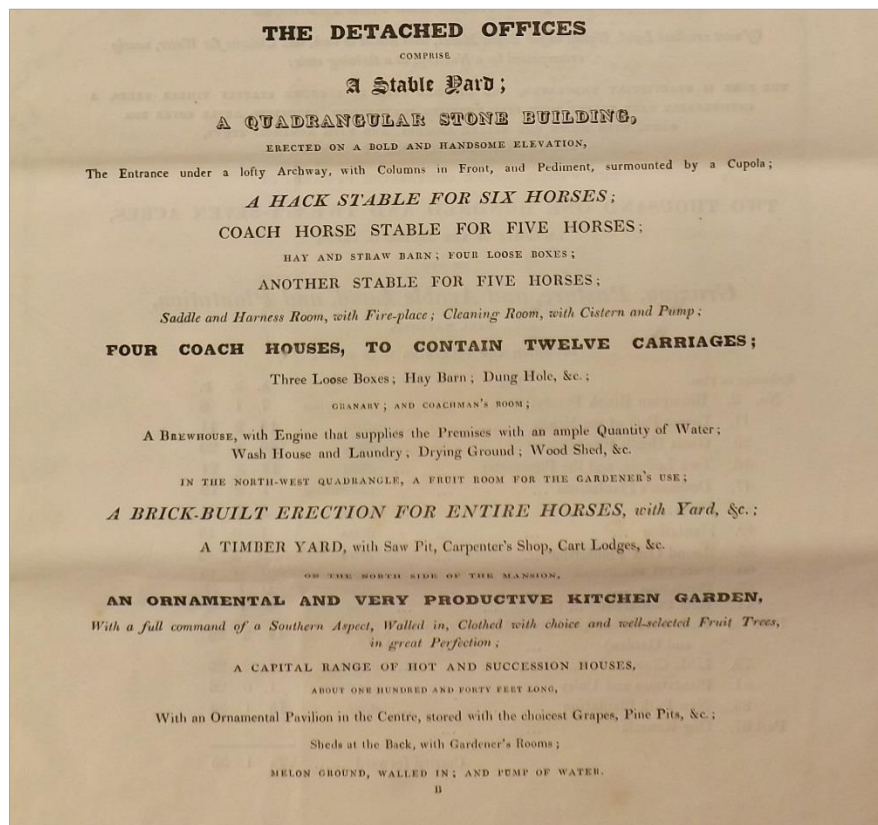


Fig 9: Extract from 1829 sales particulars, describing the stable-block and kitchen garden

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Harlestone House remained in the possession of the Spencer family into the 20th century, but it was leased to the Dowager Duchess of Grafton until her death in 1928. The house remained empty after her death and was subsequently demolished. The area remained unused until the construction of the golf-club in the 1990s.



Fig 10: View of south front of Harlestone House, from 1829 sales particulars

The medieval form of the village is not known, but the medieval manor probably lay somewhere close to the eventual location of Harlestone House and the current club-house. It is considered that there is a moderate potential for remains dating to the medieval period survive close to the site, which may relate to features associated with the village or manor house. There is also a moderate potential for features relating to the 18th century incarnation of the house.

Historic maps

Other than Eyre's county map of 1779, which shows little detail, there are no particularly early maps of the area prior to the alterations to the house in the early 19th century. Eyre's map depicts the core estate belonging to Harlestone House, along with the adjacent church and small number of surrounding cottages. At this a road separates the house and landscape to the south; this was removed during Repton's alterations. A small number of houses are shown along the main road to Northampton and only a very few are depicted at Upper Harlestone, which is not separately labelled; the two areas only appear to become truly separate entities once the connecting road was removed. By the early 19th century they are known as Upper End and Lower End. Although the Repton stables and the house are clearly visible as blocks on the (small-scale) 1813 Ordnance Survey Surveyors' Drawing (www.bl.ac.uk), the first detailed map is of 1829, when the estate was being sold

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and subsequent to Repton's improvements. The map shows the curving boundary walls to the rear of the kitchen garden (marked on plan) and the adjacent stables. Although Repton's illustrations of the south front of the house also incorporate views of the house, by 1829 a coppice screened views of the stable-block from this perspective.



Fig 11: Plan of Harlestone House estate, 1829



Fig 12: First Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1886

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map shows greater detail, but little change from the earlier map (Fig 12). An outbuilding not visible on the 1829 map is shown abutting the western edge of the stable-block. Further buildings are also present along the eastern side of the building.

The 1900 Ordnance Survey map again shows little change (Fig 13). The 1966 Ordnance Survey map shows the estate subsequent to the demolition of the house, but prior to the creation of the golf-course (Fig 14). No planting details are present within the kitchen garden area, suggesting it had been cleared at this date.

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Fig 13: Second Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1900

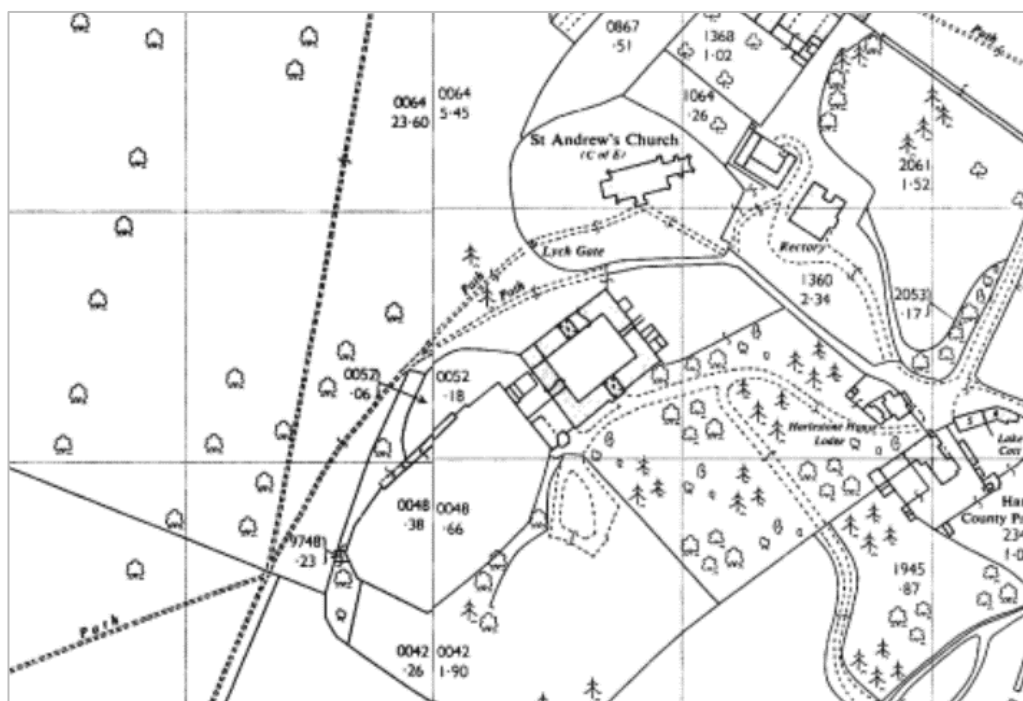


Fig 14: 1966 Ordnance Survey map

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Archaeological potential

Foundations and service runs for the new building have the potential to have an adverse impact on below-ground archaeological remains. Although no specific remains have been recorded in this area, the relative proximity of known prehistoric and Roman settlement means that there is considered to be a moderate potential for such features. In addition the proximity of the medieval manor house may have left remains in the vicinity, if only yard surfaces or the foundations of outbuildings.

However, the area in which the proposed outbuilding is planned has been subject to considerable disturbance in the more recent past, as part of a kitchen garden during the 19th and early 20th centuries, when techniques such as double-digging may have been employed, and latterly used as a BMX track in the 1980s with some alteration of the ground surface (current owner pers comm). While this disturbance will have primarily have been limited to the topsoil, there may have been some modification of deeper horizons. It is therefore considered that, if present, only the most deeply buried archaeological horizons, such as the bases of ditches, may have survived.

Setting of historic buildings

The stable-block is a Grade II* listed structure, and, as such, is considered to be of high significance. The current plans are for the construction of an L-shaped, single-storey stone outbuilding to the west of the stable-block in the eastern edge of the former kitchen gardens (Fig 15).

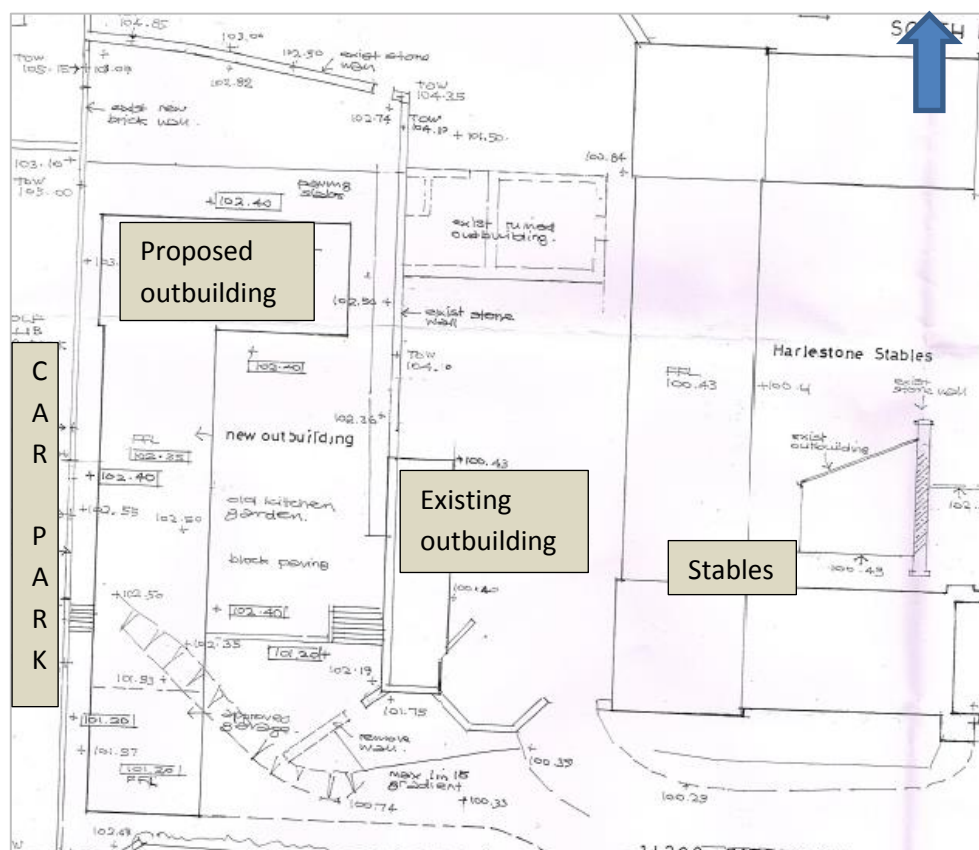


Fig 15: Extract of plans for the new outbuilding. The wall on the left is the current high car park wall in Fig 3. The new outbuilding will stand on the scrub shown in Fig 4.

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The grand front of the stables, with its central Palladian-style carriage arch and corner pavilions, was designed to be seen from across the park in conjunction with the house. Quite apart from the mid-20th century demolition of the house itself and subsequent construction of the golf club, tree planting around the south front of the stables has hidden it from view almost entirely when viewed from the south.

Views towards the stable-block from the golf-club car park are minimal (Fig 4), largely obscured by the modern boundary wall that divides the land associated with the stables and the car-park (which itself subsumed the majority of the former kitchen garden). Views from the stable-block westwards are dominated by the immediate garden area in the foreground and the golf club buildings and car-park in the background. Views of the stable-block from the north have perhaps remained the most unaltered, with the curving boundary wall, which probably also dates from Repton's early 19th century alterations (Fig 5). However, the roof of the modern house is visible to the right of the stable-block.



Fig 16: View west from the upper storey of the stables' south-west corner. Note the car park. The proposed outbuildings will lie in the scrub between the car park and the current sheds.

The original setting of the stables has been almost completely lost, with only a very few components still surviving. Views to and from the stables have been either screened by planting or are dominated by the modern golf-club facilities. The only largely unaltered view of the stables is directly from the north, although the roof of the modern house is visible to the west. Limited views of the roof of the new outbuilding will be visible behind the curving boundary wall. It is considered that there will be at most a minor impact.

Views of the outbuilding will be most prominent looking eastwards from the golf-club car-park towards the stables (Fig 4). However, the modern boundary wall already obscures much of the view of the stable-block and the view is actually only of the featureless roof of one of the side frontages. It is considered that the loss of this view will have no impact on its significance.

The principal entrance façades of the stables, to north and to south, will be entirely unaffected.

It is therefore considered that any changes to the setting of the Grade II* listed building will be very minor and it will suffer no harm as a result.

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IS Heritage 28/9/2014

(Endorsed ICS 28/9/14)