



The Mill House, High Ercall, Shropshire

Heritage Statement for the proposed conversion of curtilage listed former agricultural buildings to residential use.

*Client: Mr. Andrew Simms
May 2019*

Report No. HS/AH191/millhouse/01/05/19V1

Prepared by:

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HERITAGE STATEMENT

Site name: The Mill House

Location: High Ercall, Shropshire TF6 6BE NGR SJ 58512 16338 (Figure 1).

Oasis ref: commerci1- 350088.

Report No: HS/themillhouse/AH191/01/05/19V1

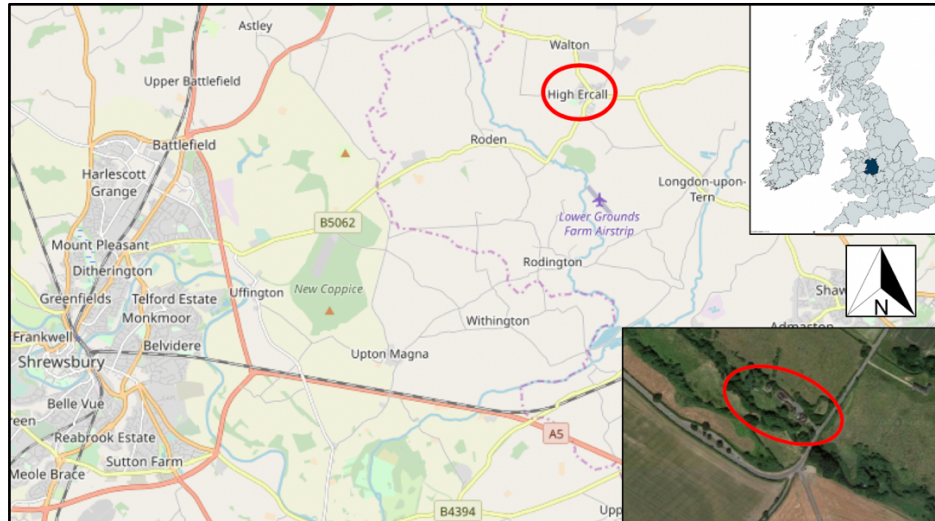


Figure 1. Location Plan

PART 1 INTRODUCTION

Background to scheme: Avalon Heritage Ltd (AHL) has been commissioned by Mr. Andrew Simms (the applicant) to prepare a Heritage Statement (HS) to support a planning application and listed building consent to be submitted to the Telford and Wrekin Council (the LPA). The planning application will be for the conversion of a number of former agricultural buildings to residential use (the proposed development area, PDA). The buildings are curtilage listed at grade II due to their historic and physical connection to a grade II listed mill now used as a dwelling and bed and breakfast. The applicant wishes to move with his family from their current home in the village of High Ercall to the buildings proposed for conversion which are owned by his parents-in-law who live in the mill house.

The Conservation Officer at Telford and Wrekin Council (CO) has visited the site and made pre-application comments regarding the proposed scheme and these will be considered in the preparation of this report. The CO has also requested the preparation of a Heritage Statement in order to understand the heritage significance of the former agricultural buildings and their capacity for further change.

AHL has reviewed the significance of the curtilage listed buildings and their historic fabric through a site survey and through consultation of a number of repositories of archival, cartographic and documentary sources and has provided advice to the applicant on approaches to the proposed conversion of the former agricultural buildings which will help to mitigate and minimise any potential adverse impacts to the significance of the listed buildings whilst at the same time considering any opportunities for further enhancing that significance.

In advising on the proposals AHL has considered both the significance of the listed building and the fact that changes to a listed building which is, or which is proposed for, residential use should be considered with a degree of flexibility which would not necessarily apply to other types of building. This is recognised by Historic England who advise, the emphasis is squarely on

balancing the needs of *the home-owner with the historic significance of the building so changes are sympathetic to both parties.*

It was clear to AHL during the site survey that the applicant is keen to enhance and maintain the historic interest of the buildings through sympathetic design and reinstatement and that the project should be conservation led.

This HS contains a statement of significance regarding the former agricultural buildings and will highlight approaches to the conversion which will then inform the preparation of plans for the scheme. It is understood by the applicant that further discussion with the CO may be required in order to inform the proposed conversion of the former agricultural buildings for residential use.

As mentioned above pre-application advice has been provided by the CO (PE/201//0472,21/08/18) and stated the following:

To meet the requirement of HO10ii, i.e. that the development would result in the optimal use of a heritage asset, it will need to be demonstrated that other less intrusive ways of securing the future of the building have been investigated and are not possible. See para 015 of PPG.

Given the age of the timber-framed building, the complexity of the site as a whole, and the number of alterations made over the years, I would strongly advise a building archaeologist is engaged to identify the evolution of the building and key elements of significance, and that a thorough structural survey including the condition of the timber frame, is carried out to identify the extent of repairs needed to retain the building in a useable condition.

From its brickwork, the covered yard building (barrel vaulted roof), does seem to be of some age, so any proposal for its demolition would need to be supported in terms of the protection and enhancement of the heritage significance of the site as a whole.

In design terms, maximum possible retention of historic fabric and plan form should be sought, and minimal additional openings or alterations made. In the timber-framed building, new openings within the frame are likely to be preferred to a large number of roof-lights, but where there are plain uninterrupted brick walls to the later buildings, windows should be confined to existing openings with any additional required being in the form of roof. Consideration should be given to retaining/relaying the brick paved floor. Within the timber frame it is suggested that windows have a slim, dark-coloured metal frame to focus on the frame rather than the window. Within the later brick elevations, and where there is evidence of former windows/doors/shutters, a more traditional painted timber casement is likely to be more appropriate.

Care needs to be taken to how the site as a whole is subdivided so as not to erode the sense of unity between the buildings as a former agricultural/industrial complex. Solid walls or fences cutting up the spaces should be avoided, with post and rail fencing or hedges used where boundaries are necessary.

This report has been undertaken with reference to guidance prepared by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and Historic England and following consultation of planning guidance on the historic environment published by Telford and Wrekin Council. In particular, the following guidance has been used in the preparation of this report:

- *Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment*, Good Practice in Planning 2 Historic England 2015;
- *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, Good Practice in Planning 3 Historic England 2017;
- *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance April* Historic England 2008;
- *Standards and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014);
- *National Planning Policy Framework, NPPF DCLG 2012 rev, 2018;*

- *Planning Policy Guidance, DCLG 2012;*
- *The Telford and Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031*
- *West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project – Shropshire, Shropshire Council and Historic England (2010);*
- *National Farm Building Types, Historic England 2013.*
- *Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings, Best Practice for Adaptive Reuse, Historic England 2017;*
- *Adaptive Reuse of Traditional Farm Buildings, Historic England Advice Note 9, Historic England 2017.*

A site visit was undertaken by the author of this report in order to assess the significance of the listed buildings and consultation was undertaken of the Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and at the Shrewsbury Record Office.

This HS does not include a full building recording report but contains an appraisal of the buildings both internally and externally sufficient to inform the planning application process and listed building consent. In accordance with NPPF this HS is intended to provide a sufficient and proportionate level of information for the LPA to make a planning judgement with regard to the proposed scheme.

Location of PDA:

The Mill House and its associated agricultural buildings are located on the Shrewsbury Road to the south of the village of High Ercall in the county of Shropshire. The parcel of land comprising the Mill House and the former agricultural buildings is aligned north west to south east and lies on the east bank of the River Roden in close proximity to Ercall Mill Bridge which lies to the south-east of the site. The site is approximately 2 hectares in size. The front elevations of the former mill-building and adjoining house sit back behind gardens which front onto the Shrewsbury Road. The associated agricultural buildings are located to the rear, north-west of the Mill House. The site is bounded to the north and east by open countryside (Figure 2).

The former Mill and adjoining Mill House lie to the south-east of the site and are fronted by a garden which is bounded by the Shrewsbury Road. To the west of the mill and mill house are gardens which once formed the location of the mill pond before the River Roden was diverted. The site is accessed by a drive way from the Shrewsbury Road which runs along the north east side of the Mill House and leads to the rear of the site (Plate 1).



Plate 1. Front elevation of the mill and adjoining Mill House viewed from the Shrewsbury Road.

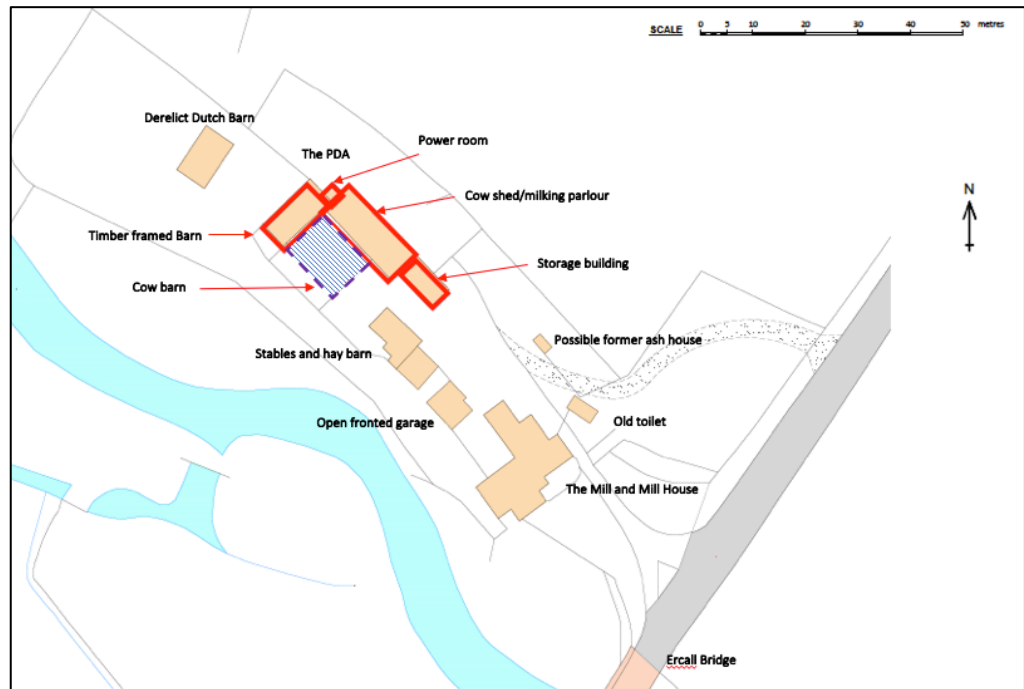


Figure 2. The PDA.

PART 2- HERITAGE AND SIGNIFICANCE

Historic Context:

The Mill House is recorded on the Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER, PRN 15660) as a Grade II listed, late-18th century mill with adjoining mill house.

Late C18 water mill and adjoining mill house. Whitewashed brick, Site and tiled roofs with gabled ends, and brick dentil eaves. The mill is 3 storeys with segmental headed window to each storey and a door to ground and first floors. Gabled water wheel housing on south-west side. Contemporary house adjoins at right-angles; 3 storeys, one window range, casements and with modern porch in the angle. C19 tow-storey, one window addition to right (north-east). The mill no longer contains machinery.

A comprehensive and detailed account of the history of the historic Mill House is contained in a *House History Research Report on The Mill House* (J. Ming 2007) commissioned by the current owners of the mill and what follows below is a summary of that information in order to set the PDA into context.

The Mill House is a Grade II listed house and former water mill situated on the River Roden south west of the village of High Ercall in Shropshire. The parish of High Ercall was formerly known as *Ercall Magna* and the Mill House as *Ercall Mill*. The mill and adjoining house have three storeys, constructed of brick, with later two-storey extensions as well as a series of stables, barns and other outbuildings (some of these are the subject of the planning application for change of use to residential). The mill and the adjoining mill house were most likely constructed in the latter part of the 18th century, although new documentary evidence may indicate that it may date from as early as 1746 (ibid).

There has been a mill on the River Roden at High Ercall since at least the medieval period with Domesday recording that *Archelou* was a manor of 7 hides held by an Earl Roger with two mills. The name *Archelou* is thought to signify *Archetel's place or hill* and given the Old English form of the place name and the village's mention in Domesday it is highly likely that the village dates from the earlier Anglo-Saxon period. High Ercall lies in the hundred of Bradford which was named after the *broad ford* in the manor and parish of Ercall Magna where the road from High Ercall to Shrewsbury crosses the River Roden. A bridge replaced the ford and was at first called

Bradford Bridge, and then later *Ercall Bridge*. Ercall Mill is located in close proximity to the bridge. The bridge is thought to have been the hundred court meeting place until the early 17th century. Bradford Bridge and the mill are shown on a map which reconstructs the manor of Ercall in 1345 (Figure 3).

The research undertaken on the Mill House (J.Ming, 2007) established that the current Mill House stands on a site where corn has been ground since at least the medieval period. It was an important part of the manor of Ercall Magna which as part of the hundred of Bradford descended from Lord Ferrers of Groby in 1338 to one Christopher Vane, 10th Baron Barnard in 1930. The mill was in continuous use until the earlier part of the 20th century when the final tenant at the mill was Ebenezer Evans who had an entry in Kelly's Directory of Shropshire for 1929 as a *miller (water)*. Evans eventually purchased the mill from the Barnard estate in 1930

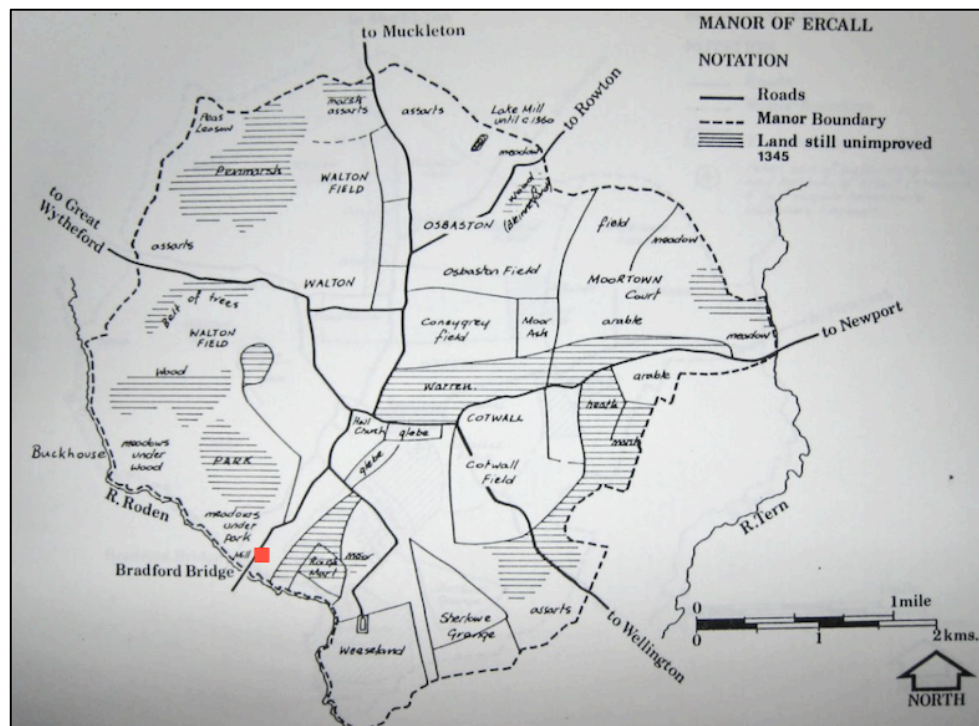


Figure 3. Map of Manor of Ercall showing a mill in the location of the PDA in 1345 (from J. Ming)

It appears that Ercall Mill ceased operation possibly as early as 1930 when the Barnard estate sold it to Ebenezer Evans, certainly by 1954 it was no longer in operation (Figures 4 & 5). From 1930 the property became known as *Mill Farm* (perhaps a direct reference to the PDA) now functioning as a working farm rather than a mill and later *the Mill House*.



Figure 4. The mill before it ceased operation (date Roden (date of image unknown, after J. Ming).



Figure 5. The mill after the diversion of the River of Roden (date of image unknown, after J. Ming).

PDA History:

There are a number of extant former agricultural buildings associated with the Mill House five of which are proposed for conversion (Figure 6). They comprise a half-timbered barn with brick nogging, a former cow-shed/milking parlour, a small engine house, a storage shed and a large barrel-vaulted cow barn.

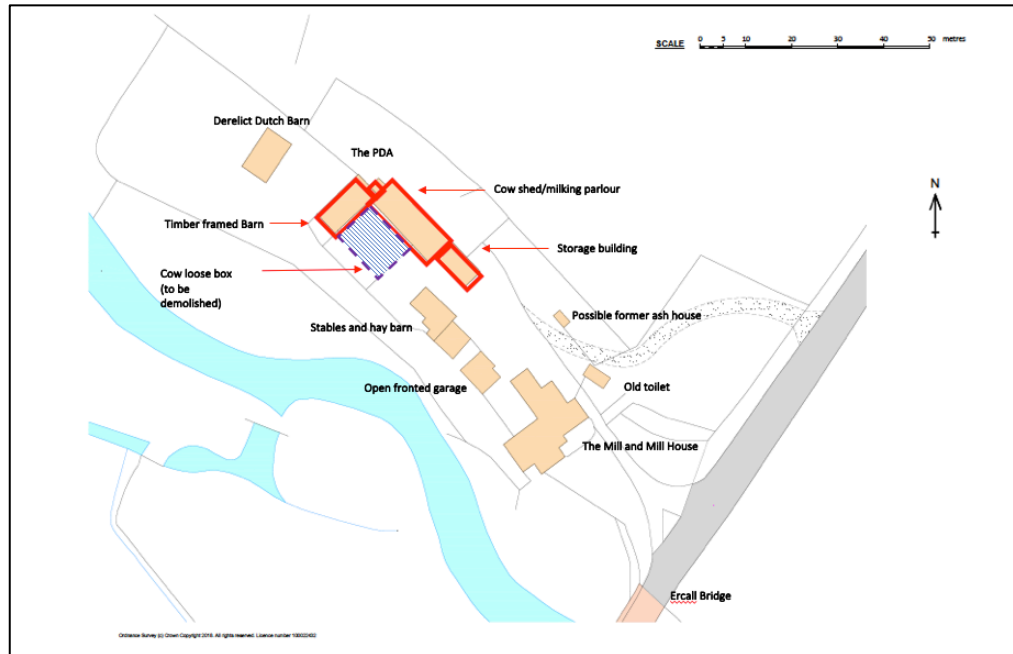


Figure 6 The PDA and former agricultural buildings for conversion.

The cartographic evidence below confirms the presence of the mill and mill house in the middle of the 18th century suggesting that in origin the building is likely to be at least late 17th to early 18th century in date (Figures 7 and 8). The maps of the 18th century, however, do not suggest the presence of any associated farm buildings.



Figure 7. John Rocque map of 1746 showing the L-shaped mill and mill-house.



Figure 8. John Rocque's map of 1752 showing the mill and mill-house.

Similarly, the Baugh map (Figure 9) showing High Ercall suggests that at the beginning of the 19th century the mill was stand alone and did not have any other associated farm buildings.



Figure 9. Extract from R. Baugh's map of Shropshire 1808 showing Ercall Mill (after J. Ming).

However, by time of the 1839 Tithe Map (Figure 10) additional buildings to the north west of the mill building are depicted and appear to comprise the existing timber framed barn, the adjoining cow shed/milking parlour (making an L-shaped range) as well as the extant stable and hay barn. The Tithe Map suggests that the land occupied by the tenant millers had greatly expanded by this time and that they were engaged in farming as well as milling. This is perhaps borne out by evidence contained on the HER which identifies areas of water meadow and rig close to the farm (HER04663, HER34564 AND HER04070).

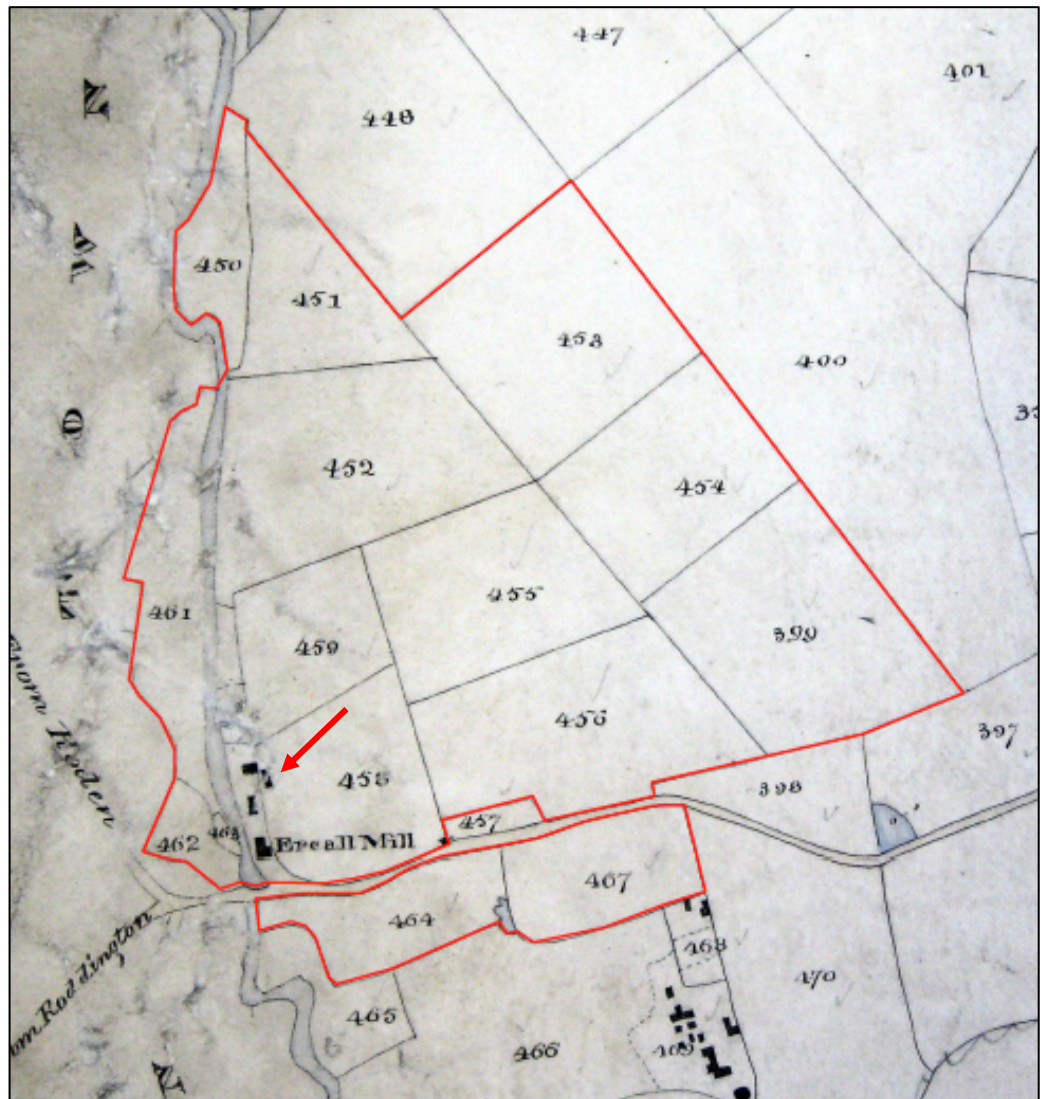


Figure 10. Tithe Map 1839 showing land belonging to Ercall Mill (after J. Ming).

By the latter part of the 19th century the OS Maps dated 1881 and 1886 (Figures 11 and 12) suggest that other buildings had been erected between the mill and the hay barn and that the north west to south east aligned range making up the L-shaped building had been extended.

The large barrel vaulted cow barn does not make its appearance until the beginning of the 20th century (Figures 13). The mill had become disused by the middle of the 20th century but it appears that the farm buildings may still have been in use and the 1954 OS Map (Figure 14) depicts an L-shaped open-sided building to the immediate north west of the timber framed barn. This is likely to correspond with the existing dutch barn.

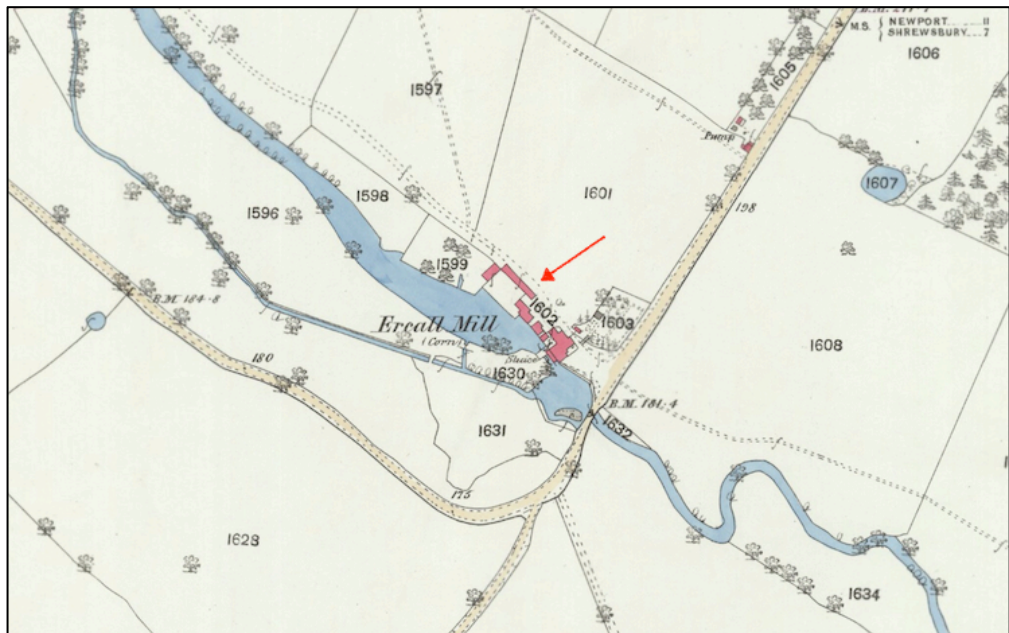


Figure 11. Ordnance survey map of 1881 showing the mill and mill house but now showing the associated agricultural buildings.



Figure 12. OS map of 1886 showing same layout as the OS 1881.

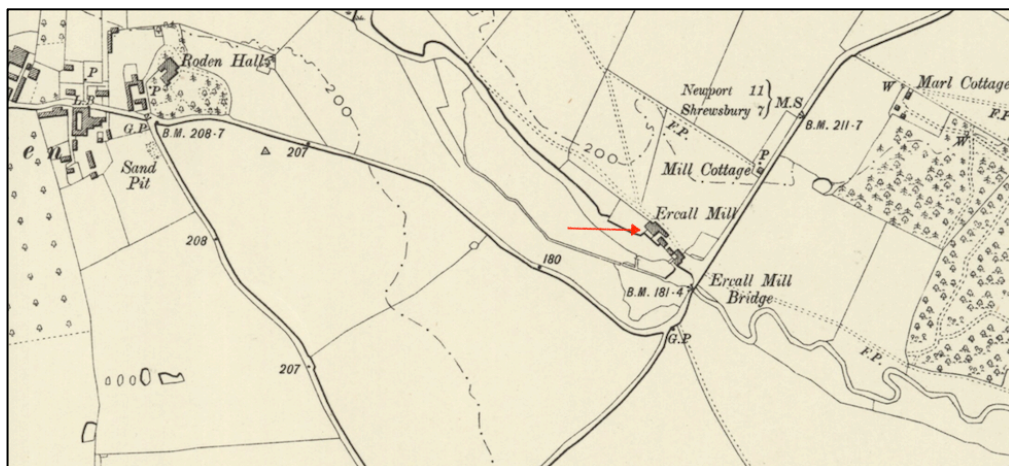


Figure 13. OS Map 1902 showing the presence of the large barrel vaulted cow barn.

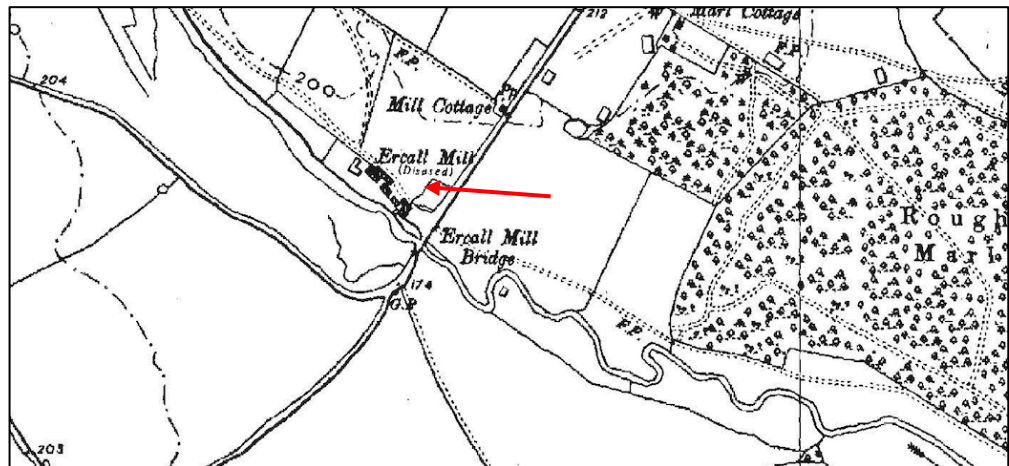


Figure 14. OS map of 1954 marking the mill as disused and depicting the presence of a L-shaped shaped structure to the north west of the earlier buildings.

The cartographic analysis has allowed for a provisional phasing of the buildings within the site and more particularly those which are proposed for conversion (Figure 15).

The earliest of the agricultural buildings proposed for conversion are the timber framed barn with the adjoining cow shed/milking parlour which originally formed an L-shaped range fronting onto an open courtyard. These buildings were erected some time between 1808 and 1839. However, the L-shaped range was extended to the south east between 1839 and 1881. The addition of the cow barn sometime between 1886 and 1902 infilled the original courtyard layout.



Figure 15. Phase plan of PDA from cartographic analysis.

Building description:

The early to mid 19th century barn is a half-timbered building with brick nogging. The barn shows various phases of building activity as evidenced by blocked openings in all elevations. The south east facing elevation of the barn has been partially concealed by the barrel-vaulted cow barn. Internally there has been subdivision of both of the two floors which suggests the barn has had a variety of functions over the years. The barn retains a number of original features (Plates 2 to 3) including roof trusses, brick flooring, wooden stall partitions for

livestock and interestingly in situ machinery in the form of a flywheel which was powered by a belt which extended down into an engine/power room located on the ground floor.

The south west facing elevation of the farm is constructed entirely of brick with a series of ventilation holes and a taking in door of plank and batten construction to the upper level. The doorway into this side of the barn appears to be original although a window to the side of the door may be a later insertion (Plate 5).



Plate 2. North east facing elevation of the barn.



Plate 3. In situ wooden stall partitions.



Plate 4. Flywheel on upper floor of barn.



Plate 5. South west facing elevation of the timbered barn.

The early to mid 19th century cow shed/milking parlour adjoins the north east corner of the timbered barn. It is constructed of red brick (clamp made) with lime mortar and window and door openings characterised by segmental arches. Most of the doors to this building are of plank and batten construction with strap hinges fixed to pintels set in sandstone blocks (Plate 6). The south west facing elevation of the cow house/milking parlour where it is covered by the barrel-vaulted cow barn comprises a series of brick pillars with brick infill part way up. It is possible that at one time this building was an open-fronted shelter which was later partially bricked up (Plate 7).

Deciphering the interior of the cow-house/milking parlour was made difficult by the presence of large amounts of stored material and rubbish, including redundant metal stalling for cows (Plate 8). The roof trusses in this building do not appear to be original and may date to a later programme of re-roofing. The lower half of the internal walls are rendered with whitewash on the brick above. The windows in this building are of hopper construction and may date to a later phase of alteration to the early to mid 19th century fabric.



Plate 6. Front elevation of the cowhouse/milking parlour.



Plate 7. Brick piers to the cowhouse/milking parlour from inside the later cow barn.



Plate 8. Interior of the cowhouse/milking parlour.

The cartographic evidence suggests that the cow shed/milking parlour was extended sometime in the mid to late 19th century. Like the cow shed/milking parlour this later extension is pitched with clay roof tiles and built of red-brick. The front elevation retains elements of original openings including sandstone blocks for pintel hinges, plank and batten stable doors and in situ brick flooring. The sliding door to the left of the image below is modern (Plate 9).



Plate 9. Front elevation of the mid to late 19th century extension.

Also belonging to this phase of building activity is a small engine or power house built into the angle where the timbered barn and cow shed/milking parlour meet (Plate 10). The building is small and inside there is an elongated slot through the internal wall on the same line as a ceiling opening giving access to the fly wheel mentioned above (Plate 11). It seems likely that this was to allow the drive belt attached to the flywheel to be fitted to an engine/power source in the small extension. The room now contains later/modern electrical fittings, but it is possible that originally power was provided by a steam engine.



Plate 10. Small power house.



Plate 11. Slot in internal wall.

The latest phase of building activity within the PDA was the construction of a large brick-built barn against the south east elevation of the timbered barn and the south west elevation of the cow shed/milking parlour (Plate 12). There appears to be at least two phases of building activity associated with this building representing an increase in height of the existing building for the construction of the corrugated iron barrel-vaulted roof (Plate 13). Brick pillars along the interior walls of the building suggest that they once supported trusses for an earlier roof (Plate 14). The function of this building appears to have been as a large livestock barn where cows were loose and not tethered in stalls.



Plate 12. Front elevation of the barrel-vaulted cow barn.



Plate 13. Upper part of the building showing where it was extended upwards.



Plate 14. Interior of the cow barn with elevation of timbered barn to the back.

Assessment of Significance:

Historic England concedes that assessments of **significance** may be subjective, but the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) notes that it is ultimately for the LPA to assess significance based on evidence provided by applicants. This Heritage Statement, which has been prepared in accordance with Historic England guidance on assessing significance and setting (see Appendix 1 for detail), is primarily intended to provide that evidence and this report suggests the following for the LPA to consider when exercising its planning judgement.

As a group, along with other buildings such as the hay barn and stables, the former agricultural buildings proposed for conversion, have a high degree of heritage significance, in particular because all of the buildings shown on historic mapping are extant. Their significance as a group is further reinforced by their association with the historic mill and mill house.

Those buildings proposed for conversion have both evidential and historic value given the preservation of much of the original fabric along with fixtures and fittings relating to their historic functions on a working farm in existence since at least the early part of the 19th

century. The half-timbered barn, in particular, is of heritage importance given the preservation of structural timbers, brick floors and original wooden stalling. However, the heritage significance of the former agricultural buildings is compromised by the deleterious condition of their built fabric and the general state of dilapidation within the yard and areas surrounding the buildings. Similarly, the interiors of the buildings proposed for conversion are in a dilapidated state and this is compounded by the substantial amount of waste materials and refuse stored in all of the buildings. Without maintenance and refurbishment, the buildings are at risk of further dilapidation and eventual ruin.

Due to the condition of the buildings proposed for conversion any aesthetic value which might have contributed to their significance has been entirely nullified and in their current state of disrepair they do not make a positive contribution to setting of the listed mill and mill house or to the surrounding landscape.

**Planning
Policy:**

PART 3 – PLANNING POLICY AND CONSERVATION

Relevant national planning policy and legislation makes clear that LPAs are under an obligation to consider not only the preservation/conservation of heritage assets but also the impacts from a proposed development on their significance and on the contribution to that significance provided by their setting. Based upon the information provided by an applicant the decision-maker must apply planning judgement to the particular facts and circumstances, having regard to the relevant policy, guidance and advice of national planning policy and legislation (see Appendix 2 for detail).

Local Planning Policy is contained in the *Telford and Wrekin Local Plan 2011 – 2031* where Chapter 9 deals with the built environment and heritage. Relevant to the current application is Policy BE 1 which refers to the Council’s design criteria.

The Council will support development which:

- I. Respects and responds positively to its context and enhances the quality of the local built and natural environment;*
- II. Demonstrates an integrated design approach from the outset combining layout, building form and design, landscape, green infrastructure, surface water management, access and parking;*
- III. Respects the landscape setting and topography;*
- IV. Preserves and reinforces historic street patterns, layouts, traditional frontages and boundary treatments;*
- V. Maintains and exploits important landmarks, gateways, views to and from the site and respects and enhances the quality of the skyline.*

Policy BE2 deals with residential alterations.

The Council will support alterations or extensions to residential building where:

- I. The alteration or extension is not disproportionate in size in relation to the existing building/plot and does not substantially alter the character of the dwelling;*
- II. The altered or extended building respects the character of the area;*
- III. The design remains in keeping with the existing building.*

Policy BE4 deals specifically with listed buildings.

The Council will have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The Council will not support development that would detract from or damage the setting of a listed building.

Any harm or loss to the significance of or setting to a listed building must be clearly justified.

The Council will only support proposals likely to cause substantial harm to or total loss of a listed building where it has been clearly demonstrated that there would be substantial public benefits associated with the proposal that would outweigh any harm or loss to the listed building, or all the following circumstances:

- *The asset cannot be sustained in its current use;*
- *The asset prevents all reasonable use of the site; and*
- *The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

Harm to a Grade II listed building is unacceptable other than in exceptional circumstances. Harm to a Grade I or II listed building is unacceptable other than in wholly exceptional circumstances.*

In these exceptional circumstances where harm can be clearly and convincingly justified and the development would result in the partial or total loss of the asset and/or setting, the Council will require the developer to record and analyse the asset, including an archaeological excavation where relevant, in accordance with a scheme to be agreed beforehand and to be deposited on the Council's Historic Environment Record.

The Council will only support applications for alterations, extensions and other changes to listed buildings if the following criteria are met:

- I. The essential form, character and special interest of the building are maintained and the historic interest of the building and its setting are not adversely affected;*
- II. Its architectural features, both internal and external, are preserved intact;*
- III. The proposed development is of an appropriate design in terms of massing, scale, form, proportion, details, colours and materials;*
- IV. An alteration, extension or new use can be demonstrated to be in the interest of the long-term survival of the building;*
- V. Where an extension is proposed, it should be designed to complement the character of the building, be generally subservient in scale and of a suitable form, material and detailed design;*
- VI. The development is located in a way which respects the setting and form of the listed building and respects its relationship to surrounding buildings, features, street scene or skyline and does not otherwise impair important views of and form the building;*
- VII. The development is of a high quality of design in terms of scale, massing, form, proportions, detailing and materials which is appropriate to the listed building and its context; and*
- VIII. The development does not result in the loss of features, such as ancillary buildings, boundary walls, trees and hedgerows or materials that contribute to the character of the setting of the building.*

The Council's policies on design and on the treatment of listed buildings should be considered in the preparation of any plans for the proposed scheme.

Proposed Scheme:

The applicant wishes to convert the former agricultural buildings for residential use, and it is therefore recommended that any plans drawn up for the conversion of the buildings consider the following suggestions:

- The structural timbers and brick nogging of the half-timbered barn should be retained and be subject to conservation work to preserve the badly weathered timbers as they are a key element of the building's historic fabric;

- Where possible original brick surfaces should be retained even if this entails removing them and then re-laying them. If this is not possible consideration should be given to the insertion of reversible suspended floors which could preserve the surfaces in situ;
- Wherever possible the historic internal layouts of the buildings should be maintained but if subdivision is required it should be low key and be by means of reversible partitioning;
- The historic pattern of openings and now blocked openings is fundamental to the mass and character of the buildings and ideally it would be best to follow existing patterns;
- Should new openings be required care needs to be given to their placing and design;
- Should roof lights be necessary they should be kept to minimum and located on the least prominent roof-slope (flush conservation type roof lights would be desirable);
- Thoughts must be given to preserving as much of the original fabric of the buildings as possible whilst their agricultural appearance should dominate any conversion plans;
- Thought should be given to how historic fixtures and fittings relating to the buildings' past agricultural use can be integrated into the design scheme for example, can surviving timber stall partitions be incorporated into the internal design or could any surviving farm equipment such as the fly wheel mechanism be retained on site in a modified form/location;
- The plans should also consider opportunities for enhancing the heritage significance of the buildings by further revealing any obscured or hidden historic features. As an example of this, it is understood that the proposed scheme would entail the demolition of the barrel-vaulted cow barn. This would offer the opportunity for the currently obscured front elevations of the early to mid 18th century half-timbered barn and cow shed/milking parlour to be open to view;
- The plans should aim to reconstitute the original courtyard fronted by the timbered barn and cow shed/milking parlour.

PART 4 – JUSTIFICATION AND CONCLUSION

Given the current condition of the buildings proposed for conversion it is clear that they require restoration and maintenance works to ensure their long-term survival. As the land is privately owned by the applicant's parents-in-law a commercial or public use is not possible and the optimum viable use to which the buildings can be put is residential. Any proposals for the conversion of the buildings will need to consider at the very least, integration of those architectural elements and historic features which contribute to their heritage value in order to avoid substantial harm to their significance.

It is the conclusion of this Heritage Statement that the former agricultural buildings discussed above have the capacity for conversion to domestic use through an innovative design which aims at retaining their principal layouts and selected historic features whilst catering for the needs of a modern family. The applicant has shown great enthusiasm for balancing these needs with a sensitive and responsible approach to changes to the historic buildings.

This HS has described the heritage values which make up the significance of the agricultural buildings at Mill House. It has considered how the proposed scheme for conversion to living space should take into account the primary elements which make the buildings important and provided suggestions on how any scheme should try to incorporate its extant historic attributes.

Without conversion of the buildings into a dwelling there is no other viable use to which they can be put. Their proposed conversion using sensitive design and sympathetic restoration along with the necessary clearance of substantial amounts of rubbish from the yard and the interior of the buildings would have an overall benign effect on the setting of the designated mill and mill house.

The purpose of this HS was to provide the LPA with a sufficient level of information for them to exercise a planning judgement in relation to the planning application and listed building consent for the curtilage listed buildings at the Grade II listed Mill House. It is believed that this HS has achieved those ends by providing a proportionate response to assessing the significance of the buildings and has also provided a sufficient level of information to inform the design process as the application progresses.

References:

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance, Historic England 2008;

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, National Planning Policy Framework DCLG 2018;

The Setting of Heritage Assets. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3, Historic England 2015 London.

Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment, Good Practice in Planning 2, Historic England 2015;

Standards and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014);

National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG NPPF 2012 rev, 2018;

The Telford and Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031, adopted January 2018, Telford and Wrekin Council;

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APPENDIX 1

Assessing significance.

The NPPF glossary describes **significance** as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The Historic England publication *Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (GPA 3, 2015a)* states that an understanding of the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset is necessary in assessing how adaptable an asset may be to change, the best means of conservation and how relevant policies should be applied.

Historic England's publication *Conservation Principles* (HE, 2008) further clarifies the concept of significance as the value of a heritage asset which may be evidential, historical, aesthetic or communal.

Evidential value is defined as the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity and primarily associated with physical remains or historic fabric.

Historical value arises from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. This can derive from particular aspects of past ways of life. It can provide a direct link to the past and to notable families, persons, events or movements.

Aesthetic value is the way in which a heritage asset provides sensory and intellectual stimulation including design value such as of a building, structure or landscape as a whole. It may also include its physical form, and how it lies within its setting.

Communal value is the meaning of a place to the people who relate to it and for whom it relates to their collective experience or memory. It may be commemorative or symbolic and be associated with identity or collective memory.

The significance of a heritage asset is normally related to a combination of some or all of these values.

The contribution that **setting** makes to the significance of a heritage asset is considered to mean the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. NPPF makes it clear that *the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.*

Setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset (Historic England GPA 3 *The Setting of Heritage Assets*).

The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from a heritage asset will play an important part, the way a heritage asset is experienced in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places (ibid).

Historic England provides guidance on approaches to assessing the setting of a heritage asset and its contribution to the significance of the heritage asset. A staged approach is advised:

- **Step 1** is to identify which heritage assets and their setting are affected;
- **Step 2** is to assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset and considers the physical surrounding of the asset, including its relationship with other heritage assets, the way the asset is appreciated and the asset's associations and patterns of use;
- **Step 3**, if appropriate, is to assess the effect of the proposed development on the significance of an asset by considering its location/siting, form/appearance, additional effects and permanence;
- **Step 4** is to maximise enhancement and minimise harm;
- **Step 5** relates to making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes.

APPENDIX 2

National Planning Policy and Legislation.

Section 2 of the NPPF, *Achieving Sustainable Development* states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, described as the objective of meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For decision-taking this means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan, or,
- Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless:
 - a. the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or,
 - b. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

In this regard the NPPF recognizes that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

Section 16 of the NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies on the historic environment and how these are expected to be implemented. The emphasis is on planning requirements and decisions within the planning system being relevant and proportionate to the significance of a heritage asset potentially affected by a proposal.

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF states that any harm to, or loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset (from alteration or destruction or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification. Where a proposed development will lead to **substantial harm** to (or total loss of significance) of a designated heritage asset, LPAs should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits (para. 195). Where a development proposal will lead to **less than substantial harm** to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use (para. 196).

Where non-designated heritage assets are concerned the NPPF requires that LPAs take into account the impact of a proposal on the significance of the heritage asset in determining the application. In particular, when weighing the impact of a development on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset LPAs will need to use a balanced judgement regarding the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (para. 197).

In determining planning applications, the NPPF also requires that LPAs should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to a viable use consistent with their conservation. It also encourages LPAs to consider the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality.

The NPPF defines **archaeological interest** as:

....evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

All heritage assets, including those within the historic built environment, can have archaeological interest, but very often archaeological interest pertains to buried remains and above-ground remains in the form of earthworks and historic landscape features.

The NPPF emphasises that the information required in support of applications for planning permission should be no more than is necessary for an LPA to reach an informed decision and that the level of information provided needs to be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset affected and the impact on that significance (including setting) from a proposed development.

Therefore, the aim of a Heritage Statement is to provide a sufficient level of information regarding the presence of designated and undesignated heritage assets (including buried archaeological remains) and the potential impact on them of a proposed development in order for the LPA to exercise its planning judgement with regard to the planning application in question.

The Listed Buildings Act 1990 which sets out the general duties of Local Planning Authorities with regard to the exercise of planning functions within a conservation area and the relationship of proposals to any listed buildings states:

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

With regard to development affecting buildings or land in a conservation area the Act requires the LPA to pay special attention to *the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area* (Section 72).

HERITAGE SERVICES:

- Constraints reports and heritage risk assessments for land acquisition;
- Heritage Impact Assessments;
- Statements of Significance;
- Setting Assessments;
- Listed Building Appraisals;
- Historic Building Survey and Recording;
- Places of worship;
- Historic agricultural buildings;
- Desk-Based Assessments;
- Historic Landscape Survey;
- Analysis of historic and designed gardens.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES:

- Scoping and negotiation with LPAs;
- Preparation of WSIs and mitigation strategies;
- Project Management and set up of archaeological/geophysical surveys;
- Consultancy and advice;
- Co-ordination of fieldwork;
- Procurement.

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