

# Heritage Statement

Use as a 'Pop Up' Boutique Wedding Venue

Wiverton Hall, Bingham Road,  
Wiverton, NG13 8GU

Prepared by Stephen Bradwell, MA MRTPI IHBC

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**RTPI**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Stephen Bradwell MA MRTPI IHBC of Trigpoint Conservation & Planning Ltd. in respect of an application to make use of Wiverton Hall off Bingham Road as a 'pop up' boutique wedding venue together with associated parking.
- 1.2 Paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires applicants to provide an assessment of the impact of the development proposals on the significance of heritage assets that is '*proportionate to the assets' importance...sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance*'.
- 1.3 This statement therefore seeks to identify any designated heritage assets that may be affected by these proposals and to consider the potential impact of the proposals on their significance, having regard to the statutory duties and other relevant national and local planning policies.

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

- 2.1 In addition to a site visit, the following sources of information have been used to identify the designated heritage assets within the locality:
- relevant designation records from Historic England's *Heritage List for England*; and
  - the Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record (HER) was also accessed via the Heritage Gateway.

## **3.0 SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1 In summary this proposal seeks to make use of the ground floor rooms within Wiverton Hall as a 'pop up' boutique wedding venue for a limited number of events each year together with the provision of an associated temporary parking area on a parcel of open land to the north of the Hall, with directed pedestrian access to the Hall. The existing ground floor layout of the Hall lends itself to use as a wedding venue and consequently it is not proposed, nor is it necessary, to make any external or internal alterations to the listed building.
- 3.2 In commenting on a pre-application enquiry relating to the use of gardens as a wedding venue, the conservation officer<sup>1</sup> noted that the setting of the Hall could be affected by external activities such as from noise or lighting. Consequently it is now proposed to contain the activities associated with the wedding venue to within the Hall.
- 3.3 The site is presently served by an access off Bingham Road and a tree lined drive serves both

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<sup>1</sup> Email from Mr James Bate to Helen White, dated 14 January 2019

the Hall and the neighbouring residential properties, and this will also be used to provide access to the temporary parking area.

- 3.4 The overall objective is to keep Wiverton Hall as a family home, and a limited number of events will provide an important source of income to support the upkeep and improvement of the Hall, and clearly paragraph 192 of the NPPF notes that in determining applications, local planning authorities should, amongst other things, take account of the '*desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation*'.

#### *Pre-application Enquiry*

- 3.5 In response to an earlier pre-application enquiry for a wedding venue and a marquee to be located within the woods to the north-east of the Hall, the local planning authority advised, amongst other things, that Wiverton Hall was a Grade II\* listed building, close to several scheduled monuments, and noted the potential objections from the Council's conservation officer and Historic England (ref. 18/02741/ADVICE).

## **4.0 SITE APPRAISAL**

- 4.1 The application site is located at Wiverton Hall, a Grade II\* listed building, and it also makes use of part of the former historic parkland associated with the Hall for car parking.
- 4.2 Wiverton Hall, described in the list description as a small country house (see Appendix 1), is presently occupied as a private family home, and it is a building of two halves that very much reflects its historical development. The front half of the building, being part of the early 19th century Tudor Revival Style house, contains, on the ground floor, a large kitchen and dining area used by the family and a range of formal living/reception rooms on either side of the centrally placed entrance hall. The rear half of the building being the remnants of the late 15th century gatehouse, contains a small living room with a separate utility/services room together with a large central reception hall that contains toilet facilities and the main staircase to the first floor, where there is a suite of bedrooms.
- 4.3 The parcel of land to be used for the temporary parking facility is located to the north-west of the Hall, and whilst this falls within the former historic parkland that was attached to the Hall there is no evidence of any historic landscaping within this part of the site. It should also be noted that Historic England was asked to consider an extension of the scheduled moated site and fishponds to the north of Wiverton Hall to include the area to the south-east of the scheduled site, which includes the site of the proposed car parking. However, the subsequent reports published by Historic England (dated 25 July 2019 & 1 October 2019) concluded that as investigations made by Nottinghamshire County Council and Historic

England within the area between the moat and Wiverton Hall had failed to identify any specific archaeological features, the archaeological potential of this area was deemed to be very low.

## 5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 The most relevant planning policies relating to the historic environment are:

### *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990*

5.2 This Act requires Councils, when determining applications, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or any features of special architectural or historic interest, or its setting (sections 16 & 66).

### *The Development Plan*

5.3 The Development Plan for Rushcliffe consists of the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy and the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies (LPP). The most relevant Development Plan policies relating to the historic environment are considered to be:

- Core Strategy Policy 11 (*Historic Environment*) of the Local Plan Part 1 states that proposals will be supported where heritage assets and their settings are conserved and/or enhanced in line with their interest and significance.
- LPP Policy 28 (*Conserving and Enhancing Heritage Assets*) of the Local Plan Part 2 requires proposals affecting heritage assets to '*demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the assets and their settings, identify the impact of the development upon them and provide a clear justification for the development*'. It also sets out a number of criteria against which proposals will be considered, including:
  - the significance of the asset;
  - whether the proposals would be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the asset and any feature of special historic, architectural, artistic or archaeological interest that it possesses;
  - whether the proposals would conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the heritage asset;
  - whether the proposals would respect the asset's relationship with the historic street pattern, topography, urban spaces, landscape, views and landmarks;
  - whether the proposals would contribute to the long-term maintenance and management of the asset; and
  - whether the proposed use is compatible with the asset.

### *National Planning Policy Framework*

5.4 The NPPF recognises that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to

their significance [para. 184], where significance may be derived from the archaeological architectural, artistic or historic interest of the asset as well as from its setting. The NPPF also notes that in determining applications, account should be taken of the '*desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation*' [para. 192].

- 5.5 The NPPF notes that '*when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset great weight should be given to the asset's conservation*' [para. 193]. It also recognises that the significance of a designated heritage asset (such as a scheduled monument or listed building) can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of the asset or by development within its setting, and any harm to or loss of significance requires a clear and convincing justification [para. 194].
- 5.6 In addition to '*no harm*', the NPPF distinguishes between two levels of harm to designated heritage assets, namely *substantial* and *less than substantial*. It advises that substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset of the highest significance (such as scheduled monuments or Grade I & II\* listed buildings) should be considered as wholly exceptional [para.194].
- 5.7 Paragraph 195 notes that development proposals resulting in substantial harm should be refused consent, unless there are substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm, but where it is considered that a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use [para. 196].

### ***Other Related Planning Policy Guidance***

*English Heritage: Temporary Structures in Historic Places (pub. March 2010)*

- 5.8 Whilst this guidance is primarily concerned with the erection of temporary structures in historic places used in association with special events, it acknowledges that events such as weddings can provide a number of benefits, including providing a source of income to help to fund the repair and maintenance of heritage assets.
- 5.9 The guidance does however recognise that temporary structures, by virtue of their design, siting and duration, can have a physical and visual impact on heritage assets and their setting, particularly on key views, and how this affects an understanding and appreciation of a place and its relationship with its context. The recommended management practices advise that temporary structures should be sited to minimise their impact on important views and disturbance of the visual character of historic areas, noting that the erection

and dismantling operations should be carried out carefully, according to an agreed method statement and a realistic timetable.

## **6.0 SUMMARY OF LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS**

### *Listed Buildings*

- 6.1 Wiverton Hall is a Grade II\* listed building (HER ref. MNT25200), described in the list description as a small country house, originally a late 15th century gatehouse, extended in 1814 in a Tudor Revival Style (see Appendix 1 for the full list description).
- 6.2 The Paddock Cottage to the north of the Hall is also Grade II listed. There are no other listed buildings within the vicinity of the site that would be affected by these proposals.

### *Scheduled Monuments*

- 6.3 The site of the former moated manor house within woodland to the north of Wiverton Hall is designated as a scheduled monument (HER ref MNT17060) and two Civil War gun batteries to the south-east of the Hall are also scheduled (HER ref MNT17063).
- 6.4 Given the relative distance between the proposed car parking area and these scheduled monuments it is considered that it will have no impact on their setting or overall significance and these scheduled monuments are therefore given no further consideration within this report.

### *Historic Parks and Gardens*

- 6.5 There are no Registered Historic Parks and Gardens within the vicinity of the site.

### *Conservation Areas*

- 6.6 The site lies outside any designated Conservation Area.

### *Historic Environment Record*

- 6.7 The existing grounds at Wiverton Hall are included on the HER as part of an historic landscape with reference to a moat and an avenue of trees shown on Sanderson's 1835 map '20 miles Around Mansfield' (HER ref MNT26812), and they can therefore be reasonably regarded as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 6.8 The HER also includes an earthwork bank running in a north-south alignment to the west of the Hall (HER ref M1360), a moated manor house site with fishponds to the north of the Hall (HER ref M8083) and a deserted medieval village to the north east of the Hall (HER ref M1367). Given the relative distance between the proposed car parking area and these sites

it is considered that it will have no impact on their setting or overall significance and these sites are therefore given no further consideration within this report.

## **7.0 IMPACT ON DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS**

7.1 Having regard to the site's context the main heritage issues raised by this proposal would appear to be the potential impact of the proposed wedding venue use on Wiverton Hall and its overall significance, and the potential impact of the temporary parking facility on the setting of Wiverton Hall and its historic parkland.

### *Potential Impact on Wiverton Hall*

7.2 The character and appearance of Wiverton Hall and its overall significance is considered to derive from its architectural and historic interest (its built fabric and materials of construction, its overall architectural composition and its associations with the Chaworth and Muster families), and also from its archaeological interest (its associations with the English Civil War, resulting in the demolition of the original hall, and its subsequent rebuilding in 1815).

7.3 Whilst there is no specific guidance from Historic England regarding the use of listed buildings as wedding venues, the nature of such events is similar to those found in other listed buildings (and English Heritage and the National Trust operate a number of such venues). In addition the guidance published initially by English Heritage accepts that the use of historic places for special events can provide a number of benefits, such as providing a source of income to help fund the repair and maintenance of heritage assets. As such these proposals will accord with the principles of national policy.

7.4 The primary concern of the English Heritage guidance is to ensure that the physical and visual impact on heritage assets and their setting is kept to a minimum. To this extent the building will remain in the ownership of a single owner and the present residential use would then continue between events. It is also evident from the application drawings that the ground floor of the Hall lends itself to use as a wedding venue with no requirement for any physical alterations to the fabric or layout of the existing building.

7.5 It is therefore considered that as the proposed wedding venue use would not directly affect the historic fabric or floor plan of Wiverton Hall and can deliver heritage benefits whilst being compatible with the continued residential use of the building, its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest will be preserved by the proposed use.

*Potential Impact on the Proposed Car Parking*

- 7.6 The position of the Hall within its surrounding parkland also contributes to its significance, illustrating the (historic) social and economic status of the Hall and its occupants. Consequently, and in view of the conservation officer's comments in respect of the pre-application submissions (see para. 3.5 above) careful consideration has been given to the location of the temporary car parking facility, and to minimise its impact on the setting of the Hall and on the historic parkland, it is proposed to use a parcel of land on the north side of the Hall that is both secluded and well screened from view.
- 7.7 Although this parcel of land lies within the historic landscape identified in the HER, this area consists of a relatively flat and featureless field, there is no evidence of any surviving historic landscaping within this field. The principal surviving landscape feature is the avenue of trees leading to the Hall from Bingham Road and this will not be affected by these proposals. Furthermore the location of the car park is not particularly prominent within the wider landscape surrounding the Hall, or other designated sites at Wiverton Hall, and will not affect any views either towards or from the Hall. Consequently, as the proposed car parking will be of an infrequent nature and of limited duration it will have no material impact on the character or appearance of the historic landscape, nor will it adversely affect the overall setting of the Hall and its associated scheduled monuments, or their significance.
- 7.8 Although this part of the historic parkland has been assessed as having a very low archaeological potential (see para. 4.3 above) it is proposed to utilise a trackway system for the car parking area to prevent any permanent damage to the ground and avoid any harm to any buried archaeological remains. This type of trackway system is often used for events within sensitive landscapes or historic environments and will be laid out and removed before and after each wedding event. The trackway system will not be permanent and it requires no groundworks or excavation of the site.

*Summary*

- 7.9 It is my professional opinion therefore that the impact of these proposals on the listed building and the historic parkland would be best described as neutral, particularly as the wedding venue use will not affect the character or appearance of the Hall and the associated car parking will have no material impact on the historic parkland, or any below ground archaeology, or the setting of the Hall.

**8.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 The use of listed buildings as wedding venues is not uncommon, and in fact English Heritage and the National Trust manage a number of such sites. The proposed use of Wiverton Hall



as a 'pop up' boutique wedding venue would constitute a beneficial use of the Hall, that requires no alterations to the the principal listed building and is compatible with its use as a family home. Furthermore the use of a parcel of land within the historic parkland for temporary parking, that is both infrequent and of limited duration and discreetly located to the north of the Hall, will have no material impact on the historic landscape or the setting of the Hall and its associated scheduled monuments.

- 8.2 Therefore in this context the proposed 'pop up' boutique wedding venue along with its associated car parking will comply with the objectives of English Heritage's guidance and also the objectives of the NPPF to protect heritage assets and their significance, whilst also securing viable uses consistent with their conservation. Furthermore, these proposals can accord with Core Strategy Policy 11, which seeks to support proposals that conserve and/or enhance heritage assets and their settings, and LPP Policy 28, which seeks to ensure that proposed uses are compatible with the asset and will conserve or enhance its character and appearance.
- 8.3 Consequently this proposal is able to comply with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act and the respective local and national policy objectives that seek to protect the significance of heritage assets.

**STEPHEN BRADWELL, MA MRTPI IHBC**

**26 May 2021**

**APPENDIX 1: List Description - Wiverton Hall, Bingham Road**

Wiverton Hall including service 12.2.52 range to rear left GV II\*

Small country house. Late C15 gatehouse, converted 1814 in Tudor Revival Style. Rendered brick C19 work, ashlar gatehouse. Hipped roof behind a deep castellated parapet. Tall ridge stacks. Two storeys. Symmetrical 5-bay facade the corners and centre bay marked by octagonal buttresses which rise as tall octagonal turrets with broad castellated tops. Central rib-vaulted porte-cochere, again with corner buttresses and turrets. Above is a gothic arched window with glazing bars. To the left and right, two tall 3-light mullioned windows with square heads and hood moulds and gothic-arched lights. Shorter, similar windows to 1st floor. To the left is a single storey addition with a single 3-light window as before. Right return of 1 bay with a 3-light ground floor window as before, and a further polygonal bay set back with a 2-light gothic window to each floor. A similar polygonal bay to left return with tall stair window. To the rear, the former gatehouse is of stone with 3 round, angle-turrets (to each end and between the 2 bays). The centre turret contains the main, arched entrance with moulded surround. The left bay has a wide arched entrance, now part-blocked, with a moulded surround. Above is a 4- light deeply recessed and roll-moulded mullioned window. The right bay has single lights at ground and intermediate levels and at the upper level a 2-light mullioned window in line with, and similar to, that of the left bay. Two cross-loops to the centre turret. Castellated parapet. The service range is to the rear left and is L-shaped and of stuccoed brickwork with a slate roof. Approx. 3 bays long, with mainly tripartite casements. Interior: octagonal entrance hall with ribbed ceiling on triple colonnettes. 6-panel doors with moulded architraves. In the centre of the building is an open-well Regency staircase with traceried iron balustrade, wooden handrail, ramped at the top and rolled at the bottom, and stone treads with shaped soffits. The former carriageway of the gatehouse, now a room, has a groin vaulted ceiling and a Regency fireplace.

N Pevsner. The Buildings of England, 1979.