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**Blue Coat School, Oldham
Temporary Accommodation / Car Parking**

Heritage Statement

June 2021

On behalf of

Department for Education

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement is provided in support of the planning application being made by the Department for Education (DfE) at the Blue Coat School, Egerton Road, Oldham. The wider campus site contains Grade II listed buildings.
- 1.2 The School's listed estate is a vital part of both the heritage and history of the institution, and also its contemporary identity and philosophy. With these positives also come the constraints of maintaining and operating within the limits of such a historic location.
- 1.3 The proposal is for the temporary siting of teaching accommodation on the site, after which the site will be used permanently for additional car parking.
- 1.4 The Heritage Statement follows accepted best practice: first outlining the planning policy requirements related to heritage; identifying local heritage assets and their significance; briefly describing the application proposals; and then assessing the impacts of the proposals on the significance of the heritage assets.

2 The Site

- 2.1 The site lies to the north-east edge of Oldham town centre. It is accessed from Egerton Road via a gate, close to the junction with Horsedge Street, which provides a single point of access and egress. Surrounding uses are generally residential.



Existing site

- 2.2 The school site sits at a higher level behind a large stone retaining wall on Egerton Street, approximately 6m high. The site itself rises relatively steeply to the north, where commanding views are available southwards.
- 2.3 The school comprises the original 19th century main school building and gatehouse and an extensive collection of modern development of various eras, which now largely surround the greenspace that sits in front of the main listed school building.
- 2.4 Unmanaged car parking is clearly an issue on site and the setting of the site is currently weakened by extensive and poorly co-ordinated car parking, often double and triple parked in

areas of the site not intended for car parking. This issue is exacerbated by the steep topography on site, which makes the parked cars more visible and untidy.

Existing site context



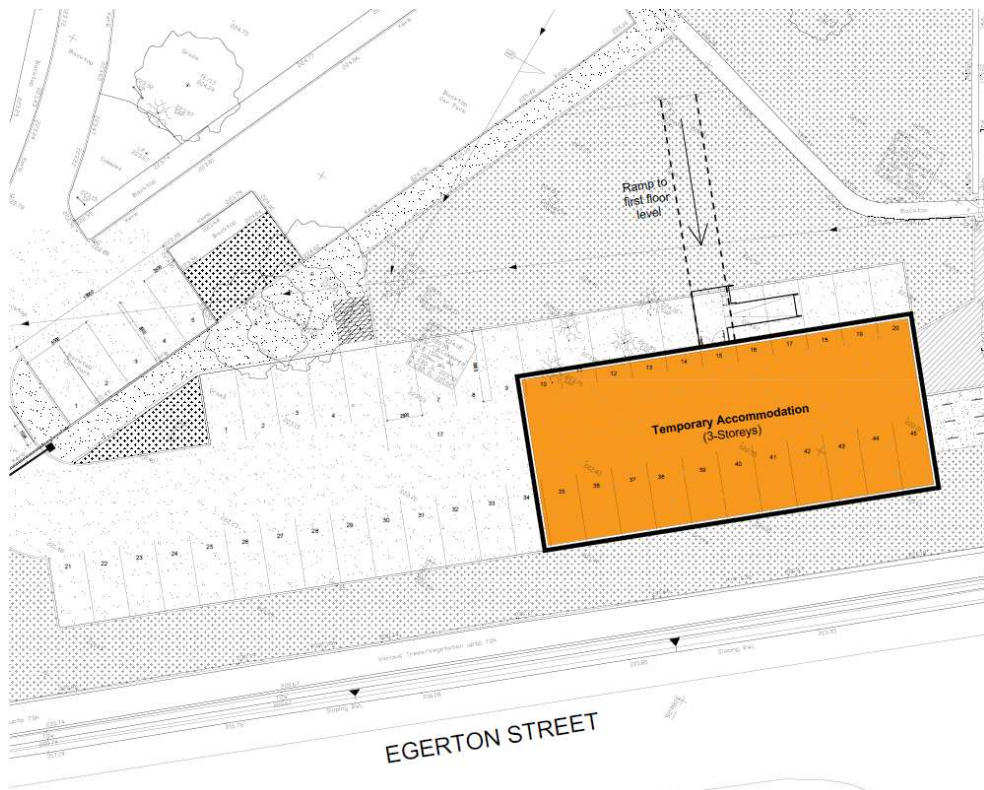
3 The Proposals

- 3.1 The proposals are the response to an urgent requirement for primary school places and this will be met by the Brian Clarke CE Academy (BCA) to be operated by The Cranmer Education Trust (CET). p
- 3.2 The accommodation will comprise temporary accommodation units that will be stacked to form a three storey temporary development on the site on an area of hardstanding to be created. This will be sited in an area of greenspace, as shown below. It will involve the loss of two trees. Other trees are retained in the vicinity, and these will help to screen the units. The units will be removed after eight months and once the new BCA school at Booth Street is completed by the end of February 2023. The proposals also include the restoration of a play area. The temporary class rooms will likely be needed until July 2023, so will only be situ for a short term.
- 3.3 In the long-term, when the units are removed the area of hardstanding will be retained and used for car parking, to alleviate parking issues on site. Relevant plan extracts are provided for reference below. The full submitted plans submitted with the application should be referred to for full details.
- 3.4 The 3-storey arrangement is required in order to provide sufficient accommodation on-site and also allow a small amount of associated car parking. Given the proposals will remove three of the existing spaces to form the entrance to the new car park it is required to cover the loss of these spaces, and there will be additional need from the teachers for this temporary school.
- 3.5 The location of the units within the site has been sited to maximise the amount of parking that can be provided here.

Figure 1: Location of works



Figure 2: Proposed temporary accommodation site plan



4 Heritage Planning Policy

- 4.1 This section outlines the national and local planning policies on heritage that are relevant to this assessment.

Relevant Legislation

- 4.2 Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 advises that *“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority ... 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.”*
- 4.3 Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities to pay, *“special attention in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area” in the determination of planning applications.”*

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, last published in 2019). Chapter 16 addresses conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It emphasises that heritage assets are *“an irreplaceable resource, and 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”* [para 184]. Heritage assets can include World Heritage Sites, listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments or un-designated heritage assets.
- 4.5 Paragraph 189 explains that in determining applications, local planning authorities [LPAs] 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 asset’s 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.”*
- 4.6 Paragraph 190 goes on to say that *“Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”*

- 4.7 Paragraph 92 dictates that when determining applications LPAs should “take account of:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
 - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”*

4.8 More detailed guidance is provided on how to consider potential impacts. In general “*great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*” [para 193]. “Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.” [para 194]. Significant harm to, or loss of, grade II listed buildings should be exceptional; and, in the case of grade II* and I listed buildings: wholly exceptional.

4.9 Paragraph 195 explains that “*Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.”*

4.10 Where the development proposal leads to less than substantial harm to the significance of the asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use.[para 196].

“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 directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement

will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset” [para 197].

- 4.11 It is recognised that not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to significance and that there could be opportunities for development within them that makes a positive contribution. Similarly, there could be opportunities within the setting of heritage assets that enhance or better reveal their significance. paras 200-201].

Local Plan

- 4.12 At the local level Oldham Council's Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (adopted 9 November 2011) includes respecting the heritage environment within its 'Vision' [p.29]:

J) respect the positive features and characteristics that add to our sense of place and identity by ensuring development respects the positive aspects and distinctiveness of our urban and rural landscapes. Features and characteristics include the significant and valuable elements of Oldham's heritage such as conservation areas and listed buildings, and their settings, and the scheduled ancient monuments. Also the views into and out of the Peak Park.

- 4.13 Policy 24 provides the local policy on heritage protection, and this follows the national direction as set out in the NPPF. In particular “*Development to, or within the curtilage or vicinity of, a listed building or structure must serve to preserve or enhance its special interest and its setting.*”

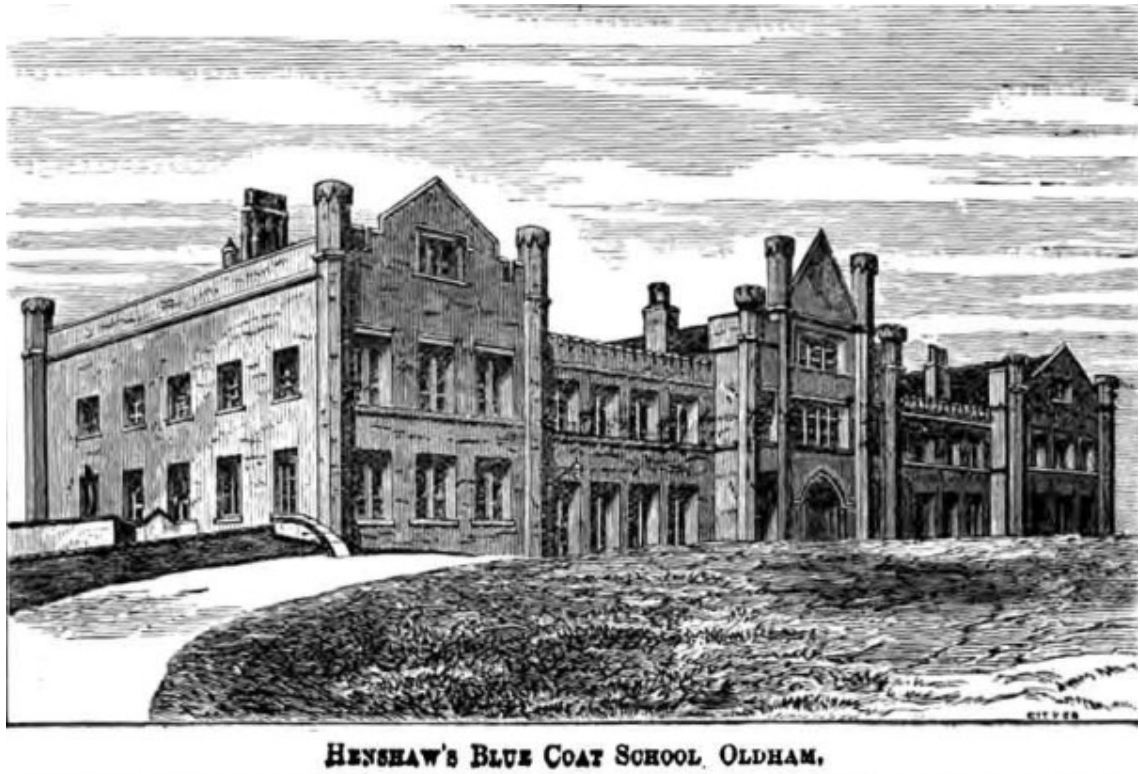
National Heritage Guidance

- 4.14 Historic England have produced a series of good practice advice notes, including GPA2 Managing Significance in Decision-taking (2015) and The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd edition, 2017). These provide further advice on assessing impacts, conserving assets and decision-making in the planning process.

5 Local Heritage Context

Historical Development

- 5.1 The school was founded when Mr Thomas Henshaw died in 1810 and he left the sum of £40,000 for the endowment of the Blue Coat School in Oldham.
- 5.2 A public meeting was held in Oldham in September 1825 to appeal for an offer of suitable land. An offer was forthcoming and was accepted. In addition, a public appeal was launched to provide the funds for building the school.
- 5.3 The architect was Richard Lane, and the foundation stone was laid in 1829. The school was finally opened in 1834 [source: Oldham Historical Research Group].



Blue Coat School, from "A Pictorial Background to The Life & Times Of William Rowbottom, Circa 1757 – 1830"

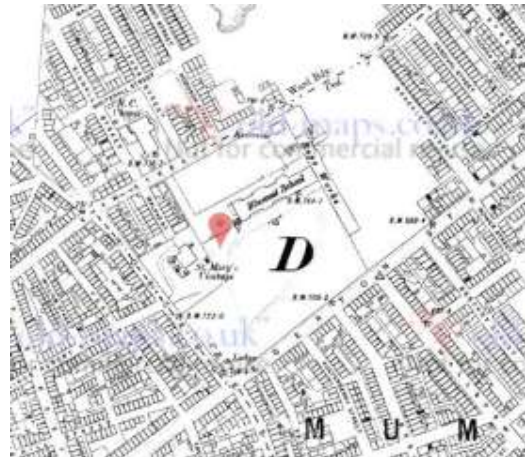
- 5.4 Historical drawings show the listed school building set behind green space with a long drive approaching the school from the south-west – an arrangement that still exists today, though the original building now sits alongside significant modern development.
- 5.5 Historic mapping (see below) shows how the relationship of buildings and space on site, and its surroundings, has changed over time. The site originally sat in open fields and comprised a

single building set in its own grounds. By the end of the 19th century the surrounding area became urbanised as Oldham expanded to incorporate the site. During the 20th century the new building was accompanied by an increasing extent of new development, although an area of green space has persisted in front of it, as has the original gatehouse and approach.

Historic Mapping



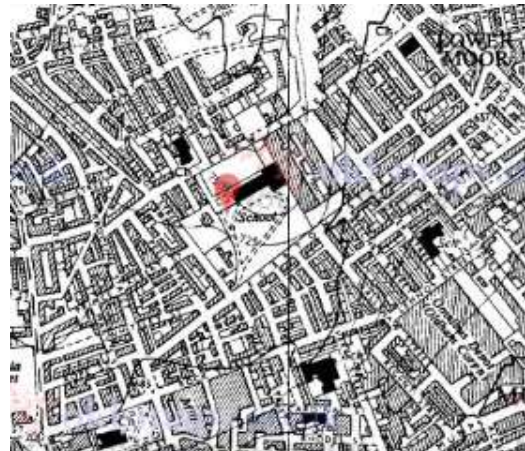
1848 [OS, via Old-Maps.co.uk]



1894 [OS, via Old-Maps.co.uk]



1922 [OS, via Old-Maps.co.uk]



1975 [OS, via Old-Maps.co.uk]

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Heritage Assets

- 5.6 The heritage assets on the site comprise the two listed buildings, listed as follows:
- Henshaw's Bluecoat School, Grade II listed, 1829-34 [main school building];
 - Lodge to Bluecoat School, Grade II listed, c.1830 [gatehouse and boundary wall].
- 5.7 There are no conservation areas, other listed buildings or other designated or non-designated heritage assets on the site or immediately adjacent to it. The remainder of development on the site is modern and does not have heritage significance.
- 5.8 The full listing details of the two buildings are provided below.

Main School Building:

SD9205SE EGERTON STREET 780-1/5/28 Henshaw's Bluecoat School 23/01/73

II

School. 1829-1834. By Richard Lane. Ashlar faced with Welsh slate roof. 2 storeys, symmetrically planned about a central entrance hall. Neo-Tudor style. Central and outer gabled wings each a 3-window range, linked by longer 5-window ranges. Advanced central wing with central moulded arched doorway and 3-light mullioned and transomed windows above on first and attic storeys, with steep gable above and polygonal pilasters terminating in truncated pinnacles. Outer 2-light mullioned windows on each floor, and polygonal angle pilasters with embattled pinnacles. Outer gables are similarly styled, with polygonal angle pilasters with truncated pinnacles, and steep coped gables. Windows throughout are mullioned and with margin lights in deep splayed embrasures. Embattled parapet over 5-window linking ranges. Advanced single storeyed parallel wing to right added in 1908, employing similar style. INTERIOR retains much of the original planning, in spite of the loss of the original hall (housed to the rear of the right hand gabled wing). Central entrance and stair hall, with cantilevered stone stair with cast-iron balustrade, linked to central spinal corridor by three moulded archways on each floor. Some original detailing also survives, particularly the moulded plasterwork of the corridor, and the cornice and gothic fireplace in the former governor's dining room. The school was founded as the result of a bequest from Thomas Henshaw, a hatter of Oldham, supplemented by a public appeal.

Listing NGR: SD9297905494

Gatehouse:

SD9205SE EGERTON STREET 780-1/5/29 Lodge to Bluecoat School 23/01/73

GV II

Lodge to Henshaw's Bluecoat School (q.v.). c1830. Coursed and squared rubble with Welsh slate roof. Single-storeyed, with central door flanked by single 2-light casement window each side. Plain architraves to windows, hood mould to doorway, parapet and coped gables. Single end wall stack.

Listing NGR: SD9291205345

6 Assessment of Impacts

- 6.1 This section assesses the heritage impacts of the proposed development on the two heritage assets identified in Section 5.
- 6.2 The proposals do not physically affect either of the two listed buildings on the site but the potential impacts to consider are those upon their setting. The proposals sit within the school site, within its campus and on the raised land above Egerton Road. They should therefore be considered as being within the curtilage of the listed buildings.

Main building

Assessment of Significance

- 6.3 The significance of the building itself is not affected by the proposal. The significance of interest here is in its setting. The building was clearly sited to enjoy long range views southwards and to sit behind an area of greenspace. These factors have diminished in the preceding two centuries as the site and surroundings has become more developed. Although a green area is retained in front of the building this is not much reduced from its original extent and is partially enclosed by modern developments. These developments sit in front of the building line and affect views to and from the main building. Nevertheless, an open aspect and open relationship to the front edge of the site from the listed building is preserved, and the height of the site means that long range views continue to be enjoyed.



Proposal site

Assessment of Impacts

- 6.4 **Loss of greenspace and impacts on layout** – the proposals are on an area that is currently green space and so will represent a further reduction in this original feature of the layout of the site. The degree to which this will impact the current site is however limited by the extent of new development that already sits in front of the main building.

- 6.5 The retaining wall of the car parking will be visible from the listed building, as the above photographs show. We have considered this and sought to mitigate by the choice of materials, that will be sympathetic of the local area, and we would look to condition the materials from an agreed palette of local materials to maintain the visual coherence of the the site and the built environment.
- 6.6 The proposed site is partially located in front of the main building and has the potential to directly impact its relationship with the open aspect, and in the case of temporary accommodation - its views, westwards. However, this is mitigated by the fact the L-shaped building to the immediate east of the site already sits in front of the main building and already affects this relationship. This is in effect creating a courtyard-type arrangement where development will enclose the greenspace and form a new relationship with the listed building, although maintaining an immediate greenspace setting to it.
- 6.7 When the temporary accommodation is removed a more open aspect, and views, will be preserved. The greenspace will be replaced by hardstanding which is visually coherent with the wider site. p
- 6.8 It is considered that there will be therefore be a **moderate negative** temporary impact on the layout of the site. When the temporary accommodation is removed this will become **permanent positive** impact.



Existing view to main listed building from proposal site

- 6.9 **Car Park safety** – the highways officer at pre-application stages has indicated new safety measures such as arcmo crash barriers will be needed where accidents impact on Egerton Street. These will be placed at the edge of the car park and not against the listed boundary wall. These safety installations will not impact upon the wider listed buildings or their setting.

- 6.10 **Views from the main building** – impacts on views by the temporary accommodation are diminished by the site topography. The fact that the main building is both higher in scale, and sits on a higher part of the site, means that the impact of the modern development in front of the main building is diminished. It still appears more dominant on site than the plan-form suggests. Long range views are still possible between and above modern buildings in front of it.



Existing view south from outside main building – showing how topography hides building massing and retains open views

- 6.11 It is considered that the proposals will have a **moderate negative** temporary impact on views from the listed building. When the temporary accommodation is removed this will become **no impact**.
- 6.12 **Views to the main building/impact on setting** - Similarly, the higher topography and scale of the main building will help to preserve views to it from all parts of the site. The proposed site sits on the southern side of the main driveway. It therefore does not impact on the continuing historical relationship of the listed building, gatehouse and the approach between the two, nor on views that are offered from this driveway as one approaches the main building. Indeed, there will be little opportunity for views to be taken from behind the temporary accommodation toward the main building, as this is on the edge of the site and will not be a place of much activity. The retention of mature trees immediately in front of the temporary accommodation will help to integrate the temporary building within the site and mitigate views. On a permanent basis, the retention of these trees will help to offset the loss of green space.
- 6.13 It is considered that the proposals will have a **negligible** temporary impact on views from the listed building. When the temporary accommodation is removed this will become **a slight negative** impact due to the loss of greenspace in foreground views.

- 6.14 **Other impacts – loss of trees:** other impacts include the loss of two trees within the proposed sites. These trees contribute to the green setting of the site and appear in some foreground views to the listed building. This will be a permanent **slight negative** impact.



Proposed development site – trees on left will be retained, trees on right will be lost

- 6.15 **Car parking:** the permanent proposal to introduce car parking will help to remove unsightly and unmanaged car parking from other more sensitive parts of the site. This includes the immediate setting of the main listed building and parking alongside its approach. These are important parts of the site in terms of its original conception and these areas are currently significantly negatively affected by car parking. The current proposals therefore offer indirectly a **moderate positive** permanent impact due to the re-organisation of parking on site.
- 6.16 **Views from Egerton Road** – we have also assessed potential impacts from Egerton Road. The local topography means that this sits at a significantly lower level than the listed building and its setting, behind a c.6m retaining wall. There is also a significant tree line on this site boundary. No views are possible from Egerton Road of the main listed building. The temporary accommodation is also not likely to be highly visible here or to have an effect on the streetscape at lower level. There will therefore be **no impacts** from Egerton Road.



View from Egerton Road

- 6.17 **Gatehouse** – the gatehouse (lodge) is also listed and impacts upon it have been assessed. The lodge is a small, single storey building. It is located at the main entrance on Egerton Road. The topography means that this sits at a significantly lower level than the proposed site. The significance of the gatehouse are in its relationship with the main listed building and the wider site. This relationship will not be affected by the proposals. Only glimpsed views are currently possible between the gatehouse and the main building and these will not be affected by the proposed temporary accommodation. Glimpsed views will also only be possible from the gatehouse to the temporary accommodation and these will be less prominent than modern development that lies closer to the lodge. There will therefore be **no impacts** on the setting of the listed gatehouse.



Listed gatehouse

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 This Heritage Assessment has considered the potential heritage impacts of the proposed temporary accommodation and subsequent parking at Blue Coat School. It has described the site and its current context, and assessed a range of potential impacts on the listed main building and gatehouse.
- 7.2 The assessment that there will be a series of slight to moderate negative impacts on the listed main building from the temporary accommodation. When the temporary accommodation is removed these will be reduced to slight or no impacts. The short-term (8 month) nature of the proposals is therefore important in terms of any significance of assessing the proposals impact as it will only represent a short term and removable impact.
- 7.3 Impacts must also be seen in the current context of the site, in which a significant amount of modern development already surrounds the listed building, and car parking detracts from the historic environment.
- 7.4 The permanent proposals offer the potential to remove car parking from sensitive parts of the site in heritage terms. It therefore offers positive heritage impacts that can help to offset negative impacts.
- 7.5 There will be no impacts on the listed gatehouse due to the topography and current site context.
- 7.6 Finally, it should be recognised that this site is in continuing use as a school – the use for which the listed building was designed and built. Significant positive value should be put upon this in heritage terms. It should also be recognised that the need to maintain this use and meet modern teaching needs on an historical site places demands and requires a flexible approach to heritage protection. If the listed main building is no longer capable of continuing in educational use then it will be under much greater threat than that represented by any of the proposals represent, and the application should be considered in that context.
- 7.7 In summary, we see no reasonable reasons why the considered heritage impacts should outweigh the urgent educational needs of the proposal in planning terms.
- 7.8 This assessment has fulfilled the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy in providing an evidence-based assessment of potential impacts on the significance of heritage assets.