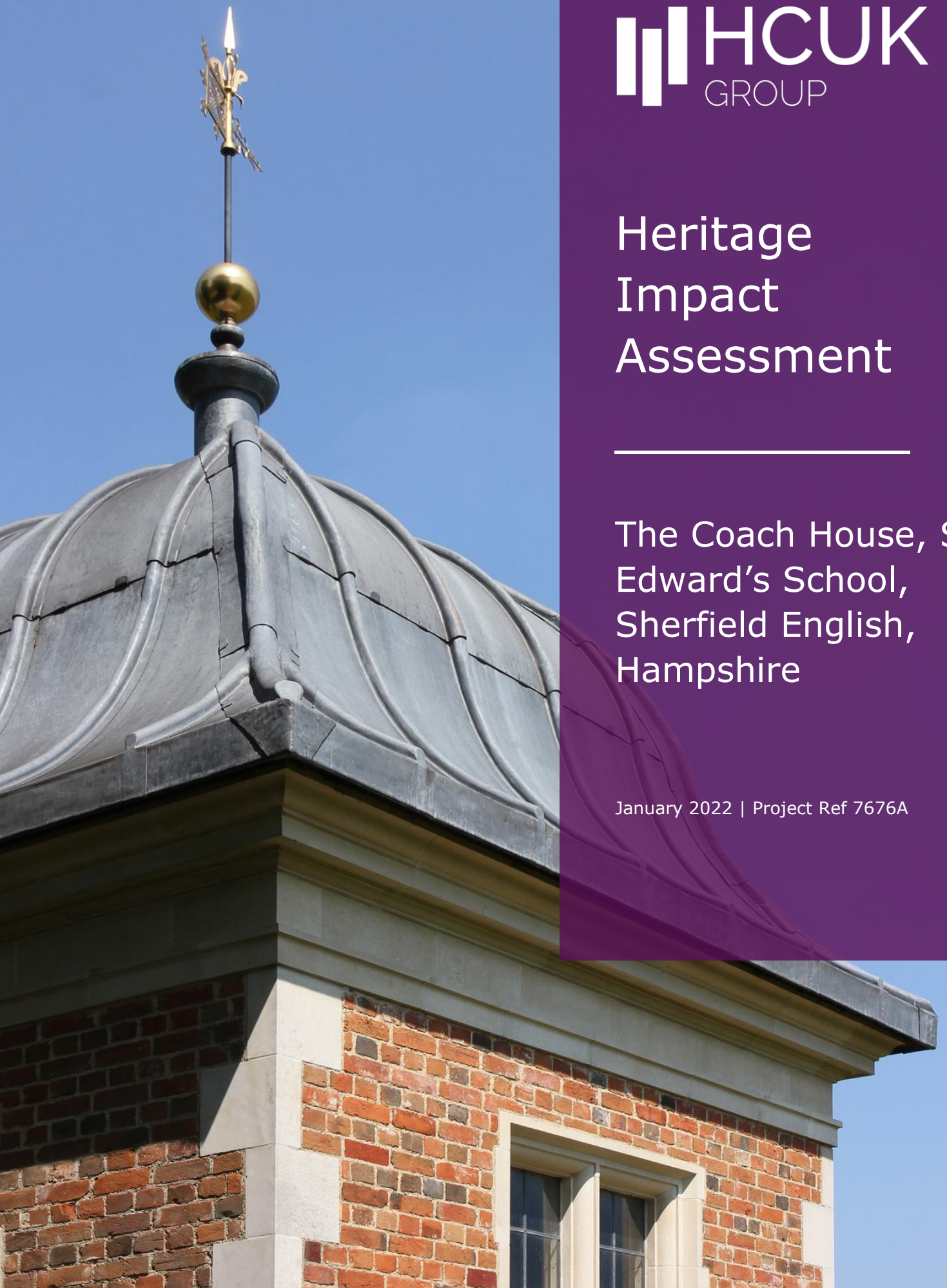




Heritage Impact Assessment

The Coach House, St
Edward's School,
Sherfield English,
Hampshire

January 2022 | Project Ref 7676A



HCUK Group is a multi-disciplinary environmental practice offering expert advice in archaeology, heritage, landscape, arboriculture, and planning. It began life in 2010 as Heritage Collective LLP, before becoming Heritage Collective UK Limited in 2014. In the coming years diversification saw the addition of Archaeology Collective, Landscape Collective and Planning Collective, before all strands came together to be branded under a single umbrella: HCUK Group, based on the acronym for the original company. A home working company since the beginning, we are pleased to employ a talented workforce of consultants and support staff, who are on hand to advise our clients.



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App. 1 Scale of Harm table (HCUK, 2019)

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by HCUK Group on behalf of St Edward's School and relates to a pre-application enquiry regarding alterations to the former Stable Block/Coach House which forms part of the grade II* listed school building, also known as Melchet Court. Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC hereafter) are the determining authority.



Figure 1: Melchet Court, St Edward's School (grade II) viewed from the north west with the former Stable Block/Coach House visible to the far left*

- 1.2** St Edward's School main building, Melchet Court, is a grade II* listed building (UID: 1339192) which comprises a country house from the 1860s which was fire damaged and rebuilt in the 1870s before being remodelled in between 1912-14. To the east of the school building is a detached red brick former Stable Block/Coach House which, while altered, dates from the 19th century and would, in accordance with Section 1(5)(b) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990, be considered to form part of the listed building, sometimes referred to as 'curtilage listed').



Figure 2: The former Stable Block/Coach House at Melchet Court, St Edward's School

1.3

In accordance with the requirements of Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) this statement describes the significance of the identified designated heritage assets.

The Proposals and Relevant Background

1.4

Over time, the former Stable Block/Coach House has been incorporated into the educational provision on the site. In 2019 a retrospective application for conversion of part of the building into classrooms and therapy rooms (LPA ref: 19/01685/LBWS) was granted. Following that application, additional therapy spaces are now required and proposals seek to convert other parts of this building in a similar way.

1.5 The current pre-application proposals¹ can be summarised as:

- Minor changes to layout to provide a series of three classrooms and therapy spaces;
- Introduction of new raised floors throughout (with historic floor preserved in situ where present);
- Replacement of entrance doors and introduction of a ramp to the southern access door;
- Boxing in of exposed pipework; and
- Retention, and where relevant, restoration of surviving stable features.

1.6 In addition to the main grade II* listed school building there are a number of other grade II listed buildings on the site, including:

- St Edward's School retaining wall 50m north of Melchet Court (UID: 1301521);
- St Edward's School retaining wall to drive in front of Melchet Court (UID: 1093666);
- St Edward's School retaining wall 25m south of Melchet Court (UID: 1093667); and
- St Edward's School, the water garden - canal, bridge and pavilion (UID: 1157660).

1.7 These listed buildings are all garden features and while the former Stable Block/Coach House is within the setting of these asset, the predominantly internal nature of the works means that the significance of these assets would not be affected. As such, these assets have been scoped out of this assessment which instead focuses on the grade II* listed Melchet Court.

¹ It should be noted that current proposals do not include introduction of replacement windows or suspended ceilings (features which were included within the retrospective 2019 consented application).

Purpose of this Statement

1.8 The purpose of this Heritage Impact Assessment, provided at pre-application stage, is to assist with the council's assessment of the scheme by informing the decision takers on the effects of the proposed development on the historic built environment. Value judgements on the significance of the heritage assets affected are presented and the effects of the proposals upon that significance are appraised. The heritage assets affected have been observed and assessed by the author following a site visit made in January 2022. Specifically, this report assesses the significance of the listed building and the effect of the proposed development on that significance. Particular regard is given to the provisions of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. The report also sets out how the proposal complies with the guidance and policy of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 and local planning policy.

2. Relevant Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1** The decision maker is required by sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building and its setting when exercising planning functions. The decision maker must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the significance of the listed building, and there is a strong presumption against the grant of permission for development that would harm its heritage significance.²
- 2.2** For the purposes of this statement, preservation equates to an absence of harm.³ Harm is defined in paragraph 84 of Historic England’s Conservation Principles as change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset.⁴
- 2.3** The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as being made up of four main constituents: architectural interest, historical interest, archaeological interest and artistic interest. The assessments of heritage significance and impact are normally made with primary reference to the four main elements of significance identified in the NPPF.
- 2.4** The NPPF requires the impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset⁵ to be considered in terms of either “substantial harm” or “less than substantial harm” as described within paragraphs 201 and 202 of that document. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) makes it clear that substantial harm is a high test, and case law describes substantial harm in terms of an effect that would vitiate or drain away much of the significance of a heritage asset.⁶ The Scale of Harm is tabulated at **Appendix 1**.

² Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited v East Northamptonshire District Council and others [2014] EWCA Civ 137. This principle has recently been confirmed, albeit in a lower court, in R (Wyeth-Price) v Guildford Borough Council.

³ South Lakeland v SSE [1992] 2 AC 141.

⁴ Conservation Principles, 2008, paragraph 84.

⁵ The seven categories of designated heritage assets are World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Park and Gardens, Registered Battlefield and Conservation Areas, designated under the relevant legislation.

⁶ Bedford Borough Council v SSCLG and Nuon UK Limited [2013] EWHC 4344 (Admin).

2.5 Paragraphs 201 and 202 of the NPPF refer to two different balancing exercises in which harm to significance, if any, is to be balanced with public benefit.⁷ Paragraph 18a-020-20190723 of National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) online makes it clear that some heritage-specific benefits can be public benefits. Paragraph 18a-018-20190723 of the same NPPG makes it clear that it is important to be explicit about the category of harm (that is, whether paragraph 201 or 202 of the NPPF applies, if at all), and the extent of harm, when dealing with decisions affecting designated heritage assets, as follows:

"Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated."

2.6 Paragraphs 199 and 200 of the NPPF state that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset when considering applications that affect its significance, irrespective of how substantial or otherwise that harm might be.

2.7 Local Planning Policy for TVBC is contained within the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan DPD 2011-2019 (adopted 2016). Relevant policies from this document are outlined below.

2.8 **Policy E1 High Quality Development in the Borough:** This policy, while not a specific heritage policy, notes that development will be permitted if it is of a high quality in terms of design and local distinctiveness. The policy notes that development should integrate, respect and complement the character of an area in terms of layout, appearance, scale, materials and building styles and not detract from important views of key landmark buildings.

2.9 **Policy E9 Heritage:** This policy notes that development or works affecting heritage assets will be permitted provided that it would make a positive contribution to sustaining or enhancing significance of heritage assets and that the significance of heritage assets has informed the proposals through an assessment proportionate to their significance. The policy goes on to present levels of harm and assessment of impacts in accordance with paragraphs 201 and 202 of the NPPF.

⁷ The balancing exercise was the subject of discussion in *City and Country Bramshill v CC SLG and others* [2021] EWCA, Civ 320.

3. Background and Development

History of Melchet Park

3.1 Historically throughout the middle ages, Melchet Park formed part of the Royal Forest of Clarendon near Alderbury in Wiltshire. In 1357, the Sheriff of Wiltshire received an order to construct a lodge within the 'King's Park of Melchet' and it is understood that, at this time, the lodge was constructed and 20 acres of land surrounding it were enclosed. By 1577 the lodge was occupied by Richard Audley, Chief Ranger of the park and permission was granted by Elizabeth I to enclose a total of 240 acres of Melchet Park.

3.2 The next major changes to the estate occurred in 1792 when it was purchased by John Osbourne who planted the park with a variety of foreign trees (including California Pine and cedar), some of which can be seen today, and laid out the parkland in the English Landscape style. During this period an 18th century mansion stood on the site though little is known regarding the form and appearance of this building.



Figure 3: 1807 Map of Salisbury showing Melchet Park ('Milshal Park') set within landscaped grounds and parkland

3.3

During Osbourne’s ownership, in c.1800, a Hindu temple was erected in the grounds of the mansion to honour his friend Warren Hastings, a British colonial administrator who, alongside Robert Clive, are credited with laying the foundation of the British Empire in India. The temple (**Figure 4**) was based on a sketch made by Thomas Daniell of the porch at Fort Rotas in 1790 and was placed in the grounds alongside a pedestal of Hastings (**Figure 5**) by the sculptor J.Rossi.



Figure 4: Sketch, by William Daniell, of the temple in Melchet Park © Royal Collection Trust

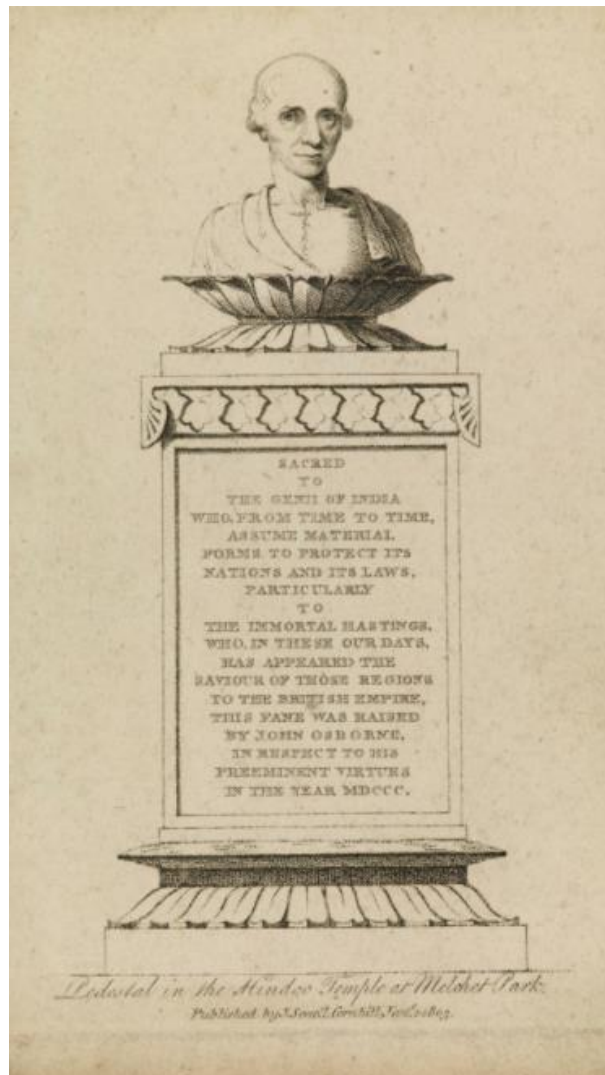


Figure 5: Sketch of the pedestal of Hastings within the grounds of Melchet Court (sketch by William Daniell, c.1803) © RIBA Collections (ref: RIBA85186)

3.4 Through the heirs of John Osbourne, the estate was conveyed to Alexander Baring, who was created Lord Ashburton in 1835. He was succeeded by his son, William, second Lord Ashburton, in 1848.

3.5 In the early 1860s, the second Lord Ashburton chose to replace the former Georgian mansion at Melchet Court with a large red brick country house to the designs of Henry Clutton. Sadly William died soon after in 1864 and the house was completed by his widow, Lady Louisa Ashburton, who had a daughter (Mary Florence) with William.

3.6 Less than a decade after its construction in 1873 the property was significantly damaged by fire. It was reconstructed by Henry Clutton between 1875-1879 and Lady Asburton remained at Melchet Court until her death in 1903.



Figure 6: Melchet Court, pictured in the 19th century prior to the redevelopment of the campanile © Historic England Archives

3.7 Eight years after Lady Asburton's death in 1911 the estate was sold to Sir Alfred Mond who became Lord Melchett, in 1928. Lord Melchett made alterations to the estate including the addition of a new wing in 1911 and various changes to the gardens, all by Thomas Arthur Darcy Braddell and Humphry Deane, Arts & Crafts designers. These changes included:

- The addition of a sunken garden, immediately in front of the house on the main terrace;
- The addition of a Dutch garden, with a canal, bridge and gazebo, just to the east of it;
- The addition of a new gate house in 1924 which replaced a former lodge;
- The introduction of a rock garden beyond the lower terrace;
- The introduction of a bathroom pond to the south of Melchet Court; and
- The introduction of a rose garden to the west.

3.8 Lord Melchett died in 1935 when the estate was split up with the grounds and buildings purchased to be the Pinewood Public School. Following the outbreak of World War II, the school was requisitioned by the British Army before being passed to the Sisters of Nazareth who used it to care for children. Between 1954 and 1962, the Salesian Fathers ran a theological college at the site. It was then purchased in 1963 by the Trustees of the Clifton Catholic Children's Society for use as a school, the use which it remains in to today.

3.9 The building was designated as a grade II* listed building in November 1986. It's list description reads:

"Country house. 1863, fire damaged 1873, rebuilt 1875-9 all by H Clutton, remodelled 1912-4 by D Braddell, early interior work by A Stevens and L W Collmann. Brick arch with stone dressings, plain tile roofs. Clutton's work Jacobean, Braddells Edwardian version of same. Entrance front is symmetrical with end and central Dutch gables. In centre 2 storey projecting porch has early C20 stone Jacobean doorway with cartouche over, 4 stone steps below, 4-light mullioned window over and low parapet. End bays have large 2-storey bows, with 4-light mullion and transomed window. Bays between have 4-light mullioned window with similar 3-light window over. 3-light mullioned windows in gables. Garden front is similar with rectangular 2-storey bow in centre, and canted bays at each end, with balustraded parapet. At ends and over centre in middle of building chimneys with triple moulded brick stacks. At one end, on garden front, service range remodelled early C20 with sunken garden in front, in enclosed area between gable of house and projecting wing on service range. That gable of house and service range are all that remains of 1863 house, in High Victorian Gothic, with round tower on junction with service range. On entrance side at other end C19 and C20 5 bay orangery with brick pilasters and cornice, stone arches. Under centre arch aedicule of rubbed brick and terracotta. Inside, behind porch is hall, still apparently with Steven's ceiling and grey marble fireplace, door- cases and panelling early C20. To L is staircase, said to be Stevens, but more English Baroque, and Steven's ceiling over. Steven's ceilings Italian Renaissance, designs in V & A, coffered and painted. Along R end chapel with more Jacobean than Italian ceiling, possibly Steven's and moved from dining room which lies behind staircase. Remainder of interior late C19 and early C20, except study in service range, partly in tower with Jacobean plaster by Collmann.

Country Life; 1930; p176-83. N Pevsner; Buildings of England, Hampshire; Penguin; 1966; p332-3."

Cartographic Evidence

3.10 The present day Melchet Court is first seen on the 1881 Ordnance Survey (OS hereafter) Map which is replicated at **Figure 7**. The map shows the main dwelling at Melchet Court complete with a large glass house to the west elevation. A detached building, the former Stable Block/Coach House, can be seen to the east as a series of solid buildings, arranged around yards and linked with glazing elements (shown in blue hatch on the map).

3.11 The map also provides evidence as to the garden design at this period showing a series of terraces and walls to the north and south of the dwelling and parterres with water features further south. The 1901 OS Map (not replicated here) shows a similar arrangement. The 1909 OS Map (**Figure 8**) shows a similar arrangement to the Stable Block/Coach House and main dwelling.

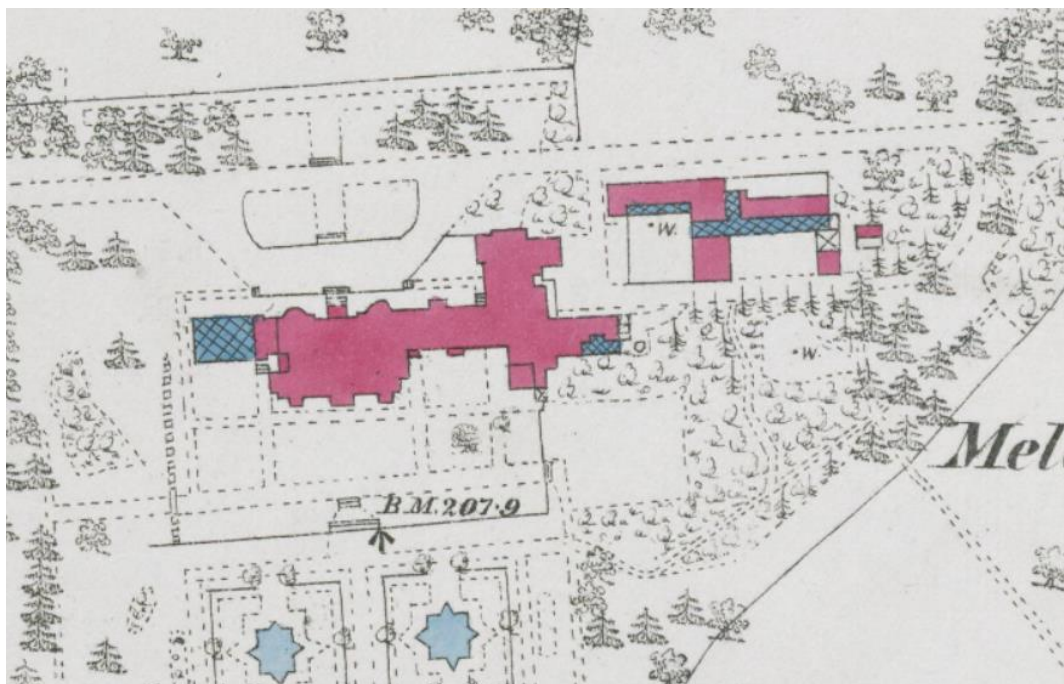


Figure 7: 1881 OS Map (surveyed 1876). Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland

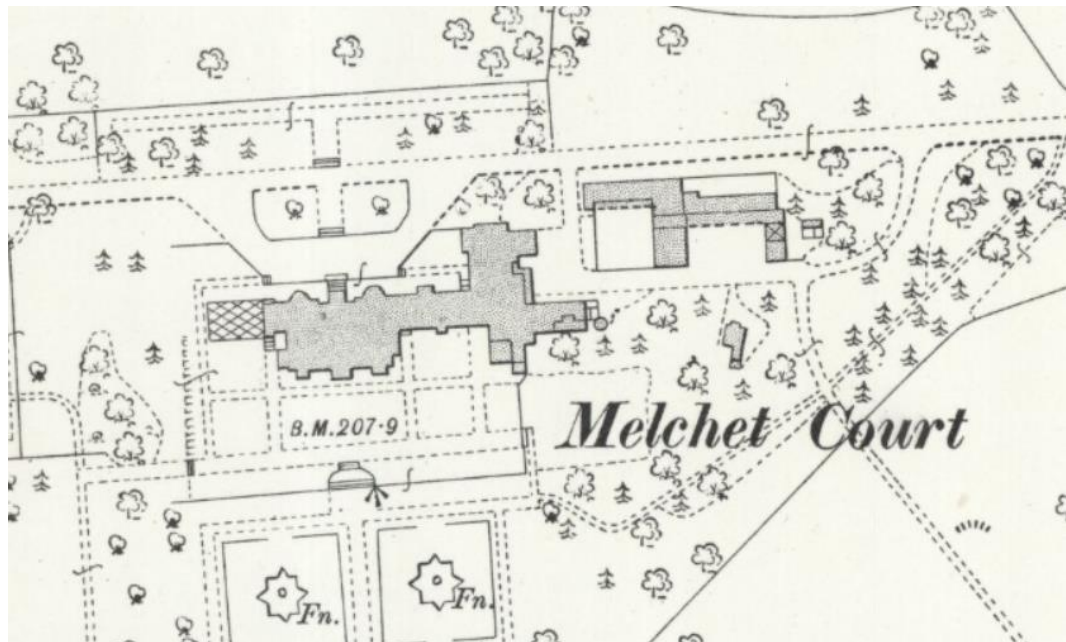


Figure 8: 1909 OS Map (surveyed 1900). Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland

3.12 By the time of the 1926 OS Map (**Figure 9**) further changes can be seen in the form of new garden features (those added in 1912-14 by Lord Melchett) and various additions to the ancillary detached Stable Block/Coach House, including a glazed canopy to the eastern face of the western yard. This canopy can also be seen on an early 20th century photograph (**Figure 10**) and seems to correlate to a period when the former Stable Block/Coach House was converted to use as garages for Lord Melchett’s car collection.

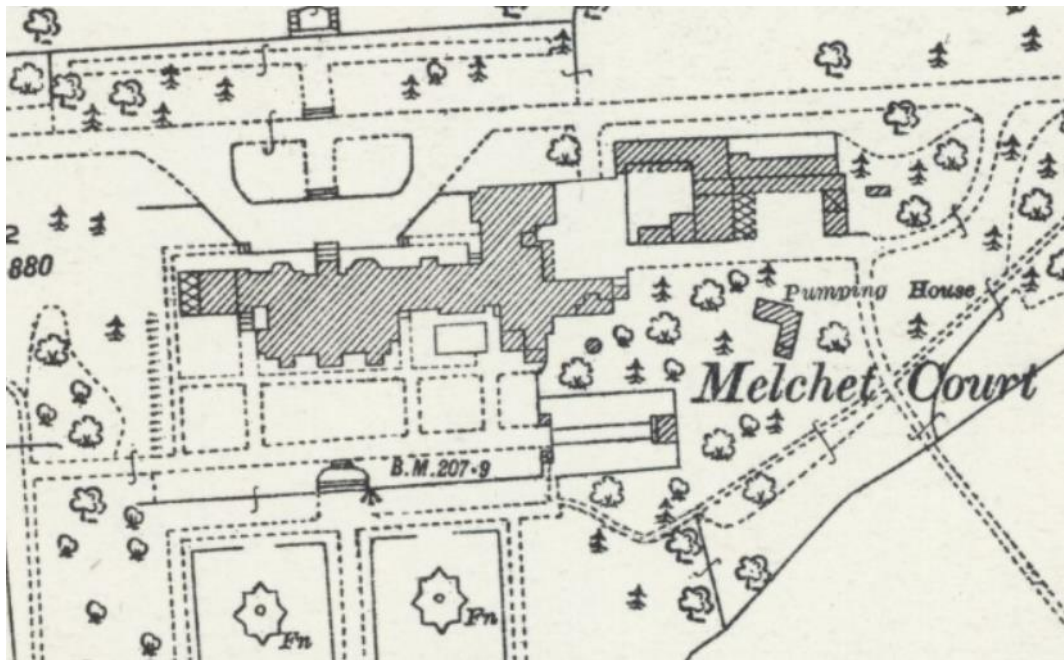


Figure 9: 1926 OS Map (surveyed 1924). Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland



Figure 10: Early 20th century photograph of the Stable Block/Coach House with new glazed canopy when in use as garages

Current Description of the Former Stable Block/Coach House

3.13 The former main element of the former Stable Block/Coach House is a single storey with attic level detached building which is styled in a similar manner to Melchet Court through the use of red brick, stone dressings, prominent chimneys, Dutch gables and leaded mullion windows (**Figures 11 and 12**).

3.14 To the east of the main structure, connected to it, is a single storey portion which was historically more open with timber posts but has since been infilled with modern brickwork and windows (**Figures 13 and 14**).

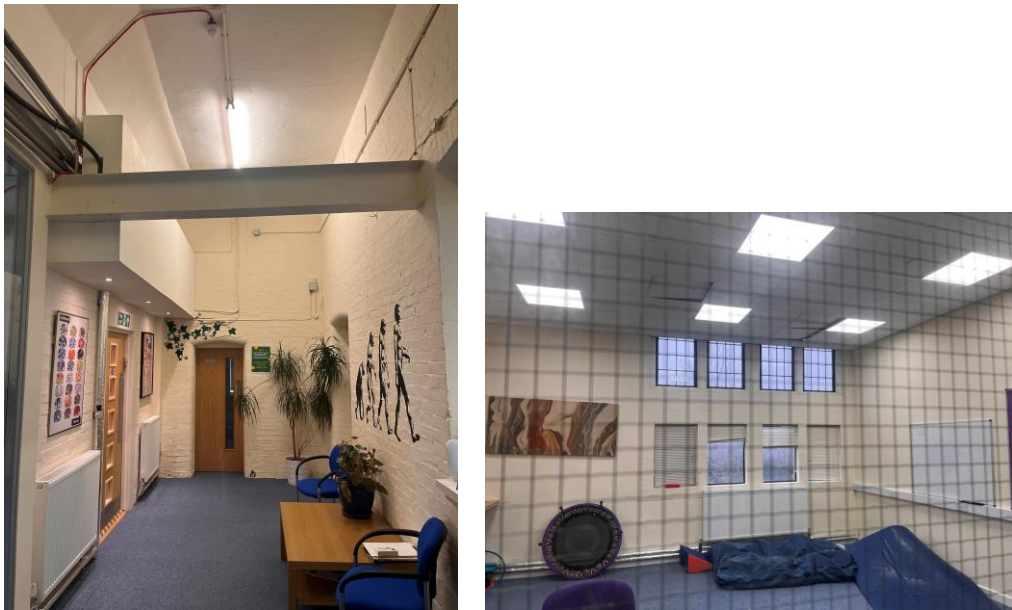


Figures 11 and 12: Front elevation of the former Stable Block/Coach House (left) and rear elevation (right) with high level dormer windows and various walls creating yards in this ancillary part of the estate



Figures 13 and 14: Single storey element of the former Stable Block/Coach House as seen from the north (left) and south (right) with modern brick infill

3.15 As noted within the Introduction, part of this building has already been converted into classrooms and therapy spaces and photographs of these areas can be seen at **Figures 15 and 16**. Consent was granted for these works as part of a 2019 retrospective application (LPA ref: 19/01685/LBWS).



Figures 15 and 16: Photographs within the part of the former Stable Block/Coach House which has already been converted to educational space

3.16 The remaining areas of the building which are the focus of this application are currently in use as brickwork classrooms (**Figures 17 and 18**). While in some form of educational use, these parts of the building retain an informal ancillary character and a small number of original features remain. These include:

- Herringbone brick flooring;
- A single run of tongue and groove panelling in the southern most room;
- A remnant stable post in the southern most room; and
- Timber doors leading to the southern most room (thought this has been altered with the fan light above being sealed).

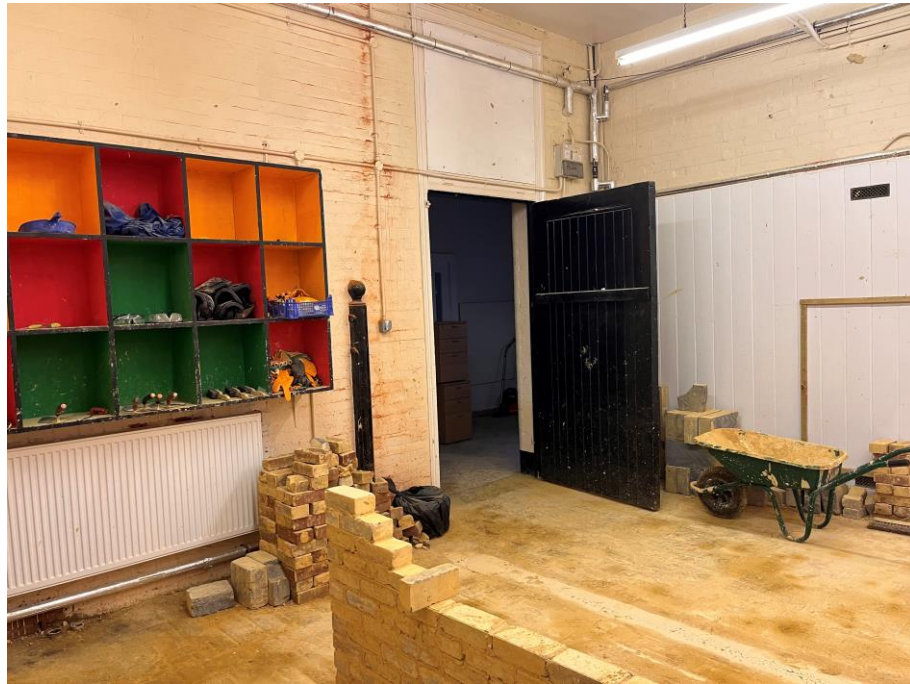


Figure 17: Southern most room in use as a brickworks training classroom. Room features brick flooring, tongue and grove panelling, historic door and a stable post (all of which can be seen in the image)



Figure 18: Photograph of the northern most room which has already been altered in character through dry lining of the walls and introduction of a replacement floor

4. Statement of Significance

Assessment of Significance

4.1 This chapter of the report establishes the significance of the relevant heritage assets in the terms set out in the NPPF. This chapter should be read in conjunction with Chapter 5 (Heritage Impact Assessment).

St Edward’s School Melchet Court (grade II*)

4.2 St Edward’s School Melchet Court is of more than special interest as defined by its high grade of listing (only 5.8% of listed buildings are grade II*). The asset’s significance primarily relates to a combination of its architectural, historic and artistic interest.

4.3 The building’s architectural interest stems from the structure as a mid to late 19th century country house of Jacobean style which portrays a high level of quality, craftsmanship and design, both internally and externally. Externally, the building’s irregular elevations, retained earlier elements (of the fire damaged 1860s house), high quality materials and use of architectural mechanisms of the period (such as Dutch Gables, turrets, prominent moulded chimneys and transom and mullion windows) all contribute to its clear special architectural interest.



*Figure 19: Melchet Court (south front), grade II**

4.4 Internally, the building’s interiors (particularly the principal rooms) are lavishly decorated and demonstrate a high level of survival both in terms of detailing and plan form. These aspects of the building are of clear architectural interest in their own right.



Figure 20: View within the dining room with wall panelling, timber floors and enriched moulded ceiling



Figures 21 and 22: Views within the main entrance hall (left) showing a large grey marble fireplace attributed to Alfred Stevens and within the library (left)

4.5 The building is also of clear historic interest (illustrative value) as a high quality and high status example of a late Victorian country house which provides physical evidence as to domestic, social and economic practices of the period alongside providing evidence as to architectural preferences and design. Of particular relevance is how the building displays the evidence of the distinct styles adopted by the two principal designers, Clutton's Jacobean design and Braddell's Edwardian.

4.6 Associations with various well known architects and designers also contributes to the significance (particularly the historic interest) of the building. These designers include:

- Henry Clutton (b.1819, d.1893) – an eminent English architect and designer during the 19th century who studied with Edward Blore and worked with William Burges
- Thomas Arthur Darcy Braddell, also known as Darcy Braddell (b.1884, d.1970) – Braddell went into practice with Humphrey Deane (as Deane & Braddell) and the pair had extensive experience of design in the Arts & Craft domestic styling
- Alfred Stevens (b.1817, d.1875) – a 19th century British sculptor who also contributed to St Paul's Cathedral with a monument to the Duke of Wellington
- Leonard William Collmann (b.1816, d.1881) – a 19th century architect, painter and draughtsman who also designed some elements of furniture

4.7 The setting of Melchet Court, complete with 18th century landscaped park in the English Landscape style and various separately grade II listed garden features, makes a strong positive contribution to the significance of the grade II* listed building, allowing the structure to be appreciated in a context not dissimilar to its surroundings during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Former Stable Block/Coach House

4.8 As noted in the Introduction, the former Stable Block/Coach House is considered to be part of the listed building under Section 1(5)(b) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990, sometimes referred to as 'curtilage listing'.

Curtilage listing is criteria-based and does not reflect on any qualitative considerations (i.e. historic interest or character, etc.) and does not necessarily reflect inherent special interest, but it is relevant in terms of how the structures are dealt with procedurally in terms of planning and development control. Essentially, they are assessed as part of the listed building.

4.9 This section provides an assessment of the individual significance of the former Stable Block/Coach House and any contribution it makes to Melchet Court as the main listed building on the site.

4.10 While altered, the building is of clear architectural and historic merit, primarily as a result of its exterior. The building's architectural style as a more modest version of Jacobean design reflects its strong relationship (associative, physical, visual and spatial) with Melchet Court and its role as an important ancillary building within the estate. Internally, the building has been altered as part of its part conversion into teaching space. The parts of the building currently proposed for conversion retain a more authentic character internally having been less altered as a result of later changes however the level of intactness is limited and the small number of remaining Stable Block/Coach House features include:

- Areas of herringbone brick flooring;
- A single run of tongue and groove panelling in the southern most room;
- A remnant stable post in the southern most room; and
- Timber doors leading to the southern most room (thought this has been altered with the fan light above being sealed).

4.11 While of some value as a well detailed mid to late 19th century former Stable Block/Coach House, the building's value is, to a large extent, borrowed from Melchet Court and its contribution to its significance (both individually and as a group with the other surviving ancillary estate features) is largely by virtue of forming the residual ancillary part of a country house estate.

5. Heritage Impact Assessment

5.1 This chapter of the report assesses the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets identified in the previous chapter. This chapter should be read in conjunction with the preceding chapter and the drawn submission of the application.

1.9 As noted, the current pre-application proposals to convert the existing spaces into classrooms and therapy spaces can be summarised as:

- Minor changes to layout to provide a series of three classrooms and therapy spaces;
- Introduction of new raised floors throughout (with historic floor preserved in situ where present);
- Replacement of entrance doors and introduction of a ramp to the southern access door;
- Boxing in of exposed pipework; and
- Retention, and where relevant, restoration of surviving stable features.

5.2 The effect of each of these elements is considered below under the relevant subheadings.

Various minor changes to layout

5.3 At present, the part of the building proposed for conversion entails an entrance lobby with north and south external doors, a large southern room (brickworks classroom) and a large northern room (which is already functioning as a more traditional classroom with modern plaster to the walls and modern floor coverings).

5.4 As identified elsewhere in the pre-application submission, St Edward's School requires additional therapy spaces and, in order to achieve this minor changes to the layout of the former Stable Block/Coach House are required. These changes can be summarised as:

- Introduction of a partition with double doors into the lobby to provide an entrance lobby (south) and lobby corridor (north);
- Subdivision of the southern room (brickwork classroom) to provide two therapy rooms (the partition would have high level glazing to provide natural light into the eastern therapy room); and
- Changes to the plan form of the already converted part of the building including the introduction of a new corridor to the existing therapy room and creation of a new opening in the wall to the south of the chimney breast, allowing access from this part of the building into the newly converted part.

5.5 While these works would result in a minor change to the plan form of the building and result in the removal of a wholly limited portion of 19th century fabric, the proposals would preserve key elements of the building, namely the building's exterior character, the vast majority of its plan form and cellular arrangement, almost all of the building's historic fabric, the tall floor to ceiling heights and surviving stable features. As such, the contribution that the former Stable Block/Coach House makes to the grade II* listed Melchet Court would not be affected by these wholly internal works which would retain a sense of the building's ancillary use and which would not entirely affect appreciation of the building's plan form.

Introduction of new raised floors

5.6 As identified in the preceding sections, this part of the former Stable Block/Coach House retains part of its original herringbone brick flooring (namely partly within the entrance lobby and within the brickworks classroom). Due to the proposed use of these spaces as therapy rooms for the school, and as detailed elsewhere in the pre-application submission, retaining this flooring exposed would not be appropriate due to the danger of children injuring themselves on such a hard and uneven surface.

5.7 In recognition of the surviving historic floor, rather than entirely replacing the existing fabric, proposals seek to provide a new suspended floor atop the retained historic flooring. This would provide the required floor (flat floor surface that would

be carpeted) while preserving the historic floor in situ without any alterations. Full details of how this could be achieved have been supplied as part of the pre-application submission.



Figure 23: Brick herringbone flooring present within the former Stable Block/Coach House

5.8

While there would be a change to the finished floor level throughout this part of the building, this is deemed to be the most sensitive way of providing an appropriate floor within the building while retaining the historic brick flooring. The raising of floors would also mean safe level access to increase accessibility. It is also relevant to note that there is already a notable level change between the already converted part of the building and this area (necessitating a short run of steps) and that the introduction of a raised floor would allow cables etc. to be concealed within the created void. In addition, the proposals would be entirely reversible if reinstatement of the original floor surface and level was desirable in the future. On balance, given the necessity of these works and their sensitive and reversible nature, no harm to the significance of Melchet Court, of which this building forms part, is considered to be incurred.

Introduction of replacement external doors and a new access ramp

5.9 Within the single storey section of the building on both the north and south sides are a series of external doors (**Figures 13 and 14**). In both cases the doors present are modern and constructed of timber. Proposals seek to replace these modern timber doors with new black powder coated aluminium doors to increase security within the new therapy areas and to provide a small ramp to the southern door to ensure the building is accessible to wheelchair users. These are wholly minor changes which will have no bearing on the overall character of the building or its significance. The contribution that the former Stable Block/Coach House makes to the grade II* listed Melchet Court would not be affected by these minor alterations.

Boxing in of pipework

5.10 This part of the former Stable Block/Coach House features predominantly tall ceilings which are reflective of the building's original and historic use. In order to maintain the existing floor to ceiling heights no suspended ceilings are proposed (unlike the other part of the converted building). However, there are a large number of exposed pipes, ducts and cables present within the spaces now proposed for conversion and, in order to rationalise the spaces without affecting the overall character, these are proposed to be sensitively boxed in. The overall character of the interiors of the former Stable Block/Coach House will not be affected by this and the painted brick walls will remain predominantly exposed and there would be no effect on heritage significance.

Retention and restoration of stable features

5.11 Aside from the brick flooring (discussed at length above), proposals seek to retain and, where relevant restore, the surviving stable features within this part of the former Stable Block/Coach House. These are all located within the southern most room (proposed to be divided into two) and include a single run of tongue and

groove panelling, a remnant stable post and a timber door (providing access from this room to the lobby).

5.12 The tongue and groove panelling (though bisected by the introduction of a new partition which could be scribed around the panelling) and the stable post are both proposed to be retained and, as required, redecorated. They will remain exposed within the therapy rooms providing visual and physical evidence as to the original and historic use and ancillary character of the building.

5.13 The existing door leading into the southern room (**Figure 24**) is a tall timber door which is proposed to be retained and redecorated with a new element of glazing added into the fanlight above (i.e. the removal of the later boarding) to restore the feature and provide much needed natural light into the therapy room. The brickwork surrounding the door and fanlight would be retained in situ.



Figure 24: Existing door leading from the lobby into the southern room with currently blocked fanlight above

5.14 These works would entirely preserve, if not enhance, the significance of the former Stable Block/Coach House and the contribution that the building makes to the primary listed building on the site, the grade II* Melchet Court.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** The pre-application proposals to provide additional therapy rooms within existing built form at St Edward's School are based on a thorough understanding of the significance, character, historic development of the grade II* listed Melchet Court, of which the former Stable Block/Coach House forms part. The proposals have been designed to provide high quality educational space within the curtilage listed former Stable Block/Coach House while being sensitive to the identified heritage assets.
- 6.2** As identified in the preceding section, the proposals do not amount to any notable external changes and while changes are proposed to the curtilage listed building internally, these have sought to retain the character of the spaces while providing the high quality therapy rooms required by the school. The scheme as a whole would have only a wholly limited effect on historic fabric and all key features of the spaces (including surviving stable features, the tall floor to ceiling heights and exposed brick walls) would be retained as part of the works. Overall, while resulting in physical alterations to the curtilage listed buildings, these works would have no effect on the value of the building individually or when considered as part of its role within the wider grade II* listed Melchet Court.
- 6.3** As such, the high level pre-application proposals are found to be capable of preserving the significance of the grade II* listed building i.e. the proposals fall outside of the remit of paragraphs 201 and 202 of the NPPF. Conversely, if the council do consider there to be any detrimental effect on the significance of the grade II* listed Melchet Court (of which the former Stable Block/Coach House forms part) then that effect must surely be wholly limited and a low level of less than substantial harm. Such a low level of effect could be demonstrably outweighed by the benefit to the public in enabling this part of the building to be used as much needed accommodation for the school.

Appendix 1

Scale of Harm (HCUK, 2019)

The table below has been developed by HCUK Group (2019) based on current national policy and guidance. It is intended as a simple and effective way to better define harm and the implications of that finding on heritage significance. It reflects the need to be clear about the categories of harm, and the extent of harm within those categories, to designated heritage assets (NPPF, paragraphs 201 and 202, and guidance on NPPG).⁸

Scale of Harm	
Total Loss	Total removal of the significance of the designated heritage asset.
Substantial Harm	Serious harm that would drain away or vitiate the significance of the designated heritage asset
Less than Substantial Harm	High level harm that could be serious, but not so serious as to vitiate or drain away the significance of the designated heritage asset.
	Medium level harm, not necessarily serious to the significance of the designated heritage asset, but enough to be described as significant, noticeable, or material.
	Low level harm that does not seriously affect the significance of the designated heritage asset.

HCUK, 2019

⁸ See NPPG 2019: “Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.” Paragraph 018 Reference ID: 18a-018-20190723.

Standard Sources

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