Heritage Statement

in connection with

Proposed development at

Old Bold Hall, St Helens

Prepared by

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 This statement supports a proposal to demolish a timber and corrugated steel stables with a single storey residential dwelling, adjacent to Old Bold Hall, a house sat within the platform of a moat which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and 2 listed buildings.

1.2 The building proposed to be demolished is a poor quality building of no heritage interest or significance. The SAM retains some moderate to high levels of significance mainly contained within its historic and evidential values, whilst the Listed Buildings retain higher significance as change has not readily impacted upon them. The setting is relatively moderate, and the contribution of the stables is negative, providing an opportunity for enhancement.

1.3 The proposed scheme will replace a low quality building to a similar size and scale with sympathetic design and material and will not impact upon the key drivers of the significance of setting; historic and evidential setting being sustained, whilst aesthetic setting will clearly be enhanced.

1.4 On this basis the proposal is deemed compliant with both national and local policy.

2 INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Format

2.1 This heritage statement has been prepared to assess proposals to demolish a stables and replace with a dwellinghouse at Old Bold Hall, St. Helens. It is adjacent to a moated Scheduled Ancient Monument and a Grade II Listed Bridge and Gate Piers. Care is needed to avoid harming the significances of the setting of the heritage assets in line with the requirements of planning law and policy.

2.2 The statement assesses heritage significance and guides proposals for change in a manner that conserves significance and avoids harm. The approach adheres to the principle of managing change intelligently, which lies at the heart of national planning policy for conservation of the historic built environment.

2.3 The statement has been prepared in accordance with the general guidelines set out in the Historic England publications 'Informed Conservation'[i] and 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance'[ii] and in particular responds to heritage policies outlined in Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021). The legal context is set by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990.

2.4 Current Planning Policy is provided through Policy LPC11 of the St. Helens Local Plan and needs to be given the appropriate weighting.

The Author

2.5 Ian Rowan, the author is a qualified Planning & Conservation Officer. With a background of over 30 years in Planning, Regeneration & Conservation, Ian holds a Masters Degree in Environmental Planning and a Post Graduate Diploma in Conservation & Regeneration, and has specialised in Conservation Planning since 2004.

Methods of Research and Investigation

2.6 Inspections of the site were carried in October 2022 out to assess its physical nature. Background research has also been conducted to ascertain all relevant contextual matters appertaining to the proposals. In accordance with the NPPF, background research has been proportionate to the nature of the proposed works and their likely impact.

3 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Location

3.1 The property is located to the south of the M62, and is approximately 4 miles to the south of St. Helens town centre. A location plan is given in figure 1.

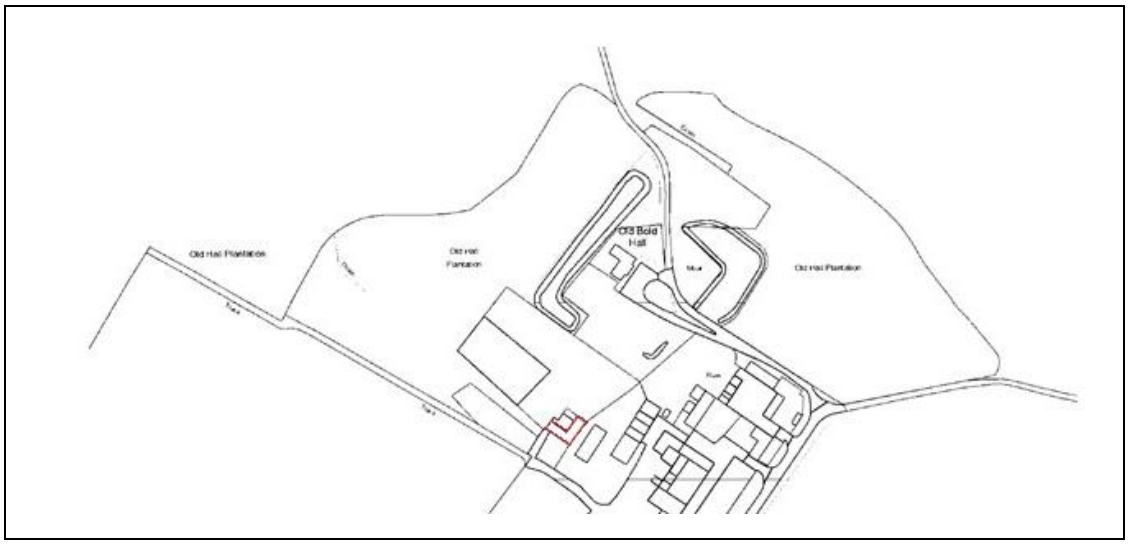

Figure 1 Location plan.

Outline Description & Historical Background

3.2 Bold Hall, a detached 2 storey house within its own spacious grounds, is an unlisted building built to replace a previous hall on the site. It was built in the mid - 20th Century, first appearing on the 1947 Ordnance Survey map. Map regression, figures 2 – 6, demonstrates the evolution of the site from the 1840's. The site is accessed from the A57 along a private entrance past the Grade II Listed bridge and gate piers.

3.3 The site is formerly part of a wider estate which of agricultural holdings and the current house sits upon the moated site which is subject to scheduling,

the previous hall being demolished in the early part of the 20th Century. The south easter section of the moat has been filled in, as can be seen from Plate 1 above, whilst the remaining sections of the moat have been drained and have been subject to natural revegetation.

3.4 Site features and other points of interest within the site are shown in the site photographs given later in Plates 1 - 15.

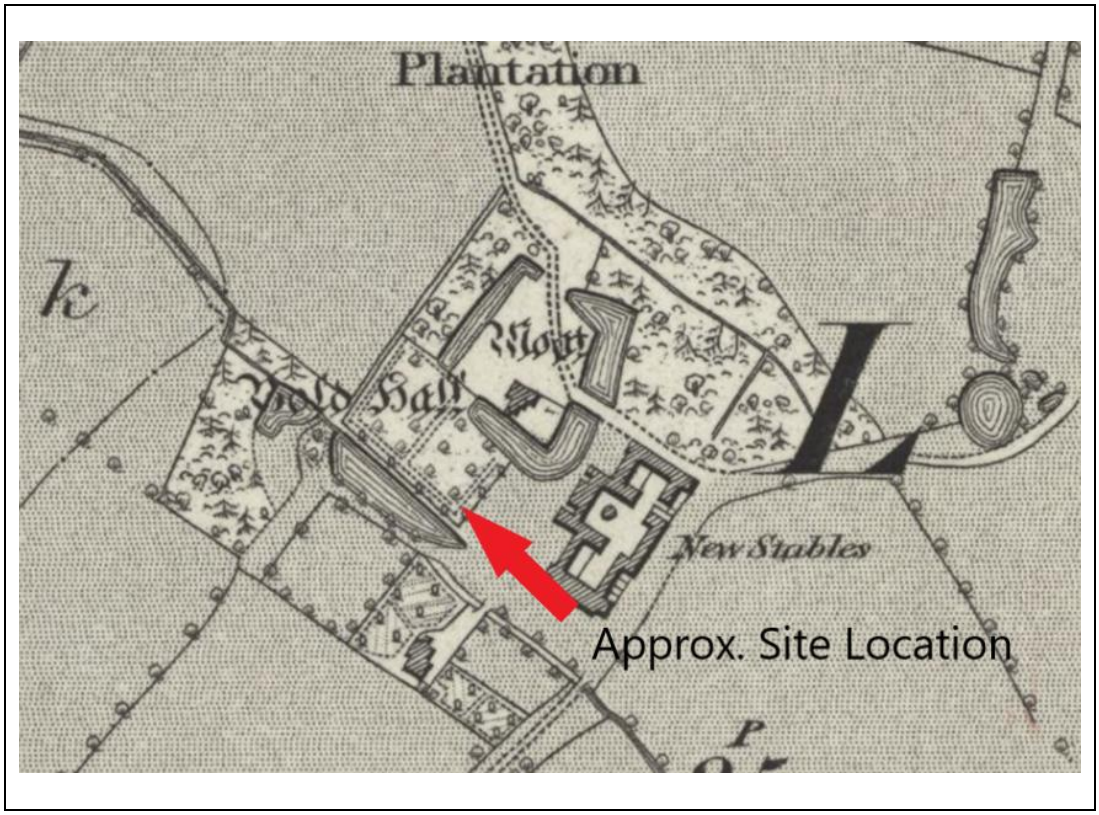

Figure 2 OS Map of 1848

Figure 3 OS map of 1891

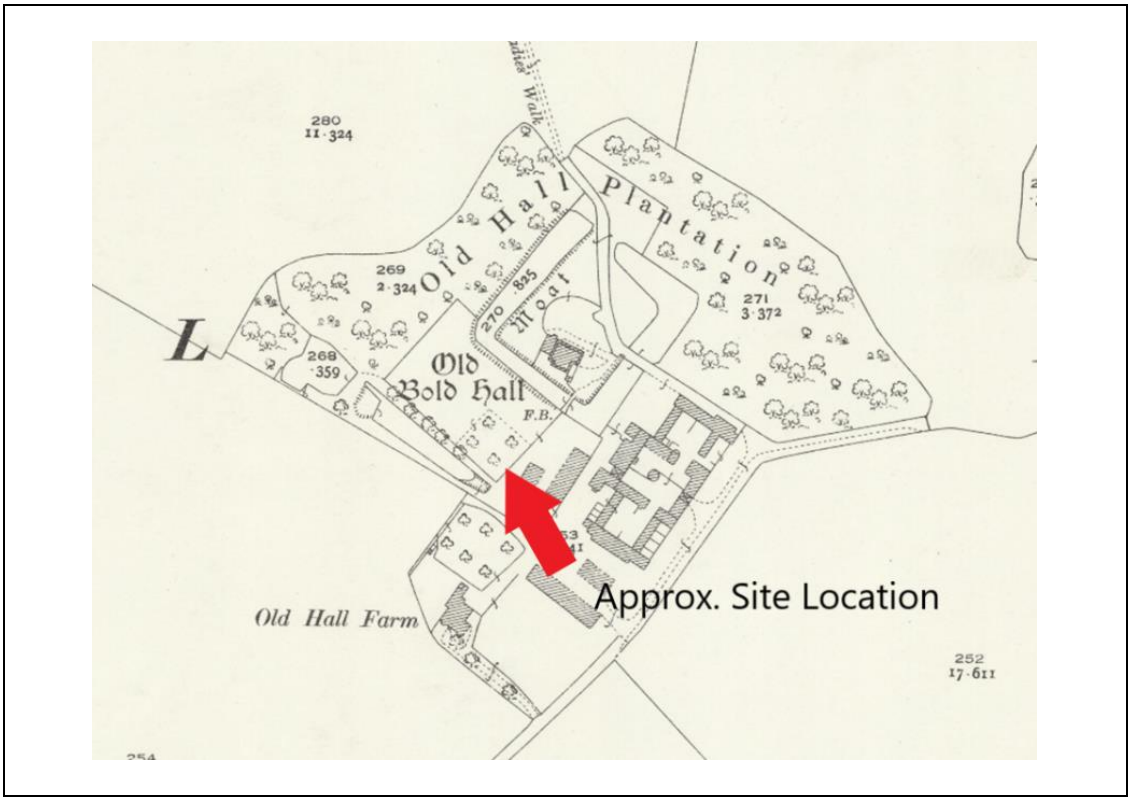

Figure 4 OS map of 1925

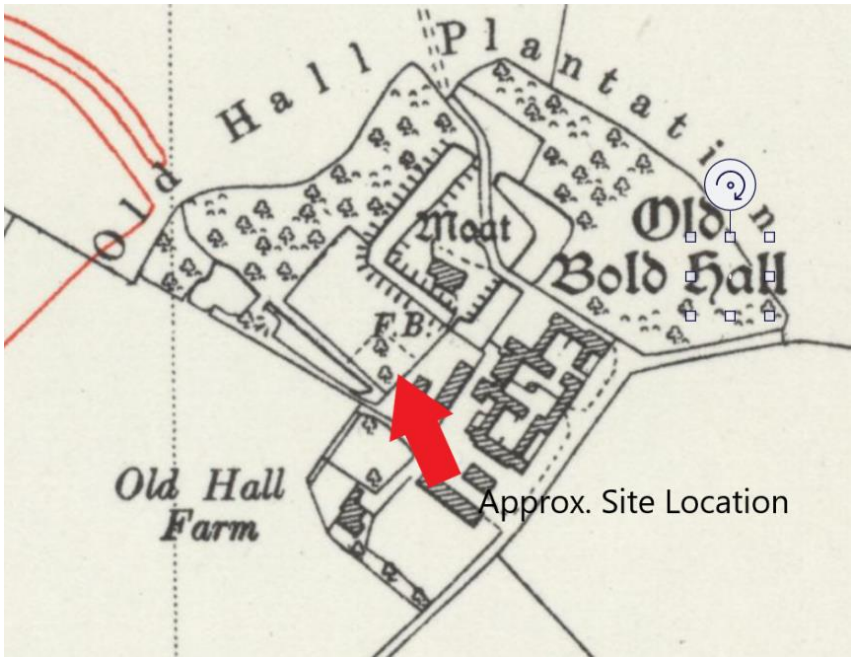

Figure 5 OS Map of 1938

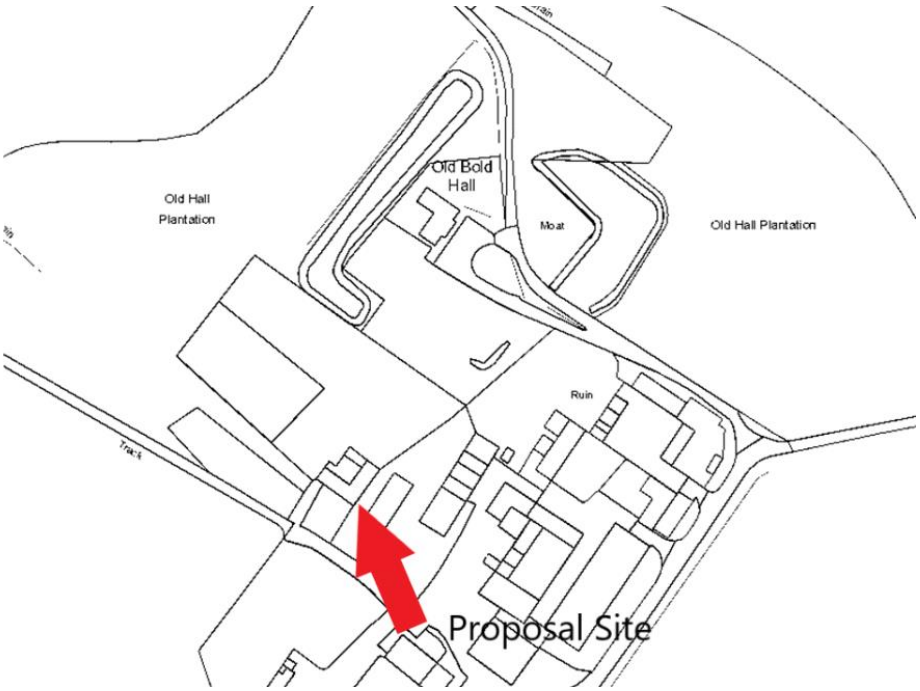

Figure 6 Current OS Map

Heritage Asset Designations

3.4 The moated site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument whilst the bridge and gate piers are Grade II Listed. Listing descriptions are provided below.

Around 6,000 moated sites are known in England. They consist of wide ditches, often or seasonally water-filled, partly or completely enclosing one or more islands of dry ground on which stood domestic or religious buildings. In some cases the islands were used for horticulture. The majority of moated sites served as prestigious aristocratic and seigneurial residences with the provision of a moat intended as a status symbol rather than a practical military defence. The peak period during which moated sites were built was between about 1250 and 1350 and by far the greatest concentration lies in central and eastern parts of England. However, moated sites were built throughout the medieval period, are widely scattered throughout England and exhibit a high level of diversity in their forms and sizes. They form a significant class of medieval monument and are important for the understanding of the distribution of wealth and status in the countryside. Many examples provide conditions favourable to the survival of organic remains.

The moated site at Old Bold Hall was one of a group of five moated sites in the former township of Bold, documentary evidence indicates that of these it was the most significant. The moat survives well despite its modern tree and shrub growth. Evidence of the original buildings will be preserved on the island.

Details

The monument comprises a moated site, the island of which is now partially occupied by a 20th century farmhouse and garden but which was formerly occupied by Old Bold Hall. The moat is dry and has been partially in-filled but the site retains an early 18th century bridge and flanking gate piers which are Listed Grade II. The manor of Bold was known to be in existence in 1212 and Old Bold Hall is known to have been rebuilt at least 3 times, with access being by a drawbridge in the 16th century. The moat is 20-24m wide at its E corner and is steep-sided in its NW and SW arms and up to 1.5m deep. It is heavily overgrown with trees and shrubbery throughout. The island measures c.60m x 70m and possesses two access drives, one continuing across the island as a public footpath. Old Bold Hall farmhouse, the bridge and gate piers, a timber shed, all hedges and a public footpath signpost are excluded from the scheduling. The ground beneath all these features, however, is included.

Gate piers at Bold Old Hall SJ 59 SW 12/1 28.5.58.
II
2. Designed by Leoni, the Italian architect, and built early C18. The capital of one pier is a restoration. Heavy, massive style, stone. The house was Palladian, now rebuilt in modern times, re-using a 1616 datestone.

Bridge at Bold Old Hall SJ 59 SW 12/2 28.5.58.
II
2. Designed by Leoni, the Italian architect and built early C18. Simple single arched bridge over moat.

Photographic Survey

3.5 There follows a selection of photographs showing the relevant features of the site.

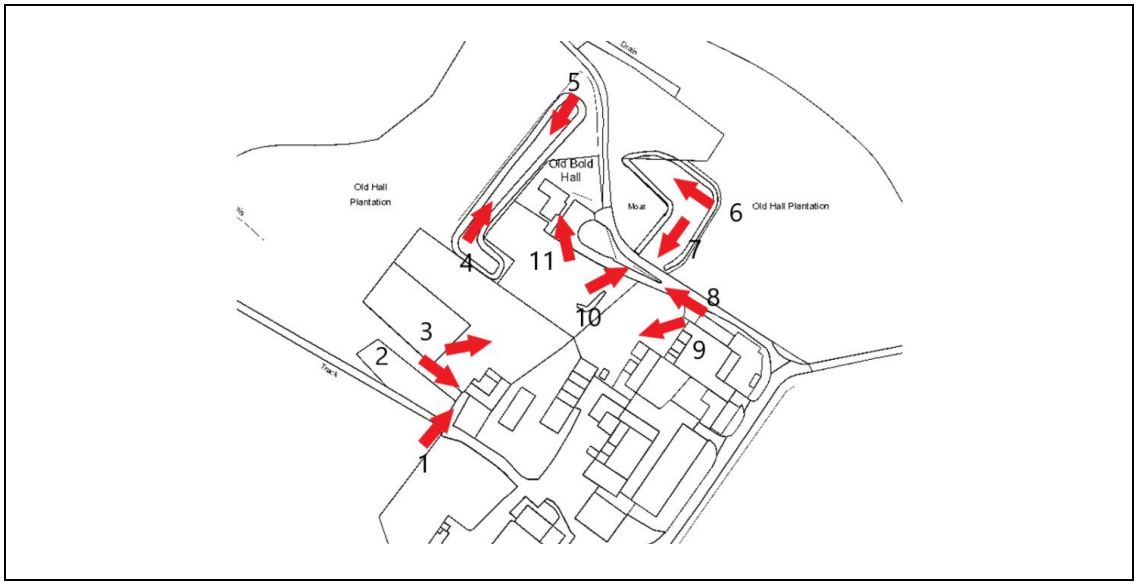

Figure 7 – Photograph Locations

Plate 1 – Proposals Site (south elevation)

Plate 2 – Proposals Site (east elevation)

Plate 3 – Looking North Towards Eastern Line of Former Moat

Plate 4 – Looking North Along Line of Former Moat (west section)

Plate 5 – Looking South Along Line of Former Moat (west section)

Plate 6 – Looking West Along Lone of Former Moat (east section)

Plate 7 – Looking South Along Line of Former Moat (east section)

Plate 8 – Gate Piers & Bridge

Plate 9 – Looking Along Line of Former Moat (east & south section)

Plate 10 – Gate Piers & Bridge

Plate 11 - House

4 HERITAGE APPRAISAL

Introduction

4.1 The following appraisal adheres to guidance published by Historic England (2008)[2]and relates specifically to the requirement contained in paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), given in extract below:

4.2 "*In determining applications, local planning authorities 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 assets' 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."*

4.3 The appraisal begins by identifying and assessing any heritage values which might be affected by the proposals, before evaluating these values and expressing them concisely within a 'Statement of Significance'. The essential purpose of this Statement is to set priorities for conservation of significance and enable an objective assessment on the likely impact of the proposals.

Heritage Values

4.4 The heritage values explored below are distilled under the following headings: *evidential value; historic value; communal value; aesthetic value.* The exploration focusses specifically on those values deemed of relevance to the proposals and is therefore not an exhaustive assessment of the relevant heritage assets.

Evidential & Archaeological Value

4.5 Historic England (2008) suggests that "Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity."

4.6 The archaeological and evidential value of the monument is derived from both the moated site and possible remains of the previous house. The

moat is not an intact surviving example of its kind, having been partially infilled, drained and left to become overgrown. However, the platform within which it is located has the potential to yield evidence of the original house, located to the south of the current 20th Century house and may reveal previous foundations and material from the earlier old halls. The site also contains evidential value through the retention of historic fabric in terms of the bridge and gate piers. These structures yield evidence of the original entrance into the moated site, the bridge being much altered, but the retention of the stone identifies the original location, albeit the moat beneath has been infilled, offering potential archaeological value.

4.7 The current house contains more moderate evidential value as a relatively modern building. The stables which are subject to the proposed replacement yields little in the way of heritage value, being modern timber agricultural buildings, sitting outside of the historic site.

4.8 The setting of the SAM has changed over time. Originally home to an earlier house(s), the current house was developed in the 1930s/1940s, whilst the location of the proposals site was previously a wooded / orchard area. The most noticeable change to the setting is the infilling and draining of the moat, rendering much of the visible evidence of the setting uninterpretable. In between the moat and the proposals site is a ménage. The setting of the gate piers and bridge has been impacted by change to the house and the infilling of the moat, eroding this evidential value of the setting.

Historical Value

4.9 Historic England (2008) suggests that - "Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative".

4.10 Old Bold Hall, the moat and the listed bridge and gate piers offer a limited insight into the historic lifestyle of the medieval period, as well as later periods as the site has developed. The moat serves as a symbol of what was likely the early defensive requirements of the old hall, but also as a sign of wealth and status for the gentry that inhabited the hall. This

historic value has been reduced somewhat however, through changes to the moat. The bridge and gate piers provide an element of opulence to the site. Associative value is provided by links with the Bold family.

4.11 The setting of the assets contributes to the illustrative value of the place, there being a direct close relationship between the buildings and the land. There has historically been an element of segregation between the Old Hall and the wider estate, which has left the house and moat as an isolated fragmented element of what was once a wider estate. There is nothing in the way of historic value to the stables subject to the proposed redevelopment, and as such this contributes nothing to the extant historic setting of the site.

Communal Value

4.12 Historic England (2008) suggests that: "Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory".

4.13 Old Bold Hall has long been a private dwelling, but as a Scheduled Ancient Monument co-located with 2 No. Grade II Listed Buildings, the moat will hold some small levels of communal value given its nationally recognised status. The prominence of the gate piers and bridge will give it some higher communal value. The setting of the estate will provide some moderate value; whilst the moat is relatively unrecognisable, the presence of the piers will add some value to the wider setting.

Aesthetic Value

4.14 Historic England (2008) suggests that: "Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place".

4.15 Old Bold Hall is a relatively modern building, being from the mid – 20th Century, of brick construction under slate, built in a common stretcher bond. With relatively steep pitched gabled roofs, the building has a relatively attractive external envelope, which portrays an element of authority, albeit, not of any particular heritage value, and is a good example of mid – 20th Century architecture. The moat does not provide

any particular aesthetic value, being altered so that the south – east section is not obvious, the remaining part of the moat being home to relatively unkempt trees and vegetation. The bridge and gate piers retain aesthetic value in terms of the use of coursed stone and detailing on the piers.

4.16 The hall and moat retain fragments of their historic setting; to the east of the house the formal entrance containing the gate piers and bridge yield some high aesthetic value, and still provides a sense of arrival. To the south of the moat, the setting of the asset has changed with the construction of the ménage, however this is relatively neutral in aesthetic terms, offering nothing of any particular aesthetic or architectural value.

4.17 The proposals site offers nothing in the way of aesthetic value; of timber construction with corrugated tin roof, the building holds no visual quality, and an opportunity for enhancement exists.

Statement of Significance

	Evidential	**Historic**	**Communal**	**Aesthetic**
Moat	Moderate – High	Moderate – High	Low – Moderate	Low
Piers & Bridge	High	High	Moderate	High
House	Low – Moderate	Low – Moderate	Low – Moderate	Moderate
Stables	Low	Low	Low	Low
Setting	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

4.18 Having assessed the heritage values associated with the site, it is possible to take a more informed approach to the assessment of site significance, giving specific consideration to conservation priorities in light of the

proposals for change. In this context a statement of significance is given below.

4.19 Bold Hall is a 20th Century house located atop a medieval moat, with Grade II Listed gate piers and bridge to the east approach to the site. An appraisal of heritage values has established that the moat contains moderate to high levels of evidential and historic significance, whilst communal and aesthetic value is lower. The listed gate piers and bridge offer high evidential and historic value, their relatively intact nature being of significance, whilst the potential for evidence of past human activity associated with the bridge brings some significance.

4.20 As a 20th Century building, the house holds some low elements of significance. The significance of the setting of the assets is relatively moderate. Change to the moat has eroded the wider setting in terms of its significance, the ability to interpret the moat has been reduced, likewise its historic setting has changed due to this. That said, it is acknowledged that the moat plays a part in the wider setting in terms of its ability to identify the site as one of some social status historically. Aesthetic value is similarly moderate. The stables contribute nothing in the way of heritage value to the setting, in fact imparting a negative value upon this.

5 ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSALS

General Principles

5.1 General guidance on assessing proposed changes to heritage assets is given in Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021). The policy establishes the premise that conserving significance should be a guiding principle when developing proposals for any new scheme. In order to do this it is first necessary to conduct an appraisal of heritage values and identify the significance(s) of heritage assets before commencing with design. Part 4 of this appraisal fulfils this need, and the findings of part 4 have informed the development of the proposals. There follows, here in section 5, an objective review of the finalised scheme to verify to what extent conservation of significance has either been secured or compromised.

Summary of the Proposals

5.2 The proposals consist of the demolition of the timber stables and subsequent replacement with a single storey dwellinghouse. It has been designed to a size, scale and design to be similar to the previous building and within its current location, with complementary, sympathetic materials. Full plans will be submitted as part of a planning application but indicative plans are included below.

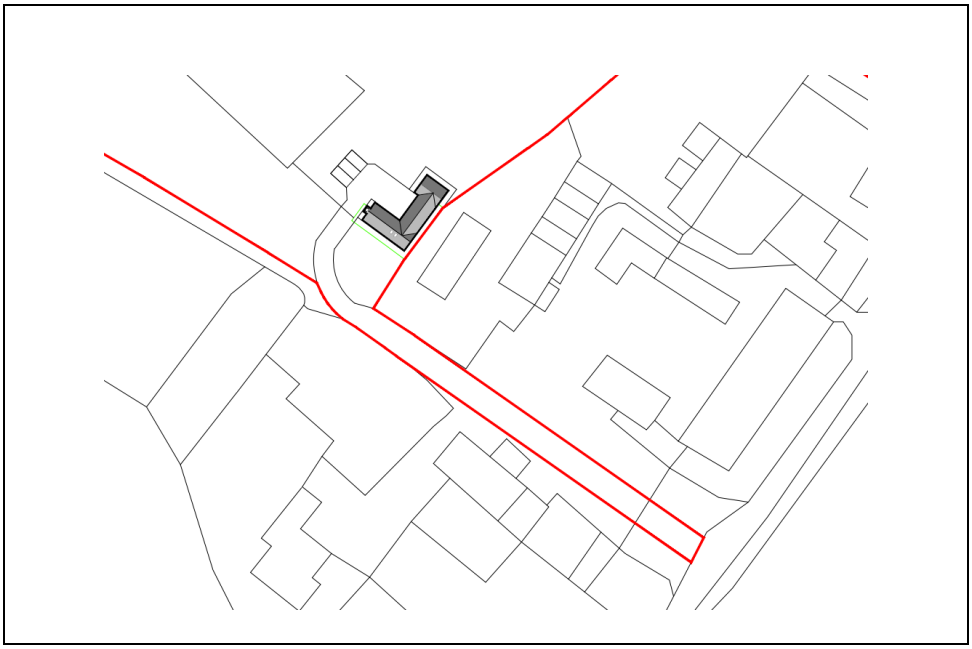

Figure 7 Proposed Site Plan

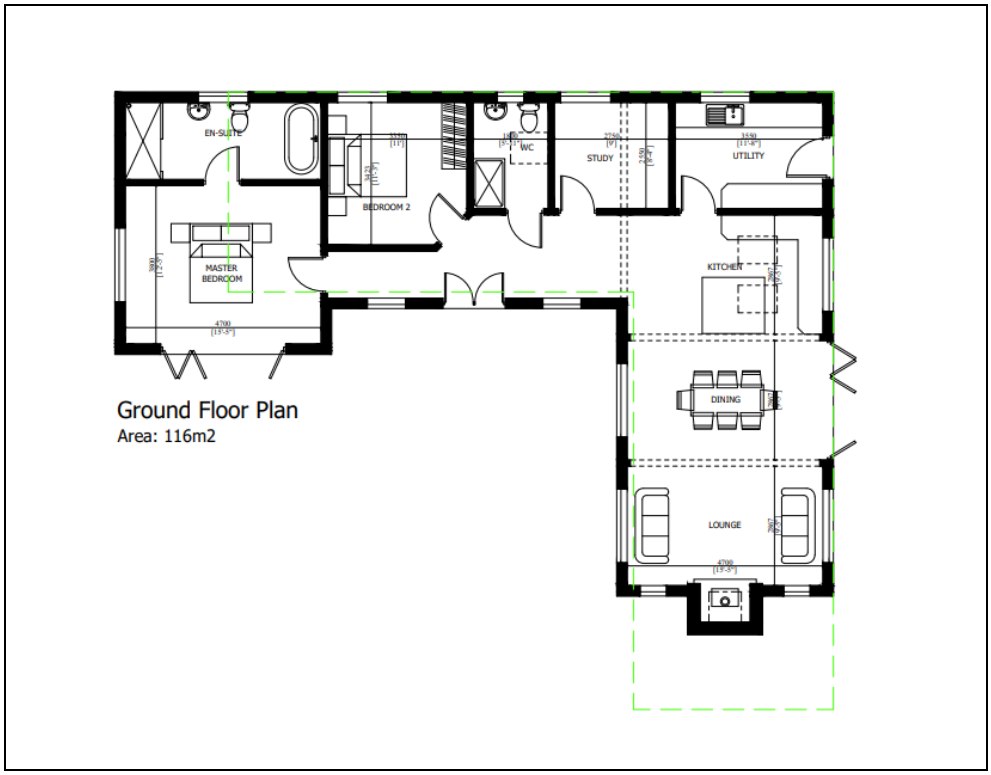

Figure 8 Proposed Floor Plan

Figure 9 Proposed Elevations

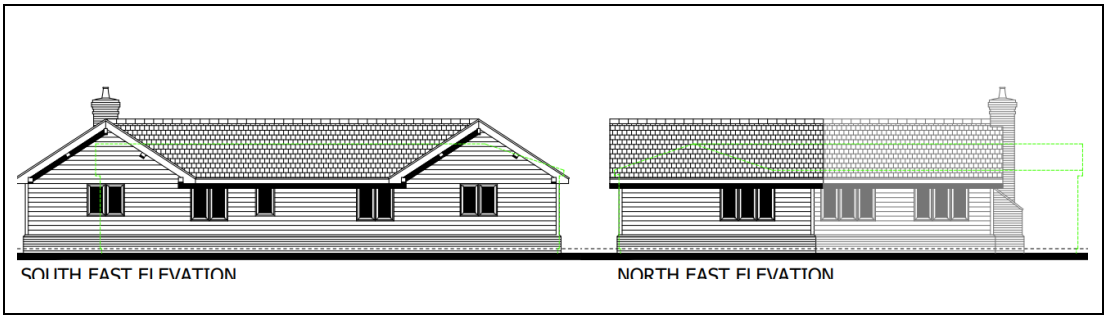

Figure 10 Proposed Elevations

Analysis of the Proposals: National Planning Policy Framework

5.3 As discussed earlier, Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF (2021) considers heritage planning and in essence unifies the overall approach to planning in a way that previous guidance, such as PPS's and PPG's, did not. This ensures that deliberations over decisions relating to heritage assets are made in the full planning context, where factors other than heritage conservation play a crucial role. It identifies the following key drivers in the decision making process:-

- ***the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;***
- ***the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and***
- ***the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.***

5.4 In order to establish a clearer, objective assessment of the proposals in the context of the NPPF, the following commentary considers how the proposed scheme aligns itself to the NPPF heritage policy drivers listed above.

5.5 ***The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation –*** the significance of the heritage assets and their setting has been assessed within this statement which has established that the moat has moderate to high evidential and historic value, with lower communal and aesthetic value. The gate piers and bridge are high in evidential, historic and aesthetic value, with more moderate levels of communal value, whilst the setting of the asset is relatively moderate due to change. The building on the proposals site currently imparts a negative impact upon setting and the more values it contains.

5.6. The key drivers of the setting are of importance and the setting of the site will be sustained – the immediate setting and the sense of arrival from the east via the bridge and gateposts will not be affected by the proposal. The new house will be located to the south of the moat where the stables currently resides. The current setting will be maintained in terms of its significance, and indeed will be enhanced by a development which will improve the aesthetic value of the setting. The moat itself will not be affected directly by the proposal, it being located to the south east of the platform.

5.7 ***The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality –*** the heritage asset i.e. the listed buildings and the SAM will be preserved and will not be physically altered. Redevelopment of the stables will remove an unsightly building and provide for family living within a small rural complex, long since established.

5.8 ***The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness –*** the proposed dwelling has been designed from materials to harmonise with local character across the site, rather than compete with the historic rural environment.

5.10 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states**: "*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 (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.*" –** the proposal under scrutiny is whether the new dwelling causes harm to the setting of the listed assets and the SAM. In this case, as demonstrated through this report, the proposal will not impart harm upon the significance of this setting. The proposal is located where previous change has occurred, and the moderate significance of the setting of the SAM will indeed be enhanced. The setting of the gate piers and bridge will not be unduly affected. The significance of these buildings, announcing the entrance of a site of some social standing will be maintained and not unduly affected.

Analysis of the Proposals: Local Planning Policy

5.11 Current Planning Policy is provided through Policy LPC11 of the St. Helens Local plan, which states:

Policy LPC11: Historic Environment

1. The Council will promote the conservation and enhancement of the Borough's heritage assets and their settings in a manner that is appropriate to the significance of each asset. These include designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, and non-designated above ground assets and areas of archaeological interest.

2. All proposals for development that may affect a heritage asset, or its setting should be accompanied by an Assessment of Significance that should form part of a Design and Access Statement and / or a Heritage Impact Assessment and clearly set out the significance of the heritage asset including any contribution made by its setting. The proposals should demonstrate how they respond to the significance of the asset. Merseyside Historic Environment Record (HER) should be consulted as a minimum.

3. The impact of development proposals on the significance of heritage assets and their settings will be considered in accordance with case law, legislation, and the National Planning Policy Framework. Development affecting heritage assets

4. Development proposals that would lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset will be refused permission unless it can be demonstrated that: a) the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or total loss; or b) all the other exceptions set out in paragraph 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework (or any successor national policy that supersedes this paragraph) apply.

5. Development involving harm to or loss of any non-designated heritage asset (such as any building identified on a Local List prepared by the Council) will only be permitted where the benefits are considered sufficient to outweigh the harm, having regard to the scale of the harm and the significance of the heritage asset.

6. Where the complete or partial loss of any heritage asset is justified, the asset's significance must be recorded to a standard agreed by the Council and made publicly available.

Areas of archaeological interest

7. Any development proposal that may affect one or more asset(s) of archaeological interest (whether designated or not) must include an appropriate desk-based assessment and where necessary a field evaluation, carried out by a suitably qualified person(s). Such evidence should identify any likely features of archaeological interest within or close to the site and how these would be affected by the proposal.

8. Development proposals affecting archaeological remains may be required (depending on the significance of the remains) to preserve the remains in situ or to secure the appropriate excavation and recording of the significance of the remains by a suitably qualified person.

Other implementation measures

9. The Council will:

a) prepare, update and promote the implementation of Heritage Asset Appraisals and Management Plans and give appropriate weight to these in development control decisions;

b) work with partner organisations to interpret and educate the public about the heritage of the Borough;

c) take appropriate measures to improve public access to heritage assets; and d) seek to secure the effective conservation and use of all heritage assets that are 'at Risk' within the Borough.

5.12 The report has demonstrated that the setting of the SAM and the listed buildings will not be unduly affected. Given the location of the proposal, significance of the listed assets will be maintained, and given the change to the SAM, and the more moderate levels of significance afforded to its setting, preserve setting and an opportunity to enhance the aesthetic setting has been grasped. The commentary provided above satisfies Policy LPC11.

6 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

6.1 This heritage statement has reviewed the likely impact of the replacement of a stables adjacent to Old Bolf Hall for residential purposes. The site is close to a Scheduled Ancient Monument and 2no. Grade II Listed Buildings. The findings of the statement are that the proposed development will harmonise with the existing site and will not harm the heritage values and significances of the setting of the heritage assets.

6.2 As shown throughout the statement, the proposals acknowledge the significance of the SAM & building's setting. The setting of the SAM lies intrinsically in its evidential and historic value, whilst the gate piers and bridge are relatively high in evidential, historic and aesthetic value. The proposal is directed to a site outside of the SAM and away from the listed buildings, replacing a building of no heritage value, and the asset's significance will continue to be enjoyed and experienced as originally intended.

6.3 The proposals satisfy national and local heritage planning policy and represent what in the context of the NPPF is described as sustainable development, and as such the proposal is wholly supportable.

[i] Clarke, K, *Informed Conservation,* Historic England 2003
[ii] Historic England, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance: Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment,* 2008