



PLANNING HERITAGE

Conservation Planning Consultancy



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

Project: 1332 The Old Blacksmiths, Todenham, Gloucestershire GL56 9PF

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Aerial View of the Old Blacksmiths

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The focus of this report is to examine and assess and set out a justification for the proposed demolition and rebuilding of the Old Blacksmiths, Todenham and the requirement to repair the churchyard wall following the failure of the Churchyard boundary wall and the resultant impact upon the rear wall of the building which caused the collapse of a section of wall that in turn crushed a contractor. The implications of which has been the need to issue an unsafe structures notice by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The building remains unsafe. It is fenced off and retains the interior propping that was erected prior to works commencing on site. The applicant has taken all reasonable steps to try and save the building however, the impact upon the building of the church yard wall collapse, has led to significant structural movement.

The assessment was carried out by Gregory Beale, IHBC, RTPI, Director, Planning Heritage Ltd.

The property was listed at Grade II in July 2008. Cotswold District Council recently approved a scheme to convert the building

for holiday accommodation were approved by Cotswold District Council (13/00501/FUL and 13/00502/LBC).

The building is located within the Todenham Conservation Area, designated in February 1981 and subsequently reviewed in November 1990 and July 1993. It is therefore a designated heritage asset of national and local significance.

1.1.1 Key Findings:

The key findings include:

- That every practicable measure was taken to protect the building at the start of the development process and that it was an unforeseen event which led to the collapse of the rear wall and serious structural movement of the building
- That the building is no longer structurally sound or safe
- That several repair options have been considered in an effort to preserve the property, however none are considered safe for contractors
- That the collapse of the wall at the rear has pushed the front elevation out to the extent that the coach doors no longer shut
- That the roof is acting as a tie and that the complete removal of the roof structure, with the aim of lessening loads, would result in the total collapse of the building
- That the church wall requires urgent attention but due to the location of several graves adjacent to the boundary wall, it is impractical and financially prohibitive to do so from within the churchyard
- That the demolition of the building will enable the church wall to be properly

repaired and the wider setting to be enhanced by the new building, which will retain the external appearance of the present building

- That the proposed scheme will provide a structure that is visually attractive and one that will have a viable long term future as holiday accommodation, bringing financial benefit to the village and wider local economy
- That the applicant has sought to try and save the building and demolition is seen as a last resort

I.2 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This statement has been prepared to demonstrate that the proposals to demolish the Old Blacksmiths is the option of last resort, following careful assessment of the existing dangerous structure and the need to implement urgent repairs to the church wall and the building itself in a safe manner that will not endanger life.

The primary purpose of this report is to focus upon the issues relating to the proposed demolition; primarily the issue of not being able to save or repair the building and secondly reusing the site for the same purposes, in relation to the heritage policy implications contained within National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), specifically paragraphs 132, 133, 136 and 138.

I.3 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This statement does not provide a detailed historical appraisal of the site, nor does it record in detail the complete architectural development of the building or the area as a whole, but provides a proportionate assessment of significance for the purposes of informing the application. The report should be read in conjunction with the structural reports supplied by Stephen Bacon Design.

Following the structural failure of the walls, visual assessments of the site took place on 10 March and 22 April 2014 which sought to assess the extent of damage and to elucidate the results of the visual assessment and provide baseline information for this report.

The report sets out a brief history of the site to elucidate the context and demonstrate that the historic significance of the property has been understood.

The methodology is set out in five main chapters, which can be read independently. These chapters are:

- Introduction
- Understanding: the Site Today
- Understanding: History and Development
- Significance
- Heritage Impact Assessment

I.4 EXISTING INFORMATION

The site is located immediately to west of the Farriers Arms PH and sits against the southern boundary wall of the church yard of St.Thomas a Becket's Church in the centre of the village. The wall collapsed on 25 February 2014 and since that time the building has been fenced off to protect the public should further collapse occur.

The documentary evidence suggests that there has been smithy in the parish since the C13. The references show that at some times there were at least 2 operating blacksmiths in the parish, and that the first specific reference mentions a forge built in the village in 1757. A working smithy was last recorded in the village in 1962. The present building has not had an industrial use for over 60 years.

The building forms part of a small group of properties including the Farrier's Arms and the houses opposite the Church.

The roof coverings were removed prior to works commencing on site to lessen the loadings on the building. Internal propping was erected. Following the collapse of the rear wall, the building is unsafe and structurally unsound. The forces exerted by the collapse at the rear pushed out the front elevation and it is not possible to shut the carriage doors.

I.5 GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE

It was not possible to inspect the interior of the building due to the unsafe/parlous condition.

UNDERSTANDING: THE SITE TODAY



The Old Blacksmiths Todenham

2.1 STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS

The property was listed Grade II in 2008 and the list description states: 'A blacksmith's forge, dating originally from circa 1757, extended in the mid-late C19.'

MATERIALS: The building is constructed from red brick laid in an irregular, mainly stretcher bond, with later brick for the western end and the upper courses across the building. The building is set under a Welsh slate roof.

PLAN: The forge is a single-depth, linear range, set against the high retaining wall of the churchyard to its rear.

EXTERIOR: The main elevation is of three unequal bays, that to the left having double plank and ledged doors under a timber lintel. The long central bay has two windows under timber lintels: a wide, timber casement with six narrow upright lights, and a smaller, pegged timber six-pane fixed light with mesh glazing. The separate store to the right has a narrow plank door dating from the later C19. The gable end is blind. There is a plain, square brick stack at the eastern end of the long, central bay. To the rear, the building rises only circa 30cm above the height of the retaining wall to the churchyard.

INTERIOR: The interior is divided into three unequal rooms, each running the depth of the structure. The left-hand room, probably the C19 shoeing room, has traces of a terracotta tiled floor beneath later debris, and an inserted timber ceiling across one end, to provide storage. A wide doorway, perhaps the original entrance door, leads into the forge, which has a furnace at either end, with raking chimney breasts in brick. A timber bench is fixed

under the window. The room is open to the roof. The third room is a store, accessed only from the outside. The roof is a simple structure of narrow section timbers, formed from paired common rafters with single purlins, dating from the later C19, which extends across the entire building. Several independent timbers stretch across the central room, resting on the wall tops, to allow machinery and tools to hang. The walls of the rooms are spiked with narrow metal bars protruding from the mortar in the brickwork, to allow tools and forged items to hang.

HISTORY: Todenham is recorded back as far as the early C9, and mention is made in documentary records of a smith, sometimes more than one, working in the village from the C13 to the later C20. A forge is recorded in the C16, but there is a record of a new forge being built at Homestall End, the site of the Blacksmith's Shop, in 1757. This earliest phase appears to have consisted of a low, single-storey, one-bay building with a separate narrow bay at the east end, and a single furnace. It was extended westwards in the period post-1840, and the building's roof was raised later again, resulting in the replacement of the roof structure. A second furnace was added at the east end at this time, and the chimney of the earlier furnace was removed. The building has always been used as a blacksmith's forge; the tithe map of 1840 describes the building as a Blacksmith's Shop, and historical directories record the smith as George King in 1856, and Harry Gilson in 1897 and 1914. The Gilsons remained the village blacksmiths until the forge was closed up in 1964.

2.2 STATUTORY LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The policy context is set out more fully in Section 4 and briefly comprises:

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- National Planning Policy Framework
- Cotswold District Local Plan 2001-2011, adopted in April 2006 and the Core Strategy and policies relating to the historic environment and listed buildings

2.3 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Old Blacksmiths is a modest building of mixed 9 inch bond brick construction. The roof coverings were removed prior to the commencement of the approved scheme of conversion. This reduced the loadings upon the exterior walls. The roof has a felt and batten covering. The main elevation has a double door with timber lintel, 2x timber casement windows and a timber plank door into the former store. The stacks have been removed.

As a direct result of the church yard wall collapsing, a significant proportion of the rear wall was pushed in and the front elevation twisted and bowed, making the whole building unstable.

Previous documentary research confirmed that other than low-key storage, the last use of the property was a blacksmith's forge and that this had been the established use since c.18; the title map of 1840 describes the building as a Blacksmith's Shop, and street directories record the smith as George King in 1856, and Harry Gilson in 1897 and 1914. The Gilsons remained the village blacksmiths until the forge was vacated in 1964. Contrary to the list description, little survives within the building other than 2 forges, which when last inspected were in a parlous condition, one of which being close to collapse. Their present condition is not known following the collapse of the rear wall and subsequent movement of the building.

Local opinion as to when the Blacksmith operations ceased varies between the 1940s up to 1964. It is however, apparent that the village has not had a working forge for c.50 years and the Old Blacksmith's provided low-level storage for equipment and materials.



Top Left: Front Elevation showing lines of cracking and movement
Top Right: Rear Elevation showing extent of collapse
Bottom Left: View of Rear elevation from Churchyard
Bottom Right: View into collapsed area

2.4 SETTING

The site is located within the Todenham Conservation Area, designated in February 1981 and reviewed in November 1990 and again in July 1993.

The building forms part of a small group of properties including the Church, Farrier's Arms and the houses opposite. The present condition of the building is causing both visual blight and disruption to the village and the properties adjacent to it.

The church yard is situated immediately to the north of the application site and the Old Blacksmith's was built abutting the churchyard wall. The topography of the land means that the churchyard is c.2m higher than the road and is approximately level with the eaves of the Old Blacksmith's. A section of church yard wall fronting the road was repaired in 2007 after those sections had started to fail during a period of sustained heavy summer rain. The Church repaired the accessible sections along the roadside and verge.

The assessment of the setting showed that for a village in the Cotswolds, there is a considerable range of styles and materials within the village. Although the older properties are generally built in the vernacular Cotswold style there is also a significant proportion of brick within the village, including the application site. The Farrier's Arms, originally a house built c.1733 and has been a pub since 1856, is constructed in brick as are a number of homes and outbuildings all repaired or built in the C19.

A description of the village in the 2002 Pevsner Architectural Guide to Gloucestershire (*Gloucestershire 1: The Cotswolds*) describes the immediate location of the application site as 'to the S of the church, the Farrier's Arms, of brick, dated 1733, and Church Cottages, a row of charming C17 and C18 ashlar houses, with date-stones 1713 and 1718; the taller central house is also of brick'.



Top: View of site prior to collapse
Middle: View of site following collapse
Bottom: View of site from Churchyard



2.5 EXTERIOR

The location and design of the building means that the only openings are in the south elevation. These include the main (carriage) doors, 2x casement windows and a single door giving access to a former store.

The site inspection and assessment of the documentary evidence demonstrate that the building, although considerably altered has changed little in terms of footprint since 1885. The property was extended to the west and increased in height at its western end, as is evident from the change in brick work and loss of stack.

Following the damage caused to the rear wall as a result of the collapse of the churchyard wall, there has been considerable movement within the structure of the building. This has led to the visible bowing of the front wall, which in turn means that the main doors no longer shut properly. They are currently held in place with boards.

2.6 INTERIOR

The interior of the building was inaccessible due to the serving of a Dangerous Structure Notice by the HSE.

Prior to the collapse interior propping had been erected to support the brick partition.

2.7 USE

The building is vacant and is unsafe to enter. The condition is blighting the centre of the village and the setting of the church and adjacent properties.



Top: The Old Blacksmith's April 2012
Bottom: The Old Blacksmith's March 2014

UNDERSTANDING: THE ISSUES

3.1 BACKGROUND

Cotswold District Council gave planning and listed building approval for the conversion of the building into the holiday accommodation (13/00501/FULL and 13/00502/LBC) on 6 June 2013.

The applicant was undertaking those works when the churchyard wall behind the Old Blacksmith's collapsed, causing a section of building at the rear to fall on to a contractor.

As discussed above, the church yard wall had undergone repairs in 2007 but only to those sections which were easily accessible. Those repairs are visually distinct with newer light stone.

The Old Blacksmith's is now considered by the HSE and the LPA Building Control to be a dangerous structure and unsafe. It is fenced off, so that should further collapse occur it will not cause harm to people or property.

3.2 THE ISSUE

The proposal which this statement seeks to support is for the demolition of the Old Blacksmith's. The building is beyond reasonable and safe repair after the land contained by the churchyard wall rotated and caused the collapse of the retaining wall onto of the rear wall, which in turn led to the catastrophic failure of the building.

There has been extensive discussion within the design team and with the Council, who were informed of the collapse at the time. Those discussions have focused upon the need to try to save and preserve the existing building, however, it is now accepted (by both the applicant and LPA) that demolition is the only viable option.

The walls of the building are typical 9inch bricks in a mixed bond. There are few header bricks, indicating that the wall construction comprises mainly bricks laid in stretchers with minimal connection between the outer and inner skins. Thus the movement caused by the thrust of the collapse has resulted in the walls becoming inherently unstable. This is apparent on the front elevation where the walls are bowing to the extent that the carriage doors do not close.

3.3 THE OPTIONS

3.3.1 BACKGROUND

The Old Blacksmith's is a modest building of mixed bond brick construction and had slate roof on the southern side and artificial slates on the north. The southern elevation has a double door beneath a timber lintel, 2x timber casement windows and a timber plank door into the store. Prior to the works commencing, a single ridge stack survived on the east end.

Cotswold DC approved a scheme of conversion into holiday accommodation in 2013 and works commenced in 2013/14. During those initial works there was a period of sustained and heavy rainfall, which saturated the ground behind the building, that in turn lead to the collapse of the rear wall of the building, when works to stabilise and build a new interior wall for damp proofing and strength started.

As part of the works, the roofing materials were removed and interior propping erected. The latter was in part done due to the acknowledged movement in the spine wall that had previously occurred.

As discussed above, during works to construct a new back wall within the property, the rear wall was pushed in by the collapse of the churchyard wall and land behind it. A contractor was partially buried, although was not seriously injured.

Due to the collapse of the rear wall and the subsequent involvement of the HSE, the building has been fenced off and

no work has taken place. The building is now classified as a dangerous structure.

The result of this is that property remains vacant and untouched since February 2014.

3.3.2 REPAIR

Following the collapse of the rear wall there have been a number of meetings to determine a course of action that would allow for the conversion of the property to continue in safe manner. It was also apparent that as part of any programme of repairs, the churchwall would have to be repaired and preferably (due to the location of graves) from outside the churchyard.

Initially the aim was to seek a way in which the building could be repaired and preserved.

The options considered included:

- The repair to the churchwall from within the churchyard
- The propping of the gable and front elevation and removal of roof timbers to enable contractors safe access to repair and stabilise the walls
- The retention of parts of the front elevation whilst demolishing other less stable sections
- The removal of the roof to allow for repairs to the walls

It is apparent that attempts to retain the property will not resolve the issue of the need to repair the churchwall.

The unstable nature of the Old Blacksmith's walls following the collapse is described more fully in the letter dated 27 April 2014 from Stephen Bacon Design Ltd (Structural Engineers).

3.3.2 DEMOLITION

In order to enable access to the property for any works, the HSE must be satisfied that the works can be carried out safely and without danger to life. It is apparent that the unstable condition of the much of the building means that this can not be achieved and demolition is the last resort.

The assessment of the existing building has shown that the roof members are tying the building together and should they be removed the horizontal restraint will fail. This will cause the outward thrust of the walls to be too great and the building will collapse. The building can not be propped sufficiently to stop avoid this.

In light of the unstable structural nature it was agreed with the Council that demolition should be considered, albeit that there is an 'in principal' objection to such a proposal.

Under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990 s.9(3)(b) states *'that it was not practicable to secure safety or health or, as the case may be, the preservation of the building by works of repair or works for affording temporary support or shelter'*. In this case the public land (highway) is protected by the erection of the Heras fencing however; this situation can not continue in perpetuity. A solution has to be found and the discussion which have been held with Council show that repairs can not be carried out safely and without further collapse, as stated in the Engineer's report.

Should demolition be allowed, this would enable the safe and economic repair of the churchwall to take place as well allowing for a new building, which would replicated the original to be built in its place.

It is not the intention to create a new building which diverts from the appearance of the existing.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Significance can be defined as the *'value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest'*. Significance is unique to a place and it is vital to identify this, as the aim of conservation is to sensitively manage change to a place to ensure that its significance is protected, and also revealed, reinforced and enhanced at every possible opportunity.

There are occasions when the significance of a building or place may be regarded simply as intrinsic. However, since significance is evaluated as a result of how a building or place is interpreted or perceived at a given moment, there are instances where significance can be regarded as a fluid concept that can either be eroded or enhanced, depending on the consequences of change. Significance can be eroded through, for example, partial demolition or inappropriate alterations. Alternatively, it can be enhanced through informed, considered change which can bring positive benefits. These benefits can include the revealing of heritage values, the re-assertion of historic integrity, facilitating greater public appreciation and the strengthening of communal values and uses – all of which may ultimately raise the level of significance. Thus the aims of managed change to protect, reveal, reinforce or enhance significance can be achieved through a variety of means including conservation, improved interpretation, understanding and/or presentation.

This assessment of significance has been informed by non-intrusive site investigation combined with archival research. Many heritage values are recognised by the statutory

designation and regulation of significant places. In statutory terms, the Old Blacksmiths is listed Grade II in 2008. This designation provides a formal statement of the national architectural and/or historical interest of the site and its local value. However, it is essential to go beyond this view to arrive at a deeper understanding of its values and significances that considers more than matters architectural- historical and identifies nuances in levels of significance. This ensures that decisions regarding both day-to-day and long-term management take into account all of the values that contribute to its significance.

The range of values that may therefore contribute to the significance of a place can be categorised under the following headings. These headings derive from English Heritage's *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008):

- **Evidential Value:** the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity;
- **Historical Value:** the associative or illustrative ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present;
- **Aesthetic Value:** the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a heritage asset or place;
- **Communal Value:** the associated meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values embrace spatial, social and inspirational values.

4.2 THE POLICIES

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Sections 16 and 66, state that a local authority is obliged, when considering whether to grant listed building consent and planning permission for works or development which affect a listed building or its setting, to pay *'special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest'*.

Interestingly, the 1990 Act does not place a duty upon applicants to ensure that development proposals 'enhance' the listed building or its setting. Therefore, an application that 'preserves' the setting of the listed building (i.e. does not cause it 'demonstrable harm') passes the statutory test set by Section 66 of the Act and in the absence of any other material reasons for not approving the scheme, planning and listed building consent will be granted.

In regard to the policies contained within the National Planning Policy Framework these relate to the Governments wish to see proposals that conserve and enhance the historic environment. It defines the historic environment as *'all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora'*. The NPPF further classifies a 'heritage asset' as *'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest'*.

When considering development proposals and the impact upon a heritage asset the Local Authority should take into account the particular nature of the significance of the heritage asset.

The NPPF states that *'the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'* and that there are *'three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental'*. The Government see the role of the environment as being one of *'contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use of natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy'*.

Within the over-arching roles that the planning system will play, a set of 12 *'core land-use planning principles'* have been developed to underpin place-shaping and decision making. The 10th principle is stated as being one that will seek to *'conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations'*.

NPPF paragraph 128 states that *'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'*.

The NPPF continues further and states in paragraph 131 that in determining an application, local planning authorities should take into account the following:

- *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.*

As part of the consideration of an application, the Local Authorities should require an applicant to provide a description of 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.

The NPPF states that the assessment of the heritage assets and their significance should be taken into account by the Local Planning Authority in their consideration of the application, in order to *'avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal'*.

Paragraph 132 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting'*.

Paragraph 133 sets out the considerations when dealing with proposals would lead to substantial harm to or the total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset. It states that local planning authorities should refuse consent, *'unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- *the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*

- *no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- *conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- *the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use'.*

In situations where application affect non-designated heritage assets, paragraph 135 advises that *'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 affect directly or indirectly 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'*.

Cotswold District Council's own advice and policy on alterations to listed buildings and development within conservation areas is set out in the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan, which was adopted in April 2006. The relevant policies are 14 and 15.

4.3 DESIGNATIONS OF SIGNIFICANCE AND THEIR USE IN PRACTICE

The relative heritage values of elements within the site are discussed below and key features and themes are noted. The designations can be used to inform the level of change that is likely to be acceptable and its design parameters. For example, Paragraph 40 of English Heritage's Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance states that, *'The greater the range and strength of heritage values attached to a place, the less opportunity there may be for change..'* Every case should be considered on its merits and in relation to the other spaces and elements.

The heritage values of the Old Blacksmith's have been graded under five categories from High to Detrimental. As a Grade

II listed building the overall significance is of national importance. The heritage values contributing to significance identified here have however been graded to identify the relative contributions that these values make to the significance of the apartments in order to inform any future proposals for change and reuse. Definitions of these are given below.

- **High:** an aspect of value that strongly contributes to the significance of a place. These aspects may be important at a national or even international level. They will have high cultural value and will form an essential piece of the history and meaning of the place. In material terms, they will greatly contribute towards the heritage values. Conservation will be a priority, and alterations would require a defined and compelling need and general consensus following wide consultation and/ or the demonstration that significance will be considerably enhanced, reinforced or revealed as a result.

- **Medium:** an aspect of value that will have some cultural importance and will make a modest contribution to the significance of a place. In material terms they will play an important role in conveying the heritage values. Efforts should be made to protect and enhance these aspects, though a greater degree of flexibility is possible than with aspects of high value.

- **Low:** an aspect of value that will make a slight (yet still noteworthy) contribution to the significance of a place. In material terms it will still add something to the heritage values, although this contribution may have been compromised by loss or uninformed interventions. A greater capacity for enhancement exists than for items of medium or high value, although a low designation does not necessarily mean that the feature is expendable and any material change is likely to require consent from the local authority.

- **Neutral:** an aspect that has no discernible value that neither add to nor detracts from the significance of the place. Informed change is likely to be acceptable.

- **Detrimental:** an aspect of the place that detracts from its values and therefore its significance. In material terms, removal of these aspects should be strongly encouraged following the necessary consultation and consent procedures. These are often elements that have been added or caused to occur through the lack of maintenance, often driven by need and carried out in a piecemeal way, which detracts from the aesthetics and are damaging to the fabric or wider significance.

The significance of a place is the sum of these values, brought together and expressed in a summary statement of significance. This section forms the foundation upon which any proposals for change and enhancement can be considered and carried forward. It is therefore an aid to the decision-making process and helps set out the design and conservation parameters.

4.4 EVIDENTIAL

A search of online records indicate there are no known archaeological finds associated with Old Blacksmith's.

The evidential value of the property is considered to be **low-medium**.

4.5 HISTORICAL

4.5.1 ILLUSTRATIVE HISTORIC VALUE

In addition to the historic maps and photographs, the original fabric surviving within the building:

- 2 former fireplaces which do not retain the forge
- Walls and features within depicting the evolution of the building

Of most significance is the fact that the southern façade survives within which it is possible to read the alterations to

openings and extensions. The west gable also shows clear evidence of the increase in height of the building at this end. Thus the illustrative historic values are restricted to the select areas of the building highlighted above are **high** internally and **medium** for the main façades.

4.5.2 ASSOCIATIONS WITH NOTABLE PEOPLE

As a building of low status there are no known associations of relevant to this application for the history of the building. Having served as a Smithy throughout its history and as such the historic associations with notable people has a **low** heritage value.

4.6 AESTHETICS

The Old Blacksmith's is located in the centre of the village and overall the setting has a **high** aesthetic value whilst the interior has a largely **low-medium** aesthetic value in relation to heritage due to the dilapidated nature of the features within the building. This may have been exacerbated following the movement of the building, resulting in further extensive decay/damage and subsequent loss of fabric.

In general, the internal spaces are modest and will be improved by the proposed scheme of conversion.

The Grade II listing is as much for its social context rather any architectural quality. The context of the building provide an important amenity and green space and are integral to the design of the heritage asset.

Overall the setting of the Old Blacksmith's has a **high** aesthetic value whilst the interior has a largely **low-medium** aesthetic value in relation to heritage due to the damage of historic fabric through decay.

4.7 COMMUNAL

At present the parlous condition of the building means that it is vacant and unused and so has a **detrimental-neutral** communal value.

4.8 CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

Positive	Detrimental
The design and surviving features of the visible façades	Failing brickwork and bowing walls, collapse of fabric and heras fencing.
The contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area as part of a group of historic buildings including the church, PH and adjacent house	The detrimental impact upon the overall character/appearance of the village of the protective fencing and site as a whole
The historical associations with a former village industry	The lack of a beneficial use for over 40 years
The archaeological evidence showing the evolution of the building	The loss of the rear wall and impact upon the structural integrity of the whole building caused by the collapse of the churchyard wall

4.9 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The primary significance of the Old Blacksmith's is the contribution made by this building to the character and appearance of the conservation area, within an architectural group/collection of buildings that form part of the setting to the church and wider context of the village.

The historical association with the former use as a blacksmith's forge, of which 2 much altered forges remain inside the property, albeit since the collapse of the rear wall and the structural movement of the property their condition is unknown. Although the building is beyond repair, the site with a rebuilt version of the existing structure has the potential to make a significant financial role to the viability of the village and support local businesses including the public house, despite its current condition and parlous state.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE SITE

The focus of this report is to examine and assess the significance of the Old Blacksmith's in terms of the historic significance of the building and the impact that the proposed demolition will have upon the property and wider context. The demolition of the building is one of last resort and one that the owner has sought to avoid, however, the structural damage caused by the collapse of the adjacent wall upon the building and the resultant destabilisation of the building means that it is unsafe to access the site and carry out repairs of any sort to the property.

The information in this report will further inform the decisions made within the design process and has been prepared as part of an application for planning permission and listed building consent.

This document has been produced in accordance with planning requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It specifically meets Paragraph 128 which states that in 'determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including the 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'. In order to more fully understand the effect of the impact on the heritage values of the study area, the following assessment provides a comparable analysis of the heritage values (as described in the Assessment of Significance) against the level of impact. This assessment is based on the criteria set out by ICOMOS, and is a clear way of understanding not just the impact of change but how levels of impact vary according to the value of the heritage assets. Level of impact will be assessed based upon the following criteria:

Level of Impact	Description
High Beneficial	The proposed changes will dramatically improve the overall setting and character of the heritage assets, revealing and/or enhancing important characteristics which were previously inaccessible. There would be a substantial improvement to important elements of the building. In some cases this change could also include extensive necessary conservation works. Any change resulting in a highly beneficial impact should be encouraged.
Moderate Beneficial	The proposed changes will considerably improve the overall setting and character of the heritage assets, revealing and/or enhancing important characteristics which were previously inaccessible. There would be a substantial improvement to important elements of the building. There may be an improvement in key uses and beneficial change (such as the creation of coherency) to the visual characteristics of the interior of the building. Any change resulting in a moderately beneficial impact should be encouraged.
Negligible	The proposed changes will have minimal visual impact on the heritage asset or very minor impact on the overall character of the surrounding context.
Neutral	The proposed changes will have a neutral impact, neither positive nor negative, on the heritage asset.

Level of Impact	Description
Minor Adverse	The proposed changes will have some negative impact on the heritage asset but this will be relatively minimal on the setting or overall character of the asset. There may be some impinging on views or interior layouts. Change of this magnitude may be acceptable if suitable mitigation is carried out if the wider public benefit outweighs the impact.
Moderate Adverse	The proposed changes will negatively alter the overall character and setting of the heritage asset. It will likely disturb key features and views and detract from the overall heritage asset, and will involve the loss of historic fabric. Change of this magnitude should be avoided where possible, but can be neutralised through positive mitigation or by bringing wider benefits that will enhance other elements of significance.
High Adverse	The proposed changes will seriously damage the overall character and setting of the heritage asset. They will cause a notable disruption to, or in some cases complete destruction of, important fabric and views. Change of this magnitude should be avoided unless there is a compelling need or substantial public benefits.

Heritage Value	Level of Impact (Adverse or Beneficial)				
	No Change	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
Very High	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/Large	Large/Very Large	Very Large
High	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/Large	Large/Very Large	Very Large
Medium	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Slight	Moderate	Large/Very Large
Low	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight	Slight/Moderate
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight

5.2 IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED WORKS

The Old Blacksmith's is a redundant building, which has not had a viable use since the smithy closed c.1964. Permission was approved by the Council in 2013 for the conversion to holiday accommodation. It was the intention to convert the building and so retain the external appearance and repair the 2x forges. This would provide a viable use for the building and economically contribute to the village. The recreation of the building would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. Furthermore, the design of the new building to reflect the existing property will retain and enhance the overall character and appearance of the site and relationship with the church and PH, whilst enabling the churchyard wall to be properly and swiftly repaired, which is a benefit that would otherwise not be achieved without compromise to the churchyard and associated graves.

Value	Heritage Value	Level of Impact	Overall Impact
Evidential	Medium	<p>Major The potential for below ground archaeology is medium.</p> <p>The proposed rebuilding will remove walls or features that have evidential value</p>	Large/Very Large
Historic	Medium	<p>Major The areas of original fabric with illustrative historic value comprise the walls of the building and the 2 damaged forges. This will be removed by demolition.</p> <p>Overall the associations with notable people will not be affected by these proposals whilst the illustrative historic value will be enhanced through the rebuilding that will mirror the external appearance and retains a new 'forge' will enhance and bring benefit to the site and conservation area.</p>	Large/Very Large Beneficial
Aesthetic	<p>High (external elevations)</p> <p>Low-medium (interior)</p>	<p>Major The elements of high aesthetic value include the façades and the setting. Changes to these will include the demolition of the existing building which will result in a short term clearance of the site, however, the repair of the churchyard wall and the construction of a new building will bring longterm enhancement.</p> <p>Major The aesthetic value of the interior has been diminished by thee structural movement of the building. This will be enhanced through the creation of a more coherent floor plan, circulation and restoration of the internal space.</p>	Large/Very Large Beneficial
Communal	Neutral	<p>Moderate At present the building is vacant and in a parlous condition, so has a detrimental-neutral communal value. Returning the building to a viable use that bring economic benefits to the village as well as significantly enhancing those communal values.</p>	Neutral/Slight Beneficial

6.1 CONCLUSION

This report sets out a series of key issues that are important considerations when assessing the proposals for the demolition of the building and its replacement with a replica structure.

For the reasons set out above the impact of the proposals upon the heritage significance of the property is considered to major but equally the proposed rebuilding of a new building that reflects the existing and the repair of the churchyard wall is considered to be beneficial to the village.

The key findings are set out in the Executive Summary and include the following:

- that the historic significance of the heritage asset has been considered and that it has been the aim of the applicant to seek a means of repair for the building, if possible however, there is no method which would be safe for contractors
- that following the serving of the Dangerous Structure Notice and the considered opinion of the Structural Engineer, the applicant is left with no option other than to dismantle the building

- that the repair to the churchyard wall and the construction of a new building which replicates the external appearance of the existing, the proposals will not cause substantial harm or loss to the longterm significance of the conservation area, rather this will enhance the village.
- the proposed work has in principal been accepted by the Authority subject to an analysis of the historic significance of the property.
- that the building in its present condition is causing a potential danger and blight to the centre of the village and the harming the economy of the PH.
- that the proposed building will mirror the design of the existing external appearance of the property.
- that the proposed building will bring enhancement and economic vitality to the village.
- that the applicant has sought to preserve the building but has been left with no option other than to demolish the listed building before it collapses, which potentially would remove any support to the churchyard wall causing further collapse and danger to the street of the churchyard wall.

The proposals which have arisen from this unfortunate series of events take full account of the significance of the property and the wider setting of the heritage assets and it is my professional view that the proposals will not cause substantial harm or loss to the longterm significance or vitality of the village as a whole.