

**EDELWEISS,
CHURCH CLOSE, ABBOTTS ANN,
HAMPSHIRE**

Heritage Statement



FORUM
Heritage
Services

**EDELWEISS,
CHURCH CLOSE, ABBOTTS
ANN, HAMPSHIRE**

Heritage Statement

Bob Edwards

BSc. (Hons.) PG Dip. IHBC MCIfA

September 2023

**FORUM
Heritage
Services**

© Forum Heritage Services Ltd 2023

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Forum Heritage Services being obtained. Forum Heritage Services accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Forum Heritage Services for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Forum Heritage Services accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned

EDELWEISS, CHURCH CLOSE, ABBOTTS ANN, HAMPSHIRE

Heritage Statement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Edelweiss is a late 20th century bungalow forming part of a small cul-de-sac development, Church Close, accessed off Church Road, Abbots Ann, Hampshire (approx. NGR SU 33020 43480) (Figure 1). The bungalow lies to the rear of The Manor and East Manor House (hereafter referred to as the Manor House), a Grade II listed building, and is within the Abbots Ann Conservation Area.

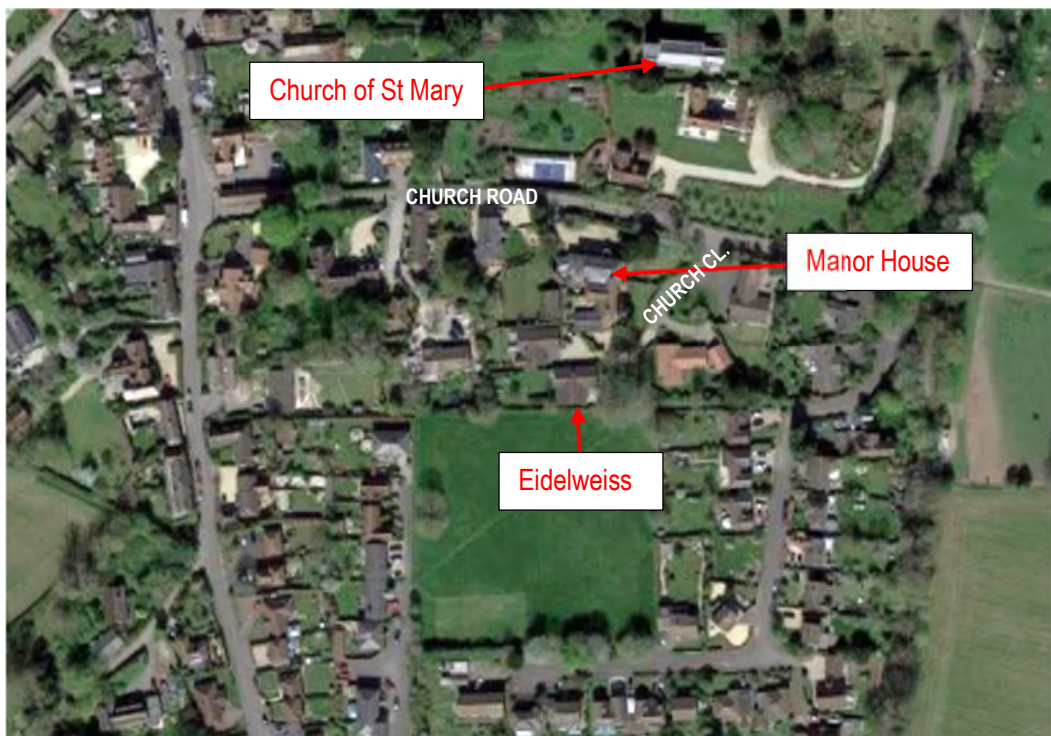


Figure 1 Site location. © Google Maps

- 1.2 The owners of Edelweiss are seeking to increase the available accommodation within the property by extending the building to the west. This application follows refusal for planning permission to raise the height of part of the building.
- 1.3 Forum Heritage Services has been commissioned to make an assessment of the extent and importance of the setting of the Manor House and any other nearby listed buildings that may be affected by the proposal and the contribution to their significance, and to consider the potential impact of the proposals upon the significance of the listed buildings and to prepare a Heritage Statement in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Bob Edwards BSc (Hons) PD Dip IHBC MCIfA, Director of Forum Heritage Services visited the site in November 2020 and subsequently prepared this report which has been revised to address the latest Conservation comments.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Abbots Ann Tithe map of 1840 shows the church and the building now known as The Old Manor set close to each other to the north of Church Road with a large farmstead group to the east of the church (Figure 2). To the south of Church Road is the building now known as The Manor House set in a plot with two access points of Church Road and some small outbuildings to the west. The rear boundary to this plot (123) ran close to the south end of the rear wing, behind which was a plot (124), which had a strip of planting along its south boundary, curving slightly to the north-west at its west end which appears to have been intentionally designed to screen views to the Manor House from the path which ran east – west along the south boundary of 124 and the adjacent plots to the east, 125. Evidently, views to the north towards the rear of the house and beyond were intentionally screened from public view.

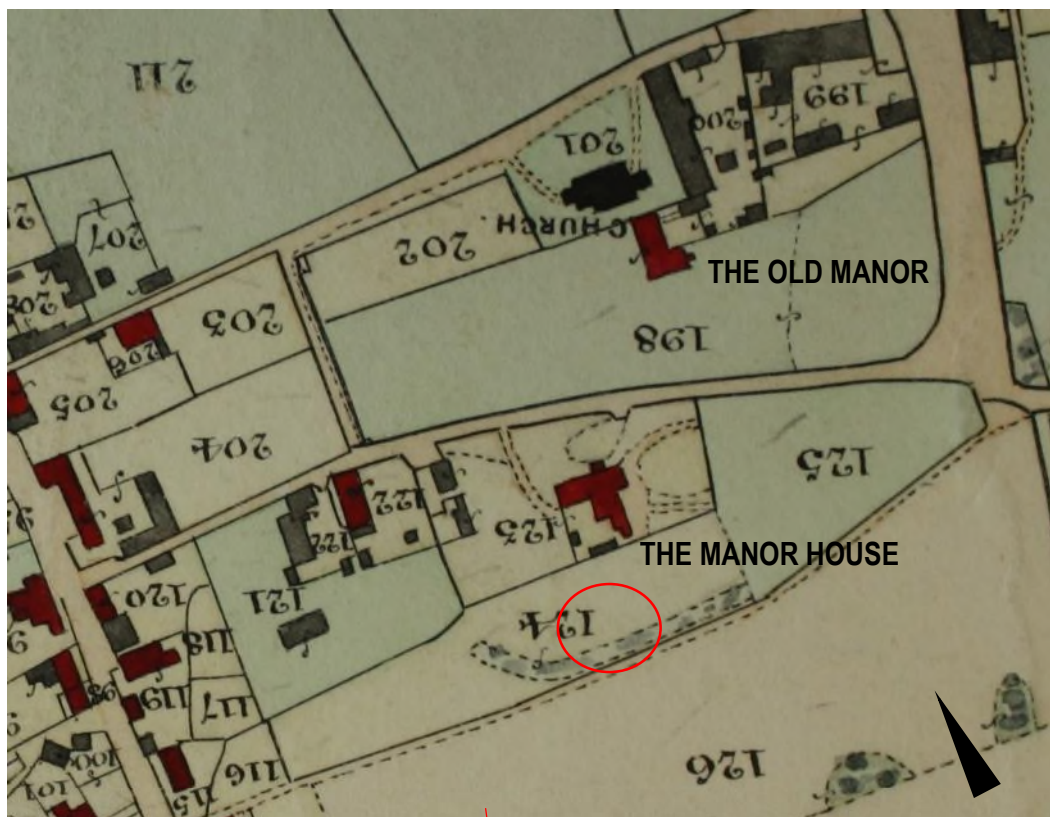


Figure 2 Abbots Ann Tithe map showing the area of Church Road, the Manor House and the Church of St Mary the Virgin. The approximate position of Edelweiss is circled. © HRO.

- 2.2 By 1873 the plot 124 shown on the Tithe map had been subdivided into at least four parcels with the area immediately south of the Manor House being shown with a series of east – west and north – south paths with some planting shown but not a strong indication of tree planting. Later editions of the Ordnance Survey maps show the planting along the south boundary to the east of the current position of Edelweiss which appears to have been intended to screen views to the rear of the Manor House from the section of what is now Manor Close, leading to the south. This was an historic routeway which joined up with the main road through the village to the west. The series of OS maps up to 1940 indicate that there has always been an intention to screen at least some views to the rear of the Manor House.

- 2.3 The Manor House was added to the *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic interest* at Grade II in 1985. The building is described as:

House. C18, and early C19. Walls of brick and render, roof of slate and tile. An L-shaped house, with a taller early C19 north front. Regular front of two storeys, six windows. Hipped slate roof. Walls of painted brickwork in Flemish bond, rubbed flat arches, stone cills, plinth. Sashes in reveals, the two eastern bays are now filled as brick panels, the upper east unit having inserted a small casement (c.1900). Stucco porch with a simple Greek Order, being rectangular with narrow side windows, and with a semi-circular open front of two columns, two pilasters on four steps, with an arched doorway having a radiating fanlight and a C20 panelled door. The C18 rear block is lower, with hipped tile roofing, slate-covered outshots, walls of painted brickwork facing the rear courtyard and roughcast (c. 1900) on the east elevation: casements. The north side of the east elevation projects (being the end of the north front) and is symmetrical, of two windows (with front details). Inside, there is a plain staircase of the early C19.

- 2.4 On the north side of Church Road is the parish church of St Mary the Virgin (listed Grade I) with the Old Manor House (Grade II) standing close by to the south-east.
- 2.5 In the 1980s a group of four bungalows, including Edelweiss, were constructed to the south and east of the Manor House creating a small cul-de-sac development.

3.0 DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The Manor House is largely screened from views along Church Road by a substantial hedge which allows only the upper part of the elevation and the shallow-pitched hipped roof to be glimpsed apart from through the entrance gate (Figures 3 and 4). The west boundary of the Manor House plot also has some trees along it which prevent views to the house from the west. When approaching from the east a combination of trees and a substantial hedgerow along the south side of the road similarly prevent views to the house.
- 3.2 To the west of the Manor House there is a property called the Coach House (originally forming part of the Manor House) where the frontage to Church Road is quite open. This gap allows a view towards the area to the south of the of the plot of the Manor House but no buildings can be seen (Figure 5).



Figure 3 The Manor House and seen from Church Road from directly north of the house.



Figure 4 The Manor House glimpsed through the entrance gate from Church Road.

3.3

At the entrance to Church Close little more than the roof of the rear range can be seen above and through the hedge (Figure 6). The roof of Edelweiss can be seen in the distance. After entering Church Close the east gable end of the front range and the upper storey of the rear wing of the Manor House can be seen above a tall brick wall and a hedge enclosing the curtilage of the listed building (Figure 7). From this point near the entrance into Church Close the roof of Edelweiss can be seen above the hedge of the Manor House where, due to the distance and perspective, even though Edelweiss stands on higher ground, the bungalow appears to be significantly lower than the roof of the rear range of the Manor House.



Figure 5 The view from Church Road through the gap to the east of the Coach House.

3.4

Edelweiss is a simple, architecturally plain late 20th century bungalow constructed in a dull red-brown brick with a concrete pantile roof (Figure 8). When standing to the east of the bungalow looking north, the gable of the rear wing of the Manor House, together with an extension against its west side, can be seen through the entrance to the listed building from the shared access road (Figure 9). Elsewhere, within the plot of Edelweiss only the roof of the Manor House can be seen above the boundary hedge.



Figure 6 The view from Church Road at the entrance to Church Close where the roof of the rear range of the Manor House can be seen. The roof of Edelweiss can also be seen in the distance.



Figure 7 The view to the east gable of the main range and rear range of the Manor House is seen from the lower part of Church Close with Edelweiss beyond the left.



Figure 8 Edelweiss, east and north elevations.



Figure 9 The view to the south gable of the rear wing of the Manor House has seen from adjacent to the east elevation of Edelweiss.

- 3.5 Immediately south of Edelweiss is a playing field occupying an area of land which rises gradually to the south. To the east and south sides of this playing field are houses built between 1960 and 1974 along Manor Close, the houses to the east back onto the playing field whilst the houses to the south face north, looking across the road of Manor Close but along the south boundary of the playing field there is a row of trees which, apart from some small gaps, prevent meaningful views across the playing field towards the Manor House or the church. To the west is some further mid-20th century development which was built upon an area of former allotments. From the central and western parts of the playing field nearing the southern boundary, the views north look towards Edelweiss and the adjacent bungalow, Halycon, beyond which the very top of the ridge of the front range of the Manor House and a section of the hip at the west end of the house can be seen (Figure 10). The top of the church tower can be glimpsed beyond. Moving towards the eastern side of the playing field at its upper end part of the gable of the rear wing of the Manor House can be glimpsed to the right of Edelweiss with just the top of the ridge of the front range visible above the bungalow. From this position the upper part of the tower of the church can be seen although here it is partially obscured by one of the chimneys of the Manor House (Figure 11).
- 3.6 As the playing field is on a slope, when moving northwards towards Edelweiss the extent of the Manor House and the church which can be seen above the bungalow reduces and from between halfway and two-thirds down the field from the southern boundary the roof of the Manor House cannot be seen with only the chimneys rising above the bungalow roof (Figure 12). Little more than the pinnacles of the tower of the church are visible. To the west, because Halycon is slightly further away from the point of view and on slightly lower ground a little more of the church tower is visible (Figure 13). Within the northern third of the playing field the Manor House and the church are not visible.



Figure 10 A view north from the upper part of the playing field towards the Manor House with the church. Only the ridge of the Manor House can be seen above Edelweiss with a section of the west hip of the main roof of the listed building visible in the gap between Edelweiss and the adjacent bungalow to the left, Halycon.



Figure 11 The view from the upper part of the playing field to the east where part of the south gable of the rear wing of the Manor House can be seen to the right of Edelweiss the church tower beyond.



Figure 12 Moving north, downslope and slightly to the west from the position of Figure 11 the extent of the Manor House which is visible reduces so that only the chimneys rise above the ridge of Edelweiss.



Figure 13 A view from the south-west of Edelweiss taken from a position further north from Figure 10. Little more than a short section of the slate roof of the Manor House can be seen in the gap between Edelweiss and Halycon, with the church rising above Halycon.

4.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the statutory approach to the management of historic buildings and areas and requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses, and its setting, under Section 66 – a matter the Courts have held should be afforded considerable importance and weight. Section 72, relating to Conservation Areas requires that ‘special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’.
- 4.2 The statutory approach is reflected in Policy E9 of the Test Valley Borough Council Adopted Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 4.3 Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF (2023) says when considering the impact of development on the significance of a listed building, great weight should be given to its conservation whilst para. 190 states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 4.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (Annexe 2 Glossary) defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'

4.5 The Historic England Guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2nd edition, December 2017) states that:

'Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate that significance' (p.4)

4.6 The HE guidance sets out a staged approach to the assessment of understanding the significance of setting:

- 1 Identification of heritage assets and the extent of their settings
- 2 Assess whether, how and what degree the settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage assets
- 3 Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful on the significance
- 4 Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm
- 5 Record the process

4.7 The guidance also states that views which particularly contribute to the significance of heritage assets include those where the relationship between the asset and other historic assets or places or designed views.

5.0 **ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SETTING TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LISTED BUILDINGS**

5.1 This assessment will follow the approach as set out in the Historic England guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets* to identify the importance of the setting of the listed buildings and to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on their significance.

Step 1: Identification of heritage assets

5.2 The heritage assets to be considered in relation to the proposed development within their settings are:

- Manor House
- The church of St Mary the Virgin

Although the pre-application comments refer to the Manor House and 'other listed buildings in the village', there are no other listed buildings where it is considered that the proposed development has the potential to impact upon their settings. It is not clear therefore which other listed buildings were being referred to by this statement.

Step 2: Assessment of contribution of setting to the significance of the heritage assets

- 5.3 The Manor House is one of the higher status houses in the village and was, historically, set apart from the main core of the village area to the west. Historic maps show that there has always been a relatively high degree of planting around the boundaries of the property to screen views to it, and today this screening remains and may have even increased.
- 5.4 From Church Road the ability to experience the Manor House is very limited due to the tall, thick hedge running along the boundary on the south side of Church Road. The experience can be described as only glimpsed and minor. There are no views to the house from the west or east.
- 5.5 To the south of the Manor House, and the modern bungalows built behind it, is a playing field and some 20th century housing development. Along the south boundary of the historic Manor House plot, now the south boundary of Edelweiss, is a public footpath. Along this path the height of the hedge, together with the presence of Edelweiss and the hedge to the current curtilage of The Manor House, means that there are no meaningful views of the listed building.
- 5.6 The area of the playing field slopes up to the south and as the description of the area around the Manor House, above, demonstrates, from the lower, northern part of the field it is not possible to see the Manor House apart from a very small area to the south-west of Edelweiss where there is a narrow, glimpsed view between Edelweiss and Halycon. This is not an important view in terms of understanding the significance of the listed building. Moving up the playing field, the ridge of the Manor House becomes gradually more visible but, even at the top of the playing field, only the upper part of the ridge of the slate roof and a chimney is visible.
- 5.7 In all the views available from the south, one can only gain an understanding that there is a building with a slate roof beyond the modern bungalows – there is no ability to understand or appreciate its architectural form, detail, character or significance as a building of national importance.
- 5.8 An assessment of the setting of a listed building must consider how the setting contributes to the significance of the listed building. To the north, the setting of the Manor House is a quiet rural lane with the parish church and the Old Manor House, both largely screened from views by a tall wall with planting behind and, to the west, the converted coach house of the Manor House and then the first of the vernacular cottages as one approaches the main part of the village. It is this feeling of relative isolation from the main core of the settlement and the sense of seclusion afforded by the tall hedges along the boundaries that is of greatest importance in terms of setting.
- 5.9 The development in the 1980s of four bungalows within the grounds of the Manor House has undoubtedly severely impacted upon the setting of the listed building; the sense of seclusion and privacy indicated by both the present-day planting and the evidence for screening planting around the grounds of the house shown on historic mapping has been destroyed. Once set in a relatively spacious, private plot, the Manor House now has a relatively small curtilage which is contrary to the typical character of such houses.

- 5.10 As noted above, the historic maps show that there has always been an expectation of privacy for the rear part of the Manor House with planting being shown even on the Tithe map clearly intended to screen views to the rear of the house. It is evident that there has been no expectation or intention for the rear of the house to be seen or appreciated or to make any form of statement in terms of its architecture or status. It is considered that, given the historic map evidence, the area to the south, now occupied by the playing field and the housing development along Manor Close has never been an important aspect of the setting of the listed building either in terms of views towards the house or views from the house to the landscape beyond. Therefore, this area must be regarded as a neutral part of the setting of the listed building – it is accepted that the listed building can be 'experienced' from this area but this experience is minimal and does not allow any appreciation of understanding or appreciation of the listed building and there is no historical relationship of importance between the land beyond the south boundary of Edelweiss and the Manor House.
- 5.11 The church of St Mary the Virgin is a Grade I listed building, indicating that this is a building of exceptional interest. This high-grade is primarily due to its early 18th century architecture, the church being rebuilt by Thomas 'Diamond' Pitt. It is not necessary to assess the complete extent of the setting of the church in relation to the proposed development which will only potentially affect the area to the south of the listed building.
- 5.12 The church stands away from the main village street and is accessed by a path which runs to the north of the churchyard, linking it to the main village to the west and the road leading to Little Ann to the east. Although the area to the south of the church is open, the opportunity to review the church from the north-east is limited due to trees alongside the road and from within the village the buildings along the east side of the street prevent views to the church. Whilst church towers are often regarded as landmark structures in the landscape, there is nothing to suggest that the ability to see the tower of the church from the south was an important consideration in its design or location – the church tower cannot be seen from the main village street for instance. Indeed, the Manor House itself largely screens the view to the church tower from the south, even before the construction of Edelweiss, with only the very top part of the upper stage and pinnacles being visible. Today, the presence of Edelweiss has very little, if any, material impact upon the ability to see the church tower.
- 5.13 It is considered that the area of the playing field and Manor Close represents a slightly positive contribution to the significance of the church in that one can at least be aware of the location of the church, a distinctive building type which are one of the key buildings of historic settlements and as such differs from the ability to see a small part of a plain slate roof as is the case of The Manor House.

Step 3: Assess impact of the proposed development on significance

- 5.14 Taking the NPPF definition of setting as set out in 4.4, above, it follows that the test for whether a development within the setting of a heritage asset will affect significance must be based on the impact on the ability to experience the heritage asset or to appreciate or understand its significance. A further potential aspect of potential impact on setting is whether the proposed development would be harmful aesthetically when seen in combination with or adjacent to a heritage asset or have other impacts on setting such as impacts on tranquillity, light pollution or smells. The courts have been clear in that the term 'preservation' used in the Planning (Listed and Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 does not mean retain unaltered – change can be acceptable.

- 5.15 Following the refused application, the present scheme is for an extension that avoids any increase in the height of the house whilst allowing some accommodation within the roof of the extension.
- 5.16 The proposed extension to the west elevation of Edelweiss will maintain the bungalow form of the present house, the extension meaning that when seen from the south and south-east, the addition will only screen the existing view to Halycon. The sightline from the south-west from the playing field through the gap between Halycon and Edelweiss (as seen in Figure 13) will be partly closed but it is considered that this 'view', in which little of the architectural character and significance of the listed building can be appreciated, is not an important view in terms of setting.
- 5.18 The extension of Edelweiss will have no impact on the ability to see the church tower and so there is no harm to the Grade I listed building.

Step 4: How to maximise enhancement or avoid or minimise harm

- 5.20 The proposed alterations to Edelweiss will not cause harm to the significance of the Manor House or the Church of St Mary the Virgin.

Step 5: Record the process

- 5.21 This report presents a record of the process of the assessment of the importance of the setting of the listed buildings and its contribution to their significance, together with the assessment of the potential impact of the proposals.

6.0 IMPACT ON THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

- 6.1 The Manor House and the cul-de-sac development of Church Close lies within the Abbots Ann Conservation Area, the boundary of the designated area running along the south boundary of Edelweiss and Halycon, the former south boundary of the Manor House, the playing field lying outside of the designated area.
- 6.2 As late 20th century buildings, the four bungalows of Church Close are not identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of conservation area and this is considered to be a fair and appropriate assessment of their significance to the designated area.
- 6.3 Generally, the Abbots Ann Conservation Area is an area of high architectural and historical character, but the development of Church Close does not conform to, or maintain, that character or significance. Fortunately, due to the extent of screening along the south side of the Church Road, the impact of this development is relatively limited with the two western bungalows, Church View and Kallehult, being the most visible from the entrance to Church Close from Church Road. This small late 20th century development cannot be considered to be important in terms of its character in relation to the character and appearance of the conservation area or of the settlement more widely. The extension of Edelweiss will maintain the bungalow form of the present building and the character of this modern development and so there will be no harm the character and appearance of the conservation area.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed extension to Edelweiss will not impact on any views of significance to the rear elevation of the Manor House. Therefore, the development will not impact on any meaningful experience of the listed building or the way the significance of the listed building is understood or appreciate. As such, the extension will not result in harm to the special interest of the listed Manor House and St Mary's church through change within their settings.
- 8.2 Edelweiss and its late 20th century neighbours do not make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the relatively minor alteration of Edelweiss, maintain the bungalow form, will not represent a harmful change to the special character or interest of the designated heritage asset. Similarly, the proposed alteration will not cause harm to the wider landscape character particularly as experienced from the public footpath to the south of the property.
- 8.3 Therefore, it is concluded that the proposed extension of Edelweiss will not cause harm to the significance of either the listed Manor House or the church and so the development does not conflict with the statutory duty in Sections 66 or 72 of the Act, National Policy in the NPPF or Policy E9 of the Test Valley Borough Council Adopted Local Plan 2011-2029.