

# The Stables and Coach House to Embleton Tower, Embleton, NE66 3UZ



## Proposed Conversion to Residential Annexe

## Heritage Statement

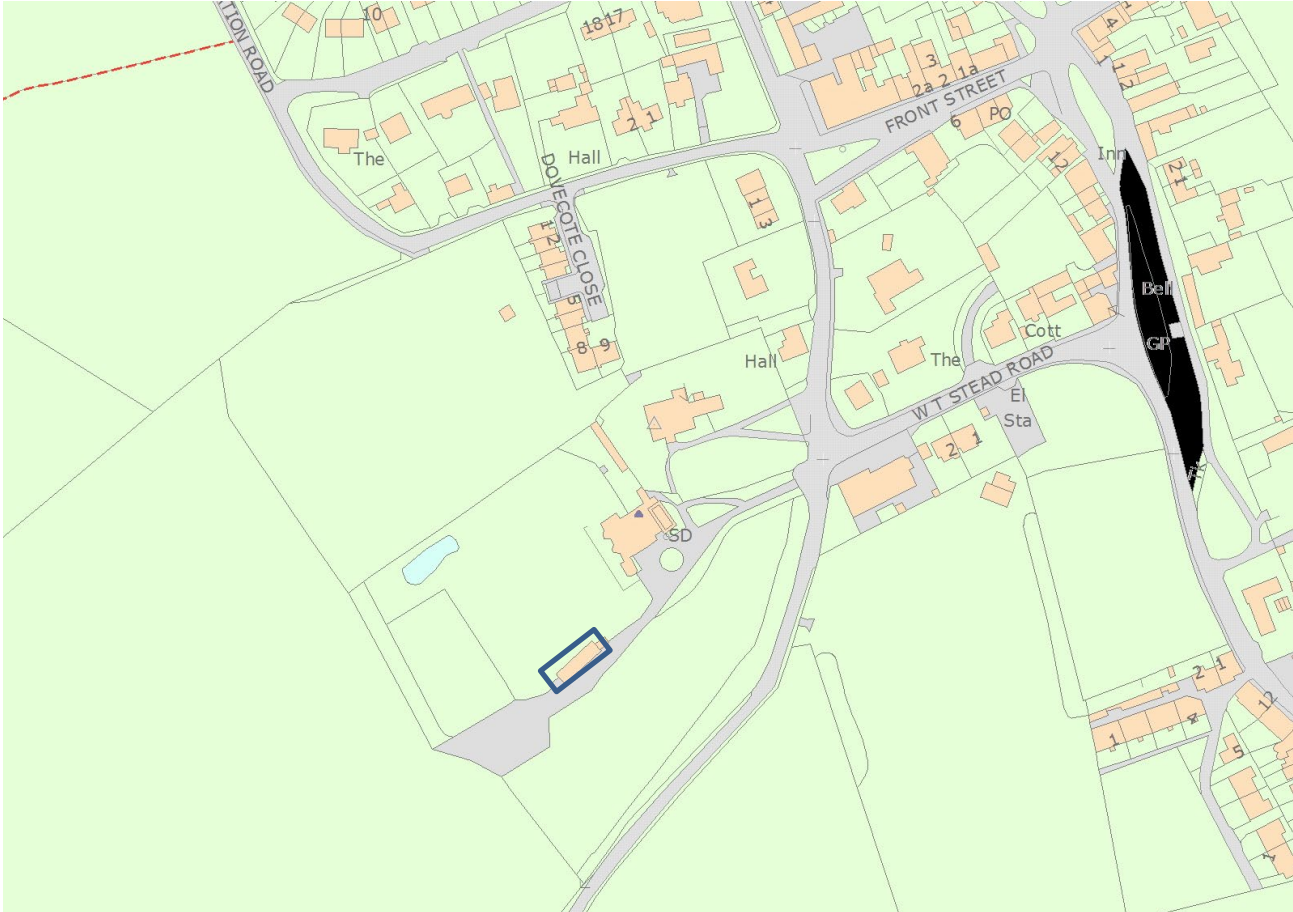
September 2023

Argyle Planning Consultancy LTD

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**Site Location Plan**



## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Argyle Planning Consultancy Ltd was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Julian Kenny to prepare a Heritage Statement to support the planning application to convert the coach house/stables building in the grounds of Embleton Tower, Embleton for use as a residential annexe for dependent relatives.

1.2 The purpose of this Heritage Statement is to assess heritage significance and guide proposals for change in a manner that conserves significance and avoids harm to the heritage assets, in this case principally the Grade 1 Listed Embleton Tower and the Embleton Conservation Area.

1.3 The approach follows the principle of managing change intelligently, which lies at the heart of national planning policy for conservation of the historic built environment. The methodology employed involves the following steps:

- Identify any designated and/or non-designated heritage assets potentially affected by proposals for change
- Evaluate the heritage values and significance of the heritage assets, placing particular focus on values and significance that might be affected by the proposed changes.
- Establish the nature of the proposed changes, including the overall aim of the change and the emergent design proposals.
- Analyse the potential impact of the finalised design upon the significance of the heritage assets.

1.4 The statement has been prepared in accordance with the general guidelines set out in the Historic England publications 'Informed Conservation' and 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance' and in particular responds to heritage policies outlined in Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019). The legal context is set by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990.

## **2. General Description and Context**

2.1 The outbuilding, comprising the former coach house and stables, lies to the south west of Embleton Tower, Embleton which itself sits on the south west side of the village in close association with the village church.

2.2 The outbuilding is built of random rubble whinstone roughly brought to course under a red clay pantile roof.

2.3 The immediately surrounding context to the outbuilding is rural village edge facing as it does onto a paddock to the south and the extensive and wooded garden of Embleton Tower to the north. It is a highly attractive sylvan setting.



The outbuilding in its sylvan setting

### 3 The Heritage Assets

3.1 As stated, the outbuilding lies within the curtilage of the Grade 1 listed Embleton Tower (incorporating the medieval pele tower) to which it functions as a service building being formerly in use as a coach house and stables. Thus, whilst it is not listed in its own right, it has both historic functional links and contributes to the overall aesthetic of the main house and its setting. It is not officially recognised as a non-designated heritage asset but in many respects it has the same local heritage value as many of those non-designated assets identified in the *Embleton Parish Neighbourhood Plan*.

3.2 The site also sits towards the southern edge of the Embleton Conservation Area the extent of which is shown on the map at Appendix 1. A Conservation Area Appraisal for Embleton was prepared by the former Alnwick District Council which sets out the history of the Conservation Area and its character and form.

3.3 Originally there were two other smaller listed structures – a sundial and garden walls which lay close to the outbuilding. However the sundial was stolen prior to the current owners purchasing the property. The garden walls are listed Grade II and the official list description along with that of Embleton Tower (listed as the Old Vicarage) are at Appendix 2.

### 4 Planning Policy Context

4.1 The *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) requires applicants to

describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting and assess the impact of the proposal on the heritage asset.

4.2 In determining planning applications, the NPPF states that local planning authorities should take account of:

- 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.
- the extent to which the significance is harmed by the proposal.

The NPPF makes it clear that proposals which preserve or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

4.2 The *Northumberland Local Plan* (NLP) adopted 2022 is the development plan for the area and its policies carry full weight.

**Policy ENV1** seeks to protect the natural, built and historic environment from impacts of development.

**Policy ENV7** looks to protect heritage assets both designated and non-designated and

**Policy ENV9** requires development to preserve or enhance conservation areas.

4.3 The Embleton community has also prepared the *Embleton Parish Neighbourhood Plan* (EPNP) which is now 'made' and forms part of the Development Plan. Policies of relevance to the proposal are:

**Policy 4** requiring all development including extensions and conversions to be built to a high standard of design.

**Policy 5** requiring development proposals in the Conservation Area, including extensions and alterations to existing buildings and structures, to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, through the careful use of materials and incorporation of traditional design, leaving the character unharmed.

**Policy 7** sets out the requirements of development affecting non designated heritage assets of local importance and worthy of protection.

## 5.0 Heritage Appraisal

5.1 The following appraisal adheres to guidance published by English Heritage (2008) and relates specifically to the requirement contained in paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), given in the extract below:

*"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*

Heritage Statement Coach House/Stables Old Vicarage Embleton

*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.”*

5.2 The appraisal begins by identifying and assessing any heritage values that 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

5.3 The heritage values are explored 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.

#### Evidential Value

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

5.5 This section of the Embleton Conservation Area retains strong evidence of the manner in which Embleton has developed, with the original settlement located on the flatter sheltered land to the west of the whinstone ridge centred around the medieval church and its fortified vicarage.

5.6 Embleton Tower provides evidential value across a range of periods from the early tower house built at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and reflecting the need for protection as a result of raids by the Scots, to the development of the grand country vicarage.

5.7 The tower was fortified around 1450 when the vicar was granted a license to crenelate and the ground floor was strengthened. In Tudor times mullioned windows were added in the north eastern elevation. It is only one of three fortified vicarages in the country.

5.8 The comparatively modern house (by comparison) to which the tower is attached, grew in several stages starting in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The current house and its unique elongated octagonal conservatory provides extensive evidential value of the work of the celebrated North East architect John Dobson commissioned to remodel and extend the house in 1828.

5.9 The outbuilding housing the coach house and stables is evidence of the lifestyle of the clergy occupying a fine country living in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and was probably developed in the early years after the Dobson extensions.



The West Front showing the Dobson elevation and fine elongated octagonal conservatory

## Historical Value

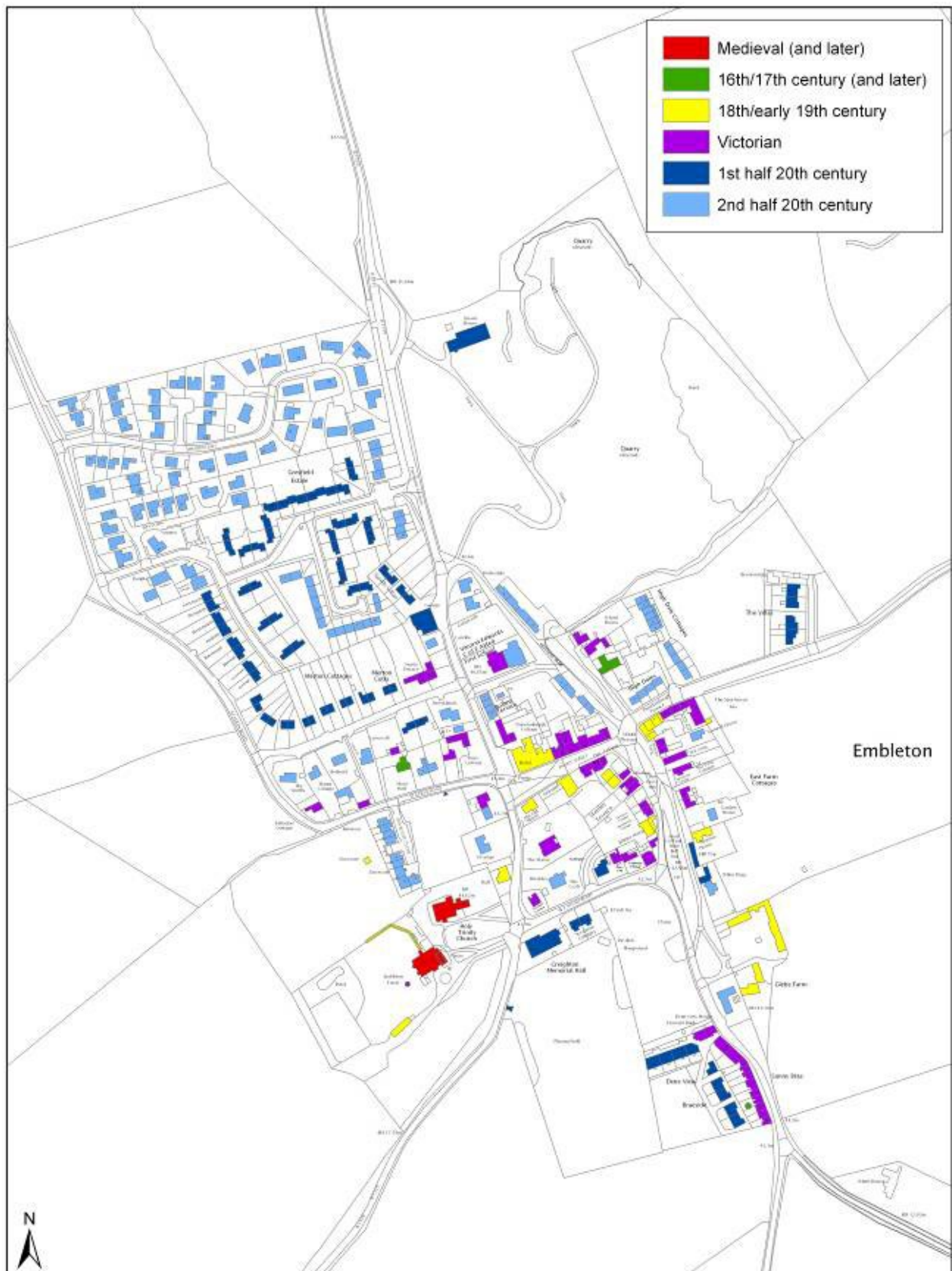
5.7 Historic England (2008) suggests that - *“Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative”*.

5.8 The Conservation Area holds illustrative historic value through the manner in which it helps depict the life and development of the village. Value is derived from the medieval architecture of church and tower reflecting the heart of the early village.

5.9 The house itself presents illustrative historic value of a country vicarage with its close association between the house and church.



The Main House c 1904



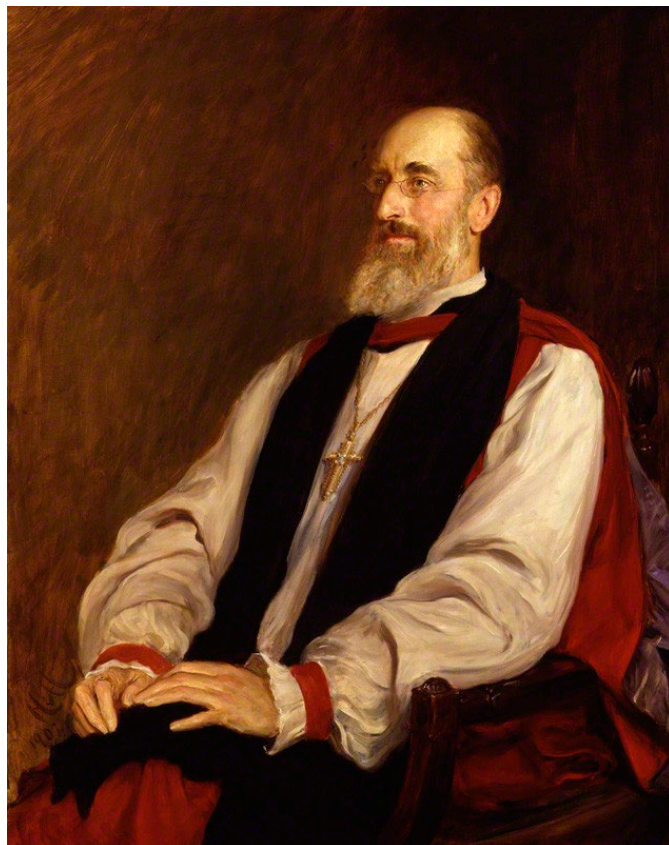
Embleton Development and Age of Buildings - Embleton Conservation Area Appraisal

5.9 As well as the associative historic value linked to the architect John Dobson the house also has associative historic value linked to Rev Mandell Creighton who was an intellectual giant of the late Victorian period. He went from being a fellow of Merton College, Oxford, to being the first Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Cambridge, and a fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He published five ground-breaking volumes on [Heritage Statement Coach House/Stables Old Vicarage Embleton](#)



Renaissance/Reformation Popes. His parallel career as a churchman began with ten years from the mid-1870s to the mid-1880s as a vicar in Embleton, between his appointments in Oxford and Cambridge. He went on to be Bishop of Peterborough and finally Bishop of London.

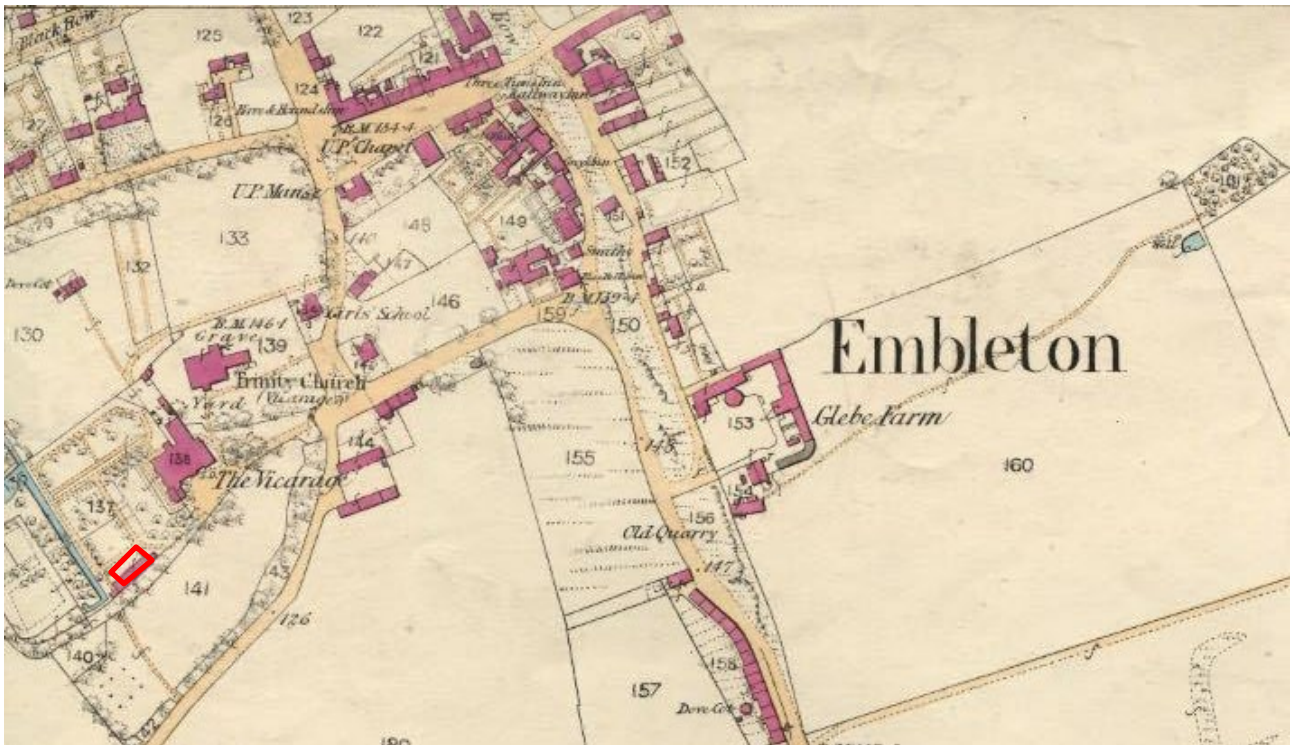
5.10 The Creightons' decade in Embleton was at a time in their lives when they were still young (several of their children were born there), they shared the work in the parish, and Mandell Creighton was rarely away from home. Louise began to write and he continued to work on his series on the Popes. Social life was full by the standards of most people, with many visits by friends in the better months. There were also visits to the local aristocracy including the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland in Alnwick Castle. The visit was apparently not repeated when the Duke learned about Mandell's liberal politics! In retrospect their time in Embleton assumed great importance to them, set against the much more limited time they had together in their days in Cambridge/Worcester and Peterborough and then as Bishop of London, which was one of the most demanding jobs in England in either church or state.



Rev Mandell Creighton

5.10 As far as the outbuilding the subject of the application is concerned the early OS editions clearly indicate that the building was in place by 1860 - the time of the OS First Edition.

5.11 The outbuilding has historic value in its own right as a service building functionally linked to the main Vicarage.



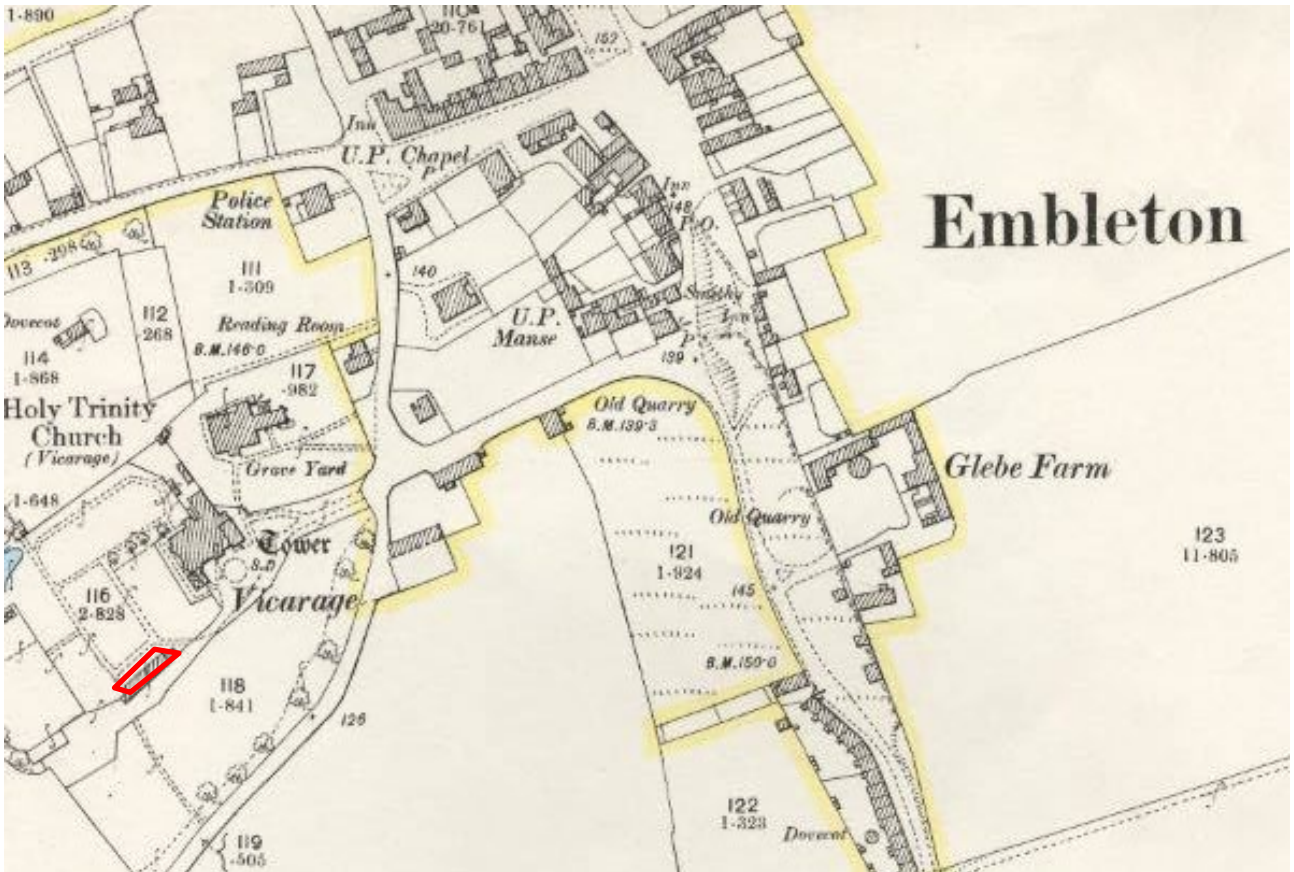
OS First Edition 1860

## Communal Value

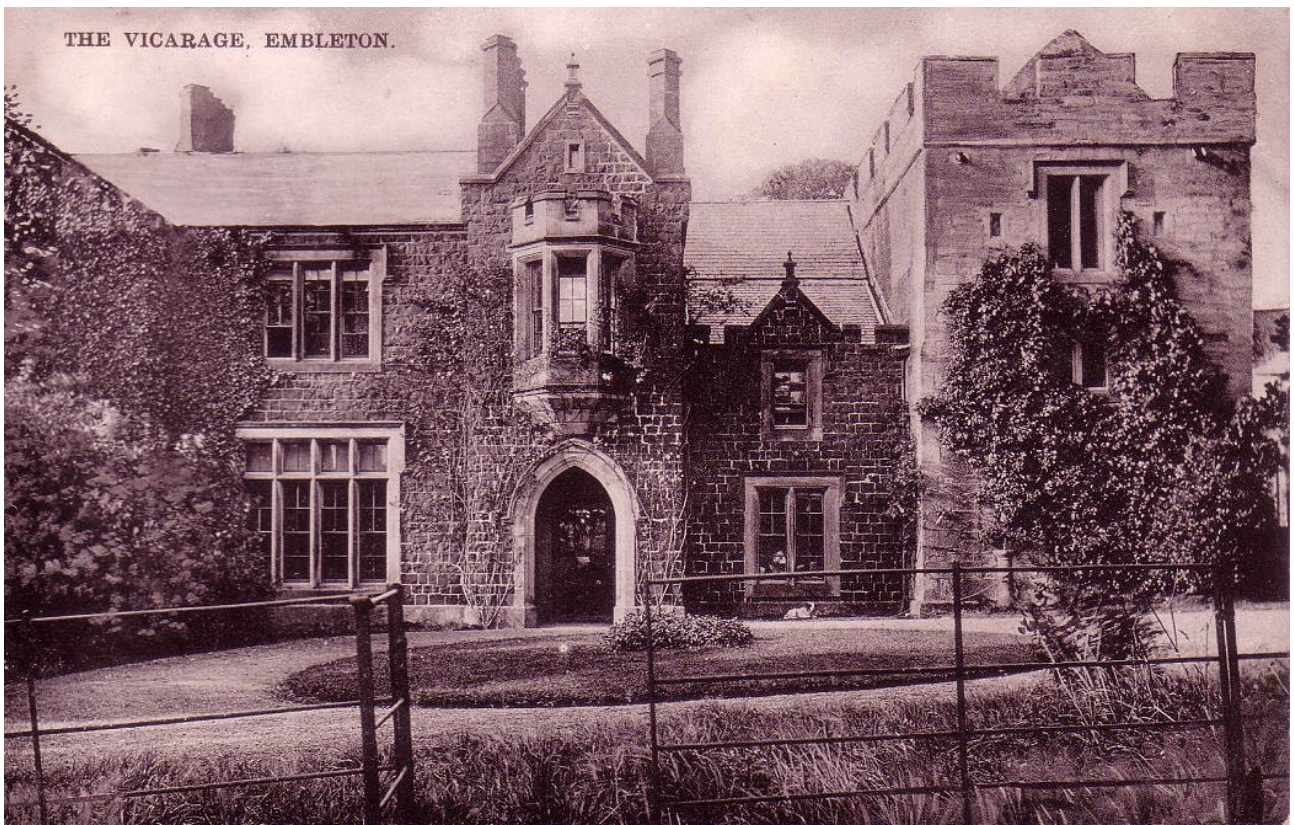
5.11 Historic England (2008) suggests that: “*Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory*”.

5.12 This part of the Conservation Area possesses varied communal heritage values owing to the role which the area has played in the life of the village and which, based on mapping evidence, has changed relatively little, at least in overall form, over the past 160 years. This stability has helped to build a strong sense of place held in the memory of residents and visitors.

5.13 The church and its associated vicarage and pele tower have been central to the heart of Embleton for centuries and, although the role the church now plays in the life of the village has changed, the community still view it as the heart of the village anchoring the sense of place.



OS Second Edition 1897



The Vicarage around 1910-20

## Aesthetic Value



A 1935

Pen and ink drawing of the Vicarage by A.E. Macleod on a plain letter postcard sent to Mr Child in Ponteland Newcastle postmarked Embleton 1942

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

5.15 The listed church and vicarage form an iconic grouping in the approach to the conservation area and village from the south. The whole contributes to a pleasing villagescape and builds a strong aesthetic value and strong sense of local distinctiveness.

5.16 The Conservation Area Appraisal explains that Embleton has an ad hoc layout more a result of serendipity than planning with the form of the village very much dictated by the whinstone ridge and flatter land to the west and north where the medieval heart of the original settlement lies.

## 6. The Significance of the Heritage Assets

6.1 These values create the significance of the Conservation Area and the listed and non-listed buildings involved in this application. The significance comes from the ad hoc informal layout and the charming mix of buildings and spaces in mainly simple vernacular styles and with a limited palette of walling and roofing materials which complement each other with whinstone buildings such as the church and vicarage creating a strong local distinctiveness.

6.2 The CAA expresses the significance of the Conservation Area (which is paraphrased here) as a blend of historically different cultures, of polite and vernacular architecture, of the hardness of geology and the softness of landscape including village gardens (such as that to Embleton Tower). Its medieval atmosphere is carried by its ancient church and former vicarage and its industrial past evidenced by the quarrying of whinstone from the backbone ridge of the village. The use of this underlying geology in local architecture is

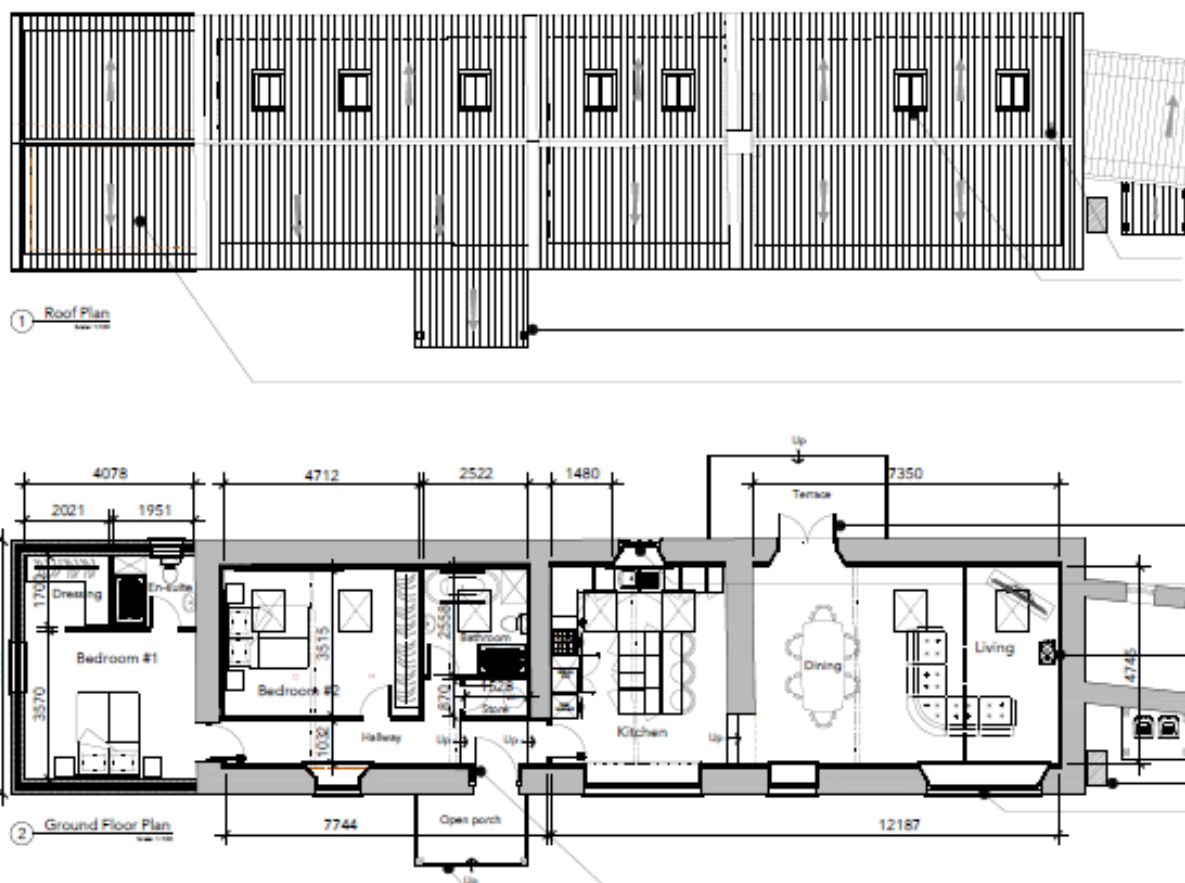
witnessed by both the few sophisticated buildings that use a rich mixture of neat whinstone blocks and sandstone dressings (such as Embleton Tower) and the black rubble vernacular cottages and service buildings such as the application property which uses the whinstone in a rougher random form. All these cultural, geological and community threads are invisibly woven together to give the historic village of Embleton the unique atmosphere it has today.

6.3 As one of only three fortified vicarages in the country and the house the work of one of the pre-eminent North East architects, Embleton Tower itself is of high significance. The outbuilding itself however, other than its functional link to the main house as a service building, is a simple structure and whilst it has a simple charm it has no outstanding features and therefore it is of much lower significance.

## 7. The Proposed Development

7.1 The proposal is to convert the former coach house and stable building from its current use as storage space to a two bedroomed self-contained residential annexe to Embleton Tower for use by dependent members of the family.

7.2 The conversion will broadly retain the current footprint except in two respects. At the west end where there is a half width offshoot in a very poor structural state the proposal is to rebuild this the full width of the property but retaining the stepped ridge as the building steps down the slope. In view of the limited opportunity for circulation space given the layout of the building it is also proposed to construct a small storm porch on the south side.



Proposed plans for conversion showing rebuilt west end with small extension and storm porch

7.3 Other than these more major interventions the proposal requires only small adaptations externally to the existing building in the form of some new fenestration to the west and north elevation, the replacement of coach doors on the south elevation with glazed screens, the replacement of the roof pantiles most of which are in a poor condition and the introduction of rooflights.

7.4 Internally the design, as far as possible, works with the existing layout and spaces other than in respect of the two small extended areas of the bothy mentioned above and the removal of one stud wall in the middle of the building. It is also proposed to remove the ceiling in the main living space and kitchen.

7.5 Access will be taken along the existing track extending from the private drive to Embleton Tower and will have 2 parking spaces provided on its south side. The occupants will have shared use of the main house garden.

## **8. Impact of the Development on the Significance of the Heritage Assets**

8.1 As stated above the former coach house and stable building is seen in the context of the Grade 1 listed Embleton Tower when viewed from the south on the approach to the village.

8.2 The proposals for the most part do not change the footprint, extent, height or overall mass of the outbuilding and the only change to the elevation facing south, in which the building is visible to the side of Embleton Tower viewed from the road, is the addition of the small storm porch. There would also be replacement of some of the larger timbered openings in the south facing elevation with aluminium framed glazing but as these will be designed sensitively there would be no significant impact on the Grade 1 building.

8.3 Similarly, change to the north facing elevation which will feature in the outlook from the principal garden facing windows of Embleton Tower and the conservatory will be limited to the small west end extension, some additional new aluminium framed fenestration but in keeping in terms of size and design with that in the rest of the bothy, together with the introduction of conservation style rooflights. These changes also will have minimal impact on the significance of the Grade 1 building. However, as stated in the Design and Access statement if it is the view of the Conservation Officers that timber windows would be more appropriate in this elevation the applicant would go along with this but they do wish to secure aluminium framing in the windows and openings of the south facing elevation. (See DAS)

8.4 In terms of the impact of the proposals on the Conservation Area, the character of the Embleton Conservation Area is established through a combination of the settlement form to the west of the whinstone ridge and the heritage buildings within it. Although the property is contained well away from the sweeping views of the ridge from the coast it is nevertheless a building that is overlooked from the public realm in the approach to the village particularly in the winter when the tree screen is bare. As such careful thought has been given to the design of the conversion to ensure that it fits into this important heritage

setting.

8.5 The conversion has been designed to work as far as possible with the existing form of the building as a non-designated heritage asset, using matching materials for most new work. The small extension is necessary to make a viable two bedroom unit but has been designed reflecting the ridge pattern stepping down the slope from east to west.

8.6 Overall there will be a material benefit in securing the structure and future of this attractive service outbuilding enhancing its position in the setting of the Grade 1 listed building and the Conservation Area. The conversion will sustain and enhance the significance of the non-designated heritage asset in the Conservation Area and will put it to a viable use consistent with its conservation.

8.7 The proposal would therefore comply with the NPPF requirements in Section 16 and would be in accordance with NLP **Policies ENV 7** by conserving the quality and integrity of the heritage assets and **ENV 9** by reinforcing the local distinctiveness of the Conservation Area. In terms of the ENP the proposal would be built to a high standard of design meeting **Policy 4** and would leave the character of the Conservation Area unharmed meeting **Policy 5**.

8.8 The policies would therefore be met and accordingly the proposal should be treated favourably.

## 9. Conclusion

9.1 This Heritage Statement details the significance of the main heritage assets involved and the relationship of the application building to this, outlines what is involved in the conversion and demonstrates that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of its impact on the significance of the heritage assets involved.

9.2 No harm to the adjacent Grade 1 listed building and Grade II listed garden walls or their settings would arise as a result of the proposal and there would be no harm to the historic and townscape character or setting of the Embleton Conservation Area caused by the development proposals and the Conservation Area will be preserved.

9.3 The future of the non-designated heritage asset – the outbuilding itself - would be secured in a sensitive manner and accordingly, planning permission should be granted.

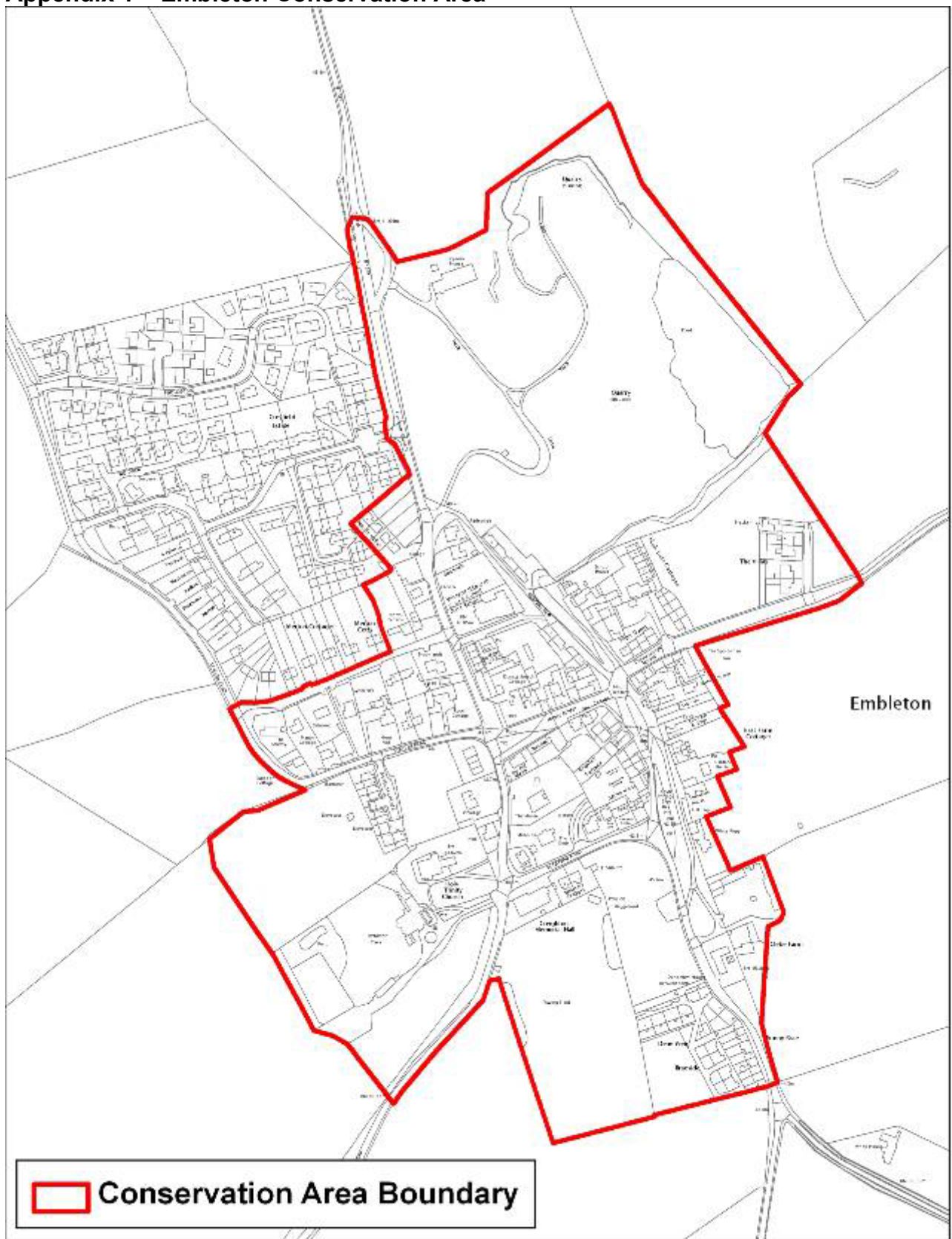
Peter Biggers MRTPI AIHBC

Argyle Planning Consultancy Ltd

September 2023

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1 – Embleton Conservation Area



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## Appendix 2 – Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the site

### The Old Vicarage

Heritage Category: Listed Building  
Grade: I  
List Entry Number: 1041824  
Date first listed: 10-Jan-1953  
Date of most recent amendment: 01-Sep-1988  
List Entry Name: THE OLD VICARAGE  
Statutory Address 1: THE OLD VICARAGE

#### The scope of legal protection for listed buildings

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

#### Location

Statutory Address: THE OLD VICARAGE  
District: Northumberland (Unitary Authority)  
Parish: Embleton  
National Grid Reference: NU 23053 22444

#### Details

NU 2322 EMBLETON EMBLETON VILLAGE

14/69 The Old Vicarage 10.1.53 (formerly listed as Embleton Vicarage) GV Vicarage. Early C14 house or solar wing reconstructed c.1390 as tower; kitchen wing mid-C18; major extensions by John Dobson 1828 for Rev. George Grimes. Tower squared stone and rubble, with south end refaced in squared tooled stone; C18 wing brick, rendered and colourwashed; C19 parts squared whinstone with sandstone ashlar plinth and dressings. Welsh slate roofs. C18/19 parts form irregular H-plan, with link to tower at east end and conservatory, of stretched octagon plan, at south end of west range. C19 parts in Tudor style.

South (entrance) front 2 + 3 storeys, 5 irregular bays. Chamfered plinth. Porch bay in centre has double-chamfered arch with hoodmould, under canted oriel with embattled parapet; plain panel under gable above. Set back to left a bay with large 4-light mullioned-and-transomed window and 3-light window above. Set further back to right a lower bay with 2-light transomed window under single-light window; embattled parapet with small gable in centre. Slightly-projecting left end bay has single-light 1st-floor window above attached conservatory. Right end bay is tower; C19 two-light

windows on upper floors are flanked by older chamfered loops, probably re-set. Embattled parapet with gable of cap-house behind. C19 parts have sash windows, mostly of 8 panes, in chamfered surrounds under hoodmoulds; coped gables with moulded kneelers and finials; tall stacks with multiple diagonal corniced shafts.

Right return: Tower 3 storeys, 2 wide bays. Broad central stack projection, corbelled out at eaves level. Square-headed 2- and 3-light windows, some blocked, those to ground floor C20 but in same style. 16-pane casement in C18 stone surround to 2nd floor right; some blocked medieval loops; embattled parapet with truncated old brick stacks.

Left return 2 storeys, 3 bays. Central two single-light windows on 1st floor. Flanking flat-topped canted bays, with 12-pane sashes, under 2-light windows in slightly-raised panels carried up as gables. Attached conservatory at right has 12-pane sashes in recessed and hollow-chamfered surrounds; swept and hipped glazed roof; roof ribs descend to integral cast-iron gutter.

Rear elevation: Tower at left shows 16-pane casement on 2nd floor and various blocked loops. C18 wing in centre shows two 12-pane 1st floor sashes and hipped roof.

Interior: Entrance porch has groined vault on moulded corbels, and half-glazed Gothick door. Tower: ground floor divided into two segmental-vaulted chambers; north chamber has old chamfered fireplace and pair of pointed doorways. 1st floor has C18 octagon room with moulded fireplace and domed niches; remains of old stair in cupboard at north end. 2nd floor has another moulded early C18 fireplace and stone roof corbels. Cap-house has unusual roof trusses with saddles and additional outer principals carrying purlins. Kitchen wing has 1st-floor room with acanthus frieze, and contemporary fireplace with fluted pilasters and scroll cornice. Early C19 part: Open-well stair with stick balusters; coffered ceiling to hall. Drawing room has elaborate vine-scroll frieze, cornice and floral ceiling rose; dining room has coffered ceiling. Doors of 6 vertical panels; folding panelled shutters; Gothick and Tudor fireplaces, with ornamental cast-iron grates.

Historical Notes: Merton College, who held the patronage of Embleton, agreed in 1332 to provide quarters where the vicar might "live suitably and entertain visitors decently"; reconstruction seems to have taken place after the parish was laid waste by the Scots in 1385.

Listing NGR: NU2305322435

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

## **Sundial**

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade:II

List Entry Number:1371193

Date first listed:01-Sep-1988

List Entry Name:SUNDIAL TO WEST OF OLD VICARAGE

Statutory Address 1:SUNDIAL TO WEST OF OLD VICARAGE

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

### **Location**

Statutory Address: SUNDIAL TO WEST OF OLD VICARAGE

District: Northumberland (Unitary Authority)  
Parish: Embleton  
National Grid Reference: NU 23038 22421

### **Details**

NU 2322 EMBLETON EMBLETON VICARAGE

14/70 Sundial to west of Old Vicarage

GV II

Sundial, probably later C19. Cut stone, bronze. Round shaft with moulded top carries bronze dial signed by George Stockton, Shields; scrolly gnomon.

Included for group value.

Listing NGR: NU2303822421

### **Legal**

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

## **Garden walls**

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1041784

Date first listed: 01-Sep-1988

List Entry Name: GARDEN WALLS TO NORTH WEST OF OLD VICARAGE

Statutory Address 1: GARDEN WALLS TO NORTH WEST OF OLD VICARAGE

### **Location**

Statutory Address: GARDEN WALLS TO NORTH WEST OF OLD VICARAGE

District: Northumberland (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Embleton

National Grid Reference: NU 22998 22457

### **Details**

NU 2322 EMBLETON EMBLETON VILLAGE

14/71 Garden walls to north-west of Old Vicarage

GV II

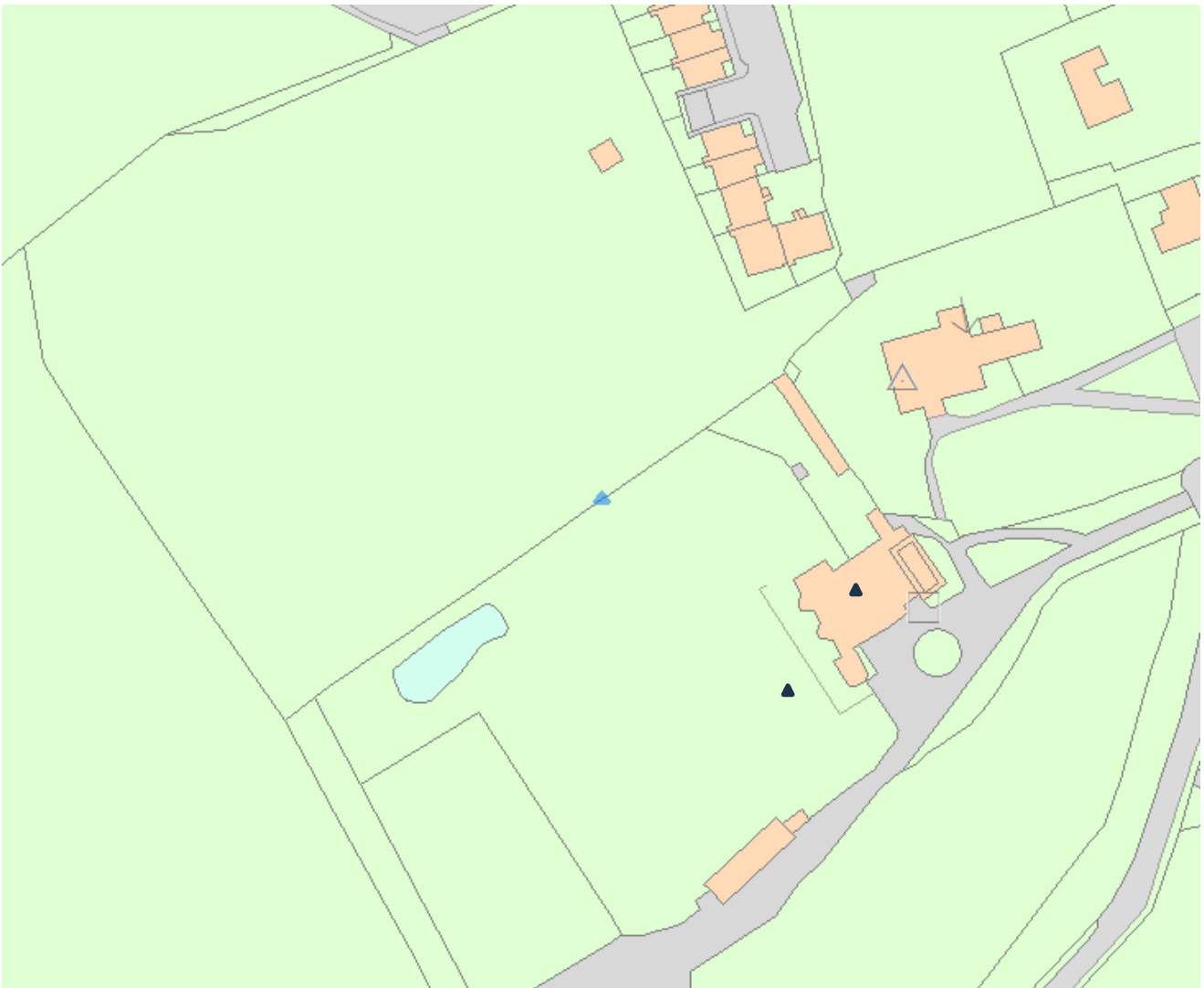
Garden walls, C18. East wall brick on edge in Flemish bond, with rear face of whinstone rubble. North wall brick in irregular stretcher bond; stone coping. Long north wall 3.5 metres high, with pilasters and flat coping, stepped downhill. East wall runs south-east and then south; first part 3.5 metres high, second part 1.2 metres high.

Included for group value. Rubble section at south end of east wall, and ruined privy attached to west end of north wall, are not of special interest.

Listing NGR: NU2300022455

### Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



Listed Building locations in immediate vicinity of site

### **Appendix 3 List of Sources Consulted in Preparing Heritage Statement**

- Historic England – Listed Building records
- Embleton Conservation Area Appraisal – Alnwick District Council 2007
- Northumberland Historic Environment Record
- The Buildings of England - Northumberland - Pevsner
- Keys to the Past
- Google Images
- <https://communities.northumberland.gov.uk/>
- <http://embleton-northumberland.co.uk>
- Embleton Northumberland – A Pictorial History