

**HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED REPLACEMENT  
CONSERVATORY – SHEEPCOMBE HOUSE, TOCKINGTON, SOUTH  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**



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**This report is not for general publication**

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## **1. Introduction and Objectives**

- 1.1.** This heritage statement has been prepared to accompany the listed building application for proposed works at Sheepcombe House, namely the replacement of the 1970s conservatory with a simpler and more legible conservatory on the same footprint.
- 1.2.** This report draws on the guidance on the statutory requirement to prepare a heritage impact statement in tandem with an application for listed building consent. The requirement to consider the impact of proposals on the character and setting of designated heritage assets such as Listed Buildings is encompassed within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In accordance with the Act and reinforced by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023, the heritage statement sets out the significance of the designated heritage assets which have the potential to be affected by the proposed development. This is followed by an assessment of the development impact on the significance and setting of the heritage asset.
- 1.3** Sheepcombe House is Grade II listed, designated as such on 5/12/1984. . The listed building description is attached at Appendix A. The house is some 0.8 kilometres north-east of Tockington village, reached off a long drive from Washingpool Hill Road. The house was built in the mid C17 and extended in the later C17, the construction of local rubble with clay-tiled roofs. The gabled south elevation (entrance facade) was sashed in the C18 to create seven regular bays. The west elevation has restored mullion and transom windows, the later north service ranges now a separate property. The conservatory is built against the west elevation. Built in 1984 (prior to listing), the four-bay structure is of oak construction with simple vertical glazing, the glazed mono-pitched roof concealed by a panelled parapet. The west elevation comprises a rubble-built screen wall. The whole is now in a poor condition with extensive wet rot apparent, especially at sill level. A structural report has deemed the conservatory incapable of repair.
- 1.4** The proposal is to demolish the conservatory and replace it on the existing footprint. The new structure is to be of contemporary design, steel-framed with curtain (non-reflective) glazing, the framing clad in dark grey aluminium. The flat roof is detailed with a shallow perimeter canopy to assist with solar/rain protection, the roof-deck itself with two hipped glazed lanterns. The screen wall is to be retained, the existing step built up to create a level parapet.



Figure 1 - existing conservatory



Figure 2 - typical condition of conservatory

**1.4** The proposal comprises the following:-

- Demolition of the existing conservatory
- Construction of new conservatory on existing footprint
- Slight alteration of modern stone screen wall.

Further detail is provided within the Design and Access Statement.

## 2. Statement of Significance

**2.1 Historical and aesthetic context.** Sheepcombe House is a substantial rubble-built mid-C17 house, its two later C17 rear wings enclosing a courtyard. The house – with its gables and surviving ovolo-moulded windows is typical of the region. The depression in the later Elizabethan years probably accounts for the dearth of C16 buildings in The Vale. Surviving date-stones suggest a building boom by the 1630s. The Civil War years put a virtual stop to building, but when peace was restored the building boom began again: large numbers of dates are known from the 1650s to the 1690s. The regional type was by far the stone-built gabled farmhouse – with wealth in most of the Vale fairly evenly distributed during the period, there is no great contrast between the houses of the gentry and those of the more prosperous farmers. Sheepcombe with its prominent diagonal chimneys is typical of the type, probably once roofed in local stone tiles.

Gables and diagonal chimneys continued to characterise local building until well into the C18 by which time symmetrical facades with flat eaves gradually replaced gables and dormer gables. Mullioned windows began to be replaced with cross-windows by the 1670s, but sash windows became increasingly common by the early C18. Rather than rebuild substantial houses then only a century or so old, many were remodelled, the creation of a regular sashes facade at Sheepcombe very typical of the upgrading of facades in rural areas and the towns. The retained gables and chimneys still give an overwhelmingly C17 character, not unduly reduced by the later rebuilding of the chimneys in brick and the replacement of the roof in Roman tiles.

In 1799, Joseph Sturge, a prominent local Quaker moved into Sheepcombe, At the time of the Tithe Survey in 1839, Sheepcombe was owned by Samuel Peach Peach of Tockington Manor (whose grandfather, a Bristol merchant, had bought the estate in 1780). The tenant in 1838 appears to have been William Parry, but in 1839, Luke William was the tenant. Elements of the holding appear to have been sublet, the house itself to Miss Katherine Fahourdin. Williams is mentioned in bankruptcy proceedings in 1850 having evidently vacated the farm two years earlier. By 1861, Edward Meredith was farming 317 acres at Sheepcombe, employing 8 men and 4 boys.

In 1972 the house – then derelict – was purchased by Bruce and Susan Farr who spent several years restoring the house to its present condition.

The historical and aesthetic values of Sheepcombe House are considered **HIGH**

**2.3 Communal Value.** Sheepcombe House was once the centre of one of the largest local farms, once part of the Tockington Estate. This and its association with the important local Quaker community is recorded in published local history, although beyond most if not all local living memory. The communal value of the house is therefore **LOW**

**2.4 Evidential Context.** The structural history of the house is straightforward and very typical of the C17-C18, the evidential value considered **MODERATE**.

### **3. Justification for the Proposed Works**

- 3.1** As shown in the photos above, the conservatory is now in a very poor condition. Given its relatively modern and utilitarian construction, there seems no reason to conserve the structure. Replacement with a watertight and warm living space perpetuating the character of an obviously added lightweight structure would seem the obvious way ahead.



#### 4. Impact of the Proposed Works

4.1 The proposed works may be described as follows:-

- Demolition and replacement of later C20 conservatory. As set out above, the replacement structure is of similar dimensions to that existing, the design contemporary and lightweight. There is no attempt to either reflect the original style of the house or to create an architectural statement. Rather, the structure is simple and subservient to the house, honest and legible in design.

**Impact on evidential value – low - neutral**

**Impact on historical value – low - neutral**

**Impact on aesthetic value – moderate - positive**

**Impact on communal value – low - neutral**

## 5. The setting of the Listed Building

**5.1** The setting of a listed building is the surroundings in which it is understood, experienced and appreciated, embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape. Views to, from and across a historic asset are an obvious form of evaluation, but other sensory elements may be relevant too, including topography, layout, use, noise, and light pollution, as well as historic, artistic, literary, cultural or scenic associations, tranquillity and remoteness. When assessing proposals, local planning authorities are required to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any other features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. This is set out in section 66 of the 1990 Act Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act.

**5.2** In terms of setting, the house occupies large lawned grounds, its entrance front to the south, the garden front to the west. Both fronts may be read together, but they are of quite different character. The entrance front is formal, distinguished by the later regular sash windows and the sweeping driveway running in front. The west front is more irregular and C17 in character, as shown by the gables and transom-and-mullion windows. The conservatory has been part of the setting since shortly prior to the listing of the house and in that a structure of similar size and scale is proposed suggests that the impact on setting will be very low. In that the new structure will be visually more recessive due to the choice of materials – and less fussy due to the reduction of structural members – the impact may be regarded as **low – neutral**.

## 6. Legislation and Policy

### Legislation

6.2 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision-making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Act impose statutory duties upon local planning authorities which, with regard to listed buildings, require the planning authority to have ‘special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses’.

### National Policy

6.3 In considering applications for listed building consent or planning permission affecting heritage assets, local authorities are also required to consider the policies on the historic environment set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 which are supported by Planning Policy Guidance. At the heart of the Framework is ‘a presumption in favour of sustainable development’ and there are also specific policies relating to the historic environment. The Framework states that heritage assets are ‘an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations’. The Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework defines 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*. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

6.4 In terms of ‘setting’, this is broadly defined in the Glossary 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*. Further advice is provided within Historic England’s *Setting of Historic Assets – GPA Note 3, second ed. 2017*). The guidance within is set out against the background of the NPPF and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guide (PPG), on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas, and landscapes.

6.5 The Framework, in paragraph 194, 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*. Section 2 of this report – the assessment of significance – meets this requirement and is based on the research and site survey, considered to be of a commensurate level of detail to understand the potential impact of the proposals. The Framework

also, in paragraph 199, requires that *when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.* The Framework goes on to state at paragraph 200 that: *any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.* Chapter 3 of this report provides this clear and convincing justification.

6.6 The Framework requires that local planning authorities categorise harm as either 'substantial' or 'less than substantial'. 'No harm' is also a material category. Where a development proposal will lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Framework states, in paragraph 201, that *this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*

6.7 **Historic England Conservation Principles** was published in 2008. This is aimed at local authorities, property owners, developers and professional advisers. It sets out six high-level principles:

- The historic environment is a shared resource
- Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment
- Understanding the significance of places is vital
- Significant places should be managed to sustain their values
- Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent
- Documenting and learning from decisions is essential

The principles respond to the need for a clear, over-arching philosophical framework of what conservation means at the beginning of the 21st century.

The idea of 'significance' lies at the core of these principles. Significance is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, be it a building an archaeological site or a larger historic area such as a whole village or landscape.

'Conservation Principles' sets out a method – based on heritage significance - for thinking systematically and consistently about the heritage values that can be ascribed to a place, and how historic places may be valued in various ways. 'Conservation Principles' shows how they can be grouped into four categories:

**Evidential value:** the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

**Historical value:** 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.

**Aesthetic value:** the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

**Communal value:** the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

### **Local Policy**

6.8 South Gloucestershire Local Plan (Policies, Sites and Places Plan) adopted November 2017 Policy PSP17 (Heritage Assets and the Historic Environment) is relevant. In terms of listed buildings, the policy advises that *alterations, extensions or changes of use to listed buildings, or development within their setting, will be expected to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest, including their settings*. In terms of the existing conservatory, it is reasonable to state that it is not an element of architectural or historic interest and in terms of what is proposed, the impact on character and setting is very low – some might argue positive in terms of a tactful modernist extension.

6.9 It is considered that the proposal is in accord with the legislation and national/local policy outlined above.

## **7. Evaluation of the proposed scheme in the context of the Conservation Principles.**

### *Principle 1 – Significant Places will be managed to sustain their values*

Changes in the historic environment are inevitable and conservation of historic buildings is about the careful management of change, having special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The proposed works are perceived as conserving the special character of the house whilst subtly upgrading its facilities for modern residential use. The works of alteration are all external with no historic fabric affected.

### *Principle 2 – Understanding the significance of historic assets is vital*

In evidential terms, the structural history of the house is relatively straightforward, as examined above.

### *Principle 3 – The historic environment is a shared resource*

The scheme preserves the historic building wholly intact. In terms of public interest, the legal procedures needed to obtain listed building consent provide the mechanisms for arbitrating between private and public interests.

### *Principle 4 – Everyone will be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment*

It is hoped that this document will assist ensuring that decisions about the building are taken in an open and transparent manner, as well as sharing what is known about it to date, raising people's awareness and understanding of their heritage.

All contractors involved will be suitably qualified and/or experienced in undertaking works to best conservation practice.

### *Principle 5 – Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent*

It is hoped that this document will underpin this principle and provide a clear justification for proposed changes to the building

*Principle 6 – Documenting and learning from decisions is essential*

The information and documentation gathered as a result of the proposed scheme will be retained by the applicants, with a copy provided to the RCAHM's public archive.

## **8. Assessing the changes in the context of the Conservation Principles**

Changes to the building may be categorised as follows:

### *New work or alteration*

- Replacement of 1980s conservatory.



## **9 Conclusion**

**9.1** In having special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, as required by the statutory duty under section 16 (2) & 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the proposals are considered to preserve the building and its setting. We respectfully consider that the justification for the proposals outweigh the impact of the alterations identified above.

**9.2** It is hoped that this report adequately addresses the impact of the proposal on the character and setting of Sheepcombe House balancing the statutory requirement to preserve the listed building with government and local policy to retain it in suitable use and condition.

## APPENDIX A - LIST DESCRIPTION

### Official list entry

Heritage Category:

Listed Building

Grade:

II

List Entry Number:

1128949

Date first listed:

05-Dec-1984

List Entry Name:

SHEEPCOMBE FARMHOUSE

Statutory Address 1:

SHEEPCOMBE FARMHOUSE, WASHINGPOOL HILL ROAD

Statutory Address:

SHEEPCOMBE FARMHOUSE, WASHINGPOOL HILL ROAD

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District:

South Gloucestershire (Unitary Authority)

Parish:

Olveston

National Grid Reference:

ST 61697 86813

Details

ST 68 NW OLVESTON WASHINGPOOL HILL ROAD (north side) 8/227  
Sheepcombe Farmhouse

Farmhouse, now house. Mid C17, late C17 additions to rear with C18 and C19 alterations. Rubble, rendered, treble Roman tiled roof, gable stacks with brick diagonal chimneys, double Roman tiled rear wing. U-plan, symmetrical front. 2½ storeys, 7 windows, all sashes in plain reveals, central 4-panelled door with lower section unpanelled, 3 gables, each with 9-pane fixed light, single storey C20 wing to right. West elevation of 2½ storeys and 3 windows (including rear wing), 2 blocked at ground floor, two 6-light casements to 1st floor left, one window blocked in brick to 1st floor right, central gable has 2-light casement with timber lintel, stack to left with diagonal chimneys; east elevation has blank gable end and rear wing containing former dairy and wash- house of 2 storeys and 6 windows, canted bay through 2 storeys to left, varied windows, 2 passage entries, with flat head to left and round-headed to right. Rear has varied windows, including one 8-light casement to 1st floor of east wing, with loop catch and leaded lights, square moulded mullions outside, ovolo- moulded inside; blocked opening to ground floor left, and door, both with timber lintel. Interior: not accessible. Comprehensive restoration in progress at time of survey, (July 1984) (Sources: Hall, Linda : Rural Houses of North Avon and South Gloucestershire 1400-1720. 1983).

Listing NGR: ST6169786813

#### Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number:

35332

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#### Sources

##### **Books and journals**

Hall, L, 'City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery Monograph Number 6' in The Rural Houses of North Avon and South Gloucestershire 1400-1720, (1983)

