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06 December 2023  
Heritage Design & Access Statement  
Our Ref: 230885/IL v4

**HERITAGE, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**IN SUPPORT OF**

**A LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION TO  
INSTALL NEW INTERNAL STAIRS IN THE MODERN  
EXTENSION**

**AT**  
**THE WINDHOVERS**  
**22 STATION ROAD**  
**GRETTON**  
**CORBY NN17 3BU**

**Date:** 06 December 2023

**Our Ref:** 223191/ILv4



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage, Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Gateley Smithers Purslow in support of a listed building consent application to install internal stairs in the modern extension giving access from the upper ground to the lower ground basement.
- 1.2 The property is Grade II Listed and within the Gretton Conservation Area. The works would not impact upon the character or historic fabric of the building and only modern materials will be removed in the form of gypsum and concrete.
- 1.3 This statement seeks to fulfil the requirements of paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012), which 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 setting. It is proportionate to the scale of the development proposed. 1.8 This statement should be read together with all existing and proposed drawings. From here on the term “the building” will refer to the existing building and the term “the site” to refer to the site subject to this application. This statement follows the guidance of the Design Council and the CABE publication ‘Design and Access Statements – How to write, read and use them’. Where required it also takes guidance from Historic England advice Note 12 ‘Statements of Heritage Significance in Heritage Assets’.
- 1.4 The site consists of a large stone property which has recently been extended with a modern 20<sup>th</sup> century wing post 2004. It is now called ‘Windhovers’ with its escarpment position overlooking the valley often feeling a strong wind rattling the windows and pushing a draft through the stone house. The house sits overlooking generous leafy gardens to the south. To the east is a leafy access drive to Station Road, to the west the Corby to Oakham railway line and the expansive Welland valley. To the north is a tree covered area separating the house from the nearby Grade I Church of St James the Great. There are 8 other listed properties nearby including GII Churchyard Cross, GII 2 Station Road, GII 4&6 Station Road, GII Glebe Cottage, GII 10 Station Road, GII Stonycroft, GII 16 Station Road, & GII Northview. The property and settlement of Gretton is within the unitary North Northamptonshire Council (formerly Corby Borough Council). The name Gretton is Saxon for Great Settlement. Historically farming and ironstone quarrying was the key twin occupations.



## 2.0 Relevant Legislative and Policy Context

2.1 The legislation that guides decision making in respect of listed buildings and conservation areas is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2.2 Section 16 of the Act states that “in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority (or the Secretary of State) Shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

2.3 Section 66 of the Act imposes a general duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals for planning permission upon the settings of the listed buildings. It states as follows:

In considering whether to grant planning permission [or permission in principle] for development which affects a listed building or it's setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the secretary of state shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

2.4 Section 69 of the Act establishes powers for local planning authorities to designate areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance as conservation areas.

2.5 Section 72 establishes a general duty in the exercise of planning functions with respect to any buildings or other land within a conservation area to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

### *National planning policy*

2.6 National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021). Chapter 16 (paragraphs 189–208) of the document provides policy guidance for development affecting the historic environment.

2.7 Paragraph 189 recognises that the heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner that is appropriate to their significance such that they can be enjoyed by existing and future generations.

2.8 Paragraph 190 requires local planning authorities to assess the significance of any heritage assets potentially affected to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposed development.



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- 2.9 Paragraph 197 states that in determining planning applications, 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; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 2.10 Paragraphs 199 onwards provide guidance for considering the potential impacts. Paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This should be proportionate to its significance: the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. This is irrespective of whether the harm is substantial, total loss, or less than substantial.
- 2.11 Paragraph 200 goes on to state that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, including through development within its setting, should require clear and convincing justification.
- 2.12 Paragraphs 200 and 201 deal with instances of substantial harm to a designated heritage asset. Development causing substantial harm should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss, or other criteria are met. Paragraph 202 guides that where a development would lead to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 2.13 Paragraph 203 deals with the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset. It advises that in weighing applications that affect non-designated assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 2.14 Paragraph 206 encourages local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Those proposals that preserve elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset should be treated favourably.
- 2.15 Interpretation of the NPPF is provided by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). This guidance note is divided into a series of chapters which is subject to regular review; the historic environment chapter was last updated in July 2019.



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- 2.16 The historic environment chapter guides that understanding the significance of a heritage asset and its setting from an early stage in the design process can help to inform the development of proposals which avoid or minimise harm (paragraph 8). Paragraph 13 provides further guidance on setting, making clear that setting is not only related to visual attributes but other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration as well as the relationship between places.
- 2.17 Paragraph 18 provides guidance on assessing harm. It is clear that proposed development may have no impact or may enhance an asset's significance such that no harm is caused. Where development would be harmful to a designated heritage asset, this needs to be categorised as either 'less than substantial' or 'substantial' harm. The level of harm can vary within these two categories. It goes to elaborate that substantial harm is a 'high test' and therefore is unlikely to arise in many cases. This harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

#### *Historic England Guidance*

- 2.18 Historic England has published a number of best practice conservation guidance documents to assist with decision making. These include:
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (2015): Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment
  - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (2017): The setting of Heritage Assets
  - Historic England Advice Note 2: (2016) Making Changes to Heritage Assets

### **3.0 THE HERITAGE ASSETS**

- 3.1 Heritage assets are defined at Annex 2 of the NPPF as follows:

*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).*

- 3.2 Designated heritage assets include World Heritage Sites, Schedule Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields or Conservation Areas designated under the relevant legislation.



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3.3 The property is Grade II Listed as Windhovers, Station Road – list entry 1051733 first listed on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1987. The listing description is below :-

*Vicarage, now house. c.1830. Limestone ashlar with slate roof. Double depth plan. 2 storeys. Main front of 4-window range of sash windows with glazing bars, some are tripartite, all under flat stone arches. 6-panel door to left of centre with moulded stone arch-head surround and fanlight with radiating bars behind glazing. Wall around door breaks forward and returns above door with chamfered plinth. Bay to far left breaks forward as gabled cross wing. Bay to right of centre also breaks forward slightly with a gable. Shallow gabled roof with ashlar gable parapets and kneelers and ashlar stacks at ridge and end. Garden front is similar. Interior: staircase with stick balustrade and marble fireplaces.*

3.4 The Conservation Area of Gretton was first designated in 1970 and in October 2018 a Gretton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was produced by Opun Design and Corby Borough Council. There are 46 listed buildings or structures of special architectural or historic interest within Gretton.

3.5 The settlement of Gretton lies to the north of Corby forming a spring line village on the Jurassic ridge overlooking the Welland Valley. Evidence has been found to support the thinking that humans occupied the area since the Iron age with items of Roman origin having been found. The soft golden stone is a key part of the vernacular and is used on the lowest to the highest status of building including many walls which line the medieval street pattern of the historic core.

3.6 Page 34 of the Management plan identifies decorative cast iron gate posts at the entrance to Gretton Pocket park enhancing the local environment. This is evident on the High Street and Village Green.

3.7 Page 46 of the management plan identifies opportunities for enhancement. It states new development should consider the quality of the local traditional materials as benchmark for the standard of materials to be adopted for new development in the conservation area. The use of traditional materials, colours and textures in new and exciting ways making use of local suppliers local materials and skilled craftsmen, and traditional trades will be encouraged. New development and redevelopment of existing buildings should respect the existing building lines or reinstate them where historical map evidence exists.

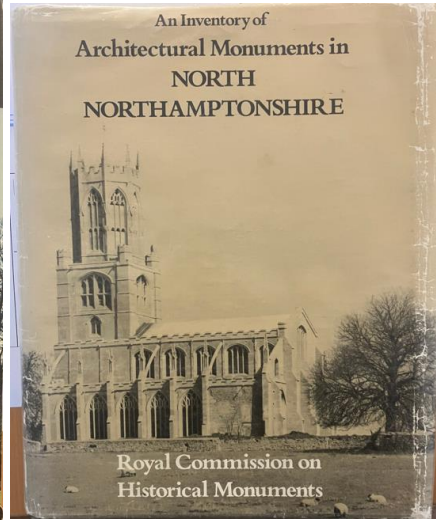
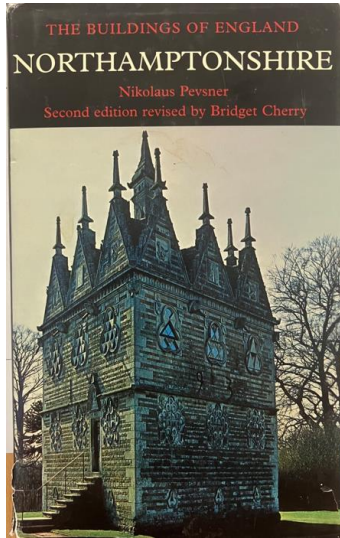
3.8 Reference has been made to the local Historic Environment Record as well as Historic OS data and books such as Pevsner and the Royal Commissions book on North Northamptonshire.



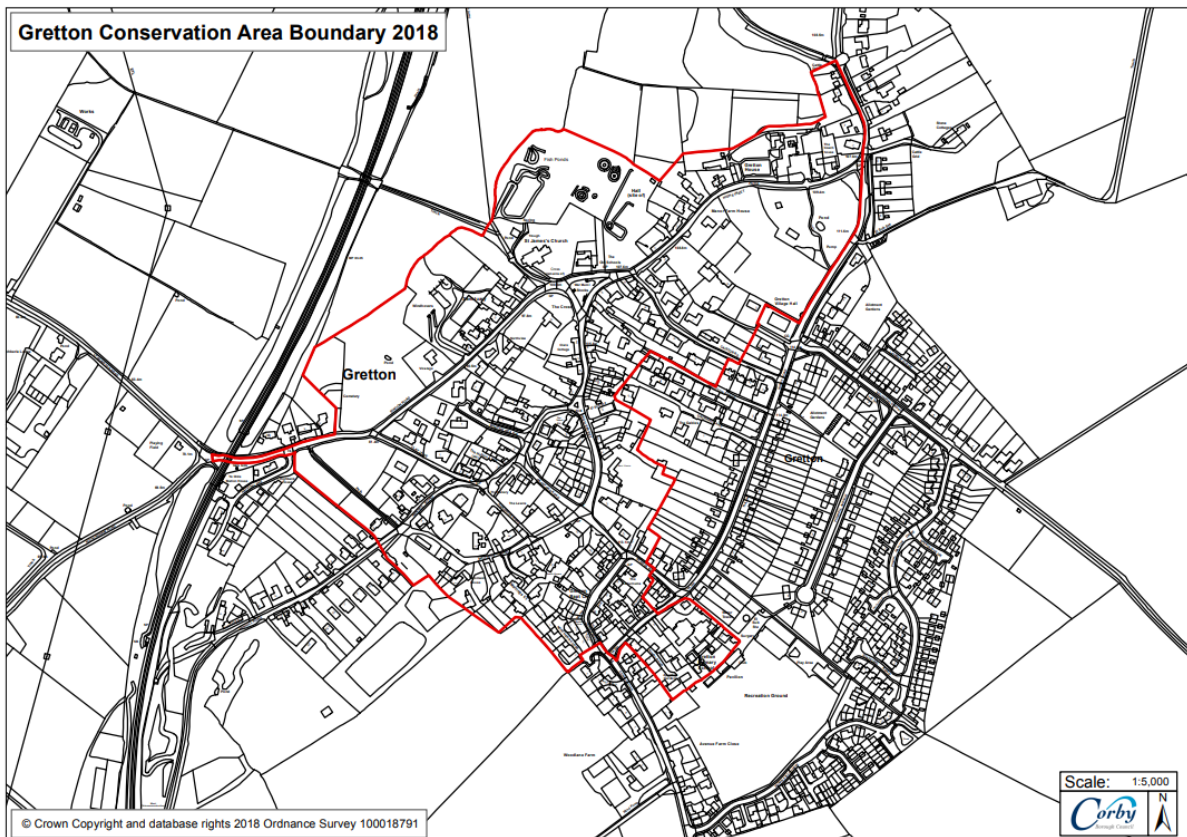
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**Gretton  
Conservation Area Appraisal  
and Management Plan**

Supplementary Planning Document  
October 2018



References



Gretton Conservation Area

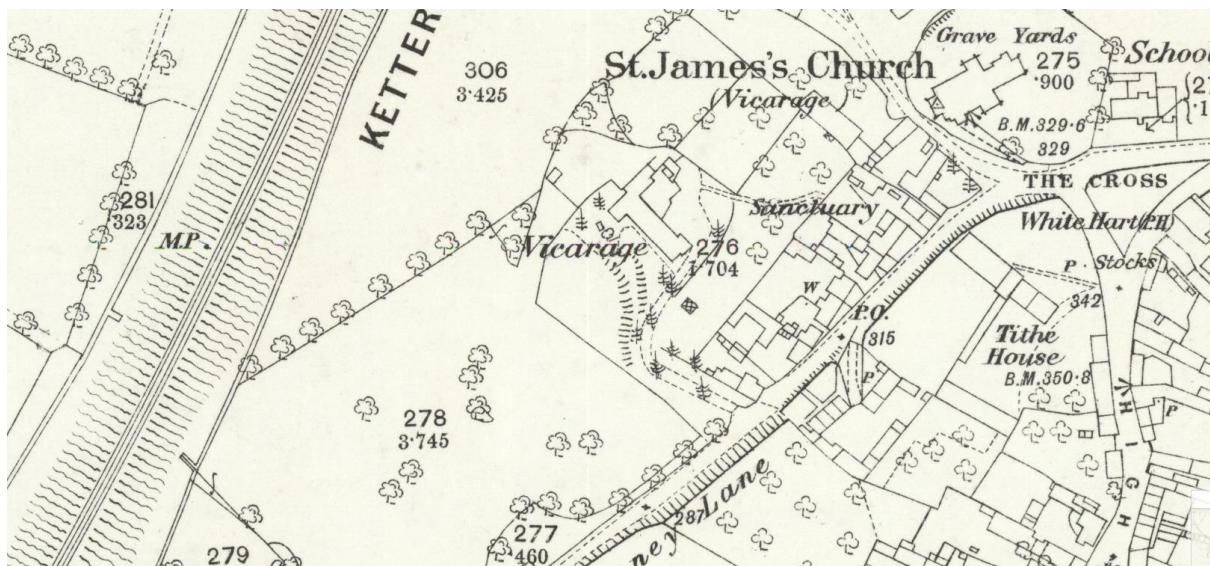




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*Historic OS extract from 1938 showing property as Vicarage and without the conservatory in its footprint.*



*Historic OS extract from 1886 showing property as Vicarage and with a more detailed footprint and showing some landscaping to the rear.*



## 4.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF HERITAGE ASSETS

- 4.1 Significance is described by the NPPF (2021) as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. The PPG (2021) provides the following interpretation of each element of significance:

**Archaeological interest:** As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

**Architectural and artistic interest:** These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.

**Historic interest:** An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them.

Heritage assets with interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

- 4.2 It is acknowledged that significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. The setting of a heritage asset is defined by the NPPF 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.

- 4.3 The Method for assessing the various aspects of Significance are drawn from the guidance given by the English Heritage publication "Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance" (April 2008).



The degrees of significance are defined as:

**A. Exceptional Significance**

Elements of the place which are of:

- Key national or international significance, as among the best, or the only surviving example, of an important type of monument,
- or outstanding representatives of important social or cultural phenomena,
- or are of very major regional or local significance.

**B. Considerable Significance Elements which constitute:**

- Good and representative examples of an important class of monument or the only example locally,
- or have a particular significance through association, even if surviving examples may be relatively common on a national scale,
- or which make major contributions to the overall significance of the monument.

**C. Moderate Significance Elements which:**

- Contribute to the character and understanding of the place,
- or which provide an historical or cultural context for features of individually greater significance.

**D. Low Significance Elements which are:**

- of individually low value in general terms,
- or have little or no significance in promoting understanding or appreciation of the place, without being actually intrusive.

At the heart of any statement of significance is the articulation of why historic asset matters to present and future generations. This is typically expressed through four categories of heritage values as set out in Historic England's Conservation Principles: Evidential; Historical; Aesthetic; Communal.



#### 4.4 **Evidential Value**

Evidential value derives from the potential of a structure or place to yield evidence about past human activity. This section therefore considers the building's ability to demonstrate history in its physical fabric.

As a former Vicarage there is the obvious links to the nearby Grade I listed Church. Physically the houses main elevation faces towards the church with the current access sweeping from the east and south. The house is hidden away from most public view points especially Station Road where visitors will often miss the unassuming access. Its likely the historic access was via the lane to the south west of the church. The listing description of the house from 1987 outlines the present key historical features of the property. Both internally and externally the property has been modified over time and the historic maps give evidence of the property having parts demolished and extensions added. The conservatory appears to be a modern addition and the layout of the property alludes that the French doors into the conservatory may have been installed in lieu of a tripart sash window. The internal shutters, cut cills, rubbed arched stone header and repointed stone works suggests this. The door and side lights also fit neatly into the same tripart sash opening as that on the first floor. These clues give evidence that the property has been adapted over time and the conservatory and other adaptations present a less than neutral impact on the property. The historic maps show the vicarage formerly enjoying a terrace overlooking the steeply graded gardens.

#### 4.5 **Historical Value**

Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a structure or place to the present. This section considers the building's associational links for which there is no physical evidence.

As a former Vicarage the house would have has links to almost everybody nearby at some point. When it ceased to be a vicarage and changed to a private residence this connection will have reduced.

#### 4.6 **Aesthetic Value**

*Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a structure or place. This section considers how the design of the building contributes to its significance.*

The aesthetic value of the house is its architectural adherence to the local vernacular with regards its walling stone and detailing. The Georgian sash fenestration differentiates from the local character setting it apart from the local styles giving it more of a status. Its use of slate roofing rather than Colly or Thatch is perhaps linked to its position close to the railway line.



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Front elevation



West Elevation of modern extension



### **Communal Value**

*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 of memory.*

It is unlikely a collective memory for the former vicarage to have meaning to local people or residents as a link to the church or for associated matters. However, its historic use, layout and position allows an understanding of the holistic link between the church, vicarage and the wider community as a status property.

The internal works in the modern element of the property will not impact upon the property or the conservation areas significance.



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## **5.0 LAYOUT**

5.1 The works will impact the internal layout of the modern extension providing stair access to the lower ground.

## **6. AMOUNTS**

6.1 n/a

## **7.0 SCALE**

7.1 n/a

## **8.0 LANDSCAPING**

8.1 n/a

## **9.0 APPEARANCE**

9.1 The works will not impact the external appearance or indeed the historic layout and appearance of the heritage asset.

## **10.0 ACCESS & CONCLUSION**

10.1 The works will be restricted to the modern element of the house therefore will not impact upon the character of setting of the Grade II Listed property or the wider conservation area.