

Heritage Impact Assessment

St Cuthberts Vicarage, Billingham



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Revision Record					
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This assessment has been prepared by ELG Heritage on behalf of Mr Paul Messham to accompany an application for Listed Building Consent for alterations to the Old Vicarage, Billingham which is a grade II*listed former vicarage, its associated outbuilding and garden folly.
- 1.2 ELG Heritage have been commissioned by the applicant to advise on the significance of the heritage assets and the impact of the proposed works upon their setting. This report does not consider below ground heritage assets / archaeology.
- 1.3 The objective of this assessment is to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the heritage assets affected by the works and to explain how the works have impacted upon their significance and setting.
- 1.4 The aims of this assessment are:
- To identify the assets which could be affected by the proposed development
 - To consider the significance and setting of the identified heritage assets
 - To demonstrate how the proposal has explored ways to maximise enhancement and minimise harm;
 - To assess the effects of the proposed development on the significance of the identified heritage assets; and

- To consider the appropriateness and acceptability of the scheme in light of the current legislation and policy relevant for decision making.

2. Site Context

- 2.1 The application property is a former vicarage associated with the neighbouring grade I listed St Cuthberts Church, which lies to the south of the Vicarage. The Church has an extensive closed graveyard to the west and south.
- 2.2 Until recently the Vicarage was in the ownership of the Diocese of Durham before being sold to the current owners in 2021.
- 2.3 The Vicarage is a grade II* listed building. Its front formal elevation faces west overlooking an extensive private garden area with a number of trees and a tiered lawn area with a small retaining wall. The property is accessed from the east via a gated driveway from Church Road. There is a detached L shaped traditional outbuilding associated with the property, which adjoins a terrace of traditional cottages to the east at Church Road.
- 2.4 More modern housing bounds the garden to the north and there is a grade II listed folly to the north of the house within the garden area.
- 2.5 The current owners have undertaken a programme of works of repair and alteration in good faith to the building in order to make it into their family home. Unaware that listed building consent was required for the works as undertaken.
- 2.6 The works as carried out, any additional works proposed and the impacts on the heritage assets identified are discussed in turn.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan with the Church and grounds lying to the south



3. Heritage Assets

St Cuthberts Vicarage

3.1 The building is grade II* listed, the listing description describes the building as follows:

3.2 *Double span house, the east range of C17 with alterations, the west early C19. Pinkish brick, pantiled roof to east range. Ashlar, Welsh slate behind; ridge stacks. East front of two storeys, five windows, very irregular with projecting chimney breasts and varying fenestration including some Yorkshire sashes and an early C19 tripartite sash with glazing bars in square bay projection. First floor band. Modern quasi-classical pedimented doorcase. West front of two storeys, three windows, large scale. Side windows tripartite sashes with glazing bars in projecting panels. Four-panel door with oblong fanlights in doorcase with cornice on consoles. Inside handsome C17 staircase has closed string entablature with swell frieze and dentil cornice, stout urn-turned balusters and deep handrail, flattened urn finials (some renewed) and reversed urn pendants.'*



Figure 2 East front of Vicarage from Church Road approach

3.3 The building was listed in 1985 and is significant as the former rectory associated with the adjacent parish Church which until 2021 was in the ownership of the Diocese. The church is of Anglo Saxon origins with the listing description as follows.

St Cuthberts Church, Grade I Listed

3.4 Tower of C10, top added late C14. Nave probably C9 but with north aisle and clerestory of late C12, south aisle of C13 and clerestory late C14, perhaps at time of addition to tower. Coursed rubble masonry, nave and tower battlemented. Original openings in tower, two-light with baluster shaft and pierced spandrel in bell stage. Small arch to nave. Chancel rebuilt 1939 by Charlewood of Newcastle. Early C17 screen and font cover.

- 3.5 The church's history goes back to the 9th Century when Bishop Ecgred of Lindisfarne built the original church, which became the property of the community of St Cuthbert. Over the centuries the facilities have grown and changed to meet the faith and community needs of successive generations. As the ancient village grew into the modern town of Billingham, new churches were created and the parish gradually divided.
- 3.6 Billingham developed around a former Anglo-Saxon village which over 1000 years ago included an ancient church of St Cuthbert and fragments of Saxon cross-shafts in the present Anglican church suggest a possible Christian presence as early as 8thC.
- 3.7 The church itself has seen notable and significant change. From Norman times to the Reformation much of the land in the area was owned by the monks of Durham whose Prior had a manor house in Beaulieu, the site of which is in the middle of the present Low Grange Estate. The manor was also believed to be a place for the sick monks needing relaxation and rest.
- 3.8 A history of County Durham describes the village of Billingham as *"a group of houses round the crossroads; the highway sends one branch north from this point to Sunderland, the other north-east to West Hartlepool. The old street-names include the 'Pekeshers' and 'Balyerawe.'* The church of St. Cuthbert stands on high ground to the north-west of the village, and forms a conspicuous landmark in the low-lying country near the mouth of the Tees. In a space before it is a cross, and here, no doubt, was the pillory set up by the prior in 1418–19. In the 15th century an unauthorized market used to be held against the wall of the churchyard on Sundays and feast days. The vicar was ordered to admonish his parishioners on the subject in 1497. Billingham made a stand for the old religion in the 16th century."
- 3.9 In 1857 the village contained a brewery, a malting, and a large skinnery. The tithe plan of 1838 of the Township of Billingham, Durham shows the Landowner to be the Reverend Thomas Ebdon in right of the Vicarage of Billingham (Glebe) with the description as the Belsis or Bellasyse Estate in the Township of Billingham, Vicarage House Billingham. The occupier at that time of the Tithe Plan is The Reverend Jonathan Gibson.
- 3.10 Census records show the house continually occupied by Church Reverends and their relative families, in later periods hosting students with domestic servants also present. The 1911 census and the 1939 census also suggest that at this time the outbuilding now associated with the vicarage, was in use as a separate self-contained cottage.
- 3.11 In addition to the Vicarage there is also an individual listed folly in the private garden area to the rear. The 1897 plan of the Vicarage shows the addition of the north range (now utility area) There are also a number of smaller outbuildings to the north east garden elevation which are now lost. There is also an indication of a porch on the east elevation. The Folly does not appear to be evident at this time or is not shown on the relevant OS plans.

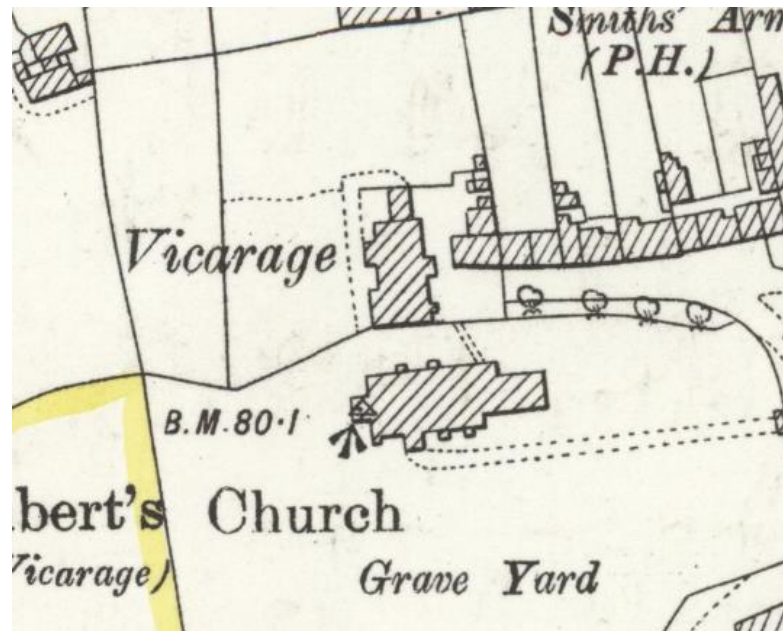


Figure 4 1897 OS Plan of the site

RUINS IN GARDEN OF ST CUTHBERT'S VICARAGE Grade II Listed

3.12 The listing description of the structure describes it as:

Parts of the C17 former Church porch and C12 sedilia set up as a picturesque ruin, Weathered ashlar masonry.



Figure 5 Listed Garden Folly

3.13 The folly shows evidence of weathering and past areas of repair and rebuild. It is unclear when this was established as a ruin within the grounds. Its siting frames the tower of the church from the garden area and forms an interesting garden feature.

BUILDING DISCUSSION

- 3.14 The existing owner purchased the property in 2021 and has sought to carry out a programme of restoration and repair works to the building to facilitate reuse as an upgraded family home. The main plan of the house is 4 main rooms off a central main hallway with attractive historic staircase. With a smaller utility and store area addition to the east. There is also a projecting store area from the main lounge. There is a large external chimney breast to the east. The building has a cellar which shows evidence of stone construction and later modern elements. The cellar is located under the far south portion of the house.
- 3.15 The property was purchased from the diocese and was in generally in outdated decorative order. Wood chip lined all the main wall areas and there were modern fireplaces evident.
- 3.16 The main principal rooms are plastered directly on to the walls, in modern plaster. The main sitting room to the east and the bedroom above is lathe and plaster walls.
- 3.17 There are a number of modern fireplaces within the property of varying ages. Any historic fireplaces have been retained. Throughout the building are a mix of surviving cornices and skirtings, some rooms had no such details and new details have been introduced to be in keeping architecturally with those found in the building. As can be seen from the images overleaf the addition of the second bay(stone frontage) has resulted in a rather heavy roof space and internally the main staircase has been altered through this addition. It is cut off at the top and creates a

rather awkward arrangement. With the staircase continuing to second floor running into the attic of the house. There are no obvious planning records which suggest when these works were carried out. However, at some point the valley gutter between the two bays of the building has been covered by a rather odd mono pitch roof insertion. By raising the gable end brick work and installing a flatter area of roof between the two phases of build, presumably to remove a valley gutter. This arrangement can be seen in figure 6 below. This alteration carried out prior to the applicants purchase has been somewhat visually harmful to the building however, is not appreciated in main views of the Vicarage.



Figure 6 Existing roof Arrangement



Figure 7 South end of the Vicarage viewed from graveyard

- 3.18 When the current owners purchase the property the entire interior was decorated in modern wall papering (please see the relevant sales article from 2021 attached as an appendix to the application). The intention through the works carried out by the applicant was to repair and restore those elements of historic significance, with more modern layers removed to allow the building to operate more effectively.
- 3.19 The statement intends to set out the main areas of works and explain the impacts of these on the general character and significance of the building.



Figure 8 View from the Church Tower showing the valley gutter in place (date unknown)



Figure 9 North elevation of the Vicarage showing the record room which contains a safe

STAIRCASE WORKS

- 3.20 The existing staircase is clearly a historic feature of the house, the client has sought to preserve the existing character of this and ensure it is structurally stable.
- 3.21 The existing staircase shows signs of historic movement and had dropped, creating twist in the timber, on inspection within the floor structure this was as a result of one of the joists being split.
- 3.22 Rather than removal of any historic timbers, a small section of steel has been inserted below the return at first floor level in the floor structure of the staircase. Accessed via removal of the area of plaster on the sloping underside. The steel rests on the existing brick pier ends, which support the stair. Plates have been attached into the existing timbers and affixed to new timbers to hold together. No historic timber work has been removed. Details of this repair work can be seen in Figure 10.



Figure 10 showing steel plates and new timber to support existing historic timbers.

- 3.23 This work has been undertaken to minimise any disturbance to historic fabric and ensure that the staircase is suitably supported. The movement can be seen highlighted in the image below.

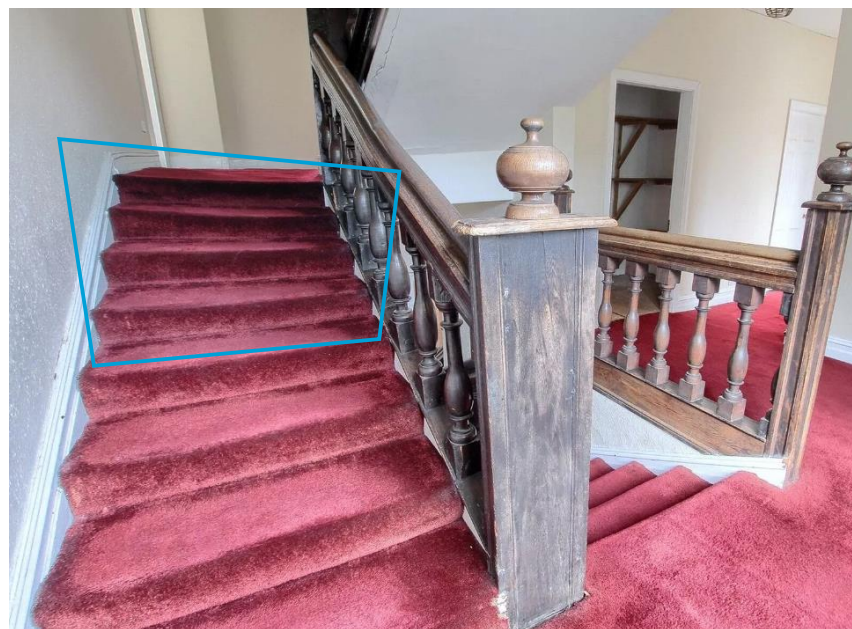


Figure 11 Sale particulars showing the dropping staircase at first floor level now repaired.

3.24 At the lower landing area the existing timber end step has been extended to create an enlarged landing area. The original and landing can be seen in the image below with the new timber surround. This is covered in ply and will be carpeted. This is a fully reversible alteration and has been installed to create an improved area of step off as the previous was relatively 'tight'. As the hallway is large at this point this has not affected the proportions of this space. See figure 12 for this detail.

Figure 12 Extended landing stair, original remains evident

3.25 The staircase has been altered historically there is evidence that it likely returned into the entrance area. The cellar area has been altered with a concrete beam inserted and modern brick work. The lower ground floor finish is also concrete at this point albeit finished in a stone flag affect. The false landing area here also further demonstrates that the staircase possibly previously returned at this point. The lower balustrade is a later addition and does not display the same timber work as the more historic elements seen at upper floor. Again, it is unclear when these works were undertaken but may possibly have been when the west front was added. Although the cellar changes are clearly mid 20th century alterations.



3.26 Additionally at the upper floor level of the staircase (at roof level), presumably the original second floor landing leading to the loft space had been altered previously with the addition of a modern partition which was

notched into the upper banister rail. Presumably this area was altered at some point with the extension to the west. Although the applicant advises that this stud work since removed was all 20th century modern boarding (this can be seen in figure 13 below).

3.27 Coving in this area survives and wraps suggesting a former corridor area which would have allowed access into the roof space area, perhaps with rooms prior to the roof alteration (infill of valley). The applicant has removed the modern partition and created formalised doorways into the loft space to allow access. Whilst this has altered the space there has been no significant loss of fabric with the staircase, floor and ceiling structure retained as existing.

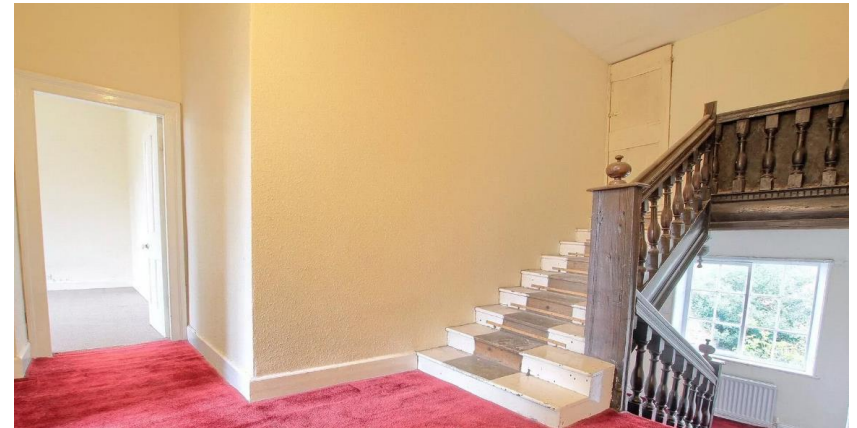


Figure 13 Partition at second floor cutting across historic stair, now removed.



Figure 14 Existing staircase at attic level

Figure 15 Historic stair details with minor oak repairs





Figure 16. New access into loft area, previously an open space.

Evidence of the notching to the handrail from previous modern partition seen in image above



Figure 17. Area at second floor where a landing has been created to allow access into the loft through removal of modern partition.

Historic timber roof members evident and coving retained.

KITCHEN AREA (ROOM NUMBER 3)

- 3.28 The window cill has been spliced and repaired. Other works in the kitchen area are general decorating and new kitchen fitting, the owner has opened up the original fireplace on the north wall of the kitchen. However, this was blocked over with modern boarding and no features were uncovered when removed. The reconfiguration of the kitchen has allowed the fireplace opening to be retained as a feature. A decorative lintel has been installed which was sourced from a reclamation yard (Aztec Stone in Bishop Auckland) to add interest into the space. This is a completely new feature to the building and is a reversible alteration. This is clearly not sourced from the building itself with the reclamation yard advising it came from a demolished mill complex.



Figure 19 The previous kitchen image prior to purchase



Figure 20 New reclaimed kitchen feature, coving also a new addition

ROOM NO 4 & 5 UTILITY AND STORE

- 3.29 The utility area has existing wall tanking, carried out historically, not by the current owner with the walls lined. The roof structure displays attractive trusses and these are left exposed. There are areas of lathe and plaster ceiling in the store beyond which have been retained including a traditional batten door and attractive wooden lock. The walls in this area are a mix of exposed brick, generally more modern construction. A new boiler system and associated pipework has been added into the store area. A new timber door to the exterior garden from the utility has been added replacing the previous timber door.



Figure 21 Internal images of Utility Room



Figure 22 New external door to utility area

FIRST FLOOR WORKS

- 3.30 At this level works within the bedroom areas have been limited to removal of modern wall paper coverings and decorations. Floor boards have been sanded and stained in areas, there are a mix of floor coverings at this level.
- 3.31 Within room No 10 (bedroom 1) a partition wall has been introduced to form an ensuite bathroom and dressing room and will connect into existing drainage/downpipe at the front of the house which leads to a foul drain.
- 3.32 Whilst the proportions of this room have somewhat altered the the plan form, the legibility remains evident and this is a reversible alteration. There was no cornicing within this room and has been introduced as a detail with the ensuite wall in a panelled effect and create a high quality of finish.
- 3.33 Within room number 12, the bathroom as had a modern partition removed, previously separating the toilet from the rest of the bathroom, to create a single bathroom area. Drainage remains as previously and tiling and a modern bathroom suite replacing the previous is to be installed.
- 3.34 Within other bedrooms where historic fireplaces remain these have been retained along with decorative window panelling to the west elevation windows. Other works have been of general decoration or overlaying of floors.



Figure 23 Bedroom No 1 ensuite detail

GENERAL WORKS

- 3.35 The client in seeking to carry out the works of refurbishment has retained all architectural fixtures and fittings and restored or repaired where possible.
- 3.36 In the hallway area a modern screed floor was laid over the original flag floor this has been removed and the tiles carefully cleaned. Due to the depth of this (approximately an inch deep) this has involved piecing in to the bottom of timber doors, again this has been carried out sympathetically to retain the historic fabric of the existing doors.
- 3.37 New electrical systems throughout have used to location of existing modern light sockets and fittings where possible. Skirting boards have been removed and new cabling run behind from floor level with the skirting then reaffixed to avoid cutting and chasing of plasterwork and minimal disturbance to walls. It should be noted that previously the building was finished throughout in modern wall coverings and carpets these have been removed. Where any panelling around windows, cornicing or skirting was evident within rooms these have been retained.
- 3.38 The only fires/fireplaces which have been removed were very obviously modern additions. Historic elements have been retained.
- 3.39 Where historic floorboards survive these have been sanded and lightly waxed. In the case of the first floor landing area, the boards showed evidence of extensive wood worm this localised area was removed and new boards replaced. Whilst the sanding is somewhat unfortunate the existing boards have been retained where possible and there are a mix of floorboards throughout the property. The stair will be carpeted.
- 3.40 Whilst the new floorboards do not match the historic, the proportions of these show they are an obvious later addition and an honest intervention allowing them to be differentiated from the earlier phases of work.
- 3.41 Farrow and Ball water-based paints have been used on walls and ceilings throughout the property.

EXTERNAL WORKS TO THE HOUSE

- 3.42 The rear kitchen door has been replaced by a split stable type door in timber. Works to windows have been localised repair, re-puttying and replacement of any broken panes splicing of cills. There are a mix of window throughout, care has been taken to ensure historic elements are retained and the works minimised through a conservation approach.
- 3.43 The front elevation overlooking the garden (west) elevation is of stone work. Some limited repair works, and cleaning works have been carried out to this façade. The specification of the works carried out by a specialist contractor Facade of Middlesbrough. The specification is attached as an appendix to the application, the method of cleaning was the Doff system, recognised for use on historic buildings.
- 3.44 The central chimney was recently struck by lightning with stonework landing in the front garden area as can be seen in the image opposite. This has since been repaired and reinstated in a like for like manner and thankfully the falling chimney caused no further damage to the structure of the house.
- 3.45 There is drain to the southeast corner of the house which was broken and creating pooling at the corner. This has been exposed to show condition and is clearly broken and modern pipework. The intention is to replace this like for like. The new ensuite bathroom in bedroom 1 will connect into this existing down pipe and foul drain via a dog leg pipe. Whilst there are concerns that these works may disturb burials this is an existing drain located on the vicarage side. Whilst it is recognised that there may be

potential for burials to spill out of the boundary of historic church yard, the client was unaware of this and the drain is an existing situation. Works have ceased in this area and arguably, no formal consent is required to fix the existing drain. The applicant would be happy to accept a watching brief when carrying out the repairs should the Councils archaeologist consider that such a condition is required.



Figure 24 West Elevation frontage

- 3.46 Within the lawned garden area works have been limited to reaffix lost coping stones and repairs to the existing wall which creates a small terrace across the lawn (and is evident on historic maps) As well as the installation of a cabling for an electrical point for garden equipment to the lower end of the terrace (seen in image 26 below).

3.47 Gravel paths have been recovered/relayed with loose gravel to match the existing.



Figure 25 Drain to the south east of the Vicarage to be replaced



Figure 26 garden wall with repairs to copings and electrical box installed.

WORKS TO OUTBUILDING

- 3.48 The outbuilding shows two phases of distinct historic build. The element running in line with the cottages on Church Road is of smaller brick work with a matching stringcourse and dental cornice. There is clear evidence of change to window openings and evidence of an archway on the south elevation.
- 3.49 In comparison the parallel range is a later addition, larger Victorian brick is evident and also evidence of more modern change internally to this element. Internally there are remaining quarry tiles and a fireplace. This is a building that has been used as accommodation in the past with drainage and water connection. There is also a modern staircase leading to a first-floor level and the roof structure in the outbuilding is largely of modern construction and is reroofed in concrete tiles. There is a modern up and over door on the west elevation.



Figure 27 Existing outbuilding viewed from the east front of the Vicarage.

- 3.50 The works carried out by the applicant have included stripping of modern timber boards from the wall that were trapping moisture, no new wall coverings have yet been installed. It is intended that these are skimmed in lime plaster. The windows have been replaced in timber single glazed style although the styles have varied across the building depending on window type. The external timber door has been replaced with a timber door. There is also the intention to remove the existing up and over roller shutter and replace with more appropriate timber doors in keeping with the architectural form of the existing building.
- 3.51 It is the intention to use this building as a garden store and annex for visitors. Through the installation of an upper floor bathroom, which would utilise all existing drainage connections and require no new additional services to the exterior of the building.
- 3.52 Some additional changes to windows are also proposed as shown on the submitted proposed plans.

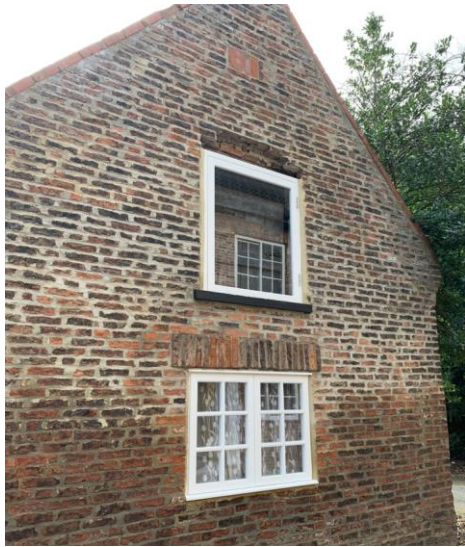


Figure 28 Gable end of outbuilding showing replaced windows.



Figure 29 Church Road elevation of out building showing changes to openings.

3.53 The internal finish of this building is mixed with a modern staircase providing access to the first floor.



Figure 30 Internal photos of the outbuilding

WORKS TO FOLLY

- 3.54 The folly is a historic structure grade II listed in its own right. As a collection of reused historic stonework it shows evidence of past rebuilding. It is a collection of historic stonework arranged in a somewhat ad hoc manner. There is a mix of repointing and mortar types evident in the structure.
- 3.55 The applicant has only reattached a couple of stones where they were found to have fallen from the structure. The mortar is lime based but a coloured dye has been added to look to match the neighbouring mortar colour. This is rather dark in tone and gives a dark grey appearance to the mortar. However, is starting to weather, and as a result of the darker mortar does not appear as a recent repair. The location of the repair is highlighted opposite.
- 3.56 It is not intended to carry out any further works to this structure and its condition will be monitored.



Figure 31 Images of current Folly condition

Significance and Setting

- 3.57 Significance is the concept that underpins current conservation philosophy and the significance of heritage assets is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as *'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'*
- 3.58 **Archaeological interest** derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. The works or which consent are sought are largely retrospective. Due to the nature of the works carried out it is not considered that further archaeological interest of the building will be revealed. The applicant is happy to accept watching brief for the ground disturbance works in respect of works to repair/replace the areas of drainage. This would ensure that any impacts on archaeology can be further considered.
- 3.59 **Architectural and artistic interest** derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place through architectural design. The Vicarage has high architectural value in its two distinct phases of vernacular build dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, reflecting the growing needs of the parish at that time. Surviving features in particular the staircase albeit altered are of particular significance.
- 3.60 **Historic interest** derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It can be illustrative or associative. The Vicarage has significant historic interest being associated with the history of the Church and wider Parish and the

home of a number of incumbents associated with the neighbouring listed parish church.

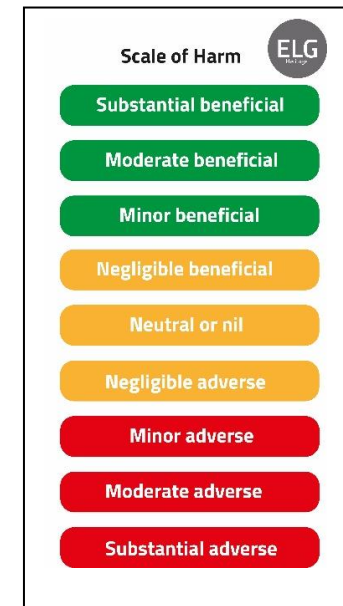
4. Impact of Development

- 4.1 Listed buildings are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and are recognised to be of special architectural or historic interest. Under the Act, planning authorities are instructed to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a Listed Building, its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 4.2 The Historic England Advice Note 12 ‘Statements of Heritage Significance’ (2019) recommends a staged approach to decision making which includes an assessment of impact on significance. The NPPF stresses that impacts on heritage assets should be avoided. Therefore, this assessment considers how adverse impacts have been avoided and / or minimised through their design and mitigation measures proposed where appropriate. The Conservation Principles Consultation Draft (2018) states that *‘as well as being potentially harmful, change can be neutral or beneficial in its effect on heritage assets; it is only harmful if (and to the extent that) the asset’s significance is reduced.’*
- 4.3 It goes on to state that *‘if changes to an asset respect its significance, then in most cases they are likely to serve both the public interest of its conservation and the private interests of those who use it. Owners and managers of heritage assets ought not to be discouraged from adding further layers that are judged to be of a **quality** that could add future interest, provided that the current significance is not **materially** reduced in the process.’* It is also the case that alterations to heritage assets can better reveal or enhance the significance

of heritage assets and these beneficial impacts will also be set out in this section.

- 4.4 Historic England define harm as ‘change for the worse, here primarily referring to the effect of inappropriate interventions on the heritage values of place’ (Conservation Principles, p71).

- 4.5 Development does not necessarily mean harm. As stated above, it is only development which reduces the significance (special interest / value) of the asset in a material way which is harmful. The scale of harm can be measured using the ‘Scale of Harm’ table. Harm within the red section; minor adverse; moderate adverse; or substantial adverse may require public benefit to outweigh that harm if it has not been balanced through beneficial effects. If harm is identified then this should be weighed against the benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.



- 4.6 Palmer v Herefordshire Council & Anor (Court of Appeal – Civil Division, November 04, 2016,[2016] EWCA Civ 1061 (Case No: C1/2015/3383) found *‘that where proposed development would affect a Listed Building or its settings in different ways some positive and some negative, the decision maker*

may legitimately conclude that although each of the effects has an impact, taken together there is no overall adverse effect on the Listed Building or its setting.'

- 4.7 The following methodology has been used as a guide to quantify the magnitude of impact, combined with professional assessment (Table 2).

Table 2: Factors in the Assessment of the Magnitude of Impact (Source: Design Manual for Roads and Bridges - Volume 11, Part 2 Cultural Heritage)

Level of Impact	Factors in the Assessment of the Magnitude of Impact
Substantial	Change to key historic building elements, such that the resource is totally altered. Comprehensive changes to the setting.
Moderate	Change to many key historic building elements / setting, such that the resource is significantly modified.
Minor	Change to key historic building elements, such that the asset is slightly different. Change to setting of an historic building, such that it is noticeably changed.
Negligible	Slight changes to historic buildings elements or setting that hardly affect it / not readily evident.
Neutral	No change to fabric or setting

- 4.8 The NPPF requires proposals to avoid or minimise conflict between conservation of the asset and the proposal. The Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' advises that:

- the significance of the asset is understood;
- the impact of development on significance is understood;
- ways to avoid, minimise and mitigate impact are explored;
- harmful impacts be justified through and balanced; and
- that negative impacts on aspects of significance are offset by enhancing other aspects of significance

- 4.9 The nature of the development and the works carried out to date are generally summarised above. The works are also annotated on the submitted drawing package. In respect of the works to the Vicarage the proposed scheme seeks to restore the listed building to a sound and well-ordered condition. Where works have taken place to historic fabric these works have been relatively minimal and are considered to conserve the overall significance of the building.

- 4.10 As well as the works to the Vicarage itself additional works to convert the outbuilding are also proposed. This building has historically been used as living accommodation and the works would be general fit out works at ground and first floor areas to create annexe accommodation. There is an existing toilet at ground floor and the building already has water and electricity supplies.

- 4.11 Repair works have also been carried out to the listed Folly, although the extent of this is very limited, to securing a few loose elements of stonework back into place to prevent further deterioration of the structure.

- 4.12 It has not been the applicants intention to diminish the special interest of the building. Architectural features have been retained and repaired, with only more modern elements of fabric removed.
- 4.13 The application is therefore submitted in good faith to look to regularise the works to date, the majority of which are cosmetic and decorative works.

Summary & Public Benefit

- 4.14 The proposed works seek to achieve suitable living accommodation for the occupants whilst retaining the historic plan form and character of the building.
- 4.15 The works have resulted in a number of changes to the listed building however the overall impact of the works is not considered to cause harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset.
- 4.16 Whilst no harm has been identified there are a small number of public benefits which result from this application; these include, but are not limited to:
- Removal of inappropriate modern wall coverings
 - Investment into the fabric of the listed building including window repairs, drainage repairs/repairs to rainwater goods and repairs to the staircase to ensure its longevity and repair in good order.
 - Productive use for the outbuilding ensuring its long term use with the property conserving the setting and context of the listed Vicarage.
- 4.17 Whilst the identified benefits may appear to be of a private nature, the Planning Practice Guidance recognises that *'benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.'* Therefore, enhancement of this building for its future longevity and understanding is considered a public benefit.

5. Decision Taking

- 5.1 Listed buildings are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and are recognised to be of special architectural or historic interest. Under the Act, planning authorities are instructed to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a Listed Building, its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act s.66(1)).
- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework requires 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'* (para 194). This Heritage Assessment aims to provide sufficient information for the significance of the heritage assets affected and the impact of development to be properly considered.
- 5.3 The NPPF states that *'when considering impact upon significance, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, relative to its significance. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'* (para 199).
- 5.4 *'Any harm to the, 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. (Para 200). Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public*

benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use. (para 202)

- 5.5 Historic England Conservation Principles (2008) recognises that each generation should shape and sustain the historic environment in ways that allow people to use, enjoy and benefit from it, without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. To understand the significance of place, Conservation Principles requires an understanding of the archaeological, historical, architectural and aesthetic interests of the heritage assets affected by such a proposal.
- 5.6 Local Policies

The Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan has the following policies particularly relevant to decision making affecting heritage assets:

SD5 Strategic Development Strategy Policy 5 (SD5) - Natural, Built and Historic Environment To ensure the conservation and enhancement of the environment alongside meeting the challenge of climate change the Council will:

1. Conserve and enhance the natural, built and historic environment through a variety of methods including:
Ensuring that development proposals adhere to the sustainable design principles identified within Policy SD8.
3. Conserve and enhance the historic environment through a variety of methods including:
 - a. Celebrating, promoting and enabling access, where appropriate, to the historic environment.
 - b. Ensuring monitoring of the

historic environment is regularly undertaken. c. Intervening to enhance the historic environment especially where heritage assets are identified as being at risk. d. Supporting proposals which positively respond to and enhance heritage assets. e. Recognising the area's industrial heritage, including early history, railway and engineering heritage and the area's World War II contribution.

Policy HE2 Historic Environment Policy 2 (HE2) - Conserving and Enhancing Stockton's Heritage Assets

In order to promote and enhance local distinctiveness, the Council will support proposals which positively respond to and enhance heritage assets.

Where development has the potential to affect heritage asset(s) the Council require applicants to undertake an assessment that describes the significance of the asset(s) affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, field evaluation will also be required where development on a site which includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest.

Applicants are required to detail how the proposal has been informed by assessments undertaken. Development proposals should conserve and enhance heritage assets, including their setting, in a manner appropriate to their significance. Where development will lead to harm to or loss of significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset the proposal will be considered in accordance with Policy SD8, other relevant Development Plan policies and prevailing national planning policy.

6. The following are designated heritage assets:

c. Conservation Areas - Billingham Green; Bute Street; Cowpen Bewley; Eaglescliffe with Preston; Egglecliffe, Hartburn; Norton; Stockton Town Centre; Thornaby Green; Wolviston and Yarm

d. Listed Buildings

9. Where the Council identifies a building, monument, ruin, site, place, area or landscape as having significance because of its heritage interest, it will be considered a heritage asset.