

Heritage Statement

The White Hart, St Albans Road, South Mimms EN6 3PJ

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Client: Griggs (South Mimms) Limited **Ref:** 0331

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Ignus Froneman, Director at Cogent Heritage, in consultation with the Applicant and Warner Planning. The report accompanies applications for planning permission and listed building consent for proposed internal and external changes to the grade II listed The White Hart pub (**the 'subject building'**), associated with its conversion to residential, along with conversion of the outbuilding to residential, and the addition of a small new infill building to the south of the subject building.
- 1.2 The author of this report is a qualified heritage consultant with over 20 years of experience in the historic environment. This includes regular appearances as an expert witness at public inquiries, on behalf of both appellants, public bodies and local planning authorities.

Heritage assets

- 1.3 The location of the listed and locally listed buildings can be seen highlighted green on Fig 1 below. The White Hart pub itself is grade II listed. The Brewers' Almshouses on Blanche Lane (a row of six almshouses of 1856), to the south of the pub, are also grade II listed. The flint and brick wall in front of the almshouses, and extending south to the Church of St Giles, and which is probably contemporary with the almshouses, is separately listed (grade II). The Parish Church of St Giles, which has C13 origins, is grade I listed, and there is a grade II listed memorial (to Sir John Austen MP, d.1742, and his sister Arabella Austen, d.1714) in the churchyard. The war memorial on the triangular green to the north of the subject building is locally listed.
- 1.4 The application site and the listed/locally listed buildings fall in Character Area 1 of the South Mimms Conservation Area, which can be seen at Fig 1 below (replicated from Figure 16 of the *South Mimms Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan* (April 2020)).



Fig 1: An extract of Figure 16 of the *South Mimms Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan* (April 2020), showing the listed and locally listed buildings in Character Area 1.

- 1.5 Insofar as there would be any effect on the setting of the nearby listed buildings, the assessment is undertaken on the basis that the acceptability of the development in relation to the subject building and/or the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area, would apply equally to the setting of these buildings, and the report does not repeat these in the assessment.

Purpose of the report, site inspection and research

- 1.6 The Heritage Statement proportionally assesses the effects of the proposed changes on the heritage significance of the relevant heritage assets.
- 1.7 The Heritage Statement was informed by a site visit, in June 2021, and documentary research. The inspection was non-intrusive, i.e. no surface/decorative treatments were removed to expose underlying fabric. Photos were taken on the site visit, including drone photography; a selection of these has been included to illustrate the report; they have not been altered, aside from cropping or annotation in some instances.
- 1.8 The purpose of the documentary research was to establish readily available sources of information about the history and evolution of the building. This is intended to be informative, but it is not intended to be comprehensive/exhaustive and it is therefore possible that other sources of information relating to the building exist. It is clear that the subject building had an extensive refurbishment in the early C20 and it was hoped that drawings of this could be sourced, but unfortunately no historic plans of the building were found.

Legislation and policy summary

- 1.9 The section below summarises the key provisions of s.66 & s.72 of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan policies.
- 1.10 Legislation: Legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). Section 66(1) of the Act sets out the statutory duty in relation to development affecting the setting of listed buildings: and section 72(1) sets out the statutory duty in relation to any buildings or other land in a conservation area.
- 1.11 It is a well-established concept in case law that 'preserving' means doing no harm for the purposes of the 1990 Act. The Court of Appeal's decision in *Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northamptonshire District Council* [2014] (EWCA Civ 137) established that, having 'special regard' to the desirability of preserving the setting

of a listed building under s.66, involves more than merely giving weight to those matters in the planning balance. There is a strong statutory presumption against granting planning permission for any development which would fail to preserve a listed building or its setting (and the same for conservation areas). In cases where a proposed development would harm a listed building or its setting (or a conservation area), the Barnwell decision has established that the duty in s.66 of the Act requires these must **be given** “*considerable importance and weight*”.

1.12 The key legal principles established in case law are:

- i. **‘Preserving’ for the purposes of the s.66 and s.72 duties means ‘to do no harm’¹.**
- ii. The desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building, or the character or appearance of a conservation area must be given **‘considerable importance and weight’².**
- iii. The effect of NPPF paragraphs 199-202 is to impose, by policy, a duty regarding the setting of a conservation area that is materially identical to the statutory duty pursuant to s.66(1) regarding the setting of a listed building (and s.72 in relation to the character and appearance of a conservation area)³.
- iv. **NPPF paragraph 202 appears as part of a ‘fasciculus’ of paragraphs, which lay down an approach corresponding with the s.66(1) duty (and similarly the s.72 duty)⁴.**
- v. If harm would be caused, then the case must be made for permitting the development in question, and the sequential test in paragraphs 200-202 of the NPPF sets out how that is to be done. If that is done with clarity, then approval following paragraph 202 is justified. No further step or process of justification is necessary⁵.
- vi. In cases where there may be both harm and benefits, in heritage terms, great weight has to be given to the conservation and enhancement of a listed building, and its setting, and the preservation and enhancement of a

¹ *South Lakeland District Council v Secretary of State for the Environment* [1992] 2 AC 141 per Lord Bridge at p.146E-G in particular (obiter but highly persuasive).

² *Bath Society v Secretary of State* [1991] 1 WLR 1303, at 1319 per Glidewell LJ and *South Northamptonshire DC v SSCLG* [2014 EWCA Civ 137] (Barnwell Manor), at [22-29] per Sullivan LJ.

³ *Jones v Mordue* [2015] EWCA Civ. 1243 per Sales LJ [at 28].

⁴ *Jones v Mordue* [at 28] per Sales LJ.

⁵ *R (Pugh) v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2015] EWHC 3 (Admin) as per Gilbert J [at 53].

conservation area. It is, however, possible to find that the benefits to the same heritage assets may be far more significant than the harm⁶.

- vii. An impact is not to be equated with harm; there can be an impact which is neutral (or indeed positive)⁷.

1.13 The National Planning Policy Framework: Section 16 of the revised (July 2021) National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment, in paragraphs 189 to 208. Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

1.14 According to paragraph 194 applicants should 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.

1.15 According to paragraph 199, which applies specifically to designated heritage **assets, great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation (the more** important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This reflects the provisions of the 1990 Act in that it applies irrespective of whether it involves total loss, substantial harm, or less than substantial harm to significance.

1.16 Paragraph 200 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. It then deals with substantial harm to, or total loss of significance of, different types of designated heritage assets. Paragraph 201 continues on the subject of substantial harm (this level of harm is not relevant to the present proposals).

1.17 Paragraph 202, on the other hand, deals with less than substantial harm. Harm in this category should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) describes public benefits as "anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress"**.

1.18 The Development Plan is the Hertsmere Local Plan (2012-2027), which is made up of the following four parts:

- i. The Core Strategy, adopted January 2013.

⁶ *R (Safe Rottingdean Ltd v Brighton and Hove CC* [2019] EWHC 2632 (Admin) as per Sir Ouseley [at 99].

⁷ *Pagham Parish Council v Arun District Council* [2019] EWHC 1721 (Admin) (04 July 2019), as per Andrews, J DBE at 38.

- ii. The Elstree Way Corridor Area Action Plan, adopted July 2015.
- iii. The Site Allocations and Development Management (SADM) Policies Plan.
- iv. The Policies Map.

1.19 The policies relevant to the proposed development are Core Strategy Policy CS14 and SADM Policy SADM29. These are quoted below:

Policy CS14 Protection or enhancement of heritage assets

All development proposals must conserve or enhance the historic environment of the Borough in order to maintain and where possible improve local environmental quality. Development proposals should be sensitively designed to a high quality and not cause harm to identified, protected sites, buildings or locations of heritage or archaeological value including Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments or their setting, and identified and as yet unidentified Archaeological Remains. The Council will take account of available historic environment characterisation work, including Conservation Area appraisals and archaeological assessments, when making decisions affecting heritage assets and their settings.

Policy SADM29 - Heritage Assets

Planning applications will be considered in accordance with the NPPF.

When applications are submitted for proposals affecting any heritage asset the applicant must clearly explain what the proposal is for and provide sufficient detail to allow for an informed decision to be made.

When assessing proposals, the Council will have regard to the significance of the heritage asset and the potential harm to it.

The Council will not permit development proposals which fail to protect, conserve or where possible enhance the significance, character and appearance of the heritage asset and its setting. The scale, design, use and character of the proposal will be taken into account, as well as the detailed provisions following.

Conservation Areas

In Conservation Areas the Council will seek to:

- (i) retain buildings, structures and historic features;*
- (ii) retain important open spaces and views;*
- (iii) avoid the cumulative effect of smaller scale proposals harming the area;
and*
- (iv) obtain improvements which enhance the area.*

In particular, proposals resulting in the loss of buildings and structures in Conservation Areas will not be permitted unless:

- (i) the building or structure is beyond economic repair; or*
- (ii) its removal and replacement would be beneficial to the character or appearance of the area.*

The Council will also take into account any additional guidance provided by a Conservation Area Appraisal including buildings identified as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

Listed Buildings

The Council will not permit development proposals which would materially harm the setting or endanger the fabric of a listed building. Listed Building Consent will not be granted for alterations or extensions that would be detrimental to the special architectural or historic character of a listed building.

[...]

List of Locally Important Buildings

Development proposals affecting a building included on this list will be expected to maintain or improve the appearance and character of the building, and its setting. The demolition of buildings on the list will not therefore be supported.

[...]

2.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary Historic Background

2.1 The *Victoria County History*⁸ for South Mimms contains a few relevant references to the subject building, as well as briefly referencing the almshouses. The detailed **entry for St Giles' church** in the *Victoria County History* is not repeated.

2.2 The *Victoria County History* firstly notes that:

"North of the church [St Giles'] and occupying a central position on the St. Albans road stood the White Hart inn and between the church and the small vicaragehouse were the five Howkins's alms-houses, erected in 1652 to the annoyance of some neighbouring inhabitants. A few widely scattered houses south of the church also formed part of the village. Two other inns existed briefly: the

⁸ A P Baggs, Diane K Bolton, Eileen P Scarff and G C Tyack, 'South Mimms: Introduction', in *A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 5, Hendon, Kingsbury, Great Stanmore, Little Stanmore, Edmonton Enfield, Monken Hadley, South Mimms, Tottenham*, ed. T F T Baker and R B Pugh (London, 1976), pp. 271-282. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol5/pp271-282> [accessed 16 November 2023].

Prince's Arms, which later formed part of the Clare Hall estate, was recorded in 1683, and the Red Bull, adjoining Chantry mead, in 1714."

2.3 It goes on to note that:

"The growth of South Mimms village, Kitts End, and Dancers Hill in the 18th century reflects increasing traffic along the two major roads. While the rural character of South Mimms village was frequently noted, the roads possessed many inns, offering comfort rather than elegance. [...] The approach to South Mimms village was marked by another concentration of inns. They included the Black Horse and the Queen's Head in Blackhorse Lane and the Cross Keys, where the post office was housed in 1845 between the church and the White Hart [the Cross Keys can be seen on the 1841 tithe map, see Fig 4 below]."

2.4 The *Victoria County History* also notes that:

"The main change in the early 19th century was the reconstruction of the road from London to St. Albans, which diverted traffic from Kitts End, Dancers Hill, and the main street of South Mimms village itself. As a result 'the innkeepers and other frontagers relegated ... to a stagnant backwater' became impoverished, although the White Hart in South Mimms village had merely to acquire a new front in order to face the Telford road [Blanche Lane]."

2.5 Of the village, the *Victoria County History* observes that:

"Although bounded by motorways, the village of South Mimms has retained a rural air. It is dominated by the church, with its bold tower and 'perfect village cemetery' which stands west of Telford's road [Blanche Lane] and south of Hickson's alms-houses."

2.6 The earliest dated image that was sourced of the subject building is a sketch of 1827, held at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (Fig 2). It shows The White Hart (marked with a red arrow) from the north, the view looking south along **Blanche Lane, with St Giles'** church in the background. There seems to have been a drinking trough to the west of The White Hart, and interestingly there was a building in front of it, where the war memorial now stands (shown on the tithe map to have been the Turnpike House). There was a row of buildings to the south, in place of the almshouses (the Cross Keys being amongst these), beyond which the churchyard was well-defined.



Fig 2: A sketch of 1827, showing The White Hart (marked with a red arrow) from the north along Blanche Lane, with St Giles' in the background. © Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies

- 2.7 An undated, possibly earlier, image of The White Hart and the Cross Keys Inn (Fig 3) shows The White Hart from the NW. The White Hart appears to have been a weatherboarded building (presumably with timber framing behind) with a double pile roof, and what looks to have been a full height bay on the west elevation of the frontage block, where an entrance was located adjacent to the bay. A sign hung over Blanche Lane at the NW corner of The White Hart. A horse rider can be seen in the space between The White Hart and the Cross Keys Inn, and there was a fence enclosing the area to the north of The White Hart.
- 2.8 Whatever the date of the drawing is, it and the 1827 sketch probably depicted a similar arrangement of buildings as shown on the 1841 tithe map (Fig 4). An earlier map of 1836 (not reproduced) shows only land parcels, absent of buildings. The tithe map labels The White Hart, and the building seen in the 1827 sketch to the north of it is labelled as the Turnpike House. It is clear from the tithe map that the buildings along Blanche Lane faced west, towards the road, at this time.



Fig 3: An undated drawing of sketch of The White Hart and the Cross Keys Inn.



Fig 4: An extract of the 1841 tithe map.

2.9 The London Metropolitan Archives has an undated c. 1850s plan of a land swap between the owner of the pub, C.A. King, and the Brewers' Company (Fig 5 – note that the plan has been rotated so that north is roughly at the top). This was presumably associated with the almshouses that the Brewers' Company built in 1856. It shows the footprint of The White Hart to have been rectangular, with porches (assumed) to the north, east and west, and with a pair of bay windows to the west, and single bay to the east.

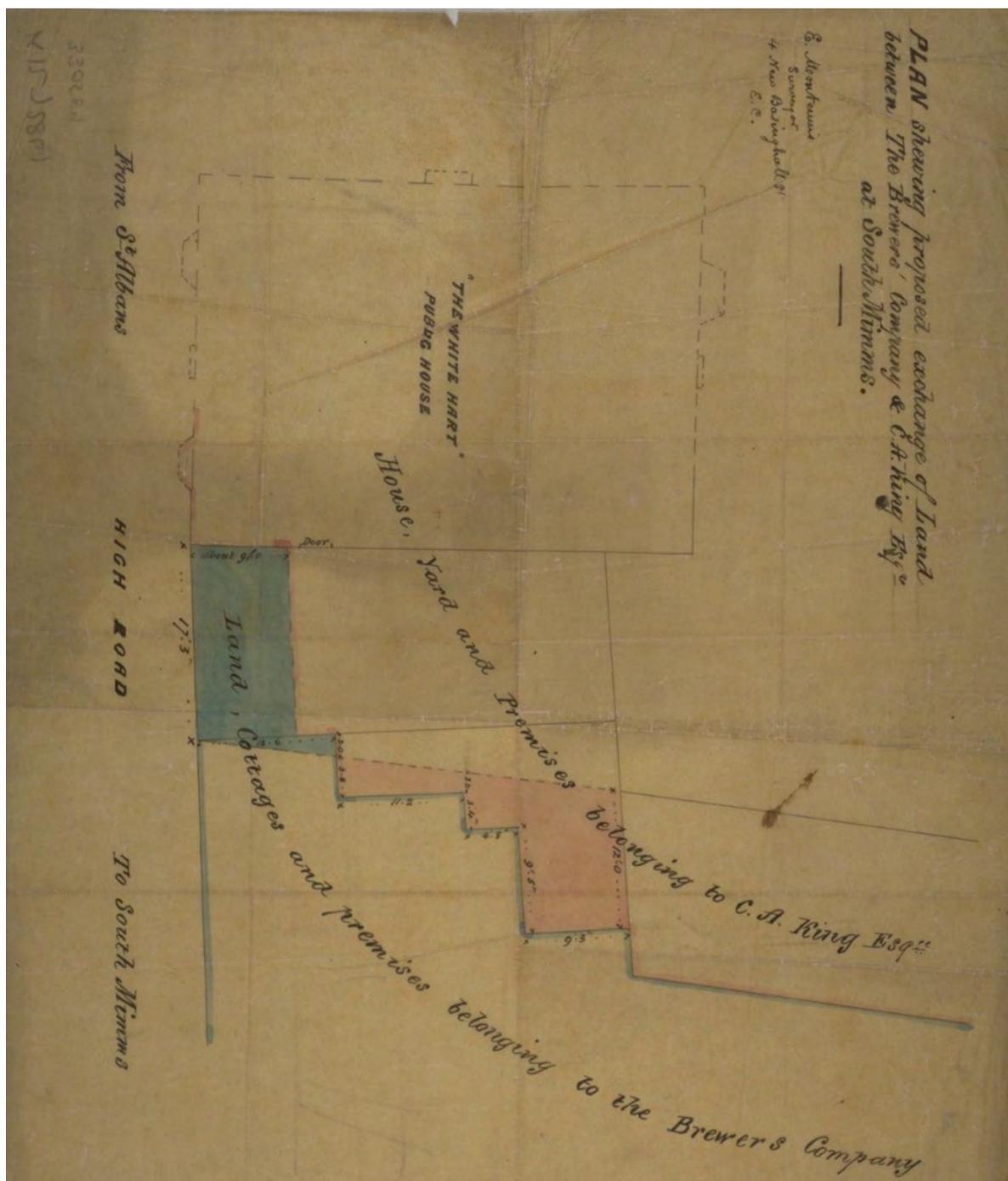


Fig 5: An extract of an undated c. 1850s plan of a land swap (note that the plan has been rotated so that north is roughly at the top). © London Metropolitan Archives 33058

2.10 The 1866 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 6) shows The White Hart with a similar footprint, and with the Turnpike House still to the north. There was at this time notably a building between the pub and the almshouses, which are also recorded on the map.

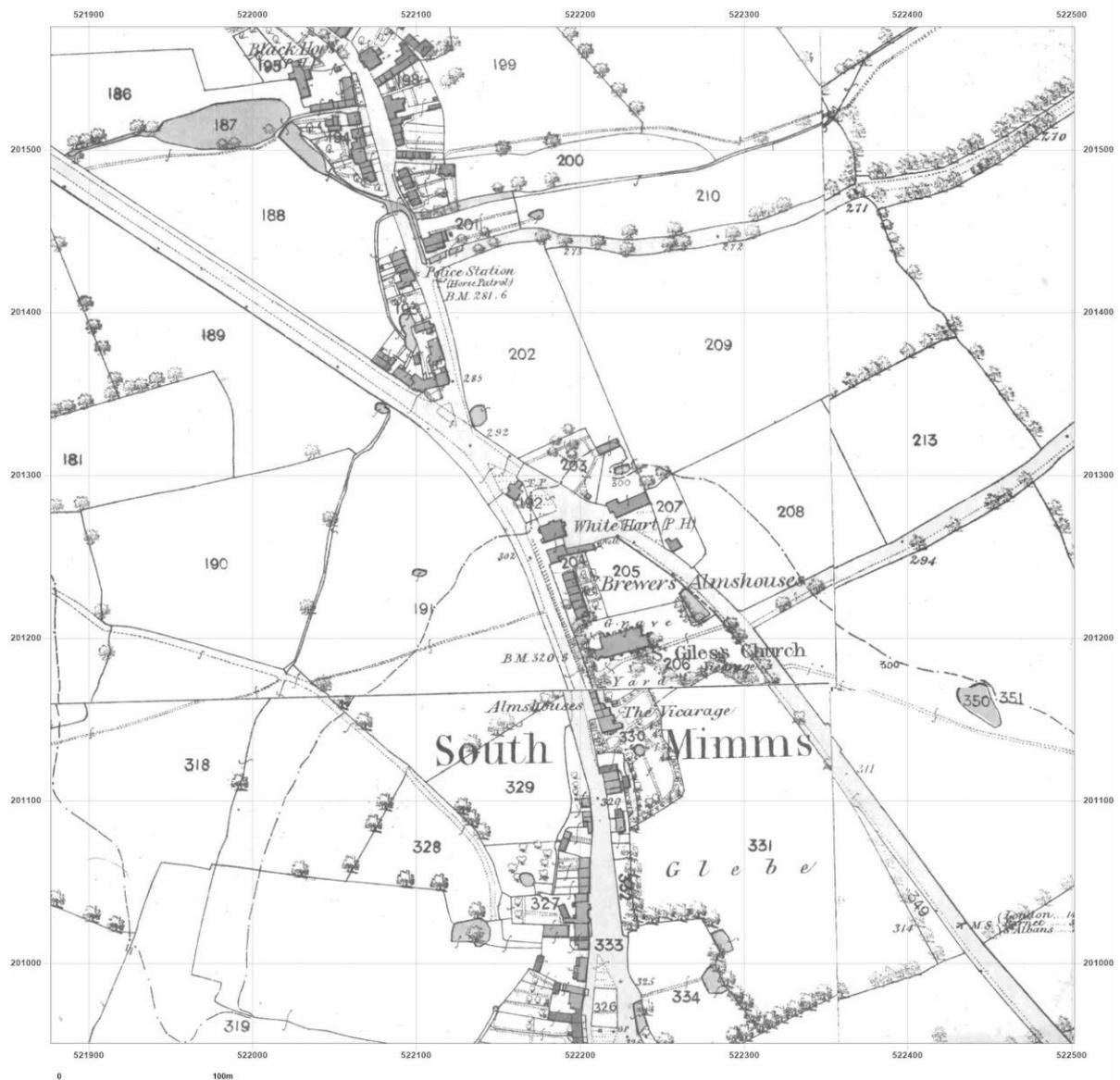


Fig 6: An extract of the 1866 Ordnance Survey map.

2.11 By the 1896 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 7) the building between The White Hart and the almshouses had gone (as had the Turnpike House to the north, leaving the triangular area at the road junction), with the rear extension to the demolished building apparently retained. A small rear extension had been added to the south of The White Hart.

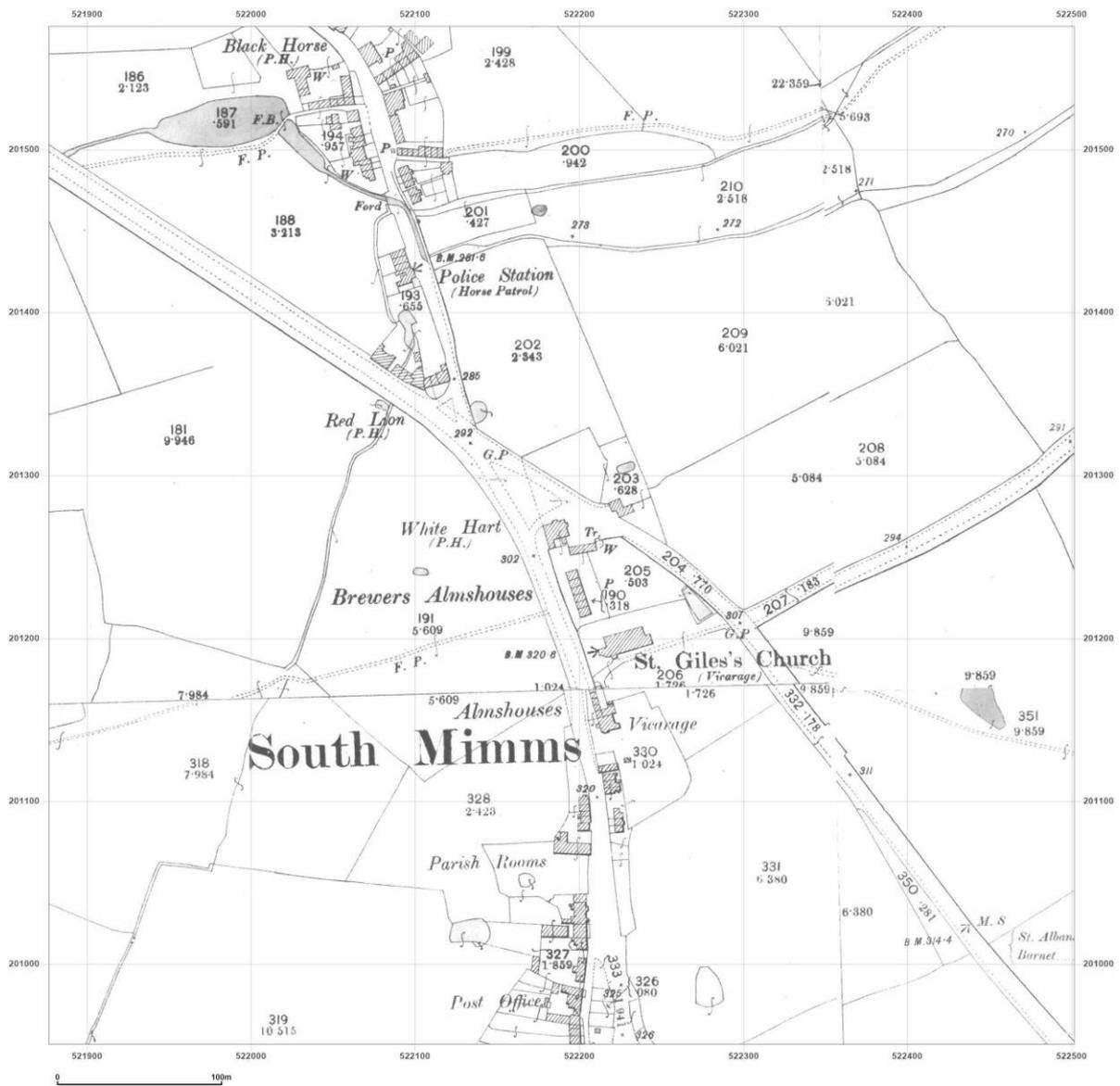


Fig 7: An extract of the 1896 Ordnance Survey map.

2.12 An undated, c. early C20 sketch by C G Harper (1892 - 1933) (Fig 8) records the building at around this time. It appears to show The White Hart before it was extended to the south (a single storey structure can be seen), and probably before the faux timbering was applied.



Fig 8: An undated c. early C20 sketch by C G Harper entitled "A view from the north-west looking across Blanche Lane towards St Giles' Church and the Brewers' Almshouses, with two men standing in the road." © Historic England Archive CGH01_01_0239

2.13 An undated photo, found in the pub on the site visit, shows the building from the NE and it must have been taken around the same time at the sketch, before the early C20 refurbishment of the building (Fig 9). It appears as though the main frontage faced east at this time. It is interesting to see the north elevation apparently being composed of two parts, one with a cornice and one without, and with a step in the elevation between the two.



Fig 9: An undated c. early C20 photo of The White Hart, found within the building on the site visit.

2.14 By the 1914 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 10) the rear extension to The White Hart had enlarged; this was probably the two storey structure that can be seen here today. It also provides a clue as to the likely date of the faux timbering and elevational changes to the building, which would no doubt have coincided with a refurbishment and extensive internal changes (of which there is evidence internally, especially at the ground floor of the building). An oblique aerial photo of 1920 from the south (Fig 11) appears to show the roof of the rear extension in a strikingly different colour. At that time the back of the building was subsumed by accretions, including a lean-to extension to the early C20 rear projection.

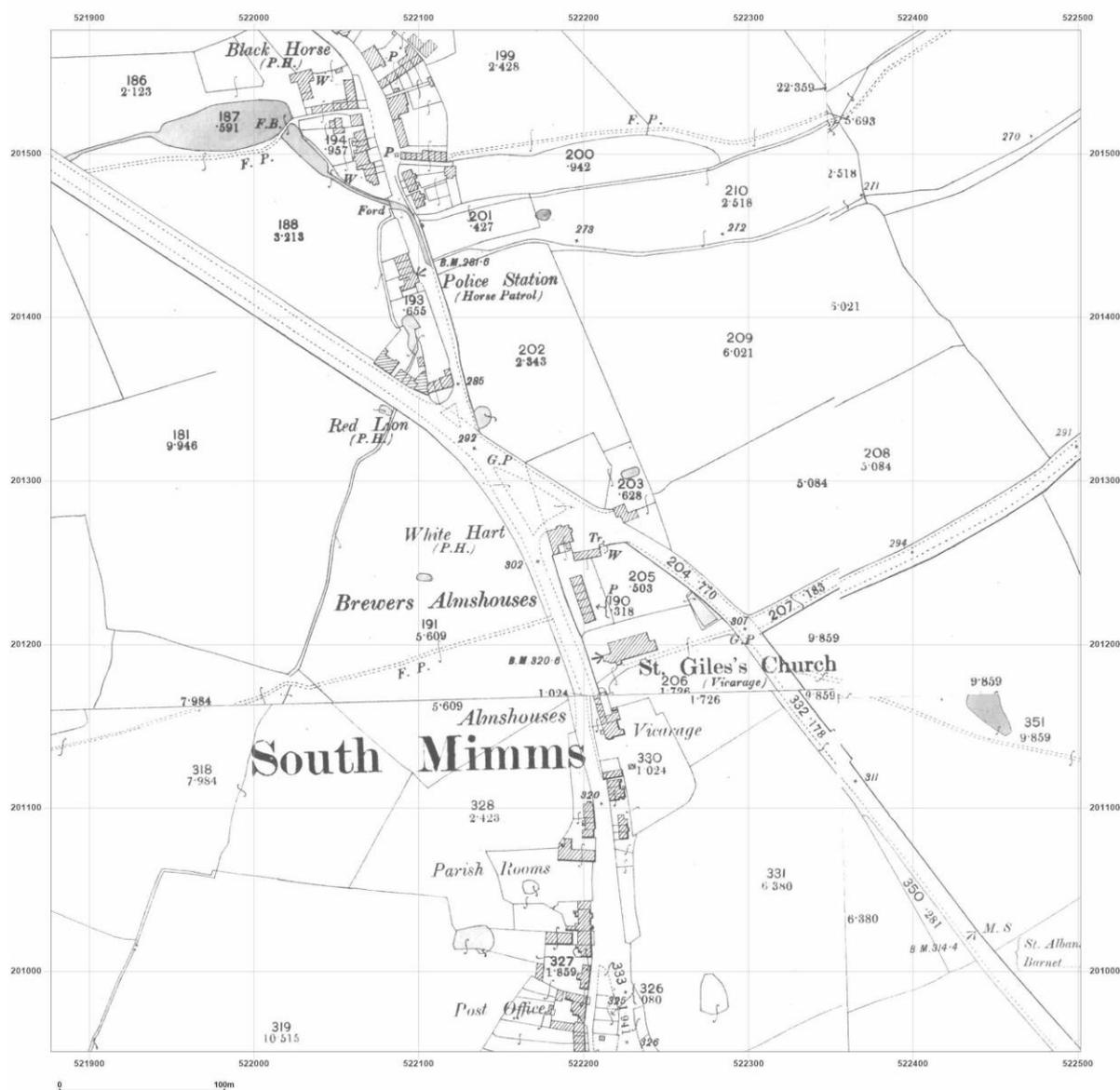


Fig 10: An extract of the 1914 Ordnance Survey map.



Fig 11: An extract of an oblique aerial photo of 1920 from the south.

2.15 A photo of 1920 (Fig 12) shows The White Hart from the north, at the unveiling of the war memorial. By now the faux timber framing can be seen.



Fig 12: An extract of a photo of 1920 at the unveiling of the war memorial.

2.16 A photo of 1935 (Fig 13) again shows The White Hart from the north.



Fig 13: An extract of photo of 1935 from the north.

2.17 Two undated c. 1970s photos show The White Hart at this time (Figs 14 & 15). The elevated view from the south, perhaps taken from the church tower, again shows a discernible change in the roof tiles of the rear roof of the building.



Fig 14: An extract of an elevated c. 1970s photo of The White Hart from the south.



Fig 15: An extract of a c. 1970s photo of The White Hart, almshouses and church from the north.

2.18 The building is also recorded in an aerial view from the west, probably taken around the same time (Fig 16).



Fig 16: An extract of an undated oblique aerial photo from the west.

The significance of the South Mimms Conservation Area

2.19 This next section refers extensively to the *South Mimms Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (April 2020) (the 'Appraisal' hereafter)*. The section below either quotes from, or paraphrases, the Appraisal. The extracts below are focussed mainly on the context of the application site, and Character Area 1 of the South Mimms Conservation Area, within which it falls.

2.20 **Section 1.1 of the Appraisal is entitled 'summary' and states:**

"South Mimms Conservation Area [...] includes the historic core of the village of South Mimms, contained within the linear development extending along Blanche Lane from the thirteenth century Church of St Giles to the small Village Green and westwards up to the M25 motorway. The Conservation Area is predominantly a residential area. Its historic building stock of cottages and houses date from the sixteenth century through to the nineteenth century and are interspersed with later development.

The special interest of South Mimms is primarily drawn from its legibility as a compact historic village. The settlement contains a number of high quality buildings of historic and architectural merit and retains a strong connection with its landscape setting [...]"

2.21 **Under the heading "Context and General Character" section 2.1 of the Appraisal states:**

"The Conservation Area includes the historic routes of Blanche Lane, Greyhound Lane and part of St Albans Road, an 1820s bypass road that intended to improve the route from St Albans to London. The Conservation Area comprises the historic core of the village along Blanche Lane in which a number of high-quality historic buildings survive. The roads within the Conservation Area are green and verdant in character and are lined by mature trees and planting, including private front gardens. Large areas of undeveloped land within the Conservation Area, primarily between Greyhound Lane and St Albans Road, indicate the rural nature of the village and the surrounding agrarian landscape contributes to an appreciation of the village as a once isolated, rural settlement."

2.22 Section 2.2 sets out the origins and evolution of South Mimms. It notes that, in the C17 the village grew, with dwellings constructed on Blackhorse Lane to the north of the conservation area. The conservation area includes a number of C17 houses. Between the church and the old vicarage, **five Howkin's Almshouses were**

constructed in 1652, which were replaced in 1856 by the **Brewers' Almshouses** to the north of the church and to the south of The White Hart.

- 2.23 In the C18 South Mimms village expanded northwards along Blackhorse Lane. South of the church, buildings lined the western side of Blanche Lane but the eastern side was undeveloped. The growth of the village at this time reflected the increase in traffic passing along the route between London and St Albans. The village retained its rural character, and a number of coaching inns lined the routes through the village. These included the Black Horse Inn, north of the conservation area boundary, which dates from the C18 and which is grade II listed. Within the conservation area, The White Hart Inn, built in the C17, survives at the junction between Blanche Road and St Albans Road. **The Appraisal describes it as “Heavily altered and re-fronted in brick, its appearance conceals the pub’s much older origins.”** It notes that other inns and pubs in the conservation area have been lost.
- 2.24 In the 1820s, the rerouted road from London to St Albans (now St Albans Road) bypassed the historic village core. This impacted many of the inns, although The White Hart still fronted the new road and survived as a public house (albeit that it has been out of use for some time now).
- 2.25 During the C19, the village was in a state of relative decline, with little building taking place; in 1871 there were 174 houses but by 1901 this had only increased to 200, despite the boom in Victorian development generally elsewhere in the country.
- 2.26 The construction of the A1(M) and M25 in the C20 greatly affected the setting of South Mimms. The roads enclosed the village on two sides, divorcing it from the wider rural setting, which is now only experienced without interruption in the northern section of the village. Many of the pubs within the village, which had been present since the C18, were closed in the first decades of the C20.
- 2.27 The C20 development infilled sections of the village to create a continuous line of built form along both sides of Blanche Lane.
- 2.28 Section 3 of the Appraisal contains the Assessment of Significance. Section 3.1 provides a summary, as follows:

“The historic village of South Mimms developed along Blanche Lane where high-quality historic buildings survive surrounding both the small Village Green by the

junction with Greyhound Lane, and alongside the Church of St Giles. This is the oldest building in the Conservation Area with thirteenth century origins and is a prominent landmark in the village; its tower is visible in long views through the village core and from the north along St Albans Road.

*Once the primary route from St Albans to London, the village was bypassed in c.1828 by St Albans Road. Reminders of the inns and public houses serving passing travellers survive as converted buildings or vacant plots; The White Hart at the junction of Blanche Lane and St Albans Road is a rare survival of significance to the village. Historic houses and cottages are the most common buildings within the villages and are interspersed with more modern development. Whilst not included within the Conservation Area boundary, the historic buildings along **Blackhorse Lane to the north form an important aspect of the Conservation Area's setting being part of the historic settlement.***

The village retains its rural character and is set within a largely undeveloped, agrarian landscape which contributes to its setting despite the encroachment of the M25 and A1(M) motorways [...].

*Listed buildings and locally listed buildings make a particularly strong positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. There are other buildings which, as part of a group within the streetscene, also make a positive contribution to the area through their age, design or use of materials; **these buildings have been identified as 'positive building/structure' [...]***

2.29 Section 3.3 **of the Appraisal is entitled 'Character Analysis' and states:**

"The Conservation Area has been divided into five Character Areas determined by their predominant land usage, building layout and building ages which have resulted in distinct characteristics. There is an overarching character to the South Mimms Conservation Area, however, identifying these Character Areas assists in assessing and understanding the significance of the Conservation Area. Key elements of each Character Area have been identified, including designated and non-designated heritage assets as well as those buildings that are considered to make a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area [...]"

2.30 The Appraisal summarises Character Area 1 as follows:

"This area is located at the north of the Conservation Area and takes in the immediate setting of the Grade I listed, thirteenth century Church of St Giles including its cemetery and the Vicarage. As the oldest building within the Conservation Area, the Church demarks the earliest area of settlement within South Mimms following the relocation of the settlement in the thirteenth century.

The Character Area has a second focal point at the junction of St Albans Road and Blanche Lane where a small green contains the village's War Memorial against the backdrop of the Grade II listed White Hart Public House of late seventeenth century origin, and to the south of this the Brewers' Company Almshouses built in 1856. To the far north of the Conservation Area Arlingham House, a former row of three cottages and public house, occupies a prominent position at the junction of St Albans Road and Blackhorse Lane."

2.31 **Under the heading 'Layout' the Appraisal notes of Character Area 1:**

*"St Albans Road and Blanche Lane intersect within this Character Area with Blackhorse Lane continuing north beyond the Conservation Area boundary. St Albans Road was completed in c.1828 to bypass the historic route through the village along Blanche Lane and Greyhound Lane. The buildings within this **Character Area front Blanche Lane, St Giles' Primary School which located to the south of the cemetery.** The density of development here is low with open, undeveloped spaces making a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area by permitting important views of listed buildings and locally listed buildings."*

2.32 The White Hart is briefly mentioned, along with the listed almshouses, boundary wall and church, **under the heading 'Building Materials and Boundary Treatments':**

*"Along the northern part of Blanche Lane, the split flint rubble of the Church of St Giles and its boundary wall predominate. Stone dressings emphasise the high status of the church, with the boundary wall divided into panels with red brick and semi-circular tile copings. Red brick is the most commonly used building material **in this Character Area; the red brick of the church's north aisle and chapel is mirrored in the red brick dressings of the Almshouses, contrasting against their gault brick elevations and tall chimneys. [...]***

Red brick is also a feature of The White Hart, behind which is concealed an earlier timber frame, but its principal elevations facing north and east are characterised by their early twentieth century black and white timber framing and render. Facing the public house, the elevations of Arlingham House are rendered or painted brickwork, as is the outbuilding to the south of the public house. There are slate roofs to Arlingham House and the Almshouses, with clay plain tile roofs found on the other buildings including the Church, The White Hart and the Vicarage [...].

A timber close-boarded fence demarks the boundary of the public house's car park along St Albans Road continuing onto low wire fences and hedging bounding the church yard. On Blanche Lane, the long flint wall runs from the Almshouses to the

Church, and the Vicarage is screened by a mature Beech hedge and an eighteenth century brick wall, a surviving remnant of the former Vicarage"

2.33 The White Hart is again mentioned under the section covering Listed Buildings and Locally Listed Buildings in Character Area 1:

"To the north of the almshouses is the Grade II listed White Hart Public House of late seventeenth-early eighteenth century origin (list entry no: 1346931). Originally of timber frame construction, it is refaced in red brick with early twentieth century timber framing and rendered panels to the principal elevations under plain tile roofs. It is located in a prominent position at the junction of St Albans Road and Blanche Lane. It is the only public house located within the Conservation Area, despite the abundance of coaching inns within the village in the post-medieval period. Its continued use as a public house is an important surviving remnant of this former aspect of the village's history"

2.34 **The following are noted under the heading 'Landscaping and Open Spaces' in Character Area 1:**

- i. the cemetery;
- ii. the open playing fields and playground of the school;
- iii. the small green to the north of The White Hart Public House; and
- iv. the car park of The White Hart.

2.35 Section 3.5 of the Appraisal deals with views and highlights (amongst others) Viewpoint 1, which is the view from the area to the north of the conservation area travelling south along St Albans Road there are key views of the tower of St Giles **Church and the tall chimneys of Brewers' Almshouses over the agrarian, undeveloped landscape.** These views are said to contribute to an appreciation of the village within a historic rural landscape and they afford long views of the deliberately prominent church tower.

The White Hart

2.36 **According to its list description on Historic England's National Heritage List, the pub was listed on 12 August 1985 and the brief list description has not been amended since then; the descriptive text is quoted in full below:**

"Public House. Late C17/early C18. Refaced, much altered and extended C19 and C20. Timber frame. Brick front to Blanche Lane. C20 timber and plaster on brick plinth to St. Albans Road fronts and rear. Tiled hipped roof. L shaped with

extensions. 2 storeys and attic. Main front has central entrance in C19 ground floor canted bay. 2 first floor sashes. Stack on front pitch to left of centre. Return wing of L to right is an extension with a separate hipped roof. Blanche Lane front has 2 ground floor canted bays flanking an entrance. 2 bays to right have glazing bar sashes those on first floor break eaves line under gablets. End stack to right. Left return has ground floor extension. first floor sashes. To rear a gable on main range and later extensions. Interior: plaster ceilings and panelling and fireplace of original building on first floor."

- 2.37 The pub may have originated as a house that became a roadside inn; there is evidence to suggest the main chimneystack was once positioned centrally within a narrower building that was later extended to the east. The early arrangement is now hard to discern, given the extent of change that has occurred as part of the extensive early C20 refurbishment of the building, but the little staircase at the first floor, next to the stack, originally probably went down to the ground floor, suggesting the building probably originated as a house with a lobby entrance plan.



Photo 1: A frontal view of The White Hart, with the red dotted line showing the likely line of the eastern extension, with an original arrangement of a central stack heating two rooms and lobby entrance (approximation shown in dotted red line).

- 2.38 The building has illustrative historic interest in its age, and as an early surviving example of the development of the village. The illustrative value of the pub is

high, on one hand, given its age and possibility of embedded timber framing (the visible evidence suggests that a good deal of this has been lost, though there is also evidence that some of the earlier fabric survives), although on the other hand perhaps less so in the context of the external changes that have occurred, which makes it harder to read the building today as a C17 timber framed building. It has had an early C20 elevational 'upgrade' that seems to have been done to give the building a more unified appearance, probably when the rear extension was added. However, the old roof tiles and the positioning of the main chimneystack indicate it is an earlier structure.

2.39 The architectural interest of the pub falls into two categories; on one hand vernacular interest in the older timber framed structure, and post-vernacular in the altered frontage. Although it is, to an extent, a pleasant building (Photo 2) in a pleasant setting, what can be seen of the pub today is mostly attributable to the early C20 re-fronting. A great deal of the architectural interest of the pub lies in what is left of the form and fabric of the earlier structure; there is far less interest in the later re-fronting and rear extension, which arguably have caused harm by obscuring and remodelling what was left of the older building. The rear and side extensions (Photo 3) have no interest.



Photo 2: An aerial view of The White Hart, from the north alongside the war memorial, almshouses and church.



Photo 3: An aerial view of the rear of The White Hart.

2.40 The early C20 rear extension (Photo 3) has little inherent significance, and has been marred by the added staircase at the rear, and the apparent rebuilding of the rear wall.



Photo 3: A view of the rear extension to The White Hart.

2.41 Turning to the interior, it is clear that the building has been significantly and extensively refurbished, such that there are now few features of interest at the ground floor. This area has been given a refurbishment in the early C20, and later, and there are almost no residual features of significance and very little by way of visible timber framing. There is an embedded post on the east side of the front bay (Photo 5), probably the original corner of the building, but nothing else was visible. Whilst the central bar has exposed joists (Photos 5 & 6), these are re-used timbers (e.g. Photo 6) and their span, thickness and spacing indicate that they are primarily decorative, rather than structural. The original joists would have spanned cross-wise, not lengthwise. The brick fireplaces are early C20 and add little by way of interest.

2.42 However, the NE room has a plaster ceiling that may well be early, if not original (Photos 8 & 9), albeit it has been damaged and truncated by the inserted stairwell to the south of the room. Judging from the faint scars that can be seen, it would appear that the ceiling was originally much more ornate. It would have had circular corner features, with embellishment between the surviving two moulded ovals, and there must have been a central decorative motif. The surviving ceiling at the first floor room above, albeit again damaged, gives an indication of the likely decorative motifs that the ground floor ceiling may have had. This suggests a date range of perhaps early-mid C18.



Photo 5: The central front room of The White Hart. The C20 fireplace can be seen on the left, and a timber post on the right is shown with a red arrow. The narrow, widely spaced and long span re-used joists appear to be primarily decorative, rather than structural.



Photo 6: The re-used joists.



Photo 7: The joists at the central rear room of The White Hart.



Photo 8: The NE ground floor room. the red arrow on the right shows where the plaster ceiling has been truncated by the stairwell.



Photo 9: The plaster ceiling to the NE ground floor room.

2.43 Turning then to the first floor, as with the ground floor, the stairwell has truncated an original ceiling on the first floor in a most unfortunate way (Photo 10), and

the effect has been compounded by the insertion of a doorway at the top of the stairs (also visible on Photo 10).



Photo 10: The ground floor, seen from the front room, looking towards the rear.

- 2.44 The ceiling, although damaged, is a fine feature (Photo 11) and it clearly denotes the original room proportions. There are matching moulded plaster wall panels (Photo 12), which it has been assumed are original, though there is a gap where this has been removed or damaged. The chimneypiece here (Photo 13) appears to be contemporary with the ceiling and it is notably in the same design as the adjoining central front room, which also has a richly decorative ceiling and wall panels (Photos 14 & 17). Here, a corridor (Photo 15) has been driven through the southern part of the room, cutting across the fine ceiling (Photos 14-16), again, in a most regrettable way and severing the moulded wall panels along the south from the rest of the room (Photos 14, 15 & 18). Unfortunately, some of the wall panels are also damaged or missing (e.g. Photo 19).
- 2.45 These rooms, and the plaster enrichment they contain, are the most significant spaces in the building; elsewhere on the first floor there is little else of note.



Photo 11: The ceiling in the NW first floor room.



Photo 12: The plaster wall panels in the NW first floor room.



Photo 13: The chimney piece and panelling to the eastern wall in the NW first floor room.



Photo 14: The central first floor front room, looking south towards the inserted wall that cuts across the ceiling and which now forms corridor along the south.



Photo 15: The corridor that has been driven through the central first floor front room (the inserted wall is on the left and the plaster panels on the right).



Photo 16: The ceiling where the corridor has been driven through the central first floor front room (the inserted wall is on the left).



Photo 17: The west wall with chimneypiece in the central first floor front room.



Photo 18: The east wall with missing plaster panel in the central first floor front room.

- 2.46 The eastern first floor rooms are devoid of plasterwork or features of note (Photos 19 & 20), with instead only a Regency style reeded chimneypiece to the larger room (Photo 19). At this point it is instructive to look at the floor plan, which shows a slight projection in the elevation between the central and eastern rooms at the first floor (on the ground floor this external step is concealed by the location of the bay).
- 2.47 When comparing that with the pre-early C20 refurbishment works photo of the building (earlier in the report, but replicated at Fig 16 below for ease of reference), there are clear indications that the eastern part of the building was a later addition. The step in the elevation can be seen on the image, and this coincided with a truncation of the presumably original cornice. Without the eastern part, the main stack would have been centrally, and provided a two-cell layout with heated rooms either side of the stack. The little front stack at the east was necessitated by the addition of the eastern part, to heat the front (NE) room (Photo 20).

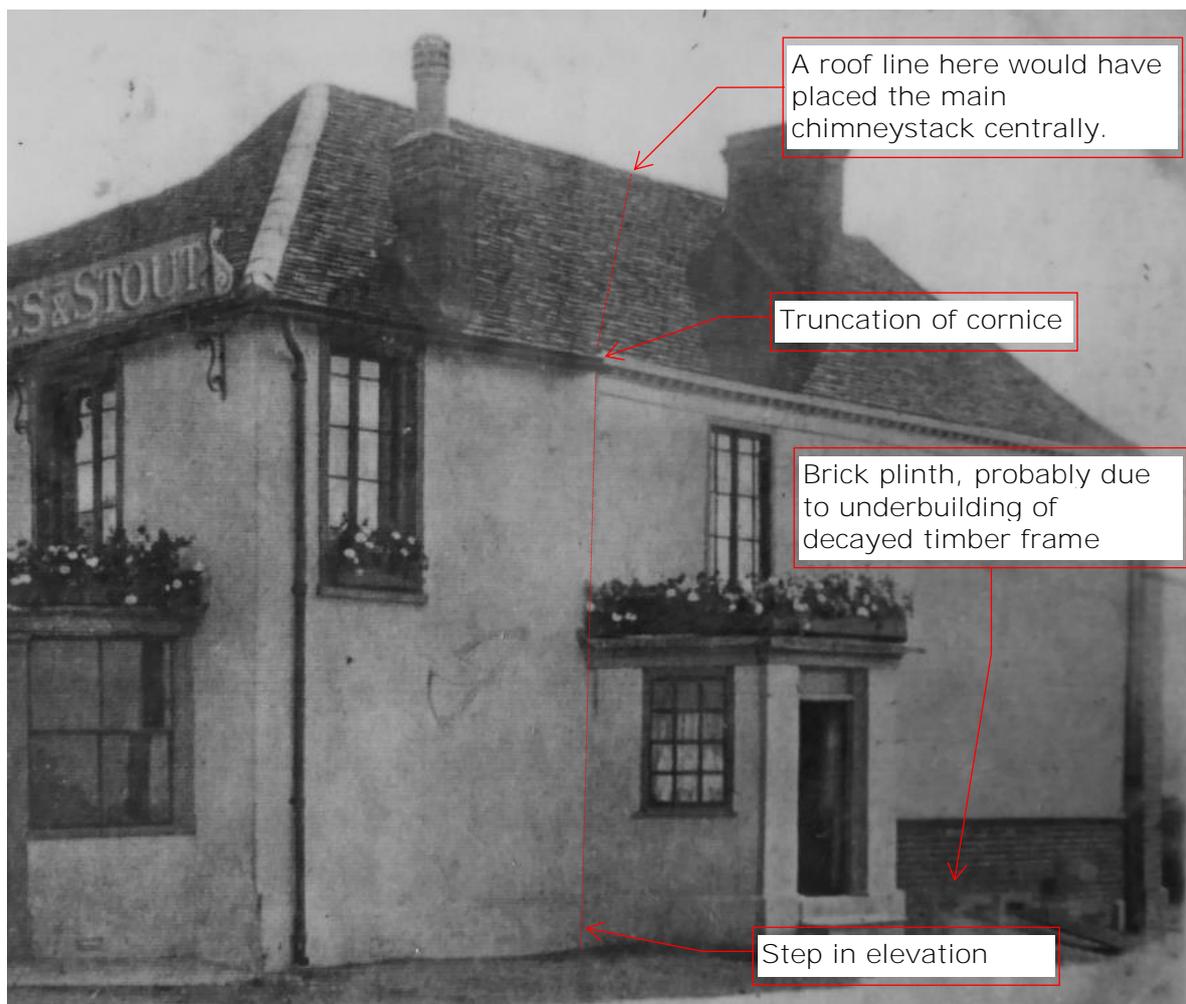


Fig 16: An undated c. early C20 photo of The White Hart, found within the building on the site visit.



Photo 19: The southern of the two eastern first floor rooms, with a reeded Regency style chimney piece.

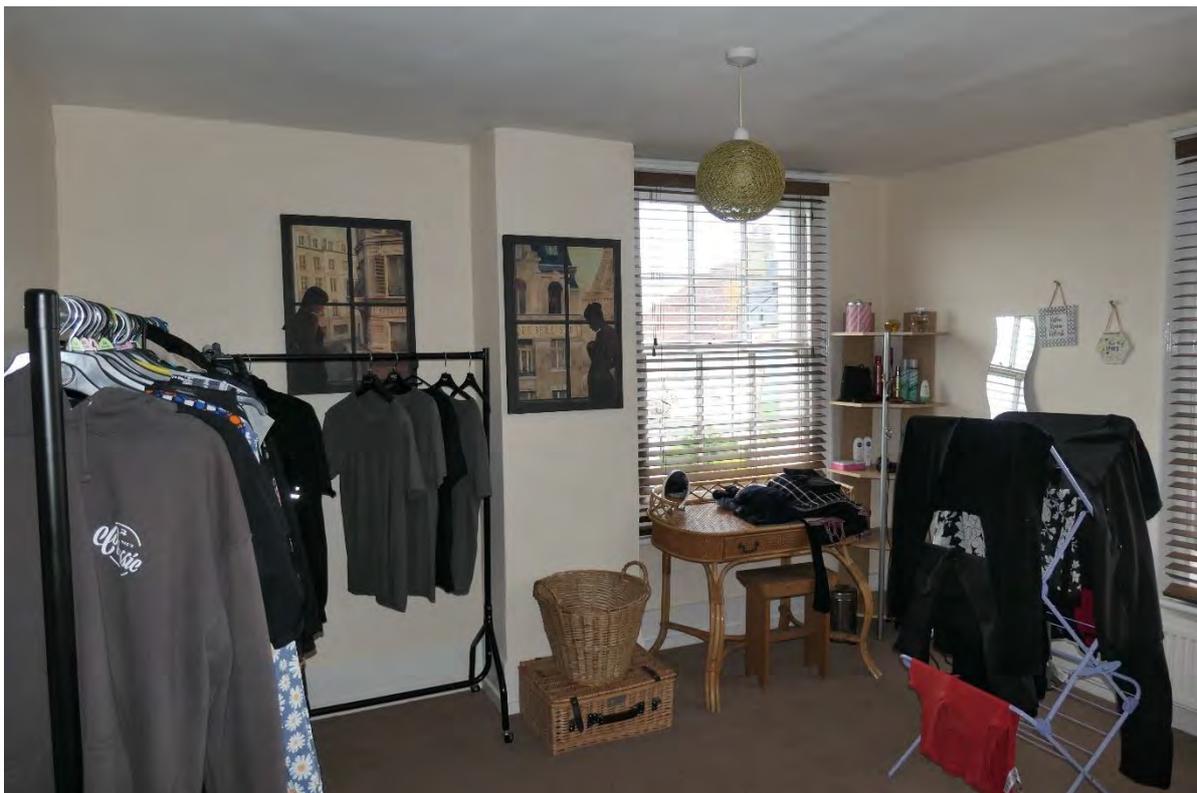


Photo 20: The NE first floor room, with a little chimneybreast to the front.

2.48 Elsewhere, the first floor is generally devoid of features, though there is the remnants of a simple, rope/ribbon-like plaster ceiling in the now compartmentalised area behind the central front room (i.e. the kitchen, Photos

20 & 21). The ceiling has been interrupted by walls and it is not nearly as good a feature as the ones to the front, and it may be later.



Photo 21: The same ceiling, seen from the lobby to the north of the kitchen.



Photo 22: The ceiling in the kitchen area centrally at the rear of the first floor.

2.49 The curved little staircase to the roofspace looks to be original (Photo 23), and it probably originally continued to the ground floor, opposite the lobby entrance on the other side of the central stack. Although the rooms here have generally been dry-lined and the structure is not exposed (Photo 24). Where the structure was visible, the timbers are of no great age and cannot be older than the early C20 (Photos 24 & 25); some are clearly much more modern (Photo 25).



Photo 23: The curved little staircase to the roofspace looks to be original.



Photo 24: The roofspace has been dry-lined and the structure is not exposed.



Photo 24: Where the structure is exposed, it is of no great age.



Photo 25: Where the structure is exposed, it is of no great age (the timbers seen here are modern).

2.50 Turning then briefly to the outbuilding, although it appears to satisfy the criteria for curtilage listing (age and associative/spatial relationship with the listed building), it can be noted that curtilage listed structures do not become listed buildings in their own right, but instead according to s.1(5)(b) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, they as are to be treated as **“part of” the listed building. They are not inherently imbued with significance, but** instead they can be treated as though they were part of the building; it is therefore necessary to establish the extent to which they contribute to the significance of the listed building when making development control decisions, in the same way as would be done for a rear extension, for example.

2.51 The outbuilding is an ordinary outbuilding that appears to have once been attached to the building that stood to the south of The White Hart. The old, plain tiled roof gives it a pleasant appearance (Photo 26), but beyond that there is little to commend; internally the building has been substantially rebuilt and it is devoid of any features of note (Photos 27 & 28).



Photo 26: The old tiled roof of the outbuilding gives it a pleasant appearance.



Photo 27: Internally the building has been substantially rebuilt and it is devoid of any features of note.



Photo 28: Internally the building has been substantially rebuilt and it is devoid of any features of note.

3.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Overview of the proposals

- 3.1 The proposals are summarised below into five broad categories, which are then assessed in turn:
- i. Conversion of the pub to residential (principle).
 - ii. Internal changes associated with the residential conversion.
 - iii. Removing existing rear extensions and a replacement extension of the pub.
 - iv. Conversion of the outbuilding to residential.
 - v. A new detached dwelling to the south of the pub.

Conversion of the pub to residential (principle)

- 3.2 The pre-application response stated that the conversion of the pub to flats would “*fundamentally harm the significance of the listed building and alter the character of the public house and historic inn*”. **Whilst this would fundamentally alter the ground floor use** (the first floor is already used as residential accommodation) it does not necessarily follow that the significance of the building would be ‘fundamentally harmed’. **A great deal of the significance of the building is encapsulated in its fabric, rather than its use *per se*, and that would not be ‘fundamentally harmed’.** Indeed, the pre-application response suggested that other uses (hotel/restaurant) might be preferable, and it can simply be noted that these too would end the use of the building as a pub.
- 3.3 In any event, as the pre-application response acknowledged, the pub has been vacant for some considerable time and in the interest of its long-term preservation, the alternative of a viable conversion option is acceptable in principle.

Internal changes associated with the residential conversion

- 3.4 At the ground floor, there are relatively few alterations to the older, front part of the building. The proposals would see the only sensitive and significant feature – the historic ceiling in the NW room – preserved in situ. The changes to the ground floor would preserve the significance of the building.
- 3.5 There would be considerable enhancements to the most sensitive and significant front first floor rooms. At the NW, the later stairwell that cuts across the ceiling would be removed (it is important to note that the removal of the staircase here is facilitated by the proposed rear extension, where it would be relocated). The

missing plaster panel on the north wall would be restored. The room would be restored to its original proportions and the ceiling would be revealed in its full extent. This would be a considerable enhancement to the significance of the listed building, in one of only two rooms that contains these highly significant features.

- 3.6 Similarly, the inserted corridor wall within the once larger central front room would be removed. The room would be restored to its original proportions. The ceiling would be revealed in its full extent. The wall panelling would be seen along all four sides of the room. The missing plaster panel on the north wall would be restored. Together, this would be a considerable enhancement to the significance of the listed building, in one of only two rooms that contains these highly significant features.
- 3.7 There would be more remodelling to the less sensitive rear parts of the first floor, which were not part of the original timber framed house and where there are only a few features of note (the reeded chimneypiece to the SE room, and the remnant plaster ceiling to the central rear area). The surviving features would be preserved.
- 3.8 On the whole, the conversion would materially and considerably enhance the significance of the listed building by better revealing its most significant features.

Removing existing rear extensions and a replacement extension of the pub

- 3.9 There is a clear and compelling case for removing the existing poor quality rear extensions. The proposed rear extensions would be greater in volume, but the additional height over the single storey flat roofed extension would be justified, in facilitating the removal of the stairwell that interrupts the plaster ceiling at the NW room. The replacement structure would be of a much higher quality than the existing block and it would qualitatively be a considerable improvement when compared with the existing.
- 3.10 The replacement rear extension, in place of the existing poor quality staircase and **'Fletton' brick wall (Photo 29)**, would be set back from the elevation and it would be lower in height to ensure subservience. This would illustrate its phasing as a later addition, though a similar design language has been adopted to ensure it would assimilate well as part of the building.



Photo 29: The existing poor quality staircase and 'Fletton' brick wall.

3.11 The proposed replacement rear extensions would preserve and enhance the significance of the listed building.

Conversion of the outbuilding to residential

3.12 Externally there would be few changes to the building. There would be modest glazed panels to the upper parts of the double doors, and small roof lights to the rear roof slope. Internally there is nothing of significance that would be affected by the conversion. The contribution of the curtilage listed structure, as a pleasant outbuilding to the main pub, would remain unchanged (as would its contribution to the conservation area).

A new detached dwelling to the south of the pub

3.13 It is instructive to look at the 1866 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 17), which shows historic situation, 10 years after the construction of the almshouses (and their boundary wall). The Ordnance Survey map shows that there was originally, when the almshouses were built, a house hard up against the northern plot boundary of the almshouses. When comparing this with the earlier maps and depictions, it can be seen that this was a two storey building. There was originally, at the time that the almshouses were first constructed, a two storey building in the same location as the proposed infill building. The previous building had a building line that was slightly forward of The White Hart.



Fig 17: An extract of the 1866 Ordnance Survey map.

3.14 When understood in this context, there is nothing inherently unacceptable about the addition of a two storey building in this same location. The proposed building would be set back from the building line of The White Hart, which would make for a logical and visually coherent transition between it and the almshouses. The building has a traditional design to help it blend in unassumingly. The design of the dormers references the dormers of The White Hart, and the little vents to the roofs of the almshouses, to help the building merge in. It would be constructed in red brick, which is characteristic of the area.

3.15 This modest new building would blend in well, and preserve and enhance the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area, and the setting of the almshouses and The White Hart.

Summary

- 3.16 When considered on the whole, the proposals would be acceptable in terms of the principle of the change of use, and the internal changes would considerably enhance the most significant parts of the listed building. These are weighty, heritage-specific benefits. The rear extensions would in part facilitate the reinstatement of the room currently interrupted by the later staircase, and would replace poor quality accretions with well-designed new additions that would preserve and enhance the significance of the building. The conversion of the outbuilding would preserve the significance of the building, and the conservation area. The modest infill building would blend in well, and preserve and enhance the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area, and the setting of the almshouses and The White Hart.
- 3.17 To the extent that there would be some harm in heritage terms due to the conversion /change of use, the benefits are greater in number and in terms of the significance of the areas affected, leaving a decisive net heritage benefit that weighs strongly in support of the proposals.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 This Heritage Statement presents a proportionate understanding of the significance of the listed building and the conservation area, and contains a detailed assessment of the likely potential impacts of the proposals. The proposals have been carefully designed to avoid impacts on the original/significant building fabric and features/decorations, and to incorporate enhancements.
- 4.2 The assessment has demonstrated that there would be material enhancements to the listed building, including to some of the most significant parts of the building. These heritage-specific benefits attract the same weight in the planning balance as harm. There would also be some harm inherent in the change of use/conversion, although conversely that provides the building with a viable future, and is acceptable in principle.
- 4.3 The enhancements to the listed building would comfortably outweigh any limited harm. Overall, the heritage-specific benefits of the proposals therefore clearly and compellingly outweigh any harm, and leaves a net heritage enhancement in the heritage balance, which attracts great weight in favour of the proposed development in the overall planning balance.

- 4.4 This means paragraphs 199-202 of the NPPF are not engaged and the provisions of s.66 and s.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) are satisfied. The proposals satisfy Core Strategy Policy CS14 and SADM Policy SADM29.
- 4.5 In accordance with the NPPF, the net heritage-specific benefits of the scheme should be brought forward into the overall planning balance, and given the **appropriate 'great weight'**.