

THE OLD SMITHY, OVERTON, WREXHAM



May 2022

Heritage Impact Assessment

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INTRODUCTION

The Old Smithy, Overton is listed Grade II and situated to the eastern end of the south side of Wrexham Road, in the village of Overton. The building is within the boundaries of the Overton Conservation Area. The structure is currently occupied as a domestic dwelling. The purposes of the proposed alterations are a reconfiguration of ground floor accommodation within the existing floor plan through refitting, and the replacement of a modern door to the rear of the property. No alterations are planned to the first floor.

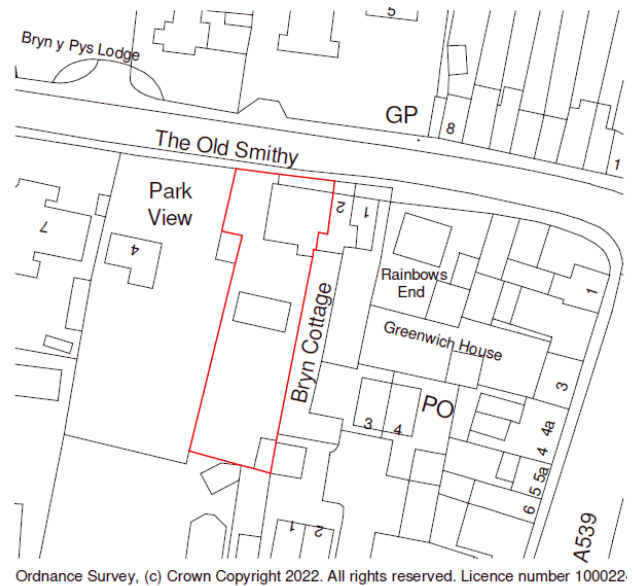
LOCATION

Overton is located approximately 7 miles southeast of Wrexham. The village has developed alongside the key routes of the A539 Wrexham to Whitchurch Road and the A528 Marchwiell to Ellesmere which converge at its centre.

The Old Smithy is located on the south side of Wrexham Road, towards the eastern end as the road meets the village of Overton. It forms the western end of a row of three terraced cottages dating from the late 18th or early 19th century. Wrexham Road is oriented west to east, before turning south onto High Street at its eastern end. The Old Smithy is located at number 3, Wrexham Road, and is situated close to the Bryn y Pys Lodge on the opposite side, which formed the entrance to the Bryn y Pys estate.



Location of Overton



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Location of Proposal Site

PLANNING BACKGROUND

The Old Smithy is a Grade II listed structure, situated at the western end of the Overton Conservation Area. The iron railings external to the structure itself are also Grade II listed. As a designated heritage asset, both national and local planning policies and guidance affect the planning policy context for the site as outlined below. There have been no planning applications associated with the site in the past 30 years.

Relevant Regional and Local Policies

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been developed with reference to the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, which was adopted by Wrexham District Council in 2005. This development plan states that:

Conservation Areas Policy EC7

Within, and in close proximity to, conservation areas, the priority will be to preserve and/ or enhance those buildings, structures, streets, trees, open spaces, archeological remains, views, and other elements which contribute to the unique character of the area. New buildings and alterations or additions to existing buildings in conservation areas, whether listed as of special architectural or historic interest or not, must reflect the design and character of the area as a whole and the form, scale, detailing and materials of existing buildings.

5.9 The centres of historic settlements often possess visual charm, architectural unity, interesting social and economic histories, and a sense of place, which are of considerable importance to local inhabitants and visitors alike. The County Borough contains twentytwo conservation areas, designated to preserve and enhance their special architectural or historic character. Within conservation areas, development should ensure design compatibility, and should respect the various elements which give them their unique character (e.g. the mix and grouping of buildings, variety of spaces, movement routes, materials, architectural detailing, patterns of land use, landscaping, etc.). It is essential that any development within conservation areas is designed to respect the character of the area as a whole, and inappropriate or unsympathetically designed development will be resisted. The Council may introduce Article 4 Directions where changes resulting from permitted development rights would adversely affect the character of conservation areas. Outline planning permission will not be granted for development in conservation areas; the Council will require detailed plans of proposals, including elevations, which show the proposed development in its setting. The Council will prepare and publish enhancement proposals for designated conservation areas.¹

¹ Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 2005, Wrexham District Council

Policy EC8

The demolition of any building in a conservation area will not be permitted unless, in exceptional circumstances:- a) the building or structure is beyond reasonable repair; or b) demolition would be a positive benefit to the conservation area's enhancement; and c) planning permission has been granted and a legal agreement entered into for the erection of an appropriate replacement building reflecting the design and character of the conservation area. d) the material generated from the demolition of the building will, where appropriate, be used for the construction of the replacement building or structure.

5.10 There is a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area, but some buildings and structures represent discordant elements in the street scene and would be better removed and the site developed to higher quality design standards. Most works involving demolition require Conservation Area Consent, and this will not normally be granted unless there are acceptable and detailed plans for redevelopment. The material generated from the demolition of buildings can often be re-used in the repair of other local buildings of other historic or architectural value or in the construction of the replacement building(s). This arrangement would ensure a better standard of design as well as promoting a more sustainable use of scarce traditional building resources.²

Listed Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest**Policy EC9**

Alterations or additions to, and development or redevelopment within the curtilage of, buildings or structures listed as of special architectural or historic interest must respect the setting and character of the listed buildings or structures.

5.11 The County Borough contains over 870 listed buildings of special architectural or historic interest. The emphasis must be on their sensitive repair and improvement, using traditional materials and techniques, and in establishing appropriate new uses for them in order to guarantee their future survival. Demolition will not normally be allowed. Alterations/additions to listed buildings require the greatest skill and care in order to avoid damage to the intrinsic character of the buildings themselves (including interiors and fixtures) and to their setting. Similarly, new development affecting a listed building must be sympathetically designed so as not to harm the listed building's historic integrity and identity. The use of legal powers will be considered where listed buildings are at risk from willful neglect, long term dereliction or abandonment.³

² Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 2005, Wrexham District Council

³ Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 2005, Wrexham District Council

National Planning Policy

The NPPF section 16 and a number of Cadw documents provide relevant guidance. These include. *Managing Conservation Areas in Wales, May 2017. Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales, May 2017. Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales.*

HISTORY OF THE AREA AND PROPOSAL SITE

Historic Development of Overton

Little is known of Overton before the Norman Conquest in the 11th century, though Saxon coffin lids found in the churchyard indicate that there may have been an earlier Saxon settlement nearby.⁴ Overton does not figure in the Domesday Book, and the earliest record of this place is as Ouerton in 1195 (though the actual source is a 14th-century one). Other early spellings of the village name between the eleventh and sixteenth century include Overtone, Awtun, Wrtun and Ortyn, and the name is taken to mean 'the settlement on the bank'. A castle was constructed nearby around 1139 by Madog ap Maredudd, though the precise location beyond a few miles is unknown. It is not clear whether the construction of this castle contributed to the founding or early growth of the village.

In 1279 King Edward granted Robert de Crevequer the right to hold a weekly market and an annual fair, and in 1292 it was created a free borough by royal charter. At this point, it is recorded that 56 taxpayers dwelt there.⁵

The granting of the Royal Charter to hold markets and fairs, along with the village's significant position at a regional crossroads, allowed the village to prosper over the next century. Burgage plots appeared along Wrexham Road, High Street, and the northern end of Salop Road. These narrow plots containing houses built with street-facing frontages would have been used to trade directly onto the street, which may explain why the village's main street is so wide. Unfortunately, this period of growth and prosperity was brought to a sudden halt when the village was sacked by Owain Glyndwr in 1403-4. It appears to have taken the village a great deal of time to recover from this catastrophe, and one Tudor chronicler records that in Overton 'there are not more than 20 houses'.⁶

St Mary's Church lies towards the centre of Overton, and is surrounded by a sandstone boundary wall. It is thought that the original church building on this site dates to the twelfth century, though nothing of this structure remains except for a fragment of a Norman stone cross which has been reused as part of a pillar on the west side of the church. The current tower of the church dates from the 14th century, and significant additions and alterations took place in the 15th and 18th centuries, with the addition of a larger nave and and Hanoverian chancel. The most extensive alterations to the church took place more recently, in the 19th century, with the addition and widening of the north aisle, the construction of a new vestry, and alterations to the roof of the nave and north aisle.⁷

⁴ Overton Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan 2010, Wrexham District Council

⁵ Historic Settlement Survey – Wrexham County Borough 2013, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

⁶ Overton Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan 2010, Wrexham District Council

⁷ Overton Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan 2010, Wrexham District Council

High Street and the northern end of the village continued to be the main focus of development during the 16th and 17th centuries. Buildings from this period were largely timber framed in construction and would have been rather small in size. Few of these buildings survive in the modern village, with Church Cottage on High Street and Quinta Cottage on School Lane being rare surviving examples. By the 18th century larger, three storey structures were beginning to appear on High Street, with others along Pen Y Llan Street and Wrexham Road, reflecting the increased wealth of the town during this period. The larger Georgian properties such as Pendas House, Gwydyr House, St. Marys House and Pryn Y Pys Estate office were all erected during this period, and provide the modern Conservation Area with many of its grander views.⁸

During the 19th century, much construction in the town reflected the demand for housing for the working class and the growing middle class. Many smaller brick terraced cottages were erected along Salop Road, and to a lesser extent on Wrexham Road, to provide for workers in the town and on the nearby estates. Much middle class housing was erected during the first half of the 18th century, with Pen Dyffryn, Fairfield, Pen Y Llan, Ty Gwernen and The Brow all constructed between 1800 and 1830. The Brow was home to Marianne Parker, the elder sister of naturalist Charles Darwin, who spent many of his childhood years in Overton. Nonresidential housing also continued apace, with the tithe map of 1838 showing eight public houses, including The White Horse on High Street, and two chapels, the Primitive Methodist Chapel on Salop Road and the United Methodist Chapel on Turning Street.⁹

Overton owes much of its growth during this period to its position at a crossroads on the main trade route between Wrexham and Ellesmere. Weekly markets took place here on Saturdays well into the 19th century, along with quarterly fairs. A Market Hall was established on High Street during this period, though the weekly markets seem to have disappeared by the late 19th century.

Overton did not have a train station within the village, but was instead served by the stop of Lightwood Green approximately 1.5 miles east of the village. This was a stop on the Wrexham to Ellesmere line, and passenger services were discontinued in 1962 as part of a nationwide program of rail closures.¹⁰

Overton's rapid growth during the 18th and 19th centuries seems to have ground to a halt by the early 1900s. The 1912 map shows little increase in the size of the village from Victorian times. The main changes are the construction of the Memorial Hall on Wrexham Road in 1905 and the construction of a row of terraces at the junction of School Lane and Turning Street.

The changes during the second half of the 20th century are more pronounced, with significant expansion to the north, east and south of the village. This expansion consists largely of private and municipal housing estates. The demolition of Overton Hall took place in 1965 to make way for the Sundorne housing estate.

⁸ Overton Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan 2010, Wrexham District Council

⁹ Overton Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan 2010, Wrexham District Council

¹⁰ Overton Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan 2010, Wrexham District Council

The Medical Centre adjacent to the church on High Street was constructed in 2006 and received an award from the Wrexham Area Civic Society for its sympathetic design, situated as it is within the core of the Conservation Area.¹¹

Historic Development of the Proposal Site

The Old Smithy forms the western end of a terrace of three cottages. These cottages were built by the Price family to house workers for their nearby estate, named Bryn Y Pys. The houses appear to have been constructed during the late 18th or early 19th century. The tithe map of 1838, which is the oldest map to show the area in any detail, shows that the row had been constructed by this time, although the plot of the Site appears to be slimmer than the current Site, with number 2 appearing to be the largest cottage. However, the tenant was one William Hughes, who lived there along with his wife Elizabeth and son Charles. Mr William Hughes gives his profession as ‘smith’ and his wife is listed as ‘smith’s wife’, suggesting that the Old Smithy was originally constructed for the purpose of blacksmithing rather than being converted to this use later. Records show that in 1848 Mr Hughes paid a rent to the estate of £12.6.0d.¹²

Mr William Hughes was succeeded as smith at the Old Smithy by his son Charles, who was in turn succeeded by his two sons John and Charlie. The historic mapping shows that little changed on the site, but the OS map dating to 1899 shows the erection of a barn/ stable to the south of the site. By 1939 John and Charlie were paying a rent of £27 annually. John Hughes, the grandson of William Hughes, shod Poethlyn, twice winner of the Grand National (in 1918 and 1919). He was also proud to have shod Nearco “one of the greatest racehorses and most important sires of the 20th century”.¹³



Picture of John Hughes (right) Charles Hughes (centre) and Mr Tom Crump (left) at the Smithy

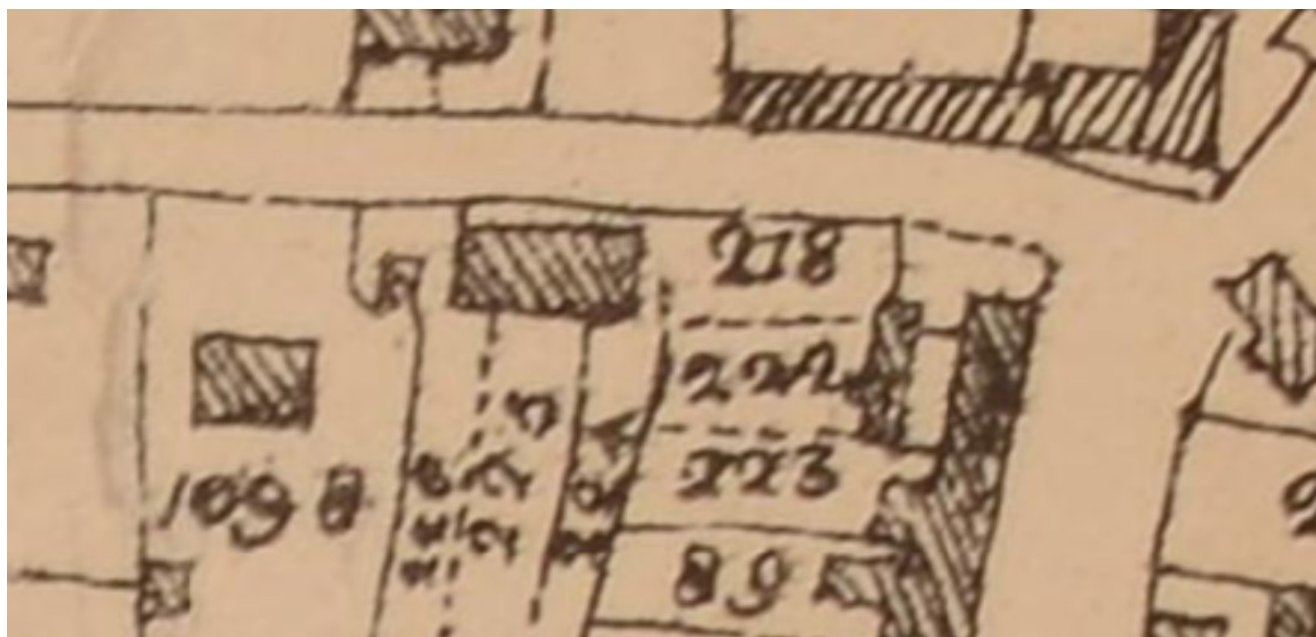
¹¹ Overton Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan 2010, Wrexham District Council

¹² Memories of Overton, overton-on-dee.co.uk, retrieved April 2022

¹³ Memories of Overton, overton-on-dee.co.uk, retrieved April 2022

It has not been possible to establish at which point the Old Smithy ceased to operate as a smithy, and left the hands of the Williams family. However, the Overton Oracle records that in 2012 the building had recently become the property Mick and Clare Smith, who operated a business names Wildbanks Conservation from the property. The business specialized in countryside management and environmental education. The same article states that the previous owner was named George Mysal.¹⁴

Sequential Development of the Site



Tithe Map or plan of the parish of Overton in the County of Flint, 1838



Excerpt of 1899 OS Map. Taken from the Overton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



Excerpt of 1912 OS Map. Taken from the Overton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

¹⁴ The Overton Oracle, September 2012

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

Plan and Materials

Number 3 Wrexham Road (the Site) is one of a row of cottages, which extends from numbers 1-3. The row rises to two storeys and is of red brick with pitched slate roof with catslide to the south. The row is set behind narrow forecourts with northern boundaries formed of iron railings and gates. Number 3 is the largest of the cottages and was historically used as both a residence and a blacksmiths workshop to the southwest of the property. Built as part of the Bryn Y Pys estate, these cottages are similar in style to those over the road named Dispensary Row.

Exterior



The northern façade



The southern façade

The northern façade of the house was formerly the primary façade and contained the front doors to the property. To the first floor and east end of the ground floor are gently curved round-topped arched windows with timber casements of two gothic lancet-style lights with plain tympana above. To the ground floor are doorways, again gothic in style, with timber boarded doors set under steep lancet arched brick heads. To the west is a timber casement window of three lancet-style lights with plain tympana.

The southern façade is mostly masked by a flat roofed, L shaped 20th century extension. The western elevation presents the entrance to the former smithy's workshop, which was situated to the rear of the building under the catslide roof. To the northern side of the first floor is a curved round-topped arched window with timber casements of two gothic lancet-style lights with plain tympana above, which matches those to the north elevation. To the southern side of the first floor is a square window opening under timber lintel with timber casement of two lancet lights, possibly a later addition as the aperture is not a brick arched opening like the others.



Window to north elevation



Window to north elevation



Doorway to north elevation

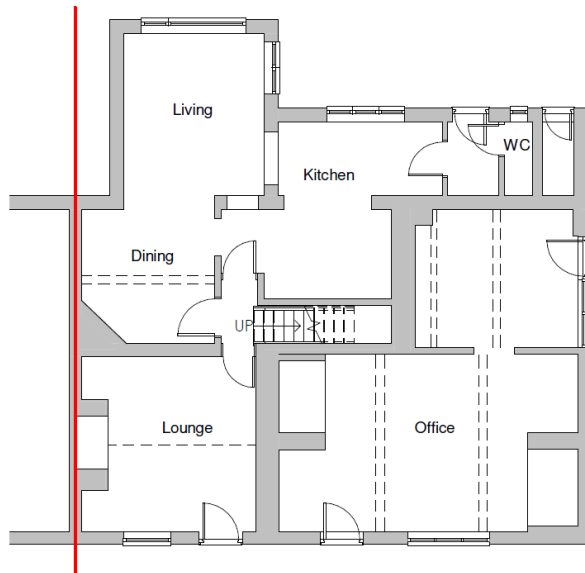


Northern side of west elevation

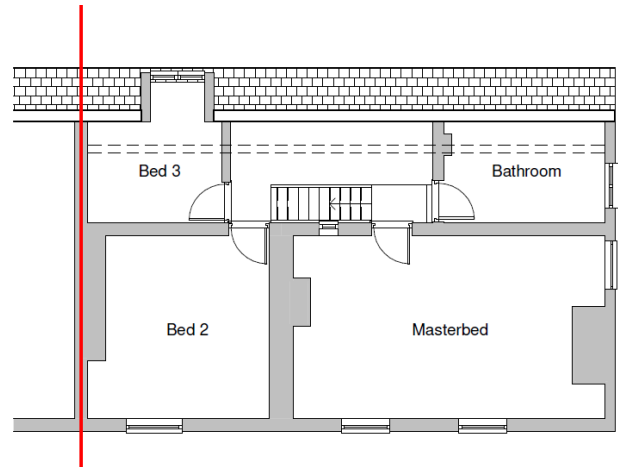


Southern side of west elevation

Interior



Ground floor plan



First floor plan

To the ground floor the building is currently accessed via the doorway in the west elevation. This provides access to the former blacksmith's workshop, which has retained the stone cobbled floor, timber beams to the ceiling and timber lintel over the connecting door in the north wall. To the north of this is a further room which retains the timber beams to the ceiling and a quarry tiled floor. The room also contains two large fireplaces, that to the west originally had a heavy timber lintel, which has been patch repaired with metal strapping and brickwork, this was possibly the former forge to the blacksmith's workshop. That to the east has a single steel lintel and appears to be a recent addition, or to have been altered/ repaired in the 20th century. The form of the three light timber casement window to the northern wall may also be a later addition and not original to the property, as it is the only example along the terrace row.



Former smithy



Modern entrance to the former smithy



Northern room



Northern room

To the south, the ground floor is currently occupied by a small WC, storage room, a kitchen and large dining/living room. Part of the kitchen and the living room section of the living/ dining space, the WC and storage room are all situated within the 20th century L shaped extension. The current dining room and part of the kitchen, as well as the stair leading to the first floor, occupy the southern section of the original terrace. An original window can be seen in the former southern external wall of the current dining room. The dining room also retains a chimney breast of a corner fireplace and timber beams to the ceiling.



Kitchen within the extension



Lounge to the west



Original window to dining room



Location of corner fireplace

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSETS

Methodology

The following is an assessment of the significance of the heritage assets that are potentially affected by the proposed works. This includes the Old Smithy at 3 Wrexham Road and the Overton Conservation Area. This assessment of significance is based upon a review of the historic development of the site, information relating to the Conservation Area provided by Wrexham District Council and a site survey.

The statement of significance of the Old Smithy at 3 Wrexham Road has been drawn up with reference to the Cadw document, *Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales*.¹⁵ The framework for assessing the level of significance of the structures was taken from the ICOMOS guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments¹⁶.

Assessment of the Significance of the Old Smithy, 3 Wrexham Road

Evidential Value

- The house provides evidence of the form and evolution of the wider settlement of the village of Overton (This also adds a level of value to the conservation area).
- The remaining historic fabric provides evidence of historic building techniques.
- The building provides evidence of the architectural style of workers cottages during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.
- The remaining elements of the blacksmith's workshop, such as the cobbled floor and large fireplace/ forge provide evidence of former use.

Historical: Illustrative Value

- The Old Smithy illustrates the period of expansion of the village of Overton in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and particularly the large expansion in construction of smaller cottages and terraces for workers.

¹⁵ Cadw. *Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales* (Cadw: 2011)

¹⁶ ICOMOS. *Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties* (A publication of the International Council on Monuments and Sites, January 2011)

Historical: Associative Value

- The Old Smithy, and the row to which it belongs, are associated with the Price family of the Bryn y Pys estate, who were important to the development of Overton over many generations, as this row was originally constructed by the Price family to house workers for the nearby Bryn Y Pys Estate.

Aesthetic: Design Value

- The aesthetic value of the Old Smithy is assessed as low. While some appealing details exist, the row to which it belongs was originally constructed as workers housing and consequently aesthetic value was not a principal consideration in the design and building of the row. That said, to modern tastes the design of the building and that of other similar structures does lend aesthetic value to the appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole. The use of repeated gothic detailing at both No 1-3 and Dispensary Row give the wider area a sense of visual harmony, and demonstrates a clear design intention.

Summary

The house provides evidence of the evolution of Overton as a village and is illustrative of the slightly later phase of development in the area, often of smaller properties, as demand for workers housing to service the village and its nearby estates increased during the late 18th and early 19th century, in a period of expansion for the village. The building is associated with the Price family of the Bryn y Pys estate, and its design and materials are indicative of the standards and techniques of construction for many buildings during this period in the wider Conservation Area. The building preserves the original street plan of the village and the significance to the development of the village accorded to the Wrexham Road, onto which the structure fronts. The building does not include any notable aesthetic design elements, save the gothic details to the windows and doors, but it contributes to the aesthetic value of the wider Conservation Area. The building should be assigned a medium level of significance overall when assessed against the framework outlined by ICOMOS, as it is a listed structure, but does not have exceptional qualities in its fabric or associations.

The Character and Special Interest of the Overton Conservation Area

The character and special interest of the Overton Conservation Area has been assessed with reference to the Cadw guidance *Managing Conservation Areas in Wales*¹⁷, *Planning Policy Wales* and *Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment*. This guidance states that the special interest and character of a conservation area can be assessed by looking at the following attributes;

- location and physical context

¹⁷Cadw, *Managing Conservation Areas in Wales*, 2017

- historical development
- spatial analysis
- architectural character
- undesignated historic assets of special local interest — including ‘positive buildings’ which contribute to character

Overton Conservation Area was designated in 1971, and its boundaries amended in 1999. The most recent Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan was adopted in December 2010. The below summary has used this information and a brief site survey to further understand the significance of the area by considering the above attributes.

Location and Physical Context

The Overton Conservation Area is situated approximately 11km to the south of Wrexham and around 3km from the border with England. The area is predominately residential and largely follows the line and orientation of High Street which runs north to south through the village, also incorporating Wrexham Road to the northwest, and some of the older residential streets to the west of High Street. The more modern residential developments to the east of High Street are excluded from the Conservation Area. The village itself is sited on the road between Wrexham and Ellesmere.

Historic Development

Overton is a village with medieval origins situated on the road between Wrexham and Ellesmere. It sits above a steep, wooded bank high above the River Dee. It has been settled continuously since at least the 14th century, with the greatest period of expansion coming between the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The above section on the development of Overton provides further information on the historic development of the area.

Architectural Character and Spatial Analysis

There is significant variation in architectural quality and built form amongst the buildings of the Conservation Area. Many of the larger, detached, middle-class houses and estate buildings are still standing, though Overton Hall itself was demolished in the 20th century. These houses are generally of high architectural quality, reflecting or intended to reflect the social status of those who dwelt there.

In contrast to these larger properties, many of the Listed buildings in the Conservation Area are workers cottages and terraces, to house workers for the nearby estates and the village itself. The workers cottages tend to be much smaller in plan, and either semi-detached or built in rows and terraces, with little architectural detailing.

Several public and municipal buildings remain within the Conservation Area, the largest and most significant of which is St Marys Church, but also several historic public houses such as the White Horse on High Street. The form of these buildings has been largely dictated by their specific intended use.

Modern development of the village has largely taken place outside of the boundaries of the Conservation Area. One of the few large buildings to be constructed within the Conservation Area since its designation is the Health Centre and Pharmacy on High Street, which received an award for its sympathetic design.

Undesignated Historic Assets of Special Local Interest

There are a large number of buildings of visual interest within the Overton Conservation Area. A complete summary of these can be found in the Overton Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan 2010.

Contribution of the Site to the Special Interest of the Conservation Area

The Old Smithy contributes to several aspects of the Special Interest of the Conservation Area identified in the 2010 Conservation Area Assessment

Building Materials and Vernacular Detail

Red brick is the prevalent material for construction in the Conservation Area, though soft red sandstone is used for the church. The Old Smithy retains its original material and facades, with the exception of the side entrance, on which the door has been replaced, and a modern L shaped extension to the rear.

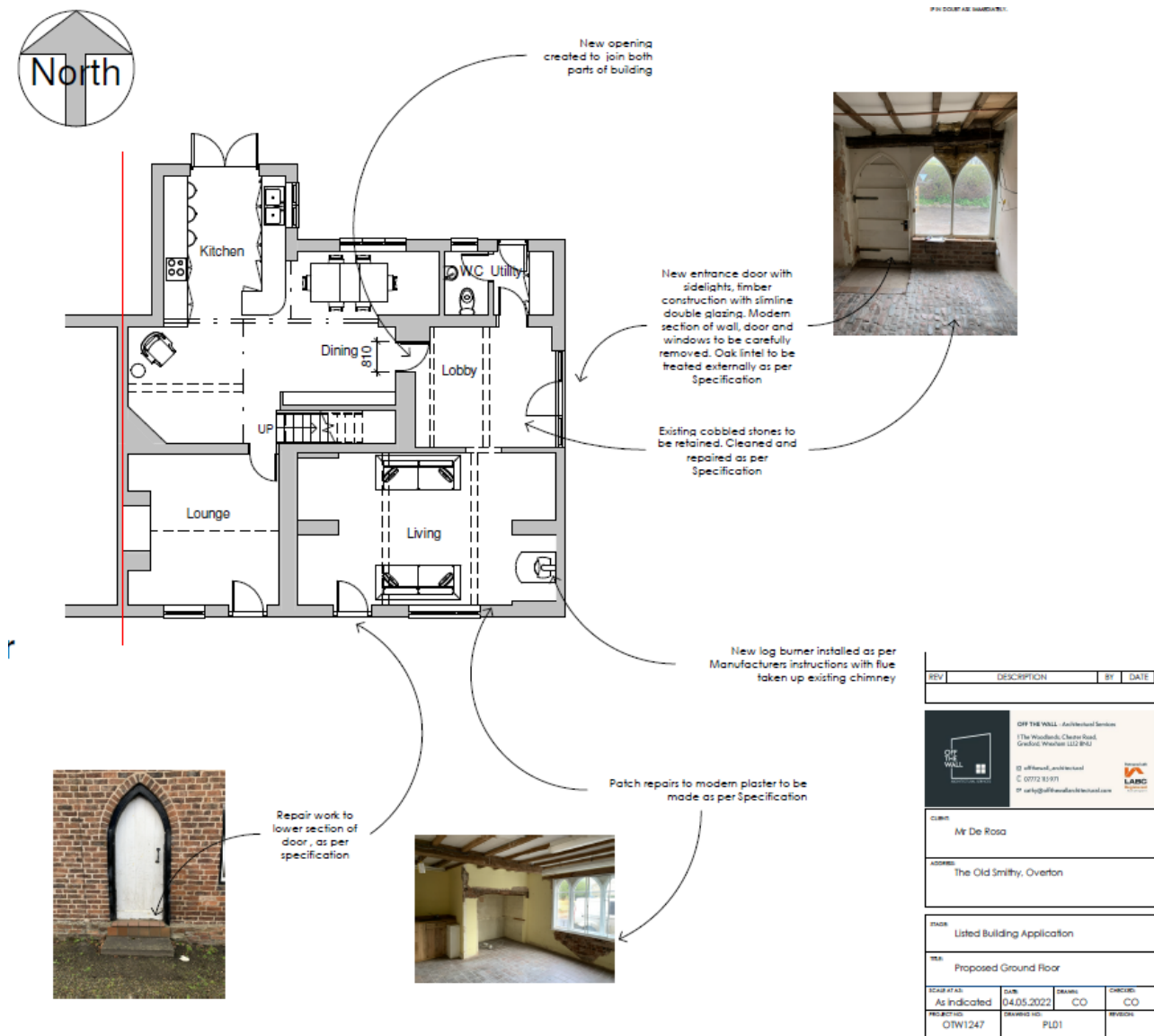
Traditional Street Pattern and Building Line

The original street pattern of Wrexham Road, High Street, Turning Street, School Lane, Pen y Llan Street and Salop Road has remained largely unchanged over time. The front façade of the Old Smithy fronts onto Wrexham Road and respects the original line of the road.

Influence of the Bryn Y Pys and Gwernhaylod Estates

The influence of the former country estates is prevalent throughout the Conservation Area. The Old Smithy forms part of a series of terraced and semi-detached cottages along Wrexham Road and Salop Road which were originally built to house workers of the Bryn y Pys and Gwernhaylod Estates. They are reminders of the importance of the Price and Fletcher families, who built the properties, in the historical development of the village.

PROPOSED WORKS



Plan of proposed works

The proposed works include some repair work and minor interior alterations to facilitate a re-ordering of the internal accommodation. They are outlined in detail in the application but are summarised below.

- New entrance added to the west elevation, current modern doorway to be removed
- Timber lintel to existing opening to west elevation to be strengthened with a steel plate across the full length of the rear face of the beam, 10 mm * 150 mm bolted at 200 mm centres with 50

mm M10 SS bolts. The plate should be in intimate contact with the steel as far as possible and painted prior to fitting.

- Existing cobbled stone floor to the former smithy to be retained, and cleaned in an appropriate manner.
- Modern plaster to be removed and walls to be made good using appropriate plaster and restoration techniques. Where there has been sustained water ingress, damaged plaster should be removed back to sound surface, the wall allowed to dry and then patch plastered with appropriate plaster.
- Ceilings- Modern plaster to be repaired where necessary to avoid disturbance to historic elements. Laths to lath and plaster ceiling to be replaced where broken and lime plaster re-applied, as per specification
- Living Room: window replacement timber with secondary glazing, lime putty replaced where needed, redecoration with appropriate paint as per specification.
- Original external timber door and associated architrave to be stripped with a water based eco stripper and timber inspected and repaired per the specification.
- Existing quarry tiles to be retained and restored per the specification.

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED WORKS ON THE HERITAGE ASSETS

Impact of the Proposed Works on the Heritage Assets

The following assessment identifies the impact of the proposals for the Old Smithy on the significance of the Conservation Area. This is achieved by considering the effects of the proposals on the elements that constitute special interest within the Conservation Area, and the ICOMOS guidance on Heritage Impact Assessment.

Impact of the Proposed Works on the Overton Conservation Area

The proposed works to the Old Smithy will not affect the setting, architectural quality or built form of the Conservation Area. The majority of the proposed works are internal to the building and consequently of negligible impact to the wider Conservation Area. The sole exception to this is the replacement of an existing door on the side entrance to the property. This door will be visible from certain angles on the approach to the Conservation Area from the west along Wrexham Road, approaching the village. However, this door is not visible on any of the four nearby significant views identified in the Overton Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan. This, coupled with the fact that the door to be replaced is not original and is instead a modern replacement, means that the impact of the proposed development on the wider Conservation Area is negligible.

Impact of the Proposed Works on the Significance of The Old Smithy

The Old Smithy has undergone a number of changes in use, from a residence with attached blacksmiths workshop, to a residence with partial commercial use and now to a family home. These changes in use have resulted in alterations to the fabric of the structure. However, the building retains a great deal of historic fabric, which provides evidence of these former uses. With the addition of a modern extension, the historic planform has been somewhat altered, but the division of the former blacksmiths workshop from the residential accommodation is still clear.

Through the process of pre-application consultation, the proposal plans have been discussed and the advice of the Conservation Officer has been reflected in the proposals, with a detailed specification presented by On the Wall Architecture, that will enhance the historic character of the house and provide best practice in historic building conservation techniques. The below assessment reviews how the proposed works affect the elements that contribute to the significance of the historic building. The assessment also uses the ICOMOS guidance for assessing impact upon heritage assets to produce a summary of impact, taking into account the detailed assessment and ICOMOS guidance.

Level of Impact Upon the Evidential Value of the Site: Low

Following the proposed alterations and repair work, the Old Smithy will still be legible as an historic terraced cottage. The proposals will not impact upon the evidence the house provides of the evolution of the wider settlement of Overton, with the development along Wrexham Road. The gothic details to the exterior that are mirrored up the road at Dispensary Row will not be affected, and so this visual link will be retained. The elements of the blacksmiths workshop that provide evidence of former use, such as the cobbled floor and the fireplace to the northern room, will be retained safeguarding this evidence of historic use. The remaining historic fabric will be repaired wherever possible, retaining the evidence of historic building techniques.

The historic plan form has been altered with the addition of an L shaped extension to the rear. Only one change to the current plan form is proposed; the addition of a doorway linking the former smithy to the room to the east, which will be the new dining area. However, this will only result in a very minor loss of fabric, and the historic plan form will still be legible.

Level of Impact Upon the Historical Illustrative Value of the Site: Neutral

The house retains a level of illustrative value, relating to the expansion of the village of Overton in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and particularly the large expansion in construction of smaller cottages and terraces for workers. This will remain unaffected by the alteration of the building.

Level of Impact Upon the Aesthetic Design Value: Neutral/ Beneficial

The elements that contribute to the design value of the property will be retained and repaired. This will be a marked improvement and will have a beneficial impact upon the structure.

Summary of Impact

The proposed works have been designed to retain the maximum amount of historic fabric and undertake informed restoration where needed. Following the ICOMOS guidance, the works to the property would be viewed as a *minor* magnitude of change, as the works will alter the historic building so that it is slightly, but not significantly modified, from its current form. Works of a *minor* nature to a heritage asset of *medium* value result in a *slight impact* upon the asset. Due to the amount of restoration work proposed, this assessment concludes that the proposed works will have an overall *slight beneficial impact* upon the listed building.

CONCLUSIONS

Contribution of the Old Smithy to the Special Interest of the Conservation Area

The Old Smithy is the end terrace of a row of 3 workers cottages at the western end of the Overton Conservation Area. It contributes to the identified Special Interests of the Conservation Area through its building materials which reflect the local vernacular; through its location on the original street plan of the village; and through its connection to the Bryn Y Pys Estate. While its architectural design aesthetics are unremarkable, it does also contribute to views both into and out of the Conservation Area.

Significance of the Old Smithy

The Old Smithy provides evidence of the expansion of the village of Overton in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and particularly of the increased construction of smaller cottages and rows for workers during this time. It provides evidence of the materials and architectural techniques associated with this type of workers cottage, several examples of which are to be found elsewhere in the Conservation Area. It possesses further associative value through its connection to the Price family of the Bryn Y Pys Estate, who were the original owners and were responsible for its construction. As the former blacksmith's in the village, the structure retains evidence of historic former use associated with local craftsmen and has a level of communal significance for those who patronized the establishment. The aesthetic value of the architectural design is low, but the use of gothic detailing at Nos 1-3 and Dispensary Row gives a sense of visual harmony to the area and demonstrates a clear design intention.

Impact of the Proposed Works on the Special Interest of the Conservation Area

The Conservation Area is assessed as having a Medium level of value in line with the ICOMOS guidance. The proposed works would constitute a Negligible level of change to the Conservation Area, as the works would only be slight changes to the exterior of the historic building. This would result in an overall Slight Beneficial impact upon the Conservation Area, owing to the amount of restoration work proposed.

Impact of the Proposed Works on The Old Smithy

The proposed works have been designed to retain the maximum amount of historic fabric and undertake informed restoration where needed. Following the ICOMOS guidance, the works to the property would be viewed as a *minor* magnitude of change, as the works will alter the historic building so that it is slightly, but not significantly modified, from its current form. Works of a *minor* nature to a heritage asset of *medium* value result in a *slight impact* upon the asset. Due to the amount of restoration work proposed, this assessment concludes that the proposed works will have an overall *slight beneficial impact* upon the listed building.

SOURCES

Memories of Overton, overton-on-dee.co.uk, retrieved April 2022

Overton Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan 2010, Wrexham District Council

Historic Settlement Survey – Wrexham County Borough 2013, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 2005, Wrexham District Council

The Overton Oracle, September 2012

Maps and Plans

Tithe Plan 1838

Ordnance Survey 6-inch to 1 mile, 1879

Ordnance Survey 6-inch to 1 mile, 1899

Ordnance Survey 6-inch to 1 mile, 1912

APPENDIX 1: ICOMOS HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The impact of the proposed development has been assessed using a cultural heritage impact assessment methodology based upon the International Council on Monuments and Site (ICOMOS) Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments, a methodology commonly used to assess heritage impact. The significance of the impact of the proposed development is based on the value or sensitivity of the heritage asset and on the magnitude of the impact on that heritage asset. The criteria used for assessing value, magnitude of impact and significance of impact are set out in three tables below. These impacts may be either adverse or beneficial. These tables consider differing types of heritage assets: archaeological attributes, built heritage or historic urban landscapes, historic landscapes and intangible cultural heritage or associations.

Assessing Value of Heritage Assets

The value (significance) or sensitivity of a heritage asset is assessed based on existing national and local statutory designations, guidance such as the Historic England Listing and Scheduling Selection Guides and professional judgement based on research and site surveys.

Table 1: Assessing Value of Heritage Assets

Asset Grading	Archaeological Attribute	Built Heritage or Historic Urban Landscape	Historic Landscape	Intangible Cultural Heritage or Associations
Very High	Sites of acknowledged international importance inscribed as WH property. Individual attributes that convey OUV of the WH property. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged international research objectives.	Sites or structures of acknowledged international importance inscribed as of universal importance as WH property. Individual attributes that convey OUV of the WH property. Other buildings or urban landscapes of recognised International importance.	Landscapes of acknowledged international importance inscribed as WH property. Individual attributes that convey OUV of the WH property. Historic landscapes of international value, whether designated or not. Extremely well preserved historic landscapes with exceptional coherence, time depth, or other critical factors.	Areas associated with Intangible Cultural heritage activities as evidenced by the national register. Associations with particular innovations, technical or scientific developments or movements of global significance. Associations with particular individuals of global importance.

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High	Nationally-designated Archaeological Monuments protected by the State Party's laws. Undesignated sites of the quality and importance to be designated. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged national research objectives.	Nationally-designated structures with standing remains. Other buildings that can be shown to have exceptional qualities in their fabric or historical associations not adequately reflected in the listing grade. Conservation Areas containing very Important buildings. Undesignated structures of clear national importance.	Nationally-designated historic landscape of outstanding interest. Undesignated landscapes of outstanding interest. Undesignated landscapes of high quality and importance, and of demonstrable national value. Well preserved historic landscapes, exhibiting considerable coherence, time-depth or other critical factors.	Nationally-designated areas or activities associated with globally-important Intangible Cultural Heritage activities. Associations with particular innovations, technical or scientific developments or movements of national significance. Associations with particular individuals of national importance.
Medium	Designated or undesignated assets that can contribute significantly to regional research objectives.	Designated buildings. Historic (unlisted) buildings that can be shown to have exceptional qualities or historical associations. Conservation Areas containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historic character. Historic townscapes or built-up areas with important historic integrity in their buildings, or built settings.	Designated special historic landscapes. Undesignated historic landscapes that would justify special historic landscape designation. Landscapes of regional value. Averagely well preserved historic landscapes with reasonable coherence, time-depth or other critical factors.	Areas associated with Intangible Cultural heritage activities as evidenced by local registers. Associations with particular innovations or developments of regional or local significance. Associations with particular individuals of regional importance.
Low	Designated or undesignated assets of local importance. Assets compromised by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations. Assets of limited value, but with potential to contribute to local research objectives.	"Locally Listed" buildings. Historic (unlisted) buildings of modest quality in their fabric or historical associations. Historic Townscape or built-up areas of limited historic integrity in their buildings, or built settings.	Robust undesignated historic landscapes. Historic landscapes with importance to local interest groups. Historic landscapes whose value is limited by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations.	Intangible Cultural heritage activities of local significance. Associations with particular individuals of local importance. Poor survival of physical areas in which activities occur or are associated.
Negligible	Assets with little or no surviving archaeological interest.	Buildings or urban landscapes of no architectural or historical merit; buildings of an intrusive character.	Landscapes little or no significant historical interest.	Few associations or ICH vestiges surviving.
Unknown potential	The importance of the asset has not been ascertained.	Buildings with some hidden (or inaccessible) potential for historic significance.	n/a	Little is known or recorded about ICH of the area.

Adapted from ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments (2011)

Assessing Magnitude of Change or Impact

The magnitude of change or impact is assessed based upon a detailed understanding of how and to what extent the proposed development might impact the specific type of heritage involved. It is necessary to have an understanding of the contribution of the setting to the value of the heritage asset as well as an understanding of the key elements or components which contribute to the value or significance of the asset to be able to determine the magnitude of impact.

Table 2: Assessing Magnitude of Change or Impact

Impact Grading	Archaeological Attributes	Built Heritage or Historic Urban Landscape Attributes	Historic Landscape Attributes	Intangible Cultural Heritage Attributes or Associations
Major	Changes to attributes that convey OUV of WH properties. Most or all key archaeological materials, including those that contribute to OUV such that the resource is totally altered. Comprehensive changes to setting.	Change to key historic building elements that contribute to OUV, such that the resource is totally altered. Comprehensive changes to the setting.	Change to most or all key historic landscape elements, parcels or components; extreme visual effects; gross change of noise or change to sound quality; fundamental changes to use or access; resulting in total change to historic landscape character unit and loss of OUV.	Major changes to area that affect the ICH activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.
Moderate	Changes to many key archaeological materials, such that the resource is clearly modified. Considerable changes to setting that affect the character of the asset.	Changes to many key historic building elements, such that the resource is significantly modified. Changes to the setting of an historic building, such that it is significantly modified.	Change to many key historic landscape elements, parcels or components; visual change to many key aspects of the historic landscape; noticeable differences in noise or sound quality; considerable changes to use or access; resulting in moderate changes to historic landscape character.	Considerable changes to area that affect the ICH activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.
Minor	Changes to key archaeological materials, such that the resource is slightly altered. Slight changes to setting.	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.	Change to few key historic landscape elements, parcels or components; slight visual changes to few key aspects of historic landscape; limited changes to noise levels or sound quality; slight changes to use or access; resulting in limited change to historic landscape character.	Changes to area that affect the ICH activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.
Negligible	Very minor changes to key archaeological materials, or setting.	Slight changes to historic building elements or setting that hardly affect it.	Very minor changes to key historic landscape elements, parcels or components; virtually unchanged visual effects; very slight changes in noise levels or sound quality; very slight changes to use or access; resulting in a very small change to historic landscape character.	Very minor changes to areas that affect the ICH activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.

No change	No change.	No change to fabric or setting.	No change to elements, parcels or components; no visual or audible changes; no changes in amenity or community factors.	No change.
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Adapted from ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments (2011)

Assessing the Significance of Impact

The table below, Assessing the Significance of Impact, uses a matrix to combine the value of the heritage assets with the magnitude of impact. This significance of impact can be either adverse or beneficial. An impact of major adverse would equate to an assessment of substantial harm, as defined in the NPPF paragraphs 132-133. Other assessments of adverse impact would equate to less than substantial harm as defined in the NPPF paragraph 134.

Table 3: Assessing the Significance of Impact

Value of Heritage Asset	Scale & Severity of Change/Impact				
	No Change	Negligible change	Minor change	Moderate change	Major change
For WH Properties Very High – Attributes which Convey OUV	Significance of Effect or Overall Impact (Either Adverse or Beneficial)				
	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/ Large	Large/Very Large	Very Large

For Other Heritage Assets or Attributes	Significance of Impact (Either Adverse or Beneficial)				
Very High	Neutral	Slight	Slight/ Moderate	Large/very Large	Very Large
High	Neutral	Slight	Slight/ Moderate	Moderate/ Large	Large/Very Large
Medium	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate/ Large
Low	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight	Slight/ Moderate

Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight
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Adapted from ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments (2011)