Cedar Hall Stables
Gresford
Wrexham Maelor (ex-Denbighshire)
NGR: SJ 344 550

A
Heritage Impact Assessment
on the
Proposed Development of the Stables

Text
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July 2026
Mercian Heritage Series No.2516

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Summary

Proposals have been made for the conversion of the redundant former Stables of Cedar Hall – the former vicarage – to a residential annexe. The house and stables were built around 1850 and are separately Grade II listed. Under the guidelines of Planning Policy Wales, this Consultancy was commissioned to produce an assessment of the impact on the listed building and on any other heritage assets adjacent to it. The report is not concerned with any other planning matters. It concludes that overall the scheme is well-considered and proportionate and will result in little or no harm to the significance of the listed buildings or any adjacent heritage assets.

Crynodeb

Mae cynigion wedi cael eu gwneud ar gyfer troi'r Hen Stablenni diangen yn Cedar Hall - yr hen ficerllys - i ddefnydd preswyl. Cafodd y tŷ a'r stablenni eu hadeiladu tua 1850 ac maent wedi'u rhestru fel Gradd II ar wahân. Dan arweiniad Polisi Cynllunio Cymru, comisiynwyd y Cynghoriaeth hon i gynhyrchu asesiad o'r effaith ar y adeilad a restrwyd ac ar unrhyw asedau treftadaeth cyfagos iddo. Nid yw'r adroddiad yn ymwneud â materion cynllunio eraill. Mae'n casglu bod y cynllun yn gyffredinol wedi'i ystyried yn dda ac yn gymesur a bydd yn arwain at ychydig neu ddim niwed i arwyddocâd y tai a restrwyd nac unrhyw asedau treftadaeth cyfagos.

1. Introduction

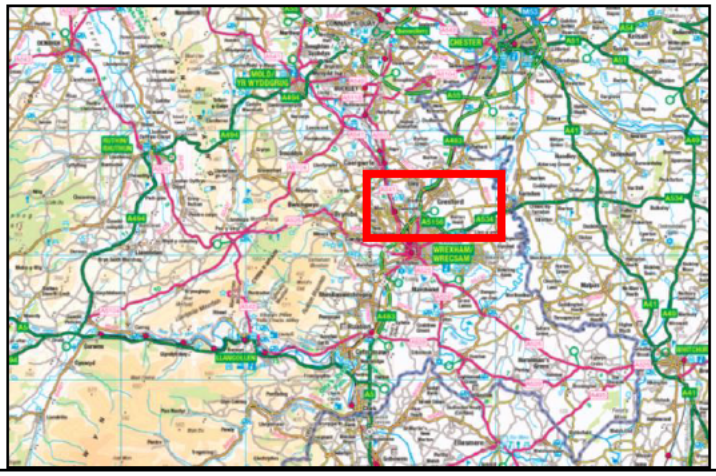
1.1 General

Proposals have been made for the conversion of the redundant former Stables of Cedar Hall – the former vicarage – in Gresford, near Wrexham into a residential annexe. The house and Stables are contemporary, being built on a greenfield site in 1850; they were separately listed Grade II in 1996. This report has been commissioned, under the guidelines of *Planning Policy Wales* to assess the heritage impact of the proposals on the character, setting or significance of the listed building and any other designated or undesignated heritage assets adjacent to the site.

1.2 Report Format

The report format is straightforward. After this introductory section is an outline relevant planning guidance (Sections 2), followed by an outline history of the site (Section 3). Section 4 is an outline description of the various components of the site, Section 5 a discussion, and Section 6 a short heritage statement. Section 6 outlines the proposals, Section 7 is a heritage impact assessment of the proposals, and Section 8 is a short conclusion

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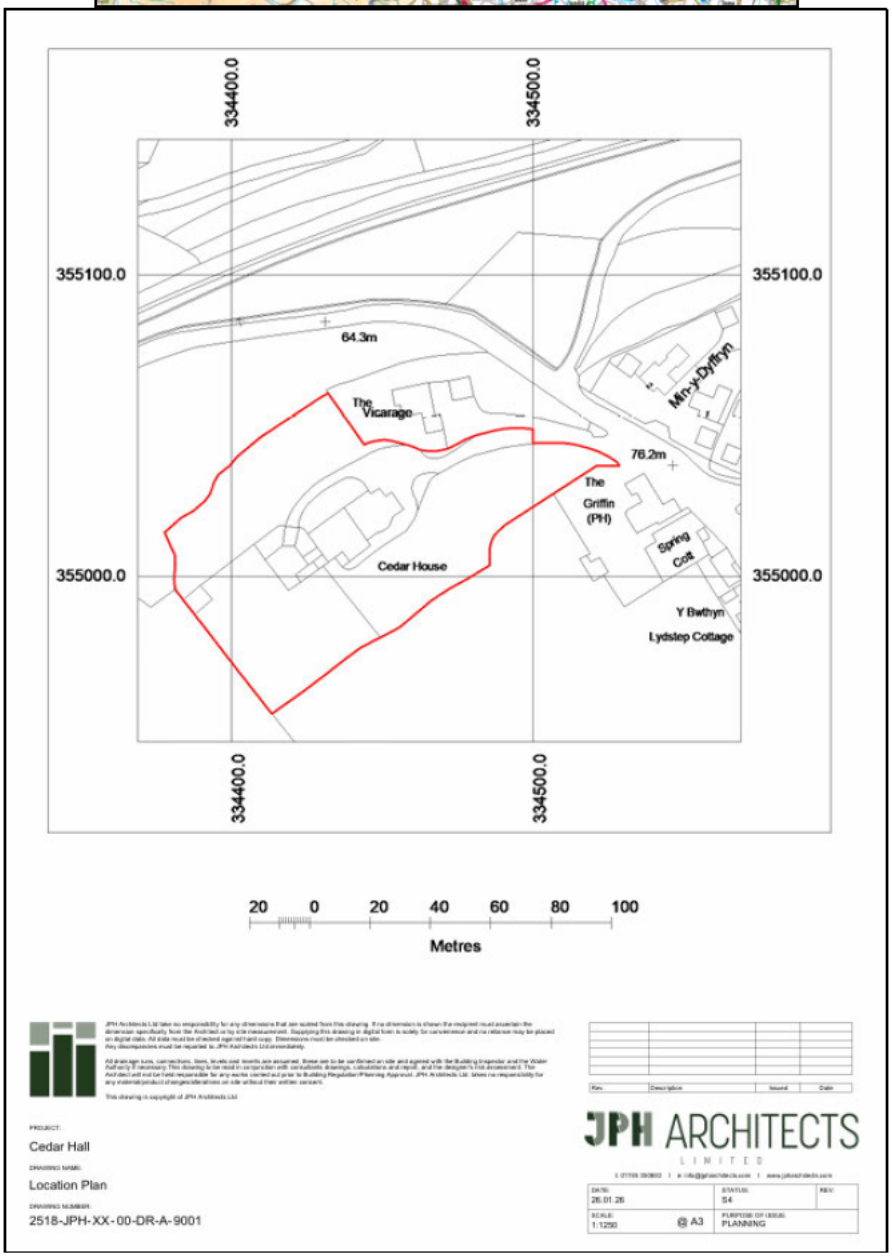


Fig.1: Location and site plan.
(OS Open Data & JPH Architects)

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2. General Planning Guidance

Section 96 of the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 states that:

> *(1) On determining an application for listed building consent, a planning authority or the Welsh Ministers may grant or refuse consent.*
> *(2) In considering whether to grant listed building consent, a planning authority or the Welsh Ministers must have special regard to the desirability of preserving—*
> *(a) the listed building to which the application relates,*
> *(b) the setting of the building, and*
> *(c) any features of special architectural or historic interest the building possesses.*
> *(3) Listed building consent has effect for the benefit of the listed building and the land on which it is situated, and of all persons for the time being interested in the building and land; but this is subject to the terms of the consent.*

The main planning guidance for Wales is now set out in *Planning Policy Wales*, originally issued in 2002 and now already in its 11th iteration. Chapter 6 deals with the historic environment. It states in paragraph 6.1.5:

> '*The planning system must take into account the Welsh Government's objectives to protect, conserve, promote and enhance the historic environment as a resource for the general well-being of present and future generations. The historic environment is a finite, non-renewable and shared resource and a vital and integral part of the historical and cultural identity of Wales. It contributes to economic vitality and culture, civic pride, local distinctiveness and the quality of Welsh life*'.

and in paragraph 6.1.13:

> '*Applicants for listed building consent must be able to justify their proposals, show why the alteration or demolition of a listed building is desirable or necessary and consider the impact of any change upon its significance. This must be included in a heritage impact statement, which will be proportionate both to the significance of the building and to the degree of change proposed*'.

Paragraph 6.1.10 states:

> '*There should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of a listed building and its setting, which might extend beyond its curtilage. For any development proposal affecting a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*'.

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However, Paragraph 6.1.11 recognises that in many cases adaptive re-use will be the only option available in order to retain and preserve a heritage asset, stating:

> '*For listed buildings, the aim should be to find the best way to protect and enhance their special qualities, retaining them in sustainable use. The continuation or reinstatement of the original use should generally be the first option, but not all original uses will now be viable or appropriate. The application of planning and listed building controls should recognise the need for flexibility where new uses have to be considered in order to secure a building's survival or provide it with a sound economic future*'.

Earlier versions of PPW re-introduced the concept of 'Undesignated historic assets' – adapted the English system's 'non-designated heritage assets' first outlined in PPS5 and repeated in the NPPF. In the latest version (11) of PPW these are now referred to (in para 6.1.29) as 'Historic assets of special local importance':

> *'planning authorities may develop lists of historic assets of special local interest, that do not have statutory protection, but that make an important contribution to local distinctiveness and have the potential to contribute to public knowledge'.*

The potential impact of any changes to heritage assets needs to be assessed during the development of the proposals for such changes; Cadw, the national heritage body in Wales, have produced guidance on the production of such heritage assessments – *Heritage Impact Assessments in Wales* (2017) – which outlines what information is required. It:

> '*should take into account sufficient information to enable both the significance of the asset and the impact of change to be understood. It should be proportionate both to the significance of the historic asset and to the degree of change proposed.*'

Allied to the PPW, the Welsh Government produced, in 2017, TAN24 – *Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment*. Section 5.13 states that:

> '*When determining a listed building consent application, the local planning authority should consider the following issues:*
>
> *The importance and grade of the building and its intrinsic architectural or historic interest;*
>
> *The physical features of the building which justify its listing and contribute to its significance (for example its form and layout, materials, construction and detail) including any features of importance such as the interior, which may have come to light after the building's inclusion on the list.*
>
> *The contribution of curtilage and setting to the significance of the building, as well as its contribution to its local scene;*

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> *The impact of the proposed works on the significance of the building;*
>
> *The extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial community benefits, for example by contributing to the area's economy or the enhancement of the local environment.*'

Section 5.14 adds:

> '*Many listed buildings can sustain a degree of sensitive alteration and extension to accommodate continuing or new uses. Past changes that reflect the history of use and ownership may themselves be aspects of the special interest of the listed building…*'

In May 2017 Cadw produced two relevant 'best practice guidance' notes. In *Managing Change to Listed Buildings in Wales*, Section 4.5 states:

> '*New work or alteration may sometimes be necessary or appropriate to keep a historic building in long-term viable use or to give it a new lease of life. You must be able to explain why the work is needed and provide sufficient information to explain the impact of your proposal on the significance of the building. The quality of design and execution should enhance the aesthetic value of the building and its setting, and additions should not dominate. Any new work should also respect the performance characteristics of the building. The choice of appropriate materials and craftsmanship is crucial. The need for quality in new work applies at every level, from small interventions in a historic room to major new buildings or developments'.*

and Section 4.7 added:

> '*Sometimes, buildings cease to be useful for their original purpose and new uses may be necessary to secure their long-term viability. This is particularly true of redundant farm buildings, industrial buildings, places of worship or large houses, for example. Change of use will almost invariably result in loss of historical form, fabric or detail, such as internal fittings, but these losses should be kept to the minimum necessary so that the original use can still be legible'*.

In *Managing Listed Buildings at Risk in Wales*, Section 4.2 states:

> *'Beneficial use funds the long-term maintenance of a listed building, either directly or indirectly. Taking action to keep a building in beneficial use, or to secure a new use if necessary, is vital'.*

An earlier Cadw guidance document, *Conservation Principles*, of 2011, provides a more succinct, pragmatic and useful summary of the issues of conservation and its core principle (para.1.1) recognises that:

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> '*Changes in the historic environment are inevitable. This can be the result of decay caused by natural processes, damage caused by wear and tear of use, and the need to respond to social, cultural, economic and technological changes*' (para.1.1).

Furthermore, it states that '*conservation is the careful management of change*' (para.1.2).

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3. Setting & Outline History

3.1 Gresford

Gresford lies just to the north of Wrexham, in north-east Wales. The name is probably of Old English origin – meaning the 'grass ford' – presumably a crossing of the River Alyn; there have been attempts to cymrize the name and to suggest it is in fact derived from Old Welsh from 'croesffordd' – the 'the cross-roads'.[1]

However, the earliest written form is *Gretford* in the Domesday Survey of 1086 - when it was listed in the Cheshire folios; this also indicated that the township been held by a freeman called Thorth at the time of the Conquest – which suggests Saxon occupation at that time. The settlement is written as *Gresford* in a deed of 1273.

According to the eccentric antiquary John Leland writing around the 1530's, '*at Gresforde is as fair a churche as Wrexham*'.[2] The size and architectural quality of the mainly late-medieval church suggests that it was built to serve a significantly larger settlement than Gresford later became.

Samuel Lewis, writing in 1840, stated that:

> '*…the village is delightfully situated on the western side of the road from Wrexham to Chester, near the head of a beautiful valley….the little vale of Gresford is one of the most lovely in the principality, abounding with pleasing and interesting objects, enlivened by the meanderings of the river Alyn through its meadows, and finely varied with richly wooded eminences, on one of which stands conspicuously its beautiful church, remarkable for the elegance of its architecture…*'.[3]

In 1848 the railway came to the area, leading to one guide complaining that '*The little vale of Gresford was one of the most lovely in the principality; but the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway has invaded its tranquil retreats, and somewhat marred the picturesque charms of this locality'.*[4]

The arrival of the railways also accelerated the exploitation of the local coalfield. A major colliery was begun on the edge of the village at the start of the 20th century employing several thousand people, leading to extensive new housing to the west of the original settlement. The scene, in 1934, of one of the worst British mining disasters, the colliery closed in 1973.

Despite the industrialisation of the area in the past century or so and the expansion of nearby Wrexham, the historic core of Gresford around a green and the parish church is still distinct from those later housing developments.

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[1] Owen, H Wyn, & Morgan, R, 2008, *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales*, 175
[2] Smith, L Toulmin (ed.), 1964, *The Itinerary of John Leland, Vol.III*, 69
[3] Lewis, S, 1840, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*, np.
[4] Hicklin, J, 1853, *The Illustrated Hand-book of North Wales*

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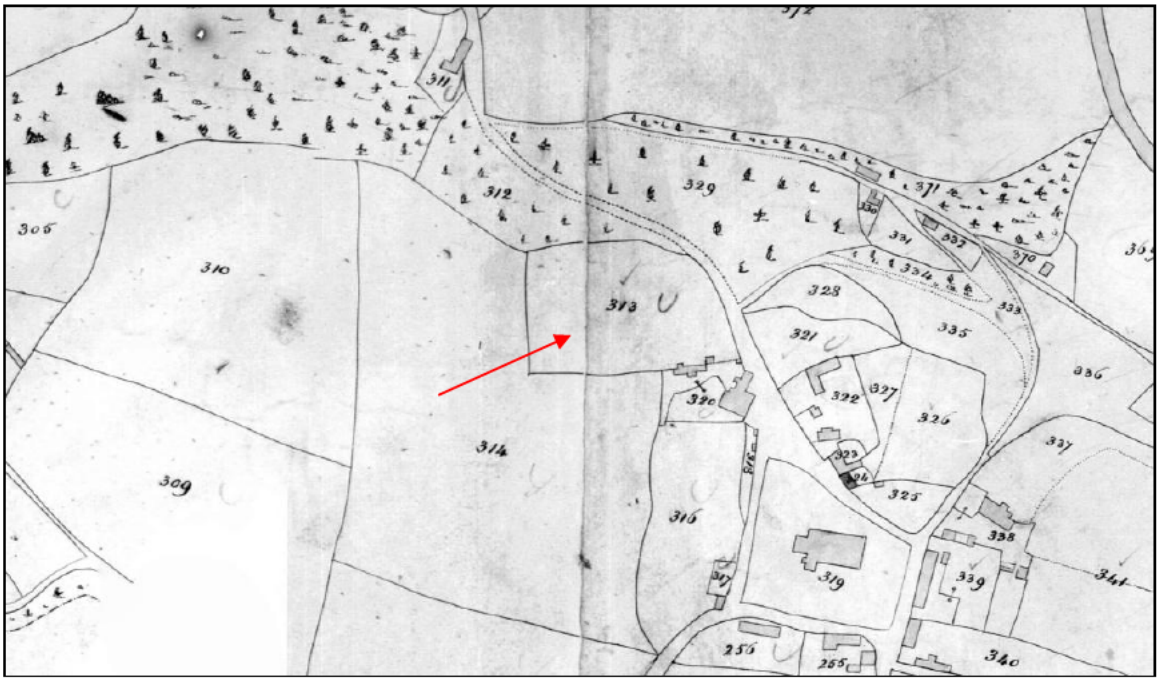


Fig.2: Extract from the 1843 tithe map, site arrowed.



Fig.3: Extract from the 1st edition 6" Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1872. The location of the new build associated with the scheme is arrowed; note the existence at this time of other structures against the garden wall and the fact that the house and stables were then linked by a now missing wing (*see below*).

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3.2 Cedar Hall

In 1846 Dr Vowler Short became Bishop of St. Asaph and in the following year appointed his brother-in-law, Robert Wickham to the vacant living at Gresford; in 1854 the bishop appointed Wickham Archdeacon of St. Asaph and a canon at his cathedral – with a combined income of well over £1,000. Wickham had previously been the headteacher of one of the largest private prep schools in England, Twyford, near Winchester and appears to have already been quite wealthy.[5]

The overt nepotism of Wickham's appointment was fairly typical of the period, but Bishop Short was also considered as being fairly advanced in many ways and did much to encourage the repair of churches and the building of new schools and rectories. One of the grandest of the new rectories was that built for Wickham at Gresford, shortly after his appointment. The original vicarage was then sold off.

The new house was built within the glebe on an arable field, called Barn Field, which had previously been leased along with the adjacent Inn. The size and architectural aspiration of the new rectory probably owed more to Wickham's personal income rather than episcopal grants. The architect was Thomas Jones (c.1794-1859) of Chester. Jones practised mostly in north Wales and was County Surveyor of Flintshire; he specialized in Tudorbethan Gothic.

The 1851 census lists Robert Wickham, then aged 48, together with his wife Jane, two daughters, Elizabeth and Laura, a groom, and four house servants including a cook. The household appears to have remained fairly static. Bishop Short, incidentally, evidently remained close to Wickham after he retired and was staying at Gresford Vicarage when he died, aged 83, in 1872. Robert Wickham remained vicar of Gresford and lived at the vicarage until his death at the end of 1880 aged 78.

Old mapping of that period shows that the present house was once slightly larger, with one rear wing extending as far as the now separate stable court and coach house range; similarly, the mapping indicates a narrow range along the south-eastern side of the stable court as well as buildings against the inner face of the north-western wall of the walled garden area beyond the stable court – and a detached building within that area and a larger one just outside (*see* Fig.3).

Apart from the loss of those elements in the mid-20th century the property appears to have been relatively little altered, although the setting was changed by the construction during the same period of a large detached property in the former gardens immediately to the north of the house – significantly reducing the once spacious aspect at the entrance into the grounds.

[5] Wickham's descendants continued to have connections with the school, several becoming headmasters, until the mid-20th century.

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4. Description

4.1 Setting

The Stables lie to the rear, or south, of the former vicarage – now Cedar Hall. The house is a deliberately asymmetric two-storey composition built of dark red brick with ashlared detailing in a vaguely Tudorbethan stile with coped stone gables and tall decorative chimneys.

Windows are mainly timber cross-mullioned sashes set within openings with stone lintels and sills. The entrance is set in a canted section at the north-western corner of the building and set behind a three-bay ashlared loggia with four-centred arched heads; above the entrance is the only window with ashlared quoins.

To the rear of the house is a rear courtyard overlooked by the two gabled rear wings – its layout and character now significantly changed due to the demolition of a former link block along the west side of the yard that butted against the adjacent stable court.



Pl.1: Cedar Hall from the north, with the entrance to the Stables in the distance to the right.

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Pl.2: The Stables (right) from the west, with the rear of the house to the left.



Pl.3: The stable court from the south, with the house beyond.

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The location of the stable court was clearly deliberately set a little to the north-west of the alignment of the house and its rear yard so that the canted angled entrance into the stables was visible from the entrance to the house – and its angle echoed the angled loggia of that entrance.

The Stables are formed of two main sections – a two-storey canted 'L-shaped' portion incorporated the main coach entrance into the yard, and a single storey extension against its south-eastern gable end.

These two sections form the north-west and north-eastern sides of the stable yard, the other two sides formed by tall brick walls. For convenience, in this report these will be considered as the west and north wings of the Stables respectively, and all other compass points considered accordingly. Further to the south is a grassed area bounded on one side by a continuation of the west wall of the west wing of the stables, with another wall at right-angles to it.



Pl.4: The entrance to the Stables.

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4.2 The Buildings

4.2.1 The Main Section

4.2.1.01 The Exterior

The Stables are built of not particularly regular hand-made browny-red bricks. On the principal external elevations to north and west these are laid to an English bond (of alternating courses of stretchers and headers) but on the other elevations the bond is a less regular and less-well laid English Garden Wall bond (with three or more rows of stretchers between each row of headers). At the wall heads are simple projecting eaves detailing.

The main cartway entrance into the stables is in the canted north-western angle of the complex. This has a four-centred brick-arched head; in the jambs are stone pintle blocks for the strap hinges of the pair of plank doors. To either side of the opening are tall windows with segmental arched brick heads and multi-paned fixed glazing. Above the opening is a raised gable with stone coping topped by a brick chimney.

The flanking outer wall of the west wing of the Stables is plain apart from a single taking-in doorway at attic level. The outer wall of north wing is difficult to assess because of overgrowth, but seems also to have been plain – although part of the scar of the former linking range to the house is evident. The end gables of both of the wings are plain. The northern one is abutted by the lower extension to the east.

The yard elevation of the canted entrance section contains the virtually full-width inner doorway, which has a four-centred brick arched head but no doors. The left, the inner wall of the west range has a primary doorway and window opening on the ground floor, each with a plain segmental arched brick head. The door has a plain plank door and the window a three-light mullioned timber casement. Above the window is a smaller one, also with segmental arched head, now blocked in brick.

The yard elevation of the north wing is dominated by the broad coach opening; this has a timber lintel above double ledged and braced plank doors. Above is a taking-in doorway to the loft with a strap-hung plank door.

4.2.1.02 The Roof

The roof follows the canted footprint of the Stables with coped gables at either end; the outer slopes of the roof are hipped on either side of the angled entrance section. The roof covering is of slate with ceramic bonnet tiles; there are roof-lights on both outer and inner roof slopes.

The section of roof over the west wing is structurally of two bays, with an intermediate king-post truss; there is a single bay over the shorter north range and over the entranceway. The truss and the brick cross walls flanking the entrance support a single tier of purlins supporting the common rafters. Some of the roof timbers are re-used.

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Pl.5: The inner elevations of the stable court.



Pl.6: The roof over the west wing of the Stables.

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4.2.1.03 The Interior

The Ground Floor

The entrance carriageway through the Stable's north-western corner is rectangular in plan and has bare brick walls; it once had a lath-and-plastered ceiling but that has been removed exposing the common joists of the loft floor. There are doorways with plank doors on either side leading into small virtually triangular spaces between the carriageway and the adjacent rectangular spaces in the wings to either side, lit by the windows flanking the entrance.

The eastern one has a cobbled floor, plastered walls and ceiling. In one corner is a small raised manger as well as a tethering ring beneath the scar of an iron corner hayrack and this space was presumably some form of loose box. The western space has a quarry tiled floor, in very poor condition, and plastered walls and ceiling. In one corner is a simple but well-proportioned stone chimney piece. This was presumably the groom's room.

The north wing contained the tall coach house on the ground floor; this has a cobbled floor and plain-plastered walls and ceiling. The west wing contains the stables and retains a set of four stalls. The stalls have cast-iron end columns and 'swan's neck' top-rails, with vertical plank dividers. The floor is brick paved and the walls plastered. The first floor structure has been renewed and is contemporary with a set of timber steps at the southern end of the wing.

The Loft

There is a loft over the whole range, open to the roof and lit by rooflights. The floor level is varied, because of the different heights of the spaces on the ground floor. The individual spaces are separated by brick cross walls rising to the purlin level, with central openings in between.



Pl.7: The carriageway entrance.

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Pl.8: The groom's office fireplace.



Pl.9: The stabling in the ground floor of the west wing.

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4.2.2 The Single Storey Section

The eastern single-storey section attached to the east gable of the north wing has, on the north side facing the rear yard of the house, two doorways with segmental head, the western one being a wider opening with a head of two rings of brick. The other doorway has just a single ring of headers and contains a plank door. To its left is a tall but narrow window opening with segmental arched head and fixed multi-paned glazing.

On the stable yard side immediately next to the gable end of the two storey portion of the north wing is the open-fronted cart shed section, topped by a coped half gable and, to the left of that, a rebuilt lean-to brick shed at the north-eastern corner of the yard.

The roof over the western portion is dual pitch; its northern slope is continued to the end of the range. On the yard side this half of the roof ends in a coped half gable, as the lean-to beyond is significantly lower. Above it is a raised spine wall.



Pl.10: The north wall of the single storey portion of the stable court.

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Pl.11: The single storey section from the south.



Pl.12: The inner face of the eastern stable yard wall.

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4.2.3 The Yard Walls

The yard walls forming the east and south walls of the stable court are contemporary with the stable buildings. They are built of the same type of brick, laid to an even looser English Garden Wall bond and topped by a plain stone coping.

Towards the northern end of the east wall is a blocked doorway with a segmental arched head. On the west, or yard, face is clear evidence of limewash, buttress remnants and some joist pockets associated with the missing east range shown on the old mapping.

In the south wall is a doorway with a crude flat-arched brick head; there is further evidence of former structures built against it. There is no break between the brickwork of this wall and that of the south gable end of the west wing of the Stables.



Pl.13: The south side of the south stable yard wall.

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4.2.4 The Garden Wall

The tall brick garden wall continues the alignment of the west wall of the west wing of the Stables but is not contiguous with it; instead, there is a clear vertical break between the two – the garden all butting against the wing. Towards the southern end of the wall is a doorway with segmental arched head – with a vertical construction break just to the north of it.

Towards the northern end of the wall, but only obvious on the east side, is a blocked opening or recess beneath a segmental arched head. There are also traces in limewash indicating the location of structures built against the wall and shown on the old mapping.



Pl.14: The eastern face of the western garden wall; note evidence for earlier structure built against this side of the wall in the past and the blocked former doorway (arrowed).

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5. Discussion & Heritage Statement

Both Cedar House and its former Stables were separately listed Grade II in 1996 and are thus both of national, as opposed to regional, significance. The Stables were built in 1850 built at the same time as, and to serve, the Rev. Wickham's new vicarage – now Cedar House. The two were built as a single composition, with the design of the Stables a diluted version of the Tudorbethan design of the house. The link was emphasised by the use of an angled entrance to the Stables echoing the angled entrance to the house itself – the entrance to the Stables thus being visible from anyone approaching the entrance to the house. This is also the reason why the brickwork of that elevation is of better quality than the rest.

The design of the Stables has some limited architectural merit but is not by a major architect and as stabling the interior arrangements were clearly compromised by the plan form. Its main significance, as outlined in the listing details, is '*as a good example of a mid C19 stable block which retains some original features*' and it evidently contributes to the setting of the former vicarage – especially as the two were once physically linked.

By the start of the 20th century the Stables would have effectively become redundant as motor vehicles replaced the coach and horse. The coach house section was converted to a garage and the stable section seems simply to have been abandoned.

The external shell of the Stables and the character stable court have been relatively little altered since it was first built, apart from the loss of the link to the house, the range against the southern side of the yard, and its general domestication. Some openings have also been blocked. The other changes are the roof lights.

The main changes have been internal, with the changes to the interior of the former coach house section, the re-flooring of the stables section and other modifications. Many of these changes were the result of later-20th century work, as noted in the listing details when the building was listed in 1996 which stated that '*the buildings show signs of alteration and were restored in the late C20*'.

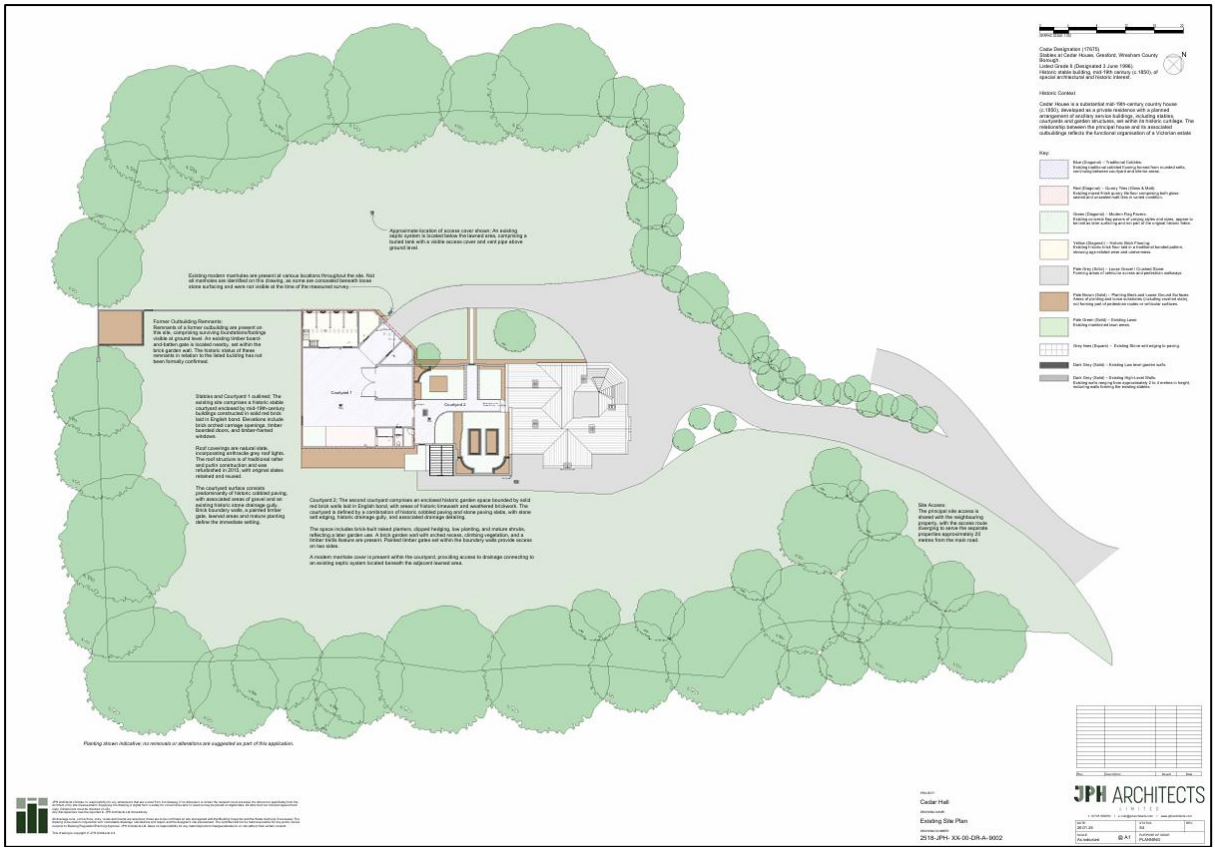
6. The Proposals

The Stables have been largely redundant for many years, used only for *ad hoc* storage associated with the house. The buildings have been maintained with some repairs clearly required to the attic floor in particular. However, without any viable use the buildings are in danger of disuse and, potentially, lack of long term maintenance.

Proposals have been developed for the adaptive reuse of the existing buildings as a residential annexe to the house. The overall appearance, scale and massing of the exterior will be retained with some changes to existing openings and reopening of others. Most changes are internal, though respecting much of the basic plan form. Most existing openings are to be reused.

Because of the present inconvenient levels of the upper floors within the building, the main internal changes relate to lowering some sections in order to create a more logical circulation pattern suited to the building's new use. The key element of this is the creation of a better arrangement over the main entrance arch in which the central portion is dropped more than the sections adjacent to the front and rear elevations but will be no lower than the soffit of the arch.

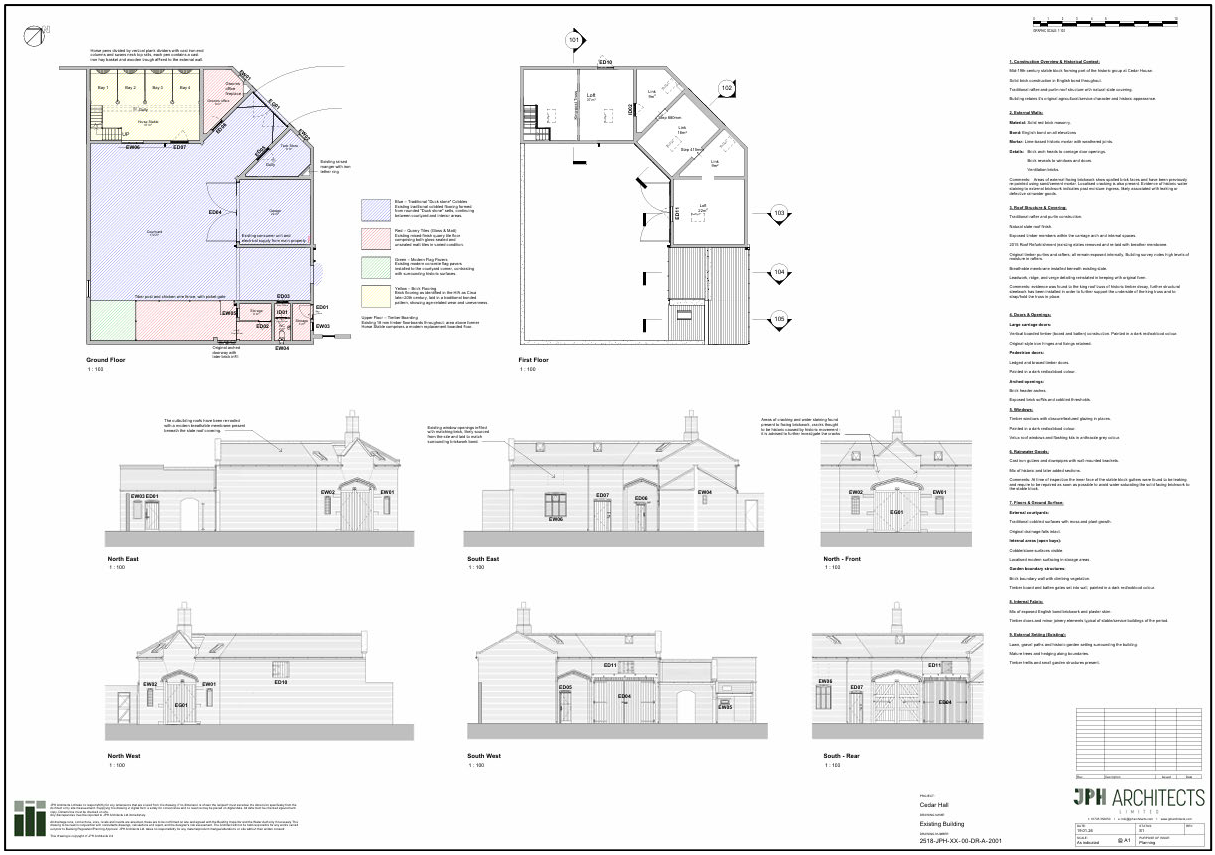
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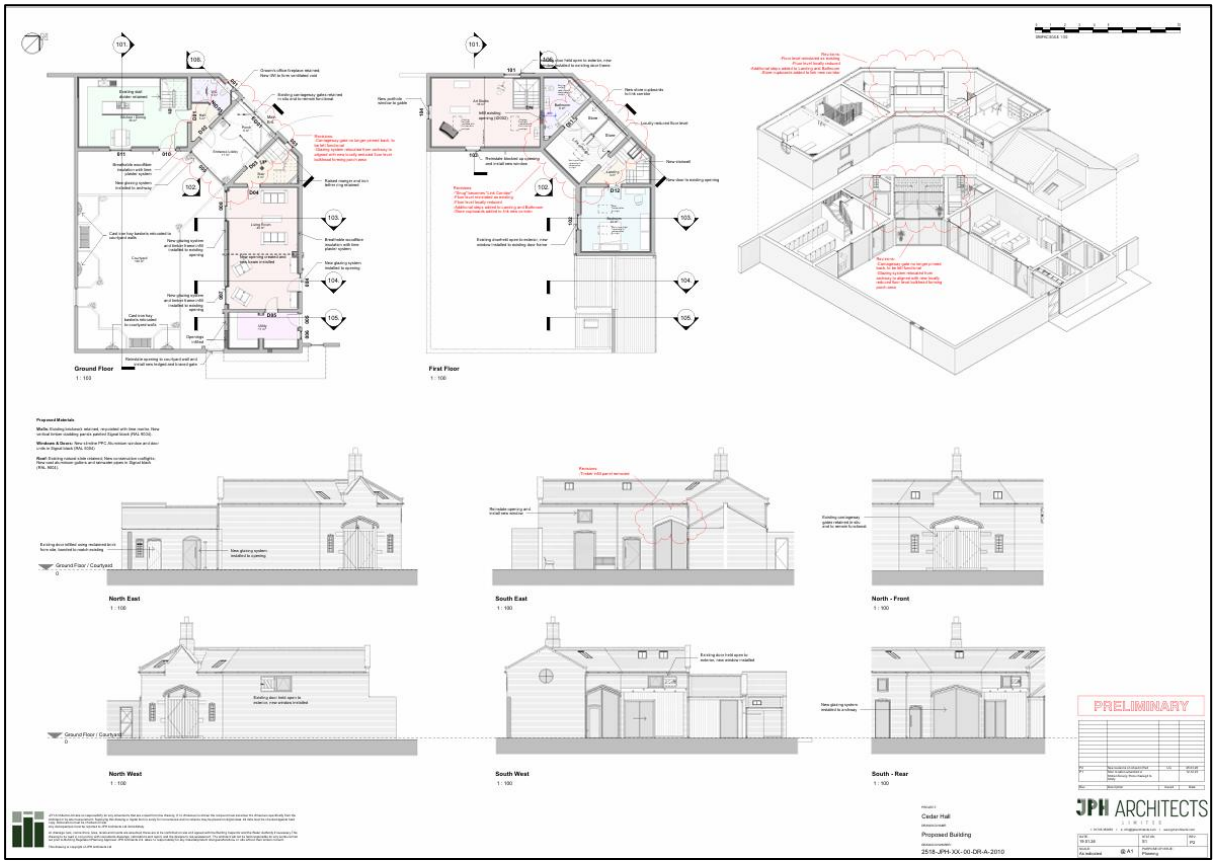




Figs.4 and 5: Existing (top) and proposed block plan.

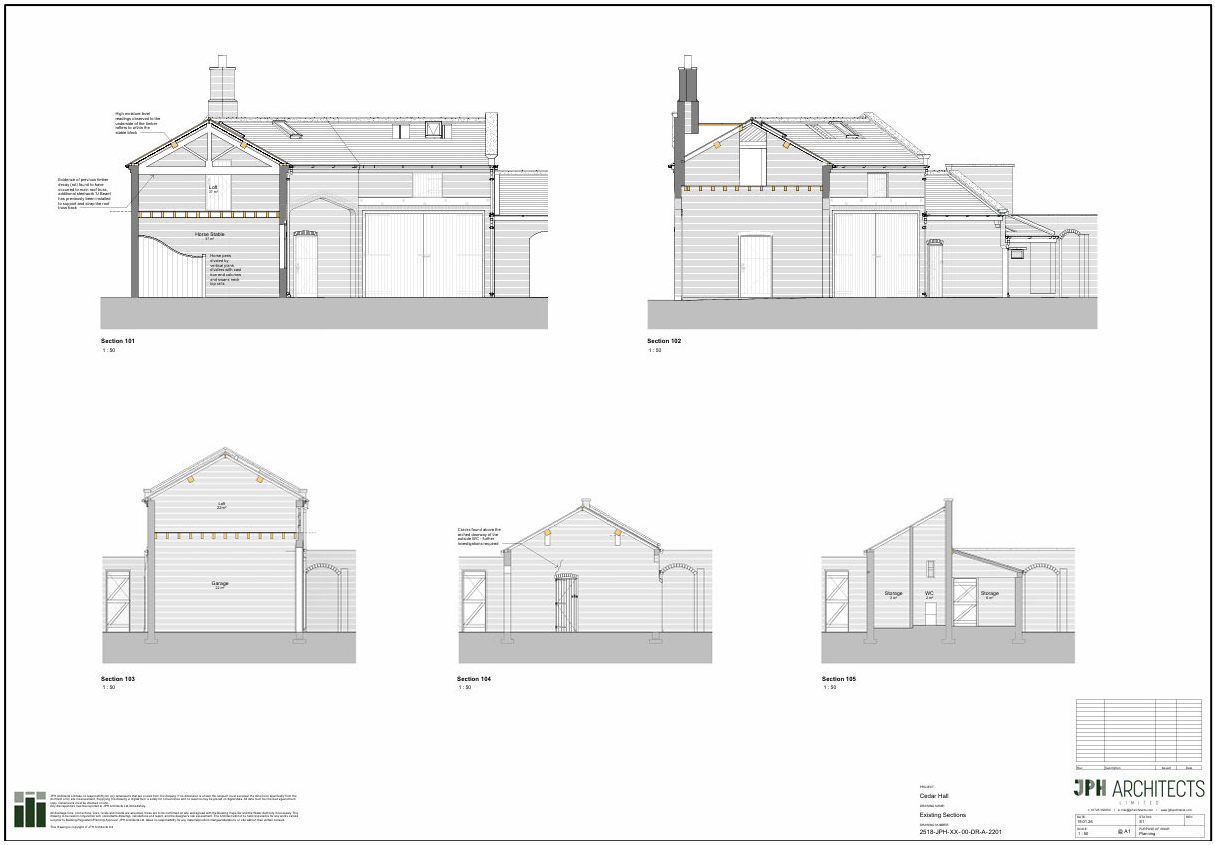
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Figs.6 & 7: Existing (top) and proposed plans and elevations.

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Figs.8 & 9: Existing (top) and proposed sections.

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7. Heritage Impact Assessment

7.1 Impact on the Listed Building

7.1.1 Physical Impact

As noted above, the physical impact on the listed building is largely confined to the interior. There will be some minor changes to the exterior, mainly associated with the sensitive re-ordering of existing openings. For example, the main entrance to the carriageway will retain its existing gates - with infill glazing set behind them in order to retain the existing external appearance of the building. Similarly, taking-in doorways at loft level will be glazed, their shutters also retained in the 'open' position.

On the east side of the west wing the existing doorway will be glazed and the existing window converted to a doorway by lowering the sill to ground level but retaining the existing width and the brick arched head; the blocked loft opening above is to be re-opened. In order to provide additional light to the proposed studio at loft level, a traditional circular 'pitching eye' is to be introduced in the coped south gable. Additionally, the existing rooflights will be replaced by better quality 'conservation' rooflights.

The internal changes retain the basic plan form but do involve a degree of loss of fabric with minor changes to and removal of partitions – the main one being between the two storey coach house portion of the east wing and the adjacent single storey section. The stairs in the south-eastern corner of the south or stable wing are to be removed and replaced by two new sets of stairs.

The existing upper floor in the eastern wing of the complex is to be lowered slightly in order to ensure the minimum height for a viable residential conversion. This viability of the new use for the building is a key element in ensuring its long-term future and is considered to be both proportionate and well considered. It will not adversely impact on the existing mixture of internal upper floor heights reflecting the varying uses of the complex and forming part of the historic character.

Similarly, in order to have a logical link between the two main 'wings' over the carriageway entrance, a subtle alteration is needed due to the issue of head heights and access. Over the carriage entrance the existing high first floor level is to be retained – except for a central 'corridor' section which be dropped slightly directly beneath the roof apex to improve the internal amenity and circulation pattern. It thus also helps in the new optimum viable use of the building - as without it this former feed storage area would have little or no purpose in the building's new role.

It is considered that this subtle compromise to the design is also well considered and appropriate as it will avoid any horizontal element cutting across the tops of the arched heads of the front and rear openings – and the need for any external infilling between them and a fully lowered floor level. The storage spaces between the lowered section and the external walls are cleverly designed to retain the existing high floor level yet still be of use.

As a consequence of this narrow dropped section being both no lower than the crown of the entrance arch and being set well within the centre of the carriageway it will not be immediately apparent or appreciable in the views of the exterior even when the retained gates are open.

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Indeed the depth of the 'drop' is little more than the of a typical bridging beam supporting an upper floor and no lower than the crown of the arched head of the opening. It is thus considered that the proposal will not result in a significant visual impact on the building or the significance of its appearance.

Elsewhere, several internal features will be retained – including the groom's fireplace and a manger. To suit domestic use most floors will be relaid in insulated limecrete, but the carriageway will be relaid in traditional cobbles above insulation instead.

For obvious reasons most of the long-redundant stable stallage will need to be removed – and although that is to be regretted it is also inevitable in most domestic conversions simply because retention of such stallage makes the logical re-use of the building impractical. However, one of the stall dividers will be retained *in situ* and incorporated into the internal design, flanking one of the new stairs.

Overall it is considered that these proposals will have a limited impact on the external fabric of the Stables, and that the proposed internal changes are well considered and necessary for the adaptive reuse of the building. There will be a degree of change to the listed building, but in the context of the site and the proposals required to ensure its long-term optimal viable use, such changes are not considered to equate to harm – substantial or less than substantial.

7.1.2 Impact on Setting

The proposals will result in no impact on the setting of the Stables as viewed from the north and north-west as the new build sections are to the south within the walled garden area. The tall walls will effectively screen all but the roof tops of the low single-storey new build within the garden area in views from the west and from within the stable yard itself.

The tall walls of the south and east side of the stable yard define the dimensions and enclosed nature of the yard and contributes to the significance of the setting of the listed building as a component in a planned complex of individual spaces – the rear yard of the main house; the stable yard; and the partly walled garden.

Similarly, the lack of significant change to the north and west sides of the Stables means that the spatial and visual relationships between the former vicarage and its stable court as seen from the significant views of approach from the north are also little altered.

7.1.3 Heritage Assessment

Overall it is considered that there whilst there would be a degree of change to the listed building through these proposals, there would be little or no harm as defined by the PPW or the 1990 Planning Act. The general character of the building is retained and its most significant elements – the external shell and its relationship with the former vicarage – are conserved.

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7.2 Impact on Adjacent Heritage Assets

The Stables are in a fairly secluded site away from the centre of the village and the cluster of listed buildings and undesignated heritage assets round the listed parish church – one of the finest later medieval churches in Wales - on the Green. There are no views, reciprocal or otherwise, between these heritage assets and the Stables.

Consequently, the only designated heritage asset that could be impacted by these proposals is Cedar Hall – the former vicarage for which the Stables were built. The house is briefly described above, as is its historical and spatial relationship with the Stables.

The key contribution that the Stables makes to the significance of the setting of Cedar Hall is in its role as a primary component within the planned compartmentalised complex of the house, stables and gardens.

The least altered aspect of this is in the views on the approach to the house from the north, in which the Stables can be seen in the distance echoing the overall Tudorbethan style of the house and the canted main entrance to the property. This element will not change greatly, except for the glazing of the main carriageway entrance into the Stables – and that will be set back beyond the retained gates to the opening.

The visual impact to the rear of the house looking across its rear yard towards the Stables and the part walled garden area will be limited. It is also an area that was considerably altered by the demolition of the former link wing between the house and the stable, and of the former eastern range in the stable yard.

7.3 Impact on the Conservation Area

Cedar Hall and its former stables are situated at the north-western extremity of the Gresford Conservation Area, originally designated in 1975. Conservation areas are designated heritage assets. A Conservation Area Assessment & Management Plan was adopted in 2009. The secluded nature of Cedar House is demonstrated by the very limited view of the main house through the gate piers included in what is otherwise a very well illustrated document.

That secluded and private location of the house – and the even more secluded nature of the stables to its rear – coupled with the limited impact on their external appearance means that there would virtually no visual impact on the conservation area and certainly there would be no harm – substantial or less than substantial – on the conservation area's significance.

8. Conclusions

For the reasons outlined above the proposals for the redundant Stables of Cedar Hall are considered to be well-designed, sympathetic to the historic character of the building, and proportionate in their scale, massing and material palette.

It is considered that any minor harm caused by the limited alterations to the standing buildings are outweighed by the advantages of the scheme in ensuring the long-term future of the building through the creation of a new annex.

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It is considered that there would be no harm caused to the significance or settings of any adjacent heritage assets, including the conservation area. There would also be the public benefit of ensuring a listed building's long term future through a new optimum viable use.

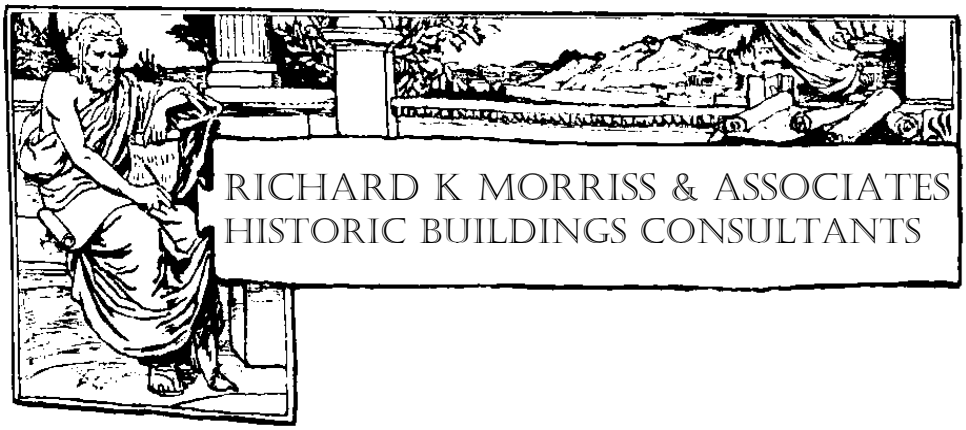
Adaptation of redundant buildings is a constant part of the built heritage, and especially so in rural areas and with buildings such as stable blocks – which, in most cases, lost their original purpose with the rapid development of the motor car in the early-20th century.

The adaptive re-use of such buildings reflecting such changes was noted as early as 1943, when a *Country Life* article urged landowners and others '*to consider the possibilities of converting semi-derelict farm buildings into sound and attractive dwellings*'.

Listed buildings and their settings have always evolved over time as their occupant's aspirations evolve and such change forms part of their significance as heritage assets. This is clearly outlined in modern planning policies and guidance, but best outlined in the recently superseded Welsh Office *Circular 61/96* which stated that:

> '*Many listed buildings can sustain a degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing or new uses. Indeed, cumulative changes reflecting the history of use and ownership are themselves an aspect of the special interest of some buildings, and the merit of new alterations or additions, especially where they are generated within a secure and committed long-term ownership, should not be discounted*'.

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The Consultancy

Richard K Morriss founded this Consultancy in 1995 after previously working for English Heritage and the Ironbridge Institute of the University of Birmingham and spending eight years as Assistant Director of the Hereford Archaeology Unit. Although Shropshire-based the Consultancy works throughout the UK on a wide variety of historic buildings – from the Scilly Isles to the Scottish Highlands - for clients that include the National Trust, the Landmark Trust, English Heritage, the Crown Estates, owners, architects, planning consultants and developers. It specialises in the archaeological and architectural analysis of historic buildings of all periods and planning advice related to them. It also undertakes broader area appraisals, heritage impact assessments and Conservation Management Plans.

Richard Morriss is a former Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and of the Association of Diocesan and Cathedral Archaeologists, currently archaeological advisor to four cathedrals, former member of the City of Hereford Conservation Area Advisory Committee. He is the author of many academic papers and of 20 books, mainly on architecture and archaeology, including The Archaeology of Buildings (Tempus 2000), The Archaeology of Railways (Tempus 1999); Roads: Archaeology & Architecture (Tempus 2006) and ten in the Buildings of series: Bath, Chester, Ludlow, Salisbury, Shrewsbury, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick, Winchester, Windsor, Worcester (Sutton 1993-1994). The latest work is an Historic England funded monograph on the Houses of Hereford (Oxbow 2018) and another HE funded monograph on Clun Castle is in preparation.

He was a member of the project teams responsible for the restoration of Astley Castle, Warwickshire, winner of the 2013 RIBA Stirling Prize; the restoration of the Old Market House, Shrewsbury, winner of a 2004 RIBA Conservation Award; and Llwyn Celyn, Monmouthshire, winner of the RICS Conservation Project of the Year 2019. He has also been involved in several projects that have won, or been short-listed for, other awards including those of the Georgian Group for Mostyn House, Denbigh; St. Helen's House, Derby; Radbourne Hall, Derbyshire and Cusgarne Manor, Cornwall.



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