Pre-Application Heritage Statement
Caversham Park, Peppard Road, Caversham, Reading

March 2017
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**Client**
Lambert Smith Hampton

**Our reference**
LAMH3009
1. Introduction

1.1 This Pre-Application Heritage Statement has been prepared by Turley Heritage for Lambert Smith Hampton, on behalf of their client, the British Broadcasting Company (BBC). This pre-application is made following an initial pre-application submission (ref. 162144) and extensive discussion with the Council’s Officers. Following these discussions, the scheme design has been refined and the extent of housing proposed has been substantially reduced. This report provides a shared understanding of the relative heritage interest of Caversham Park (‘the Site’) and an assessment of the heritage impacts arising from the revised proposals associated with the change in use of the Site, in line with future rationalisation and disposal of the land and the occupying buildings, currently in use by the BBC. The Site location is shown on Figure 1.1.

![Figure 1.1: The Site](image)

1.2 This pre-application submission is accompanied by a proportionate package of information, including drawing package and Pre-Application Design & Access Statement prepared by OWAL Architects and the Planning Statement prepared by Lambert Smith Hampton. This Pre-Application Heritage Statement should be read in conjunction with these drawings and reports.

1.3 The Site contains a range of designated heritage assets, and is subject to, a range of heritage designations:

- Caversham Park (BBC Records) (Grade II).
- Caversham Park (Grade II Registered Park and Garden) (RPG).
- Inner Park Walls (Grade II).
- Entrance gate and gate piers (Grade II).
- Temple (Grade II).

1.4 There are a number of other structures associated with the principal listed building (Caversham Park), which could conceivably form part of its curtilage or be listed via attachment, even though they are not listed in their own right. Any significance these buildings may have relates to the group value they share with the principal listed building of which they form a part (in legal terms). They are therefore considered in conjunction with the principal listed building for the purposes of this report.

1.5 There are no heritage assets outside of the Site boundary, which require assessment as part of this report.

1.6 The requirement for this report derives, firstly from the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which places a duty upon the local planning authority in determining applications for development or works that affect a listed building to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

1.7 The National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') provides the Government's national planning policy on the conservation of the historic environment. In respect of information requirements for applications, it sets out that:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance”.

1.8 Paragraph 129 then sets out that local planning authorities should also identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets that may be affected by proposals. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of proposals in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposed residential development of part, or the entire Site.

1.9 In accordance with these legislative and policy requirements, Section 2 of this report firstly confirms the relevant heritage assets within the Site that may be affected by the proposals.

1.10 Section 3 then provides a proportionate summary assessment of the significance of the identified heritage assets, including an assessment of their setting. This assessment has been carried out on the basis of the special architectural and historic interest of the listed buildings and the special historic interest of the Registered Park and Garden. This targeted assessment is undertaken on the basis of existing published information, on-site visual survey and archival research.
1.11 The relevant heritage statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy in the Framework and supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) 2014, and local planning policy and guidance for the historic environment is set out in full at Appendix 4.

1.12 Section 4 provides a high level assessment of the likely, potential impacts on the significance of these heritage assets arising from the potential development of the Site. These potential impacts are considered in light of the relevant statutory duty of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy in the Framework and supported by National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) 2014, and local planning policy and guidance for the historic environment, as appropriate.

1.13 The findings of this report are summarised and concluded at Section 5.
2. Heritage Assets

Introduction

2.1 The Framework defines a heritage asset as:

“A building, monument, site place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.”

Designated Heritage Assets

2.2 Designated heritage assets are those which possess a level of heritage interest that justifies designation under relevant legislation and are then subject to particular procedures in planning decisions that involve them.

Statutorily Listed Buildings

2.3 There are a number of listed buildings located within the Site boundary, as identified on the Heritage Assets Plan at Appendix 1.

Caversham Park (Grade II)

2.4 Caversham Park was added to the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at grade II on 14th December 1978. The list description reads:

PEPPARD ROAD 1. 5128 Caversham Park (BBC Records) SU 77 NW 15/551 II 2. Rebuilt, possibly by J T Crews, after the fire of 1850 for William Crawshay, a Welsh iron master, who had bought the estate in 1838. Of the early C18 house of the Earl of Cadogan nothing remains, and very little remains of the works by Mr Acres and Capability Brown in the Park. 3 storeys and basement. Ashlar with iron frame. Ground floor rusticated with Doric frieze over. Piano nobile above. 7 bays, outer wider with tripartite windows, divided by engaged Composite columns (end piers). Dentil cornice, balustraded parapet. Glazing bar sash windows with raised surrounds and bracket cills, pedimented on piano nobile (alternately triangular and segmental). Flanking set back Ionic colonnades of 1840 by J T Crews. 9 bays each with balustrade over, returned to east, orangery to west. Various extensions to east (including chapel) and west (former school rooms etc) and also to north-west which has a classical Doric portico to linked lodge dated 1890. To rear of main house is an Ionic Porte Cochere (now a reception room). Interior retains considerable decoration of the post-1850 house. Large central hall with 2 balustraded galleries, Doric on ground floor, Ionic on 1st floor. The best room is behind Crews West colonnade - arcaded with columned screen to west and apse colonnade to east. Elaborate decoration in the principal drawing room with enriched doorpieces and so on. Chapel altered. A landmark for the railway.

2.5 A full copy of the list entry is included at Appendix 1.

1 DCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) 2012 – Annex 2: Glossary
Inner Park Walls at Caversham Park (Grade II)

2.6 The inner park walls were first included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at grade II on 14th December 1978. The list description reads:

“PEPPARD ROAD 1. 5128 Inner Park walls at Caversham Park SU 77 NW 15/554 II 2. Mid C19, or possibly retained from the C18 by Capability Brown. Oval plan. Ditch to outside. More oval to east than to west. Red brick with buttresses about 4-5 ft high.”

2.7 A full copy of the list entry is included at Appendix 1.

Entrance gate and gate piers (Grade II)

2.8 The entrance gates and gate piers to Caversham Park were first included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at grade II on 14th December 1978. The list description states:

PEPPARD ROAD 1. 5128 Entrance gates and gate piers to Caversham Park SU 77 NW 15/550 II 2. Circa 1850 probably. Possibly designed by J T Crews. Tall square ashlar gate piers with ball finials. Good ornamental wrought and cast iron gates. Flanking pedestrian gates with outer cast iron standards. Reverse quadrant railings with end piers capped by ball finials.

2.9 A full copy of the list entry is included at Appendix 1.

Temple to the West of Caversham Park (Grade II)

2.10 The temple was first added to the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at grade II on 14th December 1978. The list entry reads:


2.11 A full copy of the list entry is included at Appendix 1.

Registered Parks and Gardens

Caversham Park (Grade II RPG)

2.12 Caversham Park was first included on the register of historic parks and gardens of special historic interest at grade II on 30th September 1987, and the list entry was subject to enhancement on 7th April 2016. The list entry is extensive, and therefore, a summary has been provided below for convenience:

A country house with the remains of an early C18 formal garden by Stephen Switzer flanking mid C19 formal terraces, surrounded by the remains of a landscape park laid out in the 1760s by Lancelot Brown.

2.13 A full copy of the register entry is included at Appendix 2.
Non-Designated Heritage Assets

2.14 The Framework\textsuperscript{2} identified that heritage assets include both designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). There are no non-designated heritage assets, which will be affected by any emerging proposals within the Site.

\textsuperscript{2} DCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) 2012 - Annex 2: Glossary
3. Significance of Heritage Assets

Significance and Special Interest

3.1 The Framework defines the significance of a heritage asset as:

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”

3.2 Listed buildings are defined as designated heritage assets that hold special architectural or historic interest.

3.3 The principles of selection for listed buildings are published by the Department of Culture Media and Sport and supported by Historic England’s Listing Selection Guides for each building type. The relevant selection guides for the listed buildings affected by the potential development of the Site are Domestic 3: Suburb and Country Houses and Garden and Park Structures.

3.4 Registered Parks and Gardens (RPGs) are designated under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953, where they are deemed to be of special historic interest.

3.5 The principles of selection for registered parks and gardens are published by Historic England. The relevant selection guide for Caversham Park RPG is Designation Register of Parks and Gardens Selection Guide: Rural Landscapes.

3.6 The Framework defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

‘The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’

3.7 Historic England has published a good practice advice note in respect of the setting of heritage assets, providing detail on understanding setting and the associated assessment of the impact of any changes.

Summary Assessment

3.8 The following assessment of significance for the listed buildings and the RPG are proportionate to the importance of each of these designated heritage assets and provide a sufficient level of description to understand the likely impact of the emerging...
proposals. Assessment is based on existing published information, focussed archival research and on-site visual survey and analysis.

3.9 This summary of heritage significance provides a strategic overview of the special interest of the listed buildings within the Site and the encompassing registered park and garden, to inform the assessment of the impact of the emerging high-level proposals upon their particular heritage significance at Section 4. This is not a definitive statement of the particular heritage significance of these heritage assets but is sufficient to provide an initial understanding of the potential heritage impacts, at this early stage. Further, more detailed, investigations and assessments of heritage significance will be needed if the proposals proceed further.

3.10 When assessing the heritage significance of the heritage assets it is necessary, in this instance, to consider them both as individual assets but also as interrelated elements of an extensive designed landscape, where reciprocal historic and aesthetic elements reinforce and amplify their interest.

Historic Development of Caversham Park

3.11 Caversham was established by the Anglo-Saxons, who built a manor house at the site of Dean’s Farm, which, along with a nearby mill, formed the east end of the village. The west end lay around the river crossing, where Caversham Bridge now stands. Control of the manor was subsequently acquired by the Normans; the first of whom to hold the manor was Water Gifford, a relation of William the Conqueror. Over one hundred years, the manor was held by three generations of Giffords.

3.12 In 1164, Caversham manor passed to Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke; when he died, it passed to his daughter, Isabel, who was promised to William Marshal, by Henry II. Marshal died in the early 13th century, at which time, the manor passed to his five sons. Marshal’s oldest son had the grounds laid out as a hunting park for deer and other game. The park was around three hundred acres at this time, and oval in shape; it maintained these boundaries for the next seven hundred years.

3.13 As Marshal’s sons did not have any children, on their death, the park passed back to the de Clares, and then in 1314, to the related Despencer family, who held it through the Medieval period. The Despencers played a part in the War of the Roses, for which, their land, including Caversham Park, was confiscated by the Crown.

3.14 The first non-aristocratic owners of Caversham Park were the Knolly’s, who were local gentry, based at nearby Greys Court. Francis Knolly was one of the first members of the new bodyguard for King Henry VIII, the “Honourable Company of Gentlemen of Arms”. In 1542, Francis was given a lease on Caversham, which included permission to demolish the old manor by the Thames, and build a new one. He was granted the land outright in 1552, however, his ownership was disputed following Queen Mary’s succession to the throne and he was forced to surrender the manor and its land. This ownership was restored in 1588, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Francis died at the end of the 16th century, before completion of the new manor at Caversham Park, and it was his eldest surviving son, William, who finished the house and entertained Queen Elizabeth there in 1601.
3.15 William invested much time and effort into acquiring wealth and title, and during the reign of King James I; he was made William, Baron Knollys, and then Viscount Wallingford. William entertained King James I at Caversham Park in 1612, along with his wife, Queen Anne of Denmark. When Charles I came to throne, William took the title, Earl of Banbury.

3.16 William’s first wife died in 1605, and he quickly married again, however, there was no recognised heir. To avoid his fortune and position from passing to the Crown on the event of his death, he sold or mortgaged his land and property to provide for his wife.

3.17 In 1633, Caversham Park was bought by Lord Craven for £10,000. Craven spent £20,000 on improving the house and estate before the Civil War. After the siege of Reading, some of the Parliamentary forces were moved to Caversham Park to recover.

3.18 Craven’s estates were confiscated and sold to a speculator, however, the property was returned to Craven in 1660, and he employed the architect, William Winde, to restore it. Winde created a tiered garden, on the Thames side of the house, parts of which are still visible today. It comprised a terrace leading down to a square of flower beds, with a further garden below and a double line of trees to either side. This formed the basis of works undertaken during the next century.

3.19 William Cadogan bought Caversham Park in the early 18th century, and began a building programme for the manor, costing £130,000. His aim was to create a seat, which could compete with Blenheim Palace and Clivedon Manor in its grandeur. The house was to be imposing, and visible from the valley, with a view down to the Thames (Figure 3.1). The layout resembled that of Clivedon, with a lengthily avenue leading to it from the north. Within the gardens, a terrace of 400 yards ran along the south front of the house, facing the Thames. Below that, were the formal gardens, and to the east and west of them, were great canals of 300 yards long. A deer park was located beyond the formal gardens. Cadogan died in 1726 without any male heirs, leaving the house to his Dutch widow and her two daughters.

Figure 3.1: Caversham Park c.1734
3.20 Subsequently, William Cadogan’s younger brother, Charles, bought Caversham Park and did much to the house and its grounds. He engaged landscape gardener, Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown to refashion the park and the gardens in 1760s.

3.21 The mansion had its two side wings removed, and was restricted to a central block around the current size. The driveway was altered so that it ran up to the house from the south east, linking to the London to Bath coach road, via Sonning Bridge. Capability Brown, kept the grand terrace but removed the formal gardens and introduced a Picturesque landscape to his typical style, with parkland flowing up to the house, tree clumps and a ha-ha to keep the animals away from its immediate vicinity.

3.22 Major Charles Marsac bought the house and park in 1784, having made his fortune in India. Marsac was nicknamed “Major Massacre”, for having trees felled and for charging entry to the park (Figure 3.2). During the time of his ownership of Caversham, Thomas Jefferson, at the time, Ambassador of France, visited the house during a tour of the gardens of England. Marsac died a wealthy man in the 1820s, and the house and park (Figure 3.3) passed to his son, an inveterate gambler, who had to sell his commission and move to France, to escape debtors.

3.23 The Marsacs made three attempts to sell the house following the Napoleonic Wars, in 1822, 1823 and 1837; however, there was little interest. The leasehold was finally bought in 1838. At this time the property was a ruin and the gardens were entirely overgrown.

*Figure 3.2: Painting of Caversham House during Marsac’s Occupation, 1793*
3.24 It was William Crawshay II, son of a wealthy businessman in the iron industry, who bought the leasehold to Caversham Park in 1838 and the freehold in 1844. The house burned to the ground in 1850 (Figure 3.4a and 3.4b), with only the columns to either side of the main house surviving. Crawshay rebuilt and improved the house. He added a new west wing to provide better servant accommodation, and a winter garden was built at this time. The house was built up around an iron frame, one of the first houses in England to be built in this way.
The house was rebuilt to the designs of architect Horace Jones, in a classical style with a modern structure and associated facilities. Separate staircases were designed to provide access for male and female servants, to reach their respective quarters. Internally, the property provided a carriage entrance with a vestibule as a porte cochere, an outer hall and a great inner hall, which was 50 foot long. There was also a morning room; a dining room with a mantelpiece from Chesterfield House in Mayfair; a library; a stately drawing room, which was over 40 foot long; a billiard room; a smoking room; a set of gentleman’s lavatories; and, a winter garden. At first floor, there were six principal bedrooms; four dressing rooms; and, a large boudoir. At second floor, there were seven large secondary bedrooms; four dressing rooms; eleven large servant’s bedrooms; and, three housemaids’ pantries. The servant’s area also included a kitchen; servants’ hall; housekeeper’s room; butler’s pantry with a silver safe; a cook’s parlour; and, a housemaid’s sitting room. There was also excellent stabling, with harness room, hay lofts and a coach house. In the gardens, much was spent on the gardens, with colourful flower beds.

William Thompson Crawshay lived privately at Caversham with his wife, Florentine, from the 1880’s until his death in 1918. His wife died in 1919, at which time, the Caversham estate passed to their nephew, Captain Jack Crawshay. Taxes, and the post First World War cost for the upkeep of such a grand house meant that it was put up for auction in 1920 (Figure 3.5), with the 1,800 acre estate divided into forty nine lots (Figure 3.6). In 1921, the estate was eventually sold privately, to local investors, and subsequently split up. The mansion and the park were sold on in 1922 to the Oratorians, a Catholic order based in Birmingham, to replace the school they ran in Edgbaston. The Oratory School moved into Caversham Park in 1922, and the headmaster put his money into expanding the school and its facilities, including ancillary accommodation addressing the drive and, perhaps, the existing squash court. The chapel was extended to take larger numbers, the sports facilities were laid out, including a cricket pitch to the front of the house and a pavilion, as well as a substantial sanatorium, which was built beside the maid buildings.
Figure 3.5: Auction photos of the house, 1920

Figure 3.6: 1920 auction plan
In 1926, there was a major fire during the school holidays, which caused considerable damage to the first and second floors and the roof, which was quickly repaired (Figure 3.7). In the 1930s, the school experienced a difficult financial period and the number of pupils fell. At the outset of the Second World War, other uses for the building had been found, including the possible use as a hospital. In 1941, the school was sold to the BBC for £55,000. The school subsequently moved, via Downside, to Woodcote, a few miles away from Caversham, where it remains today. The Oratory maintained the graves of three pupils who died at the school in 1925, 1927 and 1940, which lie to the north east of the house.

![Fire at the school, 1920s](image)

Figure 3.7: Fire at the school, 1920s

From 1943, Caversham Park has been the headquarters of BBC Monitoring, which was established by the BBC under request of the Government, to monitor the Axis powers’ use of the media, in particular, radio, which was a relatively new technology at the time (Figure 3.8). Their work commenced shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, and a daily briefing was produced for the War Cabinet on developments across Europe and worldwide. There were also more detailed reports produced for other government departments; the armed forces; the BBC; and, for British allies. Caversham House was well suited to its use, and the fabric and the layout remained largely unaltered.
In the 1960s, the larger proportion of the park and grounds associated with the historic estate was sold off for housing development, and for what became Caversham Park Village (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.8: BBC Monitoring, 1939-1945

Figure 3.9: 1973 OS Map
By the 1980’s, the house and its grounds had become rundown. Two major modernisation programmes were carried out to rectify this. The first programme, in the 1980’s, saw the building of a major new operations room at the western end of the building, refurbishment of the main building, and the development of a computer system, which made possible substantive changes in the way news reports could be prepared and delivered. The upkeep of the grounds was also improved at this time.

In more recent times, the influence of the media has increased, and its delivery has changed. To handle this, a second modernisation programme started in 2007, which involved the redesign of the west Operations Room, extensive work on the remainder of the building, and a Technology Refresh Programme to improve radically multimedia news production and the delivery of volumes of output matching that of any of the world’s major news agencies. Today, Caversham Park also houses the BBC Written Archives Centre and BBC Radio Berkshire.

Caversham Park (BBC Monitoring), Ancillary Listed Structures and Curtilage Listed Structures (Grade II)

Summary of Heritage Significance

The historic development of Caversham Park (BBC Monitoring), and the implications for relative levels of significance, will, in due course, require much more intensive research and survey. This further research will provide an authoritative understanding of its particular heritage significance to inform any detailed proposals for conversion or intervention.

An initial indication of the relative significance of the various components of the main house has been provided at Appendix 3 to assist understanding at this initial pre-application stage; however, this will be subject to further refinement in response to a more detailed understanding of its heritage significance. In addition, this assessment has been prepared on the basis of an initial helpful and informative tour of the building, where some areas, due to operational and security requirements, were off limits.

Caversham Park (BBC Monitoring) (Grade Il Listed Building)

Caversham Park is a large 19th century country house, set within substantial grounds, albeit now only forming a fragment of a larger historic estate (Figure 3.6). The special interest of the listed building is invested in its aesthetic interest, as a Victorian country house, which once formed part of a substantial country estate but is now confined to formally planned landscaped gardens, a wider parkland setting and a range of ancillary structures. This reciprocal relationship between the main house and the landscaped grounds, including the response to the remains of previous phases of the designed landscape, is the core of the listed building’s significance.

In this way, the architectural interest of the house is interrelated with the special interest of the formal grounds and landscaped gardens of the RPG. The house was designed to incorporate views and vistas, across the formal gardens and parkland towards Reading and the River Thames. Similarly, its prominence as a substantial classical building, visible on rising ground when approaching Reading on the train, is reminiscent of the historic intent of the house to be a statement of the wealth and status of the owners/occupiers, with viewers aware of the scale and quality of the building (albeit, largely restricted to this garden frontage as discussed later in this Section). This strong,
tangible connection between the house and the RPG further elevates their significance, as a key element of their respective aesthetic interest, and is interrelated with the setting of the listed building.

3.36 A house has existed on the Site since the 16th century, and whilst the location has varied, and the preceding country houses destroyed by a number of fires, there is a degree of historic interest derived from the latest iteration of the house, as part of a substantial country seat, demonstrating the continuity of the landed estate at Caversham. The historical association of the estate with members of high gentry and the upper middle classes, as well as accommodating a number of royal visitors, further elevates the historic interest.

3.37 The existing building, which was constructed in 1850, is of architectural interest as a substantial Victorian country house, illustrating the continued trend for Classical design during the mid-19th century and of the houses located at Caversham Park. The house was constructed to the design of then owner, William Crawshay, son of a wealthy businessman, and heir to an ironworks, as a grand set piece, of an innovative design, as a result of the iron frame construction, one of the first in the country to be constructed in this way. This construction technique is of historic interest and contributes to the building’s architectural value.

3.38 Unlike many other country houses, the property does not adopt a consistent character or level of architectural detail or elaboration on all elevations, notably the entrance (northern) frontage, which is comparatively plain and austere. The garden frontage is far more elaborate and architecturally resolved, reinforcing its emphasis as the principal elevation and the interaction with the layers of designed landscape of the formal gardens and more naturalistic parkland beyond. This elevation also reflects the owner’s desire for a prominent statement when viewed from the south.

Figure 3.10: Northern (entrance) elevation
The main building retains a servant’s wing, possibly a remnant of the preceding house on the basis of its architectural character with what seems to be a later extension above – presumably associated with the school, as it does not appear on images associated with the 1920s auction particulars (Figure 3.12). Whilst of a significant scale, comparable to that of the main house, it is of a plainer, more restrained character and of a narrower plan such that it is, in that regard, subordinate to the principal listed building. Its significance lies in what its architectural character and plan form illustrate about the function of a mid-Victorian country house and its later function as a school. Similarly, the original character, materiality and plan of the basement level, which, despite later alterations and interventions, seemingly survives to a large extent, contributes to the significance of the listed building.
3.40 The building has experienced various degrees of alteration, both internal and external, since its reconstruction by Horace Jones, most notably, during its conversion from a private dwelling to a school, during the 1920s. These include large-scale alterations, as discussed later in this Section, but also a range of cumulative minor alterations such as replacement and altered windows. According to records, the fabric and plan form of the building was not altered when the BBC took over the site during the 1940s; however, it has experienced two phases of modernisation during the late 20th and early 21st century. The particular functional demands of the school, and later the BBC, have not always proven to be compatible with the particular significance of the listed building. These later phases of work have, in places, disrupted the building’s architectural composition (both internal and external), with a commensurate adverse impact on the appearance and legibility of the historic function of these particular areas of the building.

3.41 In particular, the former stable block and ancillary structures located to the west of the servant’s wing have been subject to extensive alteration and rebuilding. Whilst the grand front elevation of the stable, with the original impressive doorway remains prominent and legible when approaching along the drive from the west, providing a link to its original function as part of the arrival and departure from the house, the former stable yard elevation has been internalised within later additions and modifications. Whilst the courtyard elevation is legible, as part of an internal space, an understanding of its role as part of a specialised collection of associated buildings is no longer clearly legible or understood, given the character of the adjoining spaces and buildings as a series of modern offices and breakout spaces. Whilst further detailed investigation is needed in order to determine what, if any, historic fabric and structures may survive in this part of the building, obscured by later finishes, it is apparent that this part of the building has been more significant compromised and makes a comparatively lesser contribution to the significance of the listed building.

![Figure 3.13: Internal elevation of former stable block](image)

3.42 Internally, the building has been adapted to its various functions when converted from a private house, then to a school and latterly as the base for BBC monitoring (and other functions). The historic plan form of the key spaces remains clearly legible, which provides an understanding of the original function of the house as a high-status
Victorian countryseat. In that regard, the distinction between the high-status areas of the main house and lesser status of the ancillary accommodation contributes positively to the architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

3.43 The central balustraded hall, rising full height through the building, and the key sequence of principal rooms at ground floor with their 19th century re-interpretation of ‘Adamesque’ decorative schemes remain, albeit altered in places i.e. the later glass balustrades. The spatial pattern, the proportions and decorative schemes of these key rooms remain largely intact and are the most significant elements of the building’s internal architectural interest. There are also a range of important spaces located to the western part of the building, including the room behind the west colonnade and the ‘blue’ and ‘green’ rooms (most likely billiards and smoking rooms – essential elements of a mid-19th century country house). A large degree of decorative fabric in the form of doorcases, doors etc. remain at ground floor, but to a lesser degree at upper floors and servant’s quarters.

3.44 In a similar manner to the exterior, there have been various phases of alteration to the plan form and decorative scheme within the building, which have had an adverse impact on the building’s architectural interest. These include the subdivision of rooms at first and second floors, albeit the original plan form can be discerned in most instances and original decorative fabric survives in places. The two timber staircases serving the central atrium are not original elements. It would appear from the style of the joinery, that they date that from the use of the building as a school. These staircases are reasonably ordinary pieces of joinery, which, in this instance, relate poorly to the spatial character of the building, and the historic half landing levels, which means that they are visible externally, cutting across windows (Figure 3.14). The position of the two staircases maintains the historic pattern, and in this regard, can be considered to contribute to the building’s special interest. The spaces to the east of the kitchen, notably at ground floor, have been extensively altered, and are of a plain and utilitarian character, including the comparatively recent infilling of what was historically an open colonnade (Figure 3.15). Notably, whilst elements of the original chapel remain visible i.e. windows and the corridor linking it to the main house the original spatial qualities of this part of the building have been compromised by the degree of subdivision and the insertion of a suspended ceiling.
The significance of the listed building is amplified by its historic associations with a range of important and well-regarded designers (both architects and landscape designers) as well as notable figures and families from the medieval period through to the end of the 19th century. The changing fortunes of the estate, and its gradual descent from the great noble families of the medieval period through to families who made their fortunes as soldiers, professionals and leaders of industry is also reflective of broader societal trends. In illustrating this pattern of change the listed building (and wider Caversham Park estate) can be considered to be of historic interest, albeit many large country houses illustrate this process, often with a better degree of survival of original fabric.

There are a number of buildings within the Site, which are likely to be curtilage listed buildings, including the attractive lodge, located at the western entrance to the Site; the
adjacent domestic properties (likely to be associated with the tenure of the school) and the bridge and wrought iron gates at the north-eastern edge of the park boundary, which, for the purposes of the Act, form part of the main listed building\(^8\) (Figures 3.16 – 3.19). In addition to their intrinsic aesthetic interest, these structures contribute positively to the significance of the listed building, through their associative ancillary character, illustrating the historic operation of the estate. They are also demonstrative of the historic status of Caversham Park, as a substantial country house set within extensive landscape gardens and parkland and its later function as a school. Accordingly, these elements (and there may be others) contribute positively to the special interest of the listed building.

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\(^8\) Section 1(5) Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990
The date and provenance of the inner park walls, is uncertain. They have the appearance of mid-19th century brickwork; however, there is the possibility that they date from the 18th century phase of development, associated with the landscape designs of Capability Brown. In any event, whatever their provenance, the walls are principally of heritage significance from their form and shape, which provides evidence of the now much altered designed landscape gardens and grounds, and the patterns of division between the various components. By illustrating the separation and demarcation of various elements of the parkland, the walls also help to illustrate the function and layout of the landscape gardens. This heritage significance has been eroded, to some extent, by the incorporation of later ancillary structures built off the walls and the spread of some built form beyond this historic delineation of the parkland character (Figure 3.20).
3.48 The entrance gates and piers are attractive pieces of 19th century ornamental landscape and estate architecture. They are of a substantive scale and form a prominent element of the historic entry sequence to the estate (Figure 3.21). Together with the associated boundary walls and lodge building they define the historic entrance and provide a clear interface between the public and private spaces of the historic estate. Their grand scale and character also reinforced the owner’s social and economic status to visitors and passers-by. In addition to their architectural value, it this role as part of the function of the historic estate, which is the principal element of the listed building’s significance.

3.49 Pevsner has dated the temple, to the mid-18th century, albeit this is not certain with the list entry suggesting a later 19th century date. In any event, notwithstanding its age and
provenance, the temple is of significance, primarily, as an attractive, scholarly garden feature, integrated with the retained and modified elements of the earlier former gardens (Figure 3.22). In its axial alignment at the western end of the upper terrace, the temple acts as an eye-catcher and folly within the landscape, albeit this architectural interest is derived principally from the front elevation, given that the rear is largely utilitarian masonry. This integration within the wider designed landscape elevates its architectural interest. The temple is also of historic interest as the continuation of well-established classical garden traditions, with which it integrates, and illustrates the 18th or 19th century phases of estate improvement and aggrandisement. The structure has a complementary character with the formal garden elevation of the main house as part of the holistic and integrated approach to historic estate design.

Figure 3.22: The Temple

Contribution made by Setting to the Significance of the Listed Buildings

3.50 The setting of the listed buildings is primarily made up of the surrounding RPG, of which they form integral elements. This landscaped garden and parkland setting forms an important part of the special interest of the listed structures. Accordingly, the contribution made by this element of setting is largely contiguous, and reciprocal, with that of the significance of the RPG. The landscaped grounds of the RPG illustrate the importance of integrated estate design, with the formal gardens of the terraces, incorporating earlier work with the formal classical garden frontage of the main house. The more naturalistic parkland to the south, separated by a degraded ha-ha, created a transition to the wider landscape beyond and provided the owners/occupiers of the house with the illusion of the rural idyll, albeit one planned, managed and designed. This is consistent with the evolving trends of landscape design during the course of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Whilst the legibility of the historic landscape has been eroded, enough elements survive for this element of setting, a palimpsest of England landscape design, to contribute strongly and positively to the significance of the listed buildings.

3.51 At its most basic level, the contribution made by the wider designed landscape to the significance of the listed buildings is the absence of significant built development. The ancillary historic structures contribute to an understanding of the status and operation of
the historic estate with the use of landscaped grounds for pleasure and aesthetics is an aspect of conspicuous consumption on the part of the historic estate owners.

3.52 The contribution of this landscaped setting to significance is not consistent. There are later elements such as the extensive areas of vehicular hardstanding, car parking, satellite dishes, security kiosk and equipment and later ancillary structures associated with and vital to the use of the Site as the BBC Monitoring station, which are incompatible with the significance of the listed buildings as the remains of a grand country estate. These elements are considered to detract from the significance of the listed buildings.

3.53 In addition, to the listed buildings within the Site, the former walled kitchen garden remains to the southwest. This element of the Site’s setting contributes positively as an integral element of the operation of the historic estate; however, this contribution has been undermined by its use as a caravan site. This use has transformed the character of the walled kitchen garden and severed the functional connection with the listed buildings and eroded the integrity of the remaining historic estate as a result in the change of ownership.

3.54 As noted earlier, the siting of the current house on rising ground on one side of the valley in which Reading is located, means that the house is afforded elevated views over its surroundings. Conversely, the prominent garden frontage of the house is also a prominent landmark. This ability to view the wider landscape and interrelated landmark status enhances the special interest of the listed building as it is reminiscent of its historic intent to be a statement of wealth and status of the owners and occupiers, with viewers aware of the scale and quality of the building (albeit, largely restricted to this garden frontage).

3.55 The 20th century urbanisation of Caversham, and its integration into Reading, has created a much-altered, extended setting to the listed building, which is now largely suburban in character and includes a variety of housing, educational facilities and a cemetery. Whilst this development is visible from the boundaries of the park, and has a more significant impact when compared to the lesser impact from within the centre of the grounds, it has fundamentally changed the experience of the listed buildings from an isolated country seat to one embedded in a varied domestic context.

Caversham Park (Grade II Registered Park and Garden)

Summary of Heritage Significance

3.56 Caversham Park consists of a country house, set within formal gardens and landscape parkland, which predate the existing house. A house has existed on the Site since the 16th century, and as seen today, there remains remnants of the 18th century formal garden, designed by Stephen Switzer; the mid-19th century terraces flanking the formal gardens; and, the remains of the landscape parkland, laid out by Capability Brown, in the 1760s. The significance of this registered park and garden derives from those remaining and often fragmentary built and landscape elements within its boundary that illustrate its past use and design from the 18th century onwards.

3.57 The landscaped grounds of the RPG illustrate the importance of integrated estate design with the formal gardens of the terraces, incorporating earlier work with the formal
classical garden frontage of the main house, whilst the more naturalistic parkland to the south, separated by a degraded ha-ha, provided a transition to the wider landscape beyond affording the owners/occupiers of the house the illusion of a rural idyll, albeit one planned, managed and designed. This is consistent with the evolving trends of landscape design during the course of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Whilst the legibility of the historic landscape has been eroded, enough elements survive for this element of setting, a palimpsest of England landscape design, to contribute strongly and positively to the significance of the listed buildings.

3.58 This is a multi-layered landscape, which combines elements of former 18th century and 19th century gardens, focussed around the centrepiece of Caversham Park house, flanked by wooded pleasure grounds, dating from the 1720s layout (Figure 3.23). Each surviving phase of the designed landscape contributes to the significance through the evidential and illustrative value, in demonstrating the styles and fashions of landscape architecture, as well as the changing demands of the owners of the estate. The resultant landscape is a palimpsest of historic landscape design.

![Figure 3.23: 1720 Plan for the House and Grounds](image)

3.59 The value of the historic associations with a range of leading landscape designers, from the 17th through to 19th century, provides a layering of the character, and adds depth to the historic interest of the landscape.

3.60 Through the 20th and 21st century, there have been various alterations within the landscape and its setting, which have compromised the original design intent, including the introduction of a caravan park within the grounds of the walled kitchen garden. In addition, the later elements such as the extensive areas of vehicular hardstanding, car parking, satellite dishes, security kiosk and equipment and later ancillary structures associated with, and vital to the use of the Site as the BBC Monitoring station, which are incompatible with the significance of the RPG (Figures 3.24 – 3.27). These elements are considered to detract from the significance of the RPG and the ability to appreciate or experience the historic interest of this designed landscape.
Figure 3.24: Existing car parking

Figure 3.25: Isolated and prominent satellite dish
The topography of the registered landscape is an important part of its character and has determined, or itself been adapted or remodelled, in response to the historical development and design of the estate. The land naturally falls to the south of the house, and this has been the primary determining factor in the position of the terracing and the remains of the naturalistic parkland beyond, to make the most of the views and vistas towards the River Thames.

As noted earlier, the commanding position of the house with the associated views out towards the southern pasture, and from the southern edge of the parkland upward towards the house, forms an important element of the significance of the registered landscape, and contribute to the understanding of the landscape’s design intent. The man-made lake forms a further key element of the landscape, which offers movement and reflective qualities.
3.63 Caversham Park is entered to the west, along a sweeping driveway past an orchard and the front of the house and the stable yard. This approach offers important views to the northern elements of the park, part of which is currently in use as a cricket pitch, which dates from the building’s use as a school. The later 20th century development and alteration within this part of the Site, including the car park at the eastern end and the severing of the eastern end of the drive, have diminished the legibility of the original design intention, and these detract from the special interest.

3.64 The interrelationship of the house and the gardens forms a key element of the significance of the two heritage assets. The value of the RPG is partly invested in its ability to provide an understanding of the historic importance of the house, set within extensive grounds, as a country seat associated with the nearby settlement of Caversham.

*Contribution made by Setting to the Significance of the Registered Park and Garden*

3.65 The 20th century urbanisation of Caversham, and its integration into Reading, has created a much altered, extended setting to the RPG, which is now largely suburban in character and includes a variety of housing, educational facilities and a cemetery. Whilst this development is visible from the boundaries of the park, and has a more significant impact when compared to the lesser impact from within the centre of the grounds, it has fundamentally changed the experience of the RPG from an isolated country seat to one embedded in a varied domestic context. The historic extent of the wider estate associated with Caversham Park, as well as the designed landscape, have therefore been extensively compromised by this process of mid-late 20th century expansion of Caversham.

3.66 Notwithstanding this extensive residential development, the views southward towards Reading and the treed slopes of the valley beyond are a positive element of the RPG’s heritage interest, by providing an indication of its former position at the edge of Reading and as ‘borrowed’ landscape, thereby increasing the impression of the extent of the landscaped grounds. This contribution to significance has, inevitably, been undermined by the commercial expansion of Reading, with large structures visible in the valley bottom and amongst the landscaping.
4. Pre-Application Impact Assessment

Introduction

4.1 The Site contains a number of heritage assets, the significance of which has been summarised within Section 3 of this Heritage Statement.

4.2 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty upon the local planning authority in determining applications for development or works that affect a listed building to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. There are no statutory duties relating to RPGs.

4.3 In accordance with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 128) the significance of the designated heritage assets that may be affected by the pre-application proposals has been described at Section 3. The assessment of significance demonstrates that there are areas of the Site, which make a greater or lesser contribution towards the significance of the identified heritage assets. This relative heritage significance forms the basis for understanding the potential impact arising from the pre-application proposals.

4.4 The significance of the listed buildings is invested largely in their aesthetic value, as a grand Victorian countryseat, set within imposing, albeit much degraded, landscaped grounds. The architectural interest of the principal listed building is diminished by the later alterations and extensions, both internally and externally, which have resulted from its subsequent uses as a school and, later, as the BBC monitoring station. Notwithstanding these alterations, the original ‘core’ of the main house, and the principal reception rooms and circulation spaces remain broadly legible and intact; these elements make an important contribution to its special interest. There are a number of ancillary structures, both separately listed and curtilage listed, which formed part of the historic estate and derive their significance from their intrinsic aesthetic qualities, in addition to what they illustrate about the function and status of Caversham Park as a country estate.

4.5 As noted within Section 3, the particular heritage significance of the RPG is derived, primarily, from the landscaped setting of the park and gardens, as a remnant of the early 18th century formal gardens; the 19th century terracing of the garden; and, the remains of the wider landscaped park, which was laid out by Capability Brown in the late 18th century.

4.6 This pre-application is made following an initial pre-application submission (ref. 162144) and subsequent discussion with the Council’s Officers. Following these discussions and feedback, the scheme design has been refined, and the extent of housing proposed substantially reduced. The impact assessment set out below provides a review of the revised proposals, in comparison with the previously submitted pre-application proposals.
Policy Context

4.7 The relevant heritage legal and policy context for consideration of the application proposals is set out in full in Appendix 4. This includes the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the Framework, and regional and local policy for the historic environment.

4.8 The Framework (paragraph 129) requires local planning authorities to identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets that may be affected by proposals. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of proposals in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

4.9 Importantly, account should be taken of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 131).

4.10 The Framework also requires (paragraph 132) that when considering the impact of proposals on the significance of designated heritage assets great weight should be given to their conservation, and the more important the asset the greater the weight should be.

4.11 Where a development proposal would cause harm to a designated heritage assets, this should be treated as either substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate taking into account the relative significance of the element affected (paragraph 132). Local planning authorities are also encouraged to look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset should be treated favourably (paragraph 137).

Pre-application Proposals

4.12 The current proposals have been refined and developed in response to previous pre-application discussions. The main changes between the previous pre-application submission and the current pre-application submission have been set out below:

- Alterations to the layout of the proposed residential properties;
- The number of flats proposed within the listed building has been increased from 47 units to 48;
- The number of residential properties within the RPG has been reduced from 137 to 51 units;

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• The number of units within the BBC Archives site, outside of the RPG has been reduced from 36 units to 20 units;

• The footprint of the retirement apartments building, to the west of the principal listed building has been reduced; and,

• The proposed housing along the main driveway and within the orchard has been removed from the development.

Impact Assessment

Principle of Development

4.13 As a matter of principle, in heritage terms, the conversion of the principal listed building to an alternative use, following the cessation of its current use by the BBC, presents no significant challenges. Keeping the building in an appropriate, viable use is a planning priority that will ensure the long-term conservation of its heritage significance. The proposed conversion to residential use will be closer to the original use of the property as a single country house and is considered to be more appropriate, in heritage terms, than the institutional functions that have occupied the property since the Oratory School acquired the Site in the early-mid 20th century. This view is shared by officers within the previous pre-application response, which stated that “there would be no objections to [the] conversion of the Caversham Park listed building to residential use.”

4.14 In securing an appropriate and viable new use for the principal listed building, there is scope to ameliorate the existing, less fortunate interventions to better reveal (i.e. enhance) the significance of the listed building. Similarly, as a matter of principle, there is scope, to consolidate and reveal the historic form and appearance of the stable block through the conversion of the listed building.

4.15 It is acknowledged within the pre-application response that there is scope for enhancement of the special interest of the listed building, through the removal of more recent changes, which would “aid legibility” of the historic spatial character and architectural significance.

4.16 The parkland character of the RPG is defined, predominantly, by the absence of built form, which as a ‘designed setting’ allows an overall understanding of its historic function, as part of a country seat. In this regard, it also provides an attractive and reciprocal relationship with the listed buildings as the most important element of their setting. As such, any development within the boundaries of the RPG is likely to diminish this appreciation of its heritage significance. There will also be indirect impacts on the significance of the listed buildings via change in their setting, arising from a permanent and irreversible change in the character of part of their setting.

4.17 Conversely, those areas of the Site located outside the boundaries of the RPG, would potentially only result in an indirect impact on the significance of the heritage assets. They would not, however, result in any harm as a matter of principle, although considerations of setting will need to be carefully considered.
Conversion of Caversham Park (Grade II Listed Building)

4.18 As noted earlier in this section, the proposed change of use of the principal listed building presents an opportunity to enhance its significance, through sensitive restoration and reinstatement of significant elements of plan form and architectural features, where they have been compromised or removed. Accordingly, the principle of conversion of the main listed building, subject to the nature of the proposed use, is acceptable in heritage terms as a matter of principle. Moreover, following the cessation of the existing use of the listed building by the BBC, finding an alternative use is a planning priority of great weight.

4.19 Key heritage considerations are the treatment of internal spaces i.e. the main central atrium and principle rooms that will have to be kept open and unaltered, and sensitive regard to any works of external alteration or adaption. Functional, physical and visual connections with the surrounding historic designed landscape should be maintained and enhanced, wherever possible, as part of the change of use.

4.20 The initial sensitivity plans, at Appendix 3, provide a high-level overview of the areas of greater or less significance, and thus sensitivity to change, of the principal listed building. Whilst this initial analysis will be refined further in due course, to support the detailed design of any emerging proposals for conversion of the building, it provides certainty on key considerations for conversion to an alternative use:

- The ‘core’ of the listed building is considered to be most significant and retains the majority of the key internal spaces. Change in this part of the listed building should be limited to those areas already altered i.e. rooms at first and second floors with opportunities taken to better reveal or reinstate plan form and decorative fabric.

- The eastern and western wings are, generally, of lesser significance, having been compromised to a greater degree by mid-late 20th century alterations with the exception of the western arcade and ‘blue’/’green’ rooms. These are the parts of the building most capable of accommodating change in a manner likely to sustain the significance of the listed building.

4.21 The particular significance of the listed building lends itself better to certain uses over others. Whilst conversion back to a single residential property would be the optimal use in heritage terms, it is understood that this is unlikely to be a viable option in this instance. Accordingly, residential conversion to multiple units is the most appropriate use in this instance, being more consistent with its original use. Residential conversion does, however, result in particular challenges, including how best to make use of the central atrium and large principal rooms at ground floor level.

4.22 There are a number of opportunities to enhance the significance of the listed building arising from its proposed conversion within the pre-application proposals:

- Restoration or a better appreciation of the form and spatial qualities of the former chapel.

- Revealing the historic form and fabric of the original stable yard/service quarters.
• Removal of later partitions to better reveal historic plan.

• Opening up formal colonnade.

• Reinstatement of staircases that relate in a more appropriate manner to the exterior of the listed building.

• Repairs and reinstatement of fenestration where it has been unfortunately altered.

• Reintroduction of appropriate decorative detail.

• Removal of later unfortunate additions to the building.

4.23 Within the pre-application response, there are reservations raised regarding the number of units proposed within the listed building, however, it is recognised that an inspection of the interior needs to be undertaken. As part of the proposals for the conversion of the listed building, the subdivision would be focussed within the more heavily altered areas of the building, and, wherever possible, the later alterations, which were implemented as part of the school conversion during the 1920s, would be reversed. The conversion of the listed building would be undertaken sensitively, to maintain key historic rooms, internal spaces and circulation cores as part of the proposals.

4.24 An interior decorative scheme appropriate to the age and style of the property could be implemented. The principles of the conversion will respond to the significance of the listed building, but they will be subject to further detailed refinement as part of the scheme moving forward. Overall, this element of the scheme would be a “heritage benefit,” that better reveals the significance of the listed building.

4.25 The existing mid-late 20th century ancillary structures, located to the west of the principal listed building are of a utilitarian and functional character, and have an adverse impact on the significance of the heritage assets. Accordingly, there is an opportunity to rationalise and consolidate their footprint and massing in new development within this part of the Site.

4.26 Any replacement built form should be of a high-quality and ancillary character, consistent with the historic function of this part of the estate as the focus of service accommodation. Key heritage considerations are the provision of an improved spatial relationship with the main listed building, in effect, a greater degree of separation.

4.27 Within the pre-application response, it is stated that the “20th century developments and extension within the grounds have partly eroded the Registered Park and Garden and urbanisation of Caversham has increased this…”. The proposals seek to enhance the immediate setting of the listed building and the historic interest of the RPG through the demolition of the 20th century buildings immediately west of the listed building and the rationalisation of the built form within this part of the RPG. This would provide improved views of the listed building from sweeping driveway, which would enhance the appreciation of Caversham Park house and the designed landscape of the RPG.
4.28 Following initial pre-application discussions with officers, the built form to the south of the grade II listed inner park walls has been reduced, and set away from the listed structure, thus providing a greater separation distance and reinforcing its presence as a historic boundary structure, thereby improving the understanding of its significance. In setting the proposed replacement building to the south of this structure further away from the inner park walls, the revised proposals will better respond to the underlying historic character and layout of the RPG.

4.29 Any detailed development of proposals for this part of the Site would need to be carefully developed to ensure an appropriate landscape character, including the balance between hard and soft landscaping and such matters as materials palette.

4.30 Overall, the revised proposals within this part of the Site are considered to have a more beneficial impact on the significance of the listed buildings and RPG through replacing unattractive and utilitarian buildings with a discreetly designed and positioned replacement scheme. This would provide a more attractive setting for the listed buildings and minimises the impact on the particular significance of the RPG.

Conversion of the Ancillary Lodge Buildings

4.31 The lodge, ancillary school buildings and main entrance to the Site form a cohesive group as ancillary structures associated with the use of Caversham Park as a country seat and later as a private school. The lodge seemingly retains more of its original plan form, whilst the ancillary school buildings have been more significantly altered. The sensitive conversion of these buildings to residential accommodation is consistent with their architectural character, historic function and most recent use. The principal considerations will be any impact arising from the works of conversion, including the exterior as well as the interior, where this contributes positively to the special interest of the principal listed building. The demolition and removal of the existing security kiosk and ancillary features will enhance the significance of the RPG and setting of these structures.

Proposed Residential Development located Outside the RPG

4.32 An element of residential development is proposed outside of the western boundary of the RPG, on land adjoining Peppard Road. Accordingly, there will be no direct impact on the significance of any of the identified heritage assets. Given the prevailing domestic character of the setting of the RPG and the presence of an existing non-descript building housing the BBC Archives on the adjoining site, intensification of residential development within this part of the Site is considered acceptable from a heritage perspective is considered appropriate as a matter of principle.

4.33 The revised proposals for residential development to the north of the retained BBC Archives building offers a lower density scheme than that previously proposed within the initial pre-application submission. These units will address Peppard Road in a manner broadly consistent with the variable suburban domestic context. The existing mature trees of value, addressing Peppard Road, and possibly vestiges of the former extensive parkland associated with Caversham Park, will also be maintained and incorporated into the proposed layout.

4.34 The proposed residential development would extend beyond the houses fronting the road into the depth of the plot, optimising the potential of this area of the Site; consistent
with the varied character of the heritage asset’s domestic, suburban context. There is already development within the depth of adjacent plots, for instance, the comparatively recent extension to the BBC Archives building. From within the adjoining wooded area of the RPG, there will be an awareness of new elements beyond the boundary of the designated landscape and grade II listed inner walls, however, any intervisibility will be mitigated through the presence of interposing mature soft landscaping and the existing context in which this element of development would be experienced. The number of proposed homes within this part of the Site has been reduced from 36 to 20, thus reducing any potential impact upon the setting of the listed building. The final designs of the proposals would be tested to demonstrate that there is no adverse impact arising through the presence of new development in the background of the grade II listed temple, thereby avoiding interrupting the axial, linear view.

**Proposed Residential Development within the RPG**

4.35 Subsequent to initial pre-application discussions, the proposed residential development within the RPG has been significantly reduced, and the development within the orchard and the driveway has been removed. The layout of the proposed housing has also been modified.

4.36 Any new development within the RPG will inevitably have a direct impact upon the significance of the RPG itself and, in addition, an indirect impact on the significance of the principal listed building, arising from the change in the permanent character of the land through impact on setting.

4.37 The revised layout for the proposed residential development seeks to reduce the visual impact of the housing and minimise its prominence within the designed landscape. The proposed housing would be informally arranged within the landscape setting, retaining existing trees and landscape features wherever possible. The residential development would be confined to the northern and western boundaries of the RPG and would appear as an extension to the existing 20th century residential development, which is located beyond the boundary of the RPG. Importantly, the cricket pitch and pavilion to the north of the listed building would be retained undeveloped, providing a visual buffer between the new housing and the Caversham Park (house). The driveway would also remain undeveloped, which would maintain important views towards the listed building, as well as this element of the listed building’s setting.

4.38 The envisaged residential development will result in a reduction in the extent of undeveloped parkland associated with the principal listed building, albeit to a lesser degree than the previous iteration, given the reduction in units being proposed. The proposed development will nevertheless result in an urbanising effect within the RPG and in the setting of the principal listed building.

4.39 In addition, the proposed residential development will also alter the experience of the northern prospect of the listed building, and from elevated positions in western and eastern prospects. Whilst the land to the north of the principal listed building has previously been curtailed by mid-late 20th century development, and now is much reduced from its historic extent, the remaining grounds, including the cricket pitch established by the earlier school use, is a positive element of the RPG and setting of the listed building – both designated heritage assets.
Therefore, whilst the proposals would retain a greater degree of open space to the north of the principal listed building than the previous pre-application submission (thereby maintaining a semblance of the legacy of the historic landscape of the RPG and setting of the principal listed building) and replace existing satellite dishes to the east of the listed building, they will result in the introduction of built form in an area of parkland where, historically, development would not be expected. In these terms, such development will be at odds with the character of this part of the wider parkland or setting of the principal listed building.

In this regard, these elements of the proposed development will result in some harm to the particular significance of the RPG and the principal, grade II listed building, however, this impact has been reduced in comparison with the previous pre-application submission. The extent of impact is discussed in more detail below.

**Summary of Impact**

It has been established that there are no heritage impediments to the principle of a sensitive conversion of the principal listed building to facilitate a form of residential use. As part of any such conversion, the proposals have the opportunity to address harmful and/or less appropriate interventions arising from its more recent phases of use. The proposals also allow the consolidation of existing ancillary structures of no heritage interest to provide an improved relationship to the principal listed building and inner park walls and reduces their impact on the significance of the RPG. The initial pre-application raised no objections to the principle of these changes.

As noted earlier in this Section, development located outside of the boundaries of the RPG will respond to the assets’ varied suburban and domestic context, and preserve the particular significance of the heritage assets. The number and layout of the units within this section of the Site has been reduced and revised, respectively, to respond better to the surrounding context, and to reduce its impact in any views from the listed building. The proposed extensive residential development within the grounds of the RPG will, however, result in some harm to its significance and that of the principal listed building.

**Consideration Against Legislation and Policy**

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty upon the decision maker in determining applications for planning permission to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. As noted in Appendix 4, recent case law has confirmed that decision-makers should give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed buildings.

Importantly, there are no statutory duties relating to the protection of the special historic interest or setting of Registered Parks and Gardens.

In accordance with paragraph 128 of the Framework, the significance of the relevant heritage assets have been summarised in Section 3 of this report.
4.47 In overall terms, the application proposals for the conversion of the principle listed building sustain, and, to a degree, enhance the particular significance of the listed building at Caversham Park, through the sensitive adaption of the building back to residential use, in common with its original function, as a large country seat. The removal of the later 20th century structures, within the listed inner park walls would also enhance the significance of the listed building, by returning this part of the Site back to an appearance which is more in line with the historic character. In these regards, these elements of the pre-application proposals are consistent with the relevant statutory duties of the 1990 Act and paragraphs 131 and 132 of the Framework.

4.48 The pre-application proposals would have a harmful impact on the particular significance of the listed building setting and the special historic interest of the RPG, through the introduction of built form in an area of parkland where, historically, development would not be expected. In considering the level of harm arising from the proposals it is important to note that the Framework distinguishes between 'substantial'10 and 'less than substantial'11 harm. This policy framework provides the basis upon which such harm can then be weighed against public benefits (134) or substantial public benefits and other criteria (133).

4.49 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides clear and unambiguous advice on how to identify whether harm to the significance of a heritage asset is ‘substantial’ or ‘less than substantial’ for the purposes of the Framework12.

“What matters in assessing if a proposal causes substantial harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.

Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm.”

10 Paragraph 133
11 Paragraph 134
12 Reference ID: 18a-018-20140306
Guidance in assessing the degree of harm likely to be caused to a listed building has been given by a recent court judgement (the "Bedford case")\(^\text{13}\), which states:

"At one stage I was attracted by Mr Cosgrove's submission that the inspector was falsely comparing the physical with the non-physical, and by using the formulation "something approaching demolition or destruction", he was applying a concept which was solely apt to the case of physical harm. However, this is an incorrect reading of the inspector's decision. On further analysis, I agree with Mr Newcombe that the inspector was not setting up a dichotomy. He was applying a unitary approach to a unified concept of significance. What the inspector was saying was that for harm to be substantial, the impact on significance was required to be serious such that very much, if not all, of the significance was drained away [our emphasis]."

Plainly in the context of physical harm, this would apply in the case of demolition or destruction, being a case of total loss. It would also apply to a case of serious damage to the structure of the building. In the context of non-physical or indirect harm, the yardstick was effectively the same. One was looking for an impact which would have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced [our emphasis]."

It is clear that the test of 'substantial' harm identified in paragraph 133 of the Framework is necessarily a high test that would result in the significance of a heritage asset being either entirely removed or significantly reduced. The guidance identifies that in light of the required magnitude of impact necessary to result in substantial harm, such occasions will not arise in many cases.

On the basis of this clear policy context, amplified by recent case law, the harm to the particular significance of the heritage assets would, in this instance, and having regard to the balance between the beneficial impacts as well as the adverse aspects, be ‘less than substantial’ for the purposes of the Framework and must be accorded considerable weight and importance.

In accordance with the requirements of the Framework, this harm would need to be considered against any public benefits derived from the pre-application proposals, having regard to the great weight and importance to be placed on the statutory tests for listed buildings (there are none related to RPGs).

The Planning Statement prepared by Lambeth Smith Hampton identifies the nature and extent of public benefits (broadly defined in the NPPG) that could derive from the emerging pre-application proposals and how this weighs against the less than substantial harm caused to the RPG and principal listed building, as part of the overall planning balance.

The pre-application proposals also have the potential to deliver a range of ‘heritage benefits’, as public benefits, including:

- A comprehensive landscape restoration plan, including provisions for ongoing, long-term management, of the historic landscape of the RPG.

\(^{13}\) [2013] EWHC 2847 (Admin)
• Removal of those later extensions and alterations to the principal listed building, both internally and externally, which are considered to detract from the special interest.

• Removal of functional elements associated with the current use in the ground of the listed building i.e. prominent satellite dish/receivers/transmitters and related equipment; enclosures; security kiosk and barriers; and, hardstanding.

• Reduction in the extent of vehicular hardstanding.

• Comprehensive repair and rehabilitation works for the listed buildings.

• Provision of public access to the park and gardens.
5. Summary and Conclusions

5.1 This Pre-Application Heritage Statement has been prepared by Turley Heritage for Lambert Smith Hampton, on behalf of their client, the British Broadcasting Company (BBC). This pre-application is made following an initial pre-application submission (ref. 162144) and extensive discussion with the Council’s Officers. Following these discussions, the scheme design has been refined and the extent of housing proposed has been substantially reduced. This report provides a shared understanding of the relative heritage interest of Caversham Park (‘the Site’) and an assessment of the heritage impacts arising from the revised proposals associated with the change in use of the Site, in line with future rationalisation and disposal of the land and the occupying buildings, currently in use by the BBC.

5.2 This pre-application submission is accompanied by a proportionate package of information, including drawing package and Pre-Application Design & Access Statement prepared by OWAL Architects and the Planning Statement prepared by Lambert Smith Hampton. This Pre-Application Heritage Statement should be read in conjunction with these drawings and reports.

5.3 The Site contains a range of designated heritage assets, and is subject to, a range of heritage designations:

- Caversham Park (BBC Records) (Grade II).
- Caversham Park (Grade II Registered Park and Garden) (RPG).
- Inner Park Walls (Grade II).
- Entrance gate and gate piers (Grade II).
- Temple (Grade II).

5.4 There are a number of other structures associated with the principal listed building (Caversham Park), which could conceivably form part of its curtilage or be listed via attachment, even though they are not listed in their own right. Any significance these buildings may have relates to the group value they share with the principal listed building of which they form a part (in legal terms). They are therefore considered in conjunction with the principal listed building for the purposes of this report.

5.5 There are no heritage assets outside of the Site boundary, which require assessment as part of this report.

5.6 The significance of the identified heritage assets, including the contribution made by setting to the significance of those heritage assets is provided in proportionate statements of significance at Section 3.

5.7 In summary, the significance of the listed buildings is invested largely in their aesthetic value, as a grand Victorian countryseat, set within imposing, albeit much degraded landscape grounds. The architectural interest of the principal listed building is
diminished by the later alterations and extensions, both internally and externally, which have resulted from its subsequent uses as a school and later, as the BBC monitoring station. Notwithstanding these alterations, the original ‘core’ of the main house, and the principal reception rooms and circulation spaces remain broadly legible and intact; these elements make an important contribution to its special interest. There are a number of ancillary structures, both separately listed and curtilage listed, which formed part of the historic estate and derive their significance from their intrinsic aesthetic qualities, in addition to why they illustrate about the function and status of Caversham Park as a country estate. The particular heritage significance of the RPG is derived, primarily from the landscaped setting of the park and gardens, as a remnant of the early 18th century formal gardens; the 19th century terracing of the garden; and, the remains of the wider landscaped park, which was laid out by Capability Brown in the late 18th century.

5.8 The impact of the pre-application proposals upon the particular significance of the relevant heritage assets is considered at Section 4.

5.9 There are no heritage impediments to the principle of a sensitive conversion of the principal listed building to facilitate a form of residential use. As part of any such conversion, the proposals have the opportunity to address harmful and/or less appropriate interventions arising from its more recent phases of use. The proposals also allow the consolidation of existing ancillary structures of no heritage interest to provide an improved relationship to the principal listed building and inner park walls and reduces their impact on the significance of the RPG. Within the initial pre-application response, officer raised no objections to the principle of conversion of the listed building into self-contained units. It was also acknowledged that the demolition of the 20th century buildings immediately west of the listed building do not contribute to the significance of the listed building.

5.10 The emerging proposed development located outside of the boundaries of the RPG will respond to the assets’ varied suburban and domestic context, and preserve the particular significance of the heritage assets. The layout and number of units within this part of the Site has been reduced and refined, respectively, to minimise visibility of these buildings from the listed building’s line of sight. The proposed extensive residential development within the grounds of the RPG will, however, result in some harm to its significance and that of the principal listed building.

5.11 Having regard to the relevant best practice guidance/advice and interpretation provided by case law, it is determined that any harm arising from the pre-application proposals would not, overall, satisfy the high threshold set for substantial harm for the purposes of the Framework. The correct ‘calibration’ of harm to the significance of the RPG and principal listed building would be on the spectrum of ‘less than substantial’. The level of ‘less than substantial’ harm has been reduced relative to the reduction in the extent of units proposed within the Site. In accordance with the requirements of the Framework, the less than substantial harm would need to be considered against any public benefits derived from the pre-application proposals, having regard to the great weight and importance to be placed on the statutory tests for listed buildings (noting that there are none related to RPGs).
The Planning Statement identifies the scale and type of public benefits, including heritage benefits, that could be derived from the emerging pre-application proposals and how this weighs against the less than substantial harm caused to the RPG and principal listed building as part of the overall planning balance.
Appendix 1: List Entries
CAVERSHAM PARK (BBC RECORDS)

List Entry Summary
This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: CAVERSHAM PARK (BBC RECORDS).

List entry Number: 1113560.

Location
CAVERSHAM PARK (BBC RECORDS), PEPPARD ROAD

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: 

District: Reading.

District Type: Unitary Authority.

Parish: 

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II.

Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978.

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information
The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS.

UID: 39126.

Asset Groupings
This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.
History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

PEPPARD ROAD 1. 5128 Caversham Park (BBC Records) SU 77 NW 15/551 II 2. Rebuilt, possibly by J T Crews, after the fire of 1850 for William Crawshay, a Welsh iron master, who had bought the estate in 1838. Of the early C18 house of the Earl of Cadogan nothing remains, and very little remains of the works by Mr Acres and Capability Brown in the Park. 3 storeys and basement. Ashlar with iron frame. Ground floor rusticated with Doric frieze over. Piano nobile above. 7 bays, outer wider with tripartite windows, divided by engaged Composite columns (end piers). Dentil cornice, balustraded parapet. Glazing bar sash windows with raised surrounds and bracket cills, pedimented on piano nobile (alternately triangular and segmental). Flanking set back Ionic colonnades of 1840 by J T Crews. 9 bays each with balustrade over, returned to east, orangery to west. Various extensions to east (including chapel) and west (former school rooms etc) and also to north-west which has a classical Doric portico to linked lodge dated 1890. To rear of main house is an Ionic Porte Cochere (now a reception room). Interior retains considerable decoration of the post-1850 house. Large central hall with 2 balustraded galleries, Doric on ground floor, Ionic on 1st floor. The best room is behind Crews West colonnade - arcaded with columned screen to west and apse colonnade to east. Elaborate decoration in the principal drawing room with enriched doorpieces and so on. Chapel altered. A landmark for the railway.

Listing NGR: SU7240476265.
INNER PARK WALLS AT CAVERSHAM PARK

List Entry Summary
This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: INNER PARK WALLS AT CAVERSHAM PARK.
List entry Number: 1113561.

Location
INNER PARK WALLS AT CAVERSHAM PARK, PEPPARD ROAD
The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: .
District: Reading.
District Type: Unitary Authority.
Parish: .
National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II.
Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978.
Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information
The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS.
UID: 39128.

Asset Groupings
This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.
History
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details
PEPPARD ROAD 1. 5128 Inner Park walls at Caversham Park SU 77 NW 15/554 II 2. Mid C19, or possibly retained from the C18 by Capability Brown. Oval plan. Ditch to outside. More oval to east than to west. Red brick with buttresses about 4-5 ft high.

Listing NGR: SU7227876253.
WALLS AT FORMER KITCHEN GARDEN AT CAVERSHAM PARK

List Entry Summary
This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: WALLS AT FORMER KITCHEN GARDEN AT CAVERSHAM PARK.

List entry Number: 1302854.

Location
WALLS AT FORMER KITCHEN GARDEN AT CAVERSHAM PARK, PEPPARD ROAD

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: 
District: Reading.
District Type: Unitary Authority.
Parish: 
National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.
Grade: II.
Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978.
Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information
The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.
Legacy System: LBS.
UID: 39129.

Asset Groupings
This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.
History
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details
PEPPARD ROAD 1. 512 Walls at former Kitchen Garden at Caversnam Park SU 77 NW 15/555 II 2. Probably mostly mid C19 but incorporating older work. 8-12 ft high, red brick. Communicating arches between separate sections of garden. Mid C19 potting sheds.

Listing NGR: SU7228675974.
ENTRANCE GATES AND GATE PIERS TO CAVERSHAM PARK

List Entry Summary
This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: ENTRANCE GATES AND GATE PIERS TO CAVERSHAM PARK.

List entry Number: 1113559.

Location
ENTRANCE GATES AND GATE PIERS TO CAVERSHAM PARK, PEPPARD ROAD

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: .

District: Reading.

District Type: Unitary Authority.

Parish: .

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II.

Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978.

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information
The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS.

UID: 39125.

Asset Groupings
This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.
History
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details
PEPPARD ROAD 1. 5128 Entrance gates and gate piers to Caversham Park SU 77 NW 15/550 II 2. Circa 1850 probably. Possibly designed by J T Crews. Tall square ashlar gate piers with ball finials. Good ornamental wrought and cast iron gates. Flanking pedestrian gates with outer cast iron standards. Reverse quadrant railings with end piers capped by ball finials.

Listing NGR: SU7215776310.
TEMPLE TO WEST OF CAVERSHAM PARK

List Entry Summary
This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: TEMPLE TO WEST OF CAVERSHAM PARK.
List entry Number: 1302853.

Location
TEMPLE TO WEST OF CAVERSHAM PARK, PEPPARD ROAD
The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: 
District: Reading.
District Type: Unitary Authority.
Parish: 
National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.
Grade: II.
Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978.
Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information
The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.
Legacy System: LBS.
UID: 39127.

Asset Groupings
This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.
History
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details
PEPPARD ROAD 1. 5128


Listing NGR: SU7222376157.
Appendix 2: Registered Park and Garden Entry
CAVERSHAM PARK

List Entry Summary
This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by English Heritage for its special historic interest.

Name: CAVERSHAM PARK.

List entry Number: 1000524.

Location
The garden or other land may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: 

District: Reading.

District Type: Unitary Authority.

Parish: Non Civil Parish.

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II.

Date first registered: 30-Sep-1987.

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information
The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: Parks and Gardens.

UID: 1503.

Asset Groupings
This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Garden
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.
A country house with the remains of an early C18 formal garden by Stephen Switzer flanking mid C19 formal terraces, surrounded by the remains of a landscape park laid out in the 1760s by Lancelot Brown.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Lord Craven owned the Caversham Park estate during the mid to late C17, rebuilding the Elizabethan manor house after 1660, probably with William Winde as the architect. The estate was sold in 1697, passing by the 1720s into the hands of William, first Baron, and later Earl, Cadogan (d 1726). Cadogan, a soldier and friend of the Duke of Marlborough, rebuilt the manor house in grander style, probably on a new site. A detailed agreement of 1718 between Stephen Switzer (1682-1745) and the Earl of Cadogan (Berkshire RO) describes a proposal to make terraces, canals, fisheries and a great formal parterre, for £1394, which corresponds closely with a plan of 1723 published by Colen Campbell in Vitruvius Britannicus III, 1725 (Bisgrove and Stoneham 1993). Campbell's accompanying description mentions a Mr Acres, who was probably employed to lay out the extensive formal garden surrounding the house, which was constructed around an axis described as a 'noble terrace, which is twelve hundred feet long'.

In the mid 1760s Lancelot Brown (1716-83) was employed by the second Baron Cadogan to landscape the grounds, at which time the formal gardens, still present in the 1750s (Rocque, 1761), were largely swept away, although Brown incorporated major structural elements into his own designs. It appears that none of Brown's drawings survive, nor his account books for this period. The results of Brown's work are described by Thomas Whately in his Observations on Modern Gardening (1770), and again by Thomas Jefferson in his 'Memorandums Made on a Tour to Some of the Gardens in England' (1786). The house burnt down during this period, being replaced by a smaller building, enlarged by Major Charles Marsack following his purchase of the estate in 1784. William Crawshay bought the estate in 1838, following a period of some dilapidation (National Trust 1990) and in 1850 the house burnt down once more, to be rebuilt again, this time possibly by J T Crews. The Crawshays sold the estate in 1920, it being occupied by the Oratory School until the Second World War. During the War the BBC moved into the house, which remains the home of their Monitoring Service. Large parts of the parkland were engulfed by Caversham Park Village in the 1960s and 1970s.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Caversham Park lies enclosed by the C20 development of Caversham, once a separate village but now a suburb of Reading. The c 40ha site is bounded largely by the mid to late C20 development of Caversham Park Village, with to the south the open spaces of allotments and Reading Cemetery and Crematorium. The house and park to the north lie on a plateau at the top of a south-east-facing slope. Panoramic views extend southwards from the house and garden terraces at the top of the slope across Caversham and Reading, towards low, distant hills, probably formerly with views of the Thames which lies 2km to the south.
ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Caversham Park is entered at the north-west corner of the park, off Peppard Road, 250m west of the house. Here the drive is flanked by two stone gate piers, topped with ball finials, supporting iron gates, in turn flanked by iron pedestrian gates and beyond this iron railings terminated by a further pair of stone piers (c 1850, listed grade II). The drive passes a single-storey lodge standing adjacent to the south, continuing east through the park and passing to the north of the stuccoed former stables (now converted to accommodation) standing close to the west end of the house. The drive arrives at a tarmac carriage sweep adjacent to a porte-cochère on the north front of the house, overlooking the north park which is now maintained as playing fields.

Formerly, during the C19 and until the mid C20 (OS) and the development of Caversham Park Village, the drive continued from the north front north-east through the park, curving south-east past Milestone Wood to a lodge standing by the Henley Road 1.2km south-east of the house. Part of the course of this drive is now incorporated in a pedestrian path running parallel and to the east of Galsworthy Drive. In the early C18 (Vitruvius Britannicus) the house was approached directly from gates to the north via a straight avenue arriving at a formal forecourt on the north front.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Caversham Park (1850s, possibly J T Crews, listed grade II) stands at the centre of the northern half of the site, at the top of a slope down to the Thames to the south-east, overlooking Caversham and Reading and beyond this a low range of wooded hills. The three-storey ashlar house replaced a series of houses, the last of which, dating from the late C18, burnt down in 1850. The house has been modified and extended for office use during the mid to late C20.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens consist of formal 1720s and mid C19 terraces descending south from the garden front of the house, flanked by wooded pleasure grounds containing further remains of the formal 1720s layout.

The south, garden front of the house opens onto a broad gravel path running along the top of an adjacent terrace. From here three flights of stone steps descend a grass bank to a rectangular lawn, from the south side of which three further flights of stone steps descend to a lower rectangular lawn bounded on the south side by an iron fence dividing the lawn from a paddock beyond. The paddock is now (1998) part of the parkland, but formerly (OS 1877; 1914) was part of the pleasure grounds, divided from the parkland by a ditch and bank, possibly part of a former ha-ha. The remains of the ditch, lying c 150m south of the house, are bounded by a sporadic, informal hedgerow.

The upper terrace extends 200m from the west end of the house, laid to grass flanked by clipped laurel hedges and beyond this woodland, and terminated at the west end by a stone temple (C19, on the site of an earlier structure, listed grade II) with a tetrastyle Doric portico overlooking the length of the terrace to the east. From here a path runs south-east down the hillside on which is situated the west arm of the wooded pleasure grounds. The path passes the west end of a 200m long canal situated 250m south-west of the house. Surrounded by a grass path, the canal is set within woodland, overlooking to the east the lower lawn lying south of the house. From the canal the grass path continues south-east along the west boundary of the pleasure grounds, turning north-east 300m from the house to run along the northern boundary of the former walled kitchen garden. Some 150m south of the house the path turns north to arrive at the east
end of the canal from where informal lawns planted with specimen trees and shrubs extend north to the upper terrace by the house.

The broad gravel path on the upper terrace extends through the wooded eastern arm of the pleasure grounds, terminating at the boundary, 250m east of the house. An informal path encircles this arm of the pleasure grounds, leading south-east off the gravel path at the east end of the house. A small, south-facing wooden pavilion stands within the southern half of the woodland, close to the southern edge, possibly having formerly overlooked the park sloping away to the south, before trees obscured the view. The area north of the west/east axial path has recently been replanted with specimen trees set in informal meadow, and also contains transmitting equipment. A brick wall (C18/C19, listed grade II) encloses parts of the boundary of this arm of the pleasure grounds to the north and east.

In the 1720s Switzer's grand garden surrounding the house (described and depicted in Vitruvius Britannicus 1725) contained parterres to the east and south. Two 200m long canals were constructed, possibly with cascades and amphitheatres at the outer ends as quoted for by Switzer (Berkshire RO: D/EX 258/9), on the hillside to the south-west and south-east of the house. The present canal appears to be one of these two, and was at that time flanked to the south by a wilderness containing a serpentine path. This area, now wooded, retains some mature yew trees and sculpted land formation. By the mid C18 (Rocque, 1761) the axial terrace walk was dominant in the garden, terminated at the west end by a garden building. A third canal appears to have been added by this time, lying adjacent to that lying south-west of the house, and several of the parterres seem to have been removed and others simplified. Brown's landscaping retained the axial terrace path and the canals. By the 1870s (OS 1878) the two terraced lawns had been constructed below the centre of the great axial terrace, the lower one being dotted with small, oval flower beds. Additionally, two of the canals had gone, leaving that shown on Switzer's plan lying to the south-west of the house, although in shorter and wider form than that advocated by Switzer, and more rounded in outline.

PARK The remains of the park are divided into two sections, the area north of the house, and that extending south from the garden and pleasure grounds. The northern section, occupying a plateau, is now largely given over to playing fields with trees planted around the northern perimeter. The north park is overlooked by the north, entrance front of the house, and enjoys views north towards a low, wooded hillside lying beyond Caversham Park Village. The Village occupies land that was formerly part of the park.

The southern section of the park, laid to pasture with two clumps of trees, occupies the south-facing slope overlooking Caversham, Reading and beyond this low, wooded hills. Formerly (before Caversham's C20 development) the park probably enjoyed views down to the Thames.

In the early C18 (Vitruvius Britannicus, plan of 1723) the broad entrance avenue extended from the north front across what became the north park, flanked by four rows of trees to either side. To the east lay open parkland containing a sequence of formal ponds and a farm complex. To the west of the avenue lay a formal arrangement of trees, possibly an orchard, and a further rectangular pond. Three parallel avenues
extended from the gardens on the south front across extensive lawns which subsequently became the south park, flanked to west and east by belts of trees laid out in rows. In the description accompanying the Vitruvius Britannicus plan, the park beyond was mentioned as being well-wooded, watered and stocked with deer, with reference to an excellent pheasantry and a menagerie. This arrangement remained largely intact until the mid C18 (Rocque, 1761), Lancelot Brown landscaping the estate in the 1760s. The park retained much of Brown's work until the 1960s and 1970s, when it was much reduced on all sides by the construction of Caversham Park Village and associated items including Reading Crematorium, Cemetery and allotments, and a school.

KITCHEN GARDEN The brick-walled kitchen garden (C18/C19, listed grade II) lies 200m south-west of the house, at the south-west corner of the park, and is now (1998) largely filled with mobile homes. Brick cross walls divide the area into several compartments, connected by communicating arches, and support mid C19 potting sheds. The walled garden is reached via a straight lane from the Peppard Road to the west, the entrance being marked by a C19, two-storey lodge lying 500m south-west of the house.

REFERENCES

Maps J Rocque, Map of Berkshire, 1761 T Pride, A topographical map of the Town of Reading and the County adjacent to an extent of 10 miles, 1790


Appendix 3: Initial Heritage Sensitivities Plans
Statutory Duties

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides that listed building consent is required for;

“(s.7) … any works for the demolition of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest …”

In determining such applications the following duty is placed upon the decision maker:

“s.16(2) In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority, or as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

Section 66 imposes a “General duty as respects listed buildings in the exercise of planning functions.” Subsection (1) provides:

“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

Recent case law 14 has confirmed that Parliament’s intention in enacting section 66(1) was that decision-makers should give “considerable importance and weight” to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings, where “preserve” means to “to do no harm” (after South Lakeland). These duties, and the appropriate weight to be afforded to them, must be at the forefront of the decision makers mind when considering any harm that may accrue and the balancing of such harm against public benefits as required by national planning policy. The Secretary of State has confirmed 15 that ‘considerable importance and weight’ is not synonymous with ‘overriding importance and weight’.

Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953

S8c of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 states:

“This section applies where the Commission compile a register of gardens and other land situated in England and appearing to them to be of special historic interest.”

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) 2012

The National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) was introduced in March 2012 as the full statement of Government planning policies covering all aspects of the planning process. One of the twelve core planning principles of the Framework 2012 is that planning should:

14 Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited and (1) East Northamptonshire District Council (2) English Heritage (3) National Trust (4) The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Governments, Case No: C1/2013/0843, 18th February 2014

15 APP/H1705/A/13/2205929
“Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.”

The glossary of the Framework (Annex 2) defines conservation as the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Chapter 12 of the Framework outlines the Government’s guidance regarding conserving and enhancing the historic environment in more detail.

Paragraph 126 of the Framework requires Local Planning Authorities to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment within their Local Plan. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner proportionate to their significance. This paragraph identifies four aspects that Local Planning Authorities should take into account when preparing their strategies:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Paragraph 128 requires the significance of the heritage assets, which may be affected by the proposals to be described as part of any submission, ideally as part of a Heritage Statement report. The level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the assets and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on their significance.

Paragraph 129 sets out that local planning authorities should also identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets that may be affected by proposals. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of proposals in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 131 states that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of all heritage assets and putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 132 further outlines that local planning authorities should give great weight to the asset’s conservation when considering the impact on a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, such as the listed building and conservation area. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight should be. It is also specified that
any harm to, or loss, of significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 133 outlines that local planning authorities should refuse consent where a proposal will lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance, unless it can be demonstrated that this is necessary to deliver substantial public benefits that outweigh such harm or loss, or a number of other tests can be satisfied.

Paragraph 134 concerns proposals which will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. Here harm should be weighed against the public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use.

Paragraph 137 encourages local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets, such as listed buildings, to enhance or better reveal their significance. It also states that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset should be treated favourably.

**Development Plan**

There is no statutory requirement to have regard to the provisions of the development plan in the consideration of applications for listed building consent; however, it is likely that the objectives of national policy and the development plan, with regard to the protection of heritage assets, will be closely aligned. Local authorities should also ensure that aspects of conservation policy that are relevant to development control decisions are included in the development plan.

The Reading Local Plan consists of the Core Strategy (2009 and amended January 2015) and Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012 and amended January 2015). Given the early stage of the Council’s replacement Local Plan it is of no weight in determining planning applications.

**Core Strategy (2015)**

RBC’s Core Strategy was adopted on 29th January 2008 and subsequently amended in January 2015 (with regard to affordable housing policies). It forms a key component of the planning framework used for determining applications. The following policies relate to the proposals in respect of issues of design and heritage.

Policy CS7 relates to general design quality. It requires all development to be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. There is an expectation that developments will respond positively to their local context and reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including the protection of the historic environment.

Policy CS33 relates to the protection and enhancement of the historic environment and states:

“Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include:

- Listed Buildings;
• Conservation Areas;
• Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.

Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located."

The proper interpretation of the policy must reflect its intention and the advice in the Framework. For instance the policy states that planning permission will be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. As the wording indicates on its face, this policy must be seen as permissive in the sense of explaining that planning permission will be granted in such circumstances, not that planning permission will be refused if there is any adverse impact. The latter contention is not what the policy says and would be contrary to paragraphs 132-135 of the Framework if it did, which requires consideration of any harm, if it does arise, and enables demonstration that in certain circumstances harm to the significance of a heritage asset can be justified.

The SDPD was adopted on 23rd October 2012 (the affordable housing policies were amended in January 2015), alongside the Reading Borough Proposals Map. It sets out detailed policies for use in decisions on planning applications and identifies sites for development, protection and for the application of specific policies.

Paragraph 9.1.7 notes that one of the cross-cutting aspects of national policy is proportionality, such that the greater the significance of the heritage asset the greater the presumption is in favour of its conservation. The focus is on conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement. There is acknowledgement that new development may make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment.

At paragraph 9.1.9, the document states that the Framework provides an appropriate basis for determining applications for planning permission where they would affect the historic environment. Accordingly, together with the guidance in Policy CS33 of the Core Strategy, there is no need to provide specific detailed policies in the SDPD.

Paragraph 9.1.10 is a conflation of a number of paragraphs within the Framework. It notes that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, which is consistent with the guidance in the Framework. The remainder of the policy is a partial summary of national policy. The reference to ‘Any harm to or loss of an asset needs clear and convincing justification as set out in national planning policy’ is only be applicable to designated heritage assets and relates to paragraph 132 of the Framework. .

Paragraphs 9.1.11 and 9.1.12 consider the setting of heritage assets. Paragraph 9.1.11 relates to the role that trees can have in contributing positively to the setting of heritage assets and paragraph 9.1.12 notes that the setting of an asset can contribute positively to the significance of a heritage asset. It is wrong to assume that setting makes a positive contribution to the significance of heritage assets in all circumstances, as is reflected in the definition of the setting of heritage assets contained in Annex 2 of the Framework, which notes that elements of a
setting may make a positive or negative contribution or in some circumstances have only a neutral effect.

Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest are considered at paragraph 9.1.21, which notes, in a general manner, that they these heritage assets within the Borough are of special interest because of their historical layout, features and architectural ornaments.

Paragraphs 9.1.22 to 9.1.26 relate to nationally (i.e. statutorily listed) and locally listed buildings and structures. At paragraph 9.1.23, specific guidance is provided on the change of use of listed buildings, and states that when considering any changes of use of listed buildings, the Council will consider the contribution that particular use makes to the significance of a heritage asset. Any harm to, or loss of, an asset's significance resulting from a change of use will be assessed against policy CS33 of the Core Strategy and national planning policy.

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) 2014
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) 2014 has been issued by the Government as a web resource, including a category on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. This is intended to provide more detailed guidance and information with regard to the implementation of national policy set out in the Framework 2012.

The NPPG 2014 helps to define some of the key heritage terms used in the Framework. With regard to substantial harm, it is outlined that in general terms this is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special interest. Optimum viable use is defined in the NPPG as the viable use likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the heritage asset, not just through necessary initial changes, but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear and likely future changes.

Public benefits are also defined in the NPPG 2014, as anything that delivers economic, social and environmental progress as described in the Framework. Public benefits should flow from the proposed development, and they may include heritage benefits.

Department of Culture, Media and Sport Circular: Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings 2010
The Principles of Selection for listing buildings sets out the general criteria for assessing the special interest of a building in paras. 9 and 10, as below:

“Architectural Interest. To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its architectural design, decoration or craftsmanship; special interest may also apply to nationally important examples of particular building types and techniques (e.g. buildings displaying technological innovation or virtuosity) and significant plan forms;

Historic Interest. To be of special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation’s social, economic, cultural, or military history and/or have close historical associations with nationally important people. There should normally be some quality of interest in the physical fabric of the building itself to justify the statutory protection afforded by listing.
10. When making a listing decision, the Secretary of State may take into account the extent to which the exterior contributes to the architectural or historic interest of any group of buildings of which it forms part. This is generally known as group value. The Secretary of State will take this into account particularly where buildings comprise an important architectural or historic unity or a fine example of planning (e.g. squares, terraces or model villages) or where there is a historical functional relationship between a group of buildings. If a building is designated because of its group value, protection applies to the whole of the property, not just the exterior."

In addition to the criteria and general principles set out in the guidance, a number of Selection Guides for different building types have been published by English Heritage in 2011. These Selection Guides provide further information regarding each building type, and demonstrate what features are considered significant and likely to make a building of special architectural or historic interest when assessing each building type.

**Historic England Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment 2015**

GPA Note 2 provides information to assist in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) and the related guidance given in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). These include; assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness.

It provides a suggested staged approach to decision-making where there may be a potential impact on the historic environment:

1. Understand the significance of the affected assets;

2. Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;

3. Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the Framework;

4. Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;

5. Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change;

6. Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.


GPA Note 3 provides information to assist in implementing historic environment policy with regard to the managing change within the setting of heritage assets. This also provides a toolkit for assessing the implications of development proposals affecting setting. A series of stages are recommended for assessment, these are:

*Step 1: identifying the heritage assets affected and their settings*
Step 2: assessing whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s)

Step 3: assessing the effect of the proposed development

Step 4: maximising enhancement and minimising harm

Step 5: making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes.

This document provides general advice according to different categories of intervention in heritage assets, including repair, restoration, addition and alteration, as well as on works for research alone, based on the following types of heritage asset: buildings and other structures; standing remains including earthworks; buried remains and marine sites; and larger heritage assets including conservation areas, landscapes, including parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites. It is intended to be useful to owners, developers, local planning authorities and others in considering works to all heritage assets.