

Land East of Shifnal (SHF032)

Built Heritage Statement

JCH00828
Land East of Shifnal (SHF032)
April 2020

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Appendix A: Bibliography

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Built Heritage Statement has been produced by RPS (formerly CgMs Ltd) on behalf of Harrow Estates in order to assess the likely impacts of the proposed residential development at land off Coppice Green Lane, Shifnal ('the Site') in regard to surrounding built heritage assets. The Statement has been produced to accompany an application to bring forward the Site (SHF032) to allocation in the emerging Local Plan.

The Site is approximately 2.65 ha in extent and comprises an irregularly shaped field parcel situated to the east side of Coppice Green Lane, Shifnal (see figure 1). The Site is centred at approximately SJ 75650 08293 and is currently undeveloped.

This Built Heritage Statement meets the requirement under paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for an applicant to assess the significance of any heritage assets potentially affected by a proposed development, including the contribution that their setting makes to that significance, and to demonstrate the likely impacts of a proposed development on that significance.

This report refers to the relevant legislation contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as national and local planning policy. In addition, relevant Historic England guidance has been consulted to inform the judgements made. Relevant information, including listing and scheduling citations for heritage assets have been consulted in researching this report. Furthermore, the report is based on the findings of detailed historical research, walkover surveys and assessment conducted from the Site and publicly accessible surrounding areas (May 2019, and February and April 2020), map studies and the application of professional judgement.

The findings of this report are based on the known conditions at the time of writing and all findings and conclusions are time limited to no more than three years from the date of this report. All maps, plans and photographs are the author's own unless otherwise noted and are for illustrative purposes only.



Figures 1: Aerial view of SHF032 ('the Site'), with approximate Site boundary shown in red. (Source: Google Maps)

2.0 LEGISLATIVE & PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 LEGISLATION & NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The statutory requirements and national and local policy provide a framework for the consideration of development proposals that affect the historic built environment. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, provides the overarching statutory requirements in the determination and assessment of development proposals in the historic environment. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's policies and requirements at a national level and the Planning Practice Guidance reflects the Secretary of State's views on the way policy should be applied. It is acknowledged that matters of legal interpretation are determined in the Courts but the NPPF and the Practice Guidance set out clearly the Government's priorities and aspirations for planning nationally. Documents produced by Historic England provide technical advice that is designed to explain and assist in the implementation of legislation and national policy. Therefore there is a clear hierarchy of statutory duty, policy and best practice and this has been used to inform the assessment of the application proposals that is included in this report.

The current national legislative and planning policy system identifies, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), that applicants should consider the potential impact of development upon 'heritage assets'. This term includes: designated heritage assets which possess a statutory designation (for example listed buildings and conservation areas); and non-designated heritage assets, typically compiled by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and incorporated into a Local List or recorded on the Historic Environment Record.

Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990

Legislation regarding buildings and areas of special architectural and historic interest is contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 [hereafter the '1990 Act']. The relevant legislation in this case extends from Section 66 of the 1990 Act. Section 66 states that special regard must be given by the planning authority in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings and their settings.

The meaning and effect of the duty in relation to Section 66 has been considered by the courts in recent cases, including the Court of Appeal's decision in relation to Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northamptonshire District Council [2014] EWCA Civ 137. The Court agreed within the High Court's judgement that Parliament's intention in enacting section 66(1) was that decision makers should give 'considerable importance and weight' to the desirability of preserving (i.e. keeping from harm) the setting of listed buildings.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, published February 2019, updated June 2019)

The NPPF is the principal document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

It 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'. This includes both designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment relates to the conservation of heritage assets in the production of local plans and decision-taking. It emphasises that heritage assets are '*an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance*'.

For proposals that have the potential to affect the significance of a heritage asset, paragraph 189 requires applicants to identify and describe the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected. This is supported by paragraph 190, which requires LPAs to take this assessment into account when considering applications.

The meaning, form and contribution of setting to a heritage asset has been considered in recent cases, including the Court of Appeal's decision in relation to a proposed development at Keddleston Hall, Derbyshire (Catesby Estates Ltd v Peter Steer [2019] 1 P&CR 5). The judgement emphasised that the setting of a heritage asset is not necessarily only to be identified in terms of visual and physical considerations, though '*generally, of course, the decision-maker will be concentrating on visual and physical considerations*' (para.26). This judgement also noted that identification of setting and its level of contribution to an asset's significances is particular to each situation, for example, '*it may be that the site of the proposed development, though physically close to a listed building, has no real relationship with the listed building and falls outside its setting*' (para.29).

Under '*considering potential impacts*' the NPPF emphasises that '*great weight*' should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, irrespective of whether any potential impact equates to total loss, substantial harm or less than substantial harm to the significance of heritage assets.

Paragraph 195 states that where a development will result in substantial harm to, or total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, permission should be refused, unless this harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, or a number of criteria are met. Where less than

substantial harm is identified, paragraph 196 requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.

Paragraph 197 states that where an application will affect the significance of a non-designated heritage, a balanced judgement is required, having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

2.2 NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE

National Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance (MHCLG)

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has been adopted in order to aid the application of the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle.

Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. It states that substantial harm is a high bar that may not arise in many cases and that while the level of harm will be at the discretion of the decision maker, generally substantial harm is a high test that will only arise where a development seriously affects a key element of an asset's special interest. It is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development, that is to be assessed.

Conservation Principles (English Heritage, April 2008)

Conservation Principles outlines the approach of Historic England (formerly English Heritage) to the sustainable management of the historic environment. Whilst primarily intended to ensure consistency in Historic England's own advice and guidance, the document is recommended to LPAs to ensure that all decisions about change affecting the historic environment are informed and sustainable.

The Guidance described a range of heritage values which enables the significance of assets to be established systematically, with the four main 'heritage values' being:

- **Evidential value:** which derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity;
- **Historical value:** which derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present;
- **Aesthetic value:** which derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place;
- **Communal value:** which derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

This guidance is currently being revised and update to ensure full compliance with the NPPF, which will include an update to the heritage values so that they relate directly to the terms used in the glossary of the NPPF.

Overview: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning

The PPS5 Practice Guide was withdrawn in March 2015 and replaced with three Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs) published by Historic England. GPA1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans provides guidance to local planning authorities to help them make well informed and effective local plans. GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Making includes technical advice on the repair and restoration of historic buildings and alterations to heritage assets to guide local planning authorities, owners, practitioners and other interested parties. GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets replaces guidance published in 2011. These are complemented by a series of Historic England Advice Notes in Planning (HEANs).

GPA1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans (March 2015)

This advice note focuses on the importance of identifying heritage policies within Local Plans. The advice echoes the NPPF by stressing the importance of formulating Local Plans based on up-to-date and relevant evidence on economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area, including the historic environment.

GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

This document provides advice on numerous ways in which decision making in the historic environment could be undertaken, emphasising that the first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to that significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, the document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged. A staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information is suggested:

- 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 NPPF;
- 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 balanced with the need for change; and
- 6) Offset negative impacts to significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition; December 2017)

This advice note focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. This document replaces GPA:3 The Setting of Heritage Assets (March 2017) and Seeing History in the View (English Heritage, 2011) in order to aid practitioners with the implementation of national legislation, policies and guidance relating to the setting of heritage assets found in the 1990 Act, the NPPF and PPG. The guidance is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the 2011 and 2015 documents and does not present a divergence in either the definition of setting or the way in which it should be assessed

As with the NPPF the document defines setting as '*the surroundings in which a heritage assets is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve*'. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context. The guidance emphasises that setting is not a heritage asset, or a heritage designation, and that its importance lies in what contributes to the significance of the heritage asset, or the ability to appreciate that significance. It also states that elements of setting may make a positive, neutral, or negative contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.

Whilst setting is largely a visual term, with views considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, setting also encompasses other environmental factors including noise, vibration and odour. Historical and cultural associations may also form part of the assets setting, which can inform or enhance the significance of a heritage asset.

This document provides guidance on practical and proportionate decision-making with regards to the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. It is stated that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent, and level of the significance of a heritage asset, further weighing up the potential public benefits associated with the proposals. It is further stated that changes within the setting of a heritage asset may have positive or neutral effects.

The document also states that the contribution made to the significance of heritage assets by their settings will vary depending on the nature of the heritage asset and its setting, and that different heritage assets will have different capacities to accommodate change without harming their significance. Setting should, therefore, be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Historic England recommends using a series of detailed steps in order to assess the potential effects of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset. This five-step process is as follows:

2.2 NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE (CONT.)

- 1) Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
- 2) Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of a heritage asset(s) or allow this significance to be appreciated;
- 3) Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
- 4) Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm;
- 5) Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

HEA3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans (October 2015)

This Historic England advice note is intended to support all those involved in the Local Plan site allocation process. It notes that a positive strategy for the historic environment in Local Plans can ensure that site allocations avoid harming the significance of both designated and non-designated heritage assets, including any impacts on that significance via their setting. At the same time, the allocation of sites for development may present opportunities for the historic environment, for example through better revealing the significance of heritage assets or providing an opportunity to tackle heritage assets at risk.

This document provides advice for each of the key stages in the site allocation process consisting of: evidence gathering; site selection; and site allocation policies. It also provides a five-step site selection methodology, as follows:

- 1) Identify which heritage assets are affected by the potential site allocation;
- 2) Understand what contribution the site (in its current form) makes to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
- 3) Identify what impact the allocation might have on that significance;
- 4) Consider maximising enhancements and avoiding harm; and
- 5) Determine whether the proposed site allocation is appropriate in light of the NPPF's tests of soundness.

2.3 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY & GUIDANCE

In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations.

The local planning context is prescribed by Shropshire Council, with key local policies relevant to the Site and the proposals set out below.

Shropshire Local Plan

The Shropshire Local Plan currently primarily comprises two documents, the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations and Management of Development. It also includes the adopted Neighbourhood Plan for Shifnal. This framework provides local planning policy alongside supplementary advice and guidance.

Core Strategy (adopted March 2011)

The Core Strategy sets out the vision for development in the local area through to 2026 and seeks to balance housing and economic needs with social and environmental welfare. Policies within the document inform all planning applications and development proposals within Shropshire. The following policies are considered relevant to this report:

Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles states *inter alia*:

'All development...protects, restores, conserves and enhances the natural, built and historic environment and is appropriate in scale, density, pattern and design taking into account the local context and character, and those features which contribute to local character, having regard to national and local design guidance, landscape character assessments and ecological strategies where appropriate.'

Policy CS17: Environmental Networks states:

'Development will identify, protect, enhance, expand and connect Shropshire's environmental assets, to create a multifunctional network of natural and historic resources. This will be achieved by ensuring that all development:

- Protects and enhances the diversity, high quality and local character of Shropshire's natural, built and historic environment, and does not adversely affect the visual, ecological, geological, heritage or recreational values and functions of these assets, their immediate surroundings or their connecting corridors.*
- Contributes to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire's environment, including landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets, such as the Shropshire Hills AONB, the Meres and Mosses and the World Heritage Sites at Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal and Ironbridge Gorge [...].'*

Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (adopted December 2015)

The policies within this document provide more clarity on planning issues than those found in the Core Strategy. Those of relevance to the proposals include:

MD2: Sustainable Design which states that an acceptable development proposal must: *[inter alia]*

'...Contribute to and respect locally distinctive or valued character and existing amenity value by:

- Responding appropriately to the form and layout of existing development and the way it functions, including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density and plot sizes and local patterns of movement; and*
- Reflecting locally characteristic architectural design and details, such as building materials, form, colour and texture of detailing, taking account of their scale and proportion; and*
- Protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic context and character of heritage assets, their significance and setting, in accordance with MD13; and*
- Enhancing, incorporating or recreating natural assets in accordance with MD12'.*

MD13: The Historic Environment:

'In accordance with Policies CS6 and CS17 and through the guidance in the Historic Environment SPD, Shropshire's heritage assets will be protected, conserved, sympathetically enhanced and restored by:

- 1. Ensuring that wherever possible, proposals avoid harm or loss of significance to designated or non-designated heritage assets, including their settings.*
- 2. Ensuring that proposals which are likely to affect the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset, including its setting, are accompanied by a Heritage Assessment, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.*
- 3. Ensuring that proposals which are likely to have an adverse effect on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, including its setting, will only be permitted if it can be clearly demonstrated that the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the adverse effect. In making this assessment, the degree of harm or loss of significance to the asset including its setting, the importance of the asset and any potential beneficial use will be taken into account. Where such proposals are permitted, measures to mitigate and record the loss of significance to the asset including its setting and to advance*

understanding in a manner proportionate to the asset's importance and the level of impact, will be required.

- 4. Encouraging development which delivers positive benefits to heritage assets, as identified within the Place Plans. Support will be given in particular, to proposals which appropriately conserve, manage or enhance the significance of a heritage asset including its setting, especially where these improve the condition of those assets which are recognised as being at risk or in poor condition'.*

Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan 2014 - 2026 (adopted December 2016)

The Neighbourhood Plan aims to guide development within Shifnal and has been adopted by Shropshire Council. The following policy is considered relevant to this report:

Policy HG1: Design of Residential Development states that the development plan should, in part, demonstrate:

'...high quality design that is in keeping with the scale and character of buildings and layout in the area...'

Supplementary Planning Documents, Guidance and Advice

Shropshire Council has adopted a number of supplementary planning documents (SPDs). The Council's *Sustainable Design SPD* (adopted July 2011) and the draft *Historic Environment SPD* (consultation draft of March 2016) have been referred to in the production of this report.

3.0 SITE ASSESSMENT & HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

3.1 SITE ASSESSMENT

The Site, approximately 2.65 ha in extent, is located on the north-eastern edge of the town of Shifnal, Shropshire. It comprises an irregularly shaped field parcel on the southeast side of Coppice Green Lane that is currently in agricultural use. It contains no designated or non-designated built heritage assets.

The hill above Aston Coppice forms a high point within the surrounding landscape, and the topography of the Site consequently slopes gently from north to south (approximately 105m AOD to 92m AOD).

The western boundary of the Site is defined by a continuous hedgerow (currently cut to a height of 2.2 metres) (fig.2) and abuts Coppice Green Lane. Beyond the western side of the Lane lies Idsall School and the recent Honeysuckle Grange residential development (Fig.4). The Site's north-eastern boundary is defined by a thick, linear belt of trees and its eastern boundary (parallel to Coppice Green Lane) is currently undefined, adjoining onto a larger agricultural field parcel to the east.

Grade II* listed Aston Hall lies approximately 90m to the south-southeast of the Site at its nearest point, with the residential development at Aston Court Mews situated between the Site and this asset. The access road to Aston Court Mews directly abuts the boundary of the Site to the south and, where the drive turns the corner of the Site, to the southeast. There are a number of mature trees along this boundary where the access road adjoins the Site's southeast edge, providing some visual screening between the Site and Aston Court Mews.

To the west and southwest of Ashton Court Mews is a large and dense clump of mature trees. This planting is extended either side of Aston Hall's driveway south-westwards and around the former wall garden to the west, including a densely planted boundary along this section of Coppice Green Road.



Figure 2: View north along Coppice Green Lane taking in the west boundary of the Site.



Figure 3: View north along Coppice Green Lane taking in the entrance to Aston Court Mews with the Site beyond.



Figure 4: View north across the Site from the Site's eastern boundary towards the new residential development at Honeysuckle Grange. Dense belt of trees to right.



Figure 5: View southeast across the Site from the Site's eastern boundary.

3.2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Shifnal, also historically known as 'Idsall' and 'Iddeshale', was recorded as a prosperous and relatively large settlement of 69 households in the 1086 Domesday Survey (Open Domesday 2020). The Church of St Andrew within the town has Norman origins, which further highlights the size of the settlement in this early period.

The prosperity of Shifnal continued into the thirteenth century when Henry III granted the town a market charter. This 1245 charter offered Shifnal some protection from nearby rival markets but also cemented Shifnal as an important rural and social centre in the local area. This charter physically transformed the centre of Shifnal, as a wider north-south road, over the Roman Watling Street, was laid out to facilitate market activity.

This north-south road, formed by the current-day Broadway, Bradford Street, and Market Place, retained its primacy into the medieval period and beyond. A fire destroyed much of the town in the late sixteenth-century yet it was subsequently rebuilt around this north-south road, as demonstrated by the concentration of timber-framed historic buildings with seventeenth-century origins on this route.

It is likely that during the Anglo-Saxon and the Late Medieval periods, the Site was located in the agricultural hinterland of the settlement at Shifnal. This is likely to have continued through much of the Post-Medieval period.

In the eighteenth century, Shifnal became a coaching destination on the Watling Street Turnpike Road, servicing traffic between London and Shrewsbury. This brought further wealth to the town, demonstrated in part by the construction of Aston Hall in 1720, to the south-southeast of the Site.

In the nineteenth century, Shifnal also became connected to the London and Birmingham to Holyhead railway line, reinforcing its position on the historic trading route and introducing further urbanisation to Shifnal. The Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER) records several forms of industrial activity dating to this period in proximity to the Site, including a brickfield on the south side of Stanton Road (07291, SJ 7590 0776), and a nineteenth-century wire mill and further stone quarry straddling the Telford to Birmingham railway line (07289, SJ 7590 0730; 29639, SJ 75986 07194).

The earliest source to depict Shifnal and its surrounds in a reasonable level of detail is the 1840 Shifnal Tithe Map (figure 6). This map clearly illustrates the historic linear development of Shifnal and shows the Site to be situated some distance to the east of the settlement. Specifically, the Site is shown to comprise parts of two field parcels situated on the west side of a roughly southwest-northeast orientated road running from Shifnal directly adjacent to the complex of buildings at Aston Hall and then along the linear belt of trees that defines the Site's northeast boundary.

In the accompanying Tithe Appointment, these two field parcels (numbered 1135; 1138) are recorded as being under the ownership of George Austin

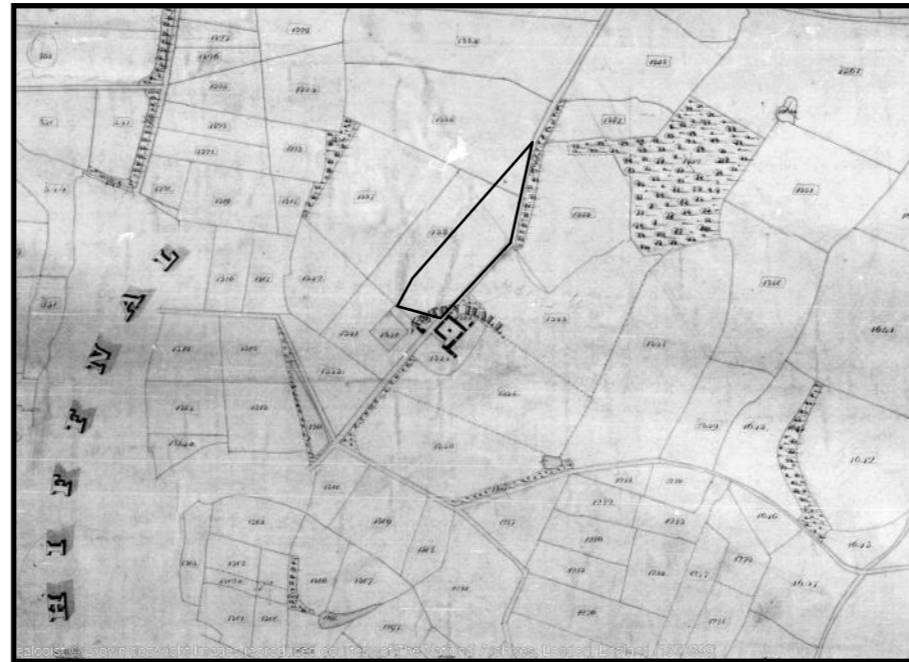


Figure 6: 1840 Tithe Map of Shifnal, with approximate Site boundary shown in red.

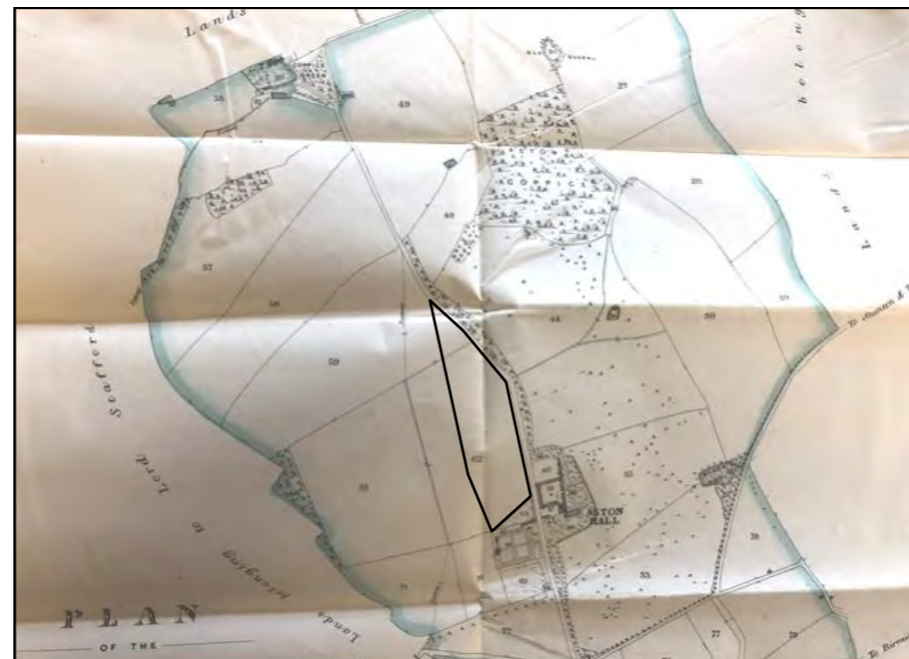


Figure 7: 1865 Sales Particulars for Aston Hall, with approximate Site boundary shown in red.

Moultrie of Aston Hall. However, unlike Aston Hall itself (1344), the parkland to the southeast (1345; 1346), kitchen garden and orchard (1340; 1343), which are also recorded as being under George Austin Moultrie's occupation, the two 'arable' field parcels comprising the Site are recorded as being occupied by 'John Norton (Aston)'. John Norton is also recorded as occupying the 'farmhouse buildings, fold and stackyard' immediately adjacent to Aston Hall and now comprising Aston Court Mews (1354), as well as many other arable field parcels to the north of Aston Hall. It seems likely, therefore, that the Site was part of the farmland of the Aston Hall Estate at this time, farmed from the buildings now comprising Aston Court Mews.

The 1865 sale particulars for the Aston Hall Estate (figure 7) also show the Site lying to the west of the road from Shifnal. The land comprising the Site appears unchanged, but the belt of trees previously adjoining only the Site's northeast boundary are shown to extend along the entirety of the Site's eastern boundary. The scattered tree planting beyond this tree belt indicates that Aston Hall's parkland may have been extended to take in the whole area between Aston Hall and Aston Coppice. A small quarry feature is also depicted in this area of land.

The 1888-89 Ordnance Survey map (figure 8) indicates a number of changes occurring to the Site and its surrounds since the mid-1860s. The southwest-northeast road that previously ran directly adjacent to the Aston Hall complex and along the east side of the Site is shown to have been bypassed, with the new road (Coppice Green Lane) located along the Site's western boundary. The original road appears to have become a private estate road, providing a driveway to Aston Hall. Likely contemporaneously to this change, the Site has become a single field parcel, sandwiched between the new road and the tree belt that remains along its east boundary. Within the Site's wider surrounds, the newly created Great Western Railway Shrewsbury and Birmingham line is shown to the south.

OS mapping (figure 9) indicates that the agricultural buildings adjacent to Aston Hall appear to have undergone considerable change by 1903, with additional buildings/ranges shown. One building is shown to have been built on the Site's southeast boundary adjacent to the private estate road.

The Site appears unchanged in the 1938 and 1954 OS mapping (figures 10 and 11). However, this mapping illustrates changes within its wider setting; namely the expansion of Shifnal to the north and northwest during the first half of the twentieth century. Linear development to the north of the High Street and further residential development at Orchard Road, within the backland plots to the east of the High Street, is shown in the 1938 mapping. Additional development to the east of the High Street is shown in the 1954 mapping, and a school is shown to have been constructed within a large plot of land directly across Coppice Green Lane from the Site.

3.2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT (CONT.)

A similar pattern of development is apparent in subsequent mapping from 1965-6 to 2019 (figures 12-16), with the built envelope of Shifnal gradually expanding east. This development initially comprised residential development off Curriers Lane and the expansion of the school off Coppice Green Lane (figure 12), with further expansion of the school and the construction of Shifnal Primary School shown in 1986-87 OS mapping (figure 13). By the mid-1980s, the M54 had also been constructed approximately 350m north of the Site. By 2000 (figure 14), the Shifnal Town Football Club ground had also been built on the west side of Coppice Green Lane, opposite the Site, and in recent years this has been joined by the Honeysuckle Grange residential development. Although not shown on the 2019 mapping (figure 16), this pattern of eastward expansion has continued most recently with the residential development at Linwood Park, situated directly south of Aston Hall across Stanton Road, and the associated highways infrastructure.

Throughout this period, the Site appears to have remained broadly unchanged; although at some point the Site has been separated from Aston Hall and returned to agricultural use, as has the large field parcel adjoining Aston Coppice to the east of the Site. Mapping indicates that this may have taken place by the mid-1960s, as from the 1965-6 OS mapping (figure 12) very few trees are shown in these field parcels. The private estate road that previously extended the length of the eastern boundary of the Site has also been reduced to its present extent by this date. The conversion of the agricultural buildings forming part of the Aston Hall Complex, directly adjoining the Site, occurred in the 1990s, necessitating the demolition of a number of the buildings. The garden plots associated with these residences are apparent in OS mapping from 2000 (figure 14).

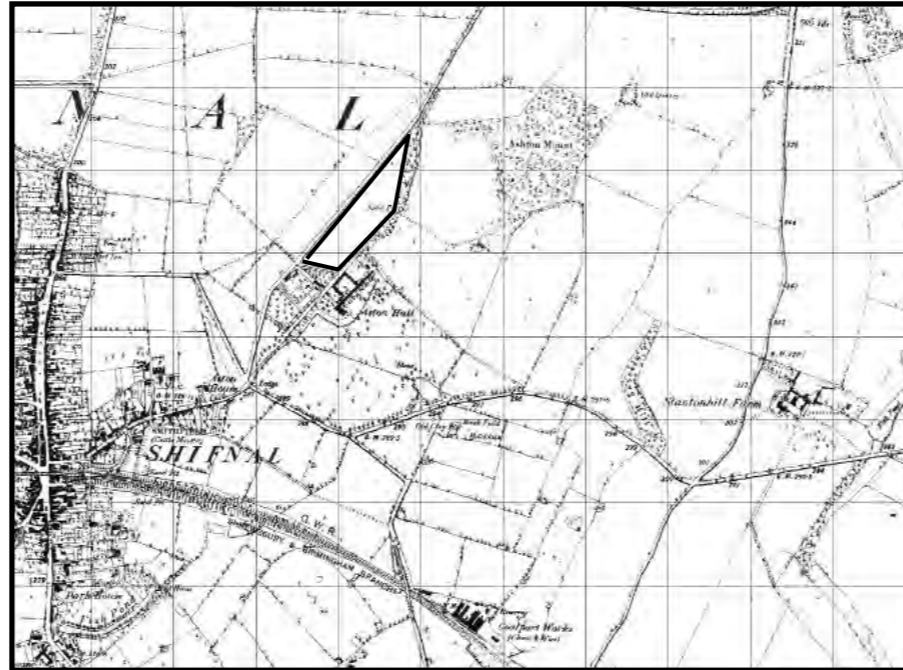


Figure 8: 1888-9 Ordnance Survey mapping, with approximate Site boundary shown in red.

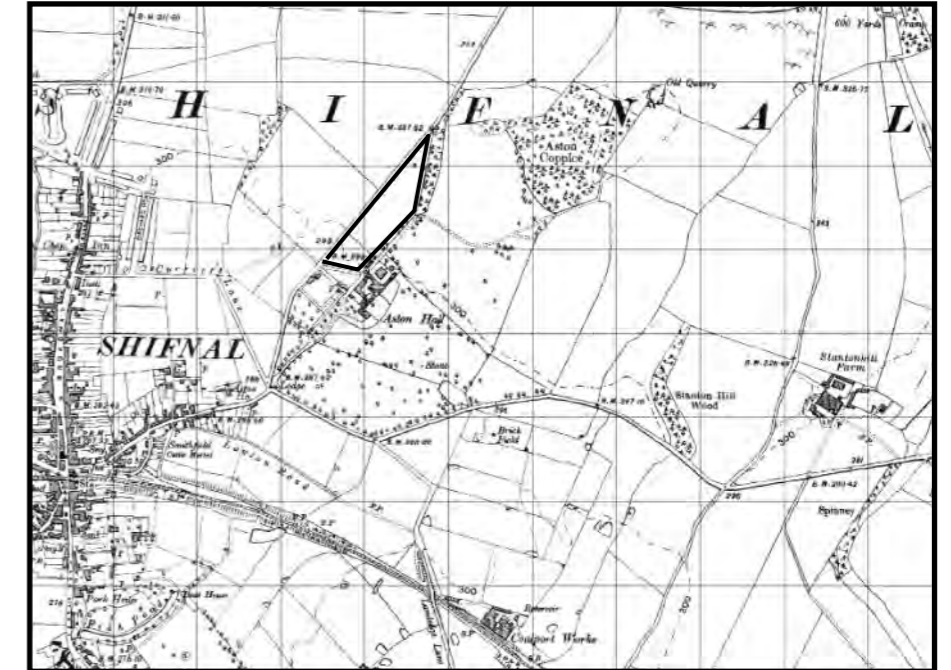


Figure 10: 1938 Ordnance Survey mapping, with approximate Site boundary shown in red.

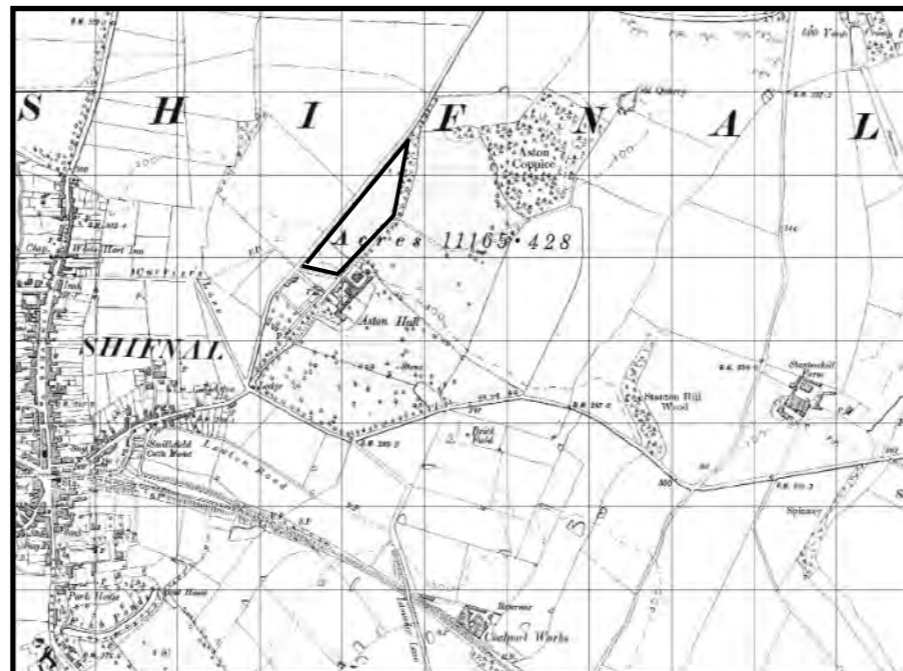


Figure 9: 1903 Ordnance Survey mapping, with approximate Site boundary shown in red.

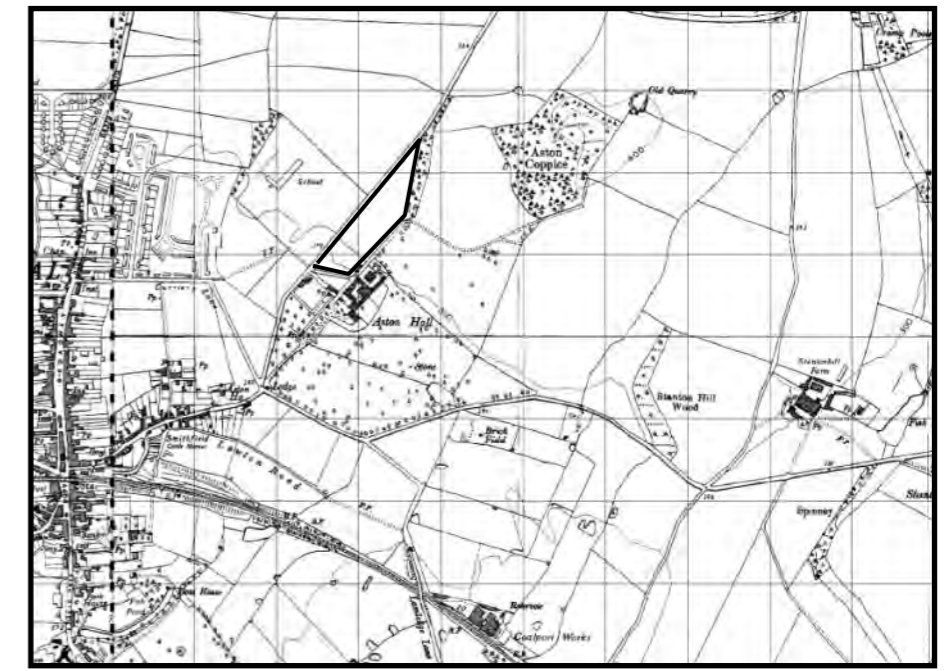


Figure 11: 1954 Ordnance Survey mapping, with approximate Site boundary shown in red.

3.2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT (CONT.)

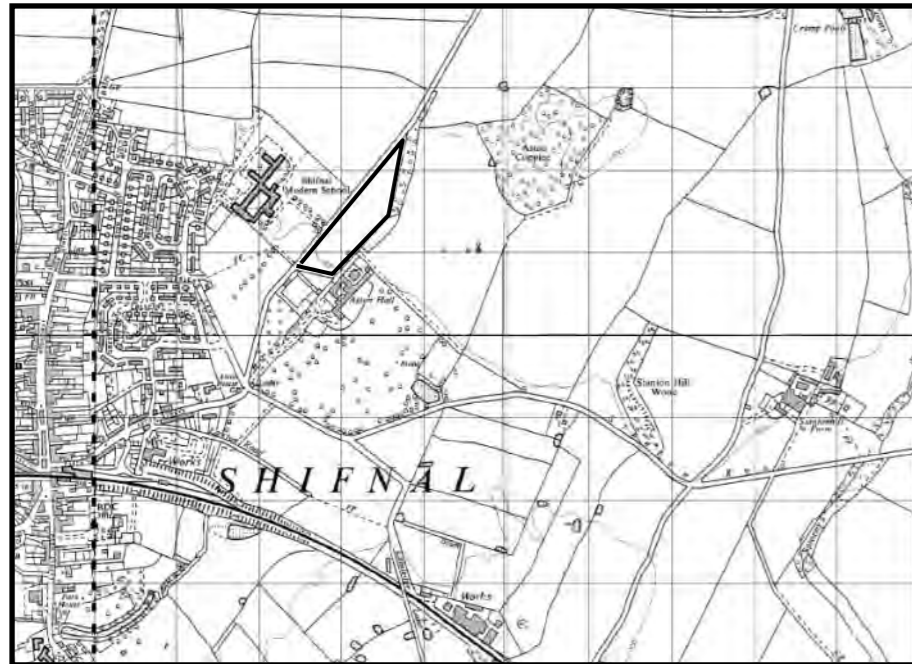


Figure 12: 1965-6 Ordnance Survey mapping, with approximate Site boundary shown in red.

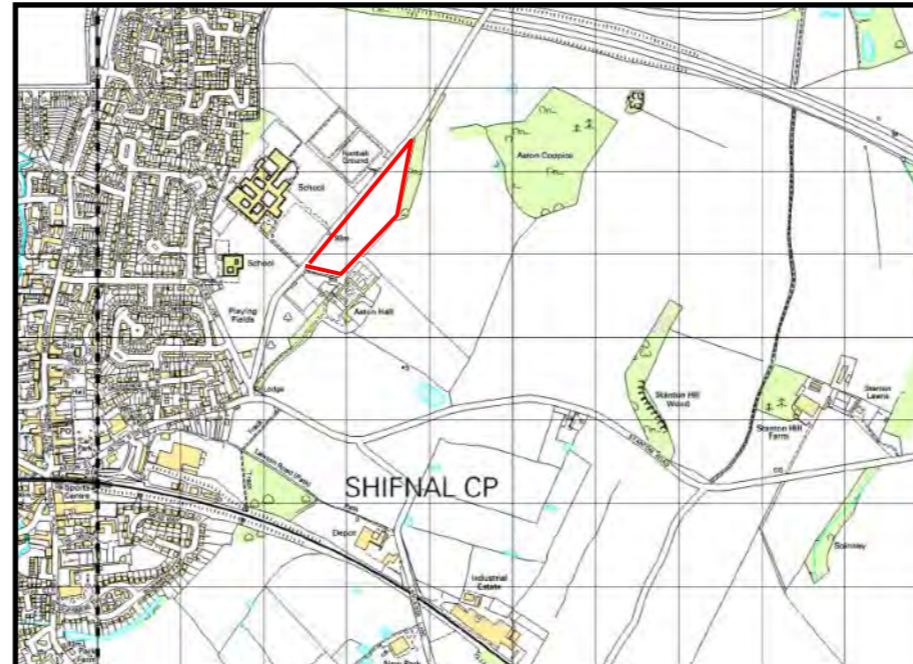


Figure 14: 2000 Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping, with approximate Site boundary shown in red.

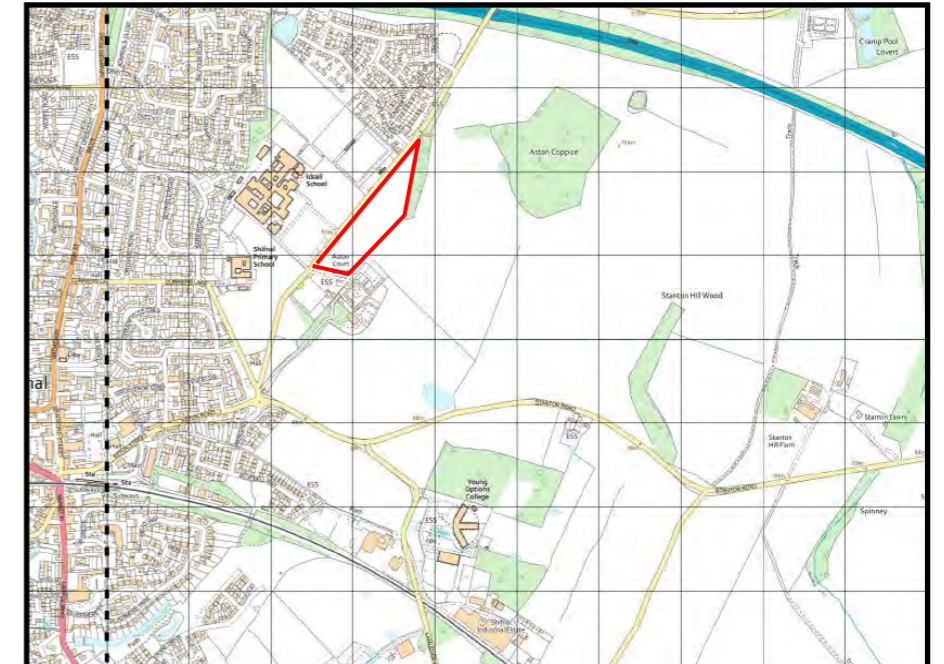


Figure 16: 2019 Ordnance Survey mapping, with approximate Site boundary shown in red.

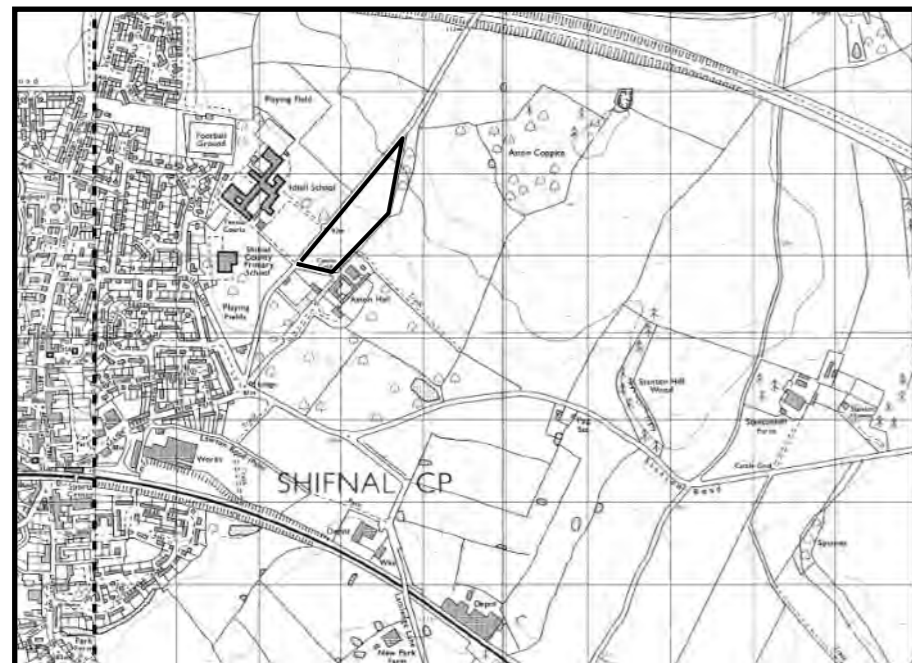


Figure 13: 1986-87 Ordnance Survey mapping, with approximate Site boundary shown in red.

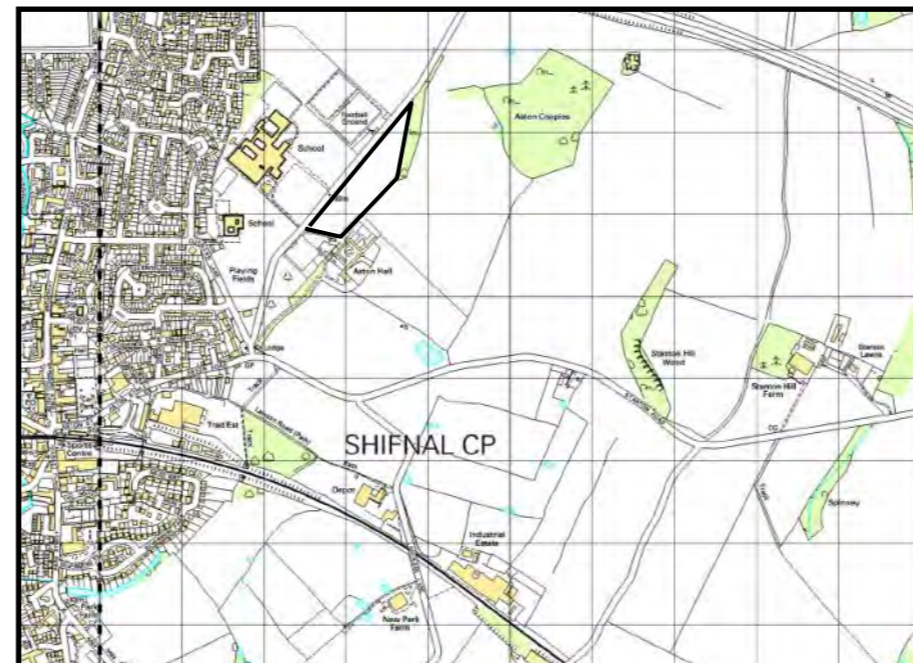


Figure 15: 2006 Ordnance Survey mapping, with approximate Site boundary shown in red.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 IDENTIFICATION OF BUILT HERITAGE ASSETS

To identify built heritage assets potentially affected by the proposed allocation of the Site and its subsequent development, an initial 1 kilometre search radius was used. This was deemed to be proportionate considering the nature of the proposed residential development.

No listed buildings or non-designated built heritage assets are located within the Site. 53 listed buildings have been identified as lying within 1 kilometre of the Site: a dense cluster within the historic core of Shifnal, to the southwest of the Site; a group of three associated assets at Aston Hall; and Coppice Green House and the South Lodge to Decker Hill, both of which lie to the north of the Site beyond the M54.

The Site is not, however, considered to form a part of the setting of the majority of these listed buildings by virtue of it not sharing any intervisibility or sequential views with these assets, and the lack of any apparent functional or historical association between the Site and these assets. Due to the intervening distance, built form and vegetation, there is no visual appreciation of the listed buildings situated within the centre of Shifnal and, likewise, there is no intervisibility with the Lodge at Decker Hill. Coppice Green House is situated just off Coppice Green Lane, but is densely enclosed by mature trees and is not experienced in views along this road.

Only the following listed buildings are considered to have any potential to be affected by the proposed allocation and the subsequent development of the Site and are considered below:

- Aston Hall (Grade II*, NHLE:1308059), situated c.90m south of the of the Site at its closest point;
- Water tower, approximately 20 metres to north of Aston Hall (Grade II, NHLE:1053653); and
- Barns, Byre and Hayloft, and Coach House, approximately 30 metres to north of Aston Hall (Grade II, NHLE: 1176103).

Grade II* Aston Hall is situated within a modestly-sized designed landscape largely to the southwest, south and southeast of the Hall. This asset is noted in the Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and is identified by Parks and Gardens UK. As well as forming part of the immediate setting of Aston Hall, this park and garden will be considered below as a standalone non-designated heritage asset.

A number of historic farmsteads identified in the Shropshire HER lie within the surrounding landscape, which may also warrant consideration as non-designated heritage assets. However, it is considered that none have the potential to be impacted by proposed allocation of the Site.

Shifnal and Shifnal (Broadway) Conservation Areas lie, in part, within 1 kilometre of the Site. However, for the reasons given above in regard to the listed buildings situated within these Conservation Areas, the Site is not considered to form part of their setting. As such they are not considered further within this report.

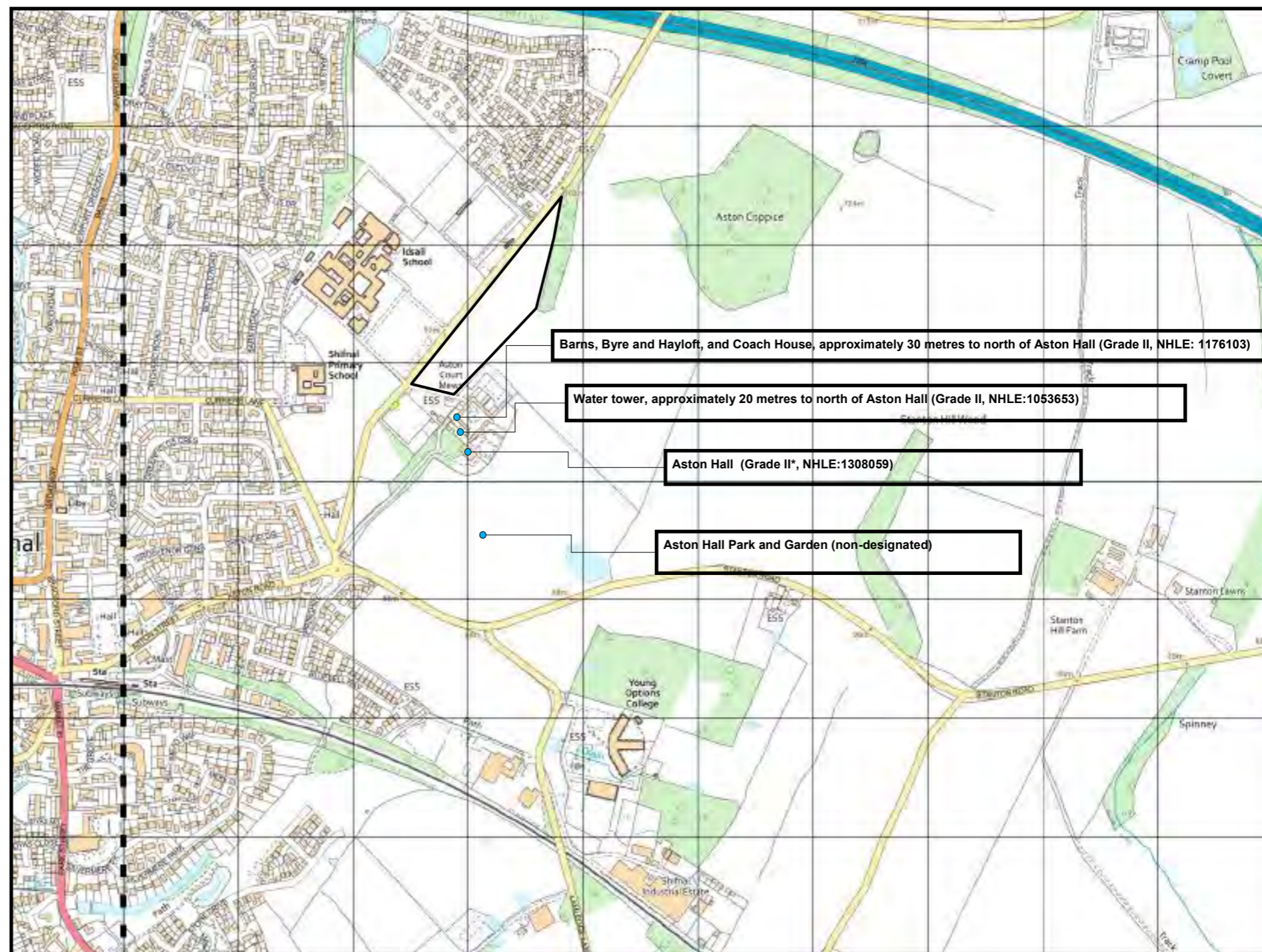


Figure 17: Heritage Assets Plan

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS: STATUTORILY LISTED BUILDINGS

Aston Hall (Grade II*, NHLE:1308059)

Date first listed: 26th May 1955

Description

Aston Hall was constructed in c.1720. In 1762 it became home to tobacco plantation and slave owner George Austin, who had been born in Shifnal in 1710 before leaving to make his fortune in Carolina. Upon his death, the Estate passed to his daughter, whose husband John Moultrie was also a slave and plantation owner in Carolina, and later acting Governor of East Florida. Aston Hall remains a private residence.

The original early-eighteenth century house was likely arranged over two storeys, with the top floor added when the whole house was refaced in the early-nineteenth century. The house is now pebble-dashed, with stuccoed and painted stone dressings, quoins and a moulded wooden eaves cornice. It has a double-span slate roof with four prominent ridge stacks. The principal elevation of the house faces south-west across the designed parkland. It is of seven bays with large central porch supported by two Tuscan columns. At ground floor level, the large nine over nine timber sash windows extend to ground level, with smaller three over six and three over three sash windows at first and second floor levels respectively. To the north-west side of the building there is a nineteenth-century single-storey addition with pitched slate roof.

The interior of Aston Hall was not inspected, but the NHLE records it as retaining a number of notable historic features, including the original flagged floor in the entrance hall, original staircase, mid-nineteenth century decorative plasterwork, and a nineteenth-century radial tympanum in the drawing room.

Significance

The Significance of this designated asset derives largely from the building's historical and evidential values as a substantial early eighteenth-century country house with nineteenth-century alterations, demonstrating changing architectural tastes and expectations for living standards in country houses over these periods. Moreover, with the Aston Hall house and Estate possessed and improved by the Austin (subsequently Moultrie) family from the mid-eighteenth century, the asset also illustrates the immense wealth generated by individuals through colonialism and slavery.

For the same reason, the asset also possesses some communal, specifically symbolic, value. Such values, *Conservation Principles* reminds us 'are not always affirmative', but 'may be important for reminding us of uncomfortable events, attitudes or periods in England's history'. In addition, the asset derives its significance from the aesthetic value the building possesses as a result of its high quality design, architectural detailing and construction.



Figure 18 c.1900 photograph of the primary (southwest) elevation of Aston Hall.



Figure 19: View of Aston Hall from agricultural land to northeast, showing parkland setting and demonstrating visual impact of Linwood Park (left). The Site (right) and development beyond Coppice Green Lane are hidden by vegetation in this particular view.

Setting

The immediate setting of Aston Hall comprises the historic Park and Garden within which the asset is situated. This Park and Garden contains a number of features that appear to be contemporary to the Hall and its nineteenth-century improvements, including a ha-ha; driveway (formerly a section of the southwest-northeast road from Shifnal); a late nineteenth-century gatehouse; walled former kitchen garden; and a small area of parkland to the east and southeast of the asset containing a number of mature specimen trees. As such, it is assessed separately below as a non-designated heritage asset. However, it also contributes to the significance of Aston Hall as it helps to place the asset within its historical and functional setting, and further demonstrates the wealth of the Auston/Moultrie family, contributing to the Hall's historic illustrative value. It also contributes to the asset aesthetically.

A complex of former ancillary outbuildings (a number of which are listed at Grade II and assessed separately below) lies within the Hall's former grounds and forms part of the immediate setting of Aston Hall. This complex of seventeenth to nineteenth-century outbuildings helps to place Aston Hall within its historic and functional setting, contributing to the historic illustrative value of Aston Hall as the centrepiece of an historic managed rural estate. With an extension domestic and agricultural staff.

Beyond, to the north and east of the asset, lie areas of coppice and agricultural land. From within these areas there are a limited number of long-distance views of the asset available in which the its architectural quality and aesthetic merit can, to a degree, be appreciated. Furthermore, a large part of these areas share a residual historic functional connection with the asset, having once formed part of the former Aston Hall estate. Whilst no longer sharing a functional connection with the asset, they nevertheless continue to make a contribution to the legibility of the asset as the centrepiece of an historic managed rural estate built in the rural hinterland of Shifnal.

However, as Shifnal has significantly grown through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Aston Hall has come to be situated in an increasingly edge of urban context and now lies on the margin of the built envelope of Shifnal. It is experienced as such from much of its setting, with the modern development surrounding Aston Hall to the south, west and northwest a notable feature in views of the asset from the surrounding roads, footpaths and fields. Moreover, whilst some of this surrounding urban context is screened in views from Aston Hall itself, due to the asset's north-south orientation and the mature vegetation immediately west and southwest of the asset, there is clear intervisibility between the asset's primary (south) façade and the recent Linwood Park development. Overall, the asset's wider setting is considered to make a lower, secondary level of contribution to the asset's significance than its immediate parkland setting or the form and fabric of the asset itself, which offer a primary contribution.

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS: LISTED BUILDINGS

Contribution of the Site to Aston Hall's Significance

The Site shares a residual historic functional connection with Aston Hall, as part of the former estate's agricultural land. There is no evidence that the Site was ever part of the former estate's designed parkland. The Site's position to the flank and rear of Aston Hall's main aspect and beyond the 'back of house' ancillary and service buildings would strengthen the view that the Site never formed part of the estate's designed landscape.

Although no longer sharing a functional or ownership connection to Aston Hall, the Site remains in agricultural use and therefore still makes some degree of contribution to the legibility of the asset as the centrepiece of an historic managed rural estate. However, the Site has also become experienced from the mid twentieth century in the context of the educational and subsequent residential development along the west side of Coppice Green Lane. As such, any understanding it provides of the asset's historic rural estate setting is limited; and is certainly notably less than the contribution made by the larger agricultural fields and coppices to the northeast and east of the asset.

Further to this, there is only limited glimpsed and partial views of parts of the asset from the Site due to the intervening ancillary buildings, Aston Court Mews (with its domesticated and broken up character), vegetation, and due to the asset's orientation to the southeast. Similarly the kinetic views of the asset are greatly limited as one moves south-westwards down

Coppice Green Lane. Firstly the continuous hedgerow, currently cut to a height of 2.2 metres, greatly restricts opportunities to view across the Site. Despite this there can be a perception of the presence of buildings and possibly some recognition of the site of a country house, due to the cluster of buildings and the dense clump of woodland including specimen trees, as one approaches the junction of Coppice Green Lane with the access drive to Aston Court Mews.

There is no perception of any part of the significance of Aston Hall until one is just over 100 metres northeast of the junction. At this point the asset's chimneys are viewable above the surrounding buildings and trees, indicating the presence of a large building (fig.20). The three chimneys suggest a large house and the eagle-eyed might note the shallow hipped roof, which could suggest an eighteenth or early nineteenth-century date.

As one proceeds down Coppice Green Lane, one can glimpse a view of a small part of the upper storey of the western, rear façade at 90 metres north of the junction (fig.21). Little is added in terms of legibility of the asset's significance compared to the first glimpsed view of a small part of the building 20 metres to the northeast.

At 70 metres from the junction (fig.22), one can glean a view of the roofscape, as before, and a part of the upper storey of the Hall at the corner of the west and northern facades. A little more is added in terms of legibility of the asset's significance compared to the preceding glimpses of

a small part of the building 40 metres to the northeast. We can see the Georgian sash window, the quoins, the window key stone and the parapet with cornice; all which suggest eighteen or early nineteenth-century architectural styling. It is at this point that a significant portion of the asset's significance becomes legible.

The greater legibility of the Aston's Hall's significance in views across the Site, though still very far from a comprehensive offering, occur around 30 metres from the junction on Coppice Green Lane (fig.23). From this point we can experience similar to the last view, in terms of significant legibility of the asset's significance. The addition is that a greater portion, albeit at an acute angle, of the northern elevation, a flanking façade, is visible.

As an aggregate, there is little appreciation of Aston Hall's significance from the Site or in views across it. The few glimpsed, filtered and partial views available have been identified above. The primary contributors to Aston Hall's significance is the form, style and history of the building's fabric, with the former ancillary buildings and the designed landscape of the park and garden, predominantly to the east and south east of the Hall providing an important contribution in terms of group value and as part of the asset's setting. The Site, with a residual historic functional and ownership association as a small part of the former agricultural estate (therefore a small part of the asset's wider setting) and minimal intervisibility wider setting, is considered to make negligible-small secondary level of contribution to the significance of the asset.



Figure 20: Glimpsed view of part of the roofscape of Aston Hall from Coppice Green Lane 110 m north of the junction with the drive to Aston Court Mews.



Figure 21: A partially zoomed view of part of the roofscape and a small portion of the western façade of Aston Hall from Coppice Green Lane 90 m north of the junction with the drive to Aston Court Mews



Figure 22: A zoomed view of part of the roofscape with architectural detailing from part of the upper storey of Aston Hall at the corner of the western and northern elevations from Coppice Green Lane 70 m north of the junction with the drive to Aston Court Mews

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS: LISTED BUILDINGS

Barns, Byre and Hayloft, and Coach House, Approximately 30 Metres to North of Aston Hall (Grade II, NHLE: 1176103)

Date first listed: 2nd January 1981

Description

The Barns, Byre and Hayloft, and Coach House, are a complex of ancillary outbuildings sited in proximity to, and historically associated with, Aston Hall. In the late 1980s, these outbuildings were converted to form 18 dwellings. The earliest range, thought to date to the seventeenth century, is situated to the south of the complex. This comprises a timber-framed former barn with stone plinth and red brick nogging, arranged over two storeys. The remainder of the complex, dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is largely built of brick or regular coursed red sandstone, with pitched tiled roofs. Some original external decorative features are apparent, including diaper work and a dentil brick eaves cornice. In relation to their late-twentieth century conversion into residential use, there appears to be some refacing of elevations, the insertion of rooflights, new fenestration, and a number of modern flues, in addition to internal reconfiguration.

Significance

The significance of the asset derives largely from the architectural and historic interest embodied within its form and fabric. In particular, the asset

retains a significant amount of historic fabric, despite losses as a result of its conversion into residential use. It consequently possesses illustrative and evidential value, providing an insight into local building practices and building techniques from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, and changes to these during this period. Despite its conversion to residential use, the asset also retains external legibility as a former agricultural and coaching complex. In addition, the asset derives some significance from the modest aesthetic value it possesses, largely as a result of its pleasing original decorative detailing.

Setting

Some elements of the asset's immediate setting are considered to contribute to its significance, whilst others detract from its significance. The fourteen private gardens and areas of tarmacked parking immediately adjoining the asset, which were created as part of the asset's late-twentieth century conversion to residential use, are considered to detract from the significance of the asset. Particularly when experienced from Coppice Green Lane, as well as from fields to the north, where the asset is seen in the context of these sub-dividing, domesticated, fenced gardens and areas of parking: this is considered to detract from the ability to understand the asset as a formerly unified complex of agricultural and stabling buildings and therefore its illustrative value.

These gardens and areas of parking also detract from the asset's aesthetic value. In contrast, Grade II* listed Aston Hall, situated 30 metres south of

the asset, is considered to contribute to the historic illustrative value of the asset, as these outbuildings were built to play an ancillary role to the Hall. The asset, the listed Water Tower (assessed separately below), Aston Hall, and the Park and Garden in which they are situated are considered to share group value.

In part, the asset's wider setting comprises areas of coppice and agricultural land, which predominantly lie to the northeast and east of the asset. As discussed above, historic mapping demonstrates that some of these areas share an historic functional connection with the asset as part of the agricultural land comprising the former Aston Hall estate. Although no longer functionally connected to the asset, this agricultural land helps to place the asset within its historic functional and rural context, therefore contributing to the asset's historic illustrative value and significance.

There are also some views of the asset from within its wider setting that contribute to the ability to appreciate the asset's historic and architectural special interest, particularly from the surrounding fields to the northeast and east where the asset can be viewed most fully. Although, as discussed above, the ability to appreciate the asset as a complex of agricultural and stabling buildings in these views has been eroded by the visual prominence of visually and functionally dividing modern features related to the asset's conversion to residential use.

The built edge of Shifnal, which comprises the asset's wider setting to the south, west and northwest, forms the backdrop to many of these views and



Figure 23: A zoomed view of part of the roofscape with architectural detailing from part of the upper storey of Aston Hall at the corner of the western and northern elevations, from Coppice Green Lane 30 m northeast of the junction with Aston Court Mews drive.



Figure 24: Barns, Byre and Hayloft, and Coach House, Approximately 30 Metres to North of Aston Hall, now converted to residential use. Southern, timber-framed range shown. (source: britishlistedbuildings.co.uk)



Figure 25: View towards Barns, Byre and Hayloft, and Coach House across the southwest end of the Site. The asset is partly screened but garages and cars associated with the asset's residential conversion are visible.

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS: LISTED BUILDINGS (CONT.)

is not considered to contribute to the asset's significance or the ability to appreciate that significance. Overall, the asset's wider setting is considered to make a moderate positive contribution to the significance of the asset.

Contribution of the Site

The Site shares a residual historical functional connection with the asset, having formed part of the Aston Hall Estate farmed from the asset. The Site no longer shares a functional or ownership connection to the asset, which has been divided up into independent residential units, but it nevertheless remains in agricultural use and therefore makes a positive contribution to the legibility of the asset as (mostly) a range of former agricultural buildings. It is, however, considered that the Site makes a lesser contribution to the historic illustrative value of the asset than the larger parcels of agricultural land to the northeast and east of the asset, despite its proximity. This is because it is formed of a relatively narrow and marginal plot of land situated along the east side of Coppice Green Lane. As such, is experienced in the context of the adjacent educational and residential development on the west side of Coppice Green Lane, including in views from the asset.

There are some return views of the asset from the Site, although from the further parts of the Site these are partially screened by the existing vegetation along the boundary between the Site and the asset. These available views allow some appreciation of the architectural and historic interest of the asset, although the ability to appreciate the asset as a complex of agricultural and stabling buildings in these views has in general been eroded by the visual prominence of modern features related to the asset's conversion to residential use.

Overall, the Site is considered to make a small secondary level of contribution to the significance of the asset.

Water tower, approximately 20 metres to north of Aston Hall (Grade II, NHLE: 1053653)

Date first listed: 29th August 1984

The water tower is situated in an enclosed area, and as such it is not possible to view the water tower from publicly accessible locations. The following description and assessment is therefore based on the NHLE description, online data, historic mapping and aerial views.

Description

The water tower, approximately 20 metres to the north of Aston Hall, was constructed in the early-nineteenth century to serve the Aston Hall complex. The water tower, which is hexagonal in plan, is two storeys in height and constructed of brown brick with a pyramidal lead roof. Whilst a functional building, it has an arcaded ground floor with round arches, with a



Figure 26: Water tower, approximately 20 metres to north of Aston Hall. (source: Britishlistedbuildings.co.uk)



Figure 27: Aston Hall and the Barns, Byre and Hayloft, and Stables enclose the listed Water Tower and preclude views from the wider surrounds.

date stone (reading 1805) above to the south. At first floor level there is a cill band and rendered blind arches. The roof is topped with a weathervane.

Significance

The significance of the water tower primarily derives from the way in which it illustrates an historic technology and the adoption of this technology, in this case by a private estate in the early-nineteenth century. However, the asset also derives historic illustrative value from the way in which its design (which is of a high quality and displays decorative features despite the asset's functional use) demonstrates contemporary attitudes towards aesthetics and displays of wealth. As was likely the intention of the individual(s) who commissioned and designed the tower, the tower's detailing also provides the asset with aesthetic value.

Setting

The asset's setting is largely defined by the yard (now used for parking) in which it is situated, which is tightly enclosed by the built form of Aston Hall, Aston Court Mews, mature trees, and further buildings adjacent to the former kitchen garden. Much of this setting is considered to contribute positively to the significance of the asset. Aston Hall, which the water tower was built to serve, makes an important contribution to the historic illustrative value of the asset. The Barns, Byre and Hayloft, and Coach House at Aston Court Mews also contribute positively to the historic illustrative value of the asset as these buildings similarly illustrate attitudes to estate architecture, and make a greater contribution to our understanding when considered together. However, some aspects of the Water Tower's immediate setting are considered to detract from its significance, including the parking of cars around the asset and the fenced private garden plots associated with the residential conversion of Aston Court Mews, which are both considered to detract from the asset's aesthetic value.

The asset shares a loose association with much of the wider landscape, which also formed part of the former Aston Hall estate. However, whilst the Water Tower shares a close historic relationship to Aston Hall, which it was built to serve, it shares no such relationship with the land comprising the wider Estate. Due to the enclosure nature of the asset's immediate surrounds, there is also no intervisibility between the Site and the wider landscape. The wider landscape is consequently not considered to contribute to the significance of the asset.

Contribution of the Site

As part of the land formerly comprising the former Aston Hall estate, the Site shares a loose association with the Water Tower. However, whilst the asset shares a close historic relationship to Aston Hall, which it was built to serve, it shares no such relationship with the agricultural parcel comprising the Site. Moreover, whilst the asset and the Site are situated in relatively

4.3 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

close proximity (c.65 metres at the nearest point), the asset's visual setting is tightly enclosed and there is no intervisibility with the Site. Since the road along the eastern edge of the Site was bypassed at some point between 1865 and 1888, the main approach to Aston Hall and the asset has been from the south, and as such the Site is therefore also not experienced sequentially on the approach to the asset.

The Site is considered to make no contribution to the asset's significance.

Aston Hall Park and Garden

Description

Aston Hall Park and Garden comprises the remains of a formal garden surrounded to the south and east by an area of parkland, in which is situated Grade II* listed Aston House. Available documentary evidence of the development of this park and garden is scarce. Shropshire HER states that 'by 1827 Aston Hall was surrounded by a small park (C. and J. Greenwood, *Map of Shropshire*), which was said in 1858 to contain 'some handsome timber' (Visitor, *A Guide to the View from Brimstree Hill (1958)*'. Some more detail as to its layout during the nineteenth century is provided in the 1840 Shifnal Tithe Map and in sales particulars for the Aston Hall Estate dating from 1865 (figs 6 & 7).

This modestly sized historic park and garden contains a number of features that appear to be contemporary to the Hall and its nineteenth-century improvements. This includes an area of lawn immediately surrounding the Hall, a ha-ha, and an area of treed parkland beyond containing a number of mature specimen trees. In addition, it includes a treed driveway that extends southwest towards Stanton Road and forms the main approach to the Hall (formerly part of the southwest-northeast road from Shifnal); as well as a walled former kitchen garden and orchard to the west. There is also a small single-storey gate lodge porch situated at the entrance to the driveway, which was built prior to 1865.

Significance

Aston Hall Park and Garden is an asset of low (local) significance. This significance derives from the heritage values it possesses as the remains of a designed gardens and parkland landscape providing the immediate setting to grade II* listed Aston Hall with which it hold group value. The Park and Garden possesses some limited aesthetic value. It also possesses some historic illustrative and evidential values in the way it demonstrates elements of garden and landscape design and provides evidence as to how these were interpreted at Aston Hall in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Setting

To the north and east of the asset lie areas of coppice and agricultural land.



Figure 28: View south across Aston Hall Park and Garden. From within these areas there are a limited number of long-distance views



Figure 29: View north across Site taking in development on the far side of Coppice Green Lane, including that at Honeysuckle Grange.

of the asset available in which features of the Park and Garden and its overall aesthetic value can be appreciated. Furthermore, a large part of this landscape setting shares an historic connection with the asset; either as part of the parkland once extending northwards as far as Aston Coppice, or as part of the wider Aston Hall Estate. This landscape setting no longer shares a functional connection to Aston Hall, nor does the fact that the Parkland once extended further north to Aston Coppice remain legible. However, it is nonetheless considered to contribute positively to the ability to appreciate the asset as a designed garden and parkland landscape at the centre of a wider rural estate.

However, as Shifnal has grown through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Aston Hall Park and Garden has come to be situated in an increasingly urban context and now lies on the edge of the built envelope of Shifnal. It is experienced as such both from within the asset itself and from much of its setting. From the Park and Garden itself the recent Linwood Park development and associated road infrastructure (including streetlights) immediately south of the asset is a notable visual presence, and development on the west side of Coppice Green Lane appears in views to the north/northwest from within the Park and Garden. These areas of development, as well as the developed edge of Shifnal more generally, are also a notable feature in views of the asset from the surrounding roads, footpaths and fields. Although the Site was not visited outside of daylight hours, it is likely that light spill from the developed edge of Shifnal is also a notable urbanising presence. Parts of the asset's setting are therefore considered to contribute positively to the significance of the asset, whereas others are not.

Contribution of the Site

As noted above, the Site shares a residual historic functional and ownership connection to the asset. Neither of these remain and the Site retains no legibility as having formed part of the former Aston Hall estate. However, in its current agricultural use, a small part of the former agricultural estate, it makes some small contribution to the legibility of the asset having been a designed landscape at the centre of larger rural estate. In addition to this, the Site's location along the east side of Coppice Green Lane means that it is experienced in the context of urban development along the west side of Coppice Green Lane and, as a result, the contribution it makes to an understanding of the asset's historic rural setting is lesser than, for example, the larger agricultural fields adjoining the asset to the northeast and east.

Overall, the Site is a small part of the asset's wider setting and as such makes a positive contribution to the significance of the asset. However, this contribution is of a negligible, secondary level to the significance of this non-designated asset.

5.0 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

5.1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The following section provides an assessment of the potential impacts on the built heritage assets identified above arising from the proposed residential development of the Site, as well as discussion of the mitigation measures should be incorporated into the indicative masterplan and those that could be introduced to any forthcoming application for the Site.

The proposed development would be for up to 80 residential units. The parameters plan (fig.30) indicates proposed residential development across much of the Site. An area at the south-western end of the Site will include no built form, so that the glimpsed and partial views of Aston Hall from and through the Site, described above, can be maintained. The boundary of development is to be a minimum distance from the junction of Coppice Green Lane and the driveway to Aston Court Mews of 70 metres.

Additionally, this provision will maintain a sense of openness between the former agricultural and ancillary buildings and Coppice Green Lane. Landscape planting at the boundary between the Site and Ashton Court Mews will further strengthen the screening in his area.

The north-eastern two thirds of the Site will include residential units up to an equivalent of 2.5 storeys in height. Those to the southwest will be no greater than a 2 storey height equivalent.

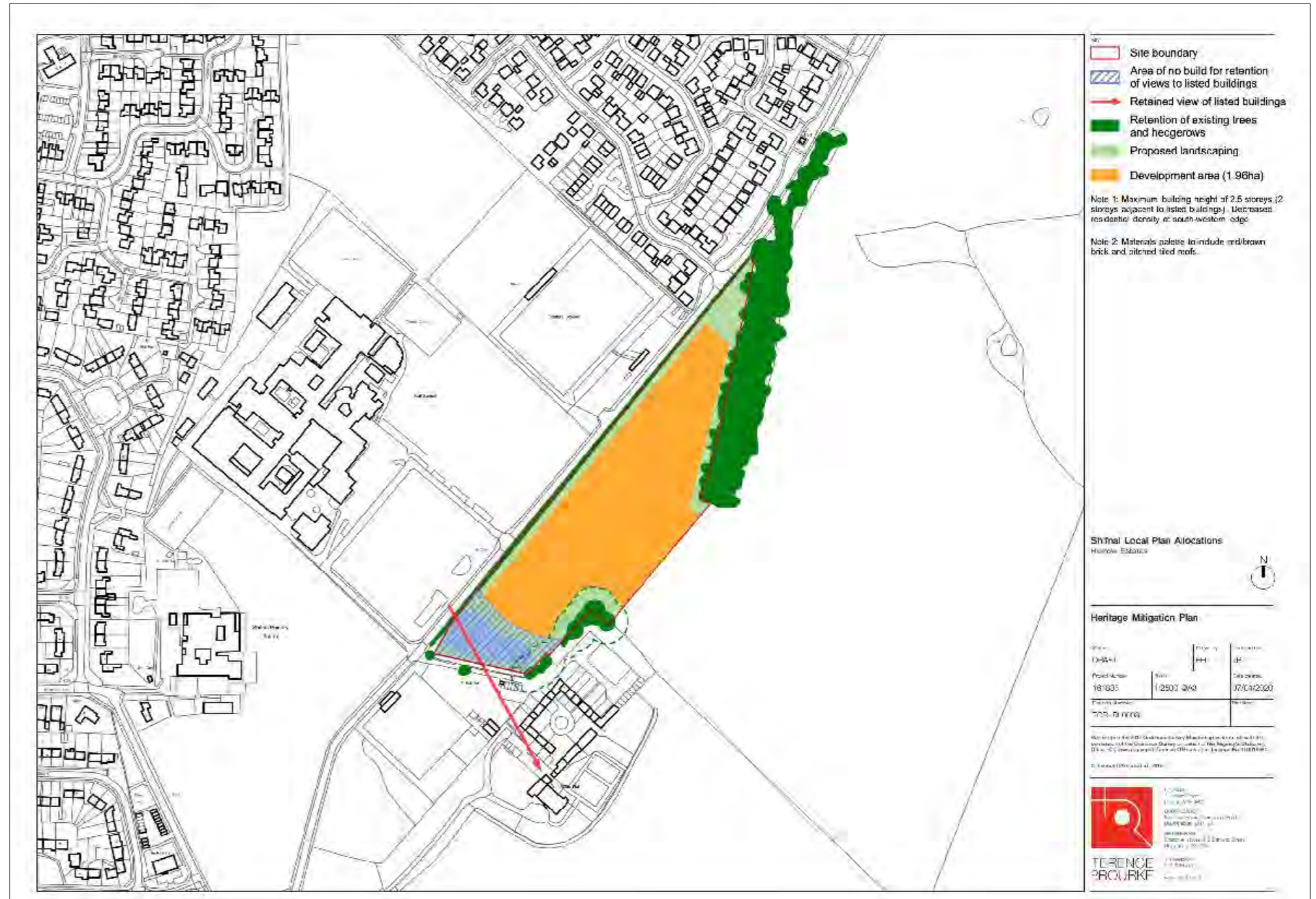


Figure 30: Proposed development parameters

5.2 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Aston Hall (Grade II*, NHLE:1308059)

The residential development of the Site will cause no impact to the physical fabric of the building and therefore any impact would result from changes in the asset's setting. The proposals will have no impact on the historic, aesthetic and evidential values manifest within the asset's form and fabric, the group value shared by the asset and the former outbuildings at Aston Court Mews, nor the building's status within its immediate setting of the designed Park and Garden.

It has been demonstrated above that the Site presently forms a small part of the asset's wider setting. It shares a residual, historic functional and ownership connection to the asset as a small part of the former Aston Hall estate and makes a small degree of positive contribution to the legibility of the asset as the centrepiece of an historic managed rural estate. The proposed residential development of the Site will continue the pattern of development that has occurred to the northwest of Shifnal whereby built form has been introduced to agricultural land formerly part of the Aston Hall estate to the rear and flank of the Hall. It will draw the urban edge of Shifnal closer to the asset and cause a small degree of further erosion to a small part of the asset's rural wider setting to the northwest. However, the Site is already experienced in the context of the development on the west side of Coppice Green Lane, and, therefore, any understanding the Site provides of the asset's historic rural estate setting is already limited.

There is also very little intervisibility between the Site and the asset, except from and across the south-westernmost edge of the Site where there are glimpsed, partial and filtered views of the upper parts of Aston Hall with elements of the former outbuildings, now the domesticated Aston Court Mews, in the foreground. The proposed residential development of the Site will introduce some further light spill and noise in relative proximity to the asset, but due to the scale of the proposed residential development (up to 80 units) it is unlikely that this will be discernible over and above that which is already experienced resulting from Aston Court Mews and existing development along Coppice Green Lane, which includes two schools, a floodlit football ground and residential development.

In order to mitigate the visual impact of the Site's development, existing planting along the Site's southeast edge should be retained and enhanced. Additional robust planting should be re-introduced along the part of the asset's east boundary that is currently undefined, to provide some screening in views from the east, and this will also have the benefit of screening some of the existing development to the west of Coppice Green Lane. Development will also be drawn back from the more sensitive south-westernmost part of the Site to ensure there is little to no experience of the proposed development from Aston Hall.

At the same time, this mitigation measure will mean that the glimpsed views of the upper parts of Aston Hall available across the south-

westernmost parts of the Site, which provide some understanding of the asset's historic and architectural interest, will be retained.

When any detailed application for development of the Site is brought forward, low-level bollard lighting should be proposed to minimise light spill. Moreover, the individual designs of the dwellings can and should reflect the more traditional vernacular architecture evident in Shifnal and in the estate buildings comprising Aston Court Mews. They should be no greater than 2.5 storeys in height (2 storeys in the south-western third of the Site). Red/brown brickwork and pitched tiled roofs can be repeated in the detail design of the dwellings, with a darker palette of materials ensuring the development is not unduly visually prominent within the surrounding landscape. In this way the residential development can and should have its design roots firmly established in the local character of Shifnal's historic built form, which has architectural merit. Any landscaping scheme should include some trees within the Site to 'green' the development.

The introduction of mitigation measures will not remove all harm to the significance of Grade II* listed Aston Hall, but will reduce the impact of the proposals. Overall, accounting for the introduction of these measures, it is considered that the introduction of residential built form into the Site will result in a **minor adverse impact** to the significance of the designated asset. This equates to a level of harm to the lower end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm.

Barns, Byre and Hayloft, and Coach House, Approximately 30 Metres to North of Aston Hall (Grade II, NHLE: 1176103)

The residential development will have no impact on the physical fabric of the Barns, Byre and Hayloft, and Coach House approximately 30 metres to the north of Aston Hall. Any impact would therefore result from change within the asset's setting. The proposals will have no impact on the historic illustrative, evidential or aesthetic values embodied within the form and fabric of the range of buildings, nor will it affect the asset's relationship to Aston Hall, which is an important contributor to the asset's significance.

It has been demonstrated above that the Site presently forms part of the asset's wider setting. It shares an historic functional connection to the asset as a part of the former Aston Hall Estate and makes a positive contribution to the legibility of the asset as (mostly) a range of former agricultural buildings.

The proposed residential development of the Site will constitute the continuation of the pattern of development that has occurred to the northwest of Shifnal whereby built form has been introduced to agricultural land formerly part of the Aston Hall Estate. It will draw the urban edge of Shifnal adjacent to the asset and further erode the asset's rural setting to

the north/northwest. However, the Site is already experienced in the context of the development on the west side of Coppice Green Lane, and, therefore, any understanding the Site provides of the asset's historic rural estate setting is already limited. This is notwithstanding the suburban influences, including areas of hardstanding, garaging and enclosed private garden plots, that have already been introduced within the immediate setting of the assets as part of their conversion to residential use.

Particularly towards the southern extent of the Site, there is intervisibility with the northwest and northeast ranges of the listed former agricultural and stabling complex and also some views across the Site from Coppice Green Lane. These views are partly screened by existing vegetation along the boundary between the Site and the asset, but nonetheless make a positive contribution to the ability to appreciate the architectural and historic interest of the asset.

As above, in order to mitigate the visual impact of the development, existing planting along the Site's eastern boundary should be retained and enhanced. This will likely further screen the asset from view from central and northern parts of the Site; but, by also drawing development back from the southwestern edge of the Site (by a minimum of 70 m), views from and across this part of the Site from Coppice Green Lane will be retained. Additional robust planting should be re-introduced along the part of the Site's east boundary that is currently undefined, to provide some screening in views from the east.

Again, any detailed application for development of the Site should and can have its design roots firmly established in the local character of surrounding historic built form, which has architectural merit. In order to further mitigate impacts on the Barns, Byre and Hayloft, and Coach House, development situated towards the southwest of the Site should be of a lower density and height to reflect the scale and massing of the assets, so as to visually complement rather than compete with this existing complex of buildings in views of the asset.

The introduction of the mitigation measures set out above will not remove all harm to the significance of the Grade II Barns, Byre and Hayloft and Coach House, but will reduce the impact of the proposals. Overall, accounting for the introduction of these measures, it is considered that the residential development of the Site will result in a **minor adverse impact** to the significance of the designated asset. This equates to a level of harm to the lower end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm.

Water tower, approximately 20 metres to north of Aston Hall (Grade II, NHLE: 1053653)

As demonstrated above, the Site makes no contribution to the significance of the asset. Consequently, the residential development of the Site will have **no impact** on the significance of the Grade II listed Water Tower.

5.2 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT (CONT.)

Aston Hall Park and Garden (non-designated)

Residential development of the Site will have no direct impact on this non-designated Park and Garden, therefore any impacts arising will result from change within the setting of the asset, of which the Site forms a part.

There is no meaningful intervisibility between the asset and the Site, such that the significance of the asset is not legible from the Site. It has been demonstrated above that the Site shares a residual historic functional connection to the asset as a small part of the former Aston Hall estate and, as such, makes a negligible, secondary level of contribution to the significance of this non-designated asset.

The proposed residential development of the Site will introduce some further light spill and noise in relative proximity to the asset, but due to the scale of the proposed residential development (up to 80 units) it is unlikely that this will be discernible over and above that which is already experienced from Aston Court Mews and existing development along Coppice Green Lane, which includes two schools, a floodlit football ground and residential development.

Mitigation measures noted above will further strengthen the current disconnection between the Site and the asset. In particular landscaping screening will act to screen the development from direct intervisibility and in sequential views from the east

The introduction of mitigation measures will not remove all changes within the wider setting of this asset, but will reduce the level of any impact to such a level that the significance of the asset and the ability to experience that significance will be unaffected by the Site's development. The introduction of residential built form into the Site will result in a **no impact** to the significance of the non-designated Aston Hall Park and Garden.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This Built Heritage Statement considers the potential impacts of the proposed residential development of the Site on the historic built environment in line with primary legislation (The planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990), the relevant heritage requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and local policy and guidance. It identifies potentially affected heritage assets, assesses their significance, including the contribution of the setting to that significance, and the likely impact on that significance from the proposed development.

This report identifies that the proposed residential development of the Site (SHF032) has the potential to affect three designated heritage assets.

It is demonstrated that the development of the Site will have no impact on Grade II listed Water tower, approximately 20 metres to north of Aston Hall. It is also demonstrated that, accounting for the suggested mitigation measures, development will likely result in a minor adverse impact to Grade II* listed Aston Hall and the Grade II listed Barns, Byre and Hayloft, and Coach House. This equates to a level of harm that is at the low end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm, thus engaging paragraph 196 of the NPPF, requiring this limited level of harm to be weighed against the wider public benefits of the proposed development.

In addition, it is demonstrated that the proposed residential development of the Site is unlikely to have an adverse impact on the non-designated Aston Hall Park and Garden.

This Built Heritage Statement meets the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy and provides sufficient information to inform the application for the allocation of parcel SHF032 ('the Site') in the emerging Local Plan.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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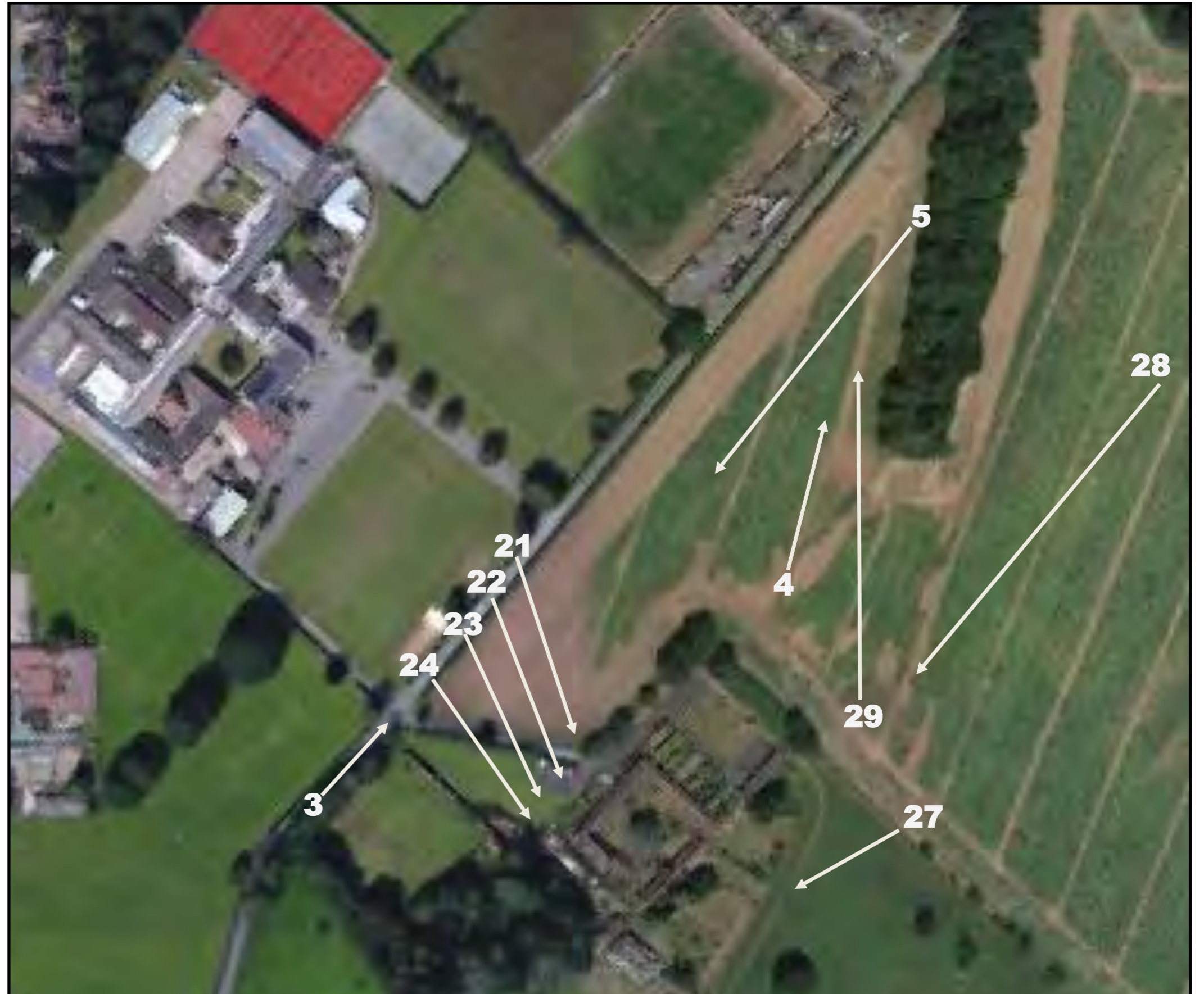
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX B: PLAN OF VIEW PHOTOGRAPHS (FIGURE NUMBERS)





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Date: 21 May 2020

Mr Liam Cowden (MRTPI)
Planning Policy
Shropshire Council
The Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Dear Mr Cowden,

Re: Land East of Shifnal (SHF032) – Meeting with Historic England.

I write to you in reference to a meeting regarding the above residential allocation site between Historic England and Harrow Estates on 13th May 2020. The attendees were Kezia Taylerson and Julie Taylor of Historic England, Tim Noden of Harrow Estates, Greg Blaquiere of Terence O'Rourke and Jonathan Smith of the RPS heritage team.

The attendees from Historic England firstly noted that their previous representation regarding the Site (and others) coming forward for a housing allocation used standardised wording at a time when little heritage information was available. They had reviewed the built heritage statement provided by RPS in advance of the meeting. They commented that the statement met the requirements of the NPPF and the relevant Local Plan policy in that it identified potentially affected heritage assets; sufficiently assessed their significance, including the contribution of setting; and appropriately assessed the effect of the Site's development on the assets' significance, including a consideration of mitigation measures.

The representatives from Historic England recognised the assessments and analysis made within the statement and noted them as reasoned and cogent. Specifically, it was recognised that the key asset in question for this case is the Grade II* Aston Hall and that its setting has different elements which provided differing levels of contribution to the asset's significance. It is my expert analysis that there is less legibility of significance from the rear and flanking areas, such as the Site, and that these areas provide a lower level of contribution to significance of Aston Hall; this analysis was not challenged by Historic England. The main contributors to the Hall's significance in terms of setting was from the designed landscape to the east over which the Hall has its main aspect. It was also noted that that there is a significant degree of screening between the Site in terms of mature planting and the ancillary buildings, now converted into private residencies (Aston Court Mews). None of this analysis was challenged.

It was accepted by the Historic England attendees that, up to the end of the nineteenth century, Coppice Green Lane's original historic alignment passed to the east of the Site, historically underlining the field's separation from the core of the former estate. As a result, also strengthening the Site's separation from the former estate's designed landscape to the east of Aston Hall; that the Site was and is not expected to be seen in intended and designed views to and from the Hall; that it is 'back of house', ancillary and to the rear of the asset.

However, the view from Historic England, despite accepting the expert analysis presented, is that the Site forms a part of open land around Aston Hall and is positioned close to the asset, as such, the proposed residential development (SFH032) would in Historic England's view enclose the Hall, effectively starting to subsume the asset with built form. Historic England, on this basis, object to the allocation of this site.

The generalised and non-specific openness of land on the east side of Shifnal does not contribute to Aston Hall's significance as a heritage asset to any notable degree. It is my professional view, and that set out in

the heritage statement, that the primary contributors to Aston Hall's significance is the form, style and history of the building's fabric itself. This is allied with the former ancillary buildings, the former kitchen garden, the specimen trees and the designed landscape of the park and garden, to the east and south east of the Hall, which all provide an important contribution in terms of group value and as part of the asset's setting. Contrastingly, the Site, with a residual historic functional and ownership association as a small part of the former agricultural estate (therefore a small part of the asset's wider setting) and with minimal inter-visibility, is concluded to make a negligible-small secondary level of contribution to the significance of the asset. The Site is not a key contributor to the Hall's high significance. Furthermore, it is my view (and that of the heritage statement) that the introduction of built form to the Site would cause a minor degree of harm to Aston Hall's significance (within the spectrum of less than substantial harm). This level of harm therefore is not considered to be at such an extent to warrant an in principle objection to allocate the site for residential development.

Historic England's argument against the allocation of this Site, is that it is firstly in open landscape and, secondly, close to the Hall. These are not valid arguments for dismissing this allocation on built heritage grounds. It has been shown, and largely accepted, that the Site does not deliver a significant contribution to the asset's significance, neither do views from or through the Site provide notable legibility of that significance. The openness of the Site is relative, but more crucially, there is significant screening by mature planting around the Hall and from the former ancillary and farm buildings, now converted into private residencies.

Also, the distance of the Site from the Hall should not be an automatic reason for alarm by Historic England. While the Site is closer than some parts of the designed landscape to the east, the Site is a minimal contributor to the asset's significance, while elements of the designed landscape have a significantly greater contribution to the asset's significance when being further in distance. Additionally, the Site is not intended to be seen from the Hall and it is the case that it hardly is. As noted above the Site is screened from the Hall by mature planting around the Hall and from the former ancillary and farm buildings. Contrastingly, the designed landscape to the east was always intended to be seen from the Hall and in wider views with the Hall, irrespective of distance.

As a final point, of the land around the Hall, it is in the direction including the Site that there are already private, domesticated residencies. The converted former ancillary buildings of Aston Court Mews deliver a wholly domestic character for the area between the Hall and the Site. Consequently, of the land around the Hall, the Site is the most appropriate to accept residential development in terms of built heritage considerations.

Being in open land and close to a heritage asset does not deliver sufficient justification to object to a site's development (allocation). Historic England's own guidance on development in the setting of heritage assets (GPA3: *The Setting of Heritage Assets* 2nd edition. 2017), sets out that '*consideration of the contribution of setting to the significance of heritage assets, and how it can be appreciated, will almost always include the consideration of views*'. It is the case that the appropriate analysis in line with the Historic England guidance has been carried out (set out in the heritage statement and summarised above). It has found that the site has a marginal and residual relationship to the asset; has a secondary level of contribution to the asset's significance; and that the legibility of the asset's significance in views from and through the site is minimal (the intended aspect from the asset is to the east across the designed landscape; the asset is screened from the site by mature planting and residential development in former ancillary buildings; and that an area of residential and domestic character is already in place between the Site and the asset).

The GPN3 guidance also notes that '*views, however, can of course be valued for reasons other than their contribution to heritage significance. They may, for example, be related to the appreciation of the wider landscape, where there may be little or no association with heritage assets*'. It is considered that Historic England, in expressing their objection during the meeting, have inappropriately strayed beyond their brief, which is limited to the historic environment. Landscape amenity considerations are wholly separate in this case from any consideration of the significance of Aston Hall and the legibility of that significance in relation to the proposed allocation site (SHF032).

In terms of recent development in a similar position in the open land around Aston Hall, such as that at Juniper Way (13/02989/OUT and 15/00089/REM), it is interesting to note that Historic England felt no need to make any representation on this scheme in open land close to the Hall, either through the Local Plan stage which allocated the site for safeguarding, or during each of the application stages (outline and reserved matters). It should also be noted that Council officers' views on these matters concluded that '*the proposed development would not impact adversely upon the setting of these listed buildings and has no conservation comments to make*' (15/00089/REM).

Our ref: JCH00828/iii

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely,
for RPS Consulting Services Ltd

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