

Haxby Hall

Heritage Statement

October 2020



Haxby, York

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Haxby Hall

Heritage Statement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Name: Haxby Hall

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Humble Heritage Ltd is a professional built heritage and archaeological consultancy operating in the specialised area of the historic environment in the planning system. The practice has extensive experience of historical and archaeological research, assessing significance and heritage impact and preparing Heritage Statements, archaeological desk-based assessments, statements of significance, conservation management plans and so forth. Humble Heritage Ltd provides heritage and archaeological advice on behalf of a wide variety of clients across much of England. The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (the IHBC) accredits Humble Heritage as a professional Historic Environment Service Provider.

Humble Heritage Ltd undertook this Heritage Statement in October 2020 on behalf of the applicant, having been appointed to advise on the design of the proposal in August 2020. This assessment is intended to accompany an application for planning permission for the erection of a residential care and dementia care home following demolition of the 1965 Haxby Hall and two adjacent 1960s dwellings.

This report provides a summary of the historical development of the application site. It examines the inherent heritage significance of the site and assesses the contribution that the application site makes to setting of the Haxby Conservation Area. It then assesses the impact of the proposed development on any relevant heritage assets.

The assessment finds that the existing care home and the two 1960s dwellings proposed for demolition have no heritage significance. Despite formerly being part of the grounds of the historic Haxby Hall, the present lawned areas has an insufficient level of heritage significance to be identified as a non-designated heritage asset. No heritage harm will therefore be caused to the existing buildings or grounds.

The application site is part of the setting of the Haxby Conservation Area and is visually prominent when approaching the village from the east. The present-day contribution of the site to the heritage significance of the conservation area is largely negative due to the unsympathetic form of the 1965 building. The few

positive elements (hedging) will be retained and the more sympathetic design of the proposed care home will enhance the setting of the conservation area.

The proposed development is therefore in accord with the heritage provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and the relevant sections of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act.

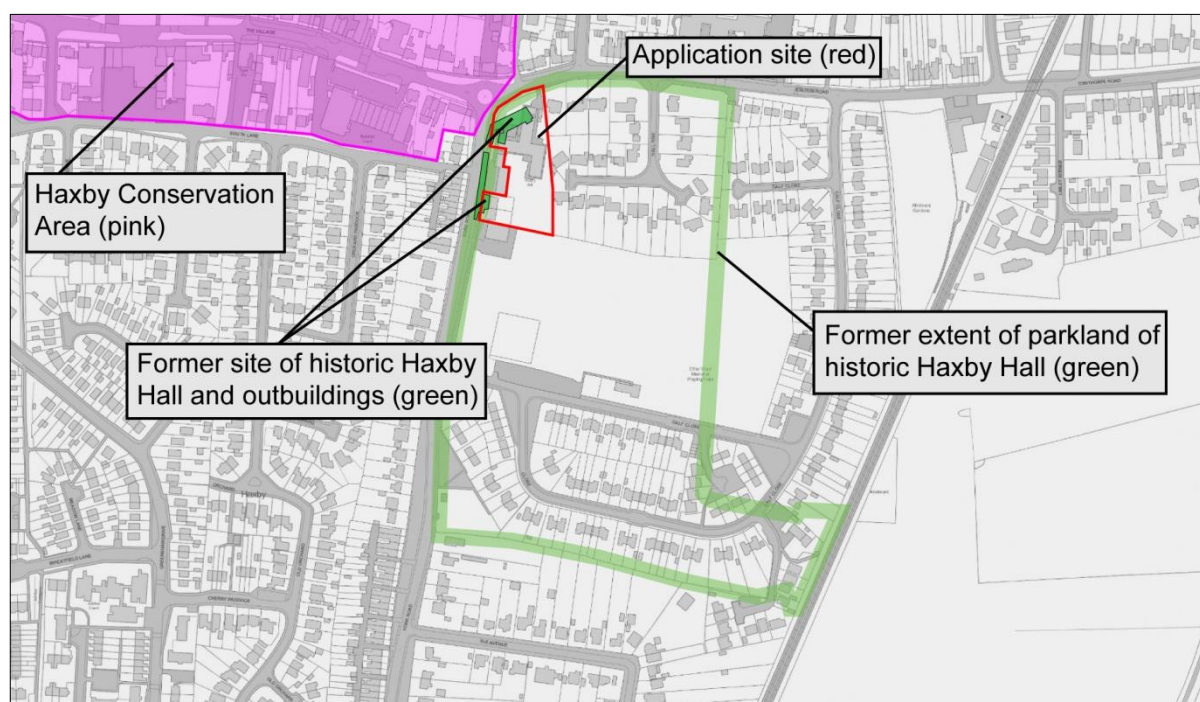
INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

- 1.01 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Dave Pinnock (BA, MA) of Humble Heritage Ltd, on behalf of the applicant and was produced during October 2020 after Humble Heritage Ltd were appointed to advise on the application in August 2020. This assessment is intended to accompany an application for planning permission for the erection of a residential care and dementia care home following demolition of the 1965 Haxby Hall and two adjacent 1960s dwellings.
- 1.02 The aims of this report are:
- To fulfil the requirement for a '*heritage appraisal*' to be submitted with the application, as recommended in pre-application advice;
 - To satisfy the requirement of paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which indicates that applicants should provide a description of the significance of any heritage assets affected by their proposals (including any contribution made by their setting).
- 1.03 This assessment has been informed by a site visit made in August 2020 that included an external examination of the existing buildings, the grounds and the environs. The Heritage Statement is further informed by analysis of historic maps of the area, and a review of known information about the site from various sources (including the City of York Historic Environment Record).

HERITAGE PLANNING CONTEXT

General

- 2.01 The application site consists of the present-day Haxby Hall (opened in 1965), two dwellings dating from the 1960s and a lawned area to the south of the hall. The site was the location of an historic hall, stables and part of the extended grounds of the hall. It has been suggested in pre-application advice from the planning authority that the site has *'residual historical significance associated with the former Hall and its extended landscape'*.
- 2.02 The application site is located just beyond the boundary of the Haxby Conservation Area and is part of the setting of the conservation area.



Site location in its historic environment context

Legislation, planning policy and guidance

- 2.03 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraphs 7-11, 38). The purpose of this Heritage Statement is to satisfy paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that *'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contributions made by their setting'* and to assess whether the proposed development meets the test of sustainable development as regards its impact on the historic environment.
- 2.04 The statutory protection for conservation areas is laid out in the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. The Act defines a conservation area as an area identified by the Local Planning Authority as having *'special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'* (s69(1)(a)). Section 72 of the Act requires planning authorities to pay *'special attention'* to *'the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'*.

- 2.05 The importance of identifying the significance of a heritage asset is highlighted in the NPPF as this is essential in informing future change that affects heritage assets. The aim of heritage conservation is to sensitively manage change to ensure that significance is protected, and also revealed, reinforced and enhanced, at every possible opportunity. In Annex 2 of the NPPF 'significance' is defined as *'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'*.
- 2.06 The NPPF requires in the case of all heritage assets, designated or otherwise, that local planning authorities should take into account *'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of such heritage assets and of putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation'* (NPPF 2019 paragraph 192a).
- 2.07 In the case of designated heritage assets such as the Haxby Conservation Area, the NPPF requires that *'great weight'* is given to the conservation of the asset, and *'the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be'* (NPPF 2019, paragraph 193).
- 2.08 If the development will lead to *'substantial harm'* to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 195 of the NPPF indicates that the development should be refused consent by the local planning authority, unless it can be proved that the loss or damage to the asset can be outweighed by substantial benefits to the public or if the proposal can meet a number of specific conditions. If the development leads to *'less than substantial harm'* to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 196 indicates that this harm still needs to be assessed against the public benefit of the scheme and whether or not the viability of the site is being optimised.
- 2.09 In the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) a heritage asset is a broad category that includes *'designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).'* (NPPF, Annex 2: Glossary). The latter are known as non-designated heritage assets and are sometimes identified by planning authorities by virtue of *'local listing'* (although City of York Council does not maintain a local list). The government's Planning Practice Guidance states the basic principle to guide the identification of non-designated heritage assets:

*'A substantial majority of buildings have **little or no heritage significance** and thus **do not constitute heritage assets**. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets.'* (PPG Paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 18a-039-20190723). [Emphasis added.]

- 2.10 In contrast to designated heritage assets, the NPPF does not require planning authorities to give *'great weight'* to the conservation of non-designated heritage assets, nor does it require *'clear and convincing justification'* for any harm that will be caused to their heritage significance. Instead, the NPPF states that:

*'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset **should be taken into account** in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, **a balanced judgement will be required** having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'* (NPPF paragraph 197) [Emphasis added.]

- 2.11 As the application is not part of the Haxby Conservation Area any impact will be through changes to the setting of the conservation area. Setting is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as:

'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative

contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral' (NPPF, Annex 2: Glossary)

- 2.12 Historic England's guidance on setting expands upon the NPPF's definition, and makes clear that although visual relationships are key, other factors can play a role and that the historic relationship between places can also be a consideration:

'The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.' (Historic England 2017, 2).

- 2.13 The assessment methodology employed in this report is based on what Historic England describe as *'A Staged Approach to Proportionate Decision-Taking'* as outlined in the Historic England guidance note on the setting of heritage assets (Historic England 2017).

THE SITE AND RELEVANT HERITAGE ASSETS

Site description

- 3.01 The application site consists of the 1965 care home, a pair of semi-detached 1960s dwellings, a lawned area to the south of the care home and a lawned area at the street frontage to the northwest.

History of the site: the former Haxby Hall



Undated photograph, probably late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Note the shallow pitched roofs over modillion cornices covering the three blocks of the house and the balcony above the main entrance (Chrystal 2015)

- 3.02 The historic Haxby Hall was demolished in 1963. It was apparently grade II listed and dated from 1790 (although some sources state 1700) (Wright 2007, Chrystal and Sunderland 2010, Chrystal 2015). It was remodelled for J T Tuite about 1827 and it is likely that this remodelling was, in effect, a complete rebuild (Waterson and Meadows 1990). It was described in 1859 as '*a modern brick structure*', a description that might just apply to a 30-year old building but which would have been an inappropriate description if it bore significant traces of its 1790 form (Whellan 1859).
- 3.03 The hall was originally a private residence, but later served as a private school up to the 1850s (in the 1830s '*Mr Storey's Academy*' later '*Revd John Heslop's Classical and Mathematical Academy for Sons of Gentlemen of High Respectability*') (Anon. 1838, Chrystal and Sunderland 2010, Chrystal 2015). In 1859 it was again a private residence, of a Miss Brocklesbank. It was subsequently the residence of Alfred Walker in 1881 and by 1890 was described as '*the property of the trustees of the late Alfred Walker, Esq., and the residence of Mr. Henry Leetham*'. In WW2 it was requisitioned from its then owner Mr Kenneth Ward, a prominent architect with a practice in York and housed the ARP HQ, a first aid post, and was used for evacuees from Hull (whether evacuees were actually housed there or the authorities merely used it as a muster point is unclear).

- 3.04 Haxby Hall was brick-built, though none of the records or historic photographs indicate what colour the bricks were. Given its likely 1827 date, the bricks could have been buff or red – the only thing clear in the pictures is that the bricks were variegated rather than a single uniform colour, perhaps hinting at a lighter colour such as gault or buff but far from definitive. The bricks were likely to have been made locally as there were up to four brickworks operating in Haxby in the Victorian period. Both red bricks and buff bricks are found locally in Victorian dwellings.
- 3.05 The original hall's entrance was to the northwest, and its primary elevation was to the southeast. Various architectural features are recorded in sources and shown in historic images, notably a glass cupola above the main staircase landing and a portico with four fluted pillars at the main entrance in the northwest elevation that supported a balcony and a similar doorway in the southeast elevation (though it is not clear whether this supported a balcony).
- 3.06 The house was in three or four main 'blocks', descending in height from northeast to southwest from three storeys, to two, to what appears to be a single storey. The earliest depiction (the late nineteenth or early twentieth century photograph at the head of this section) shows low-pitched roofs typical of Regency/early Victorian style. A picture dated 1940 shows that it had been re-roofed by that date with a complex multi-pitch roof now present.

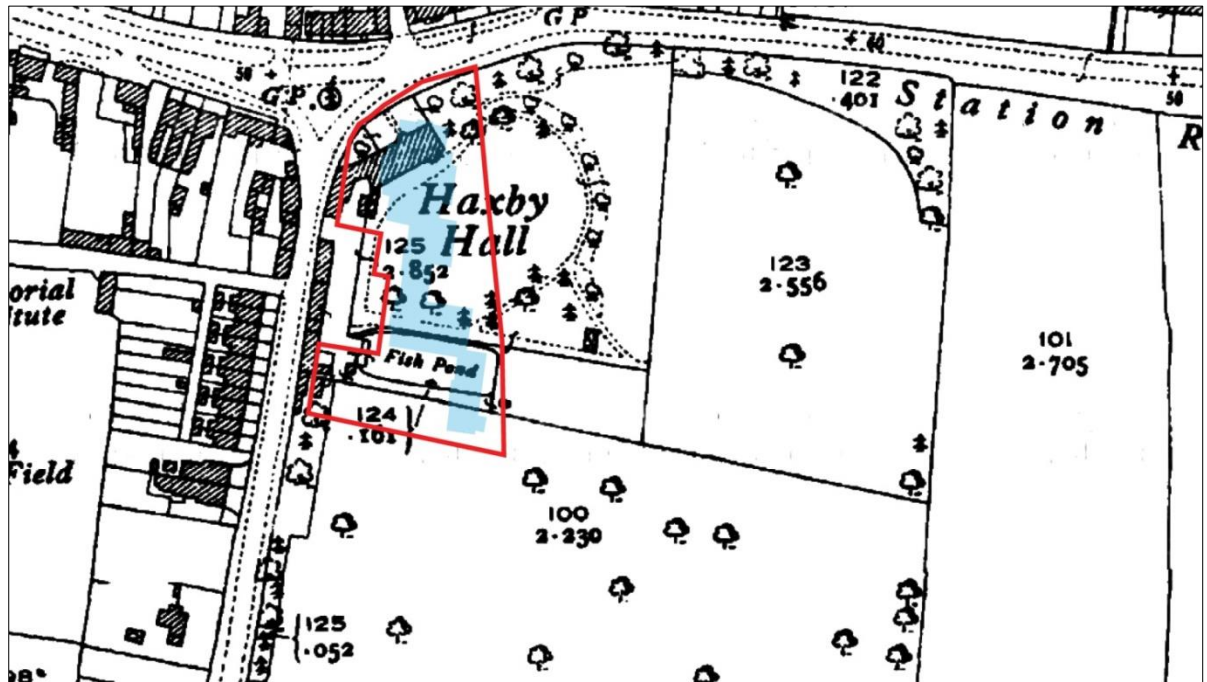


Postcard dated 1940. The house has been re-roofed and the resulting hipped roof structure is more complex and more steeply pitched than the original
 (<http://www.thecardindex.com/postcards/haxby-haxby-hall-richards-r-b-e-d/3461>)



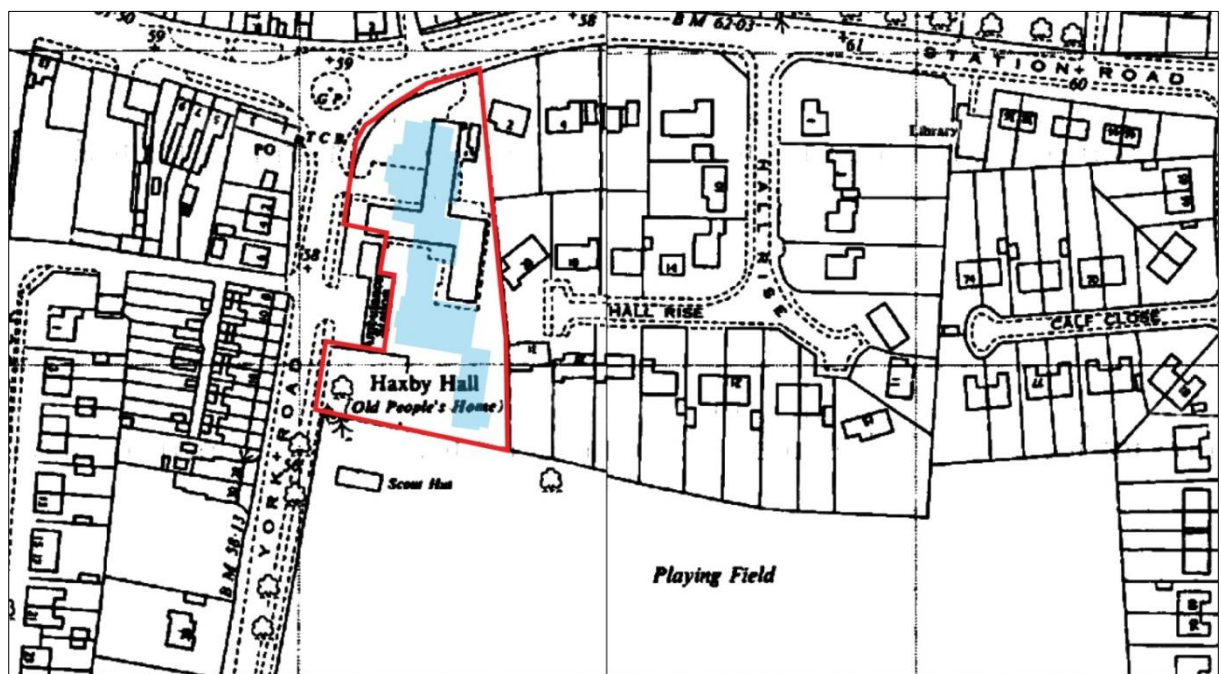
1941 photograph showing the rear of the house (requisitioned for the war effort and used as a first aid post). The rear doorway has been simplified. Variegated brick very clear (Chrystal 2015)

- 3.07 There were outbuildings to the south of the house, fronting York Road. These consisted of stables, two coach houses, other ancillary buildings and a fish pond (Wright 2007). There was a utility area around the outbuildings, separated off from the rest of the gardens by a boundary (possibly a wall or fence or both).
- 3.08 To the northwest the hall was separated from the road and the roundabout by mid-height wrought iron fencing and linear shrub planting behind it. A source from the 1930s suggests that to the south there was a high brick wall, perhaps separating the utility buildings from the road (the wall in fact mostly being the west wall of the utility buildings).



The 1930 Ordnance map shows the layout of the site (largely unchanged since 1854). The application site boundary is shown in red, the proposed new building in blue

- 3.09 Haxby Hall was demolished in c.1962/63 and the new care home was officially opened in 1965. The two dwellings proposed for demolition were built after the publication of the 1967 map.
- 3.10 A photograph from 1970 (front cover and below) shows that the new care home's boundary with the road/roundabout was in the form of white painted low fence, probably a birdsmouth style timber fence.



1967 Ordnance Survey map shows the new care home and ambulance station



Modern Ordnance Survey map showing the two dwellings proposed for demolition in the southwest corner of the site



1970. The newly built care home with birdsmouth fence boundary
(<http://www.thecardindex.com/postcards/haxby-roundabout-island-anon/18578>)

History of the site: the former extended gardens or 'parkland'

- 3.11 In 1950 Kenneth Ward, who had retaken possession of the house after the war, donated nine acres of its parkland to the village to become the Ethel Ward Memorial Playing Field, in memory of his wife.

- 3.12 The Victorian Haxby Hall was set in what was originally around 22 acres of parkland, of which the Ethel Ward Memorial Playing Field to the south of the site is the last remaining trace.
- 3.13 Historic maps show the steady erosion of the parkland by housing, first by the construction of the Park Estate right up to the southern boundary of the park between 1909-1930; then by the northern extension of the housing estate into the southern part of the park and right up to the eastern boundary of the park in around 1958 (shown as part-built in the Ordnance Survey map of that year); finally by the construction of the Hall Rise estate to the immediate east of the then former hall between 1954 and 1967. The public park was shown as dotted with trees, and probably bearing some of its former character as ornamental parkland in 1954. By 1967 it had been stripped of trees and a scout hut and pavilion had been built, presumably together with the construction of sports pitches.
- 3.14 As the maps below show, compared with the situation in 1854, almost nothing remains of the parkland associated with Haxby Hall.



Comparison of the Ordnance Survey maps of 1854 and the present-day showing former parkland of Haxby Hall

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.01 Significance is the concept that underpins current conservation philosophy. The significance of heritage assets is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as, *'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'*.

4.02 The following section assesses:

- The inherent level of heritage significance of the application site;
- The contribution that the application site makes to the setting of the Haxby Conservation Area.

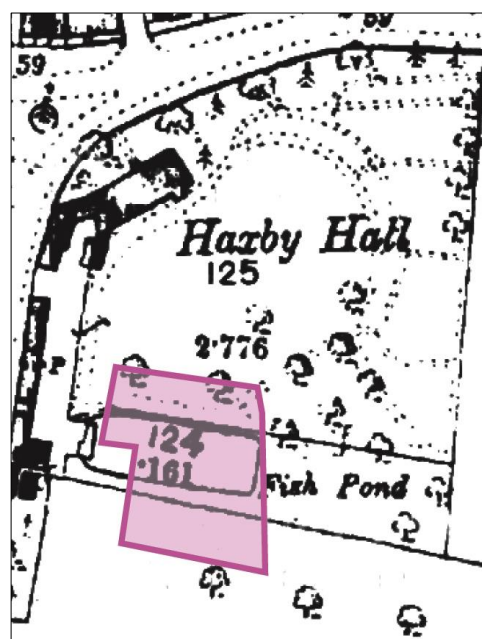
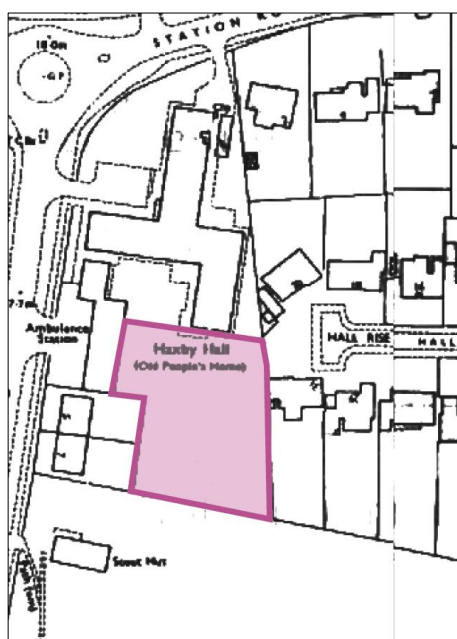
The purpose is to establish a baseline against which the impact of the proposed development can be assessed.

Heritage significance of the present-day application site

4.03 The present-day Haxby Hall was opened in 1965 as a purpose-built care home. The present day buildings on the site (care home and post-1967 houses) have no inherent heritage significance whatsoever.

4.04 Pre-application advice from the planning authority has described the existing south lawn of the site as *'a residual element of the historic garden site of Haxby Hall'* and is *'contiguous with'* the historic parkland, and has suggested that the application site has *'residual historical significance associated with the former Hall and its extended landscape'*.

4.05 While it is the case that the present-day south lawn is located in an area that was part of the extended gardens of the hall, it bears no resemblance today to its form during the heyday of Haxby Hall. The maps below show the comparison between the southern lawn today and how it would have appeared in 1893.



Comparison of the modern southern lawn with the situation in 1893 (1981 and 1893 Ordnance Survey maps)

4.06 In 1893 the area encompassed by the modern south lawn was made up of three separate landscapes: the pleasure grounds close to the house, the large fishpond and the small rectangular enclosed area in which it was situated, and the outer parkland. None of the boundaries of the lawn area correspond to historic boundaries. There is no trace or evidence of that complexity today and it would be impossible for a visitor to understand the nature of the historic landscape when looking at the south lawn.

4.07 While there may be some residual heritage significance attached to this piece of ground and the application site as a whole, there has been a tremendous amount of change to the landscape in modern times – a point acknowledged in the pre-application advice from the planning authority:

'The characteristics of the care home today convey little of its history beyond its name and relatively expansive curtilage. However, the open lawn to the south end of the site is contiguous with the historic parkland, albeit the conversion of the park to playing fields somewhat obscures the relationship;...'

'...the historic landscape has been severely compromised by development since the Hall was demolished...'

4.08 Such has been the level of change to the historic landscape that the application site and the south lawn have 'little or no' heritage significance. This is an insufficient level of heritage significance to be identified as a heritage asset, as per the government's Planning Practice Guidance.

Contribution to the setting and the heritage significance of the Haxby Conservation Area

4.09 The present day building is not a sympathetic piece of architecture and detracts from the setting of the Haxby Conservation Area, and therefore harms its heritage significance. Its architectural quality has been described by a local historian as *'the dullest construction imaginable'* and *'a piece of functional non-architecture'*.

4.10 The pre-application advice from the planning authority has drawn attention to the short section of existing beech hedge, two elm trees and a sycamore that form part of the northwest boundary of the site, stating that they have a character and scale which are appropriate to the historic grounds of a hall. These may therefore be seen to contribute positively to the setting of the conservation area.

4.11 The vegetation in question is situated on the boundary of the site and, although it has no great age and is likely to have been planted in 1965 when the care home was built, it is analogous to the shrubbery boundary shown in this position in c.1940. While it is aesthetically pleasant, the historical precedent is less clear. An earlier photograph shows much less vegetation in this location, and the boundary was mainly composed of wrought iron fencing.

HERITAGE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development and proposed mitigation measures

5.01 The application consists of a proposal for the erection of a residential care and dementia care home with 65 bed capacity following the demolition of the existing home and two 1960s semi-detached dwellings.

5.02 Pre-application advice from the planning authority was broadly supportive of the proposals and the intended design approach:

'It is considered that the general arrangement on the site and the scale and articulation of the scheme as a series of connected blocks is well-considered....'

'With regards to the design approach, the concepts of "re-introducing the street presence of" Haxby Hall in terms of bringing the building forwards on the site and referencing the varied massing of the former Hall is supported.'

5.03 However the pre-application advice was critical of (a) the effect on the south lawn, a '*residual element of*' the historic garden, and (b) number of aspects of the architectural detail of the original design proposal, favouring a more contemporary approach to avoid what was described as '*an explicitly historicist approach to the architectural articulation would result in a pale and unconvincing imitation of the original*'.

5.04 The revised design presented in this planning application has positively responded to the points made in the pre-application advice. The revised design has sought to preserve a greater degree of open space in the vicinity of the south lawn (although the degree to which this can be considered a '*residual element*' of the historic gardens is unclear, based on analysis of the historic map evidence) and to tone down the use of Georgian-style architectural detail, while carefully utilising historic design features to subtly refer back to the historic Haxby Hall.

Impact on the heritage significance of the application site and the conservation area

5.05 The buildings on the application site have no heritage significance and their demolition will cause no harm to the historic environment.

5.06 Pre-application advice had suggested that the south lawn was a '*residual element*' of the historic gardens and that '*The loss of the south lawn would have an impact on the historic landscape character as it is a residual element of the historic garden site of Haxby Hall and its connection with the parkland beyond*.' It was however acknowledged that the historic landscape has been severely compromised and that any harm would be likely outweighed by enhancement elsewhere.

5.07 In the light of the evidence of historic maps, it is open to question whether it is fair to regard the south lawn as a '*residual element*' of the historic gardens or that it is '*contiguous with*' (i.e. shares a boundary with) the historic parkland. This was never a lawned area historically and the present form bears no resemblance to the complicated landscape that was historically situated here, comprising three different landscape elements, two boundaries and a fishpond. The boundary of the present lawn does not actually correspond to any historic boundaries. It is therefore the case that the piece of ground lacks sufficient heritage significance to be identified as a non-designated heritage asset and changes here will result in no heritage harm.

5.08 Nonetheless, the revised design has addressed the comments in the pre-application advice. The elevation of the southern part of the proposed building (the 'coach house') has been pushed back

by 1m and additional green space included within the car parking area. There is as a result a wider planting bed on the eastern boundary of the site and a much larger areas of planting between the coach house patios and car parking spaces in front of the coach house. This is sufficient to refer back to the role of this area in the former gardens, and it should also be acknowledged that the removal of the two semi-detached dwellings also results in a greater open space here, making it more analogous to the historic form of the area.

- 5.09 The revised design of the building has broadly followed the advice in the pre-application advice regarding the simplification of architectural detail and avoiding pastiche. The pediment on the front gable of the main house has been omitted along with the stone feature and all window and door headers will be brick rather than stone.
- 5.10 A reduced number of architectural details have been retained to refer back subtly to the original Haxby Hall. This includes two chimneys to either side of the main elevation, in the revised design relocated to the eaves position to replicate those on the original Haxby Hall, and the portico on the main house facing the roundabout has been reduced in size and although the railings on top are retained its use as a balcony is now removed. The original Haxby Hall had railing on top of the portico.
- 5.11 A mixed palette of building materials will be employed, all of which are appropriate to the historic context of the site. Given the uncertainty over the brick type used in the historic hall, the proposed palette is appropriate.
- 5.12 Windows will be sliding sash designs to refer back to the original Haxby Hall, and also as an appropriate feature for the setting of a conservation area. Material will be high-quality timber-effect uPVC, which is virtually indistinguishable from wood at a distance, and is an appropriate material for use in the setting of a conservation area rather than within the conservation area boundary.
- 5.13 The boundaries proposed are informed by the pre-application advice. No railings or walls are proposed at the frontage of the site. Instead the frontage from the roundabout to the ambulance station will be an infill hedge to match that already there, as advised. The only other boundary is that to the east of the site, between the car park and coach house and the playing fields and scout hut. Security is an important consideration here and wrought iron railings between brick piers are proposed. There is considerable leeway here as it is not fronting the site and, historically, there is likely to have been a variety of boundaries in this general area (although as noted above the boundaries of the lawned area are not in the same position as any historic boundaries).
- 5.14 This report considers that the proposed development will cause no harm to any non-designated heritage assets and that the careful design of the proposed buildings will represent an enhancement to the setting of the Haxby Conservation Area.

CONCLUSION

- 6.01 The assessment finds that the existing care home and the two 1960s dwellings proposed for demolition have no heritage significance. The present lawned area has an insufficient level of heritage significance to be identified as a non-designated heritage asset. No heritage harm will therefore be caused to the existing buildings or grounds.
- 6.02 The present contribution of the site to the heritage significance of the conservation area is largely negative. The few positive elements (hedging) will be retained and the more sympathetic design of the proposed care home will enhance the setting of the conservation area.
- 6.03 The proposed development is therefore in accord with the heritage provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and the relevant sections of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act.

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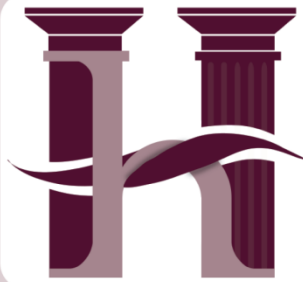
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