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HERITAGE STATEMENT

**FOR REMOVAL OF EML/CEMENT RENDER AND REMOVAL OF HISTORIC WALL FINISHES FOR
STRUCTURAL REPAIRS AT**

MANOR FARM, GRAVELEY



Applicant and Property Address:

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**Green
REGISTER**
OF CONSTRUCTION
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ARCHITECT ACCREDITED IN BUILDING CONSERVATION

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1. Introduction

This Heritage Report is written in support of an application for Listed Building Consent for the proposed works to the brick outbuilding at Manor Farm, which is Grade II Listed.

The submitted proposals and this report have been carefully produced in an informed way by Kay Pilsbury Thomas Architects, specialist Conservation Accredited Architects. This is to ensure the conservation and proposals for this historic building are sympathetic to the original building and setting.

Manor Farm is located to the north of Stevenage and within the Hamlet of Chesfield, west of Graveley village.

The ownership of the Farmhouse is separate from the once associated agricultural building, which now serve a mixture of uses, including domestic and equine. The Farmhouse sits to the south of these buildings. To the east is the ruined remains of Chesfield Church, GII* St Etheldreda, which is also a Scheduled Monument.

Access is gained by a private driveway off Back Lane, approaching the property from the northeast. The house is located centrally within the site boundary with a Kitchen garden to the southwest and gardens with lawns to the south and west. There is a C20th single garage to the north of the house which attaches to the boundary wall. The wall itself is Grade II listed.

The proposed works are pertinent to the main house only.

2. Summary Proposals.

The alterations comprise the following:

- Careful removal of internal timber panelling for urgent structural inspection and associated repairs.

When carrying out the approved works at 1st floor level (NHDC 24/02342/LBC and NHDC 24/02117/FPH), it became apparent that there had been significant structural movement within the building. This movement is particularly apparent on the southwest corner of the main range where the frame has been overbuilt. Trial holes for the approved extension show that this west gable of the front range has been under-pinned. The brickwork to the chimney in this gable is very modern c.2000 and is likely contemporary with the underpinning. The historic chimney which once serviced the Hall at ground floor was also in some distress at 1st floor. Indications are that these structural issues will also be present at the ground floor. The Living Room has timber panelling which is preventing a full structural assessment. Of course, that the panelling is largely fitting well, and shows no signs of movement distress, it might be that any movement discovered is historic. There is an array of panelling styles within the room with some parts older than others. The patchwork arrangement of the panelling suggest that it is a fairly modern intervention. The low-level panels around the room, and all of the north wall appear to be C20th. From the evidence explained in section 6, we can surmise that the oldest this room can be in its current finish, is the Edwardian Era and that it may well be newer than that. Careful removal of some of the panelling has been carried out to ascertain its viability for removal and reinstatement. It has uncovered the brick infill to the original hearth. This infill appears not to be resting on any structure but removal of further panels will be needed before a remedial plan can be put forward. Where structural remedial work is needed to the brickwork behind the panelling, we suggest that repairs might be achieved with stainless steel helibar embedded in a raked out mortar beds. The mortar will be lime putty and repointing will be brushed back gently to match the historic pointing seen elsewhere in the house. Further, more significant movement was found in the southwest corner the first-floor bedroom from the applied Georgian brickwork. The applicant is keen to ensure that the property is safe and secure before the approved extension works are progressed.

- Careful removal of existing render to the north range and replacing with vapour open products

Through redecoration at 1st floor level, it has become apparent that the external render to the north range it expanded metal lathe (EML) and cement render. This is causing moisture (likely condensation) to become trapped between the timber frame and the render; this is beginning to decay to the frame. There is no historic infill that we know of at this time, but if any is found, it will be retained. We propose internal finishes will be retained (assumed lathe and lime plaster) between the studs. Sheepswool will fill the void, a breather membrane such as Tyvek Supro Housewrap, Savolit board and lime render with glass fibre reinforcement mesh. Anglia Lime Fibre Chalk is proposed as a suitable lime render.

A full list and illustrated Table of Proposals/Impact is contained within this report, and they are described and illustrated on the accompanying submission drawings.

3. Understanding Manor Farm and the evolution of the Site.

Manor Farm is a Grade II Listed home which has undergone a series of extensions, demolitions and alterations over successive generations of use. Its timber frame construction sits over 4-storeys with Cellar, Ground, First and Attic storeys within the principle south range; and Ground and First floors to the rear service wing. Each wing has a staircase, with the historic stair tower still in use to the main range. This has remains of unglazed timber mullion windows which date the building to the latter part of the C16th rather than the later dating in the listing. Much of the south range has been brick clad and remodeled in the mid Georgian period. This was likely when main hearth was reduced on the ground floor, the ground floor Hall divided, the east bay extended towards the ruined church with a new chimney on this elevation. The main hearth was later bricked up completely, and the west fireplaces added c.1900. The rear part of the north wing has more of an Edwardian aesthetic, although the main hearth is C17th. The north end of the service wing appears to have evolved with a single storey bay, later made two-storey and extended to the north. The hipped roofs are clad in plain clay tiles. Most of the windows are replacement painted softwood timber, although there are older sashes, and two phases of mullioned windows survive; The layout is complicated and reflects the evolving uses of the building, from Manor, to Farmhouse, split residences and part agricultural use.

4. Designation Records for the Heritage Asset

The listing to Manor Farm reads:

GRAVELEY CHESFIELD TL 22 NW 4/1 Manor Farmhouse 27.5.68 (formerly listed as Chesfield Manor Farmhouse)

GV II

Manor house, now a farmhouse. C17, part demolished and remainder converted to a farmhouse in c.1770s, renovated and rear extensions C19. W wing timber frame, now with roughcast on 1st floor on N and E, exposed timbers on W side with brick infill, red brick ground floor casing on S and SW to match red brick of south wing. Steep old red tile hipped roofs. A 2-storeys and attics house facing S with a long 2-storeys W wing joined to its NW corner and linked only by a single-storey lean-to.

The S wing has a 2-rooms, end chimneys, single-room-depth plan with an older very large projecting rearwall chimney to the W room and a large rear stair tower adjoining it on E. Entrance now by a gabled C19 low porch in the NW angle of the stair tower and the S wing. W wing has a large internal chimney a third from the N end a 3-cells plan later adapted to service rooms. S front has 2 windows to each floor. 3-lights casement windows on ground floor, 2-lights on 1st floor, and segmental arched heads on both floors. Sash windows to E end, stair tower, and C19 extension at rear. Near S end of W side of W wing is a 5-lights original moulded oak mullioned window on the ground floor. 3 tall diagonal shafts to rearwall chimney of S wing. Interior of W room of this wing said to have oak panelling. Stair of dog-leg plan, oak with square newels, moulded caps, and turned balusters. (RCHM (1911)93: VCH (1912)86: Pevsner (1977)149: RCHM Typescript).

Listing NGR: TL2470027954

5. Approach and Methodology

The approach was first to understand the history and construction of the outbuilding. We assessed the phasing of the construction and dates of the various parts. This was achieved through visual inspection and archive research, together with our own conservation knowledge and years of experience working on local historic buildings and reviewing Heritage Gateway, O/S maps and historic aerial photographs.

This study identifies areas of the building of greatest historic and architectural significance and those where there had been subsequent changes, extensions and losses.

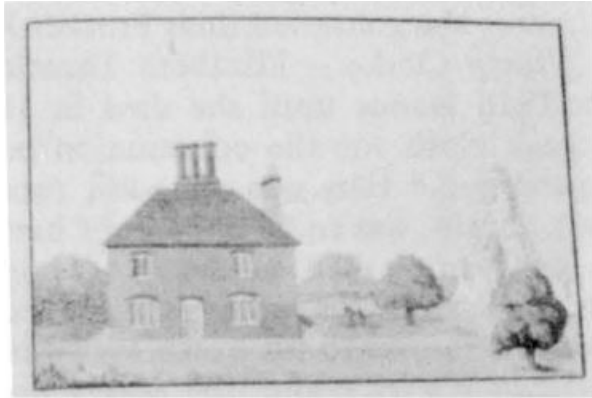
The aim is to always maintain as much historic fabric as possible whilst doing any works and avoid harm wherever possible.

The design then looks to repair and conserve the historic fabric of the building foremost and to replace unsympathetic elements. Where modern materials are causing harm, we are seeking to replace them with vapour open materials which will ensure that the building is not damaged by the unintended consequences of earlier 'repairs'. Where structural repairs are needed, suitable materials and methods will be used to ensure that these works are durable and do not cause further damage to the building.

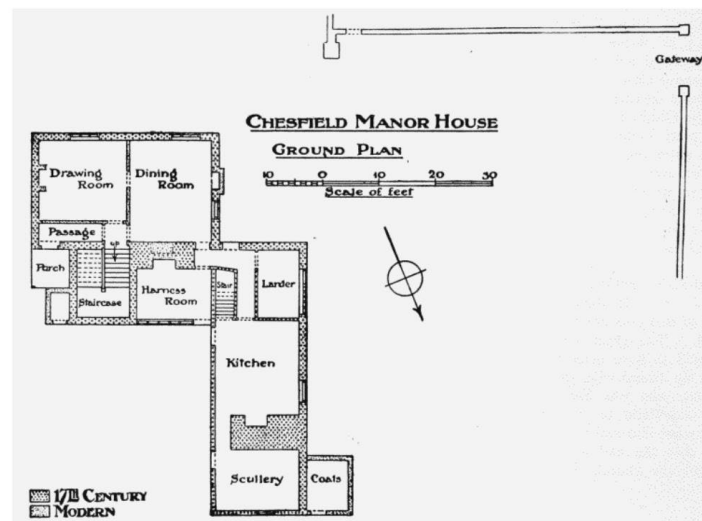
6. Assessment of Significance - Plans of Heritage Significance/Phasing Plans:

Images

We have an etching of the Farmhouse, dated c.1800. It shows the main south facing range following its 'Georgianisation'. Brick cladding, central main entrance door, the extension to the east bay and corresponding new chimney. Note that the west fireplace has not yet been built.



Taken from 'A History of the County of Herford: Volume 3', published in 1912, we find a second historic illustration which shows the later east facing dormer, the extension to the stair tower and the east porch. It does not show the west chimney yet in existence. It is not dated but is very much late-Victorian in style.



Chesfield Manor House Ground Plan

In the same publication there is also a layout of the ground floor plan, which on careful inspection shows that the infill to the north fireplace to the Dining Room, is marked as 'modern', as is the west chimney. From this evidence we can date this chimney as late Edwardian and can conclude that the room layout and finishes as we find them today be no earlier than this.

Maps

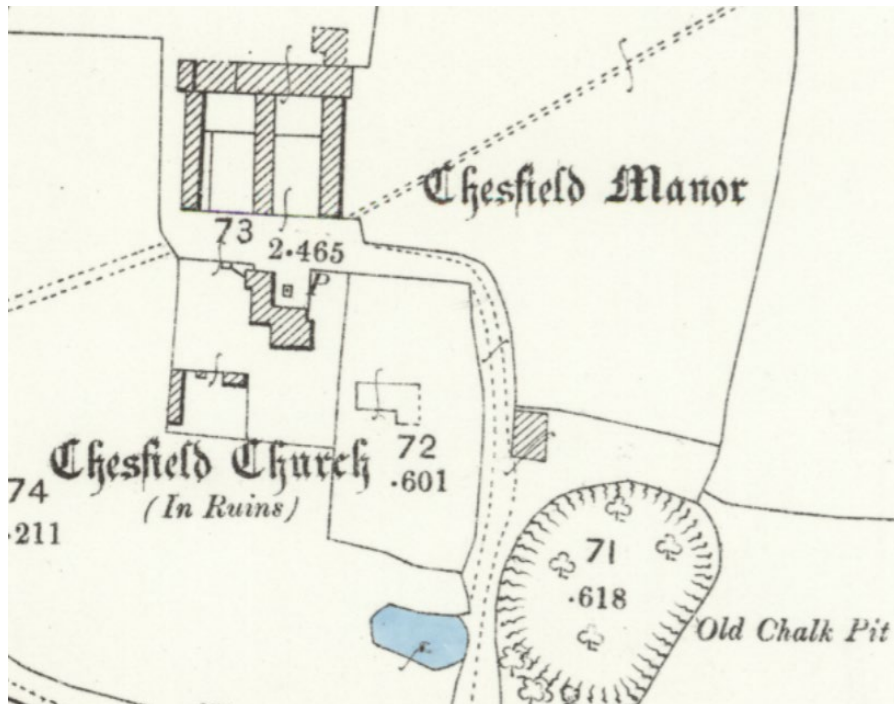
OS Old Series 1798-1898 - seems to show the main farmhouse as more extensive than it is today with a rear cross-wing projecting to the west.



OS County maps 1830-80s –a vestigial west projection to the rear wing can still be seen on this map. Noted that the walled garden shows more buildings than existing today.



OS Map 1900s - the outbuildings to the walled garden have been reduced. The buildings associated with the Chalk Pit are also less significant.



Plans of Significance



7. Proposals

General Proposal Reasoning and Justification

Replacement of the EML and cement render with the proposed insulated build-up will keep the frame protected from excess moisture. It will improve the buildings thermal performance but not so as to attract unintended consequences by introducing the risk of condensation.

The removal of the timber panels will be done carefully. Although some of the panels are likely C18th, they have only been installed since the Edwardian period at the earliest. The structural integrity of the building is paramount, to ensure its success for future generations.

8. Planning History

The following list sets out the planning and listed building applications submitted for the site in the last 10 years. Please note that these applications relate to the area of the site now owned by the applicant and does not include areas of the site annexed in the property sale to the applicant in 2023.

2025

25/02750/LBC: Installation of 1no. door and window (Utility Room) to East Elevation to regularise Listed Building Consent 24/02342/LBC granted on 08.05.2025 and replacement of 2no. standard double-glaze timber windows (windows 12 and 18) with slimline double-glazed timber windows. **Approved**

25/02746/DOC: Details reserved by Condition 6 (South Elevation Windows) of listed building consent reference 24/02342/LBC granted on 08.05.2025. **Approved**

2024

24/02117/FPH: Single storey rear extension and alterations to fenestration. Erection of rear outbuilding to facilitate golf simulator/gym/office with associated decking; erection of greenhouse/store following demolition of existing outbuilding. Installation of front entrance gate to driveway (as amended by drawings 10110 P05, 10350 P01 _ 10111 P05) **Approved**

24/02342/LBC: Single storey rear extension and internal and external alterations (as amended by drawing nos. 10110 P05, 10350 P01, 10111 P05) **Approved**

2022

22/00683/FPH | Single storey side extension (as amended by drawing nos. P001 Rev P1; -002 Rev P1; --003 Rev P1; -004 Rev P1; -005 Rev P1; and -006 Rev P1 received on 08.09.2022 and 12.09.22) **Approved**

22/00687/LBC | Single storey side extension. Internal and external alterations (as amended by drawing nos. P001 Rev P1; -002 Rev P1; --003 Rev P1; -004 Rev P1; -005 Rev P1; and -006 Rev P1 received on 08/09/2022 and 12.09.22). **Approved**

9. Photographs:

For External Works



East façade of the north range



North façade of the north range



West Façade of the north range.

Photos taken from Benchmark Heritage Design and Access Statement for Applications 25/02750/LBC and 25/02746/DOC



East wall of Living Room



West wall of Living Room



North wall of Living Room



North wall of Living Room with modern panelling carefully removed. Evidence of historic hearth with brick infill. NB infill appears to be 'floating' with no clear structure below.



South and West walls of Living Room

10. Table of Proposals / Impact:

	Proposal	Significance of affected fabric	Impact	Reasoning / mitigation /recording
1.	Remove EML and cement render to north range and installation of vapour open materials	Low	Positive	The cementitious material is causing moisture build up in the historic frame. Its removal and the following reinstatement of vapour open materials is necessary to protect the building.
2.	Removal of modern and historic internal timber panelling to facilitate structural assessment to historic brickwork and any suitable repairs using stainless steel helifix bars and lime mortar	Low	Neutral	The panelling of this room is believed to be a C20th intervention, although in some areas the fabric is older than this. There is no evidence that any of the historic panelling was relocated from elsewhere within the building and may have been acquired to decorate the room to the taste of a previous owner. The removal of the panels has been proven to be possible without causing damage to the panels. Their removal will allow a full structural assessment of the fabric which is necessary given the finding elsewhere within the building

11. Summary:

The proposed works are essential to the maintenance and safekeeping of the structure of the building. No historic fabric will be lost in these proposals.