

Heritage Statement

Hitchin Swimming Centre, Hitchin



QUALITY ASSURANCE

SITE NAME:	Hitchin Swimming Centre Fishponds Road Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1HA
CLIENT NAME:	Willmott Dixon Construction Limited on behalf of North Hertfordshire District Council
TYPE OF REPORT:	Heritage Statement
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Figure 1 - Cover image is a photo of the Hitchin Swimming Centre entrance, taken November 2024.

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction	5
Background to the Report	5
Scope and Limitations of the Report	5
2.0 Site Context	7
Historic Context	7
Site Photographs	8
Planning History	9
3.0 Heritage Assets	11
Identification of Assets	11
4.0 Assessment of Significance	13
Significance Assessment Methodology	13
Significance Assessment	13
5.0 Proposed Scheme	16
Proposed Plans	16
6.0 Impact Assessment	18
7.0 Conclusions	20
8.0 APPENDICES	22
APPENDIX A_METHODODOLOGY	22
APPENDIX B_HERITAGE LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE SUMMARY	25
APPENDIX C_LOCAL LIST DESCRIPTION	28

INTRODUCTION

1

1.0 Introduction

Background to the Report

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Bidwells on behalf of Willmott Dixon (acting for North Hertfordshire District Council) to support decarbonisation works at Hitchin Swimming Centre, Fishponds Road, Hitchin hereafter called ‘the site’.
- 1.2 The site is on the south side of Fishponds Road. The site does not contain any Statutory or Locally Listed Buildings, however it is within Butts Close Conservation Area and within the setting of the 1930s Locally Listed Outdoor Swimming Pool.
- 1.3 This Heritage Statement includes a Significance Assessment which identifies the relative heritage value of the identified heritage assets and an Impact Assessment which considers the potential impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets identified, including the contribution made by setting. This approach to impact-assessment is required in order to satisfy the provisions of Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) where the impact of development on a heritage asset is being considered (Paragraphs 207-221).

Authorship

- 1.4 This document has been prepared by Sarah Wearing MSt BA (Hons), Senior Heritage Consultant and reviewed by Katherine Harrison MSt BA (Hons), Associate Heritage Consultant.

Site Access

- 1.6 A site visit to inform the assessments being made was undertaken on 5th November 2024.

Methodology

- 1.7 Our methodology is set out in Appendix A.

Heritage legislation, policy and guidance

- 1.8 The legislation, policy and guidance summary is set out in Appendix B.

Scope and Limitations of the Report

- 1.9 The level of detail provided within this assessments is proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance” as set out in Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.10 This document is not a condition survey or a full conservation management plan and should not be used as such.

- 1.11 Photographs contained in this report (where no source is given) are those of the author. Sources are provided for all other photographs and images, the copyright of which may remain with the original author. This report should therefore not be used for any purpose that may infringe the original copyright.



Figure 2 - Aerial photograph showing the site (Google Earth)

SITE CONTEXT

2

2.0 Site Context

Historic Context

Introduction

- 2.1 Hitchin is located in North Hertfordshire, 26km north-west of Hertford and 56km north of London. It was first recorded in the 7th century as the place of the Hicce people. The ancient Icknield Way runs just to the north. Hitchin appears in the Domesday Book as *Hiz*, after the river which runs through it (pronounced Hitch), under the ownership of William the Conqueror. It was a large settlement of 103 households.
- 2.2 The town grew up around the market place and the medieval Church of St Mary. Hitchin Priory, a Carmelite friary, was established in 1317. The town was historically agricultural, primarily arable and sheep farming, alongside the wool and lavender industries.
- 2.3 The town became a staging post for coaches heading north from London in the 17th century and in 1850, the Great Northern Railway opened a station in Hitchin on the London Kings Cross to York line, with a branch to Cambridge added just north of Hitchin shortly after. This caused rapid expansion of the settlement as it became a commuter town for London.

The Site

- 2.4 An initial review of available historic maps has been undertaken to assist in the understanding of the site's history. Although such cartographic information cannot be considered to be definitive, experience shows that the mapping is often relatively accurate and reliable - particularly the later Ordnance Survey (OS) maps - and taken together with written archival data and physical evidence, can help to refine the history of a site
- 2.5 The site is located within a large open space known as Butts Close, the oldest remaining open space in the town. It was first recorded at the end of the 14th century, being used for archery practice, with 'butts' meaning 'targets', although it was primarily used for grazing animals.
- 2.6 Development around the close was limited until the 19th century. New development was instigated by the coming of the railway. The earliest buildings are Providence Row in Bedford Road, dating from 1869. Buildings began to encroach on the open space, with Hitchin Boys' Grammar School built in 1890. Fishponds Road was constructed in 1898 to connect Bancroft Road to Bedford Road.
- 2.7 By the 1920s, Butts Close was a public park and allotments. The Wilshire-Dacre Junior School was built in 1928. The pink horse-chestnut trees along the west side of Butts Close and the elms facing the school playing fields were all planted to commemorate the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1937. The open air swimming pool was constructed on land previously used for allotments in 1938.
- 2.8 The modern pool building was constructed in the 1990s and extended in 2013.



Figure 3 - OS Map, revised 1897, published 1898 (25-inch)



Figure 4 - OS Map, revised 1922, published 1923 (25-inch). Fishponds Road has been straightened and houses have begun to be constructed on the north side of the road.



Figure 5 - OS Map, revised 1964, published 1966 (1:2,500).



Figure 6 - Aerial photograph of the site in 2021 (Google Earth).

Site Photographs

2.9 The following images have been included to provide a record of the site as found in November 2024.



Figure 7 - View of the main entrance to the Swimming Centre building from the east.



Figure 8 - View of the building from the north-west.



Figure 9 - View of the building from the locally listed swimming pool to the north.



Figure 10 - View of the rear wing of the building from the north.



Figure 11 - View of the building from the south, within the site boundaries.



Figure 12 - View of the rear wing of the building from the south, from outside the site boundaries.

Planning History

- 2.10 A review of planning history for the Hitchin Swimming Centre has found the following planning applications on the North Herts Council planning portal:

REF	DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME
12/02273/1	Single storey side extension to provide 3 additional dance studios. Expansion of car park facilities by increase of 4 parking spaces and introduction of pedestrian pathway, motorbike parking and increased cycle parking provision. (Amended plans received 09/11/12 and amended plans and DAS received 29/11/12).	Approved 18th December 2012
08/00329/1	Extension of swimming centre reception	Approved 25th April 2008
02/01432/1	Main entrance extension and associated works (as amended by plan nos 101A and 102B received 09 December 2002)	Approved 12th December 2002
02/00471/1	Formation of additional car park (94 spaces) adjacent to indoor swimming pool with new access road from existing car park adjoining swimming pool boundary across Butts Close. Installation of column lighting (as amended by plan nos. 4B and 5B received 24.09.02)	Approved 27th September 2002
97/00955/1AD	Two internally illuminated car park signs, externally illuminated entrance sign and internally illuminated entrance sign	Approved 25th September 1997
94/00049/1DC	Single storey detached building to provide Health and Fitness annex.	Approved 10th March 1994
91/00598/1A	Freestanding internally illuminated identification sign	Approved 2nd July 1991
89/00329/1DC	Indoor swimming pool and cafeteria associated with existing outdoor pool plus additional car parking	Approved 23rd May 1989
82/01591/1	Erection of single storey extension for new boiler house.	Approved 1st March 1983

HERITAGE ASSETS

3

3.0 Heritage Assets

Identification of Assets

- 3.1 This section identifies heritage assets which relate to the site. In the case of this application submission, the following heritage assets are local to the proposed development and have been identified as they may be affected by the current proposals. The identification of these assets is consistent with 'Step 1' of the GPA3 The Setting of Heritage Assets.
- 3.2 Although there are other built heritage assets within the local surrounding area, the location and significance of many of them results in them having no perceptible relationship with the proposed development site. For this reason, only the built heritage assets which may be considered to be affected by the proposals have been identified.
- 3.3 In the case of this application, the following built heritage assets are located within the vicinity of the site. Due to their location, positioning and significance, they have the potential to be affected by the proposed development:

List of Assets

- 1) Butts Close Conservation Area
 - 2) Outdoor Swimming Pool - Locally Listed
- 3.4 For the purposes of this assessment, where we consider the Conservation Area, we are considering the Conservation Area as a term of designation but also with reference to the built assets which they contain; in other words, we do not assess the Conservation Area in two dimensions but rather as a grouping of buildings and spaces and the manner in which these relate to their surroundings. Thus, consideration of effects on the setting of a Conservation Area also takes into account potential effects on the setting of built assets within that designated area, this includes the buildings which are considered to make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
- 3.5 All relevant Statutory List descriptions can be found in Appendix C. Any buildings or structures considered to fall within the curtilage of the above listed buildings would be considered to form part of the listed building and impacts would be assessed accordingly



Figure 13 -Heritage Assets Map

KEY	
	SITE
	CONSERVATION AREA
	NON-DESIGNATED ASSET

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4

4.0 Assessment of Significance

Significance Assessment Methodology

- 4.1 The below evaluation of significance and subsequent conclusions have been assessed in line with the methodology outlined in Appendix 2 and consider the following:
- The relevant planning legislation as well as the policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and objectives of the Planning Practice Guidance;
 - Historic England 'Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance';
 - British Standard 7913 (2013) Guide to the 'Conservation of Historic Buildings';
 - Guidance set out in Historic England advice notes.

Significance Assessment

Butts Close Conservation Area

- 4.2 The Butts Close Conservation Area was first designated on 26th July 2011. The Character Appraisal dates from 26th July 2011.



Figure 14 - Butts Close Conservation Area Map

- 4.3 The conservation area comprises the area of Butts Close, a historic open space within the town, now used as a public park, and the houses surrounding the park, particularly to the west and north. Although the conservation area contains no statutory listed buildings, three of the structures are Locally Listed. The remainder of the buildings, predominately mid-late 19th century dwellings, are highlighted as Positive Buildings within the conservation area.

- 4.4 The conservation area is defined by a large amount of green open space and leisure amenities, as alongside Butts Close, The Green to the west and the playing fields of the Wilshire-Dacre Junior School to the north-east provide both important green space and important groups of trees.
- 4.5 As such, the Butts Close Conservation Area is considered to have a **good** level of significance in heritage terms.
- [Contribution of site to character and appearance of the conservation area](#)
- 4.6 The site is a 1990s leisure building, with 21st century extensions. Although not particularly interesting from an architectural perspective, it maintains the established leisure use already within the Butts Close park and is not considered to detract from the conservation area.
- 4.7 As such, the site is considered to make a **neutral** contribution to the character and appearance of the Butts Close Conservation Area.



Figure 15 - View of the site looking into the conservation area from the southern boundary on Bedford Road (Viewpoint 7)



Figure 16 - View of the site looking east from Bedford Road (Viewpoint 8)



Figure 17 - View of the site looking south-east from Bedford Road (Viewpoint 9)



Figure 18 - View of the site looking into the conservation area from the northern boundary on Fishponds Road (Viewpoint 10)



Figure 19 - View of the site looking south-west from the conservation area's eastern boundary on Elmside Walk.

Outdoor Swimming Pool - Locally Listed

- 4.8 The Outdoor Swimming Pool dates from 1938 and consists of a Lido style open air pool with a fountain and a single storey red brick Art Deco facilities building. There are also two smaller single-storey red brick buildings, one to the east and one to the west, which connect into the inner wall of the complex, and a single storey pavilion building to the east.



Figure 20 - Outdoor Swimming Pool, Facilities Building, view from within the complex

- 4.9 The facilities building also provides entrance to the complex and is surrounded by tall red brick walls running east-west. It was purpose built by Hitchin Urban District Council and has their coat of arms above the entrance on the front (north) elevation. It is 9 bays long with a central double doorway and a decorative concrete band running beneath the parapet. The four timber mullioned windows to the east appear to be original, with the four to the west later uPVC replacements.



Figure 21 - Outdoor Swimming Pool, Facilities Building, view from outside the complex.

- 4.10 The south (inner) elevation of the building has a brick veranda with 10 brick piers providing a covered walkway, with a decorative concrete banding and simple concrete capitals to the piers. Similar to the front elevation, there are windows in each bay, although the central doorway has been boarded up and within the third and fifth bay are doors and a smaller window. The end window to the east has been replaced with double doors. There is an Art Deco rectangular parapet above with a clock in the centre and a hipped roof behind with green coloured tiles. The facilities building is separated from the pool by a low brick wall with sunburst motif metal fencing.
- 4.11 The smaller east and west buildings have a similar brick parapet with a pyramidal green tile roof and have two doors in each. The pavilion building to the east is rectangular and clad in white weatherboarding. The roof is hipped with green tiles and extends beyond the building braced on wooden piers to provide a veranda.



Figure 22 - Outdoor Swimming Pool, Pavilion Building.

- 4.12 The rest of the complex comprises two pools – one large rectangular main pool and a shallower hexagonal splash pool to the east. They are surrounded by tiles providing areas for sunbathing close to the pools and further back, chairs and tables for dining.



Figure 23 - Outdoor Swimming Pool, 1930s fountain and railings



Figure 24 - Outdoor Swimming Pool, view of the pools.

- 4.13 The Outdoor Swimming Pool is considered to have a **low-moderate** level of significance, as an example of a late 1930s purpose-built leisure facility, which continues in the same use with minimal alteration.

Setting

- 4.14 The Outdoor Swimming Pool is set within the green, open space of Butts Close. Its immediate setting is the late 20th century indoor swimming pool and fitness centre buildings, continuing the leisure use of the site. The wider setting is open and green, with the Butts Close park to the west and south, and to the east are the green playing fields of Hitchin Boys' School. The suburban road of Fishponds Road provides the setting to the north.
- 4.15 The Swimming Pool is surrounded by other green and open leisure facilities to the north, including the Hitchin Town Football Club field and the playing fields of Wilshire-Dacre Junior Academy, giving the area context as an area for sports and leisure.
- 4.16 As such, the setting of the Outdoor Swimming Pool is considered to make a **minor beneficial** contribution to its significance.

Contribution of site to setting

- 4.17 The site is located approximately 7m to the south of the Outdoor Swimming Pool, forming part of its immediate setting to the south. The buildings on the site are of a similar materiality (red brick, tiled roof) to the buildings within the Outdoor Swimming Pool complex, and have taken some architectural influences (hipped roofs, gables). They are also a similar height, being single storey, although the topography raises the modern buildings slightly above the historic ones.
- 4.18 The site is in the same leisure use as the Outdoor Swimming Pool and provides a continuing use of the site. As such, the site is considered to make a **neutral** contribution to the setting of the Outdoor Swimming Pool.

PROPOSED SCHEME

5

5.0 Proposed Scheme

Proposed Plans

- 5.1 The proposals are for decarbonisation works to the early 1990s leisure building to the south of the outdoor pool. The external works comprise the installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels onto the pitched roof of the leisure centre, set within the roof finish. The PV panels will be in portrait orientation and in two rows along the roof of the swimming pool hall, as well as on the rear slope of the southern roof.
- 5.2 There will also be a new external insulated render applied to the walls and the existing windows and rooflights will be replaced with matching aluminium double glazed units. A new path will be built adjacent to the pool hall on the western side.
- 5.3 There will also be an enclosure containing three air source heat pumps (ASHP) adjacent to the existing plant entrance. These will be screened behind the existing retaining wall, alongside an Envirofence close-boarded acoustic timber fence, with planting to the east and south to screen the enclosure from the swimming pool hall. There will also be another, smaller proposed ASHP enclosure to the south-east of the building, also screened by timber fencing.
- 5.4 There will also be a new substation installed to the west of the swimming centre, behind a new retaining wall and screened with planting to the north. The existing track will have grass reinforcement to provide substation and ASHP maintenance access.
- 5.5 The existing palisade gate providing service access to the site from the west will be replaced with a wider version designed to match the style and colour of the existing gate. This will require the removal of one Category C (low quality) tree and a small section of hedgerow. The track will also be widened near the entrance to improve access, with the existing embankment to be adjusted accordingly.

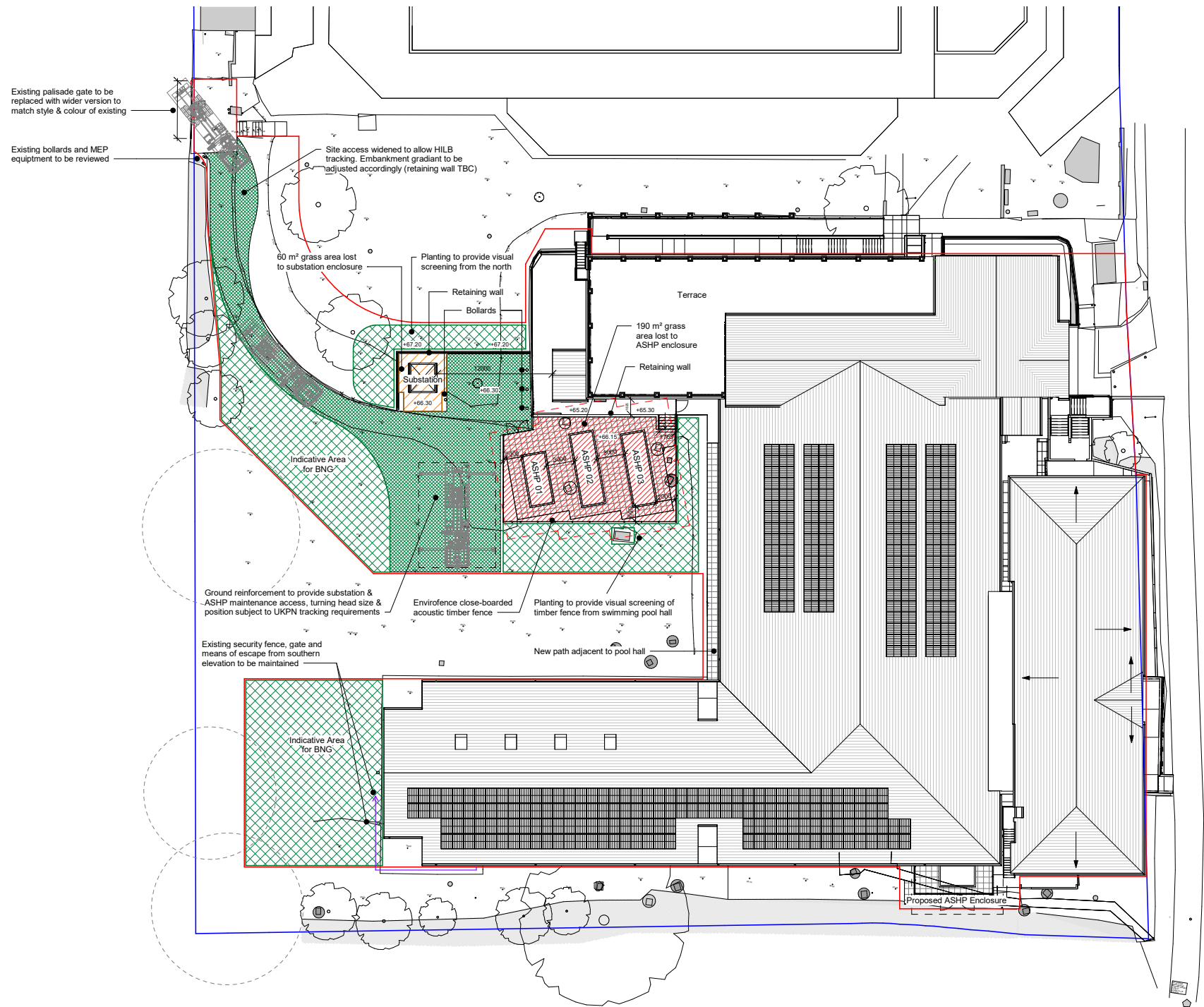


Figure 25 - Proposed site plan (Saunders Boston Architects, 2025)

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6

6.0 Impact Assessment

- 6.1 In order to assess the suitability of the site for the proposed development, it is necessary to determine the nature and extent of any impacts resulting from the proposal on heritage assets and/ or their settings.
- 6.2 When assessing the impact of a proposed development on individual or groups of heritage assets, it is important to assess both the potential, direct physical impacts of the development scheme as well as the potential impacts on their settings and where effects on setting would result in harm to the significance of the asset. It is equally important to identify benefits to settings, where they result from proposals.
- 6.3 The proposed development is considered below in terms of its impact on the significance of the heritage assets, and the contribution which setting makes to their significance. Assessment of impact levels are made with reference to Table 2 in Section 3 and satisfy 'Step 3' of Historic England's GPA 3.

Butts Close Conservation Area

- 6.4 The statutory duty under section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As stated in section 6 of this report, the Butts Close Conservation Area is considered to hold a **good** level of significance with the application site making a **neutral** contribution.
- 6.5 The addition of the photovoltaic (PV) panels will be on both slopes of the main roof and the rear slope of the southern roof, and will be set within the roof finish. Although there will be an awareness of the panels in views across the conservation area from the west, these will be partly screened by the mature foliage around the site. There will be limited to nil awareness of the panels in views into the conservation area from the east owing to the mature foliage around the site and the intervening roof forms of the eastern part of the site. Further to this, PV panels already exist within and in the immediate surroundings of the conservation area, and therefore would not form an alien addition to the area where glimpsed.
- 6.6 The new render will be in a neutral colour designed to limit its impact upon the conservation area and the windows and rooflights will be replaced with matching aluminium units, improving the look and efficiency of the building. The proposed new gate, although slightly wider, will be of the same style and colour as the existing gate, ensuring that the change would not be immediately seen or noted.
- 6.7 Three ASHP's will be located within an enclosed area at a lower level than the surrounding built context- this siting will obscure them completely from wider views within the Conservation Area. The small second ASHP enclosure will be located in the south-east at the rear of the existing swimming centre, meaning it will be screened by the building and mature foliage along the southern border of the site in views across the conservation area. The proposed substation is 3m x 3m, and 2.5m tall. However the new retaining wall, alongside the proposed planting around the structure, will limit awareness in views within the conservation area. It should also be considered that both the ASHP enclosures and the new substation site would be seen within the context of the leisure centre complex and would therefore not impact the green and residential character of the wider conservation area.
- 6.8 When considering the impact of the proposal on the Butts Close Conservation Area, although there will be an awareness of the proposals, such as the PV panels, the updated render and windows, and the new, larger access gate, these measures are not considered harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and will enable the long-term sustainability and use of the site, as well as improving the external appearance of the building with the new render, windows and rooflights. There will be the removal of one low-quality tree and a small section of hedgerow near the gate, however, all other mature foliage will remain and as such there should not be a noticeable reduction in the verdancy of the site as a result.
- 6.9 As such, it is considered overall to have a **negligible beneficial** impact on the contribution that the site makes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Therefore, the scheme is not considered to be in conflict with Section 72 of Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Outdoor Swimming Pool - Locally Listed

- 6.10 Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that a balanced judgement should be undertaken when considering impacts on non-designated assets. As stated in section 6 of this report, the Outdoor Swimming Pool is considered to hold a **low-moderate** level of significance with the application site making a **neutral** contribution.
- 6.11 The proposed PV panels will be located on both slopes of the main roof and the rear slope of the southern roof, however, there will be very limited awareness of the panels, with glimpses gained from the western edge of the asset only, owing to the intervening roof forms to the north. The addition of the new external render and the replacement of the windows and rooflights are considered to be improvements to the appearance of the building and the new access gate will match existing.
- 6.12 The main ASHP compound will be located within an enclosed area at a lower level than the surrounding built context, behind the existing brick retaining wall; this siting will obscure them completely in wider views from the Outdoor Swimming Pool. The smaller compound is to the south of the existing swimming centre building, and there will be no awareness of this from the Outdoor Swimming Pool. The new substation will also be at a lower level behind a new retaining wall with buffer planting to the north and west and as such will not be visible in views from the Outdoor Swimming Pool.
- 6.13 When considering the impact of the proposal on the Outdoor Swimming Centre, the proposed works are considered to improve the appearance of the site, as well as improve the sustainability and efficiency of the building, allowing for the long-term use of the complex, including the Outdoor Swimming Pool. As such, the scheme is considered overall to have a **negligible beneficial** impact on the contribution that the site makes to the setting of the Outdoor Swimming Pool. Therefore, the scheme is not considered to be in conflict with Paragraph 216 of the NPPF.

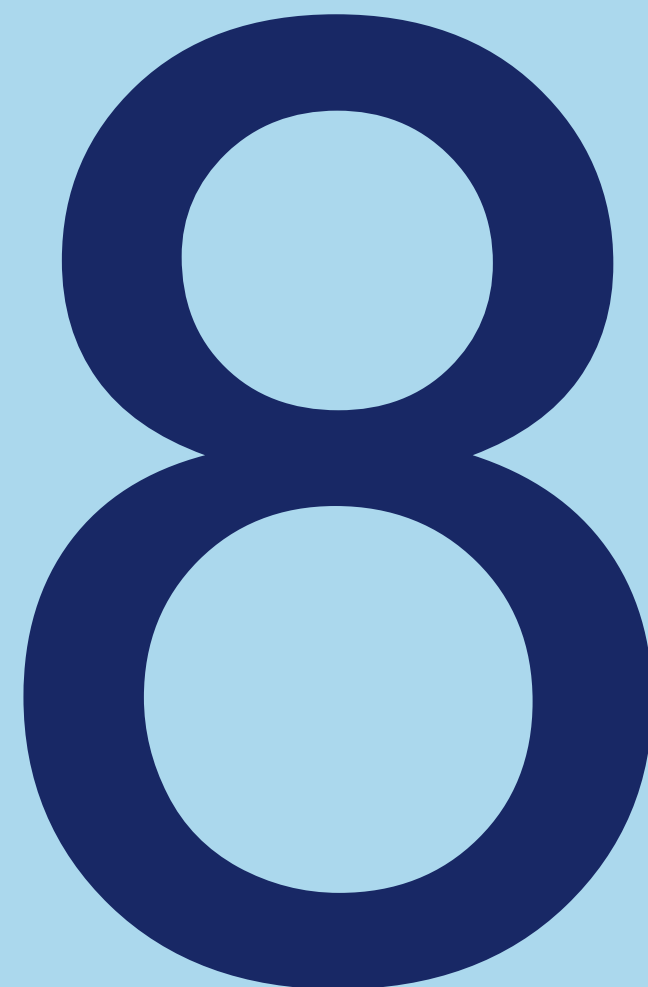
CONCLUSIONS

7

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 This Heritage Statement has been produced by Bidwells on behalf of Willmott Dixon (acting for North Hertfordshire District Council) in relation to the proposed decarbonisation works at Hitchin Swimming Centre.
- 7.2 The proposals seek to install photovoltaic (PV) panels onto the roof, apply a new external insulated render and replace the existing windows and rooflights with matching aluminium double glazed units. There will also be an enclosure added containing air source heat pumps (ASHP) adjacent to the existing plant entrance and a smaller enclosure to the rear of the building. A new substation and a new, wider access gate will also be installed.
- 7.3 This report considers the impact of the proposed scheme on the significance of the built heritage assets identified, including the contribution made by their settings. This approach to impact-assessment is required in order to satisfy the provisions of Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act of 1990 in relation to listed buildings and conservation areas and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) where the impact of development on heritage assets or their settings is being considered (Paragraphs 207-221).
- 7.4 As a result of our assessments on site, it is considered that the proposed scheme would result a **negligible beneficial** impact on the significance of Butts Close Conservation Area.
- 7.5 With regard to the Outdoor Swimming Pool, Paragraph 216 requires a balanced judgement to be undertaken when considering impacts on non-designated assets. As a result of our assessments on site, it is considered that the proposed scheme would result a **negligible beneficial** impact on the significance of the Outdoor Swimming Pool.
- 7.6 We therefore find that the proposed alterations to have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Butts Close Conservation Area in accordance with Section 72(1). In addition to satisfying these provisions of the Act, the NPPF Paragraphs 207-221 are also satisfied.

APPENDICES



8.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A_METHODOLOGY

Heritage Assets

A heritage asset is defined within the National Planning Policy Framework 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. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)” (NPPF Annex 2: Glossary).

‘Designated’ assets have been identified under the relevant legislation and policy including, but not limited to: World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, and Conservation Areas. ‘Non-designated’ heritage assets are assets which fall below the national criteria for designation.

The absence of a national designation should not be taken to mean that an asset does not hold any heritage interest. The Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) states that “non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.” (Paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 18a-039-20190723)

However, the PPG goes on to clarify that “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.”

Meaning of Significance

The concept of significance was first expressed within the 1979 Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS, 1979). This charter has periodically been updated to reflect the development of the theory and practice of cultural heritage management, with the current version having been adopted in 2013. It defines cultural significance as the “aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups” (Page 2, Article 1.2)

The NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary) also defines significance as “the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or

historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”

The British Standards BS7913 (2013) notes that “the attributes that combine to define the significance of a historic building can relate to its physical properties or to its context. There are many different ways in which heritage values can be assessed.” Significance can therefore be considered to be formed by a collection of values.

Assessment of Significance

It is important to be proportionate in assessing significance as required in both national policy and guidance as set out in paragraph 200 of the NPPF.

The Historic England document ‘Conservation Principles’ states that “understanding a place and assessing its significance demands the application of a systematic and consistent process, which is appropriate and proportionate in scope and depth to the decision to be made, or the purpose of the assessment.”

The document goes on to set out a process for assessment of significance, but it does note that not all of the stages highlighted are applicable to all places/ assets.

- Understanding the fabric and evolution of the asset;
- Identify who values the asset, and why they do so;
- Relate identified heritage values to the fabric of the asset;
- Consider the relative importance of those identified values;
- Consider the contribution of associated objects and collections;
- Consider the contribution made by setting and context;
- Compare the place with other assets sharing similar values;
- Articulate the significance of the asset.

At the core of this assessment is an understanding of the value/ significance of a place. There have been numerous attempts to categorise the range of heritage values which contribute to an asset’s significance. Historic England’s ‘Conservation Principles’ sets out a grouping of values as follows:

Evidential value – ‘derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity...Physical remains of past human activity

are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them...The ability to understand and interpret the evidence tends to be diminished in proportion to the extent of its removal or replacement.’ (Page 28)

Aesthetic Value – ‘Aesthetic values can be the result of the conscious design of a place, including artistic endeavour. Equally, they can be the seemingly fortuitous outcome of the way in which a place has evolved and been used over time. Many places combine these two aspects... Aesthetic values tend to be specific to a time cultural context and appreciation of them is not culturally exclusive’. (Pages 30-31)

Historic Value – ‘derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative... Association with a notable family, person, event, or movement gives historical value a particular resonance... The historical value of places depends upon both sound identification and direct experience of fabric or landscape that has survived from the past, but is not as easily diminished by change or partial replacement as evidential value. The authenticity of a place indeed often lies in visible evidence of change as a result of people responding to changing circumstances. Historical values are harmed only to the extent that adaptation has obliterated or concealed them, although completeness does tend to strengthen illustrative value’. (Pages 28-30)

Communal Value – “Commemorative and symbolic values reflect the meanings of a place for those who draw part of their identity from it, or have emotional links to it... Social value is associated with places that people perceive as a source of identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence. Some may be comparatively modest, acquiring communal significance through the passage of time as a result of a collective memory of stories linked to them...They may relate to an activity that is associated with the place, rather than with its physical fabric...Spiritual value is often associated with places sanctified by longstanding veneration or worship, or wild places with few obvious signs of modern life. Their value is generally dependent on the perceived survival of the historic fabric or character of the place, and can be extremely sensitive to modest changes to that character, particularly to the activities that happen there”. (Pages 31-32)

Historic England advice Note 12 notes that ‘interest may be archeological, architectural, artistic or historic.’

The British Standards set out a simpler approach which ‘is to think of a historic building’s significance as comprising individual heritage values’. These could include townscape characteristics, artistic value, educational

value and identity or belonging amongst others.

It is therefore clear that value-based assessment should be flexible in its application. It is important not to oversimplify an assessment and to acknowledge when an asset has a multi-layered value base, which is likely to reinforce its significance.

Contribution of setting/context to significance

In addition to the above values, the setting of a heritage asset can also be a fundamental contributor to its significance - although it should be noted that 'setting' itself is not a designation. The value of setting lies in its contribution to the significance of an asset. For example, there may be instances where setting does not contribute to the significance of an asset at all.

Historic England's Conservation Principles defines setting as "*an established concept that relates to the surroundings in which a place is experienced, its local context, embracing present and past relationships to the adjacent landscape.*"

It goes on to state that "*context embraces any relationship between a place and other places. It can be, for example, cultural, intellectual, spatial or functional, so any one place can have a multi-layered context. The range of contextual relationships of a place will normally emerge from an understanding of its origins and evolution. Understanding context is particularly relevant to assessing whether a place has greater value for being part of a larger entity, or sharing characteristics with other places*" (page 39).

In order to understand the role of setting and context to decision-making, it is important to have an understanding of the origins and evolution of an asset, to the extent that this understanding gives rise to significance in the present. Assessment of these values is not based solely on visual considerations but may lie in a deeper understanding of historic use, ownership, change or other cultural influence – all or any of which may have given rise to current circumstances and may hold a greater or lesser extent of significance.

The importance of setting depends entirely on the contribution it makes to the significance of the heritage asset or its appreciation. It is important to note that impacts that may arise to the setting of an asset do not, necessarily, result in direct or equivalent impacts to the significance of that asset(s).

Assessing Impact

It is evident that the significance/value of any heritage asset(s) requires clear assessment to provide a context for, and to determine the impact of, development proposals. Impact on that value or significance is determined by first considering the sensitivity of the receptors identified which is best expressed by using a hierarchy of value levels.

There are a range of hierarchical systems for presenting the level of significance in use; however, the method chosen for this project is based on the established 'James Semple Kerr method' which has been adopted by Historic England, in combination with the impact assessment methodology for heritage assets within the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB: HA208/13) published by the Highways Agency, Transport Scotland, the Welsh Assembly Government and the department for Regional Development Northern Ireland. This 'value hierarchy' has been subject to scrutiny in the UK planning system, including Inquiries, and is the only hierarchy to be published by a government department.

The first stage of our approach is to carry out a thoroughly-researched assessment of the significance of the heritage asset, in order to understand its value:

TABLE 01 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SIGNIFICANCE	EXAMPLES
Very High	World Heritage Sites, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas of outstanding quality, or built assets of acknowledged exceptional or international importance, or assets which can contribute to international research objectives. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscapes of international sensitivity.
High	World Heritage Sites, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and built assets of high quality, or assets which can contribute to international and national research objectives. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscapes which are highly preserved with excellent coherence, integrity, time-depth, or other critical factor(s).
Good	Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and built assets (including locally listed buildings and non-designated assets) with a strong character and integrity which can be shown to have good qualities in their fabric or historical association, or assets which can contribute to national research objectives. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscapes of good level of interest, quality and importance, or well preserved and exhibiting considerable coherence, integrity time-depth or other critical factor(s).
Medium/ Moderate	Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and built assets (including locally listed buildings and non-designated assets) that can be shown to have moderate qualities in their fabric or historical association. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscapes with reasonable coherence, integrity, time-depth or other critical factor(s).
Low	Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and built assets (including locally listed buildings and non-designated assets) compromised by poor preservation integrity and/or low original level of quality of low survival of contextual associations but with potential to contribute to local research objectives. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscapes with modest sensitivity or whose sensitivity is limited by poor preservation, historic integrity and/or poor survival of contextual associations.
Negligible	Assets which are of such limited quality in their fabric or historical association that this is not appreciable. Historic landscapes and townscapes of limited sensitivity, historic integrity and/or limited survival of contextual associations.
Neutral/ None	Assets with no surviving cultural heritage interest. Buildings of no architectural or historical note. Landscapes and townscapes with no surviving legibility and/or contextual associations, or with no historic interest.

Once the value/significance of an asset has been assessed, the next stage is to determine the assets ‘sensitivity to change’. Table 2 sets out the levels of sensitivity to change, which is based upon the vulnerability of the asset, in part or as a whole, to loss of value through change. Sensitivity to change can be applied to individual elements of a building, or its setting, and may differ across the asset.

An asset’s sensitivity level also relates to its capacity to absorb change, either change affecting the asset itself or change within its setting (remembering that, according to Historic England The Setting of Heritage Assets – Planning Note 3, ‘change’ does not in itself imply harm, and can be neutral, positive or negative in effect).

Some assets are more robust than others and have a greater capacity for change and therefore, even though substantial changes are proposed, their sensitivity to change or capacity to absorb change may still be assessed as low.

TABLE 03 ASSESSMENT OF SENSITIVITY

SENSITIVITY	EXPLANATION OF SENSITIVITY
HIGH	High Sensitivity to change occurs where a change may pose a major threat to a specific heritage value of the asset which would lead to substantial or total loss of heritage value.
MODERATE	Moderate sensitivity to change occurs where a change may diminish the heritage value of an asset, or the ability to appreciate the heritage value of an asset.
LOW	Low sensitivity to change occurs where a change may pose no appreciable threat to the heritage value of an asset.

Once there is an understanding of the sensitivity an asset holds, the next stage is to assess the ‘magnitude’ of the impact that any proposed works may have. Impacts may be considered to be adverse, beneficial or neutral in effect and can relate to direct physical impacts, impacts on its setting, or both. Impact on setting is measured in terms of the effect that the impact has on the significance of the asset itself – rather than setting itself being considered as the asset.

Summary of Assessment

Overall, it is a balanced understanding of the foreseeable likely effect of proposals on significance as a result of predicted impacts which is being sought through undertaking this process. It should be clearly understood that the level of detail provided within these assessments is “proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance” as set out in Paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Research Methodology

This Heritage Statement is the result of a robust process which assesses relevant documentary research, including Historic Environment Records, historic maps, drawings and reports, as well as archive material where relevant and professional judgment.

TABLE 02 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT	TYPICAL CRITERIA DESCRIPTORS
Very High	Adverse: Impacts will destroy cultural heritage assets resulting in their total loss or almost complete destruction. Beneficial: The proposals would remove or successfully mitigate existing and significant damaging and discordant impacts on assets; allow for the substantial restoration or enhancement of characteristic features
High	Adverse: Impacts will damage cultural heritage assets; result in the loss of the asset’s quality and integrity; cause severe damage to key characteristic features or elements; almost complete loss of setting and/or context of the asset. The assets integrity or setting is almost wholly destroyed or is severely compromised, such that the resource can no longer be appreciated or understood. Beneficial: The proposals would remove or successfully mitigate existing damaging and discordant impacts on assets; allow for the restoration or enhancement of characteristic features; allow the substantial re-establishment of the integrity, understanding and setting for an area or group of features; halt rapid degradation and/or erosion of the heritage resource, safeguarding substantial elements of the heritage resource.
MEDIUM	Adverse: Moderate impact on the asset, but only partially affecting the integrity; partial loss of, or damage to, key characteristics, features or elements; substantially intrusive into the setting and/or would adversely impact upon the context of the asset; loss of the asset for community appreciation. The assets integrity or setting is damaged but not destroyed so understanding and appreciation is compromised. Beneficial: Benefit to, or partial restoration of, key characteristics, features or elements; improvement of asset quality; degradation of the asset would be halted; the setting and/or context of the asset would be enhanced and understanding and appreciation is substantially improved; the asset would be brought into community use.
MINOR/LOW	Adverse: Some measurable change in assets quality or vulnerability; minor loss of or alteration to, one (or maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements; change to the setting would not be overly intrusive or overly diminish the context; community use or understanding would be reduced. The assets integrity or setting is damaged but understanding and appreciation would only be diminished not compromised Beneficial: Minor benefit to, or partial restoration of, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements; some beneficial impact on asset or a stabilisation of negative impacts; slight improvements to the context or setting of the site; community use or understanding and appreciation would be enhanced
NEGLIGIBLE	Barely discernible effect on baseline conditions but a slight adverse or beneficial impact
NEUTRAL	A change or effect which is neither adverse nor beneficial in impact
NIL	No change in baseline conditions

APPENDIX B HERITAGE LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE SUMMARY

Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The primary legislation relating to Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- Section 16(2) states “In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”
- Section 66(1) reads: “In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”
- In relation to development on land within Conservation Areas, Section 72(1) reads: “Special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

As the proposal does not involve an application for Listed Building Consent, Section 16(2) does not apply in this instance.

National Planning Policy Framework (2025)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in February 2025. With regard to the historic environment, the over-arching aim of the policy remains in line with philosophy of the 2012 framework, namely that “*our historic environments... can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives, rather than withers.*” The relevant policy is outlined within chapter 16, ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’.

This chapter reasserts that heritage assets can range from sites and buildings of local interest to World Heritage Sites considered to have an Outstanding Universal Value. The NPPF subsequently requires these assets to be conserved in a “*manner appropriate to their significance*” (Paragraph 202).

NPPF directs local planning authorities to require an applicant to “*describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting*” and the level of detailed assessment should be “*proportionate to the assets’ importance*” (Paragraph 207).

Paragraph 208 states that the significance any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal should be identified and assessed. This includes any assets affected by development within their settings. This Significance Assessment should be taken into account when considering the impact

of a proposal, “*to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal*”. This paragraph therefore results in the need for an analysis of the impact of a proposed development on the asset’s relative significance, in the form of a Heritage Impact Assessment.

Paragraph 211 states that local planning authorities should have regard to the importance of the retention ‘in-situ’ of a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument irrespective of its designation. The paragraph goes on to suggest an explanation of historic or social context should be given rather than removal.

Paragraph 212 requires that “*When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*”

It is then clarified that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, either through alteration, destruction or development within its setting, should require, “*clear and convincing justification*” (Paragraph 213). This paragraph outlines that substantial harm to grade II listed heritage assets should be exceptional, rising to ‘wholly exceptional’ for those assets of the highest significance such as scheduled monuments, Grade I and grade II* listed buildings or registered parks and gardens as well as World Heritage Sites.

In relation to harmful impacts or the loss of significance resulting from a development proposal, Paragraph 214 states the following:

“*Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- *a.the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- *b.no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- *c.conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- *d.the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*”

The NPPF therefore requires a balance to be applied in the context of heritage assets, including the recognition of potential benefits accruing from a development. In the case of proposals which would result in “less than substantial harm”, paragraph 215 provides the following:

“*Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*”

It is also possible for proposals, where suitably designed, to result in no harm to the significance of heritage assets.

In the case of non-designated heritage assets, Paragraph 216 requires a Local Planning Authority to make a “balanced judgement” having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. The NPPF therefore recognises the need to clearly identify relative significance at an early stage and then to judge the impact of development proposals in that context.

With regard to Conservation Areas and the settings of heritage assets, paragraph 219 requires Local Planning Authorities to look for opportunities for new development, enhancing or better revealing their significance. Whilst it is noted that not all elements of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance, this paragraph states that “*proposals that preserve those elements of a setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.*”

Broader design guidance is given in Chapter 12, ‘Achieving well-designed places’. The 2021 NPPF introduced the requirement for local authorities to prepare design guides or codes, consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code Documents. These should reflect ‘local character’ in order to create ‘beautiful and distinctive places’ (paragraph 133).

Paragraph 139 states that significant weight should be given to development which reflects local design policies, and/or outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the ‘standard of design’ providing they conform to the ‘overall form and layout of their surroundings.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (2019)

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was updated on 23 July 2019 and is a companion to the NPPF, replacing a large number of foregoing Circulars and other supplementary guidance.

In respect of heritage decision-making, the PPG stresses the importance of determining applications on the basis of significance and explains how the tests of harm and impact within the NPPF are to be interpreted.

In particular, the PPG notes the following in relation to the evaluation of harm: “in *determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.*” (Ref ID: 18a-018-20190723).

This guidance therefore provides assistance in defining where levels of harm should be set, tending to emphasise substantial harm as a “high test”.

In relation to non-designated heritage assets, the NPPG explains the following:

“Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.”

It goes on to clarify that: “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.”

This statement explains the need to be judicious in the identification of value and the extent to which this should be applied as a material consideration and in accordance with Paragraph 197.

Historic England Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance 2008

Historic England sets out in this document a logical approach to making decisions and offering guidance about all aspects of the historic environment, including changes affecting significant places. It states that:

“New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if: a. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place; b. the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed; c. the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future; d. the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future” (page 59).

Historic England Making Changes to Heritage Assets Advice Note 2 (February 2016)

This advice note provides information on repair, restoration, addition and alteration works to heritage assets. It advises that *“The main issues to consider in proposals for additions to heritage assets, including new development in conservation areas, aside from NPPF requirements such as social and economic activity and sustainability, are proportion, height, massing, bulk, use of materials, durability and adaptability, use, enclosure, relationship with adjacent assets and definition of spaces and streets, alignment, active frontages, permeability and treatment of setting.”* (page 10)

Historic England Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment Historic Environment Good Practice Advice (GPA) in Planning Note 2 (March 2015)

This advice note sets out clear information to assist all relevant stake holders in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). These include: *“assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness.”* (page 1)

Historic England The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice (GPA) in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) (December 2017)

This document presents guidance on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas and landscapes. Page 6, entitled: *‘A staged approach to proportionate decision taking’* provides detailed advice on assessing the implications of development proposals and recommends the following broad approach to assessment, undertaken as a series of steps that apply equally to complex or more straightforward cases:

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

Historic England Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Advice Note 12 (October 2019)

This document provides guidance on the NPPF requirement for applicants to describe heritage significance in order to aid local planning authorities’ decision making. It reiterates the importance of understanding the significance of heritage assets, in advance of developing proposals. This advice note outlines a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance precedes the design and also describes the relationship with archaeological desk-based assessments and field evaluations, as well as with Design and Access Statements.

The advice in this document, in accordance with the NPPF, emphasises that the level of detail in support of applications for planning permission and listed building consent should be no more than is necessary to reach an informed decision, and that activities to conserve the asset(s) need to be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset(s) affected and the impact on that significance. This advice also addresses how an analysis of heritage significance could be set out before discussing suggested structures for a statement of heritage significance.

Local Policy

North Herts Local Plan 2011-2031

The North Herts Local Plan is the statutory Development Plan for the district and was formally adopted by the Council on 8th November 2022. It establishes the council’s vision and policies which will guide development in the district until 2031. The relevant policies within this document are:

Policy SP1: Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire

“This Plan supports the principles of sustainable development within North Hertfordshire. We will: [...]

c) Grant planning permission for proposals that, individually or cumulatively: [...]

iv. protect key elements of North Hertfordshire’s environment including biodiversity, important landscapes, heritage assets and green infrastructure (including the water environment); and

v. secure any necessary mitigation measures that reduce the impact of development, including on climate change; and

d) Support neighbourhood plans and other local planning initiatives where they are in general conformity with the strategic policies of this Local Plan.”

Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability

"The Council considers good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development. We will: [...]"

c) Require Strategic Masterplans and planning applications for Strategic Housing Sites and significant development to (as applicable):

i. create buildings, spaces and streets which positively reflect and respond to the local landscape, townscape and historic character [...]"

Policy SP13: Historic environment

"The Council will balance the need for growth with the proper protection and enhancement of the historic environment. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to the asset's conservation and the management of its setting. We will pursue a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment through:

a) Maintaining a strong presumption in favour of the retention, preservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their setting according to their significance;

b) Identifying sites on the national register of Heritage at Risk or on the Council's 'At Risk' register;

c) Periodic reviews of Conservation Areas and other locally designated assets; and

d) Publication of detailed guidance."

Policy NE12: Renewable and low carbon energy development

"[...] Proposals for other renewable and low carbon energy development which would contribute towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be permitted subject to an assessment of the impacts upon:

i. Landscape quality, landscape character and visual amenity, including consideration of cumulative impacts of development;

ii. Environmental assets;

iii. The historic environment, including the impact on the setting of historic assets; [...]"

In assessing renewable and low carbon energy proposals against the above criteria the Council will give significant weight to their local and wider benefits, particularly the potential to reduce greenhouse gas and other harmful emissions, and the social benefits of community owned schemes where this is relevant.

Proposals for decentralised energy schemes associated with development of the strategic sites allocated in the Plan will be encouraged subject to an assessment of the impacts.

In all cases, end of life/redundant plant, buildings, apparatus, and infrastructure must be removed and the site restored to its former state or a condition agreed with the Council."

Policy HE1: Designated Heritage Assets

"Planning applications relating to Designated heritage Assets or their setting shall be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment/Justification Statement that:

i. Assesses the significance of heritage assets, including their setting;

ii. Justifies and details the impacts of any proposal upon the significance of the designated heritage asset(s); and

iii. Informs any necessary measures to minimise or mitigate against any identified harms.

Planning permission for development proposals affecting Designated Heritage Assets or their setting will be granted where they (as applicable):

a) Enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance;

b) Incorporate a palette of materials that make a positive contribution to local character or distinctiveness, where it is appropriate and justified; and

c) Will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, and this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the development, including securing the asset's optimum viable use.

Where substantial harm to, or loss of significance, of a designated heritage asset is proposed the Council shall refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is necessary to deliver considerable public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss."

Policy HE2: Heritage at risk

"Planning permission will be granted for proposals that seek to conserve or provide new uses for designated heritage assets identified on the national register, or the Council's 'At Risk' register maintained by the Council, that are justified and appropriate to the significance of the asset to return a heritage asset to beneficial use.

Proposals that harm the significance of heritage assets included on national and local registers will be resisted unless the need for, and the benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh that harm,

taking account of the asset's significance and importance, and all feasible solutions to avoid and mitigate that harm have been fully assessed."

Policy HE3: Non-Designated Heritage Assets

"Permission for a proposal that would result in harm to, or the loss of, a non-designated heritage asset will only be granted provided that a balanced judgement has been made that assesses the scale of harm to, or loss of significance of the non-designated asset and, where the proposal results in the loss of a non-designated heritage asset:

a) The replacement building contributes to preserving the local character and distinctiveness of the area; and

b) Where the asset is located in a conservation area a continuous contract for the demolition and redevelopment of the site has been secured, unless there are justifiable grounds for not developing the site."

APPENDIX C_LOCAL LIST DESCRIPTION

Outdoor Swimming Pool	Fishponds Road	Unusual survivor of 1930s Lido style open air pool with fountain and a single storey red brick facilities building adjacent; opened in 1938; commemorative Hitchin Urban District Council arms and date stone; forms a focal point in the street scene and a feature of Butts Close hard by; attractive modern swimming centre shares the Pool site.	
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