

Heritage Statement.

Garden / Pool Room.

Townsend House . Barkway. March. 2026.

PROJECT BACKGROUND.

I have been commissioned by Carl Rowland to produce a Heritage Statement (HS) to accompany a planning application at Townsend House, 109 High Street, Barkway. Royston, SG8 8ED. The subject site is located within the administrative boundary of North Hertfordshire District Council.

The scheme is for the construction of a Garden / Pool Room to provide changing and general facilities for the existing swimming pool

The subject site is a grade II listed building situated in the Barkway Conservation Area. As such, this report has been produced to provide a assessment of the heritage assets that may be impacted by the development proposal. Professional judgement has been used to assess heritage significance, based on historic, architectural or artistic interest as set out in the NPPF and expanded upon in the PPG. The report provides a heritage impact assessment of the contribution of setting to the significance of designated assets within the study area in line with The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (NPPF) and Local Plan policies.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Heritage Statement is to assess the impact of the scheme and to provide a suitable strategy to mitigate any adverse effects, if required, as part of a planning application. The aim is achieved through six objectives:

- identify the presence of any known or potential heritage asset that may be affected by the scheme;
- describe the significance of such assets in a proportionate manner, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), taking into account factors which may have compromised an asset's survival or significance;
- where relevant, determine the contribution to which setting makes to the significance of any sensitive (i.e. designated) heritage assets;
- assess the impacts upon the significance of the asset arising from the scheme;
- assess the impact of the proposed scheme on how designated heritage assets are understood and experienced, including through changes to their setting; and
- provide recommendations for further investigation and/or mitigation where required, aimed at reducing or removing any adverse effects.

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW.

This Heritage Statement has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act
- National Planning Policy Framework.
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT.

The subject site is located in Barkway, a historic Village situated roughly 6km to the south-east of Royston and 2.7km to the east of the A10 motorway. The subject site is situated on the

corner plot between the High Street and Townsend Close, within the historic core of the village.

The High Street extends 1km north-south from Cambridge Road to London Road (B1368). The northern half of street represents the most densely built section of the village, with historic building lines abutting the pavement. The southern section of the High Street comprises an eclectic mix of historic and contemporary buildings set on larger plots, with the subject site situated between two late-20th century housing developments on Townsend Close (to the south) and Burrs Lane (to the north).

The subject site contains one grade II listed building: Townsend House. The next closest designated heritage asset is 93-95 High Street (grade II* listed), which dates to the 15th century and is located 52m to the north of the subject site. These heritage assets represent some of the oldest buildings within the village and contribute towards the historic townscape views within the Barkway Conservation Area.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

This section provides an overview of the subject site and the historical background relevant to an understanding of the site and its historic context and interest. This is based on accessible records. It is not the purpose of this document to create a detailed historical narrative of the area, but to provide a proportionate assessment of the subject site's historical development and heritage potential.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Settlement in this area of Hertfordshire is believed to date back to prehistoric times, with the ancient stronghold of Periwinkle Hill located 1.3km to the north-west of Barkway. The old Roman Road, 'Ermine Street' (now part of the A10) is also located 2.7km to the

west of the site. The village is recorded in the Domesday Survey (c.1086) as 'Birchwig', which means 'BirchWay', with 48 households under ownership of Eudo the Steward. The current church was reconstructed in the village in the 13th century. Barkway soon became a key trading point during the medieval period due to its location on the old coaching route between London and Cambridge, and was granted market status in the 13th century. As a result, many coaching inns were established, and the village soon became a prosperous and attractive place to live. Townsend House was likely constructed in 1830 for a local landowner, evident from its scale, proportions and elegant Georgian design. The advent of the railway in the mid-19th century resulted in the decline of the coaching trade, and the construction of Royston Railway Station to the north of the village in 1850 significantly reduced the fortunes of the village. The widening of the A10 in the 1970s further reduced the amenity of the village. As a result the shops within Barkway have since closed, and only one pub remains open. Today, the village is relatively undeveloped and largely reflects its historic layout, thus retaining its tranquil setting in the Hertfordshire countryside. The subject site itself has been subject to several alterations to its setting as a result of contemporary housing developments.

SUBJECT SITE

Townsend House is first depicted in detail on the 1878 OS map with a square footprint and southern outbuilding. The gardens are noticeably smaller than the current site boundary. The 1898 OS map shows the construction of a linked extension between Townsend House and the southern outbuilding. By the early 20th century, the grounds of Townsend House are significantly larger, with a verdant garden extending to the south (as seen on the 1921 OS map. Modern imagery shows that Townsend House has since been substantially altered and now reflects a square plan with a northern extension (with the southern extension demolished). In addition, the grounds of the house have been significantly reduced, with the High Street slightly widened. A swimming pool has also been introduced in the rear garden (ref: 24/00771/FPH). The historic setting of the subject site has also been compromised, with the construction of two late-20th century housing developments to the immediate north and south.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site is an irregular rectangular shaped area of approximately 0.25 ha (oriented east-west), comprising Townsend House and its rear garden and front driveway. The entire plot is largely flat and planted with mature trees and shrubbery which screen views to and from the High Street and Townsend Close. Townsend House is a large detached Georgian Villa positioned with its front elevation parallel to the High Street and is set back 16m from the street behind a spacious gravel drive, with access provided via two separate vehicular entrances on the High Street and Townsend Close. The southern and eastern boundaries of the site are adjacent to the driveway and garden of a newly constructed house on Townsend Close (ref: 15/03169/1), while the northern boundary borders the rear gardens of 107 High Street and the newly built houses on Burr Lane (ref: 15/01294/1). Access to the site is provided by two driveways, one from the south and one from the west.

HERTIAGE SIGNIFICANCE

This section is intended to identify any heritage assets (within a given area) that have a potential to be affected by the proposed scheme – either directly through a material change to the asset(s) or through a change to the contribution of setting to an asset(s) significance or the character of an area. This assessment has been informed by a 50m study area beyond the site. The size of the search area has been determined based on the prevailing circumstances within the adjacent area, the nature of the proposed scheme and professional judgment, as suitable for determining the potential impact of the proposed scheme on designated heritage assets. It is therefore consistent with paragraph 207 of the NPPF, in providing a level of detail proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. There are two designated heritage assets within the study area. These are:

- Townsend House – Grade II Listed
- Barkway Conservation Area.

HERITAGE ASSETS

TOWNSEND HOUSE

Listing Entry:

Heritage Category: Listed Building. Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1102598

Date first listed: 02-Jun-1987

Listed Building Description:

Large house. c.1830. Arlesey white brick. Hipped slate roof. 3 bay double depth plan.

2 storeys. Symmetrical front with steps up to central entrance, part glazed and part fielded 6 panelled door, rectangular fanlight, panelled reveals and soffit, architrave, Doric porch. Recessed glazing bar sashes with gauged brick flat arched heads. First floor projects very slightly. Moulded eaves soffit. 4 end stacks with paired shafts. Short hipped wing to rear left. C20 garage addition to left. Interior not inspected

SIGNIFICANCE

In this case, the key significance of the building relates to its historic and architectural contribution to the development of Barkway. The building provides a tangible reminder of patterns of life during the late Georgian era, and was likely constructed for the local landowner. The principal facade of the building, whilst altered, has architectural value which reflects the prevailing style, materials and detailing of the early-19th century, making a clear aesthetic contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the Barkway. Conservation Area. However, the property is privately owned and thus has low communal value. The setting of Townsend House is principally derived from within its own spacious, verdant plot – the boundaries of which, however, have changed over time and no longer reflect its original or historic form. The wider setting has been substantially altered since the asset's construction, with the development of 99-107 High Street to the north and Townsend Close to the south in the late-20th century, as well as the recent construction of a dwelling to the east of the subject site in 2018, which visually separates the house from the open countryside beyond. Overall, the significance of the subject property is medium.

BARKWAY CONSERVATION AREA

The subject site is located in the south-east edge of the Barkway Conservation Area, which was designated in 1970. The Barkway Conservation Area Character Statement was adopted in July 2019 and provides a brief overview of the key characteristics of the area. The conservation area is notable as an example of a village with a surviving medieval street pattern, reflected in the densely settled High Street – once a popular resting place on the old coaching route between London and Cambridge. The earlier buildings are typically timber- framed constructions dating from the 15th century, with attractive Georgian and Victorian buildings interspersed along the street. With regards to the special interest of the conservation area, the Character Statement notes that.

“Barkway Conservation Area consists mainly of High Street and its high concentration of listed buildings, which range from a 15th century Wealden house through to 19th century buildings. It has a history as a coaching town, although this is little evident other than in modern buildings which frequently incorporate bridged driveways in the manner of coaching inns. Much of High Street has the feeling of being enclosed, with buildings fronting the street behind pavements, which adds to a sense of change in character and status when one leaves High Street along the more open Church Lane towards the Church of St Mary Magdalene (1102624) and lands surrounding Manor Farm (1102626). The fields and lanes here incorporate the remains of a historic water supply system, including a brick wagon wash”. With regards to boundary treatments the Character Statement notes that.

“Boundaries to the street tend to be in the form of brick or brick and flint walls many modern houses retain soft planted boundaries to the street frontage, reducing the level of enclosure, although along Church Lane, the northern boundary of the street is the wall and bank of the churchyard, while opposite this on the south side of the road is a historic wagon wash which breaks up the boundary to the fields to the south”. Townsend House is identified as a key heritage asset and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of Barkway Conservation Area. This is primarily derived from its historic and architectural qualities and the principal elevation fronting the High Street. The gardens of the building are included within the conservation area, with their green and verdant quality

making a positive contribution to the conservation area. However, the subject site is not included within any key views identified in the Character Statement.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

INTRODUCTION

This section will consider the impact of the proposals on the significance of the heritage assets identified in the Statement of Significance above, providing a clear assessment of the heritage impact of the scheme.

The following proposals will be assessed in line with the relevant statutory duties and the national and local heritage policy context. It is recommended that the following be read alongside the supporting documentation and drawings provided in the supporting submission. We consider the key issues for consideration to be:

- The impact of the proposed development on the contribution made by its setting to the significance of Townsend House
- The impact on the character and appearance of Barkway Conservation Area

PROPOSAL.

The proposed scheme is for the construction of a purpose build garden / pool room.

IMPLICATIONS

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS ON TOWNSEND HOUSE

The key features that contribute to the significance of this asset have been assessed above

in the significance assessment chapter.

The scheme will preserve the special interest of Townsend House, which is principally derived from the historical architectural character of the building. Whilst the proposed gates will introduce a minor visual change, they will not adversely impact the key significances of the

listed building, including the contribution made by its setting, as the gates will not be out of place given their context and style; the boundary hedges will also be retained. A Garden Room is a reasonable requirement for a house of this size with an open-air swimming pool the design has been well considered, and will be in keeping with the historic character of the property
It is therefore our view that the proposals will have a neutral impact upon Townsend House.

CONCLUSION

Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This HS has identified the heritage assets with a potential to be sensitive to the proposed works. It has considered their significance and assessed the impacts of the proposed works on their significance.

Two heritage assets have been identified that have the potential to be sensitive to the proposed scheme.

These are:

- Townsend House
- Barkway Conservation Area

The applicant seeks planning permission for the construction of Garden/Pool Room. The proposed scheme has been assessed against any potential impact on heritage assets that might result in a

loss of significance, and it has been determined that the key significance associated with Townsend House and the character and appearance of Barkway Conservation Area will be preserved. Following this process, and as set out in more detail in the main body of this report above, it is our view that the proposals would not result in harm to any designated or non-designated heritage asset and are therefore compliant with both local and national policy and guidance on the conservation and enhancement of the historic built environment, including the NPPF and PPG. Most importantly of all, the proposals are compliant with the statutory tests at Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas).