

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT  
LAND SOUTH OF LAVINGTON LANE, WEST LAVINGTON,  
WILTSHIRE

## Heritage Assessment



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 I have been commissioned by Gaiger Bros Ltd to provide a heritage assessment intended to provide part of the evidence base that will accompany an application for planning permission on land identified for residential development during the Neighbourhood Planning process. The proposed development includes new housing, access roads, public open space and a car parking adjacent to the village primary school. The development will also provide for the construction of an access from Lavington Lane.
- 1.2 National planning policy requires the applicant to describe the significance of heritage assets that may be affected, and an appropriate level of specialist expertise is expected to be applied to the decision-making process. The first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and, if relevant, the contribution of its setting to its significance. The level of detail is expected to be proportionate, and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on their significance. This assessment follows the general approach advocated in *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2* published by Historic England following consultation with relevant professional bodies.
- 1.3 I am a retired chartered town planner with 40 years experience of appraising development proposals in the historic environment. I am a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and am a past member of the Central Council, and Chairman of the South West branch. The report represents my professional opinion, and is largely based upon a visual assessment of the site supported by documentary research including an inspection of the Historic Environment Record. The assessment has been carried having regard to *Conservation Professional Practice Principles* published by the IHBC.
- 1.4 Other than the site in question I have not had access to private land or buildings. My assessments, and photographs taken during February of 2018, were conducted from public rights of way and vantage points..

## **2. West Lavington**

- 2.1 The parish of West Lavington includes the settlements of West Lavington and Littleton Panell, which now form a nearly continuous ribbon of development along the A360 Devizes to Salisbury road. It is convenient to think of the area south of the crossroad with the B3098 Frome to Urchfont road as the current division between the two settlements. West Lavington lies to the south, grouped around the parish church and its manor house while Littleton Panell is to the north straddling the main road. The Bulkington Brook rises to the south and flows past the villages on the east side within a steep valley. The stream marks the boundary between West Lavington / Littleton Panell and the larger settlement of Market Lavington to the east.
- 2.2 There is likely to have been a settlement at West Lavington during the Saxon period but there are no known surviving elements. The earliest features found at the church are thought to date from the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. This appears to coincide with a rebuilding here, and at Potterne, by the Bishop of Salisbury, hence the settlement's old name of Bishop's Lavington. A disastrous fire in 1689 resulted in the loss of most buildings at West Lavington. Only the stone built church and Manor House survive.
- 2.3 A second manor house could also be found at Littleton Panell. It became owned by the Beckett family, hence its name – A'Becketts. It was, however, rebuilt in 1904 and little trace of the original remains. Slightly confusingly a further property known as The Manor House is accessed from Littleton Panell but it lies over the border in Market Lavington Parish. This was built in the mid-Victorian period and is now used as the junior boarding house for Dauntsey's School. The main school campus is located on the south west side of the A360/B3098 crossroads. It developed after the First World War and its grounds now comprise 100 acres.

## **3. The Site**

- 3.1 The site consists of a parcel of unused rough pasture. It is situated east of the crossroads adjacent to the south of Lavington Lane (B3098) and is centred on SU 0054 5381. On its west side the site abuts modern housing estate development at Eastfield and Newby Close. To the south of the site is a modern primary school.



Photograph 1 - Looking north west across the site towards the Eastfield estate

Photograph 2 - The primary school on the south side of the site

- 3.2 The land dips down sharply at its eastern edge into the valley of the Bulkington Brook where a bridleway parallels the boundary. No public footpaths traverse across the pasture but a footpath follows just inside the southern boundary, and Lavington Lane lies immediately beyond the northern edge.

#### 4. **Legislative and Policy Background**

- 4.1 The following outlines the legal and policy framework considered in the preparation of this assessment:
- Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 – contains a duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
  - Section 72(1) of the Act – contains a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the designated Conservation Area.
  - The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Section 12 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' of the NPPF sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development.
  - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 “Managing Significance in Decision-taking in the Historic Environment” published by Historic England in July 2015, and Note 3 “The Setting of Heritage Assets” published in revised form in Decembers 2017.

- “The National Planning Practice Guidance” published by CLG in 2014 is an additional web-based guidance resource.
- “Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 58 – Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment”
- West Lavington & Littleton Panell Conservation Area Statement published by the Local Planning Authority in 2003

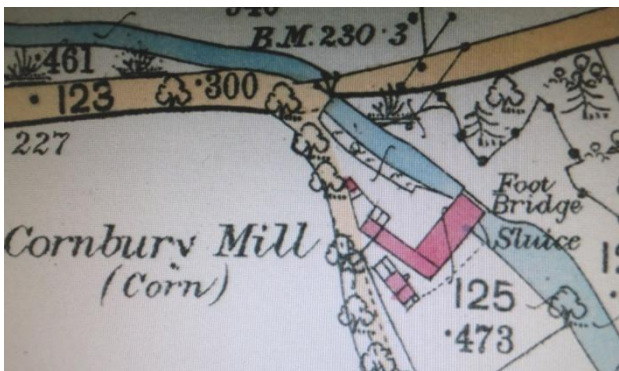
## 5 Heritage Assets

5.1 There are no designated heritage assets within the site boundaries. However, the National Heritage List indicates a number of listed buildings are found at West Lavington and Littleton Panell. Having regard to the need for proportionality, and that the proposed development is likely to consist of two storey buildings, an area of search within which it is reasonable to consider setting has been defined within a 500m radius of the site. This sweep is in effect a zone of theoretical visibility that takes no account of intervening topography and other features.

5.2 The Local Planning Authority has not published a list of locally important buildings, nor identified any non-designated assets that require to be considered during the Neighbourhood Planning exercise. Nevertheless, I have considered whether the road bridge where Lavington Lane crosses the Bulkington Brook, and nearby Cornbury Mill, should be considered as heritage assets. It is likely that a historic bridge once spanned the stream but the current structure (arch and parapets) appears to have been constructed from modern concrete cast in situ. The Wiltshire Highways Department were unable to help with any further information, and the structure is discounted from further consideration. Cornbury Mill appears to have been originally named Nash’s Mill (see map on frontpiece). Comparing what stands today with old maps and photographs indicates there have been considerable changes over the years. It may not even be the same structure. A chimney stack shown on the 1831 sketch (Fig 1 below) seems to have been removed by 1906 (Fig 2). A section that spanned over the stream and a wing that projected towards Lavington Lane in 1889 have also been removed. The 1906 image appears to show a painted front elevation of which there is no obvious trace today. The property is also now in entirely domestic use, and the fenestration has been renewed and altered. Nevertheless, the core of the building may survive from earlier times and the property illustrates the use of locally sourced rubble stone, bricks and tiles. It is also briefly noted in the Historic Environment Record (MW17680).



- 5.3 A heritage asset is defined in the Glossary to the NPPF 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. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).* Whilst it is difficult to reach any firm conclusion in the absence of access to the property I would judge Cornbury Mill is worthy of consideration as a heritage asset and thus should be added to the schedule of assets to be evaluated as potentially impacted by the proposed development.



Map 2 – from Ordnance Survey sheet 1889

Fig 1 (top right) – from auction particulars of 1831 showing Nash's Water Grist Mill (Wiltshire.opc.org.uk)

Fig 2 (bottom left) – post card of 1906 held at the Market Lavington Museum

Photograph 3 – Cornbury Mill as it is today glimpsed from the bridlepath

- 5.4 The Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record also refers to undated gullies found on the development site at Sandfield (MW175434). However, the whole field was evaluated in May 2017 and this revealed nothing of archaeological interest. Information provided by Wiltshire Council in January 2018 in respect of the Neighbourhood Plan concluded that the site is now regarded as having low

archaeological potential and if it came forward as a planning application there would not be a need for any further archaeological investigation or mitigation.

- 5.5 A linear Conservation Area covering West Lavington and Littleton Panell was designated by the Local Planning Authority in 1975 and part of the Conservation Area also lies within the area of search.
- 5.6 A complete list of heritage assets identified for evaluation is given in Table 1.

<b>Table 1. Identified Heritage Assets within 500 m of the site</b>	
<b>Item (National Heritage list addresses)</b>	<b>Type of designation</b>
Dauntsey's School, West Lavington	National Listing Grade II
7-9 Cheverell Road, West Lavington	National Listing Grade II
Surgery High Street Littleton Panell	National Listing Grade II
Russell Mill House, Littleton Panell	National Listing Grade II
Manor House, Market Lavington	National Listing Grade II
Doorway and Section of Garden Wall to Market Lavington Manor	National Listing Grade II
Clyffe Hall, Market Lavington	National Listing Grade II
Gate Piers and West Wall to Kitchen Garden of Clyffe Hall, Market Lavington	National Listing Grade II
Stable and Carriagehouse to Clyffe Hall, Market Lavington	National Listing Grade II
Mill Farmhouse, West Lavington	National Listing Grade II
Granary to North of Mill Farmhouse, West Lavington	National Listing Grade II
West Lavington and Littleton Panell Conservation Area	Local
Cornbury Mill, West Lavington	Not designated

- 5.7 The remainder of this assessment considers the impact of the proposed development on the setting of these items. The Glossary within the NPPF defines setting as : *The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.*

- 5.8 Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation. Its importance lies in what it may contribute to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance. It should also be noted that an analysis of setting is different from landscape assessment. A Visual Impact Assessment of the proposed development will be covered by others.
- 5.9 The most appropriate evaluation method is to follow the staged process set out in Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 “The Setting of Heritage Assets” published by Historic England.

## **6 Significance of the Heritage Assets**

- 6.1 Having identified the assets to be considered, the next step in the process is to assess the degree to which their settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage assets or allow significance to be appreciated. The contribution made by setting to an asset’s significance will vary from case to case. The significance of a heritage asset is the sum of its archaeological, architectural, historic, and artistic interest. This is simply a way of analysing its importance. Understanding the extent of that significance is essential because this can, among other things, lead to a better understanding of how adaptable an asset may be to change. The GPA3 includes a useful checklist of items that may contribute to an asset’s physical surroundings, and our experience of it.

### **Dauntsey School**

- 6.2 The main block of the School is the defined heritage asset. Modern school buildings engulf the block on its south and west sides. Its imposing symmetrical front elevation however faces east towards West Lavington High Street. An avenue of trees leads up to the main entrance door from the High Street. The block was intended to face the intervening open school grounds which play a medium role in helping to define the significance of the asset. However, the setting does not extend eastwards beyond the High Street.

### **7 & 9 Cheverell Road**

- 6.4 This pair of Victorian cottages face directly on to the B3098. However views of the property are very localised. They have no more than an immediate setting which plays only a minor or neutral role in defining their significance.



### **Surgery, High Street**

- 6.5 This thatched property is now occupied as a single dwelling (No. 78 High Street). It faces directly onto the A360 and views of the property are again localised, and its setting plays only a small role in defining its significance.

### **Russell Mill House, Russell Mill Lane**

- 6.6 This is a former water mill adjacent to the Bulkington Brook. It is located at the bottom of a steep sided valley. Views of the property from the lane are very restricted but the property would appear to occupy a picturesque location when observed from private land up stream. Most of the interest of the property seems to relate to its physical fabric but its setting might be said to play a medium role in contributing to its significance.

### **Manor House, Market Lavington**

- 6.7 This is a large, rambling Victorian country mansion now used as a boarding house. Its setting is not referred to in the list description but it is set within its own extensive grounds. The site is remote and not publicly accessible. The Museum website states “Many people do not realise that Market Lavington has a Manor House.....” Much of the estate is heavily wooded and it is likely that its extended setting plays no more than a medium role in contributing to the manor house’s heritage significance.

### **Doorway and Section of Garden Wall to Market Lavington Manor**

- 6.8 Parts of the doorway are thought to have been brought to the site from an ancient demolished property. The current structure once formed part of a kitchen garden which is in a concealed location remote from the principal building. It was not intended to form part of the landscaped grounds and its setting plays only a small role in defining its significance.

### **Clyffe Hall, Market Lavington**

- 6.9 This is a mid 18<sup>th</sup> century house that until recently has been in use as a hotel. The list description does not refer to its gardens but, from mapping, the landscaped grounds appear to make a medium contribution to its immediate setting. However, the gardens are not readily visible from beyond the boundaries of the property. The map of 1773 (see frontpiece) hints at a tree avenue, on the west side of the Brook,

possibly connected to Clyffe Hall (then Cleeve Hall). However, I have found no other documentary references for this, and there are no above-ground traces left of its alignment, which may have been finally obliterated by the construction of the primary school to the south of the development site.

### **Gate Piers and West Wall to Kitchen Garden of Clyffe Hall, Market Lavington**

### **Stable and Carriagehouse to Clyffe Hall, Market Lavington**

- 6.10 Both these items are situated to the east of the main house and away from the proposed housing allocation. Although they play only a supporting role to the principal building, both were constructed to avoid a utilitarian appearance. In a small way they contribute to the character of Clyffe Hall but their individual settings do not contribute strongly to the overall significance of the individual assets.

### **Mill Farmhouse, West Lavington**

- 6.11 This 18<sup>th</sup> century house sits on the east facing slope of the Bulkington Brook valley. It would have been built as accommodation for the small farmstead and corn mill operating at this point. It does not have a planned or intentional landscaped setting but the front elevation is aesthetically attractive when viewed from fields on the opposite side of the valley. Other elevations are blank or obscured. The views from the east could be said to play a medium role in adding to the significance of this heritage asset.

### **Granary to North of Mill Farmhouse, West Lavington**

- 6.12 This is a small brick granary raised off the ground on staddle stones. It does not have an extensive or intended setting. Its main significance rests with its rarity as a surviving specialist agricultural building.

### **West Lavington and Littleton Panell Conservation Area**

- 6.13 Unlike the case of listed buildings, consideration of the setting of a Conservation Area is not a statutory requirement. However, general Policy 58 of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy indicates designated heritage assets (including Conservation Areas) and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance. The core of West Lavington lies approximately one mile to the south of the development site. The streetscape is of outstanding quality

and the visual relationship to the north facing escarpment of Salisbury Plain is apparent. Its spring-line setting plays an important role in contributing to its character. The character of Littleton Panell is of lower importance. A number of vernacular cottages are found along the main street which is excavated out of the slope close to the top of an east facing valley, and intervening Victorian and Edwardian properties have consolidated a ribbon of development on either side of the High Street. Many of the later properties have been constructed in the style of the Arts and Crafts movement which gives the High Street a reasonably pleasant appearance. Road widening schemes have however detracted from historic character and there are only limited views in or out to the countryside. Setting only plays a minor role in defining the significance of Littleton Panell.

- 6.14 The character of the short section of the Conservation Area that joins the contiguous High Streets around the A360/B3098 crossroads is not well defined. A coaching inn that once stood at the cross roads was demolished about 30 years ago and there is little of architectural or historic interest. New development has taken place at the road junction, and post war housing estates have been built on the east side of the High Street at Sandfield, The Spinney, Eastfield, Newby Close and Holmfield lie just outside the designated area. A Conservation Area Statement of 2003 does not identify any important views away from, or into, this part of the designated Area. The architectural and historic interest of the section of the Conservation Area closest to the proposed development site is thus of low importance and setting makes only a minor contribution to any significance.



Photograph 4 – The junction of the A360 and B3098 looking south, with the grounds to Dauntsey's School on the west side beyond the tree line.

6.15 As noted above, demolitions and alterations have taken place at this former water mill and it is not listed as having special architectural or historic interest. Sufficient remains of its physical fabric, however, for it to be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset. It occupies a location where the brook passes between two steep wooded valley sides. The property is not readily visible from distance due to the trees and slopes in the topography. It has a very discrete location and when viewed from the lower section of the development site the top of the brick chimneystack is the only clue that a property may be present at this point. The front elevation can also be glimpsed from the bridlepath that passes along the valley bottom. The position of the property adjacent to the brook is an important reminder of the role the building once played, but setting plays only a small part in defining its overall significance.

## **7 Impact on Significance**

7.1 The next step is to assess the effects of the proposed development on any significant settings that have been identified. This stage has been assisted by cross-reference to a check-list of the potential attributes of a development contained within GPA3.

7.2 The relevant settings of 7 & 9 Cheverell Road, The Surgery, the Doorway and Section of Garden Wall to Market Lavington Manor, the Gate Piers and West Wall to Kitchen Garden of Clyffe Hall, the Stable and Carriagehouse to Clyffe Hall, the Granary to North of Mill Farmhouse, the West Lavington and Littleton Panell Conservation Area Lavington, and Corbury Mill only play a minor role in defining their significance.

7.3 Nos. 7 & 9 Cheverell Road, the Surgery, the doorway and section of garden wall to Market Lavington Manor, the gate piers and west wall to the kitchen garden and the stable and carriagehouse to Clyffe Hall, and granary to north of Mill Farmhouse are also physically and aesthetically remote from the proposed development site. There is no inter-visibility and there are no known functional links with the development site. Intervening distances, changes in levels, and existing built-up areas ensure that development of the site with two-storey development would have no impact on any significance the setting of these heritage assets may have. Although they were identified within the 500m sweep the settings to these properties have been found to lack relevance to the development proposal and do not need to be considered further.

- 7.4 Cornbury Mill is closer to the eastern boundary of the site but does not enjoy views across the development site due to its position in the valley bottom, its orientation, the existence of hedgerow trees, and the presence of a modern domestic garage block. Provided the new buildings were kept away from the eastern boundary of the development site there would be no conspicuous change to the setting of this non-designated heritage asset.



Photograph 5 – the garage at Cornbury Mill and the bridlepath to the right

- 7.5 The closest part of the Conservation Area is separated from the site by intervening post-war housing developments and there is no direct inter-visibility with the development site. Lavington Lane provides an interconnecting route between the crossroads and the northern edge of the site but again distance, changes in level and tree cover dictate there is no inter-visibility. It is understood that local stakeholders have expressed a preference for vehicular access to be obtained from Lavington Lane, rather than the existing splayed entrance onto West Lavington High Street. A point towards the lower end of the Lavington Lane frontage would play down visual impact beyond the immediate vicinity, and would not impinge upon the setting of any



heritage assets. The quality of the Conservation Area nearest to the site has been found to be low, and the proposed development of the site could take place without altering or changing its status.

Photograph 6 – Lavington Lane looking westwards from outside the north west corner of the site



- 7.6 Dauntsey's School, Russell Mill House, Market Lavington Manor House, Clyffe Hall, and Mill Farmhouse have settings that play a more important role in defining their significance and these are considered in more detail following.
- 7.7 The principal listed building at Dauntsey's School is located near the edge of the 500m sweep. The important part of its setting is contained firmly west of the A360 West Lavington High Street. The zone between the High Street and the development site is densely built-up and has a completely different character. Any further development taking place on the Lavington Lane site will thus cause no harm to the setting of the school.
- 7.8 Russell Mill House is also near the edge of the area of enquiry and intervening landforms and mature trees ensure there is no inter-visibility with the site at Lavington Lane. There are no connecting footpaths following the brook and development of the site would have no affect on the setting of the Russell Mill House. It is simply too far away to be impacted.
- 7.9 The grounds of the Manor House spread as far south as Lavington Lane but here the land is heavily wooded. Even during winter time a major block of woodland known as Manor House Woods prevents inter-visibility between the House and its immediate setting with the development site. The proposed housing development would have no impact on the setting of the Manor House at Market Lavington.
- 7.10 Clyffe Hall is located on the east – opposite - side of the valley to the proposed development. Its wooded gardens stretch down to the brook. However, Cornbury Mill adjacent to the brook is well screened, and the proposed development on the Lavington Lane site is further away again. Views towards the site were not a functional or designed aspect of the house. Although it would be constructed at a higher level than the mill house, the proposed development would have no clear impact on the setting of the listed building, and the outcome would be broadly neutral.
- 7.11 A rise in the land, and the new primary school separates Mill Farmhouse from the development site. Thus again there is no inter-visibility or known historic links between the two. As noted above the important views of the Farmhouse are from the east, whereas the building turns its back on West Lavington, and land to the west. Thus development on the Lavington Lane site would have no impact on the setting of the listed building.

## **8 Maximising Enhancement and Minimising Harm**

- 8.1 The next stage in the evaluation process is to explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm. In cases where less than substantial harm has been identified, for example, the advice in the NPPF is that the harm needs to be weighed against public benefits resulting from the development. At Lavington Lane this might include contributions towards meeting housing targets, helping satisfy local need for affordable housing, the provision of car parking for visitors to the primary school and public open space for the village. However, as no harm to heritage assets has been identified, it follows that the protection of the historic environment does not necessitate any measures to offset any negative impact of the new development. The NPPF nevertheless encourages all development to have regard to the general character and distinctiveness of the locality in its widest sense. The design of local buildings, plot size and density, and landscaping are relevant matters to consider in the preparation of a Design and Access Statement.
- 8.2 In order to ensure a successful implementation of a scheme, it would assist if building development is kept away from the eastern and northern boundaries of the site and that remaining land is planted up as dense woodland. This would curtail the risk of noise or lightspill harming the settings of Cornbury Mill, Clyffe Hall and the semi-rural character of Lavington Lane. An access point towards to lower end of the frontage with the Lane would optimise existing visibility for vehicles leaving the site, and ensure it will be away from the setting of the heritage assets. Ideally abutments would be carefully landscaped, and tall retaining walls of the type found within Lavington Lane nearer to the crossroads should be avoided. Additionally, in the event that any iconic, or tall, building was proposed within the development this should be located towards the south western section of the site in order to diminish any visual impact at the edge of the built-up area.
- 8.3 The advice from Historic England ends with a fifth step, which is to make and document the decision and monitor outcomes, but this is essentially for action by the Local planning Authority.

## **9 Conclusion**

- 9.1 A parcel of land at Lavington Lane has been earmarked for new housing in a Neighbourhood Plan, which is currently at an advanced stage of preparation. For the

housing to be considered sustainable development in the meaning of the NPPF it needs to protect the historic environment. The assessment I have undertaken incorporated a wide-ranging evaluation of heritage assets whose settings were potentially impacted by the development. In the final analysis the settings of only five make a meaningful contribution to the significance of the assets, and all were found to be geographically and/or visually separated.

- 9.2 The settings of Clyffe Hall, and the West Lavington & Littleton Panell Conservation Area, and the hitherto unrecognised Cornbury Mill seemed the most likely to be impacted. It became clear however the development site does not contribute meaningfully to setting of these items. The appraisal found, in fact, that two-storey development at Lavington Lane would not be injurious to the survival, or the settings, of any of the relevant heritage assets. In these circumstances the historic environment would not be harmed and a positive view can be taken of the housing proposals contained in the Neighbourhood Plan.