CHURCH GARDENS

HAREFIELD

HISTORIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Visualisation of the proposals.

Commissioned by

MR & MRS P MCHUGH

From

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SR Historic Environment Ltd

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CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

This assessment addresses the effect on the historic environment and acceptability of two proposals for the C17 walled garden at Harefield Gardens, formerly part of Harefield Place, Harefield:

a) the construction of a modest visitor facility building on the site of a previous building in the north-west corner, and removal of unsightly buildings to allow reinstatement of land
b) the creation (or possible reinstatement) of a small pond near the centre of the west boundary as part of the existing water course.

This Historic Environment Impact Assessment is prepared by Dr Sarah Rutherford on behalf of the owners Mr & Mrs P McHugh. Mr & Mrs McHugh have owned the property for 24 years. They have consistently and demonstrably applied a policy of model stewardship as far as their resources have allowed, notwithstanding the very poor condition of some of the non-beneficial historic assets, i.e. those which have an inherent absence of financial viability, but which are the defining structures of the garden.

1.2 SUMMARY SIGNIFICANCES

Significances are set out in detail in the Conservation Plan (Rutherford, 2004).

The Grade II Listed early C17 brick arcade along the north boundary is of the greatest importance to the Grade II Registered C17 garden. It is the outstanding surviving ornamental structure, of high quality and rarity. The elevated position not only made it prominent in the garden but facilitated

long views over the garden and to the former parkland beyond which survives as the wider setting. The earthen terrace on which it stands is of high significance as the immediate setting for the structure. The boundary walls are of high significance as the enclosure for the garden and are also listed Grade II. The watercourse bisecting the garden is a relict feature which in its original form (the detail of which is unclear) apparently made a significant contribution to the ornamental design.

The detailed ornamental C17 layout of the whole walled garden is unclear as in the C19 the ornamental use was changed to a productive garden and the layout much simplified. This planted character, with a number of later structures in the north-west corner, has since persisted.

1.3 THE AUTHOR'S PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Sarah Rutherford, Dip. Hort. Kew, M.A., Ph.D., is a professional historic environment consultant specializing in designed landscapes. She worked for English Heritage 1996-2003, initially as Historic Parks and Gardens Inspector and then for 2.5 years as Head of the *Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England*. During that time she visited, researched and appraised nearly 300 nationally significant designed landscapes. Her MA in landscape conservation from York University is supplemented by a Ph.D. based on pioneering research into the landscapes of Victorian and Edwardian lunatic asylums. Since establishing a conservation consultancy in 2003 Sarah has advised on projects for a wide range of historic designed landscapes in England, Ireland, Wales, Jersey, many for the National Trust and Historic England and contributed to various policy documents. She has prepared over 100 historic surveys and conservation plans for a range of landscapes and buildings, including the conservation plan for Church Gardens and has since advised the owners on various aspects of the historic environment. She has prepared rigorous Historic Impact Assessments for the owners of various sites based on the following methodology. She is the author of authoritative books on historic designed landscapes including the work of Humphry Repton and Capability Brown.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 APPROACH

This Historic Impact Assessment follows National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guidance in establishing whether the proposal results in less than 'substantial harm'.

Paragraph 132 in the NPPF states:
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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss

of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

Paragraph 134 states:
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 securing its optimum viable use.

In addition Paragraph 137 in the NPPF states:
Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

2.2 LEVELS OF POTENTIAL CHANGE RESULTING FROM THE PROPOSALS

Significant improvement: major repairs and enhancement to the appearance setting and perception of the most significant elements of fabric, and overall character, including major improvement to management and maintenance and to interpretation, resulting in a fundamental improvement in our ability to understand and appreciate the resource and its historical context and setting;

Perceptible improvement: repairs and enhancement to condition, appearance and perception of significant elements of fabric and improved management and interpretation, resulting in an appreciable change in our ability to understand and appreciate the resource and its historical context and setting;

No perceptible change: continuation of current conditions; changes which do not impact on condition, appearance and perception of significant features, resulting in a negligible change in our ability to understand and appreciate the resource and its historical context and setting;

Minor change: Impacts which create dis-benefits and benefits; repairs and enhancement to the appearance setting and perception of some significant elements but also some damage to fabric and landscape character resulting in a small change in our ability to understand and appreciate the resource;

Moderate change: Impacts which result in the destruction of some significant landscape features including structures, landform and structural planting, resulting in an appreciable change in our ability to understand and appreciate the resource; and

Major change: Impacts which result in the permanent loss of the most significant landscape features including structures, landform, structural planting and loss of landscape character, resulting in a fundamental change in our ability to understand and appreciate the resource and its historical context and setting.

2.3 TYPE OF IMPACT

This assesses the positive and harmful impacts taking into account the extent and type of impact and the significance of the elements affected, as follows:

Substantial Positive: Significant improvement in the condition of a Grade I or II* registered park, conservation area or in the condition and setting of I/II* listed structures; improved management to secure the long term future of an important registered park.

Moderate Positive: Perceptible improvement in the condition of a Grade I or II* registered park, Conservation Area or in the condition and setting of I/II* listed structures; improved management to secure the long term future of a nationally important registered park. Significant improvement to Grade II sites and features.

Minor Positive: Perceptible improvement in the condition of a Grade II registered park, Conservation Area or in the condition and setting of grade II or locally listed structures; improved management to secure the long term future of a locally/regionally important site.

Neutral: No perceptible change in condition or setting of designated landscapes and setting of designated structures.

Minor Harm: Minor change which creates dis-benefits to the historic fabric of a Grade II registered park, Conservation Area or in the condition and setting of Grade II or locally listed structures; but also provide benefits.

Moderate (Less than Substantial) Harm: Moderate change which result in the loss of elements of a Grade I or II* registered park, Conservation Area or in the condition and setting of I/II* listed structures.

Substantial Harm: Major change which result in the loss of the most significant fabric of a Grade I or II* registered park, Conservation Area or in the condition and setting of I/II* listed structures.

3 PROPOSAL 1: VISITOR FACILITY BUILDING IN THE NORTH-WEST CORNER

3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORIC ASPECTS OF THE SITE AND PROPOSAL

1. The exact C17 design and visual significance of the area to be occupied by the proposed building in the north-west corner of the walled garden is unclear.
2. The ornamental character has been visually degraded in the C20 by the insertion of a cluster of unsightly temporary structures which originated as service structures before the owners bought the site. The buildings and associated rubble have gradually been removed and replaced with more sensitive structures and open garden ground, but some elements survive (Figure 1).
3. This proposal continues the welcome removal of damaging elements of this cluster and reinstatement as open lawn with the additional benefit of revealing an obscured long view of the arcade which will also be repaired (Figure 2). However, the removal of these building elements is conditional on the incorporation of a basement level within the proposed building to provide essential replacement storage area.
4. The replacement building will replace the remains of an existing structure and be similar in

scale (Figure 1 & 2). It will stand in the north-west corner of the garden below the west end of the main terrace which has been truncated by a recent building at its west end. This end of the terrace is detached from the arcade structure which does not stretch the whole length of the terrace.

5. The materials are sensitive to the existing rural environs and to the historic character. The building will be recessive in appearance, using traditional materials and forms.
6. The proposed site is likely to have been considerably disturbed, given the insertion of the existing structure and results of previous watching briefs in the vicinity. On the evidence of previous watching briefs in this area it seems that there is little potential.
7. The group of structures in which the new building stands is confined to this north-west corner of the walled garden and can absorb a replacement structure of similar scale as it is sensitively designed to respond to the present setting (Figure 2).

3.2 LEVELS OF CHANGE

See Section 2. 2 for definition of the levels used below.

	Change and Mitigation	**Level of Change**
1.	The new building will enhance this part of the garden, replacing the remains of an unsightly building, and resulting in enhancement to the condition, appearance and perception of significant elements of the fabric and improved management and interpretation, resulting in an appreciable change in our ability to understand and appreciate the resource and its historical context and setting;	Perceptible Improvement
2.	The site is in an area already surrounded by various ad hoc structures that damage the setting of the arcade and terrace. An adjacent line of modern buildings which damage the historic fabric and character will be removed east of the new building. The ground will be reinstated to grass and the previous landform, with benefit to the historic character and fabric.	Perceptible Improvement
3.	Damage to the historic fabric and land form will occur as a result of the excavations necessary for the new building, however, the scale and design using traditional materials and forms will improve the appearance of the area of the currently ramshackle group, and ensure it fits well with existing structures including the historic buildings.	Minor Change
4.	More widely the proposal will alter the character of the garden and setting of the arcade by inserting a new building in a localised area	Perceptible Improvement

	already altered. It will be enclosed and screened in part from the arcade and wider walled garden by existing structures.	
5.	The north elevation will be visible from the west end of the arcade terrace but visually will form part of the cluster of buildings, standing at their heart.	Perceptible Improvement

3.3 TYPE OF IMPACT

See Section 2. 3 for definition of the types used below.

	Change	**Type of Impact**
1.	Physical damage of the new building to the historic fabric will be minimised and is acceptable. It is unlikely any historic evidence remains below ground.	Minor Harm
2.	It will enable the removal of a line of former service structures and reinstatement of their area to the former landform and open character.	Minor Positive
3.	The new building will alter to a limited extent the C17 character of the wider garden and the setting of the listed arcade and garden walls. The design and materials will complement existing modern and historic buildings and fit harmoniously into the group, enhancing the present situation.	Minor Positive
4.	The visual and other effects on the historic environment setting of the rest of the walled garden, and particularly the arcade and terrace on which it stands, is acceptable as the exterior of the building is designed to fit with the functional character of the cluster of existing service structures in this area which has since the C19 been degraded with various ad hoc working structures.	Minor Positive

3.4 CONCLUSIONS

1. On balance, the alteration to the character and setting of the rest of the garden causes acceptable change to the historic environment given its position with other similar structures in the area, and recessive design features.
2. The level of physical change to the fabric of the historic environment caused by the building ranges from MINOR CHANGE to PERCEPTIBLE IMPROVEMENT. The type of impact on the fabric overall is MINOR POSITIVE. It is acceptable because the conservation benefits outweigh the level of change.
3. The level of effect on the setting of the surrounding historic environment is MODERATE

CHANGE. The type of impact on the setting overall is MINOR POSITIVE.

4. It is acceptable because the conservation benefits outweigh the level of change.

4 PROPOSAL 2: RESTORING THE STREAM AND FORMING A POND

4.1 OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORIC ASPECTS OF THE WATER COURSE

1. The garden walls and arcade are structures Listed Grade II. The Garden is part of a Grade II Registered Garden, denoting national significance.
2. The C17 garden layout in this area is unclear and the ground has apparently been considerably disturbed by later operations including the planting of the nut stools.
3. The stream/culvert was apparently a key feature in the early C17 walled garden design. It is rare as a formal feature bisecting a walled garden, but the detail of its original form and ornamental contribution is unclear.
4. The type and form of materials which contained the water in the culvert are unclear as they appear to have been removed since, but archaeological evidence may remain. The material was probably masonry, likely brick, perhaps stone, with timber. The culvert could have been open, if it was a prestigious ornamental feature, or covered.
5. The flanking man-made 'valley' ground modelling frames the route of the watercourse (Figures 3, 7, 8). It is integral to aligning the position of the stream along the central west-east axis of the garden.
6. A substantial culvert brings the stream centrally into the garden below the east wall and through the east arm of the terrace (Figures 7 & 8). Its form requires more investigation.
7. An outflow sinks the water a few metres before it reaches the west wall below which it leaves the garden. When this outflow blocks an irregular oval pond forms, leading to uncontrolled ponding against the west wall (Figures 5 & 6). The wall is therefore vulnerable to catastrophic damage from continued episodes of ponding adjacent.
8. The ground form, especially evident during flooding (Figures 4 & 5), suggests there may have been a pond at the west end of the stream but there is no other evidence to support this.
9. The frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall events is increasing with climate change. It has been damaging in the past, including a very serious flood in the orchard and kitchen garden and resultant destruction of a greenhouse. The effect of climate change will lead to increased periods of ponding which will soon damage the west wall if mitigation does not occur (Figures 5 & 6).
10. A managed method of regulating the water control is essential to secure the sustainable future of the wall. The creation of the pond and repair of the sluice are the key elements of this management.

11. The original control method of the water levels is unclear. The present sluice near the west wall does not function properly, leading to uncontrolled ponding against the west wall.
12. The form of the culvert below the west wall is unclear but it continues beyond the walled garden below the kitchen garden.
13. The former course of the stream was slightly different, i.e. straighter (as shown on the 1860s OS), but it seems to have become rather irregular, probably since the materials culverting it and keeping it within a particular line have gone.
14. The west garden wall is now complete and in good condition, having been recently repaired by the owners. This wall had previously been damaged by a combination of uncontrolled vegetation and continued flooding within the Orchard and its sustainability is vulnerable to damage by continued inundation events.

4.2 LEVELS OF CHANGE

See Section 2. 2 for definition of the levels used below.

	Change	**Level of Change**
1.	A pond will alter the character of the garden in this area, and the setting of the arcade by inserting a water body and associated marginal planting. The area of the pond will be minimised, but the extent is affected by the valley land form and gentle fall of the stream from the east terrace. The associated alterations will be largely reversible.	Minor Change
2.	Invasive ground works will change the historic fabric e.g. works for banks and sluice. The design will minimise damage to the historic land form by minimizing the extent and depth of digging.	Minor Change
3.	Alleviation of flooding of the west (downstream) end of the stream which floods in times of high winter rainfall as far as the west garden wall, threatening the stability of the wall, which has not so far had to be rebuilt. The sluice is in poor condition. The west garden wall will be better protected from pressure from uncontrolled ponding in winter (see photos below). A pond with a working sluice will help to control water in high rainfall, holding it back from the wall and regulating outflow.	Significant Improvement
4.	The form of the current sluice is not clearly understood and it requires repair and a reliable control mechanism. The outflow should be regulated by a reliable sluice even if a pond is not constructed.	Significant Improvement
5.	Evidence found from ground works along the water course may inform	Potential

	repairs to the water course upstream. E.g. a trial trench upstream may reveal evidence of the original culvert structure and inform the approach to future management and repair.	Significant Improvement

4.3 TYPE OF IMPACT

See Section 2. 3 for definition of the types used below.

	Change	**Type of Impact**
1.	The physical change to the land form of the Grade II Registered garden caused by the pond is acceptable as the benefit to the Listed wall which survives in good condition outweighs changes to the land form and character of the immediate fabric.	Minor Harm
2.	The new pond and repaired sluice will considerably benefit the Listed west wall which is vulnerable to damage from unregulated ponding in wet weather.	Moderate positive
3.	The pond will alter the present character of the Grade II Registered garden, which has been degraded and its original layout is unclear, and the setting of the listed arcade and garden walls. It is arguable that the new pond is reinstatement as the land form suggests that a pond may have been present originally. The effect on the setting of the historic assets is acceptable.	Minor Positive

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

1. The level of physical change to the fabric of the historic environment caused by the pond is MINOR CHANGE. The type of impact overall is MINOR HARM. It is acceptable because the conservation benefits outweigh the level of change.
2. The level of effect on the setting of the surrounding historic environment is MINOR CHANGE. The type of impact overall ranges from MINOR HARM to MODERATE POSITIVE.
3. It is acceptable because the conservation benefits outweigh the level of change.

5 IMAGES OF THE SITE OF THE PROPOSED BUILDING AND ENVIRONS

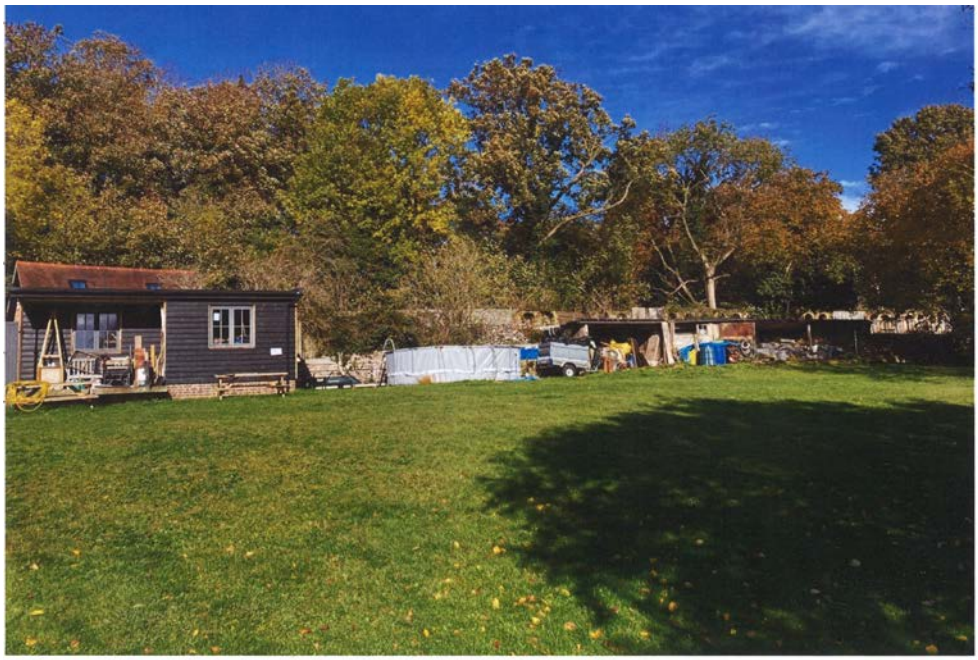


Figure 1 Existing view from the stream where the pond is proposed, north-east across the Orchard to the present buildings, with the arcade and terrace beyond.

Figure 2 Visualisation of the existing view from the stream where the pond is proposed, north-east, past the proposed new building (left) and over the reinstated site of the present buildings once cleared, to the arcade and terrace.

6 IMAGES OF THE STREAM AREA IN WINTER AFTER HIGH RAINFALL

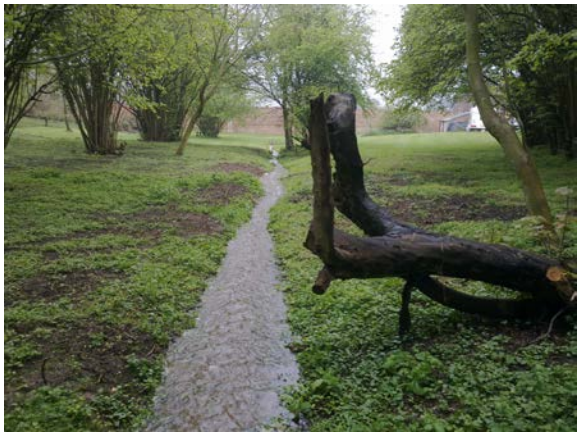
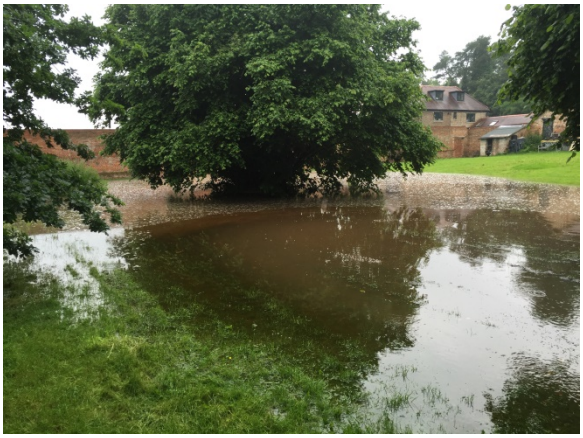
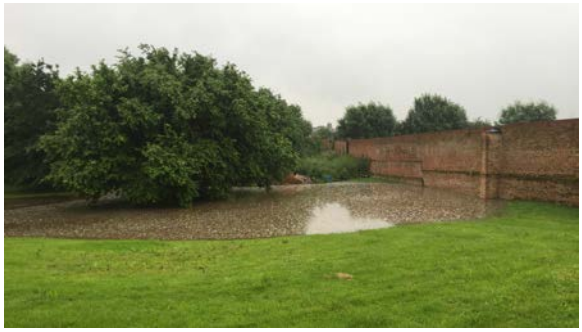
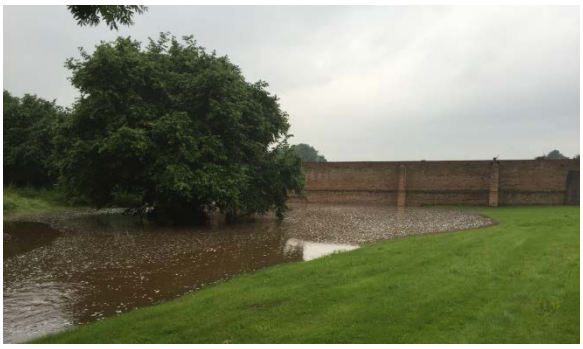
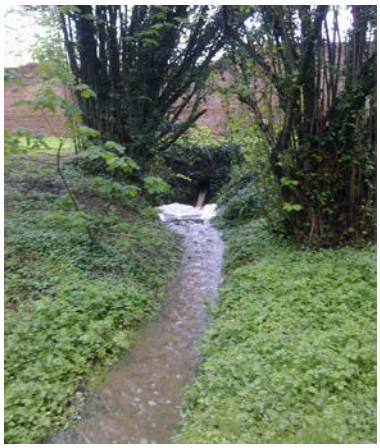
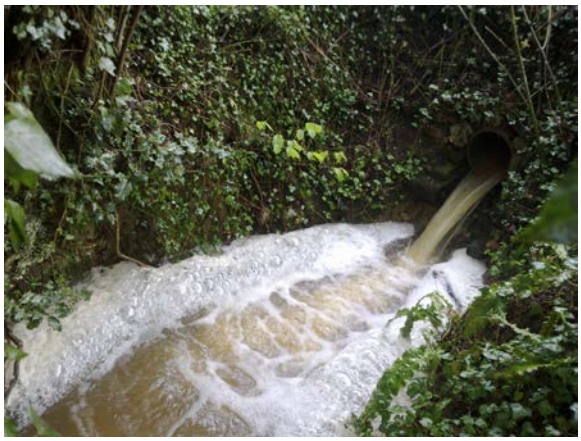



Figure 3 The west and central sections of the stream (left), view west.
Figure 4 The west section of the stream where drainage is poor, forming an uncontrolled pond (right).

Figures 5 & 6 The west section of the stream where drainage is poor, forms an uncontrolled pond contained by the west garden wall, recently repaired.

Figures 7 & 8 The east section of the stream where it is culverted below the east garden wall, through the east terrace and opens into the main garden.