Grover Lewis Associates
Town Planning & Built Heritage

Heritage Impact Assessment: Proposed development at

Holland House, 17 High Street, Spalding



for

D&R Property Services Limited

GLA-118
December 2013

Contents

		Page
1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Site and proposals	3
3.0	Heritage assets and their significance	6
4.0	Heritage policies, duties, and guidance	17
5.0	Heritage impact	26
6.0	Conclusions	33
Sources		34

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This document constitutes a Heritage Impact Assessment of proposed development at Holland House, 17 High Street, Spalding, PE11 1TW. It has been researched and prepared on behalf of D&R Property Services Limited by Roy M Lewis BA (Hons), MA (Arch Cons), MRTPI, IHBC and reviewed by Philip Grover BA (Hons), BTP, Dip Arch. Cons., MRTPI, IHBC, of Grover Lewis Associates Limited.

1.2 The Heritage Impact Assessment relates to the proposed conversion of Holland House to five apartments, together with the demolition of the adjacent Government Offices building and the construction of a new residential development on land to the south-east of Holland House that originally formed part of its grounds. The proposed development has been designed by Cooper Architectural Design of Spalding, on behalf of D&R Property Services Limited.

1.3 This Heritage Impact Assessment should be read in conjunction with the Historic Building Assessment of Holland House prepared by Grover Lewis Associates Ltd. (ref. GLA-118, April 2013), which establishes the heritage significance of Holland House as a heritage asset.

1.4 The Heritage Impact Assessment additionally describes and summarises the significance of the site of the proposed residential development and sets out the national and local heritage policies, statutory duties, and guidance material, against which the proposals should be judged. Against this background, the conclusions assess the impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage assets in question and the statutory duties relating to listed buildings and conservation areas, together with national and local planning policies relating to heritage considerations.

1.5 The assessment aims to satisfy the requirements of paragraphs 128 and 129 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which require that applicants for planning permission should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by development proposals, including any contribution made by their setting, and that local planning authorities should take account of available evidence and any necessary expertise when considering the impact of a proposal on heritage assets.

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2.0 Site and proposals

The site

2.1 The site is located on the south-east bank of the River Welland, approximately 200 metres to the north east of High Bridge, which is the principal river crossing in the centre of Spalding. The site fronts High Street, which runs alongside the river, and occupies the corner plot at its junction with Holland Road. The plot is a compact, approximately rectangular parcel of land with a frontage width of approximately 37 metres and a depth of around 78 metres. It narrows as it runs back from High Street.

2.2 The site contains two main structures: the two and a half storey red brick Holland House that occupies a little under half of the north-western frontage to High Street and a three-storey, former Government Offices building that is set back from High Street with its principal facade addressing Holland Road to the north-east.

2.3 Most of the residual part of the site is used for surface car-parking. The south-eastern end of the site was until recently lined by mature trees, all but two of which have been felled. The extent of the site, the disposition of standing structures, and the immediate surroundings, are indicated on Plate 1 below.

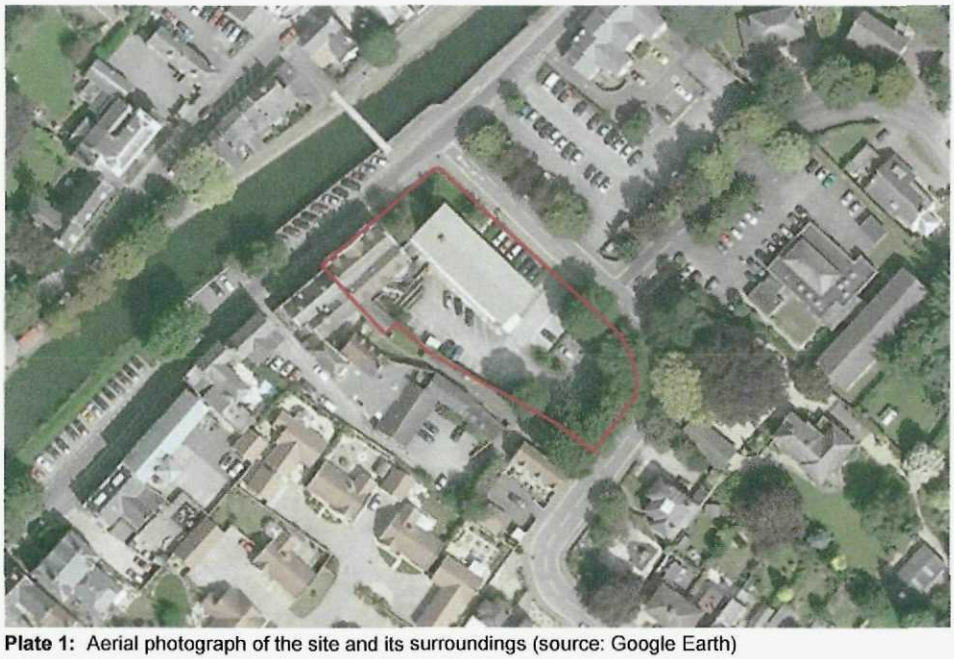


Plate 1: Aerial photograph of the site and its surroundings (source: Google Earth)

The proposals

2.4 The proposals involve the conversion of Holland House to form five apartments (units 1-5). The proposed scheme provides two single bedroom units on the ground floor, one single bedroom and one two-bedroom unit on the first floor, and a spacious two-bedroom apartment on the second floor. Access will be provided via the existing front and rear doors. The existing external door in the north-east facing end of the building will be blocked-up.

2.5 The conversion involves removal of modern partitions but retains the original room layout on each floor with only minor modifications. There will be some sub-division of rooms to integrate bathrooms and kitchenettes. A secondary staircase that was built as part of restoration works following a major fire in 1993 will be reconstructed in a different configuration.

2.6 The re-development of the former garden area to the east of Holland House, necessitates the demolition of the three-storey Government Offices building that stands alongside Holland Road.

2.7 A proposed three-storey Georgian style building to be sited alongside Holland House fronting High Street, will provide six two-bedroom apartments (units 6-11). An identical floor plan providing two apartments, is repeated on each of the three floors. Access to a central circulation area will be provided from both High Street and the rear. The design reflects research of Georgian houses in Spalding and is intended to fit into a riverside scene in which buildings of this sort are a primary characteristic. It is proposed to accurately replicate Georgian details such as skewback flat arches, windows, and an elegant doorcase, in a scholarly manner.

2.8 It is intended to re-develop the former garden area with a terrace of dwellings to replace the existing Government Offices building. The proposed terrace, which will be longer and thinner than the existing building, and will be positioned further away from Holland House and closer to Holland Road. The proposed terrace is three-storey for much of its length, dropping to two-storey as Holland Road turns sharply southwards. The three-storey element will provide six three-bedroom town houses (units 12-17). The two-storey element, which is canted around the corner where Holland Road turns sharply to the south-west, will provide three two-bedroom town houses (units 18-20).

2.9 Additionally, a free-standing pair of two-storey, semi-detached town houses is proposed to the south of the terrace, separated from it by a footpath which leads into a rear parking area (units 21 and 22). The space between the two

building blocks accommodates an existing tree within the site, within a wedge-shaped amenity area.

2.10 There is no appropriate precedent for building alongside Holland Road. The buildings further along Holland Road to the east area, beyond the conservation area, are mostly early twentieth-century Edwardian houses with some later detached and semi-detached infill. The proposed development alongside Holland Road, is inspired by nineteenth-century residential forms and aims to form a logical link between the predominantly Georgian character and three-storey scale of the riverside, and the lower rise more recent development to the east.

2.11 The final component of the proposed scheme is a hard-surfaced rear yard, which primarily accommodates parking provision. The yard will be completely enclosed by the proposed and existing buildings. Vehicular access will be provided via a footway crossing and private drive from Holland Road with a footway along the northern side, positioned alongside the northern end of the three-storey terrace. As already mentioned, a footpath access to the rear parking area will be provided at the southern end of the terrace, where Holland Road turns sharply.

2.12 The proposed buildings will be built in red/brown brickwork that is harmonious with the well-established brickwork that predominates in the conservation area, with natural blue/black slate roof coverings. Bricks will be laid in Flemish bond with snap-headers.

2.13 The street edge to Holland Road will be demarcated with low-level, hoop-topped, painted metal railings. The existing access ramp to the south of Holland House will be adapted and enhanced with the addition of metal railings with ball finials over a retaining wall built in English Garden Wall bond.

2.14 The private drive, footway and external common areas will be surfaced with concrete setts and kerbs with a traditional appearance. The rear yard will be surfaced with tarmac.

2.15 The proposals are indicated in full in the application plans prepared by Cooper Architectural Design.

3.0. Heritage assets and their significance

Holland House

3.1 Holland House is a grade II listed building, described as a house of circa 1768, probably by William Sands, Junior, that was altered circa 1845 (list entry number 1063982). Holland House has the current postal address of No.17 High Street. The attached wing to the south-west occupied by Brown and Co. (Estate Agents) constitutes part of the listed building but has the separate postal address of No.16 High Street.

3.2 A separate historic building assessment has been prepared for Holland House, which should be read in conjunction with this report. The historic building assessment sets out the known origins and evolution of the building, analyses the standing building in some detail, and sets out its significance as a heritage asset.

3.3 The historic building assessment concludes that Holland House is highly significant in architectural and artistic terms as a very high quality example of a Georgian townhouse. Pevsner, et al (1989) describe Holland House as *the best architecturally in the town*.

3.4 Internally, the building's Georgian plan form is relatively unaltered and a fine cantilevered staircase forms a principal feature. A number of original features survive, including fireplaces, doors, panelling and a small number of windows. There has been some unsympathetic subdivision of rooms, which has largely been carried out in a reversible manner. The building has been restored following a major fire and a modern replacement roof structure has been introduced. This has caused some reduction in the building's significance in architectural terms, as has the extensive amount of modern replica window joinery.

3.5 Holland House groups with a number of other historic buildings that line the River Welland. Consequently, the building is highly significant in townscape terms and makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Spalding Conservation Area. The list entry for Holland House notes that Nos. 12, 14, 15, the Warehouse occupied by GW Plowman & Son and Holland House form a group.

3.6 The once fine setting of Holland House provided by formal grounds that extended eastwards, has been severely degraded. The building now has an extremely poor setting on its eastern and north-eastern sides, due to the

presence of an inappropriate Government Offices building, a cumbersome disabled access ramp at the rear of the building, and hard-surfaced car-parking areas, which seriously detract from the architectural and artistic significance of the listed building.

3.7 Holland House is significant historically as a merchant's house, built in the period when use of the river as a port following drainage of the Fens, brought great prosperity to Spalding. The occupants of the house have included some of Spalding's most notable civic dignitaries and benefactors, including Thomas Pulvercroft, Theophilus Fairfax Johnson, Theophilus Maurice Stephen Johnson, Edward William Gooch, and Herbert George Frost.



Plate 2: Holland House, fronting the River Welland

Listed buildings in the vicinity

3.8 Further south along the High Street frontage is a group of listed buildings that include No.15 High Street (grade II), Selby House, No.14 High Street (grade II), the Warehouse occupied by GW Plowman & Son, High Street (grade II) and No.12 High Street (grade II).

3.9 On the opposite side of the River Welland stand The Limes, No.12 Double Street (grade II*), The Sycamores, No.13 Double Street (grade II*), No.13A Double Street (grade II), which is the former stable block to No.13 Double Street, Cromwell House, No.65 Double Street (grade II), No.63 Double Street (grade II), and No.59 Double Street (grade II).

3.10 There are additional listed buildings on the south-east bank of the river further along High Street, to the north west, including the Star Relay Warehouse (grade II), Yew Lodge, No.21 High Street (grade II*), the garden wall to No.21 High Street (grade II*), and Cley Hall, No.22 High Street (grade II*).



Plate 3: The grade II* listed The Limes and The Sycamores to the left fronting the river, and buildings to the right with their backs to the river, seen from the first floor of Holland House



Plate 4: The riverside to the north-east where most of the buildings turn their backs to the river, with the modern footbridge in the foreground

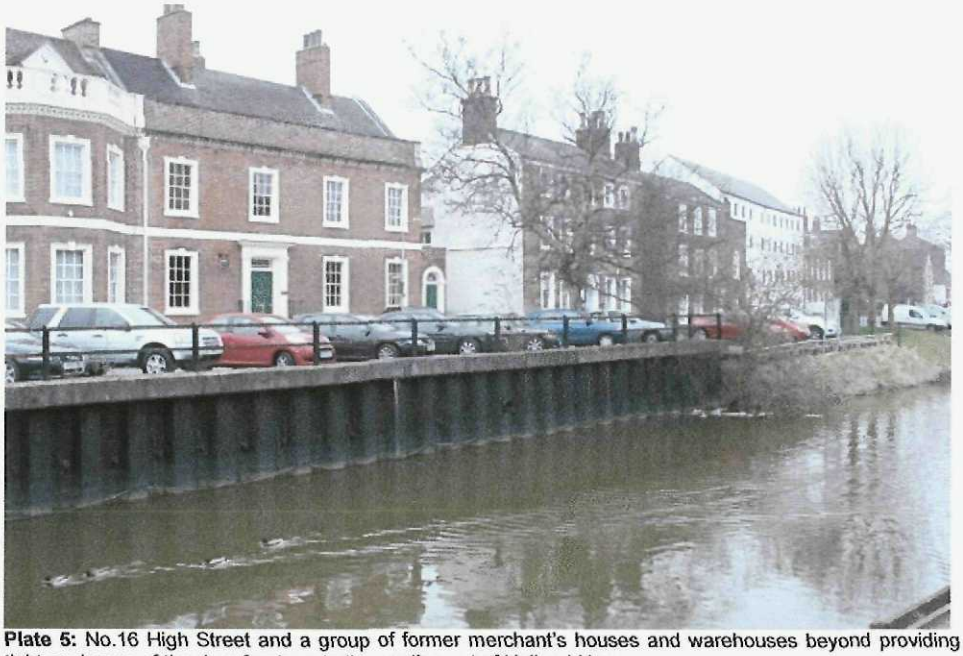


Plate 5: No.16 High Street and a group of former merchant's houses and warehouses beyond providing tight enclosure of the river frontage to the south-west of Holland House



Plate 6: The break in the enclosure of High Street to the north-east of Holland House and the group of riverside buildings beyond, including the grade II listed Star Relay Warehouse

Spalding Conservation Area

3.11 Spalding Conservation Area was designated in 1970. The boundary was extended in 1975. The conservation area has an extensive coverage that embraces the whole of the historic town centre and the riverside. The character and appearance of the conservation area is described and illustrated in some detail in the *Spalding Conservation Area Appraisal*, which was prepared by South Holland District Council in 2007.

3.12 Holland House, together with the associated site of the current development proposal, is located within the north-eastern part of the conservation area, within a narrow band that incorporates buildings that line the banks of the River Welland. The majority of the buildings on the south-eastern bank face High Street, which runs alongside the river. Therefore their principal facades address the river. On the north-western bank, The Limes and The Sycamores similarly address the river, as the southern part of Double Street similarly runs alongside the river. The historic urban form of this part of Spalding provides a relatively rare example of a town with many of its most important buildings addressing the river, a quality noted in the District Council's Spalding Conservation Area Appraisal. Holland House is one of the most significant of these buildings and therefore makes an extremely important contribution to the character and appearance of the Spalding Conservation Area.

from the character and appearance of this part of the Spalding Conservation Area.

3.18 The surface car-park on the north side of Holland Road and the Government Office building in combination, cause a cumulative degradation of the setting of Holland House and the townscape quality and character and appearance of this part of the Spalding Conservation Area. The surface car-park compounds the injury by facilitating open views of the intrusive Government Offices building.

3.19 A modern footbridge, of no particular architectural quality, crosses the river a short distance to the north of Holland House. The footbridge focuses views towards the gable end of the existing Government Offices building.

3.20 To the immediate south-west of the site, a modern vernacular-style residential development has been integrated into the streetscene in a traditional manner that responds to the conservation area status.



Plate 7: The Government Offices building seen in juxtaposition with Holland House across the river

3.13 Further north, the alignment of Double Street moves away from the river. Consequently, most of the buildings along this length of Double Street turn their back to the river. These include the grade II listed No 59, No. 63 and Cromwell House, No.65 Double Street.

3.14 Notwithstanding the overall very high townscape quality of the riverside in this part of the conservation area, the streetscene to the immediate north-east of Holland House has been seriously debased. Buildings to the north of Holland house, including the former Elmsford House, have been demolished to create a large surface car-park which causes an inappropriate gap in the enclosure of the street. The enclosed riverside scene resumes to the north of the car-park, where the Star Relay Warehouse, Yew Lodge and Cley Hall are located fronting High Street, but these are too far away from Holland House to form a coherent group or any feeling of enclosure.

3.15 The conservation area boundary embraces part of the original garden area to Holland House, as delineated by Holland Road which was constructed through the wider grounds around 1910. Much of the land to the south and east of Holland Road, which constituted the original wider grounds of Holland House, has been excluded from the conservation area as it has been redeveloped in the twentieth-century and, as a result, has been transformed into an area of markedly different character and appearance.

3.16 The former garden area of Holland House within the conservation area, which constitutes the proposed redevelopment site, is dominated by the presence of the over-large and inappropriate Government Offices building. Most of the residual part of the former garden area is used for associated surface car-parking. The large, free-standing Government Office building was built to the immediate east of Holland House in 1960, with a gable end set back about ten metres from High Street and a 30 metre long entrance front facing Holland Road. The two structures are physically linked by a small flat-roofed, single storey link-block. Pevsner *et al* (1989) record that the Government Offices building was designed by E. Farrow. The development, which had been facilitated by the acquisition of Holland House by Spalding Urban District Council in 1941, required the demolition of the carriage entrance to Holland House and the adjoining coach-house fronting High Street.

3.17 The Government Offices building is a three-storey structure, with an expressed concrete frame and a shallow pitched roof. The framework is infilled on its long northern and southern sides with glazing and spandrel panels, and with brickwork at the ends. The large and inelegant structure forms a highly inappropriate neighbour to Holland House that degrades its setting, and is a prominent and incongruous feature that seriously detracts



Plate 8: The Government Offices building seen from the footbridge over the River Welland



Plate 9: The Government Offices building, seen from the east



Plate 10: The Government Offices building seen from the sharp bend in Holland Road



Plate 11: The Government Offices building and Holland House seen from the former garden area



Plate 12: The Government Offices building and Holland House seen from the former garden area



Plate 13: The former garden area and the Government Offices building seen from Holland House



Plate 14: Edwardian and later twentieth-century buildings on Holland Road, to the south-east of the site



Plate 15: A modern vernacular-style residential development, to the immediate south-west of the site

4.0 Heritage policies, duties, and guidance

Overview

4.1 The proposed development must be considered in the light of both heritage planning policies and statutory duties. Statutory duties relating to proposals affecting listed buildings and conservation areas are contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The heritage policy context in which the proposals must be assessed includes both national and local policies.

4.2 National heritage policies are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF or Framework). The local heritage policy context is provided by the relevant policies of the South Holland Local Plan.

Statutory duties

4.3 Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 makes it a statutory duty for a local planning authority, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to *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.* Consequently, this duty must be taken into account when determining the proposed application for planning permission.

4.4 A High Court judgement (*East Northants DC, English Heritage and National Trust v. Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd* [2013] EWHC 473 (Admin)) has clarified that the section 66 duty and the National Planning Policy Framework tests (outlined below) are different and furthermore that the section 66 duty provides a more demanding test. The judge concluded that the word *desirability* in section 66(1) signals that *preservation* of setting is to be treated as a desired or sought-after objective, to which the decision-maker must accord *special regard*. This goes beyond mere assessment of harm.

4.5 Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that, in the exercise of planning functions, *with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area ... special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.*

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4.6 The House of Lords clarified, in the case of South Lakeland District Council v Secretary of State for the Environment and another [1992] 1 ALL ER 573, that the *statutorily desirable object of preserving the character or appearance of an area is achieved either by a positive contribution to preservation or by development which leaves character or appearance unharmed, that is to say, preserved.* In effect, this means that neutral development proposals satisfy the statutory duty.

National Planning Policy Framework and related guidance

4.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published on 27 March 2012, replaced all of the Government's previous Planning Policy Statements. Section 12 (paragraphs 126-141) of the Framework sets out policies relating to the conservation of the historic environment.

4.8 The policies in section 12 of the Framework refer to the concept of a *heritage asset*, which is defined 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)* (Annex 2: Glossary).

4.9 The policies in section 12 of the Framework place an emphasis on *significance,* which is defined as *the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting* (Annex 2: Glossary).

4.10 A number of the policies set out in the Framework are of direct relevance to the consideration of the current development at Holland House, Spalding. Paragraph 126 states that *local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:*

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*

- *the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- *opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.*

4.11 The Framework reinforces this approach in paragraph 131, which states that, *in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

4.12 NPPF Paragraph 132 states that in 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.* Paragraph 132 clarifies that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset *or development within its setting.* It goes on to state that *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, should be wholly exceptional.*

4.13 Paragraph 134 states that in cases where there is 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.*

4.14 Paragraph 137 is of particular relevance to the Spalding Conservation Area. It states that *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.*

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4.15 The publication of PPS5 in March 2010 was accompanied by the joint Government/English Heritage publication *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*. Notwithstanding the replacement of PPS5 by the policies in the NPPF, the companion guide to PPS5 remains extant. The Practice Guide provides guidance on the process of assessing the implications of change affecting setting, the starting point of which is understanding the significance of the heritage asset affected and the contribution made by its setting (paragraph 119).

4.16 Paragraph 34 of the Practice Guide states, *the Government's strategy for improving quality of place, World Class Places, CLG (2009), recognises the essential role of the historic environment in providing character and a sense of identity to an area. Heritage assets can inform and inspire place-making. Recognising how the design, materials and pattern of land use of the built environment provide character and definition to a locality can enable local planning authorities to better understand the appropriateness of proposed development.*

4.17 A key point made in the Practice Guide is that *a proper assessment of the impact on setting will take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it* (paragraph 122).

4.18 The Practice Guide makes the point that *the historic significance of an asset can be sustained or enhanced if new buildings are carefully designed to respect their setting by virtue of their scale, proportion, height, massing, alignment and use of materials* (para 121).

4.19 The Framework defines the setting of a heritage asset 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* (Annex 2: Glossary).

4.20 English Heritage published *Guidance on the Setting of Heritage Assets* in October 2011. In section 4 (Setting and Development Management), this guidance provides a framework for the assessment of proposed changes to the setting of a heritage asset. The advice is consistent with the advice in the PPS5 Practice Guide. The English Heritage *Guidance on the Setting of Heritage Assets* provides a detailed understanding of the concept of *setting* which is considered below.

4.21 In order to assess the degree of potential harm to the significance of a heritage asset, the guidance advises that the following five steps be followed:

- *Step 1: identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;*
- *Step 2: assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);*
- *Step 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;*
- *Step 4: explore the way in which enhancement might be maximised or harm might be avoided or minimised; and*
- *Step 5: make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.*

4.22 The joint Government/English Heritage *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (March 2010), adds categorically that *setting will generally be more extensive than curtilage* (paragraph 115). The Practice Guide also states that *the setting of a heritage asset can enhance its significance whether or not it was designed to do so* (paragraph 116) and that *the contribution that setting makes to the significance does not depend on there being public rights nor an ability to access or experience that setting* (paragraph 117). The Practice Guide advises that, whilst factors such as noise, traffic activity and historic relationships need to be considered when assessing the implications of change affecting setting, assessment is *most likely to address the addition or removal of a visual intrusion* (paragraph 119).

4.23 The English Heritage *Setting* guidance reinforces the definition of setting in the Framework, stating s*etting embraces all of the surroundings (land, sea, structures, features and skyline) from which the heritage asset can be experienced or that can be experienced from or with the asset. Setting does not have a fixed boundary and cannot be definitively and permanently described as a spatially bounded area or as lying within a set distance of a heritage asset. Views on what comprises a heritage asset's setting may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve, or as the asset becomes better understood. Construction of a distant but high building; development generating noise, odour, vibration or dust over a wide area; or new understanding of the relationship between neighbouring heritage assets may all extend what might previously have been understood to comprise setting* (Section 2.2, page 4).

4.24 The English Heritage guidance recognises that extensive heritage assets, such as landscapes and townscapes *can include many heritage assets and their nested and overlapping settings, as well as having a setting of their own. Entire towns also have a setting which, in a few cases, has been explicitly recognised in green belt designations. A conservation area that includes the*

settings of a number of listed buildings, for example, will also have its own setting, as will the town in which it is situated. The numbers and proximity of heritage assets in urban areas means that setting is intimately linked to considerations of townscape and urban design (Section 2.2, page 5).

4.25 The English Heritage guidance makes it clear that the setting of any heritage asset is likely to *include a variety of views of, across, or including that asset, and views of the surroundings from or through the asset. A long-distance view may intersect with, and incorporate the settings of numerous heritage assets. Views from within extensive heritage assets can also be important contributors to significance: for example, views from the centre of an historic town, through the townscape to its surrounding countryside, or from an historic house, through its designed landscape to the countryside beyond* (Section 2.3, page 6).

Local heritage policy context

4.26 The local heritage policy context is contained in the South Holland Local Plan (adopted July 2006).

4.27 Local Plan Policy EN4: Development Affecting Listed Buildings states:

The District Council will protect listed buildings in order that the historic fabric of the area is retained. Planning permission for development affecting a listed building or its setting will only be granted where the proposal preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the building and its setting. The following criteria will be applied in determining proposals:

1. *The development should respect the character of the listed building in terms of size, form, positioning, scale, design, roofscape, materials, colour, fenestration, detailing and its setting in terms of materials, landscaping and street furniture.*
2. *The development should ensure that important views and closures, including through views, and ancient street patterns are restored or maintained.*
3. *The development should preserve features of special architectural or historic interest which the building may possess.*
4. *The development should preserve or enhance the historic form and structural integrity of the building.*

4.28 Local Plan Policy EN5: Alteration, Extension And Change of Use of Listed Buildings states:

Planning permission and/or listed building consent for the alteration, extension or change of use of a listed building will be granted where all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. *That the proposed alterations, internally or externally, would not be detrimental to the special character or long term stability of the building.*
2. *That the proposed alterations and / or extensions would be sympathetic in scale, form, construction, colour, design, materials and location with the existing building.*
3. *That the original building has not been extended to such a degree that further extension works would harm the visual, historic or architectural merit of the building and the area in which it is located or its setting.*
4. *That the proposed development does not involve the subdivision of the garden or grounds of the listed building which would threaten the future viability of, or in any way detract from, its setting.*
5. *That the proposed change of use or sub-division of the listed building does not damage the fabric or special character of the building or its setting.*

4.29 Local Plan Policy EN7: Development Affecting Conservation Areas states:

The District Council will protect the designated conservation areas in order that the historic fabric of the area is retained. Planning permission for development within or affecting the setting of a conservation area will only be granted where the proposal preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the area and its setting. Particular attention should be given to the following criteria in determining proposals:

1. *The size, form, positioning, scale, roofscape, detailing and design of proposals are sympathetic to the character of the area and compatible with adjacent buildings.*
2. *Materials of construction should be appropriate to the area and sympathetic to adjacent buildings in terms of colour, texture, type and size.*
3. *The siting of the proposal respects important views and closures, including through views, ancient street patterns and important spaces and preserves and protects existing trees and landscape which contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area.*
4. *The proposal should retain important architectural and historic features such as street furniture, street name plates and paving.*

4.30 Local Plan Policy EN8: Demolition Of Unlisted Buildings Within Conservation Areas states:

The District Council will not grant conservation area consent for demolition of a building within a conservation area unless the following criteria are satisfied:

1. *In the case of a building making a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area, that:*
    i. *the condition of the building and any associated repair and maintenance costs preclude its use for the purpose for which it was designed or for any other reasonable alternative use;*
    ii. *extensive efforts have been made to retain the building in its current, most recent or viable alternative use; and*
    iii. *the existing building cannot be reused as part of any comprehensive redevelopment scheme for the site in order to retain visual and physical continuity within the built environment.*
2. *In the case of a building not making a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area, that the proposed alternative use of the site following demolition would not detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area.*

4.31 Local Plan Policy SG14: Design and Layout of New Development is a general policy relating to all new development in the district. It states:

New development should be designed to ensure that it makes a positive contribution to the architectural and visual quality of its surroundings. It should normally respect the vernacular architecture of the area in which it is located although high quality contemporary design will be supported in appropriate contexts. In assessing the design and layout of new development the following matters (amongst other things) *will be taken into consideration:-*

1. *local distinctiveness;*
2. *the choice of materials;*
3. *the historic pattern of development in the locality;*
4. *the relationship of the development to the character, form and scale of existing buildings nearby;*
5. *the scale, form and height of the proposed development;*
6. *architectural detailing;*

4.32 South Holland District Council, Boston Borough Council and Lincolnshire County Council, are jointly preparing a South-East Lincolnshire Local Plan

that, in due course, will replace the South Holland Local Plan. This is currently at an early stage of preparation. A first draft of the plan is yet to be published.

5.0 Heritage impact

5.1 The impact of the proposed development can be divided into three distinct categories:

- the impact of the proposed conversion of Holland House to five apartments, which will principally affect the interior of the listed building,
- the impact of removal of the existing Government Offices building, which will affect the setting of Holland House and other listed buildings in the vicinity, together with the character and appearance of this part of the Spalding Conservation Area, and
- the impact of the proposed residential development to the immediate north and east, which will affect the setting of Holland House and other listed buildings in the vicinity, together with the character and appearance of this part of the Spalding Conservation Area.

5.2 With regard to the impact on Holland House, the proposals are assessed in relation to the significance of Holland House, as set out in the accompanying Historic Building Assessment.

5.3 With regard to the other listed buildings in the vicinity and character and appearance of this part of the Spalding Conservation Area, the impact will be one of physical change to townscape and surroundings. In order to assess whether the proposed change is beneficial in heritage terms, it is necessary to consider the proposal against the existing townscape, an understanding of the concept of setting in line with the published English Heritage guidance, and the character and appearance of the Spalding Conservation Area, as set out in the Council's Spalding Conservation Area Appraisal.

The proposed conversion of Holland House

5.4 The proposed conversion is designed to respond to the historic plan form of Holland House, which will not be altered materially by the scheme beyond removal of part of one internal wall and some minor blocking up of openings. The conversion proposals have been conceived to minimise the loss of historic fabric.

5.5 The removal of part of one internal wall is necessitated at first floor level in apartment 4 to facilitate circulation. The wall is at the back of the room (south-east side) which overlooks the river, and contains a modern entrance door in a historic door lining. Stubs will be left at either end, and a downstand will be left at ceiling level, which will retain the original proportions of the room and sufficient of the wall to indicate the original arrangement. The downstand will facilitate reinstatement of a cornice, which will pick out the original shape of the room. This is the only substantive element of removal of historic fabric proposed in the whole scheme. It is rare for a conversion of this nature to be achieved with so little loss of historic fabric. This unavoidable element of the scheme does involve a degree of harm to the historic building, which it is felt is more than outweighed by the cumulative benefits of the proposed conversion scheme.

5.6 A major benefit of the proposed conversion scheme will be the removal of the intrusive modern partitions that were introduced in the main ground floor rooms in the 1990s to facilitate office use. This will greatly improve the internal spatial qualities of the two front ground floor rooms, with bays. The proposed conversion will also allow for suitable replacement of the existing garish colour scheme.

5.7 An inappropriate door and infilled arch to the opening between the ground floor entrance hall and the staircase hall, will be removed and the historic joinery lining made good. This will greatly enhance the entrance into the building.

5.8 It will be necessary to introduce partitioned bathrooms to serve apartments 1 and 3, which will have a minor adverse impact on the ground and first floor rooms with bays, on the south side of the building. The bathroom partitions will be constructed in a reversible manner. The proposed bathrooms for apartments 2 and 4 are accommodated in parts of the building that have been altered and are not of any particular significance. A main and en-suite bathroom for apartment five are accommodated in a featureless open landing area.

5.9 Kitchenettes will be introduced to serve apartments 1-4. These are positioned in the least intrusive positions and are designed with a low enclosing wall, so will have minimal impact on the spatial qualities of the rooms into which they will be inserted.

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5.10 Inappropriate suspended ceilings introduced in the 1990s will be removed and an insensitive large boxed duct that traverses the ground floor front room ceilings will be significantly reduced in size. This will be done by removal of the duct, which will enable a much smaller boxing of the beam. The suspended ceilings will be replaced by a traditional plastered ceiling at a higher level with an appropriate decorative cornice. The new ceilings will be fixed with acoustic hangers to comply with modern requirements for noise insulation. Inappropriate 1990s light fittings will also be removed, to be replaced with more suitable traditional luminaires.

5.11 It is proposed to replace the existing secondary stair with a new dog-leg stair. This will involve blocking a first-floor doorway that was formed in the 1990s and re-opening a nearby historic opening that has been blocked. As the existing secondary stair is a modern feature, this proposal will cause no harm to the heritage significance of the building and will incorporate an element of restoration.

5.12 Modern openings introduced to provide a dumb waiter and a doorway at the head of the main stairway will be infilled, which will constitute a desirable element of restoration.

5.13 Externally, there will no change to the appearance of the building other than some discretely sited vents. The existing pedestrian ramp to the south of the building will be reconfigured and linked to the existing ramp from High Street. The appearance of the ramp from the south will be of a traditional brick retaining wall topped with simple railings with ball finials. The proposed ramp will provider accessibility via a more natural and appropriate feature than currently exists.

5.14 Overall, the proposed enhancements, desirable restorations and benefits of the proposed conversion scheme greatly outweigh the minor elements of harm identified.

Demolition of the Government Offices building

5.15 The Government Offices building that was built within the original garden area of Holland House in 1960, is a large, bulky structure with a shallow roof pitch, which is out of scale and alien in relation to the traditional buildings that line the riverside. Its concrete frame and cladding materials have no empathy with the local palette of traditional materials. The building is positioned uncomfortably close to Holland House and visually intrudes into

the immediate setting of the listed building in views from both sides of the river and the footbridge. The Government Offices building totally dominates the setting of Holland House from the south and, together with its associated car parking area, has seriously degraded the former garden area on the east side of the listed building.

5.16 There can be little doubt that the removal of the large and incongruous three-storey Government Offices building would be a desirable heritage impact that would be beneficial to the setting of Holland House and the character and appearance of this part of the Spalding Conservation Area.

5.17 Whilst the Government Offices building was no doubt considered architecturally acceptable in 1960, it was built at a time when there was minimal consideration for harmony with the historic town. It is a fairly routine office building of its day. It does not display any special architectural qualities. The negligible degree of architectural loss that would result from demolition could be mitigated by an adequate recording exercise.

The proposed residential development

5.18 In addition to the benefit from simply removing an inappropriate and intrusive feature, the demolition of the Government Offices building will facilitate the restoration of an appropriate built-up frontage to High Street. The related Historic Building Assessment of Holland House has shown that the original High Street frontage was fully built up between Holland House and the Star Relay Warehouse, with access to the Holland House grounds being through a carriage arch.

5.19 It is proposed to site a three-storey Georgian style building alongside and in line with Holland House, fronting High Street, The proposed building is of an entirely appropriate scale and will fit sympathetically into the riverside scene. The submitted elevations show that the proposed building will form a harmonious neighbour for Holland House. The massing and external architectural treatment of the proposed building has been informed by considerable research of Georgian town houses and particularly those in Spalding.

5.20 Reinstatement of an appropriate built-up frontage to High Street in the manner proposed will enhance both the setting of Holland House as a listed building and the character and appearance of this part of the Spalding Conservation Area.

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5.21 Restoration of landscaped grounds to the south-east of Holland House is not a practical option. The original grounds have been bisected by Holland Road, connecting High Street to Halmer Gate, which has transformed the character of the former extensive garden into a twentieth-century residential area. It has also opened up new views. Given the need to provide an economic return to justify removal of the Government Offices building, the only practical option is to provide a built development that creates an appropriate street-scene and setting for Holland House and, at the same time, provides a suitable urban linkage between the historic environment of the riverside and the twentieth-century Holland Road residential area to the south-east.

5.22 The Government Offices building has existed for over half a century and has established the principle of built development on the site. The tight urban form of the majority of the conservation area suggests that Holland Road should be defined and enclosed by more appropriately scaled buildings, notwithstanding that it is not a historic thoroughfare.

5.23 It is beyond the scope of the current proposal to enclose or enhance the adjoining public car-park area to the north-east of Holland Road, which is the site of a demolished Georgian merchant's house called Elmsford House. Nevertheless, appropriate development on the south side of Holland Road is desirable in townscape terms, particularly because of the open views in that direction afforded from the public car-park.

5.24 Consequently, the proposed residential development is part three-storey relating to the predominant scale of riverside buildings, stepping down to two storey, which is the predominant scale of the existing residential area to the east on Holland Road. Buildings are sited towards Holland Road, with traditional railings as a street edge detail. The detailed design takes its inspiration from nineteenth-century domestic architecture, which is logical for a development that forms an urban link between an eighteenth-century riverside area and a twentieth-century suburb. The terraced form of the development is an entirely appropriate urban edge to Holland Road.

5.25 The proposed rear parking area will be shielded by the dwellings along the street edge. The parking area will have a discrete vehicular access and a separate, attractive pedestrian entry alongside the only tree on the site at the prominent corner. Views out from Holland House will be of more appropriately scaled buildings than the existing Government Offices building.

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5.26 The proposed buildings will create an appropriate urban edge to Holland Road and a new streetscape in a traditional manner. This will enhance the character and appearance of this part of the Spalding Conservation Area and will provide a much more appropriate setting for the south-eastern side of Holland House than is currently provided by the Government Offices building.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 This Heritage Impact assessment considers that the impacts of the proposed development derive from the conversion of the grade II listed Holland House to five apartments, and the impact on the Spalding Conservation Area together with the setting of other listed buildings within the vicinity, resulting from the demolition of the Government Offices building on Holland Road and its replacement with a residential re-development scheme that will provide twenty-two two and three bedroomed dwellings.

6.2 The assessment concludes that whilst the proposed conversion of Holland House to five apartments will lead to a very modest degree of loss of historic fabric and some adaptation of the interior that will alter the spatial qualities of some rooms (in order to provide bathrooms), the proposed benefits which include removal of highly inappropriate partitions, suspended ceilings, light fittings, a bulkhead, and above all the securing of a long-term sustainable future for the building, will far outweigh the modest degree of harm to the significance of the heritage asset that will be caused. Conversion of the building to five apartments that can be created with minimal disruption to the plan form and interior qualities of the building constitutes an optimum viable use for the heritage asset, within the terms of the NPPF.

6.3 With regard to the demolition of the former Government Offices building, the assessment concludes that the removal of this large and incongruous three-storey building would be a desirable heritage impact that would be beneficial to the setting of Holland House and the character and appearance of this part of the Spalding Conservation Area.

6.4 With regard to the proposed residential development, the assessment concludes that the proposed three-storey Georgian style building alongside and in line with Holland House, would reinstate an appropriate built-up frontage to High Street that would enhance both the setting of Holland House as a listed building and the character and appearance of this part of the Spalding Conservation Area. The assessment concludes that the proposed two and three-storey residential development on the site of the Government offices building and its associated car park, will create a well-defined edge to Holland Road and a new streetscape in a traditional manner. This will enhance the character and appearance of this part of the Spalding Conservation Area and will provide a much more appropriate setting for the south-eastern side of Holland House than is currently provided by the Government Offices building.

6.5 Consequently, the proposed development satisfies the requirement of section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for consideration of development which affects a listed building or its setting, to *have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting.*

6.6 Similarly, the proposed development satisfies the requirement of Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states for *special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance* of the conservation area.

6.7 The proposed development is fully in line with the heritage policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In particular, the proposal satisfies the test in Paragraph 134 which requires any *less than substantial harm* to the significance of a designated heritage asset, to *be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.*

6.8 The removal of the visually intrusive Government Offices building and its replacement with a sensitively designed and appropriate residential development constitutes an *opportunity for new development within a conservation area and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance,* within the terms of paragraph 137 of the NPPF.

6.9 For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development is in conformity with the provisions of the South Holland Local Plan and in particular Local Plan Policy EN4 (Development Affecting Listed Buildings); Local Plan Policy EN5 (Alteration, Extension And Change of Use of Listed Buildings); Local Plan Policy EN7 (Development Affecting Conservation Areas); Local Plan Policy EN8 (Demolition Of Unlisted Buildings Within Conservation Areas); and Local Plan Policy SG14 (Design and Layout of New Development).

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