

# Eddisons

Incorporating **Barker Storey Matthews**

## Planning Appraisal



Property / Land at:	Knuston Hall
On Behalf Of:	North Northamptonshire Council
Our Reference:	22-024/KW/JH
Agent:	Kate Wood BA(HONS) MRTPI

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## 1 Introduction

This Planning Appraisal is provided to North Northamptonshire Council to set out the planning history and site constraints, both physical and policy constraints, with a view to understanding and advising the most appropriate way forward for the future redevelopment of the site.

## 2 The Site Location and Context

Knuston is a small hamlet located on the B569 Irchester Road south west of the town of Rushton. The village of Irchester is located less than a mile to the south west of Knuston beyond the East Midlands railway line running between Bedford and Wellingborough.

Nearest towns are Rushton (1 mile), Wellingborough (5 miles), Kettering (9 miles) and Northampton (12 miles).

The nearest railway station is at Wellingborough. Bus stops are located along the Irchester Road in the vicinity of Knuston Spinney and at Station Road close to the railway crossing.

The site itself is part of a wider parcel of land owned by the council. Knuston Hall is accessed directly off Irchester Road via a bell mouth junction and cattle grid wide enough for only a single vehicle.

There is no footway on this side of the road but wide grass verge. There is a narrow footway on the opposite side of the road with occasional street lighting. The road is limited to 50mph and is straight, with good visibility.

Land to the south west of the site comprises agricultural land and Knuston Hill Farm which has been converted for use as a Thai Buddhist meditation centre. To the south and south east of the site is agricultural land. To the east is a woodland with agricultural land beyond. To the northeast is a care home closer to the road, beyond which is a row of residential properties leading towards the edge of Rushton.

On the opposite side of the road is a loop road known as Knuston Road, which gives access to a small industrial estate and dwellings.

The driveway into the site from the road is a single width tarmacked shared surface route which forks to the left (north) towards the service yard including outbuildings and prefabricated buildings. The right fork leads to the hall itself.

There is a large pond to the west of Knuston Hall and a large fish pond beyond the western boundary of the site.

## 3 Background and Planning History

The planning history of the site is associated with its use as an adult education centre. This includes residential accommodation for students.

The application history is set out at **Appendix 1** of this appraisal.

The planning use of the site is as an adult residential college and conference centre, which falls within Use Class C2 (residential institution) in terms of the residential training element

and Use Class F1(a) provision of education, in relation to the non-residential courses and conference facilities. The conference facilities have been used more widely for events and functions, supported by on-site catering and the option of overnight accommodation when not in use for residential training.

Additionally, some of the outbuildings have been let out to individual businesses. However, here is no planning history relating to these additional users.

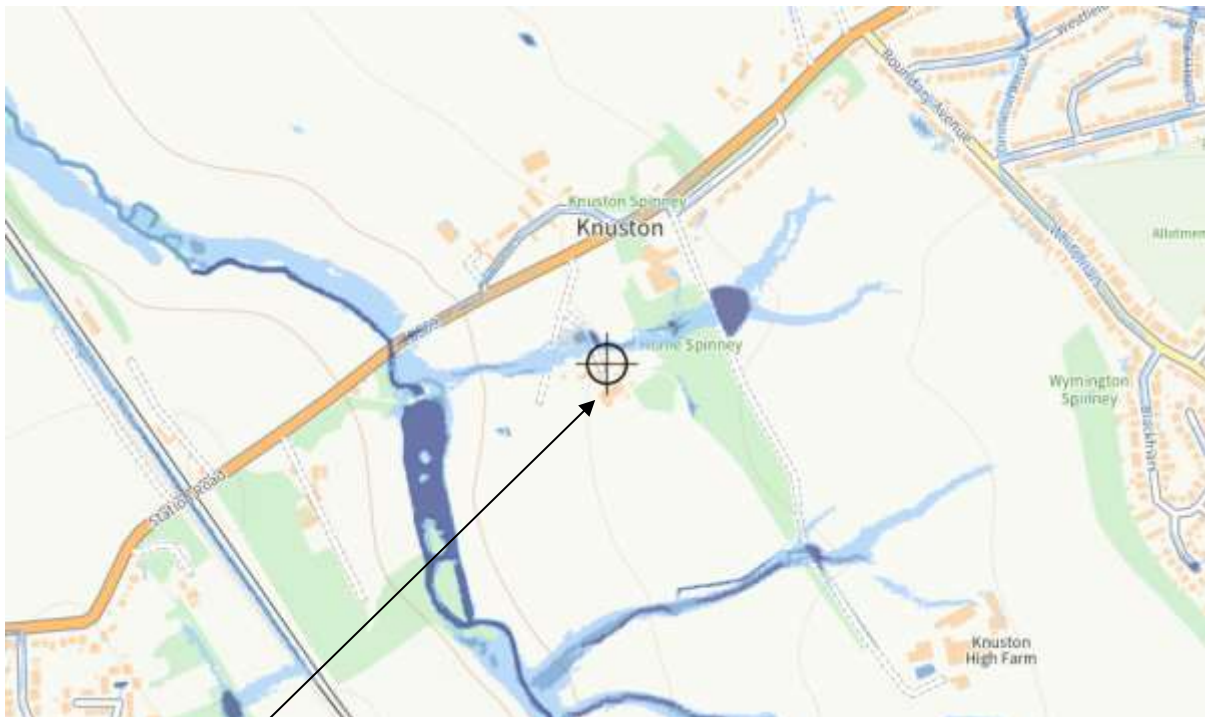
The adult residential college and conference centre have recently been decommissioned and the Planning and Heritage Appraisals have been undertaken to inform the council on its options going forward.

## 4 Site Constraints

The flood risk map for rivers and the sea is attached at **Appendix 2** and shows that the site is within Flood Zone 1 (low risk).

Part of the site between the hall and the road is at risk of surface water flooding. In any event, due to the size of the site being greater than 1 hectare, a Flood Risk Assessment would be required to accompany any planning application.

Surface water flood risk is shown on the plan below:-



*The site*

The site is not in a conservation area but Knuston and its attached outbuildings are listed at Grade II. The full listing from the Historic England website is at **Appendix 3**.

Other listed buildings in the vicinity are Fox Cottage to the north east of the site on Irchester Road, a bridge at the north end of the large fish ponds beyond the western boundary of the

site, Knuston Hugh Farm and Barn to the south east of the site, and Holme Farm House and Barn on the opposite side of Irchester Road (on Knuston Road), all at Grade II.

There are no habitat designations on or close to the site (for example SSSI).

No public footpaths or rights of way cross the site.

## **5 Relevant Planning Policies**

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021**

The NPPF sets out the Government's vision for sustainable development, which it sets out in three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental. These objectives are delivered through Local Plans and planning decisions. The NPPF applies a presumption in favour of sustainable development which, for decision-taking means "approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay" (paragraph 11.c).

The relevant paragraphs of the NPPF to the development of the site are as follows:

**8.** Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

**11.** Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For plan-making this means that:

- a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;

- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:
- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area<sup>7</sup>; or
  - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For decision-taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date<sup>8</sup>, granting permission unless:
- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed<sup>7</sup>; or
  - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

**38.** Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

**47.** Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

**48.** Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)<sup>24</sup>.

### **Local Planning Policies**

The development plan for the area comprises the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2016, The Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough 2019, the Irchester, Knuston and Little Irchester Neighbourhood Plan 2018, along with a suite of supplementary planning documents (SPD's).

Relevant policies of the Joint Core Strategy are policies 1 to 5, 7 to 11, 13, 25, 26, 29 and 30.

These are not replicated in an appendix as they are high level policies which generally reflect the requirements of the NPPF.

Of note are policies 29 (Distribution of New Homes) which notes that housing development in rural areas will only be permitted where tested and supported through local and neighbourhood plans, and policy 30 (Housing Mix and Tenure) which requires housing development in rural areas to include 40% affordable dwellings.

Relevant policies of The Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough are replicated at **Appendix 4**.

## **6 Advice for Redevelopment of the Site**

### **Appropriate Uses**

It will be necessary to retain the listed buildings, including the main hall and those within the courtyard.

As noted in the Heritage Review by Berrys, the surrounding parkland contributes to the significance of the hall. It may therefore be difficult to obtain planning permission for any development within the parkland setting, unless it is subservient and associated with the main building.

Any development such as housing within the grounds is unlikely to be considered acceptable unless it is for enabling purposes, which would need to be supported by a viability assessment.

There is however, the opportunity to provide replacement buildings within the courtyard by replacing the 20<sup>th</sup> century development, to reinstate that enclosed space.

The council may however, consider some scope for additional development if it could be shown that such development would not undermine the significance of the hall with its parkland setting.

Appropriate uses could be considered as follows:-

**Residential** – The conversion of the hall to residential houses or apartments will depend upon whether the internal alterations can be made without impacting on the historic fabric of the building which is an important feature noted in the listing description.

This would include the conversion of the outbuildings in the courtyard, along with a replacement building to complete the enclosed courtyard character.

However, it should be noted that individual gardens will be unlikely to be found acceptable, as this would break up the parkland setting and be out of character.

Residential development in the grounds would be difficult to achieve for the same reason relating to breaking up the parkland setting. However, there may be scope to provide some frontage development adjacent to the access point in the form of lodges to frame the access drive, but heritage advice should be sought as to whether this would confuse the site's history.

Other residential development in the grounds is unlikely to be considered acceptable.

**Commercial Use** – The change of use of the building to uses such as offices should be acceptable in principle, given the current use of the site for education.

**Leisure Uses** – Given the authorised use of the site for a training centre, with accommodation and catering included, the use of the site for a wedding venue, conference centre, and / or hotel should also be acceptable in principle.

Issues to be considered with evening and weekend uses such as a wedding venue are the impact of noise and disturbance upon residential neighbours. In this case the building is some distance from residential properties such that noise should be able to be satisfactorily controlled both in terms of amplified music and traffic.

**Care Uses** – The use of the site as a care home or similar care accommodation, would be acceptable in principle. However, the individual rooms would need to be assessed for compliance with CQC requirements regarding space standards. It is often the case that care homes incorporate individual en-suite bathrooms, which would have an impact on the historic fabric of the listed building through dividing up rooms, but could be considered further should an operator be interested.

A care village development, with some element of low key buildings in the grounds for additional accommodation may be acceptable if the low key buildings were not individually partitioned but form part of the main parkland.

### **Planning Procedure**

The council will be interested in the results of any marketing exercise as part of their considerations, particularly if additional development is proposed in the grounds.

It is therefore important to keep a record of marketing particulars, all interest received, viewings, offers and reasons for not offering.

In the meantime, I would recommend that advice regarding the above options should be sought from the council's planning department in order to refine the options for development going forward. This should be in the form of a request for pre-application advice, including seeking advice from the council's conservation officer, who's input will be vital in informing future development proposals.

Alternatively, the pre-application advice will provide some comfort as to the likely acceptability of development, such that investment in the surveys, reports and plans required to support a planning application will be justified. Pre-application advice also enables us to finalise the 'validation list', namely the list of plans and documents required to support the application. This ensures that nothing is missed.

At this stage I would suggest that the following validation list apply to any subsequent planning application:-

- Application forms and notice
- CIL forms and Section 106 Heads of Terms
- Covering letter
- Planning, design and access statement
- Location Plan
- Site layout plan as existing and proposed
- Plans and elevations of the existing and proposed buildings
- Plans and elevations of cycle parking
- Section drawing(s) to show relative building heights
- Tree survey and constraints plan
- Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA)
- Landscaping plan
- External lighting scheme
- Topographic survey
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)
- Any species – specific surveys arising from the PEA



- FRA and surface water drainage strategy
- Desk based contamination report
- Archaeological desk-based assessment
- Access junction design
- Heritage Impact Assessment

At pre-application stage, not all of these plans and documents will be required, as noted above, but greater detail will reap more thorough advice. The council will caveat any advice relating to issues that have not been fully researched or promoted. Even so, pre-application advice will provide significant comfort and direction.

## **7 Conclusion**

The site offers a variety of opportunities for securing the optimum viable use of the listed buildings, but there is little opportunity for additional built development if this would undermine the parkland setting of the building which is part of its historic significance.

Early liaison with the council's planning and conservation officers should be sought to ensure that opportunities for additional built development, beyond the opportunities presented in the courtyard, are understood.

## Appendix 1 Planning History of the Site

### Planning Applications (11)

- [Residential school](#)

Ref. No: WR/1968/0046 | Status: NONDET

- [Installation of additional 5 bay Elliott mobile accommodation](#)

Ref. No: BW/1990/0587 | Status: Approved Application

- [Use of land for purposes ancillary to activities of training centre inc. motorcycle training](#)

Ref. No: BW/1987/1131 | Status: DEMAPR

- [Erection of 40ft high absail tower](#)

Ref. No: BW/1987/0400 | Status: DEMAPR

- [Conversion of part of greenhouse into office](#)

Ref. No: BW/1986/1292 | Status: Approved Application

- [Extension to students accommodation](#)

Ref. No: BW/1979/0946 | Status: DEMAPR

- [Site for caravan](#)

Ref. No: WR/1964/0153 | Status: Approved with Conditions

- [Bedroom & warden's flat](#)

Ref. No: WR/1961/0012 | Status: Approved Application

- [Adult education and community centre](#)

Ref. No: WR/1949/0035 | Status: Approved Application

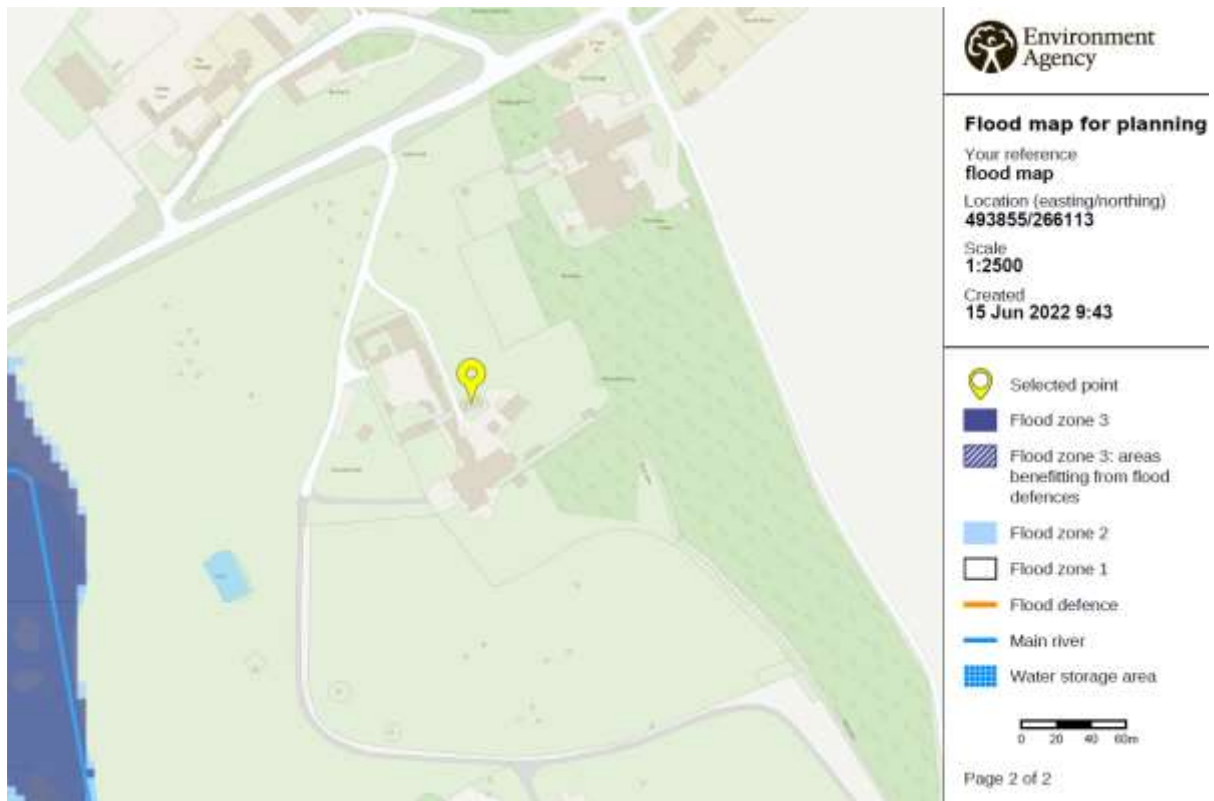
- [Alterations](#)

Ref. No: WR/1959/0148 | Status: NONDET

- [Site for caraven](#)

Ref. No: WR/1955/0138 | Status: Approved with Conditions

## Appendix 2 Flood Risk Map (Environment Agency)



The above plan is an extract from the Environment Agency flood plain maps reproduced from their website.

## Appendix 3 Historic England Listing Description

### Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1392364**

Date first listed: **17-Jan-2008**

Statutory Address 1: **KNUSTON HALL INCLUDING ATTACHED OUTBUILDINGS, STATION ROAD**

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

**Understanding list entries** (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/>)

**Corrections and minor amendments** (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/>)

### Location

Statutory Address: **KNUSTON HALL INCLUDING ATTACHED OUTBUILDINGS, STATION ROAD**

**The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.**

District: **North Northamptonshire (Unitary Authority)**

Parish: **Irchester**

National Grid Reference: **SP9385366066**

### Reasons for Designation

\* The building retains fabric from several epochs which possess architectural interest, and which is highly characteristic of an evolved gentleman's seat \* The Hall has an important series of rich later C18 plasterwork decoration in the ground floor rooms of the square block \* The various ranges, including a service range and outbuildings to the north, have a structure which has evolved since the C17 and elements of interest survive from the C17, C18 and C19 \* The discovery of an early C19 annotated plan of the house adds to the interest.

## Details

654/0/10013 17-JAN-08

IRCHESTER STATION ROAD Knuston Hall including attached outbuildings

II

Country house and outbuildings, now residential College of Adult Education.

DATE: C17, C18 and C19, with C18-C20 alterations. The C18 work was for Benjamin Kidney and that after 1865 for Sir Richard Arkwright.

MATERIALS: Coursed stone rubble with stone dressings and some ashlar in the earlier parts. The part added after 1865 is of ashlar. The roofs are of slate behind low parapets and there are various stone stacks. There is some plain tiling on outbuildings

PLAN: Two and three storeys. The house is on an extensive plan of mainly two large adjoining blocks, that to left with the main entrance dates from after 1865 and that to right is probably mid C17 (the survival of banded stonework and an early C18 double sash with thick glazing bars in a wide C17 proportioned window in a first floor corridor). This square block was much altered late C18 and then again mid C19. To the rear is another wing of probably mid C17 date, also altered C18 and C19. Extending to left, north, is an extensive series of C18 and C19 outbuildings partly around a large yard.

EXTERIOR: The entrance block is in Jacobean style and has a large shaped gable and stone mullion and transom windows and a projecting entrance porch. The block to right has paired windows with C19 stone frames to both west and south, and 2 large C19 canted stone bays to west. The uniform pale stone west front probably is a C18 refacing because it differs from the ironstone banded lower two storeys of the south and east fronts. The lower two-storey rear wing has multi-paned sashes and a two-storey canted bay. Although the core of this wing is probably C17 the front is again uniformly pale stone and was probably added C18, for the stonework overlaps the plinth of the main block where the two meet. Projecting further east is another two-storey brick range which then becomes a garden wall.

Extending from the north front is the extensive series of outbuildings, now partly subsidiary college accommodation. The two-storey range nearest to the house has an C18 four bay front with a two bay central break forward under a pediment in which is a reset datestone of 1666 (possibly the date of the C17 parts of the house). Adjoining to the north of this, and of less significance, are a former scullery and laundry, a single-storey building much altered, and a former stable block, which is roofless.

From this range extend further ranges on three sides of a large yard. To the east is a large, two-storey, three-bay, former coachhouse with a stone front and pediment, containing a blind roundel, and three arched entrances. On each side of the coach house are single-storey ranges in stone with openings dressed in red brick. To the far north are C18 brick ranges formerly used as livestock houses and pens. To the south are stone buildings used in the early C19 as an aviary and dovecote.

INTERIOR: The square block to the right has later C18 elaborate plasterwork ceilings in the main ground floor rooms and roundels with Classical heads in relief in the present bar. The former dining room has C17 panelling brought in probably C19. C18 plaster ceiling also in the first floor lobby, which would originally have been the ceiling of the small staircase hall. The present dining room in the rear wing which was the kitchen in the early C19 (and probably long before) has a large open fireplace. The c1865 range has a Neo-Georgian cornice in the entrance hall and a staircase with ramped handrail and turned balusters.

HISTORY: In the early C16 Knuston was owned by the Brudenell family, but the estate was sold to the Page family in 1542. The Hearth Tax records of 1670 suggest the house was already substantial since it had 8 hearths and the datestone 1666 reset in an outbuilding range may be the date of a major rebuilding which was probably the present

square main block and the rear wing for services. It had been thought that this rear wing (the current dining room) was the only surviving element of this house, which was then known as Hill House. As a result of the Enclosures Act in 1769 the grounds were laid out as parkland and in around 1775 Benjamin Kidney, a London merchant and High Sheriff of Northamptonshire, spent c £10,000 on the house. In 1791 Knuston Hall was sold to Joseph Gulston but, in the half century or so after this, the house was let or leased. In 1865 the estate was bought by Robert Arkwright, great grandson of Sir Richard Arkwright, the renowned textile entrepreneur. Robert made considerable additions to the house and also alterations to the existing structure. After Robert's death in 1888 the house was occupied by caretakers or tenants until the Hall was sold in 1920. Northamptonshire County Council bought the Hall in 1949 and it continues in use as a residential College of Adult Education.

A survey drawing made by the well-known architect JB Papworth, probably c.1811 for Thomas Lane who seems to have been the then tenant, gives a very good idea of the hall at that time showing both the configuration and use of the rooms. It is almost certainly a drawing made on the spot, whilst the architect toured the house and outbuildings, and may have been a preliminary to possible alterations. This drawing and the evidence of the surviving structure has permitted a suggested sequence for the building history of the house. It has not been possible to be precise on any changes Papworth may himself have made because of the major ones carried out later by the Arkwrights, but the present state of the square block which was the main house in the plan is probably the result of works in the 1860s. Nevertheless, this block still retains rich plasterwork almost certainly of the 1770s in the long room (formerly the entrance hall and the drawing room), and also in the panelled room (formerly the dining room), as well as in the room which is now the bar. This would appear to be part of the costly work carried out by Benjamin Kidney. The large block added on by Arkwright is fashionably Jacobean but the interior of the new entrance and staircase hall has a Neo-Georgian cornice echoing the C18 work in the adjacent square block and is the same as the in the long corridor.

The works carried out in the square block for Arkwright appear to have consisted of opening up this new corridor through the house on the ground and first floors and involved burrowing through a huge stack shown in the survey drawing and replacing the small staircase with a lobby on each floor. The bedrooms were also subdivided, a process which has continued more recently with the creation of en-suite bathrooms. The cornice in these corridors and in the lobbies is the same as in the new entrance hall but original C18 plasterwork survives in the first floor lobby, on a scale too large to have been designed to be viewed, as is now possible, close to, but completely appropriate when seen looking up from the ground floor below, as originally intended. Part of the C19 work involved the removal of the wall between the original entrance hall and drawing room and the making good of the wall mouldings as well as the removal of the drawing room fireplace. In the present panelled room, formerly the dining room, the panelling was probably brought in at this time as it dates from the C17 and was clearly not made for the room. However, the fireplace is mid C18, possibly with some alterations, and may be part of the 1770s work. The ceiling is mainly C18 plasterwork, but the lowest coved cornice moulding in each of the compartments could be late C17 and it is possible that there were some mid C19 additions as well. In the present bar, which was a lobby in the early C19, there are C18 plaster roundels with relief profiles of Classical heads. This room was altered in the mid C19 when part became the beginning of the corridor and a further roundel was added to the decoration in a different style. Some further swags were probably also added.

**REASONS FOR DESIGNATION** Knuston Hall and its outbuildings are designated at grade II for the following principal reasons: \* The building retains fabric from several epochs which possess architectural interest, and which is highly characteristic of an evolved gentleman's seat \* The Hall has an important series of rich later C18 plasterwork decoration in the ground floor rooms of the square block. \* The various ranges, including a service range and outbuildings to the north, have a structure which has evolved since the C17 and elements of interest survive from the C17, C18 and C19.

SOURCES RIBA Drawings Collection: JB Papworth Collection PB1327/PAP [206] (1-2).  
[www.knustonhall.org.uk/history.htm](http://www.knustonhall.org.uk/history.htm)

## Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: 495856

Legacy System: LBS

## Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



## Map

This map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale.  
This copy shows the entry on 06-Jun-2022 at 11:17:06.

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(<https://historicengland.org.uk/terms/website-terms-conditions/>).

End of official list entry



## **Appendix 4 Current Local Plan Policies**

Relevant policies of The Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough 2019 are replicated below (relevant extracts of policies only).

### **Policy E 3**

#### **Employment Outside Established Employment Estates**

Wherever appropriate, land and premises in industrial and business uses (B1; B2 & B8) will be retained for that use.

Proposals for change of use or re-development of land and premises currently in industrial or business use (B1; B2 & B8) to other uses will be supported where they satisfy the following:

- A. They accord with the spatial strategy for the borough.
- B. They will not prejudice the current and future operations of adjoining businesses and the site as a whole.
- C. If the land or building is vacant, there is clear evidence that the site/premises has been marketed for a reasonable period of time.
- D. If the existing land or premises has environmental or amenity issues, there is clear evidence that these problems cannot be overcome by an industrial or business use.
- E. The proposal will resolve existing conflicts between land uses.

### **Policy H 3**

#### **Housing Needs of Older People**

On sites of 50 or more dwellings, or 1.4 ha or more site area, the local planning authority will seek the provision of a proportion of the housing to meet the needs of older people. The precise proportion, type and tenure mix will take into account:

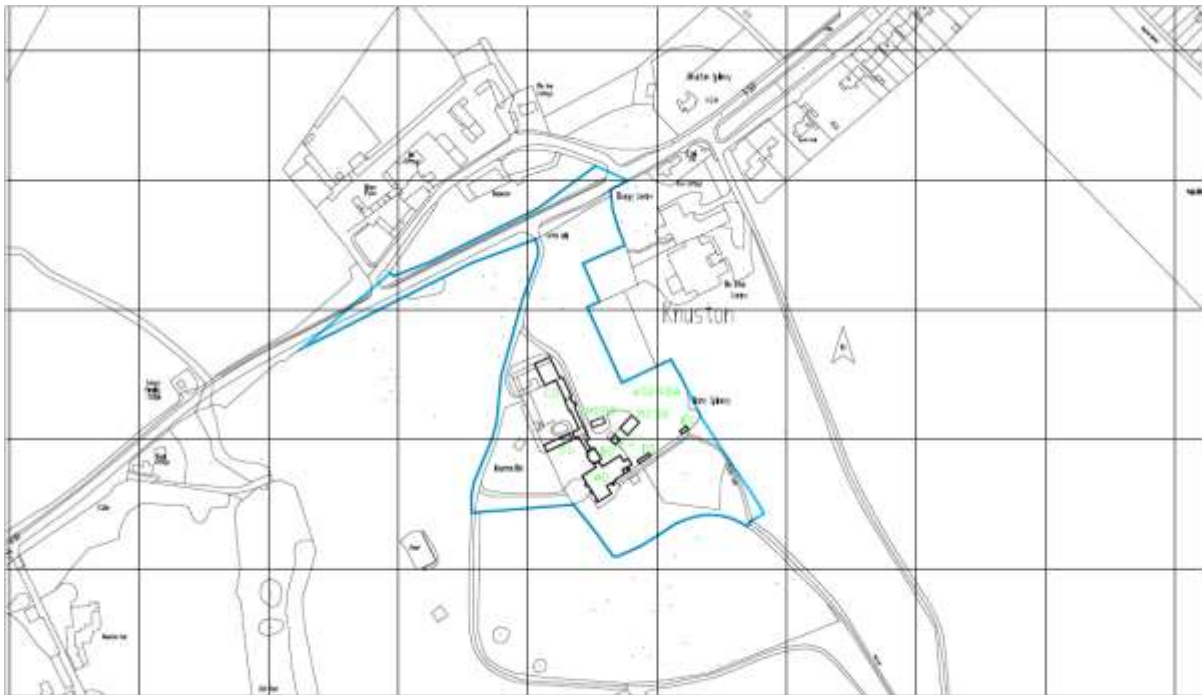
- evidence of local need;
- the scale and location of the site; and
- the viability of the development

### **Policy H 4**

#### **Retirement Housing, Supported Housing and Care Homes**

Retirement housing, supported housing and care homes will be supported provided that retirement housing and supported housing schemes have good access to local facilities and public transport routes and that care homes have good access to public transport routes.

## Appendix 5 Location Plan



Area	Code	Area
10A	10000	0.241 Ha
10B	10000	0.277 Ha
10C	10000	0.463 Ha

This document is for reference only. For details of the site, please refer to the County Council.

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EDDISON HALL RECEPTION	1/2022	SITE PLAN
	APR 2022	09/2022
	09/2022	