

WAKEHURST MANSION REOPENING & REPRESENTATION

HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

June 2025

Rev. C



Martin Ashley Architects
745 Regal House, 70 London Road
Twickenham
TW1 3QS

PREPARED BY

Name: James Campen RIBA, ABBC

SITE DETAILS

Address: Wakehurst Place, Ardingly, Haywards Heath, Sussex,

Postcode: RH17 6TN

Listing Status: Grade I

Revision	Reason for Issue	Date of Issue	Issued By
-	First Issue - DRAFT	02.05.2025	JC
A	First Planning Issue	08.05.2025	JC
B	Final Planning Issue	12.05.2025	JC
C	Planning Amendment Issue	03.06.2025	JC



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Executive Summary	4
2 Introduction & Background	4
3 Description & History	5
4 Description Of Proposals	13
5 Assessment Of Impact	13
6 Conclusion	19
7 Appendices	20

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared by Martin Ashley Architects on behalf of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (RBG Kew), in support of a Listed Building Consent application for a limited number of new interpretation installations within the ground floor of Wakehurst Mansion. The proposals form part of a wider initiative to reopen and re-present the Mansion to the public in summer 2025, telling the story of the estate and RBG Kew's presence on the site.
- 1.2 The areas that may be affected are all internal fabric, primarily within the 19th century east extensions of the Grade I listed Wakehurst Place, including areas of medium to high significance such as the Chapel, Billiard Room, and Library. The installations have been carefully designed to be fully reversible, with minimal and justified intervention to the historic fabric. The elements requiring consent include limited fixings for audiovisual equipment, lighting, and interpretation displays, as well as minor interventions associated with electrical services and ironmongery upgrades.
- 1.3 The assessment concludes that the proposals will result in a very low level of physical impact on the historic fabric, and any potential harm has been minimised through thoughtful design, re-use of existing fixings or concealed locations, and a commitment to reversibility. In contrast, the public and interpretive benefits are significant. The project directly addresses the disconnection between the Mansion and its wider landscape setting, identified as a key issue in the Conservation Management Plan (2024), and will enhance the public's ability to engage with both the historic and scientific narratives of Wakehurst.
- 1.4 The limited works requiring Listed Building Consent are fully justified, proportionate, and beneficial in the context of the Mansion's long-term use and interpretation.

2 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared by Martin Ashley Architects on behalf of RBG Kew, to accompany the Listed Building Consent Application to Mid Sussex District Council for the proposed interior Interpretation works, as part of the representation and reopening of the ground floor of Wakehurst Mansion in Summer 2025.
- 2.2 Wakehurst Place Mansion is a significant late 16th-century country house set within an extensive historic landscape. The house, built originally by Sir Edward Culpeper in the 1590s, is constructed from local Wealdon sandstone and is notable for its Elizabethan architectural features, including mullioned windows, gabled roofs, and stone dressings.
- 2.3 The mansion stands within the wider Wakehurst Estate, now managed by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The estate covers approximately 500 acres and includes botanical gardens, ornamental lakes, formal lawns, woodland, and a nature reserve. The mansion itself is located slightly elevated, providing views across the surrounding landscaped gardens.
- 2.4 The proposals relate to the installation of new interpretation on the Ground Floor, in the Library, Billiard Room, East Entrance Hall and Chapel. The installations have been designed to be freestanding and fully reversible and so largely do not require Listed Building Consent. The proposals have been through a process of refinement which has limited relevant LBC matters to an absolute minimum, to ensure that they have been fully justified and have a minimal impact on historic fabric.
- 2.5 This assessment is limited to the items in the proposals which have been identified as requiring Listed Building Consent. These will each be individually described and assessed.

3 DESCRIPTION & HISTORY

3.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF WAKEHURST PLACE MANSION

- 3.1.1 The following information is summarised from the 2011 & 2024 Conservation Management Plan, prepared by Richard Griffiths Architects, for which extensive research was carried out.
- 3.1.2 Wakehurst Place Mansion is a fine gentry house built at the end of the sixteenth century. It was reduced in size during the seventeenth century and again in 1844. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, successive owners extended the house, remodelled its interior, and reconstructed parts of its exterior. Today, while only part of the original Elizabethan structure survives, it remains a significant example of architecture from the period. The Mansion's symmetrical façade is a striking feature, contributing greatly to its appeal for the many visitors to Kew's Wakehurst gardens.
- 3.1.3 The Mansion's nineteenth- and twentieth-century history offers rich material for social history. Its succession of owners vividly illustrates the evolution of British capitalism—land, foreign trade, steel, railways, gin, and mass clothing production. Some owners were rising in fortune; others, possibly, in decline. Their stories, and those of their servants and gardeners, remain of great interest. They also had a significant impact on the building itself with a series of extensions and alterations, including the construction and remodelling of the east extensions, which contain the East Porch, East Entrance Hall, Billiard Room and Chapel.
- 3.1.4 In 1941, Sir Henry Price offered to bequeath the Mansion and its extensive estate to the National Trust, which assumed ownership in 1964. The Trust leased the gardens to the Ministry of Agriculture for use by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (RBG Kew), as a counterpart to Kew Gardens in terms of climate and ground conditions. After the final occupant Lady Price vacated the Mansion in 1968, it too was leased to RBG Kew. Since then, the building has been used for laboratories, offices, education initiatives, a tea room, a shop, and a variety of events, conferences, and functions.
- 3.1.5 Since 2000, Kew has commissioned and built a new visitor centre, a new restaurant, and a new home for the Millennium Seed Bank, relocating many functions previously housed in the Mansion. Although it remained in use—hosting educational initiatives and generating income through events and weddings—the Mansion has not been fully utilised.
- 3.1.6 Between 2022 and 2024, the exterior of the house underwent a major conservation project. The roof coverings were re-laid, with Horsham stone tiles salvaged and consolidated on the historic higher roofs, and, following historic precedent, plain clay tiles used for the 19th/20th Century, lower north and east wing roofs. Repairs were also carried out to the roof structure, external masonry was repaired and repointed, and the first- and second-floor windows were overhauled. In addition, the roof valleys were redesigned to improve maintenance access and eliminate potential rainwater discharge weak points and bottlenecks.

3.2 OUTLINE CHRONOLOGY

1571-90	Built as a courtyard house by Sir Edward Culpepper.
1697	South side of courtyard demolished.
1848	East and West wings shortened by two thirds and South ends refaced. Horsham slate roof changed to clay tile roof due to structural issues.
1869-70	NE wing and the 1-storey wing on the East added by the Marchioness of Downshire.
1890	Restored and East Wing remodelled by Aston Webb for Sir William Boord.
1903	North porch added by Sir Aston Webb for Gerald Loder MP, RHS President, Lord Wakehurst.
1936-8	South front taken down, stones numbered and replaced after careful restoration.
1940-44	Canadian Army and ATS stationed.
1963	Sir Henry Price bequeathed Wakehurst estate to the National Trust.
1965	Long-lease agreement to Royal Botanic Gardens.
1970's	Major reroofing project undertaken.
2020	Closed to the public due to Covid-19 Pandemic.
2022-2024	Major reroofing and external repairs project.

3.3 SUMMARY OF PHASES OF BUILDING



Fig. 18 - Ground Floor



Fig. 14 - South Facade



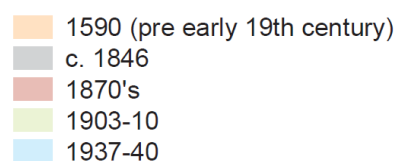
Fig. 16 - East Facade



Fig. 15 - West Facade



Fig. 17 - North Facade



3.4 THE LIBRARY

- 3.4.1 The Library evolved from what was originally referred to as the "front hall" in the 1878 Sale Particulars. During the Downshire period, a screen was used to partition part of the hall to create a more private writing and reading area. These works included significant moves of historic materials including the relocation of the main stair and the Library's fireplace, which was relocated from the former Main Hall.
- 3.4.2 In the 1890s Sir William Boord undertook alterations elsewhere in the Mansion, including significant decorative work in the Library. Aston Webb upgraded the Library, reorganising the panelling, installing new shelving, and replastering the ceiling in an Elizabethan-revival style, replicating the design of the Drawing Room ceiling.
- 3.4.3 In the 1970s, RBG Kew converted the Library for use as a laboratory and document store, with shelving and partitions introduced. However, these interventions were carefully removed in more recent conservation work, returning the Library's appearance closer to its early twentieth-century character, with its oak panelling reinstated.

3.5 THE EAST EXTENSIONS - CHAPEL, BILLIARD ROOM, EAST ENTRANCE, AND HALL

- 3.5.1 During the 1870s, Lady Downshire commissioned a major extension to the north and east of the original house. This included the construction of the service wing to the north, as well as the Chapel, a Billiard Room, a new East Entrance with a modest round-arched porch, and an associated Entrance Hall. The extensions were built in a style sympathetic to the original building, with sandstone

masonry matching the sixteenth-century fabric and simplified Elizabethan details, such as mullioned windows and gabled roofs.

- 3.5.2 A dedicated chapel was unusual for a Victorian country house of this scale, and it demonstrated the family's strong Protestant values. Architecturally, the Chapel was designed to harmonise with the Elizabethan character of the Mansion, featuring sandstone masonry and round-arched windows with simple tracery. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Chapel retained its religious function, serving as a private place of worship for the family and household.



-1 Chapel in the Loder Period, between 1903-1936 (facing east, away from the chimney protrusion)

- 3.5.3 When Sir William Boord purchased Wakehurst in 1890, he initiated substantial remodelling of the East Extensions in conjunction with the remodelling in the main house. The architect Aston Webb reconfigured the east entrance area. A new outer porch with a WC was added, the Entrance Hall was reduced in size, and the Billiard Room was altered to create a large sitting room for Boord, featuring new exposed timber roof trusses. These changes improved circulation and adapted the space for more contemporary living requirements.
- 3.5.4 Following the Mansion's transfer to the National Trust and its lease to RBG Kew, the east wing spaces underwent significant adaptation in the 1970s. The Chapel, Billiard Room, and Library were all converted into laboratories as part of Wakehurst's growing scientific activities. Although substantial modifications were made to accommodate these functions, the works were designed to be reversible. The changes to the Chapel during this period were extensive: laboratory equipment was installed, partitions were introduced, and finishes were simplified to suit the building's new utilitarian function. Features lost during the laboratory conversion included some of the chapel's historic fittings, including wall panelling and decorative finishes.
- 3.5.5 Following the relocation of laboratories to new facilities with the construction of the Millennium Seed Bank, these laboratory installations were removed and the spaces restored to reflect their

earlier historic arrangements, while still bearing the imprint of their mid-twentieth-century institutional use. The Chapel has been left as a plain, bare space with the former ecclesiastical character retained principally in the windows and the roof structure.

3.6 PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE MANSION

3.6.1 The Mansion was used for public access, educational programmes and events such as weddings until 2020 when it was closed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. After the 2020 lockdown some staff returned to work in offices on the first floor, but the educational programmes did not resume.

3.6.2 Prior to 2020 there was public access to the main rooms on the ground floor – the Chapel, Billiard room, Library, Boudoir, Drawing room. A small number of interpretation panels were placed around the rooms, but there was no structured narrative to guide visitors around the building. Some pieces of the Price collection of furniture were placed in the ground floor rooms, and in the lobby and staircase area. The dining room was not generally accessible to the public. Public access to the ground floor coexisted with educational activities, weddings and other events which often used the same rooms.

3.7 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

3.7.1 In 2009 a Conservation Management Plan was commissioned, to inform decisions about the future of the Mansion and its subsidiary buildings. The CMP was produced in 2011 by Richard Griffiths Architects, working in association with Wessex Archaeology. The CMP was then updated in 2023-24 to include recent developments and current thinking about the future of Wakehurst.

3.7.2 The CMP ascribed Heritage Significance to parts of the Mansion. The method used followed the Heritage Lottery Fund while acknowledging that significance is based on informed judgment rather than objective fact.

3.7.3 The significance of the Mansion as a whole was summarised in the following categories:

- **A “Scientific values (wildlife, geology, ecology)”** - None presently known.
- **B “Natural or aesthetic beauty (views, artistic qualities of objects, buildings, spaces, designed landscapes)”** The Mansion has aesthetic significance arising from the quality of its design, workmanship, fittings and materials.
- **C “Historical importance (association with people or events)”** - The Mansion is historically important because it provides vivid experience of the lives, tastes and ambitions of significant strands of British capitalism during its rise and maturity.
- **D “Archaeological Importance (the pattern of construction, alteration and use revealed by the fabric)”** - The Mansion is highly significant from an archaeological point of view because it contains physical evidence of many periods of architectural design and style, from the late sixteenth century to the 1930’s.
- **E “Social or community values (the views of local people or other groups)”**. The Mansion is considered valuable by visitors and local people, because of its inherent attractiveness and because of its historical interest.
- **F “Public amenity values (who uses the site and how, access)”** - Although public access to the Mansion is only partial, for many visitors it forms a significant part of their experience of Wakehurst Place. However the very extensive changes to the interior in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the absence of “authentic” room settings, means that many visitors find that the interior does not live up to the promise of the splendid south façade.
- **G “Educational values”** - Parts of the ground floor are used for changing exhibitions. There is also some interpretative material about the history of the Mansion and its occupants. The educational programme based in the Mansion is of national and international significance in the field of environmental studies and is a key part of Kew’s mission at Wakehurst. Obviously its significance does not derive from the historic character of the building itself.

- **H “Use Values (the role use plays in significance)”** - The current uses of the building have been described above. With the exception of the use of the Mansion for functions, weddings etc., they are all related indirectly to an appreciation and understanding of the natural and architectural heritage. Obviously the use of the Mansion is not in itself a heritage value, as, for example the use of a functioning historic industrial building might be.

3.7.4 Parts of the building were assigned categories of significance as below.

Significance of the Mansion



3.7.5 The Chapel and the Billard Room interiors were graded ‘Medium’, while the fabric itself and the Library as a whole were graded ‘High’ Significance.

3.8 RESPONDING TO HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

3.8.1 The overall context for National trust policy at Wakehurst can be found in *Our Strategy 2020-2025*. The National Trust’s approach to the conservation of Wakehurst Place in particular is outlined in two documents: *The Schedule of Special Qualities (1998)* and *The Statement of Significance (2009)*.

3.8.2 The Schedule of Special Qualities describes four overlapping types of “significance” possessed by the Wakehurst estate including “Qualities and characteristics arising from the historical evidence of private ownership over several centuries, of which the historic mansion is the focal point” and “The scientific presence introduced by RBG Kew in 1965; botanical science is integrated throughout the site but the research and science support facilities are focused within the Mansion and the Service area.”

3.8.3 These are described in more detail as follows: “Principal Characteristics of the Mansion, its setting and the showrooms. The feel of a private house and garden through cumulative attention to detail... Historical evidence of private ownership greater near the House. Showrooms in the mansion dominated by family associations and reflect Loder, Price and the plant collectors eg the library reflecting Loder as a great bibliophile and linked to the immediate surrounding garden.”

3.8.4 The context of RBG’s policy for Wakehurst is set by *Our manifesto for change 2021-2030*. The key points are:

“The mission of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (RBG Kew) is to understand and protect plants and fungi for the well-being of people and the future of all life on earth.”

There are five priorities:

- 1. To deliver science-based knowledge and solutions to protect biodiversity and use natural resources sustainably.*
- 2. To inspire people to protect the natural world.*
- 3. To train the next generation of experts.*
- 4. To Extend our reach.*
- 5. To influence national and international opinion and policy.”*

3.9 In a section named *“Understanding: Historic Estate or Botanic Garden?”* the 2024 Conservation Management Plan identified the most significant issue at Wakehurst Place as being the disconnect between the estate as the setting for the historic house and landscape, and the estate as the setting for Kew’s Wild Botanic Garden. It stated that this lack of relationship impacts negatively on the visitor experience across the entire site and suggested that by engaging visitors with the estate as a single entity rather than a disjointed experience between the landscape and mansion, the site would allow visitors to appreciate the historic house and outbuildings as well as the landscape.

3.9.1 The 2024 CMP suggested the principles behind decision-making about uses for the Mansion should include:

- Allowing maximum flexibility for Wakehurst’s changing needs.
- Avoiding damage to the historic fabric, or a loss of coherence in the appearance or sequences of rooms.
- Interpreting of the complex history of the house and its estate. The Mansion presents evidence of a number of historical episodes from the sixteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They are layered and overlapping and this makes possible a density and variety of interpretation that could be a very attractive feature of the experience of visiting the Mansion.

3.10 **CONDITION**

3.10.1 Having been unused for the last five years, the condition of the interior spaces that these proposals relate to can generally be described as currently being fair. The Billiard Room was subject to making good repairs and redecorations following the external roofing works, which involved limited structural roof repairs internally. The interpretation works will also involve some interior redecoration.

3.11 **SETTING**

3.11.1 The 2024 CMP stated that Mansion will always be considered part of the wider Wakehurst Place landscape and decisions about the Mansion must bear in mind its place in the landscape. Similarly, decisions about the landscape must bear in mind the significance of the Mansion. The Conservation Plan for the Landscape will provide the framework for these considerations.

4 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSALS

4.1.1 The proposals have been designed by Designmap, a multidisciplinary interpretation design agency who work in cultural environments including museums and historic places. Their work includes exhibitions at Westminster Cathedral, Deal Castle, the Natural History Museum, the Cutty Sark, as well as for RBG Kew elsewhere at Wakehurst.

4.2 AIM OF PROPOSALS.

4.2.1 The proposals respond to the Public History and Interpretation section of the CMP. This encourages the public use of the Mansion for historical interpretation by highlighting its rich and varied architectural history. This includes Victorian modernisation, early 20th-century decorative trends, 1930s architectural adaptations, and later 20th-century repurposing, with each phase illustrating broader themes in architectural and social history, offering multiple entry points for engaging storytelling. The CMP argues that the Mansion is well-suited to host diverse forms of public interpretation—such as exhibitions, digital media, and performances—extending beyond botanical themes to celebrate the building's evolving role and significance.

4.2.2 The National Trust have been kept up to date with the proposals and are fully supportive, and eager to see the Mansion reopened for visitors.

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSALS.

4.3.1 In the Chapel, the new exhibition space telling the story of Kew as a 'living laboratory'. This will include science and horticultural stories, 'Nature Unlocked', with a particular focus on the chapel being the site of the original Seed Bank. The interpretation will cover the 60 years of Royal Botanic Gardens Kew leasing Wakehurst, and the unique origins story of the globally recognised, Millennium Seed Bank.

4.3.2 The Billiard Room will be used to tell the history of the house, key occupants and the gardens through the landscape. It will include the place of the National Trust and Kew in that history. A billiard table will be the central interpretive element.

4.3.3 The vision for the Library is to create a welcoming, flexible space for visitors to relax, enjoy, pick up a book, and get the 'flavour' of some Mansion luxury. Light touch interpretation will be used to provide accidental finds, touches of historic stories, and a place to host speakers and guests. There will be potential collaborations with other Museums and Archives and potential to extend commercial space e.g. book selling.

4.4 The proposals have been designed to be freestanding and fully reversible. Each element has gone through a process of justifying its necessity, understanding the potential impact to the historic fabric and context, leading to the development of design to either mitigate this through the detailing or eliminating it all together. There are therefore now very few proposals remaining which require Listed Building Consent.

4.5 Drawings, details and descriptions of the proposals are provided separately and should be referenced in conjunction with the following sections.

5 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

5.1 The direct impact of each proposal that has been identified as being relevant to the Listed Building Consent Application has been described, justified and explained, with comments provided on any potential impact to significance, mitigations proposed, as well as an assessment of any positive impacts or benefits.

5.2 The indirect and positive impact of the proposals as a whole are also assessed.

5.3 GENERAL APPROACH TO MITIGATION

- 5.4 A consistent design approach has been taken across all elements of the proposals. Where possible, physical intervention has been avoided. Where necessary, any impact has been kept to a minimum and designed to be fully reversible. Fixings have been carefully considered to use areas of existing alteration, concealed locations, or fabric of lower significance. This approach reflects the building's varying levels of heritage significance and aims to meet interpretive objectives while protecting the Mansion's historic character.

5.5 CHAPEL PROJECTION FIELD

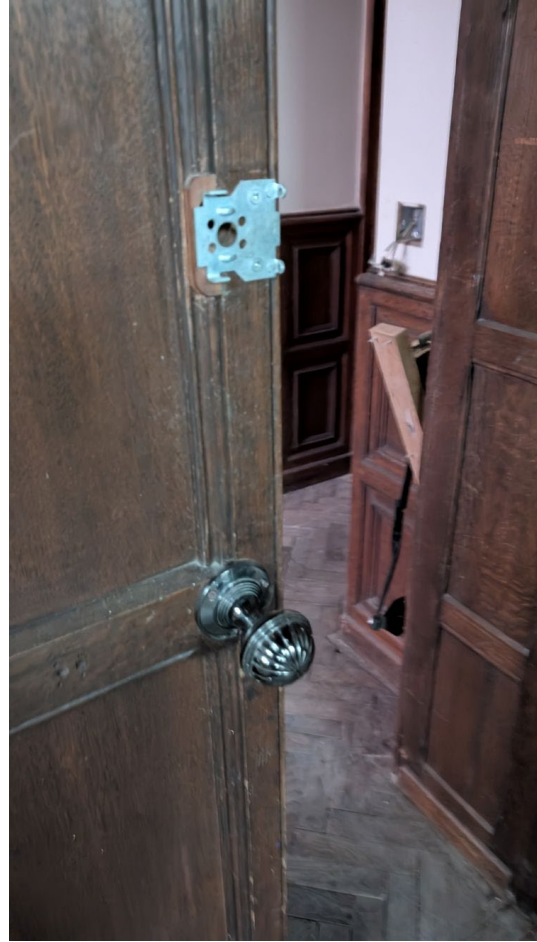
- 5.5.1 **Location.** The west wall of the Chapel, internally. This is a plain-painted masonry wall with a large off-centre protrusion, formed by the rear of the fireplace in the main hall. Two large timber angels are hung on the wall, level with the roof corbels above the protrusion. These are understood not to be original, having been moved to the mansion from elsewhere.
- 5.5.2 **Proposal.** A false section of wall is proposed to create a larger symmetrical protrusion into the room to provide a surface for projections. The boxing will be constructed with MDF front, side and top panels. New timber skirtings will be constructed to match the existing, installed around the base.
- 5.5.3 **Purpose/necessity explained.** The interpretation requires a level projection surface, avoiding smoothing out 'stepped' surface that would interfere with the legibility and effectiveness of the animation.
- 5.5.4 **Fabric affected and significance.** The Chapel has been designated as medium significance, but the wall itself has been assigned High Significance, as part of the Chapel and the Hall Fabric. Any historic fabric which may have been on this section of wall, e.g timber panelling relocated from elsewhere in the mansion, was removed during its conversion to laboratories in the 1970s and subsequently not reinstated and so the wall itself is of low aesthetic value. The large, plain, square edge timber skirtings are from the 1970s conversion. The roof structure and the timber angels will not be affected.
- 5.5.5 **Potential impact/harm & mitigation.** The proposal has been designed to be fully reversible. The need to stabilise the installation with fixings has been mitigated by proposing to fix a timber batten into the unseen top edge of the protrusion. Fixings have previously been made into the top of the protrusion by electrical installations, installing a socket outlet, as it is a very discreet location.
- 5.5.6 **Positive Impact/benefit.** Incorporating the existing skirting design will integrate the false wall into the rest of the room and so once decorated it will not appear as a modern construction. The scale and symmetry of the proposals are in keeping with the scale of the space and so it will sit more comfortably than the existing off-centre protrusion which relates to the room behind.



-2Chapel west wall

5.6 DOOR IRONMONGERY

- 5.6.1 **Location.** The doors between the East Entrance Hall, Library, Chapel and Billiard Room. The door between the Library and the North Entrance Hall.
- 5.6.2 **Proposal.** Replace modern ironmongery with new, whilst retaining original.
- 5.6.3 **Purpose/necessity explained.** The proposals require doors to be functional and some need to be lockable to close off spaces. The door from the North Entrance Hall to the Library needs to be held open whilst functioning as a fire door.
- 5.6.4 **Fabric affected and significance.** The doors are all 19th century timber panelled, installed either as part of the original 1870s construction of the east extension or, more likely, replaced as part of Aston Webb's 1890s reordering. The design of the doors integrates with the wall panelling. 19th century Dutch pull handle, rose fittings remain but their latch and lock cases have been removed, leaving voids. Poor quality door knobs have been installed on the chapel doors. Night latch fittings, with varying finishes, have been added. These appear to related to the 1970s conversion to laboratories but the panelling detail suggests that these replaced an earlier fitting. 20th century overhead door closers are generally in poor condition, having been crudely installed. Intumescent strips to fire doors are worn and no longer function.
- 5.6.5 **Potential impact/harm & mitigation.** The alterations and addition of varying ironmongery has harmed the appearance of the doors. There is a risk that introducing new locks could add to this cumulative negative impact if not carried out properly. The proposals are therefore careful to reuse existing location and fixing positions rather than add new ones. The 19th century handles and escutcheons will be retained. Poorly installed, mismatched and damaged modern ironmongery will be removed and replaced
- 5.6.6 **Positive Impact/benefit.** The overall effect of the proposals, including the removal and replacement of poor supplementary fittings, will be to rationalise the ironmongery, enhance the appearance of the doors, and improve their functionality.



-3 Left - Chapel Doors, poor quality doorknobs to be removed.

-4 Right - Library door, night latch and missing case.

-5 Below, closer to be removed.



5.7 BILLIARD ROOM PROJECTOR

- 5.7.1 **Location.** The collar beam of the Billiard Room's central truss.
- 5.7.2 **Proposal.** A full size billiard table, referencing the room's historic purpose, will form the exhibition centerpiece. It will contain a topographical model map of Wakehurst that will be animated with video projections housed in a traditional billiard lighting hood.
- 5.7.3 **Purpose/necessity explained.** A projector is proposed to project selectable linear animations onto a white relief landscape model set into the billiard table top. The projector needs to be secured over the table.
- 5.7.4 **Fabric affected and significance.** The room has been designated as medium significance. The trusses are a characteristic feature of the room and have a distinctive character. Previous internal wall linings have however negatively affected the trusses and the visible roof rafters by concealing their ends, with the effect of changing the proportion of the chamfer stops.
- 5.7.5 **Potential impact/harm & mitigation.** The intention is to clamp the projector around the beams without the need for any fixings into the fabric. If this is unable to adequately secure the fitting then 4No. M10/80 fixings are proposed as a backup solution. The impact would be mitigated by making the fixings into the top of the collar beam, where they cannot be seen. There have historically been fixings made in this location, including numerous nails which are still extant on all trusses.
- 5.7.6 **Positive Impact/benefit.** The benefits are for the proposals as a whole.



-6 Billiard Room truss.

5.8 BILLIARD ROOM LIGHTING

- 5.8.1 **Location.** The collar beams in the Billiard Room's trusses.
- 5.8.2 **Proposal.** New adjustable, focusable LED spotlights for the exhibition. The tracks require fixings to top side of beams.
- 5.8.3 **Purpose/necessity explained.** There is a need for improved, controlled lighting in the room in order to pick out the additional interpretation without flooding the room with light and interfering the with the impact of the projection.
- 5.8.4 **Fabric affected and significance.** As noted in 5.7.

5.8.5 **Potential impact/harm & mitigation.** As noted in 5.7, the impact would be mitigated by making the fixings into the top of the collar beam, where they cannot be seen. There have historically been fixings made in this location, including numerous nails and a previous installation of former prominent spot lights fixed in this location.

5.8.6 **Positive Impact/benefit.** The benefits are for the proposals as a whole.

5.9 BILLIARD ROOM FUSE BOARD

5.9.1 **Location.** The proposals relate to the north end of the Billiard Room, immediately to the west of the fireplace, below the existing shelf.

5.9.2 **Proposal.** To install a new fuse board and lighting controls under the shelf, enclosed in a timber cupboard.

5.9.3 **Purpose/necessity explained.** The fuse board and controls are required for the electrics and lighting of the new interpretation within the Billiard Room and adjacent spaces.

5.9.4 **Fabric affected and significance.** The room has been designated as medium significance with the wall itself assigned High Significance. The wall is part of the Aston Webb reconfiguration of the Downshire period east extensions by Boord between 1890 and 1903. The space under the shelf is framed and formally housed bookshelves.

5.9.5 **Potential impact/harm & mitigation.** The location connects to existing cable routes whilst being discreet and appropriate. The former use as a book shelf provides a frame, allowing the straightforward addition of doors to create a cupboard. The new doors can match the design of the adjacent panelled cupboard doors. The existing shelf over and the adjacent chimney breast return, prevents the effect of proud boxing in within the room. The new equipment and the cupboard will need to be secured to the wall but minimal fixings will be used. The installation and new doors will be fully reversible.

5.9.6 **Positive Impact/benefit.** The proposal will arguably bring a modest amount of visual harmony to this end of the room. The boxing in will conceal the electrical controls.



-7 Billiard Room, cupboard location.

5.10 INDIRECT IMPACT OF PROPOSALS

5.10.1 The proposals are all internal and so will not affect any views or the setting of the Mansion.

5.11 POSITIVE IMPACTS OF PROPOSALS AS A WHOLE

5.11.1 The proposals as a whole will provide the basis for the reopening of the Mansion to Wakehurst's visitors. They will enhance the presentation of the spaces and provide information on the former owners and uses of the building.

5.11.2 The content of the interpretation directly addresses what the CMP identified as the most significant issue at Wakehurst Place - the disconnect between the estate as the setting for the historic house and landscape, and the estate as the setting for Kew's Wild Botanic Garden. It responds to the opportunity identified in the CMP for the Mansion to host public interpretation on a range of topics extending beyond RBG's core themes of botany and sustainability, celebrating the social understanding of architecture and design by telling the stories of the building's owners and its modern uses, allowing visitors to appreciate the historic house as well as the landscape.

5.11.3 The Public Amenity Value will also be enhanced by the proposals as they will provide visitors with information and interest that makes up for the absence of "authentic" room settings and the feeling that the interior does not live up to the promise of the building's fine south façade.

5.12 MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT

5.13 The proposals have been designed to have a minimal impact on the fabric and with reversibility as a key consideration. There has been a process of reviewing and revising the proposals to omit as many elements as possible which require alterations to historic fabric, leaving only a small number of essential, minimal interventions. The magnitude of the impact is therefore considered to be very low.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The interpretation proposals for the ground floor of Wakehurst Mansion have been designed with regard for the building's historic significance and fabric. All proposed interventions have been developed to minimise physical impact and ensure reversibility, aligning with conservation principles and the guidance set out in the Conservation Management Plan.

6.2 The small number of elements requiring Listed Building Consent have been clearly identified, with each assessed individually for potential impact, necessity, and mitigation. These are minor, carefully considered interventions that will not result in any harm to the Mansion's heritage significance.

6.3 The proposals will enable the Mansion to be partially reopened to the public with a renewed interpretive offer that supports the objectives of both RBG Kew and the National Trust. The enhancements to public understanding and appreciation of the site's layered history represent a significant positive outcome for the building's future stewardship.

7 APPENDICES

7.1 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1.1 Wakehurst Place falls under the following Planning designations:

The High Weald AONB (National Landscape)

7.1.2 Listing: Mansion Grade I; Stables Grade II*; South Lodge and Gateway Grade II; Registered Park and Garden Grade II* (part)

The estate includes several Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designations due to its rare flora and fauna, but not in the historic core in which the Mansion is sited.

Area of Countryside Restraint

Archaeological Notification Area

Flood risk zone

Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area

7.1.3 The planning context for Listed buildings is set by the Mid-Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, as follows:

“Policy DP34

Listed Buildings

Development will be required to protect listed buildings and their settings. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

A thorough understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting has been demonstrated. This will be proportionate to the importance of the building and potential impact of the proposal;

Alterations or extensions to a listed building respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric. Proposals for the conversion or change of use of a listed building retain its significance and character whilst ensuring that the building remains in a viable use;

Traditional building materials and construction techniques are normally used. The installation of uPVC windows and doors will not be acceptable;

Satellite antennae, solar panels or other renewable energy installations are not sited in a prominent location, and where possible within the curtilage rather than on the building itself;

Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building;

Where the historic fabric of a building may be affected by alterations or other proposals, the applicant is expected to fund the recording or exploratory opening up of historic fabric.”

7.1.4 On 8 September 2023 a presentation was made to officers of Mid- Sussex District Council (Judy Holmes, Deputy Chief Executive and Lara Southam, Head of Regeneration and Sustainable Economy) by the Director and other staff of RBG Wakehurst. The aim was to explain RBG’s thinking about the overall development of the site and to discuss their comments and observations. The presentation, entitled “Transforming Wakehurst” (RBG Wakehurst) was about aspirations for consolidation, growth and transformation, rather than detailed discussion of specific Planning applications. The Wakehurst Senior Leadership Team presented a number of core topics covering the botanic garden, science and research, education, community and commercial activities. Information was presented on a number of future projects together with an explanation of how they would be prioritised, linked and phased.

The following future projects were presented:

- The masterplan
- The Silk Road Steppe
- The Walled Garden
- The Mansion and Stables
- Wild Play
- Havelock Farm
- Visitor Welcome Experience
- Improvements to parking and transport
- Science/Research
- Decarbonisation
- Wakehurst Conservation Research Nursery

7.2 STATUTORY LISTINGS

7.2.1 The statutory listings for the Mansion and other buildings in the study area are as follows:

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: I

List Entry Number: 1025764

Date first listed: 28-Oct-1957

List Entry Name: WAKEHURST PLACE

Statutory Address 1: WAKEHURST PLACE, TURNERS HILL ROAD

Details: ARDINGLY TURNERS HILL ROAD 1. 5405 Wakehurst Place TQ 33 SW 6/437 28.10.57 I

2. The property of the National Trust. Administered by Kew Gardens. This house was built by Sir Edward Culpeper in 1590. It originally formed a complete court-yard, but the south side of this was demolished before 1697. The east and west sides were shortened by two-thirds in 1848 and refaced on their south front with old stone. The house is therefore E-shaped today. It was restored by Sir Aston Webb for Sir William Boord in 1890. The whole of the south front was taken down, the stones numbered and replaced after careful restoration in 1938. The house is built of Sussex sandstone ashlar with a Horsham slab roof. 3-storeys. 7 windows. The wings have gables with kneelers, coping and ball finials at the apex and above the kneelers. In the centre is a smaller projection of 3-storeys surmounted by a similar scrolled gable. On its ground floor is the porch having a round headed doorway with Doric columns on pedestals with a cornice over, and the initials E. C. The first floor window above is flanked by similar Ionic pilasters with a triangular pediment over having a statue on each side of this. Between the porch and the wings are 2 gabled dormers on each side, the outer ones projecting slightly with a bay below them on ground and first floors. The inner face of the wings have similar dormers. Four-light casement windows with stone mullions and transoms. The north-east wing and the 1-storey wing on the east were added by the Marchioness of Downshire in 1869-70; and the north porch by Sir Aston Webb for lord Wakehurst in 1903. The interior has its contemporary staircase; also panelling, fireplaces and over-mantels, but the position of these has been moved in several cases. Manners Sutton, Speaker of the House of Commons, later Viscount Canterbury, and Sir Alexander Cockburn, Lord Chief Justice, were tenants of the house in the eighteen thirties.

Listing NGR: TQ3395031418