



WEST CAMBRIDGE

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

MERTON HALL FARMHOUSE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

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1. Executive summary

- 1.1.1 This heritage assessment considers the significance of the University of Cambridge Department of Veterinary Medicine, and Merton Hall Farmhouse. Produced for the University of Cambridge, the buildings are described and analysed against the criteria for assessing significance and national listing criteria. The Vet School consists of both teaching and animal hospital facilities, with Merton Hall Farmhouse a small nineteenth century cottage currently used as a multi-faith chaplaincy centre.
- 1.1.2 The Vet School, although of some historic interest and containing some features of interest, was essentially backward looking in its design when it was first built. The interior and exterior of the Vet School lack an integrated or cohesive stylistic character and are not of high quality compared to national trends for university building during the period, while neither the architect nor his practice were particularly renowned for their University buildings in Cambridge or nationally. The building has undergone a number of alterations and additions, which have detracted from its integrity and as a result from its significance. It is not of special interest and does not therefore meet the national listing criteria.
- 1.1.3 Merton Hall Farmhouse is of limited significance, being a standard building of its type and period. The farmhouse has been much altered and added to, while the overall quality of the building both in materials and style is low. Those changes which have been made have been detrimental to the historic integrity of the fabric.
- 1.1.4 Neither the Vet School nor Merton Hall Farmhouse derive much significance from their settings, with development and removal of buildings, and alterations to road configurations having changed their settings substantially.

2. Introduction

2.1 Outline

- 2.1.1 This report comprises a heritage assessment of the University of Cambridge Department of Veterinary Medicine, and Merton Hall Farmhouse. This heritage assessment has been produced for the University of Cambridge to help inform the future development of the West Cambridge facilities.
- 2.1.2 A visit to the buildings was undertaken on 27 June 2016, during which access to both the exteriors and interiors was provided.
- 2.1.3 This heritage assessment has been produced using professional judgement. The assessment of the significance of both the Department of Veterinary Medicine (also referred to as the Vet School) and the Merton Hall Farmhouse has been based on physical assessment of the building and archival research, and takes into account the established criteria for assessing significance identified in Historic England guidance¹.
- 2.1.4 The location of the Vet School and Merton Hall Farmhouse is shown on Figure 2.1.

2.2 Structure of the report

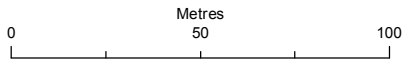
- 2.2.1 This heritage assessment identifies the historic background and development of the buildings of both sites, and their wider setting, describes the architectural and structural character of the Department of Veterinary Medicine and Merton Hall Farmhouse, and identifies the significance of each building.
- 2.2.2 The structure of the report is as follows:
- Introduction
 - Historic Background – including analysis of historic map regression and the development of the site and buildings
 - Building Description – including a description of both the exterior and interior of the buildings, plan form and setting
 - Significance Assessment – identifies what the significances of each building is related to its individual character and wider placement within historic building typology
 - Conclusion

¹ English Heritage, 2008, Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-principles-sustainable-management-historic-environment/conservationprinciplespoliciesguidanceapr08web.pdf/>



Department of Veterinary Medicine

- School of Veterinary Medicine
- Merton Hall Farm House



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Client
University of Cambridge

Project
West Cambridge Masterplan

Title
**Department of Veterinary Medicine
Location Plan**

Sheet Size	Original Scale	Designed / Drawn	Checked	Authorised
A3	1:2,000	SD	JW	MJ
		Date 2007/16	Date 2007/16	Date 2007/16

Drawing number	Rev
Figure 2.1	00

3. Historic background

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The character of the West Cambridge area has altered from being a largely rural area in the early twentieth century, to one combining fringe residential ribbon development on the edge of Cambridge along Madingley Road, and a number of the University of Cambridge science faculty departments. The Department of Veterinary Medicine forms one of the first post-war developments within the University expansion onto the land to the south of Madingley Road, while Merton Hall Farmhouse has had a longer presence in the landscape. Its immediate setting has changed considerably over the last century.

3.2 Historic mapping

3.2.1 The development of the Department of Veterinary Medicine and the West Cambridge area in general, and changes to the surroundings of Merton Hall Farmhouse, can be seen from historic map regression.

3.2.2 The First Edition OS County Series maps of 1888 shows the rural character of the area south of Madingley Road, with regular large post-enclosure field pattern and farmsteads (Figure 3.1). Merton Hall Farm is not labelled but is clearly visible, with the small farmhouse at the northern side of a large farmyard almost entirely enclosed by barns and outbuildings. The house was (as currently) double fronted and was probably one room deep. The map shows another farmstead, Church Hall Farm, to the east, while to the north of Madingley Road is a group of non-agricultural buildings, with the “Man Loaded With Mischief” beer house to the west, and the University Observatory to the north east.

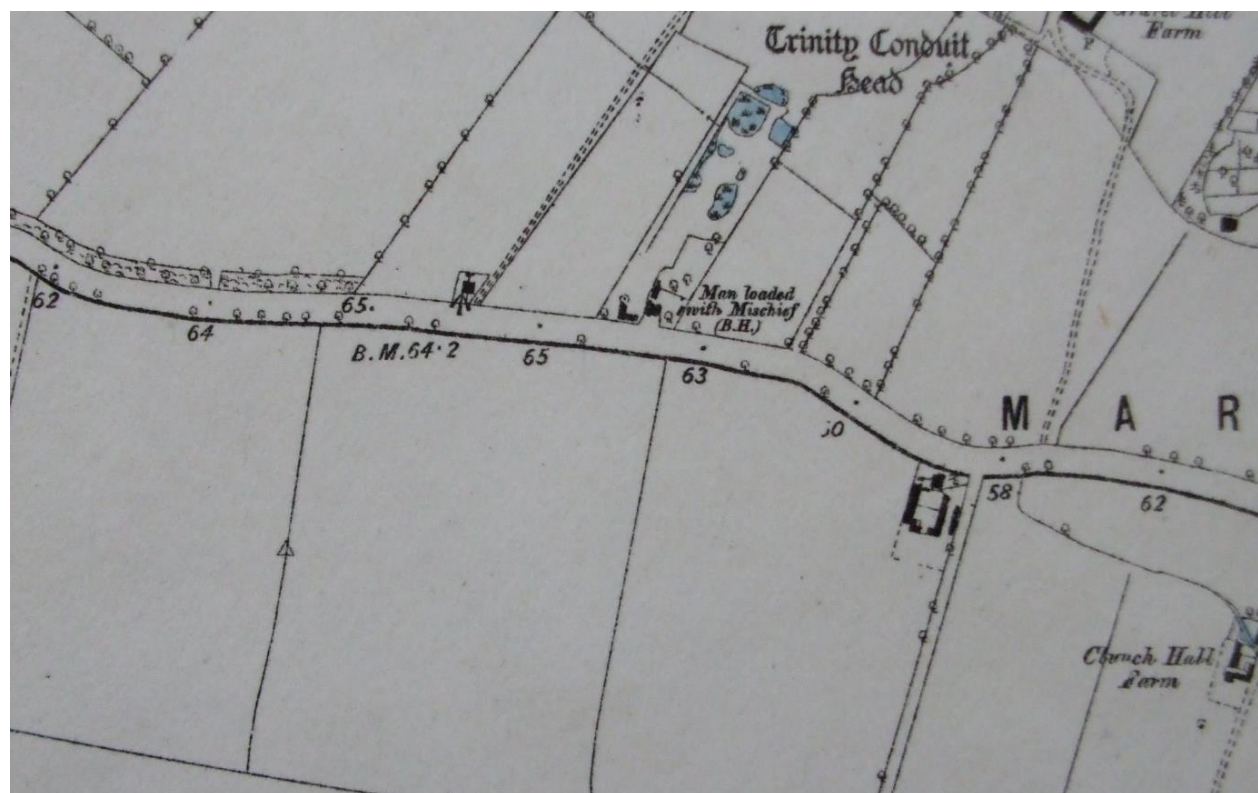


Figure 3.1 First Edition 1:10 560 Ordnance Survey County Map of Cambridgeshire 1888

3.2.3 Merton Hall Farm is first labelled as such on the 1904 OS County Series map. By the survey for the 1927 OS County Series map, the beer house had disappeared and the new dwellings of Merton Hall Cottages and Rosemary Cottages had been constructed along Madingley Road to the west (Figure 3.2). Additional buildings had been constructed or were under construction to the north of Madingley Road by the time further additions were made to this map in 1938. A number of small additional outbuildings to the south of Merton Hall Farm also appeared during this intervening period.

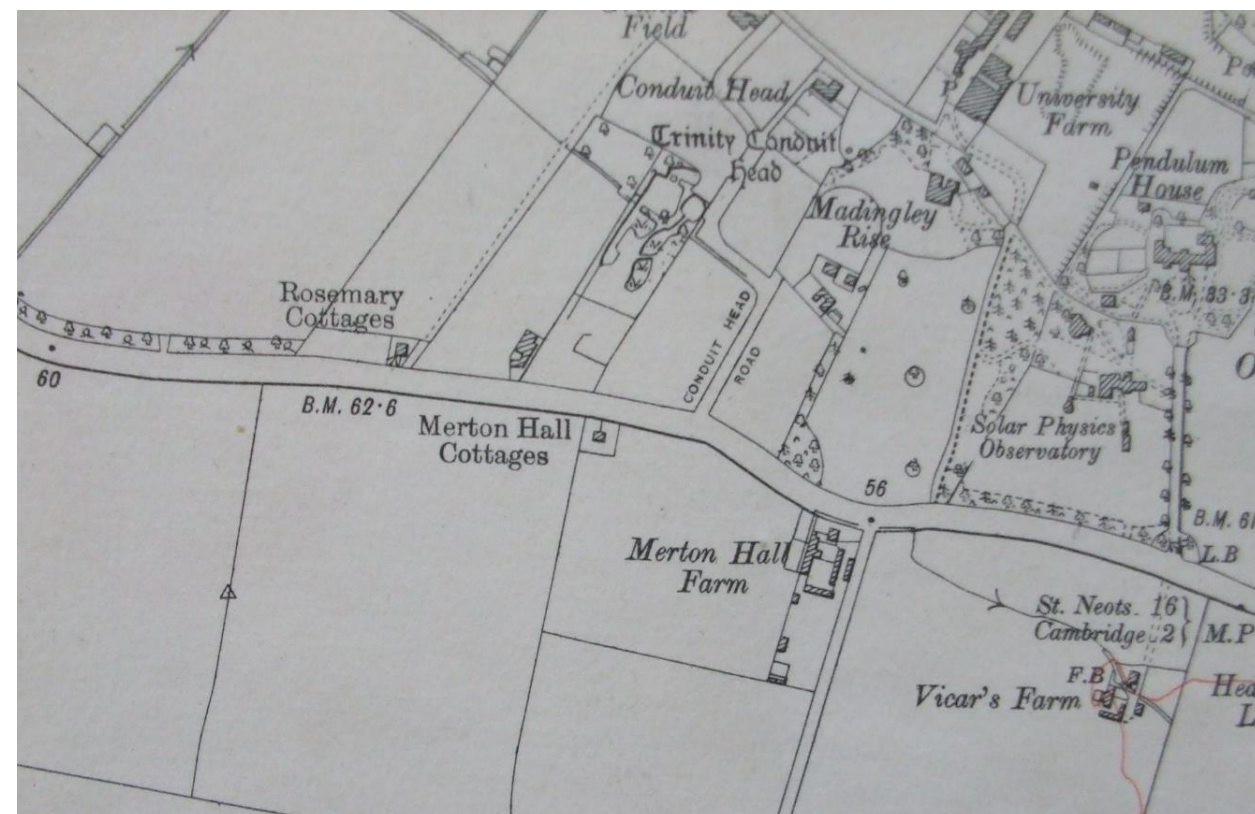


Figure 3.2 1:10 560 Ordnance Survey County Map of Cambridgeshire 1927

3.2.4 By the time of the OS mapping of the immediate post-war period, the development of the area to the south of Madingley Road by the University is becoming evident. The 1950 revisions of the mapping show a large building to the west of Merton Hall Farm, and another to the south (see Figure 3.3, the latter building is not visible in this Figure). It isn't until the 1970s that the Department of Veterinary Medicine first appears on the OS maps, labelled as the “University of Cambridge School of Veterinary Medicine” on the 1970 and 1972 maps (Figure 3.4). By this time, the map also shows change to Merton Hall Farm, coinciding with its acquisition by the University. A number of larger buildings have been constructed to the south of the farmhouse, with the distinctive rectangular arrangement of buildings around the farmyard, evident in previous mapping, no longer clearly visible. The maps show that a north-south aligned driveway was constructed from Madingley Road to the entrance of the Vet School to provide access, while the north-south aligned road to the east of Merton Hall Farm remained.



Figure 3.3 1:10 560 Ordnance Survey Map, with additions in 1950

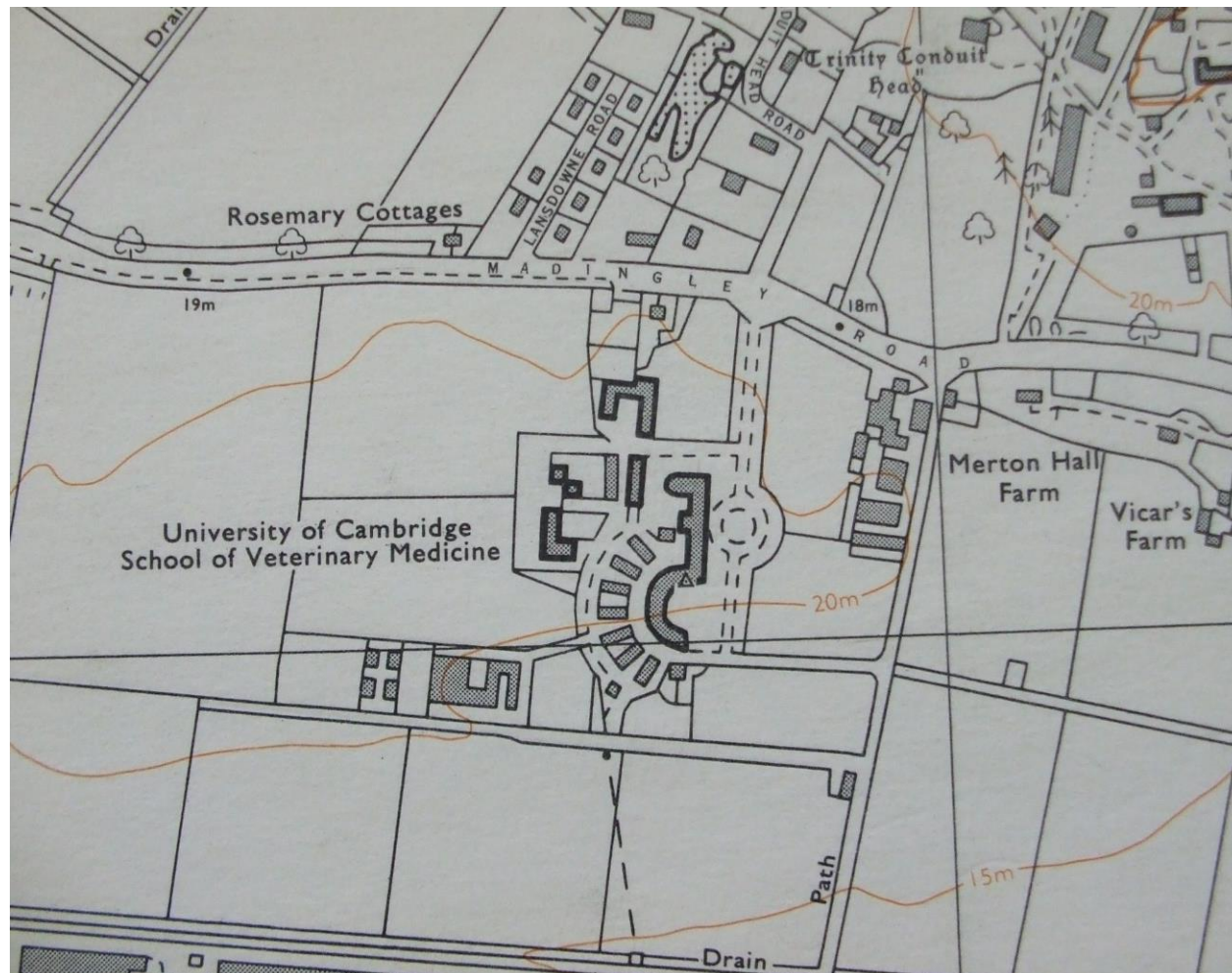


Figure 3.4 1:10 000 Ordnance Survey Map 1970

3.2.5 This access arrangement was retained through the 1980s and 1990s, with the current road configuration first appearing on maps dating from the early 2000s. The 1983 OS 1:10 000 map shows further development within the West Cambridge site, with two new groups of laboratory buildings constructed to the east and south east of Merton Hall Farm. To the west, the M11 has been built, aligned north-south, forming the western boundary of the wider site. The Vet School and Merton Hall Farm buildings are all unchanged from the earlier map, with the exception of a single additional building to the rear of the Vet School. The latest changes to the site appear to have taken place at the turn of the twenty-first century, with the most recent mapping showing the addition and alterations to buildings around the Vet School (see below), and the removal of the complex around Merton Hall Farmhouse; this latter development appears to have taken place circa 2000, with the buildings replaced by a single cruciform structure which remained until its demolition circa 2013/14. The reconfiguration of access into the site dates from the same time as the removal of the Merton Farm complex. JJ Thompson Avenue, the road to the east of Merton Hall Farm, became the main entrance from Madingley Road to the West Cambridge site generally, with a connecting road constructed between this and the original Vet School entrance driveway. The northern section of the original Vet School entrance driveway became redundant with this new connecting road providing the current approach to the Department. The original roadway still remains in situ.

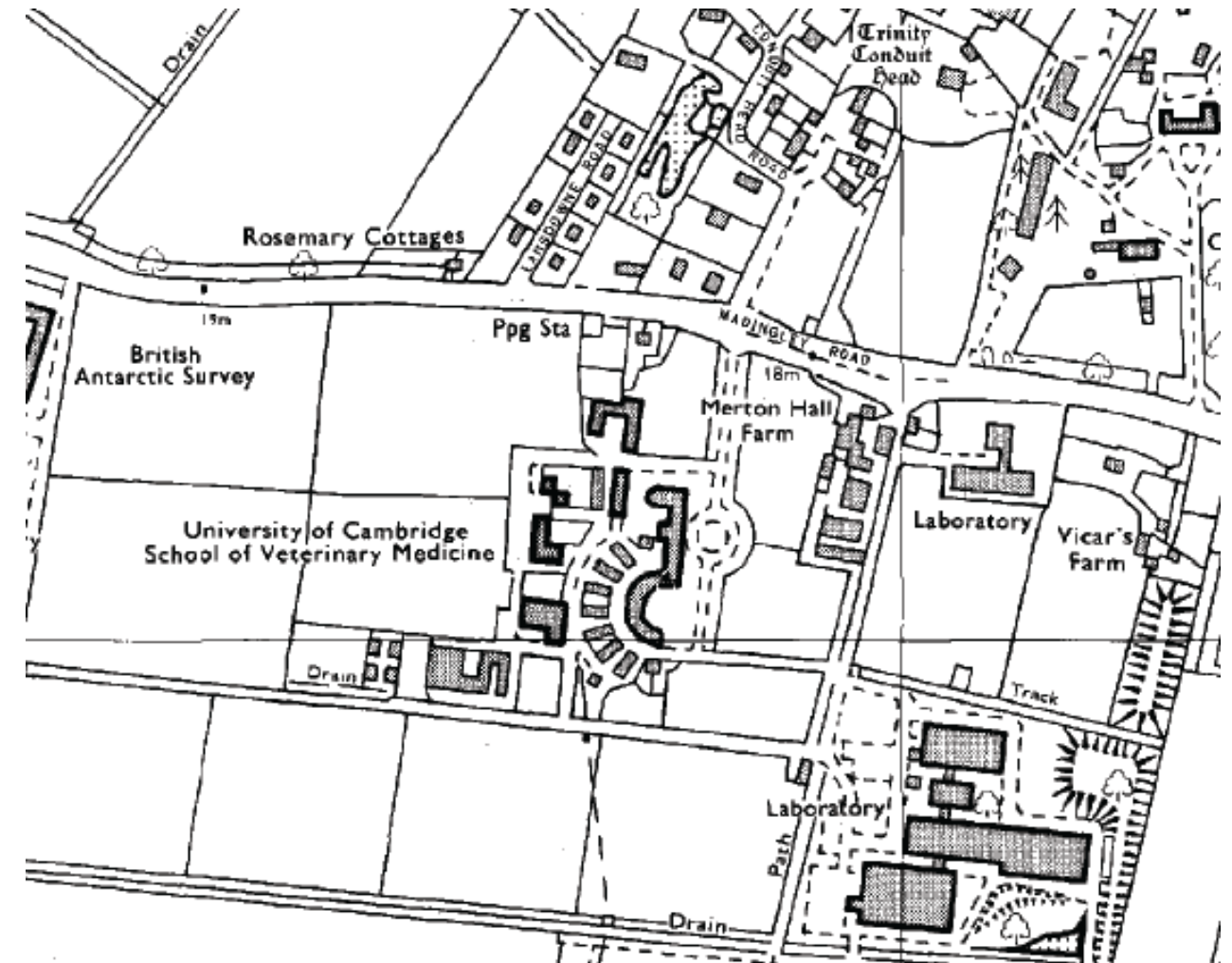


Figure 3.5 1983 OS 1:10 000 map

3.3 University of Cambridge Department of Veterinary Medicine

- 3.3.1 The origins of the Department of Veterinary Medicine date back to 1909, when field laboratories were set up by the Department of Pathology off Milton Road to study disease in larger animals. From 1935, the University had an agreement with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, through which it ran both a pre-clinical course, and a postgraduate diploma, and in 1944 the second report of the Loveday Committee recommended that the Vet School become an integral part of the University. Planning for the Vet School began in 1947, with the proposal for the institution of a School of Veterinary Medicine and a Department of Veterinary Medicine approved by the University the following year. The first Veterinary students entered the University in 1949, receiving their degrees as the main buildings of the Department were completed in 1955.
- 3.3.2 The opportunity to develop new science faculty facilities in the Cambridge West area had been identified by the University as early as the mid-1940s; documents from the County Planning Department in Cambridge from December 1949 state the intention for general university expansion, with land around Madingley Road identified as “University Reservation”.² The minutes of the University Financial Board from the time evidence the decision to utilise the land at Merton Hall Farm for the purpose of the new department. Letters from the first months of 1950 discuss and recommend terms to acquire the land belonging to the farm for the specific purpose of constructing the Vet School on the land.³
- 3.3.3 The architect of the Vet School was Ian Forbes of Messrs Forbes and Tate architects. It would appear that he was commissioned in 1949, with work commencing on the foundations and roads in June 1950, and the main building work on the superstructure commencing the following year. Correspondence between the Financial Board and the architect during the construction of the buildings highlights issues of delays and spiralling costs associated with the project. It was originally intended for the Department to be completed within two years, opening in 1953, however the project continued until the official opening finally took place in 1955. Even beyond that, documentary evidence suggests continued works through until 1957. By the time that all matters between the architect and the Department had been settled, in September 1957, the total cost of the building was noted to be considerably higher than originally planned.
- 3.3.4 It is evident from the building itself that there had been plans for an additional east wing to be constructed at the south end of the building, but this was never built. Given the financial and logistical difficulties apparent during the construction of the building, it is possible that this was the reason that no further major additions were made to the building. Nevertheless, internal alterations to the building were frequent, particularly from the late 1980s onwards. Between 1994 and 1999, alterations were made to a number of rooms within the main Teaching Block, and the Small Animal Hospital was developed, with a reception area created in the rotunda. The buildings to the rear of the Hospital Block were altered, with some new building, during the 2000s, with a large block combining three of the original stabling blocks to the rear of the Hospital constructed in 2000; another to the south of this built in 2005-6, and further additional buildings were constructed in 2008 and 2011.

² Cambridge County Planning Department, ‘The Planning of Cambridge’ Statement to the Press (1949), included within University Financial Board Minutes, University of Cambridge Archives (UA Min II 17).

³ Minutes of board meeting, 1st February 1950, University Financial Board Minutes, University of Cambridge Archives (UA Min II 17).

3.4 Merton Hall Farmhouse

- 3.4.1 The origins of Merton Hall Farm can be identified from historic mapping, and suggest that the farm was constructed during the mid-nineteenth century. The mapping included within Cambridge City Council’s ‘Cambridge Suburbs and Approaches: Madingley Road’ report⁴ shows that the farm was not shown on Baker’s Map of 1830, but as described above it does feature on the First Edition OS map of 1888.
- 3.4.2 The original building, a double fronted one-room deep farmhouse, formed the northernmost part of the farm complex, with an arrangement of additional buildings set around the rectangular farmyard to the south. At some point the house was extended to the rear, with the addition of a lean-to kitchen (to the south) and small room (to the north), and though it is unclear exactly when this was completed, the 1903 1:2500 OS County Series map appears to show this addition, or a predecessor.
- 3.4.3 As mentioned above, the farm and its land was acquired by the University for the construction of the Vet School in the early 1950s. The documentary evidence suggests that the farm was at that time under the ownership of Stetchworth Dairies, occupied by Messrs Strutt and Parker, with whom a settlement was agreed for the acquisition of the land⁵. A complex of buildings was developed to the south of the farmhouse following it being subsumed into the Vet School, though whether this involved the complete replacement of the original farmyard buildings, or whether original farm buildings were partly adapted is unclear. The date of the further addition of a rear extension to the building, today housing an ablutions room and toilet facilities, is unclear, but it may have coincided with the further changes to the south in early 2000s, consisting of the removal of the southern building complex and construction of a cruciform building, as described above. This cruciform building appears to have been a temporary catering facility, and was itself demolished in 2013/14.
- 3.4.4 The farmhouse formed part of the Department of Veterinary Medicine while the complex to the south was in use, but has since been taken over as the University multi-faith chaplaincy centre.

⁴ Cambridge City Council, ‘Cambridge Suburbs and Approaches: Madingley Road’ (2009), Architectural History Practice for Cambridge City Council.

⁵ Minutes of board meeting, 1st February 1950, University Financial Board Minutes, University of Cambridge Archives (UA Min II 17).

4. Building description

4.1 University of Cambridge Department of Veterinary Medicine

- 4.1.1 The main complex of the Department of Veterinary Medicine is made up of two interconnected buildings. To the north the main Teaching Block contains the lecture theatres, departmental reception and offices, a library and a number of laboratories. To the south, a curved Hospital Block with a central rotunda houses the veterinary hospital facilities, which currently operates as a Small Animal Hospital, with examination rooms, medical theatre and additional office facilities. It has an end lodge at its south end, a detached lodge and a link detached stables.
- 4.1.2 The building is not constructed in any one evident or integral architectural style. Externally the Hospital is essentially classical, with elements such as the portico, rotunda and largely symmetrical façades, with some art deco decorative elements. The interior is more modernist, with some art deco influenced features. For much of the building, form appears to follow function, with key elements expressed externally, although with a definite attempt to conform to classical norms.
- 4.1.3 The Department opened the building in 1955, though construction had begun on the buildings in 1951, with the building bearing the date 1953 on some of its rainwater heads, (evidence of the intended completion date). Throughout its life the building has seen a number of alterations and additions, mostly internal, notably through a period in the mid-1990s. Additions were made to the rear of the Small Animal Hospital to introduce more modern theatre and consultation room facilities in the 2000s and there were alterations internally, especially within the rotunda.
- 4.1.4 The architect of the Vet School was Ian Forbes of Messrs Forbes and Tate. Forbes doesn't appear to have been particularly affiliated to the University, nor was he or the Forbes and Tate practice prolific within other Cambridge departments or colleges during the post-war period.
- 4.1.5 The Vet School is constructed of red brick, with an internal structure of steel beams encased in concrete. Portland stone is used for decorative or individual architectural features, such as the portico entrance, parapet and classically detailed panels within the southern façade of the Teaching Block. Reinforced concrete is also used for internal partitions, and the staircases.
- 4.1.6 The eastern façade of the building is designed as the front of the department, with the western façade the rear. The Hospital Block is attached to the south west corner of the Teaching Block and extends to its south.
- 4.1.7 The Teaching Block has a central longitudinal corridors on the ground, first and second floors. With short central corridors between full width rooms within the attic. The entrance is central to the building on the east façade and perpendicular to this corridor. Off the central corridor, the building is one room deep on either side, with the exception of the library space, which forms a larger space extending to the rear of the building in the centre of the west façade. At the northern end of the Teaching Block is a lecture theatre space, which rises to the height of two storeys, and a west wing of a single storey, extending back from the main western rear elevation; here the corridor continues in the centre of the building turning west, with lecture theatres on either side, and terminating in the semi-circular Senior Common Room (SCR).

- 4.1.8 The curved Hospital Block wing leads directly off the southern end of the Teaching Block, on its west side. Offices and examination rooms are located off a top lit central corridor. In the centre of the Hospital Block, and forming the modern day public entrance and reception area for the Small Animal Hospital, is a rotunda, which is two storeys, as opposed to the one storey space throughout the rest of the 1950s elements of the hospital block. This is aligned slightly to the east of the central corridor, with the corridor cutting through the rear, western half of the rotunda. To the rear of the Hospital Block is additional consultation and theatre space, constructed at the turn of the twenty-first century.
- 4.1.9 At the south end of the curved Hospital Block is a two storey lodge style pavilion, its upper floor is within its attic and lit by dormers. There is a similar, probably later, detached lodge to its west. There is a link detached 1950s stable block to the south west of the Hospital Block, accessed from the curved corridor towards its south end.
- 4.1.10 The east façade of the Teaching Block is designed as the principal façade, with the entrance to the department central to it (Figure 4.1). The façade consists in total of thirty-two bays, though these are not all regularly spaced. The majority of the façade is three storeys with an additional storeys housed within the attic. The southern three bays rise to five storeys, and the northern three are two storeys with double height windows, housing a lecture theatre. The façade is symmetrical in its centre, between the two staircase bays. This central part has fifteen bays consisting of a central three bays over the central portico, with arched windows on the first floor, with six bays either side. The ground floor has a blind bay on each side to accommodate the central portico and stepped entrance. Beyond the staircase bays at either end of the three storey section, the façade differs. At the north end are three regular window bays, the third storey of which are blind, to the north of which is the lecture theatre. At the south end of the building, to the south of the southern staircase bay, are five regular window bays with an additional blind bay to the south, beyond which is the five storey section, of three bays (the southern-most of them blind).



Figure 4.1 Vet School Teaching Block, principal east entrance façade

- 4.1.11 The majority of the windows in the east façade of the Teaching Block are uniform three light metal frame windows, with only a small number of exceptions. The central three bay section has arched six light iron frame French windows on the first floor, with decorative tympanum ironwork. The staircase bays have curved fifty light windows, continuous from the ground floor to the second floor. The northern lecture theatre has double height, arched metal frame windows, all with decorative arched brickwork above. The southern-most lecture theatre window has an external door at ground floor level. The windows of the southern five storey section are described below. On the first and second floor of the main façade, continuous stone sills run under the windows of the six bays flanking the central three bays, while the windows of the central bays and the ground floor windows either side have their own individual sills.
- 4.1.12 The staircase bays have flat fronted gables, either side of which the roofs have overhanging eaves with a plain eaves cornice. There are Portland stone parapets on the southern five storey section and the northern lecture theatre section, while there is also Portland stone on the gables of the staircase bays, with cornice returns below. The roof has five regularly spaced curved shallow vented dormers. The gabled roof is slate covered and the southern and northern ends of the building have flat roofs. The façade features rectangular section galvanized zinc rainwater downpipes, with the rainwater hopper heads embossed with the date '1953'.
- 4.1.13 Below the level of the first floor windows, a brick plinth runs the length of the façade between the staircase bays. Beyond the staircase bays, the plinth drops to ground floor level. Either side of the middle five and a half bays, the lower courses of brickwork have dogtooth decoration. This motif is also used on the corners of the east façade, and on the sides and rear of the building, as described below.
- 4.1.14 The portico entrance is slightly concave, complementing the entrance driveway in front of the building. The portico has four Doric columns with entasis, and Doric pilasters on the wall of the building. The entablature has a plain frieze and simple architrave and cornice. The portico roof is flat, with coffered soffits. A wrought iron decorative balustrade between the columns has a modern flowing basket motif. The shallow portico steps are granite, with curved outer edges. Either side of the steps, at ground level, are decorative paved roundels.
- 4.1.15 There have been few additions or alterations to the eastern façade of the Teaching Block. The external door to the lecture theatre at the north end of the façade has been added to the previous window, with the lower brickwork reconfigured.
- 4.1.16 On the north façade of the lecture theatre at the north end of the Teaching Block are three blind arches, reflecting the arched window openings on its east façade. These have Portland stone sills, with recessed features in the brickwork between the arches. The plinth on the north elevation is at the same height as at the ends of the façade, i.e. at the bottom of the blind arches.
- 4.1.17 The curved western façade of the semi-circular SCR at the rear of the building (Figure 4.2) has decorative recesses with staggered brick, and the plinth and dogtooth decoration are at the same height as on the northern lecture theatre. The façade has two metal frame glazed doors, with five nine light metal frame windows, one on either side of each door, and three located centrally. Each window has a stone sill and decorative brick flat arches. A decorative frieze of tiles beneath raised brickwork, and a small moulded Portland stone cornice, form the parapet. Between the windows are recessed features, matching those on the north façade of the lecture theatre. The hoppers on the downpipes are somewhat more decorative than those on the other façades, reflecting the status of the room.



Figure 4.2 Vet School Teaching Block, west elevation of Senior Common Room (SCR)

- 4.1.18 The rear of the Teaching Block reflects the front façade in its style and expression. For example, two slight projections in the brickwork match the bays of the staircase bays on the front façade. The windows are largely the same, though a considerable amount of metal ducting, vents and fan cabinets have been added. The expression of the western exterior of the library is the same as that of the lecture theatre, with decorative recesses in the brickwork, dogtooth decoration on the lower parts of the plinth and a Portland stone parapet. There are double height metal frame windows in each of the three bays, with the middle one incorporating a glazed metal frame door.
- 4.1.19 The five storey south section of the Teaching Block is treated slightly differently to the rest of the building. This is partly due to the original intention to build a three storey eastern wing extending from the front of the façade, and is indicated by the staggered brick courses running vertically up the eastern façade, below the fourth floor (Figure 4.3). The brickwork on the lower three floors between the staggered wall stubs is also of a cheaper quality than elsewhere, lighter in colour with a less textured surface and with concrete string courses between floors. The flat arched windows have uncut bricks and staggered soffits, while the metal framed windows themselves are larger than those of the rest of the east façade, aside from on the third floor.



Figure 4.3 Vet School Teaching Block, southern section east façade. Note the poor quality staggered brickwork, which detracts from the façade

- 4.1.20 The three bay south façade of the building, at the south end of the five storey section, has different decoration from the other elevations (Figure 4 4). The ground floor is faced with Portland stone rather than brickwork, with five classically styled panels either side of and between the windows, and a plain entablature below the first floor windows. Above this the façade is brick. The third floor has arched French windows, leading onto a stone balcony, with white painted iron railings. There are metal tie plates on the south and west facades of the five storey section, above the third floor windows.



Figure 4.4 Vet School Teaching Block, southern section south façade

- 4.1.21 The front, east façade of the Hospital Block (Plate 5) has nine bays either side of the central rotunda, with the northern of a pair of lodges at the southern end of the building, and the curved façade connecting to the Teaching Block at the northern end. The central rotunda has three structural bays on the front facade. The hospital has a stone cornice on the wings, which forms a string course across the rotunda. The brickwork of the Hospital Block is the same throughout; laid in a variation of Flemish bond with two stretchers between each header, so that the headers sit over the perpend between stretchers (Monk Bond).



Figure 4.5 Vet School Hospital Block, principal east façade

- 4.1.22 On the rear elevation of the Hospital Block the brickworks has single course recessed brickwork bands. Above the tops of the windows is a reinforced concrete band that rises to the flat roof. The additions to the rear of the hospital date from the turn of the twenty-first century. They are constructed from red brick with recessed decorative red brick, reflecting the original 1950s design. The bricks are machined but with a 'handmade' looking finish.
- 4.1.23 A three bay classical pavilion lodge is located at the south end of the Hospital Block. It is one of a pair, the other being detached opposite it. The lodge has a Portland stone eaves cornice, with a fully hipped stone tile covered roof. A central circular cupola with a centaur weather vane sits atop the roof. The doors and windows are original. The east façade of the lodge has a central window with a semi-circular head rising, as a dormer feature through the roof, with the cornice following the window head.
- 4.1.24 To the rear of the Hospital Block are a number of stable blocks, the majority of which have been subsumed into larger subsequent buildings or have been altered. One, behind the south end of Hospital Block, remains seemingly largely unaltered since the 1950s. It consists of five individual stables, partitioned internally, with wooden stable doors. The central three stables have two windows, with each stable on the end of the building having just one. A large wooden double door entrance is in the centre of the east elevation. The roof has a plain truss, with steel ties and tiles, and overhanging eaves with concrete lintels. Atop the roof are four concrete vents.

Interior

- 4.1.25 The Teaching Block's lead into an entrance lobby has glazed metal framed doors to front and back and a polished stone floor. There is a reception window on its north side with a reception office behind.

- 4.1.26 The main 'L' shaped central corridor on the ground floor has with timber doors. The upper panels of those to the main staircases are glazed. The corridor has parquet flooring, coloured in a two-shade pattern (see Figure 4.6). Throughout the ground floor there are plain skirting boards. The building has no internal cornices and the ground floor ceilings have visible concrete-encased steel beams. There is additional modern plastic electrical ducting high on the walls in most of the building. In the single storey west wing the corridor has circular skylights. At the southern end of the ground floor corridor a new glazed brick curved wall has been added. The doors within the building are of various types, most of which are not original.

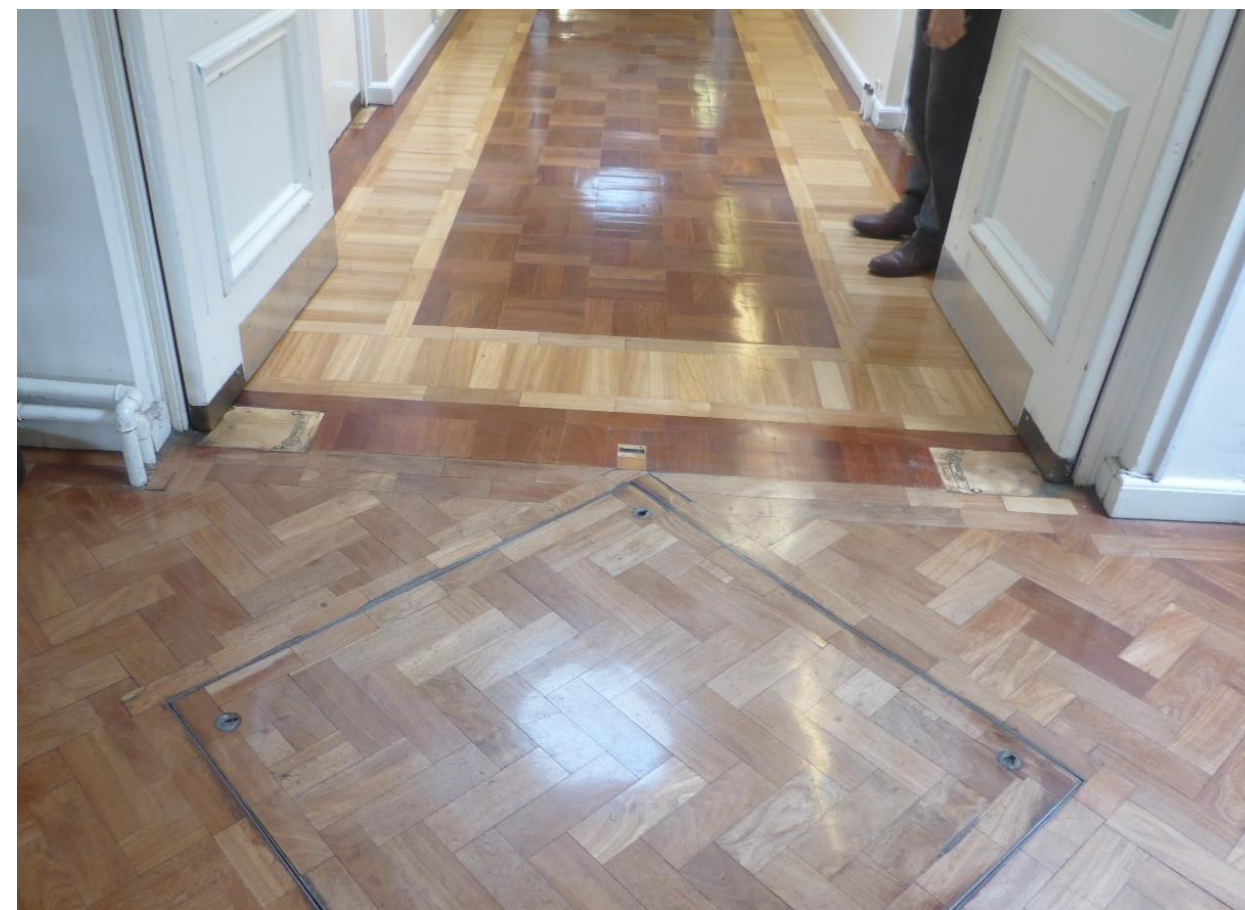


Figure 4.6 Vet School Teaching Block, parquet flooring showing difference in style between the main corridor (background) and SCR (foreground)

- 4.1.27 The SCR has herringbone parquet flooring, different in style from that in the corridors as shown in Figure 4.6. The room has circular skylights, in the same style as the west wing corridor, with metal framed windows around the curved wall. Timber double doors, with glazed panels, provide access from the corridor, and have been altered. Internal elements, are somewhat modernist style, and modern services have been installed, in an unsympathetic manner. The polystyrene ceiling tiling is broken up by modern strip lighting, installed in the mid-1990s.

4.1.28 The lecture theatre at the northern end of the ground and first floor of the Teaching Block (Plate 7) is original whereas those adjacent to it along the west wing corridor have been altered considerably or are completely modern installations. A number of original features have been retained within the lecture theatre. The room has metal tall framed windows on the east side of the room with matching high level arched windows on the western wall. Sound-absorbent polystyrene wall and ceiling tiles may be original, as may be the cork flooring. The tiered seating has tongue and groove horizontally set boarding, with spring tip-up seats and long desks. There is an original projector pit in the middle of the seating. The end of each row of seating has recessed panels. To the rear of the lecture theatre, high level double doors give access to the first floor corridor. Store rooms are located on either side of the podium, designed to direct views inwards towards the lecturer and blackboards. The timber desk on the podium and the blackboard both appear to be original. The lighting on the ceiling dates from the mid-1990s, as with that in the SCR, while modern additions have been made to the podium end, with white boards, additional projection facilities and sound system installed.



Figure 4.7 Vet School Teaching Block, lecture theatre

4.1.29 Two identical (though mirrored) spiral staircases with central wells, providing access through all floors of the Teaching Block, are located on the east side of the main corridor. Each are lit by vertically proportioned twenty light curved metal framed windows, continuous to the height of the stairwell (Figure 4.8). The staircases themselves are constructed of thin concrete, with tubular steel banisters, the uprights of which are decorated with finial vine motifs, each folding back onto the previous upright. Each stair has terrazzo style inserts. Originally, the staircases would have opened directly onto the corridors, but recently glazed timber framed partitions and double doors have been added. The partitions are curved to match the curve of the staircase.



Figure 4.8 Vet School Teaching Block, northern staircase

4.1.30 Located centrally on the ground floor, opposite the entrance lobby, and projecting outwards to the rear of the building, is the departmental library. This is in its original position, but it was heavily reconfigured in the year 2000. The original narrow first floor gallery and spiral staircase were removed, and a central straight staircase added, with the first floor being extended over most of the space (Figure 4.9). This has compromised the sense of space and restricted the light which would have been offered by the original design. A glazed partition with glazed doors provide access from the main corridor. The first floor ceiling has a central longitudinal north-south arch with square skylights. The glazed timber double doors upstairs are original, as are the metal framed windows.



Figure 4.9 Vet School Teaching Block, library, showing altered configuration with new first floor and staircase

- 4.1.31 The ground floor offices are of uniform plain style though they vary in size. A number of these have been refurbished and have lost their original features. Those retaining original features have a herringbone parquet floor, similar to that in the SCR, and plain skirting boards. Metal framed windows are found in most of the offices. Even those which retain their original windows and floor have been heavily altered with the unsympathetic addition of modern service ducting. The toilets off the ground floor corridor retain a number of their original features, including the timber and metal framed cubicles, and terrazzo and tiled flooring. At the southern end of the corridor is a lift, providing access across all floors of the Teaching Block; the original lift has been replaced.
- 4.1.32 The first floor corridor is similar to that on the ground floor, though the floor cover is of cork tiles, rather than parquet timber. The skirting boards are simple, although they have a simple ovolo profile top moulding. The offices off this corridor include larger board rooms and meeting rooms as well as smaller offices, as well as aforementioned access to the staircases, library and lecture theatre. The configuration of the first floor is largely unchanged from its original layout. The slightly more elaborate skirting boards reflect the slightly higher status of the rooms compared with those on the ground floor. This difference is status accords with classical norms.
- 4.1.33 The second floor has been sub-divided into individual laboratories, with glazed timber partitions installed along the corridor. The corridor is no longer continuous. The use of the space as laboratories has led to elements being modernised, with the floor possibly replaced, and further services installed. The skirting boards along the surviving areas of the central corridor are similar to those on the first floor.

- 4.1.34 The third floor is essentially attic space, which has been adapted to house offices and laboratory space, with storage within roof voids around the outside of the floor. At the southern end of the floor on the west side of the building, are external original emergency metal spiral fire escape staircases. A variety of door types are found on this floor, most of which are not original. Within the roof void space, the steel I-beams, elsewhere encased in concrete, are visible, as is the timber roof structure.
- 4.1.35 On the ground floor, the central longitudinal curved corridor of the Hospital Block (Figure 4.10) is lit by a continuous three light wide recessed basement pavement type skylight. Terrazzo flooring extends the length of the corridor, with swept margins to facilitate cleaning; above are eight courses of glazed wall tiles extending to dado height. The junction of the walls and ceiling of the corridor have a slight curve. The timber glazed doors from the corridor of the Teaching Block into the Hospital Block are original. The offices along the corridor would have originally all had parquet flooring, though this has been removed in a number of them for reasons of medical hygiene.



Figure 4.10 Vet School Hospital Block, main corridor

4.1.36 The rotunda at the centre of the Hospital Block is currently the reception area for the Small Animal Hospital, and has been reconfigured from its original spatial arrangement, with a galleried first floor added across part of the space, supported on steel posts though the reception area itself remains largely open (Figure 4.11). The rotunda is constructed of reinforced concrete, with eight frame posts visible and a reinforced concrete beam extending around the space between the low and high level windows. Towards the top of each frame post is an original metal ring, used for supporting animals, when the hospital was used for larger animals (the space may have originally been used for equine examination). The current reception desk is below the galleried first floor. There is a large octagonal ceiling skylight, with metal framed triangular lights and a central boss and the inserted first floor is further lit by the original clerestory triple twelve light windows between the frame posts above the taller ground floor windows lighting.



Figure 4.11 Vet School Hospital Block, rotunda interior, showing alterations made for accommodation of the Small Animal Hospital reception area

4.1.37 To the rear of the rotunda, on the west side of the central corridor, is a modern addition that provides more examination rooms and theatres. The theatre areas to the west of the corridor within the Hospital Block rise higher than the level of the corridor and are lit by arched brick high level windows.

4.2 Merton Hall Farmhouse

4.2.1 Merton Hall Farmhouse, is a small mid nineteenth century three bay, two storey double fronted farmhouse, originally one room deep, with later twentieth century additions to the rear. The building is built of handmade Suffolk white brick, laid in Flemish bond. The building's front, east façade is its principal elevation, with a central entrance door (Figure 4.12). The ground floor has a central corridor, running front to back, with a main room either side at the front of the building. Behind the south room is a kitchen, within a lean-to. Behind the northern front room is small office. To the rear of both the south front room and the hallway is the triple winder staircase. A later addition to the rear consists of an ablutions room. The first floor contains three rooms: two larger rooms over the front rooms on the ground floor, and a small room above the ground floor entrance hallway. There is an attic within the roof space.



Figure 4.12 Merton Hall Farmhouse, principal east façade. Note the additions of vents, detracting from the quality of the façade

4.2.2 The front façade is symmetrical, with four light sash windows under brick flat arches and stone sills beneath. The front door has a simple bracketed and weatherboarded gabled porch, with a slate roof. The doorway has a much worn York stone threshold. Vents have been added to front brickwork, an addition which involved the removal of sections of the original brickwork; the vent openings and their reflective finish detract from the façade.

- 4.2.3 The southern and western elevations show evidence of the additions and alterations made to the building (Plate 13). The kitchen lean-to has red brick repairs, a red brick string course, and is faced in machine made brick, with a clear straight joint between it and the original house. A poor quality timber casement window is located in the southern elevation, which contrasts with the sash windows in the original house. A simple timber plank door provides access into the western ablution room extension.



Figure 4.13 Merton Hall Farmhouse from the south west. Note the brickwork showing additions to the rear of the original building

- 4.2.4 The farmhouse has plastic downpipes, and two phases of damp proof course are evident: one of slate, dating to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, and one post-1956. The roof cover is slate, and the building appears to have been recently re-roofed. The extension to the rear housing the ablutions room has concrete ridge tiles along the roof. Small stacks, each with two non-cowled pots, are located on the gable ends.
- 4.2.5 The ground floor corridor is unadorned, with a simple skirting board, and painted later beams above. The front room to the north has a single sash window and a plain timber fireplace architrave, with a timber mantelpiece. The room has a picture rail, no cornice, and a simple skirting board. The door is not original. The doorframe is original and has an iron latch plate but has been heavily repaired. To the west of the fireplace is a wooden panel cupboard which contains the central heating system but no shelves. The southern front room is of similar character and has a modern brick replacement fireplace. Unlike the northern room opposite it has two windows, one in the east wall and one in the south. The timber panelled door from the corridor is possibly original. A sliding door provides access to the kitchen from the southern front room. A small room, currently the chaplaincy office, is located to the rear of the ground floor on the north side. This is very simple with modern skirting boards, a timber window, and no cornice or picture rail. To the rear of the ground floor is the toilet and ablutions room (Figure 4.14), which includes a metal trough for Muslims to wash their feet prior to prayer.



Figure 4.14 Merton Hall Farmhouse, ground floor ablutions room to the rear, showing trough for foot washing

- 4.2.6 The stairs have a cupboard underneath, which appears to be original, although the door is nailed shut. The staircase is timber, with plain newel posts. On the first floor the northern room has a fireplace with a nineteenth century cast iron register grate, with a timber architrave, without a mantelpiece (Figure 4.15). The southern room has a better cast iron fireplace, with a 19th century register grate, implying that this was possibly the principal bedroom, with a timber mantelpiece, though still with a plain skirting board. As with the room below, this is the only room on the first floor to have two windows. The small room, above the ground floor corridor, has a late nineteenth century sash window, and no features of note.



Figure 4.15 Merton Hall Farmhouse, first floor front room (north), showing register grate fireplace

- 4.2.7 Currently used by the University of Cambridge as the multi-faith chaplaincy centre. This use has driven some of the later additions to the interior of the building, including the trough for foot washing in the rear ground floor room.

5. Significance assessment

- 5.1.1 The significance of an historic building or structure can be assessed against recognised criteria, related to various factors of the building's design and history.
- 5.1.2 The English Heritage (now Historic England) guidance document¹ outlines a number of aspects of significance. These comprise:
- **Evidential** value: derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity
 - **Historical** value: derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present
 - **Aesthetic** value: derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place
 - **Communal** value: derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory
- 5.1.3 Assessing the significance of an historic building not only considers these elements, but also an understanding of how the building has evolved, what values are related to it and by whom, and the how significance may be derived from setting and context.
- 5.1.4 The criteria used to establish whether a building classifies for statutory listing are set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended). These are that the building must be of "special architectural or historic interest". In relation to these criteria the *Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings*⁶ also elaborates on these criteria. :
- **Architectural interest.** The extent to which a building is of importance in its architectural design, decoration or craftsmanship, for example nationally important examples of particular buildings types and techniques (e.g. buildings displaying technological innovation) and significant plan forms;
 - **Historic interest.** The extent to which a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural or military history and/or have close historical associations with nationally important people. (This is usually alongside quality of interest in the physical fabric itself).
- 5.1.5 The guidance then goes onto set out further principles for the selection of listed buildings:
- **Age and rarity.** The older a building is, and the fewer the surviving examples of its kind, the more likely it is to have special interest. For example, before 1700, all buildings that contain a significant proportion of their original fabric are listed; after 1840, due to larger numbers of buildings constructed and that have survived, greater selection is necessary (para. 12)
 - **Aesthetic merit.** The appearance of a building – both its intrinsic architectural merit and any group value (para 13)
 - **Selectivity.** A building may be listed primarily because it represents a particular historical type in order to ensure that examples of such a type are preserved. (para .14)

⁶ Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2010, Principles of selection for listing buildings <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/guidance/principles-of-selection-for-listing-buildings-2010.pdf>

5.2 University of Cambridge Department of Veterinary Medicine

- 5.2.1 Historic England identify the criteria for listing of post-war university buildings in their *Designation: Listing Selection Guide – Education Buildings*⁷. This document states that "early twentieth century university buildings will be judged largely on their architectural quality, and intactness may be a factor". Historic interest is also a consideration in deciding on listing of university buildings from the period, with "early example[s] of certain sorts of buildings will have an extra claim to recognition". The guidance recognises that "architectural interest will be determined sometimes by questions of successful functionality, as well as by consideration of design quality."
- 5.2.2 The Vet School represents an early example of the University expansion during the post-war period, particularly in the context of the use of the West Cambridge site for science faculty buildings. The construction of the building enabled the study of veterinary science to become a better integrated part of the University. However, the building was never part of a wider integrated complex within the site, and its current setting reflects this, with it being one amongst a number of essentially independent groups of science buildings within the area. This limits any group value which the building may have derived from its surroundings, while its position also reduces its historic significance as part of the wider university, not being a part of any wider collegiate or integrated contemporary faculty complex. The ad hoc nature of the hospital's rear extensions also partly detract from the legibility of the building and from its setting.
- 5.2.3 Though the building does contain some individually impressive architectural elements, such as the Hospital Block rotunda and the Teaching Block entrance portico, the overall quality of the architecture is limited. During the 1950s, many university buildings adopted a restrained neo-Georgian style, with certain standout examples of modernism and seventeenth and eighteenth century revival architecture. The combination in the Vet School of classical elements on the facades, with some art deco decoration, and modernist and art deco motifs internally, means the building does not maintain one harmonised stylistic character and looks backward in style, rather than being forward looking. In spite of much of the exterior being unchanged, elements detract from its significance, not least the unfinished southern section on the east façade of the Teaching Block, where the poor quality brickwork and non-uniform fenestration detract from the rest of the main façade. The utilitarian functionality of the building appears to have been the primary driver in its design, with form complementing function in much of the building. This is, however, is executed half-heartedly, with the use of decorative motifs not reflecting the uses of the various parts of the building and their relative significances.
- 5.2.4 The building does not derive significance from its architectural association; the architect, Ian Forbes, was not an architect of particular renown. Although working for the Forbes and Tate practice, which had designed some notable residential buildings within the Home Counties during the inter-war period, neither the practice, nor Forbes himself, had specific connections with the University, and the building does not form part of a wider scheme of their work. Unlike with other University buildings of the period, where the University's own School of Architecture or competitions provided opportunities for stylistically and technologically advanced work, the Vet School has no such significance, being a largely backward looking design in stylistic terms.

⁷ English Heritage, 2011, Designation: Listing Selection Guide – Education Buildings https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dlsg-education-buildings/education_final.pdf/

- 5.2.5 In relation to the criterion of whether the building is functionally successful, the building works and has maintained its intended role as both a teaching facility and a functional hospital. However, a number of its main architectural features, such as the library and rotunda, proved not to be robust. The fact that the building has been radically altered suggests that the design was not sufficiently adaptable without the loss of its key architectural features. Moreover its use does not reflect the originally intended hierarchy of architectural elements. It is by no means an exemplar of high functionality.
- 5.2.6 A number of the building's spaces are much altered. While the exterior of the Vet School has been relatively unchanged along the eastern principal facades, a number of alterations and additions have been made to the building, both externally to the rear, and internally. As described above, a number of additional buildings have been constructed to the rear of the Hospital Block, with connections into the Hospital Block itself. Although the central corridor is an appropriately modernist and well-designed space, its detailing is standard in hospital buildings of the period, with swept skirting areas, hygienic tiling and skylighting. Additionally, internally a number of alterations have been made, with the rotunda space subdivided to form the reception of the Small Animal Hospital, and the configuration of rooms altered to provide access to the new additions to the rear.
- 5.2.7 Throughout the department, a number of internal alterations have been made, with the installation of new services and changes in room use and the demolition of walls internally, the most common examples. A number of these changes have been conducted in a largely unsympathetic manner, which detracts from the interior of the building. Some rooms have been retained largely in their original state, such as the lecture theatre at the north of the Teaching Block. However the changes have significantly altered the character of others, such as the library, which has largely lost its significance and was one of the principal spaces within the school.
- 5.2.8 The Vet School derives little significance from its setting. The buildings which were formerly located to its east were demolished in the early 2000s. The school's western aspect has been radically altered by the construction of outbuildings in an ad hoc manner. As identified above, the Vet School was not developed as part of a wider group of buildings or departments. Its current setting includes a number of more modern buildings to the south and east, while those located immediately west of the department have developed somewhat organically since its institution.
- 5.2.9 The alteration in road layout through the construction of the main West Cambridge entrance along JJ Thompson Avenue has impacted on the setting of the Vet School. Although the original straight approach driveway from the main road, with its avenue of trees survives, it is no longer used, and the character of the approach is much altered. Indeed, from the current approach, the now mature trees along the original avenue screen the department from view (Figure 5.1).



Figure 5.1 Modern day approach to the Vet School, showing screening of approach views due to the road reconfiguration

- 5.2.10 The Vet School and Hospital were designed in the period when modernism was the forward looking architectural style. Instead of embracing the spirit of the age, Ian Forbes designed these buildings in a way that was more appropriate to the interwar period than the mid-1950s and was essentially backward looking. Although the history of the department is embodied within the buildings, there have been alterations to its principal spaces, detracting from this aspect of their significance. Although of architectural and historic interest the buildings are not of special architectural or historic interest and therefore do not meet the criteria for listing.

5.3 Merton Hall Farmhouse

5.3.1 Historic England identify the criteria for listing agricultural buildings and vernacular houses similar to Merton Hall Farmhouse in two guidance documents^{8,9}. The *Agricultural Buildings* guidance concentrates on farmsteads and structures such as barns, sheds and those constructed for specific agricultural functions. The farmstead originally associated with this building has been removed and it is essentially out of its intended context. However, the guidance does identify that “individual buildings must be assessed on their own merits”; those surviving in a group are of more interest than a sole survivor from an earlier farmstead. More discrimination should be exercised in assessing buildings from the 1840-80 period, with attention being focussed on those farmsteads which are exceptionally complete, distinguished examples of early architecture, or those pioneering design or technological advancement.

5.3.2 The *Vernacular Houses* selection guidance relates more specifically to Merton Hall Farmstead itself, and identifies a number of factors to be considered in designation for such buildings:

- Regional and local characteristics – how clearly does a building represent local traditions, materials and land use?
- Dates of buildings and rates of survival – particularly early examples of buildings or innovative use of structural techniques and materials are likely to give a building special interest, as are examples of typologies with low survival rates;
- Innovation – identification of innovative building types, techniques and materials (though not as great a factor for vernacular buildings than with other types);
- Alteration – evidence of important changes and alterations reflecting national or regional social or economic trends;
- Specialist functions – for example, those buildings not exclusively domestic;
- Proportion of survival – the extent of survival from original or important phases in the current fabric and plan-form;
- Plan-form, room use and circulation – unusual or surviving room use or plan-form, or patterns of circulation related to form and function;
- Fixtures, fittings and decoration – complete, high-quality or unusual fixtures, fittings and decoration;
- Houses and industry – those vernacular houses associated with industrial enterprises;
- Materials, finish and grading – the presence of early examples of materials, and quality of internal and external features;
- Historical associations – any connections to significant historical figures or events

5.3.3 Merton Hall Farmhouse has very limited historic value. The typology of a single room deep farmhouse both regionally and nationally dating from the mid-nineteenth century is a common one. Though nationally buildings built with white or gault brick, such as the Suffolk white brick of which the farmhouse is constructed, often date from later, the earlier use of such materials is not unusual in the Cambridgeshire region, and even in London this material was used much earlier, in the late 18th century. The building has little significance relating to its historic use or identity as either a farmhouse or subsequent use as part of the University estate.

5.3.4 The architectural quality of the farmhouse is low, as it is a standard form of building, and it is degraded further by the later alterations and additions which have taken place. The internal fixtures and fittings are not of high quality, and the internal features are plain and simple. The building does not contain innovative features, nor any specialist functions, aside from recent alterations such as the foot washing facilities in the ablutions room to the rear of the ground floor.

5.3.5 The farmhouse has undergone a number of alterations which have detracted from its significance. The quality of the lean-to kitchen and the ablutions room extensions are poor and have altered the plan form and circulation around the building. Additions of vents to the front façade have altered the brickwork and led to original brickwork being removed, and a number of internal fixtures and fittings have been altered or are not original. The fireplaces are standard designs of the later 19th century.

5.3.6 Merton Hall Farmhouse derives little significance from its setting. The historic setting of the farmhouse was obliterated by the removal of the Merton Hall farm buildings, and the further alterations and removal of buildings have left the farmhouse isolated adjacent to the main entrance to the West Cambridge site. The current setting has little historic integrity or aesthetic value.

⁸ English Heritage, 2011, Designation: Listing Selection Guide – Agricultural Buildings
https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dlsq-agricultural-buildings/agriculture_final.pdf/

⁹ English Heritage, 2011, Designation: Listing Selection Guide – Domestic 1 Vernacular Houses
https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dlsq-vernacular-houses/domestic1_final.pdf/

6. Conclusion

- 6.1.1 The University of Cambridge Department of Veterinary Medicine although of some historic interest and containing some features of interest, such as the northern lecture theatre, was essentially backward looking in its design when it was first built in the mid-1950s. It is not of special interest and does not therefore meet the national listing criteria.
- 6.1.2 Although the Vet School contains some interesting individual elements and motifs, the interior and exterior lack an integrated or cohesive stylistic character and are not of high quality compared to national trends for university building during the period. Neither the architect, Ian Forbes, nor his practice, Forbes and Tate, were important or prolific within Cambridge and the University during the post-war period. The building has undergone a number of alterations and additions over its lifetime, which have detracted from its integrity and consequently its significance.
- 6.1.3 Merton Hall Farmhouse is of limited significance, being a standard building of its type and period. The single room deep mid-nineteenth century farmhouse, which has been much altered and added to. The overall quality of the building materials and style is low, and the changes which have been made to both the exterior and interior have had a detrimental effect on the historic integrity of the building fabric.
- 6.1.4 The setting of the Vet School has been degraded by and the addition and removal of buildings and the reconfiguration of the approach roads over time. The setting of Merton Hall Farmhouse has been obliterated completely, as it now stands on its own. Neither building derives much significance from its current setting.

