

New House Farm, Start Lane, Whaley Bridge *Significance and Impact Assessment*



May 2012

New House Farm, Start Lane, Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire
Significance & Impact Assessment

Prepared for Dan Crick

by

The Architectural History Practice Ltd

May 2012

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was commissioned from The Architectural History Practice Ltd (AHP) in 2011 by Dan Crick, the owner of the building. Its purpose is to assess the significance of the listed building, and the impact of a proposed extension for residential use.

New House Farm is a designated heritage asset, listed in Grade II. It is listed as a good example of a late 18th century vernacular farmhouse in a hill farming setting. The farmhouse is of high heritage significance for its historic and architectural value, although the significance of its component parts varies. The front elevation is the most architecturally significant aspect of the exterior and retains a date stone carved with the initials R & M J and the date 1795. The rear and side elevations are plainer architecturally, and the house has been refurbished in the last ten years by the current owners.

Proposals to extend the house by one bay will help to secure a long-term viable use for the building as a family house, whilst retaining its historic fabric and preserving its setting. The extension has been designed to complement the vernacular character of the farmhouse and will be sited to minimise impact, by building onto the north-west gable end where it will be least visible and have a low impact on setting. The addition will be built using carefully detailed traditional materials and the modest design will not compete with or detract from the existing building. It is considered that the proposal will cause minimal harm to the heritage asset, as the right balance has been struck between the conservation of the building and the impact of the addition.

The proposals are consistent with advice and policies in the NPPF and AHP is pleased to support the proposed scheme.

All photographs are by AHP unless otherwise credited

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Report

This report was commissioned from The Architectural History Practice Ltd (AHP) in 2011 by Emery Planning Partnership on behalf of Dan Crick, the owner of the site. The report should be read in conjunction with survey and proposal plans produced by Ashworth Jackson & Walker dated 2012, and a Design and Access Statement produced by EPP.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires the significance of heritage assets to be assessed when changes are proposed, and for the impact of proposals to be assessed in relation to significance.

The house is a grade II listed building (see Appendix 1).

1.2 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to assess the significance of the building, and the impact of proposals to extend it. The report will cover the following key issues:

- A summary of the history and development of the building,
- A statement of significance of the interior and exterior of the building,
- A heritage impact assessment of the proposed works, in the context of national policy.

1.3 Copyright

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2.0. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT & CONTEXT

2.1 Context: vernacular farm houses in North West Derbyshire

Rural Derbyshire is rich in vernacular farm buildings which reflect the geology, building traditions and farming practices of the county. In the north and north-west of the county, carboniferous sandstone or gritstone is the dominant building material, used for walling as well as for roofing. In this upland area, sheep farming with some cattle created the agricultural landscape that defines the High Peak countryside. Grain crops such as oats and barley were grown in small quantities as part of small-scale mixed hill farming, but the main crop was hay. This resulted in buildings such as field barns that were built for storing hay and winter feed, and on the farmstead, cow houses or shippens with hay lofts, and small barns.

On small farms in the High Peak built in the late 17th and 18th century, farmhouses were usually built under the same roof as a shippon or multi-purpose farm building. This linear plan-form is known as a laithe house in the Yorkshire and Lancashire Pennines, but is also found in Derbyshire farm buildings. The hierarchy between the domestic accommodation and the farm building was often expressed by a contrast between the house with regularly arranged windows, and the farm building which had fewer, irregularly spaced windows. Wherever the topography allowed, the buildings were arranged so that front of the house and the shippon faced south, for warmth. The rear, north side of the buildings was often blind or provided with very few openings.

Many of the hill farms built in the 17th and 18th centuries in High Peak were associated with the piece-meal enclosure of the moors by small freeholders, whose initials were often carved into a datestone to record the building of the new farm. Small farming families often relied on a dual income, from non-farming activities such as quarrying or mining as well as the farm.

Most examples of historic vernacular farmhouses that survive in anything like their original condition are protected by national listing as good examples of this characteristic building type.

2.3. Historic development of New House Farm

The form of the building is typical of late 18th century vernacular houses and the appearance of the house is consistent with the date 1795 carved on the datestone above the entrance door. The initials R and M J relate to Roger and Martha Jackson (information from parish records researched by the current owner); the Jackson family owned the farm well into the 19th century. The farmstead was probably built by freeholders and the name, New House, suggests that this was then a new farmstead. The new farm was probably associated with the expansion of cultivated land in the hills around Whaley Bridge (it is situated at c.800 ft above sea level), probably as part of the

enclosure of the commons in this area. This area was within Cheshire until 1936 when administrative boundaries were redrawn.

The tithe apportionment shows that the building (in plot 453) was then owned by Robert Jackson and tenanted by Isaac Lomas. The map shows the linear farmhouse facing south with a rear projection, probably the existing outshut, to the west end. The next map to show the farmhouse is the 1872 OS map (1:2500); the house is less clearly depicted but the lane is clearly shown. The house was built with a single-aspect, sited to take advantage of the south-facing aspect across the valley.



Fig.1: The farm house is shown on plot 453 on the tithe map for Taxal parish, surveyed c.1845 (ref EDT 448/2 Cheshire Council)

The left hand bay at the west end of the house was probably historically in farm use, for example as a dairy or shippon with loft above and was not in domestic occupation until adapted by the present owners as a kitchen. The rear of this bay projects to the rear under a catslide roof, clearly shown on the tithe map. Photographs taken before recent refurbishment show that the front elevation of the west bay was formerly blind with no windows; the front door to this end bay was then a 19th century 4-panelled door, Victorian rather than 18th century. The ground and first floor rooms of the end bay were lit by gable-end windows, with a larger opening to the upper floor. No outbuildings are shown on the tithe map or 1872 OS map; the stone outbuildings opposite the house are probably later 19th or early 20th century.

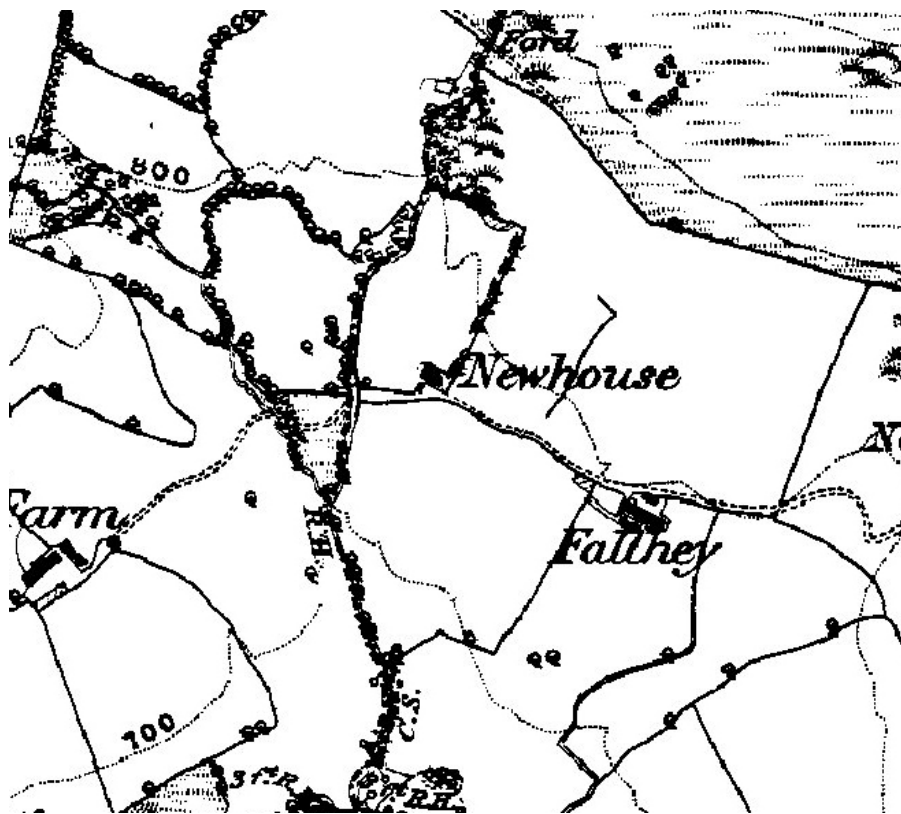


Fig.2: Newhouse Farm on the 1872 OS map (Cheshire Council)

The core of the historic house is divided into two rooms at ground floor; historically the west room was probably the living room/kitchen and the east room a parlour. Windows to these rooms are formally arranged as pairs of sashes in plain stone surrounds; the 4-pane sashes are probably late 19th century replacements for the original 18th century windows which would have had smaller panes, probably with stone mullions. The 1795 datestone is over the front door, to the left of the windows. The existing windows and the style of the doors suggests a Victorian refurbishment of the late 18th century building.



Fig.3: the front of the house in the late 20th century, before refurbishment

The roughly built lean-to out house against the west gable end is probably an addition of the late 19th century or early 20th century, and had a corrugated iron roof until the late 20th century. This structure was rebuilt to make it safe in the last ten years, with stone slate roof and new window.



Fig.4 west gable-end with lean-to outhouse, prior to refurbishment

In the last ten years the current owners have refurbished the house, retaining sash windows and many original internal features such as fireplaces, floorboards, doors and beams. The former agricultural west end of the building has been sympathetically refurbished and adapted as a kitchen and utility area. The first floor window position was lowered and the out house re-roofed.



Fig.5: west gable-end in 2011

3. SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Assessing significance

Assessing significance is a key principle for managing change to heritage assets, and is embedded within the historic environment section of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012). When considering the impact of proposed development, advises that the more significant the heritage asset the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation (policy HE9). English Heritage issued *Conservation Principles* in 2008 to explain its philosophical approach to significance and managing change and identified four main aspects of significance: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. Within these categories, significance can be measured in hierarchical levels; the most usual levels are:

- **Highest** – an asset important at the highest national or international levels, including scheduled ancient monuments, Grade I and II* listed buildings.
- **High** – a designated asset important at a national and sometimes at a regional level, including Grade II listed buildings.
- **Medium** – an undesignated asset important at a local or regional level, including local (non-statutory) listed buildings or those that make a positive contribution to the setting of a listed building or to a conservation area. May include less significant parts of listed buildings.
- **Low** – structure or feature of very limited heritage value and not defined as a heritage asset. May include insignificant interventions to listed buildings, and buildings that do not contribute positively to a conservation area.
- **Negative** – structure or feature that harms the value of a heritage asset. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of setting and opportunities for enhancement.

3.2 Significance of New House Farm: summary

The house was listed Grade II in 1977 (see Appendix 1). The building as a whole is of high significance as a good example of a late 18th century upland farmhouse. The house has a linear form, is built of local materials and faces south across a deep valley, features typical of traditional farmhouses in the area. It relates positively to the rural setting and is an attractive feature in the hilly landscape west of Whaley Bridge. Not all parts of the building are of equal significance, however; the front elevation with its regular arrangement of windows, coursed stonework and datestone is of highest significance for architectural value. This is also the most visible elevation and relates most strongly to the setting; it is visible from the lane and in distant views across the valley.

The rear elevation, set into the hillside, has low architectural value and is largely hidden, typical of other similar buildings. The west gable-end is a

secondary elevation and has a more informal character; it has also been slightly altered by lowering the first floor window. Its location in relation to key views of the house also means that it relates less strongly to the setting. The lean-to outhouse has been partly rebuilt and has low significance.



Fig.6: New House Farm in 2011, from the principal approach from the SE

4.0. IMPACT ASSESSMENT & NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1. Summary of the proposals

Architects Ashworth Jackson & Walker have designed a small 2-storey extension to the house that balances the significance of the house with the need for additional family space and current Building Regulations. This report should be read in conjunction with the current set of proposal plans and drawings. The proposals are a response to three key factors:

- The owner requires more space for family life;
- Sustaining residential use is the most appropriate use for the building;
- The building is listed and preserving its historic and architectural character and significance is a priority.

The proposals affect the exterior setting and part of the external fabric of the building.

4.2. Exterior

The north and east elevations will not be altered. The existing front elevation facing south-west will remain intact and to protect its character and form, the proposed addition will be set-back from the plane of the front wall; quoins will remain exposed and visible. The addition continues the linear form of the farmhouse, following the traditional plan form for farmhouses in the area.

On the secondary west elevation, the lean-to added outhouse will be demolished. This structure has been altered and partly re-built by the present owners and is a low significance structure. Features on the gable-end wall will be obscured, but the impact of this on the historic and archaeological significance of the house will be minimised by retaining existing ground floor windows in situ.

- The addition will be built with a facing of coursed local sandstone laid in lime mortar, with a cavity and inner block-work leaf.
- New windows and doors will have natural sandstone lintels and sills to match existing. Doors and windows will be made of timber, windows without glazing bars and double glazed. The paint finish will match the rest of the building's windows.
- A simple stable-style door is proposed to the front, with a plain boarded door to the side, painted doors a dark colour.
- Salvaged riven stone slates, laid in diminishing courses will be used for the roof, with natural stone ridges and a plain pointed verge.
- Two conservation rooflights are proposed for the rear pitch.

- Cast-iron rain water pipes, reclaimed, will be painted black to match existing, and gutters will be traditional timber, fixed to iron rise and fall brackets.

4.3. Interior and existing external fabric

No new openings are proposed at ground level; the addition will connect to the existing house via the existing side doorway. Existing windows will be retained in situ as internal features, and the external wall will remain fair-faced, so that it will be visible within the addition. At first floor level, a new doorway will be inserted through the gable wall into the new addition, to connect the existing house with the extension. This will entail removing a small area of historic masonry. The existing first floor window to the west bedroom will be blocked, but the reveals will be retained internally. This window is not in its original position as it was altered by the present owners.

4.4. The proposal in the context of the NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework advises local planning authorities on decision-making, with Section 12 relevant to the historic environment. Local authorities are advised to take account of 'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation', and the 'desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness' (section 131). A key principle enshrined in the NPPF is the conservation of heritage assets and the presumption against substantial harm to an asset's significance (section 132). Significance must be taken into account in assessing the impact of a proposal, to avoid or minimise conflict between conservation and any aspect of the proposal (section 129).

The proposal for a one-bay extension at New House Farm entails the addition of a new structure which will obscure part of the external fabric of the existing house and entails one new opening in the historic gable-end wall. This work will not result in 'substantial harm' to the heritage asset, so the tests in section 133 of the NPPF do not apply. Section 132 applies instead, as the harm is 'less than substantial'. The proposal causes very limited harm; this amounts to a secondary elevation of the historic building being obscured, the insertion of one doorway and the impact of an addition which will be low. The modest scale and design of the addition enlarges the house in a manner that will not detract from the form, scale and character of the heritage asset, and its siting on a secondary ensures the impact on setting is minimal. The proposal will help to secure the 'optimum viable use' for the house by providing a fourth bedroom for the family; this benefit outweighs the limited harm (section 132).

Section 141 of the NPPF advises that local authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any

heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part), in a manner proportionate to their significance (section 141). This report provides part of this record and if necessary, a full photographic record could be taken of affected areas.

5.0. CONCLUSION

The house is a heritage asset of high significance, and the Grade II listed building contributes to the historic farming landscape of High Peak. The west gable-end is less prominent and significant than the front elevation and is the best location for a small one-bay addition. The modest scale, traditional detailing and local materials proposed for the addition respect the character and significance of the vernacular farmhouse. The landscape setting of the house will not be harmed as the siting for the extension has been chosen for its low impact.

The addition will cause no more minimal harm to the significance of the building and its setting, by obscuring a secondary elevation, extending the form of the house and inserting one door. The addition is justified by the benefit of providing the extra space that is needed to enable the house to continue as a family house, the optimum viable use for this heritage asset.

The proposals are consistent with advice and policies in the NPPF and AHP is pleased to support the proposed scheme.

SOURCES

Department for Communities & Local Government, *National Planning Policy Framework*, March 2012

English Heritage, *Conservation Principles*, 2008

High Peak Borough Council, *Landscape Character*, Supplementary Planning Guidance 5, adopted 2006

B. Joyce, G. Michell, and M. Williams, *Derbyshire Detail and Character*, 1996

Maps and Plans

1846 tithe map (Cheshire Archive & Local Studies)

1872 OS map (1:2500) (Cheshire Archive & Local Studies)

Websites

www.maps.cheshire.gov.uk/tithemaps (last accessed 26 June 2011)

www.ancestry.co.uk (last accessed 26 June 2011)

Appendix 1: Listed Building Description

WHALEY BRIDGE

PENNANT KNOB (North Side)

5172

SJ 98 SE

3/19

New House Farmhouse

II

Small 2-storey farmhouse in coursed stone with stone slate roof and rusticated quoins. 3 stacks. Dated J (over) R M 1795. 2 windows, retaining the original stone surrounds, but now of 2 late C19 lights, hung sashes. Half-glazed door of 4 panels, small trellis porch. Similar door to the left.

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