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Conservation Response.

Date: 07/11/2022.

Application ref: HPK/2022/0406.

Case Officer: Tom Hiles.

Proposal: 'Listed building consent for a single storey extensions and internal alterations'.

Dear Tom,

Bower Cottage, Whitle Road, Whitle Bank Road, New Mills, Derbyshire, SK22 4EF.

Objection. Recommended refusal.

Whitle (*White Hill*) Conservation Area envelopes a historic Hamlet made up of predominantly traditional agrarian stone buildings. Historically part of a group of neighbouring Hamlets nearby; Beard, Ollerset and Thornset, it is a very small and intricate Conservation Area, vulnerable to change, with almost all of the structures being Grade II listed.

The pattern of the Hamlet is seemingly sporadic from a wider view, though from the ground each group of buildings exhibit linear plans associated to their respective courtyards or yards, and barns. Identified as a Dispersed Plan (*Historic England*) where typically the farm buildings of two or three farmsteads are intermixed, thus creating a Hamlet. The sizes of each structure and farmhouse are commonly indicative of the former level and status of an estate's, or farmstead's size and wealth. Certainly with the development of machinery, and need to store fodder and straw then had an impact on size of buildings.

Some evidence suggests there was a Lordship of the name Longdendale and manor in situ in the area around the 12th Century that encompassed the settlement of Whitle. Despite its present day modern connections to New Mills, its reasonably remote location sees the retention of its pattern of development and high quality well survived structures.

Bower Cottage, registered with Historic England as 'Three Barns to Bower House Farm, Whitle Bank Road' is a Grade II listed building. Previously derelict, it has seen a complete overhaul and received renovation over the years to bring the building back into viable use consistent with its conservation. The result is such that its place in the Hamlet is secured, and its historic use and function remains legible through the historic fabric, 'T-plan' floorplan and character that contributes to the Conservation Area. The full range of Historic England's Heritage Values can be appreciated. The floorplan and 'make up' is modest, linear and representative of its period of construction thus awarding it Grade II listed status, and recognition of group value among the remaining listed buildings in the Hamlet. The name Bower originates from this area, the family name of the farm workers and those that lived in the dwellings at the time of their construction according to New Mills Tithe Records 1841.

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The scheme shows the addition of two extensions. First, a large conservatory structure to the southeast and second, a very small porch to the southwest.

Both of the proposed interventions will cause substantial and irreversible harm to the Grade II listed building, and result in confusing and illegible elevations; the repercussions of which will not represent nor suit that of the identity of a historic barn or farm building. The current scale, details, and relationships between the two halves of the 'T-plan' of the Cottage are the core of the building's fabric, and should be protected. Certainly as it forms part of the wider setting and context within the Conservation Area.

The proposed conservatory sees part of the principle elevations to the Grade II listed structure, removed altogether. (See drwg no.200 Ground floor proposed). I fail to see how this respects the structure or its significance by seemingly undoing works that reinstated its former dignity. The porch structure is of a diminutive size, and sees the historic 'T plan' pattern of the building apparently merged to an extent. I am unsure as to why a porch of this size is of any use when there is currently an interior foyer and hallway at the core of the building. The current approach to the front door sees intricate and aesthetically pleasing fenestration and relationships between each portion of the façade that should be retained.

Both structures look to be visually jarring in design and materiality, and are not sensitive interventions to what is a fine example of a structure very much still part of the historic Hamlet. (See Figure 3, Page 5, Heritage Statement).

Kind regards

Miss E Holland.
Conservation Officer.