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**WOLFEN HALL, CHIPPING, LANCASHIRE, PR3 2NZ:**

**HERITAGE STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED FRONT PORCH**

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This heritage statement has been produced at the request of Mr & Mrs Morris, via their agents Sunderland Peacock & Associates Ltd, to accompany an application to Ribble Valley Borough Council for planning and listed building consent for the addition of a porch at Wolfen Hall, (NGR: SD 60656 44752), which is grade II listed. It provides a summary of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, in accordance with Paragraph 128 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* and has been produced by Stephen Haigh MA, a buildings archaeologist with over 15 years professional experience in the region, following a site visit on 13 September 2013.

**2 Identified heritage assets**

- 2.1 Wolfen Hall Farm comprises a group of various buildings occupying an outlying location 2km north-west of Chipping village, at the foot of Parlick and Wolf Fell, the southern end of the Bowland fells, and in the Forest of Bowland AONB. The Hall itself comprises a single dwelling, created from the amalgamation of the farmhouse with other adjoining buildings, and stands at the south-west end of the farm group.



**Photo 1: the present Wolfen Hall**

- 2.2 Wolfen Hall has been listed (grade II) as a building of special architectural and historic interest since 1983 (National Heritage List no: 1072289), and is the only designated heritage asset in the vicinity. It is described in the list as:

House, possibly C16th, altered 1867-8. Slobbered rubble with steep slate roof. 2 storeys, 2 bays, with end stacks. Windows have plain stone surrounds with wooden casements. The door, between the bays, has plain reveals. The chimney caps have copings and weathered offsets. At the rear is a parallel range which appears to be of a later date. Interior: The right-hand room has, in its rear wall, a blocked 5-light tall wooden mullioned window with wooden lintel and sill and splayed wooden jambs. Between the hall and the left-hand room is a timber-framed wall which rises through the 1st floor. A main post, against the front wall of the house, is tenoned into the tie beam at 1st floor ceiling level. The rear wall of the left-hand room, separating it from the stair hall at the rear, is also timber framed with many redundant peg holes suggesting re-use or reconstruction. Between the entrance hall and stair hall is a chamfered wooden door surround with 4-centred head. The dog-leg stair has been reconstructed but retains its C17th handrail and moulded newel. A stone wall, now dividing the rear wing but formerly an external wall, has a blocked window with wooden mullions. A drawing in the Weld collection at the Harris Art Gallery, Preston, dated 1841, shows the house extending further to the right (north-east) where a later C19th extension now adjoins. The drawing also shows a chamfered doorway with an ogee head. This feature is not necessarily of medieval date.

Smith, T.C. *History of Chipping*. Preston, 1894, p. 226.

- 2.3 The small scale and position of the proposed development mean that the only heritage asset to consider in this application is the grade II listed Wolfen Hall itself (including its setting).

### 3 Historical background

- 3.1 Wolfen Hall (formerly known as Wolfhouse and other variants) has medieval origins as a settlement, and may for a time have served as a manor house, but the property changed hands at various times during the seventeenth century and in later years descended the social scale to become a tenanted farm, until the late twentieth century.
- 3.2 One important historical event as regards the present application is the extensive alterations which were carried out at the Hall in 1867-8<sup>1</sup>, and the broadly contemporary construction of new adjoining buildings at its north-east end. It is also important to note that these adjoining buildings were altered substantially during later years, and again when they were incorporated into the residential accommodation, it is believed under planning consents of c.1999.
- 3.3 Two illustrations of Wolfen Hall made before the 1860s alterations, by John Weld of Leagram Hall in 1841, are useful in showing how much the exterior has been altered since then (figures 1 & 2 below).

<sup>1</sup> Smith, T 1894 *History of Chipping*



Figure 1: John Weld's sketch of Wolfen Hall, 1841<sup>2</sup>

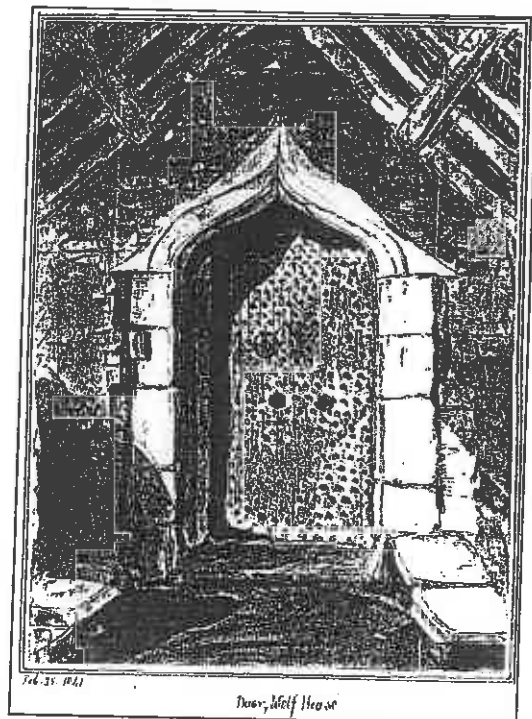


Figure 2: John Weld's sketch of the doorway within the porch at Wolfen Hall, 1841

3.4 Figure 1 shows the main house with an irregular arrangement of windows, at least one of which has a hood mould, with an approximately central doorway. Beyond a straight joint or set-back to the right of this part of the building are two further narrow bays, apparently unheated, with a small stone, gabled porch positioned at the junction between these and the main house. The separate illustration of the doorway, set within the porch, shows an ogee arch and large moulded jambs of medieval character (figure 2). The first edition Ordnance

<sup>2</sup> Lancashire Archives DP 386/1

Survey 1:10560 map also shows this porch (figure 3), but it appears to have been removed in the 1860s works, when the north-east end appears to have been rebuilt (see figure 4).

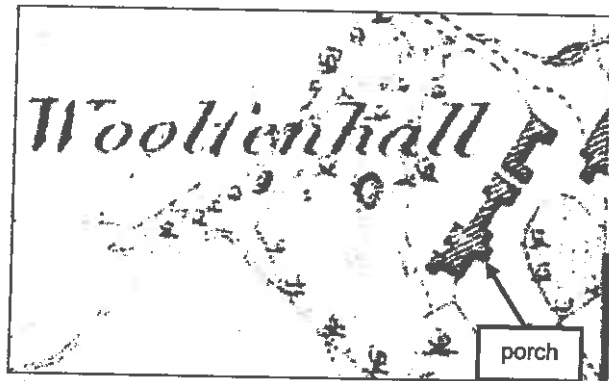


Figure 3: OS 1:10,560 map, 1846 (Lancs, sheet 45)

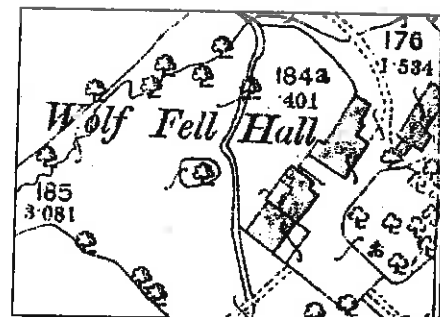


Figure 4: OS 1:2500 map, 1892 (Lancs, sheet 45.8)

3.5 The site was visited by a field investigator in 1958, whose external inspection noted that:

The present structure is a plain stone built two-storey farmhouse with all modern features. There are no architectural features by which it may be dated. Adjoining outbuildings and farmbuildings on the NE side are of a late date of construction..... The present structure may be a complete or partial rebuilding employing materials from a preceding building on the site.<sup>3</sup>

3.6 Also during the twentieth century, the front of the farm buildings which adjoined the north-east end of the house was altered to create a wide opening in order to serve as a garage, the appearance of which is shown in photograph 2 below, taken in the 1980s or 1990s.

3.7 Episodes of extensions and alterations to the Hall were given listed building and planning consent in 1995, 1999, and 2000, the aspects of which relevant here were the replacement of the garage doorway by a window, and the insertion of a new window opening at first floor level, over the adjacent entrance.

<sup>3</sup> English Heritage Pastscape Monument no 43824, consulted 11 October 2013

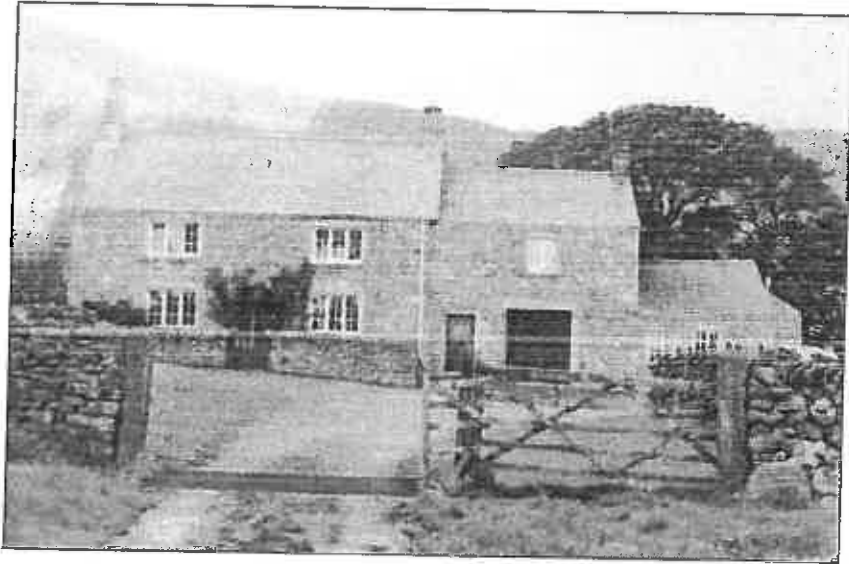


Photo 2: Photograph of 1980s/1990s, showing garage occupying north-east end

#### 4 Architectural appraisal of the house

- 4.1 Despite the rather sweeping dismissal of the Wolfen Hall farmhouse made in 1958, that it was then a relatively modern building, it is clear from a brief internal inspection and the listed building description that much earlier elements do survive inside the south-west part, though it is also clear, and supported by graphic evidence, that the present front of that part of the house largely belongs to the 1860s. The remodelling of the fenestration carried out at that time and the present blue/green slate roof result in a generally bland façade which is to all intents and purposes indistinguishable from houses of the mid 1860s, which gives no indication of the building's more historic origins, or indeed is in a style distinctive to the local vernacular.
- 4.2 The north-east end of the house appears to have been entirely rebuilt in the 1860s, as no architectural features demonstrably earlier than that date were observed within it. The doorway used as the main entrance into the dwelling has tie-stone jambs and must have replaced the ogee arched doorway observed by Weld in 1841, but its size and proportions are agricultural rather than domestic so it was clearly intended as the entrance to a shippon or stable, rather than part of the dwelling. The three windows in this elevation are all post-1999 in their present forms, the ground floor window having been created to replace the garage doorway noted above, though all have been treated so as to resemble nineteenth century openings. The interior of this part of the range now forms the kitchen and other domestic areas. Further to the north-east, the single storey end of the range is equally very modern in character.



**Photo 3:** Present appearance of the site for the proposed porch



**Photo 4:** Single storey part of the range

- 4.3 The immediate setting of the listed building is also worth noting: apart from the small walled garden to the early part of the house, the frontage is dominated by an extensive tarmac forecourt which in character is modern, uniform and monotonous.

## 5 Assessment of heritage significance

- 5.1 It is clear that the house merits its listed status only by virtue of its internal features surviving from the early post-medieval or late medieval phase, and that without them, it is very doubtful that it would be designated as a heritage asset. The extent and precise nature of these significant features has not been properly established, but as far as has been ascertained they are confined to and visible

only in the interior of the taller, south-west part of the house. The north-east end of the building appears to date entirely from the 1860s and the 150 years following and is barely recognisable as the former farm building it once was. In summary, the exterior of the house as a whole has very limited aesthetic and evidential values, which reduce the building's overall heritage significance.

## **6 Assessment of impact of the proposed porch**

6.1 The proposed porch would be a minor addition to the building range and has been designed with historical precedence in mind, and though it is not intended to be a faithful restoration of the porch demolished in the 1860s, its form and materials are in keeping with the present building and with similar gabled porches in the district. It has not been designed to be distinctive or dominant, but rather to blend with the existing fabric of the listed building, and it would also serve to enhance the historic structure by breaking the monotony of the existing tarmac forecourt. Its position, adjoining for the most part what is believed to be a wholly late nineteenth century part of the range (and one which was much modified in later years), is intended so as to impinge as little as is practically possible on the façade of the main and historically most significant part of the house, though it should be borne in mind that that façade is largely the product of 1860s work which greatly reduced the building's aesthetic and evidential value. As such, it respects, rather than slights, the building's hierarchy. The existing nineteenth century doorway into the building, to be enclosed within the porch, would be left intact and would remain visible inside the new structure, as would the set-back between the two parts of the range which adjoin here. The manner in which the proposed porch disregards symmetry by being off-set to the window above, and overlies this join between the two buildings, contribute to, rather than detract from, the visual appearance of the elevation, by adding a further element to the palimpsest.

Stephen Haigh, MA  
11 October 2013