

FAR LATHE, HILL HOUSE FARM, GRINDLETON, LANCASHIRE:**STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT****REGARDING PROPOSED CONVERSION TO CAMPING BARN****1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This heritage statement has been produced to accompany a planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council for the conversion of Far Lathe, near Hill House Farm, to a camping barn. It has been commissioned at the request of the applicants Mr & Mrs Dobson, by their agent Stephen Bialecki.
- 1.2 This statement is provided because Far Lathe constitutes a non-designated heritage asset, as a largely intact but redundant field barn of circa 1800, situated within the Forest of Bowland AONB. It provides a summary of the significance of the asset and its setting, in accordance with Paragraphs 128 & 129 of the *National Planning Policy Framework*, to enable the planning authority to consider the impact of the proposed scheme on the building and its setting, and to minimise conflict between heritage conservation and the proposal.
- 1.3 In essence, the proposed conversion would have a positive impact on the building's heritage significance by providing it with a viable use, which it presently lacks, thereby ensuring its continued maintenance and existence. The barn's long-term redundancy and deteriorating condition currently present a severe threat to the building and the conversion to a camping barn would meet one of the core principles of the NPPF, which is to "conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations".
- 1.4 This document has been produced by Stephen Haigh MA (a buildings archaeologist with 20 years professional experience of investigating and recording historic buildings in the region), following a site visit on 15 May 2014.

2 Description and assessment of the heritage asset and its setting

- 2.1 Far Lathe is an outlying barn located 400m north-west of Hill House Farm, at the south-east corner of a field of permanent pasture, and next to a small water-course, within a landscape type described by Lancashire County Council as "undulating lowland farmland with wooded brooks"¹. A yard or paddock enclosed by two dry stone walls and a post and wire fence lies on the north-east side of the building.

¹ Lancashire County Council: Forest of Bowland Landscape Character Areas

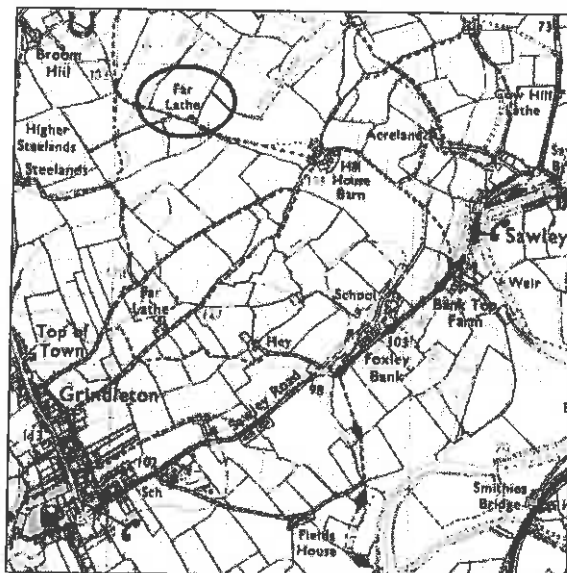


Figure 1: location map

- 2.2 The building has been very little altered since it was first built, and is a handsome structure which exhibits many key features of this barn type in the district, where such buildings are a distinctive and highly valued element of the rural landscape. It is likely to date from the period 1770-1820, though cannot be dated precisely: it lies within land enclosed in the post-medieval period (ie. after 1540)² and was certainly present by 1847 when the Ordnance Survey recorded it with its present outline and name. There is no evidence or suggestion that it once formed part of a larger settlement and the Lancashire County Archaeological Service's Historic Environment Record has no information on it.

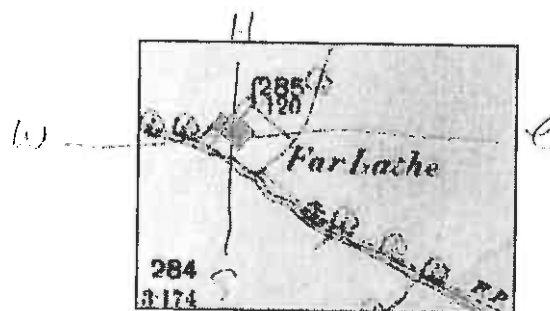


Figure 2: Ordnance Survey map, surveyed 1885 (sheet no: Yorkshire, 182.3)

- 2.3 The barn is built from lime-mortared sandstone rubble of varying character, and has a stone slate roof. In plan it is characteristically L-shaped, with the main, four-bay body of the building being wider along the front, north-east side to accommodate a covered entry and adjacent shippon. The cart entrance in this side bears a good stone arch, and has a number of typical openings, including

² Lancashire County Council Historic Landscape Character map

narrow breathers at the left and a square mucking-out hole to the right. The lower gable has a central doorway to a shippon, and a good pattern of breathers or putlogs, as well as a slightly larger owl hole near the ridge. A single doorway with original surround serves the rear, south-west elevation, while the upper, north-west gable has a high level forking hole, unusual in that it incorporates the re-used, chamfered and stopped jambs of an earlier doorway complete with lintel in which a recessed panel appears once to have borne a date, though if so it is no longer legible.

- 2.4 The cart entry has a cobbled floor and original loft over, the latter in poor condition: it incorporates the lintel for the collapsed doors, which now lie badly damaged below. As is usually the case, these were positioned at the inner end of the porch rather than at the outer face of the building. An inserted doorway in the north-west side of the porch serves a small adjacent shippon with later boskin, not of particular interest.
- 2.5 The main body of the barn is open to the roof, but the historic division of the barn into a lower shippon and hay-loft at the south-east end is still present, though the condition of this timber-framed structure is poor. There are standings for nine cows here, arranged in pairs across the building's short axis, and separated by oak framed and pegged boskins with elbowed heel posts (only one intact), which support heavy beams to carry the loft. A much degraded, framed partition constructed in similar fashion to the boskins forms the division between the shippon and main barn interior, and incorporates "hourglass" head posts, which are commonly found in the local area. Over the shippon, the hay loft incorporates wide, heavy boards which are also probably original to the building, but these are much decayed.
- 2.6 The barn's roof structure appears entirely original. It comprises three king post trusses formed from local hardwood converted by pit sawing or riving; they are pegged and have carpenter's numbering visible. The rafters are of particular interest as they are short, uneven and curved timbers, which must have represented the best use of locally available materials when the building was erected.

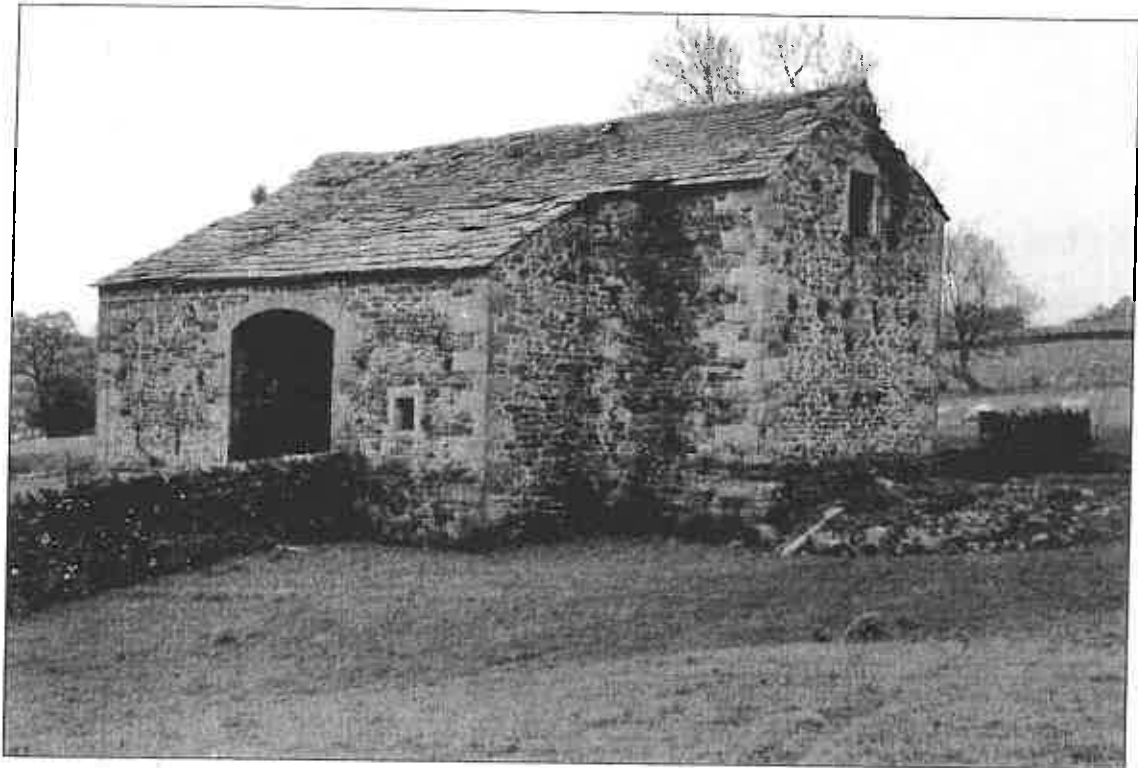


Photo 1: view from the north

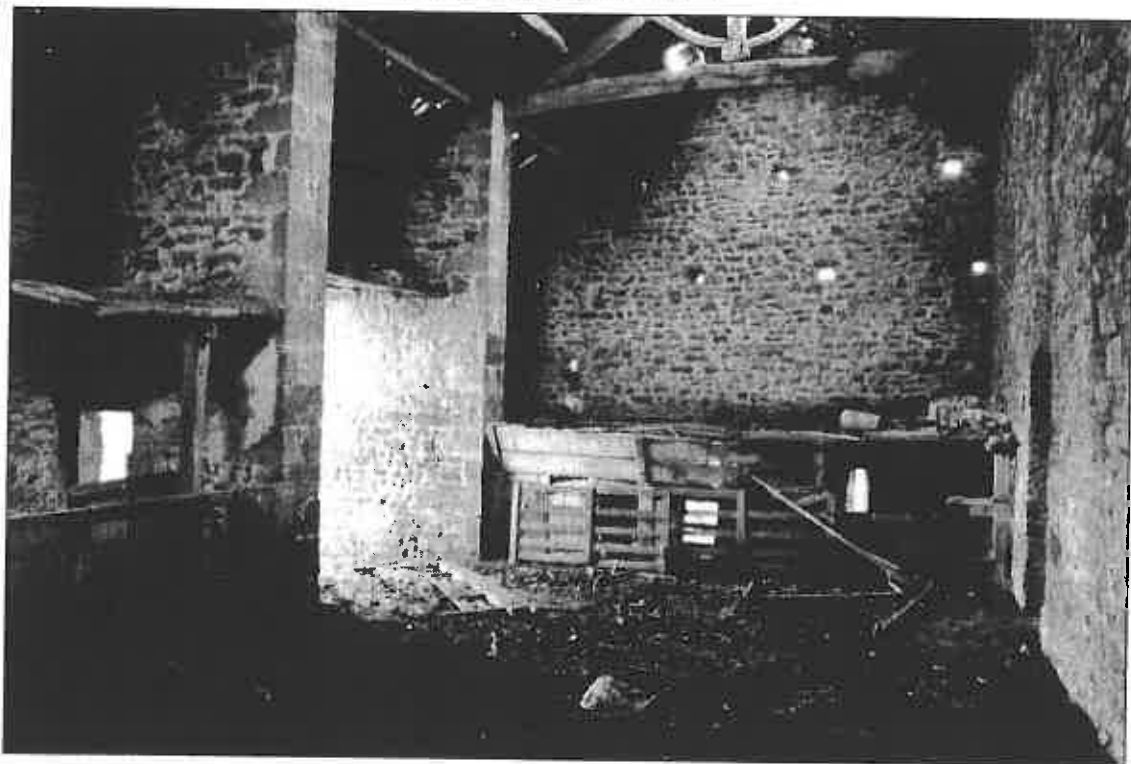


Photo 2: Interior, looking towards the shippons and main entrance

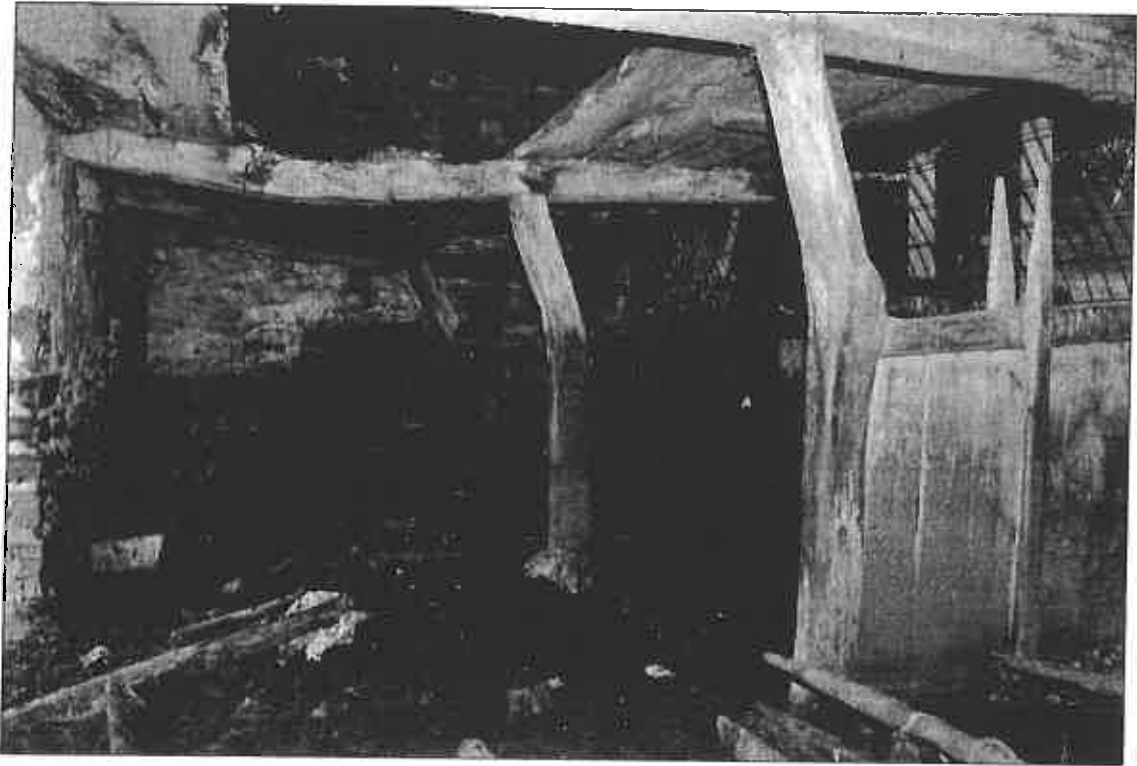


Photo 3: the main shippon with hay loft over



Photo 4: distinctive roof structure

3 Statement of heritage significance

- 3.1 The barn has medium heritage significance, too low to merit protection by listing, but certainly sufficient for it to be worthy of conservation by providing it with a viable use through sympathetic conversion. Aspects of the building which contribute to its significance are:
- the isolated setting within a pasture field, with adjacent small paddock or yard, and absence of any other buildings nearby
 - it is a very good and little altered example of a field barn of *circa* 1770-1820 (the hey-day of that building type)
 - the unaltered exterior with typical arrangement of openings, in particular the arched entry and breathers, and the distinctive re-used masonry around the high level forking hole in the north-west gable
 - the division of the interior into three areas: the porch, and two separate shippens of different sizes, with their historic internal structures still partly in place
 - the unaltered roof structure made of local timber

4 Impact of proposed scheme

- 4.1 The proposed scheme has been closely guided by the existing historic form of the building, and designed with a minimum of changes to the barn's setting and exterior. No new external structures or alterations to the surrounding boundaries are proposed, and the design makes use of existing openings as far as is practical. New openings would be confined to a modest window in the south-west elevation, in a style to match the nearby doorway, and four new roof lights. All existing openings and blocked openings would be retained in their present form, though fitted with window frames and new doors as necessary, the precise forms of which would be sympathetic to the barn's agricultural form and non-domestic in character, as far as can be achieved. A pair of new timber doors of traditional style would be fitted within the porch to conceal the glazed screen, when the building is not in use. The existing roof structure, including the distinctive rafters, would be repaired, retaining as much original timber as possible, and it would remain exposed from within the building.
- 4.2 Changes to the interior would clearly be required to accommodate the building's new function as a camping barn and the existing internal timber structures would be lost, though their much degraded present condition means that they are beyond repair in any case.
- 4.3 Overall the scheme would have a positive impact on the heritage asset by ensuring the continued survival of this historic building, so typical of the farming

landscape of the Ribble Valley and Forest of Bowland areas, while retaining its agricultural character, within its distinctive landscape setting.

Stephen Haigh, MA

24 June 2014