

58 CHURCH STREET, RIBCHESTER, LANCASHIRE, PR3 3YE:

HERITAGE STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF LBC APPLICATION FOR REPLACEMENT AND INSERTION OF WINDOWS

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement has been produced to support an application to Ribble Valley Borough Council for listed building consent at 58 Church Street, by the owners Mr & Mrs Hindle, via their agent Janet Dixon Town Planners Ltd. It provides a summary of the significance of the heritage asset (a grade II listed building, within the Ribchester Conservation Area), and its setting, together with an assessment of the potential impact of the proposals on that significance, 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 25 April 2014.
- 1.2 The present listed building consent application is in part retrospective and includes the following proposals:
- the replacement of existing windows in three elevations;
 - the insertion of one Velux roof-light.
- 1.3 The present application follows the carrying out of some work to the building within the last year by the present applicants, who at that time did not appreciate the need for listed building consent to be obtained. Work at the site has now ceased, pending the outcome of this and another listed building consent application. An earlier application regarding windows (3/2014/0569) was refused on 12 August, so the proposals have been revised to take account of that decision, a consultation response from English Heritage, the planning authority's delegated item report, and subsequent discussions between the council's Principal Planning Officer (Conservation & Design) and the applicants' agent.

2 Identified heritage assets

- 2.1 The building has been listed since 1983, at grade II with Group Value, as part of 50-58 Church Street, which comprises a row of nine terraced houses on the east side of Church Street in the centre of Ribchester (National Heritage List no: 1072260). The statutory description reads:
- Row of houses, late C18th. Squared sandstone with slate roofs and brick chimney caps. 2 storeys. Each house of one bay, with a door to the right. All the windows are modern, those to nos. 53-56 having plain stone surrounds, those to nos.57 and 58 having plain reveals. The doors have

plain stone surrounds, except that to no.57, which has plain reveals. The ground-floor window surround to no.54 is wide and possibly reconstructed. No.55 has an additional ground-floor window to the left, with plain reveals, possibly in a former tunnel doorway. No.56 has a doorcase with fluted pilasters, fluted frieze and open pediment on console brackets. Above is a plaque dated '1795'.

- 2.2 The building also lies within the Ribchester Conservation Area, designated in 1973.



3 Setting

- 3.1 The property lies within the historic core of Ribchester on one of the village's main thoroughfares, which is dominated by broadly similar terraced houses of two or three storeys, many of which were built as weavers' cottages in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though there are also some larger and more modern houses in the vicinity. No 58 forms the south-east end cottage in a row of nine, and faces south-west. There is a side street next to the property with a former barn across a small yard to the rear, now much altered and in use as an electricity sub-station.

4 Historical background

- 4.1 There was a significant Roman fort and settlement at Ribchester but thereafter the village was generally of much diminished importance, until the late eighteenth century when its economic fortunes flourished as a result of the success of the domestic handloom weaving of cotton, although in 1773 it was still described as a "poor village".
- 4.2 The terrace of 50-58 Church Street is of a single main phase of construction, which can tentatively be dated to 1795 by the date-stone on no. 56, and all nine cottages are generally considered to have been built for handloom

weavers at that time, on a rising tide of prosperity brought by the growth of the textile industry in the region¹.

- 4.3 No. 58 has been extended at its south-east gable by the addition of two storeys. Although map evidence indicates there was a structure in this position by 1892, the external appearance of the present extension suggests that it was largely or entirely rebuilt *circa* 1978, when Building Regulations approval and a Housing Improvement Grant award were awarded for its heightening to two storeys, partly to accommodate a bathroom. That work, and other changes to the earlier part of the building undertaken at that time, were carried out as Permitted Development².

5 Description of the house

- 5.1 The original part of 58 Church Street comprises a single cottage, one bay wide and on two storeys, with attic. Walls are of punch-dressed, coursed sandstone to the front but of less well-finished stone to the gable and rear, and incorporate moulded stone brackets for guttering (now redundant), above which are timber fascia boards. Comparison with other members of the terrace shows that the two front window openings have been much altered: formerly they would have been lower in height, and they were probably changed to their present forms in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. At the rear, the ground floor French doors were evidently introduced in the 1978 alterations, but the first floor window opening appears unaltered. The present blue slate roof and brick chimney are also the result of alterations: a stone slate covering on a slightly less steep pitch would have existed formerly (as can be seen from inside the roof space), which accounts for the redundant gutter brackets to the front.
- 5.2 The extension at the south-east gable uses squared sandstone of a very different character, incorporating “jumpers”, and the uniformity of its elevations suggests that this part of the building was at least re-faced, if not re-built in its entirety, during the 1978 work.
- 5.3 The interior of the original house is divided into a larger, heated front room and a smaller, unheated back room on both ground and first floors, though parts of the brick dividing walls (perhaps non-original) have been removed in previous alterations. The front ground floor room has a fireplace opening with stone surround (of indeterminate date), and a fireplace can also be inferred on the first floor, though there the fireplace was removed in 1977. Original spine beams over the front rooms carry the upper floors, and there is

¹ Lancashire County Council and Egerton Lea Consultancy 2006 *Ribchester: Lancashire Historic Town Survey Programme, Historic Town Assessment Report 2006*

² Planning application 3/77/0975/P

a second pair of historic beams at right angles to these, in the rear ground floor room.

- 5.4 Until the recent alterations the staircase was situated within the rear room and its position and gradient can still be seen within the adjacent plastered wall; this is also its position on the 1977 existing survey drawing and possibly was its original position, though it is understood that the one removed was not the original structure, and so probably a 1978 replacement. It was evidently steep and probably quite simple in construction, perhaps without risers, though exact details are not known.
- 5.5 The addition of the extension in two phases means that four openings have been inserted in the original south-east gable: the earliest of these, from the living room, was blocked and the other three inserted in 1978.
- 5.6 The attic comprises a single, unheated room whose floor joists and boards have been replaced in the present alterations. The historic means of access to it is not known: no stairs are shown on the 1977 plan. Aspects of the historic roof structure are visible within this space (purlins and some original rafters in the rear pitch), along with a small blocked opening to the gable, but otherwise it lacks features of interest.

6 Assessment of heritage significance

- 6.1 The nature of the heritage significance of 58 Church Street is primarily its position within an essentially intact row of nine terraced cottages built c.1795, which forms an important part of the historic core of Ribchester. However, although the historic origins and character of this group are readily apparent, the uniformity of the original design for the row (with the exception of no 56) has been much eroded over time, and in particular the extension of no. 58 at its south-east gable, in two phases of work, has contributed to this diminution.
- 6.2 Aspects of the interior also contribute to the heritage significance of the building, despite the 1977 changes, which included changes to circulation within the original dwelling, in part associated with the building's extension. The significant aspects include the plan form, with its division into front and back rooms (still discernible despite the removal of part of the dividing walls), and the location of the staircase within the rear ground floor room. The pair of first floor beams are also an essential component of the plan form and structure.
- 6.3 Prior to the recent unauthorised work, no historic windows survived within the building, and those to the front elevation have large panes with top hung

sashes, which are not in keeping with the building's historic character, and so none of the existing windows contribute to its heritage significance.

7 Impact statement

Replacement of windows

- 7.1 It is proposed to replace the two windows in the historic part of the front elevation with white painted sliding sashes, of two-over-two, double glazed design. While these are not intended to be historically accurate as regards the house itself, they are of a form which is clearly more desirable than the existing windows, and which would enhance the aesthetic values for the listed building and the conservation area. Other windows to be replaced are of plain, timber framed design which would have no impact on the building's significance, given that they would replace broadly similar windows, also of post-1978 date.

Installation of roof-light

- 7.2 Two new roof-lights were installed in the recent unauthorised works. Consent is being sought to retain the smaller of these two, to provide a source of natural light to the landing. It is located low down in the roof slope and of flush fitting design, so has only minimal visual impact on the building and on the conservation area.

Stephen Haigh, MA
04 November 2014