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WOLFEN HALL, CHIPPING, LANCASHIRE, PR3 2NZ:

HERITAGE STATEMENT

IN SUPPORT OF A PROPOSED REAR EXTENSION AND THE CREATION OF A REAR GARDEN

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 rear extension and the creation of a rear garden 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, buildings archaeologist, following a site visit on 13 February 2015, and taking into account pre-application advice provided by RVBC on 15 January 2015.

2 Description of the heritage asset

- 2.1 The 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, within the Forest of Bowland AONB. The Hall itself stands at the south-west end of the farm group and comprises a single dwelling, created from the amalgamation of the farmhouse with other adjoining buildings which have been much altered and extended in recent years. It is stone built with blue slate roof, with the main range, which has a twin-span roof reflecting the building's double depth plan, stepping down in height to the north-east.
- 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), although the character of the Forest of Bowland AONB is also a material consideration.



The present Wolfen Hall

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 17th century and in later years descended the social scale to become a tenanted farm, until the late 20th century.
- 3.2 Extensive alterations were carried out at the Hall in 1867-8¹, and the construction of new adjoining farm buildings at its north-east end also took place around that time; the latter were altered substantially during later years, and again when they were incorporated into the residential accommodation, under planning consents

¹ Smith, T 1894 *History of Chipping*

of c.1999. A drawing made in 1841 shows how much the house has been extended and altered in the intervening period.



John Weld's sketch of Wolfen Hall, 1841²

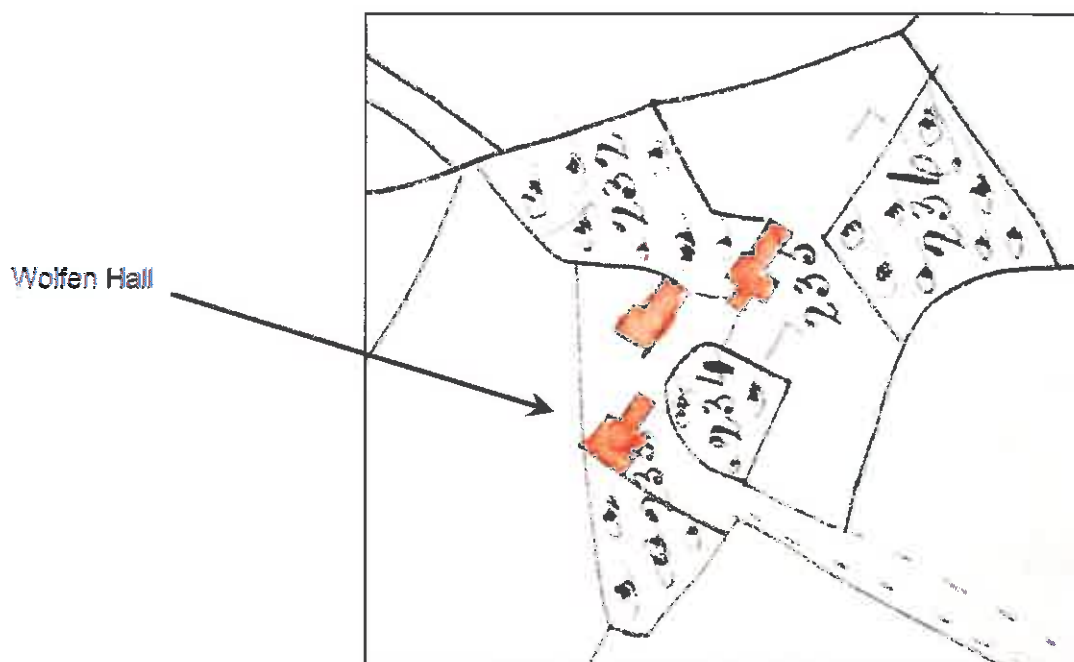


Rear view of the house

- 3.3 There is ample evidence to show that the present extent and external appearance of the house, particularly at the rear and north-east end where the existing single storey rear wing runs perpendicular to the main range, is the result of the late 19th and 20th century changes, although on the whole the materials and proportions are in keeping with traditional buildings of the district.

² Lancashire Archives DP 386/1

- 3.4 There is at present no rear garden and rough grassland runs up to the rear of the house, but there is some historical evidence to show that this has not always been the case, as the 1840 tithe map below shows. Plot 233, which extends to the rear of the house where it was enclosed within a boundary, was then described as "house, fold, garden and barn", while 232 was also "barn and garden".

Chipping tithe map, 1840³

4 Assessment of heritage significance

- 4.1 It can be seen that the house merits its listed status only by virtue of the early historic internal features, confined to the interior of the south-west end. 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. The exterior of the house, particularly to the rear, has a relatively modern and undistinguished appearance which contributes very little to the building's significance. The main range's twin span roof and the single storey wing at the north-east end both mean that the house lacks the true linear layout which characterises many traditional North West farmhouses.

5 Recent planning history

- 5.1 An application for a new porch to the front elevation was refused by RVBC in 2013 (3/2013/0578 & /0579), but allowed on appeal in 2014

(APP/T2350/E/14/2213092). The inspector noted that the porch would be a "substantial addition to the house but it would not harm the significance of the listed building and would add to its character rather than detract from it". He also commented that "as the 19th century porch reflected the use and adaptation of the house during parts of its history so would the proposed porch in the 21st century".

6 Summary of proposed scheme

- 6.1 The proposals have three aspects: the addition of a small, single storey extension to the rear elevation; the alteration of two existing windows in the rear elevation to form two doorways; and the creation of a garden to the rear of the house, to be enclosed by the new extension on one side and elsewhere by two dry-stone walls approximately 1.5m – 1.8m high.

7 Assessment of impact and justification for proposals

- 7.1 The proposed extension would measure 6m long and 5.2m wide, (slightly narrower than the gable which it would adjoin), with its roof line just below the existing. It would be faced with sandstone of similar appearance to the rest of the house, with blue slate roof (the roof lights included in the proposals at the time of pre-application submission have now been omitted), so would blend in in general terms, but it would remain visible and legible as an addition to the house. There would be bi-folding doors to the south-west elevation and a single large window to the gable, which although something of a departure from the otherwise largely traditional appearance, would be acceptable because of the extension's modest scale and because of its distance from the Hall's historic core. In terms of size and scale, the extension would be obviously subordinate to the main range and would not compromise the setting of the house. Although the pre-application advice places weight on the linear layout being a predominant farmstead plan in the uplands, and implies this contributes to the significance of Wolfen Hall, it cannot be seen to apply here because of the range's more complex form, which already includes the perpendicular wing at the north-east corner – it is not an example of this linear type, and therefore the linear layout cannot be preserved.
- 7.2 As noted above the rear elevation of the main range is largely modern in character, and the replacement of two windows with doorways would have no significant impact on the appearance of the building.
- 7.3 The proposed rear garden would enhance the appearance of the house and setting as it would have traditional dry-stone boundary walls, be of a modest

³ Lancashire Archives, DRB 1/42

size, and fit well with the proposed extension along one side. Rear gardens and yards are probably more the rule than the exception for farmhouses in the region, and although at present the land to the rear is open, uncultivated farmland, it has been demonstrated that historically that was not always the case. The pre-application advice opines that the present lack of containment of the rear elevation, ie. the way in which the farming landscape continues up to the house, is an aspect worthy of retention, but in support of this it cites a document concerned with the conversion of farm buildings rather than established dwellings, and it must be borne in mind that the Hall is not a former outbuilding with a distinctive, originally non-residential curtilage, but an historic dwelling which can be expected to be embellished and enhanced to some degree by domestic surroundings and paraphernalia.

- 7.4 Overall, the scheme is an acceptable one for the listed building because it would not harm its character or significance. The proposals are sited to the rear of the building and only minor alterations to the existing rear elevation are included, while the creation of an enclosed garden and small single storey extension would enhance the setting of the building by contributing a domestic curtilage, which it presently lacks.

Stephen Haigh, MA
20 May 2015