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Your ref: 3/2016/0022

Our ref: ASM/ASP/PDI

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016

FAO A Dowd

Dear Mr Macholc,

**Planning Application 3/2016/0022: Proposed demolition of external toilet block and the construction of a single storey extension at the rear of 1 and 2 Abbeycroft; 1 and 2 Abbeycroft, The Sands, Whalley BB7 9TN**

Thank you for your consultation on the above planning application. The proposed extension is a radical new element attached prominently to a historic building which is Listed Grade II, in a Conservation Area and sited next to a Scheduled Monument. You should seek the views of Historic England with regard to the impact on the setting of the Scheduled Monument.

As you will be aware Abbeycroft is thought to be of earlier 17<sup>th</sup> century origin, although heavily altered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and divided into four (previously three) dwellings. It has been suggested that the building may originally have been timber-framed and that it was re-walled in stone, the walls raised and an extra bay added to the north end in the later 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is not known to have been part of the monastic settlement at Whalley and may have been built as part of the Assheton's family's estate following their purchase of the abbey at the Dissolution. There is certainly a building on this site on the 1762 map of the lands held by Nicholas Assheton. The site is adjacent to the early 14<sup>th</sup> century abbey gatehouse, although it must be said that whilst the proposed extension will be visible from this monument and the public highway, we do not consider that it will significantly impact any public viewpoints of the Scheduled Monument.

The visual impact on the Listed Abbeycroft will, however, be significant and in our opinion rather incongruous in design. We understand the desire to create something that is modern in both appearance and performance, and that it is not attempting to create a 'pastiche' of historical elements, but consider that the impact is too large to be acceptable. It is felt that the proposed glass wall and doors to the western elevation is unlikely to reveal much of the structure of the original building once the rooms behind

are furnished, and will introduce a new and substantial reflective element onto this historic building. The proposed use of lead as a roofing material is appreciated as a nod to traditional roofing techniques, but such a large expanse of it at a low level like this is unusual and potentially dominating and perhaps even an invitation to crime.

It is not known if Abbeycroft itself is sited within the bounds of the abbey precinct itself, although the presence of the gateway would suggest that it is. Whilst it is thought that this building was a new erection by the Asshetons there is a possibility, albeit small, that it was built on the site of a former monastic structure. In any event there are likely to be buried remains around the building which will relate to its construction and later use and alteration. It is even possible that there will be evidence which will support or refute the suggestion by Mr Haig in the Heritage Statement that the building may originally have been timber-framed. It is not considered, however, that such remains would be so significant as to require preservation in situ at the expense of the development.

Despite the advice above relating to the impact on the building, should the proposed development be found to be acceptable, we would recommend that a watching brief is held by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional archaeologist during the excavation required for the construction. This can be required by the use of a suitable planning condition. The following wording is suggested:

**Condition:** No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agent or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological recording and analysis. This must be carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which shall first have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** To ensure and safeguard the recording and inspection of matters of archaeological/historical importance associated with the building.

**Note:** A formal archaeological watching brief will be required during all ground disturbance associated with the development. This work should be undertaken by an appropriately experienced and qualified professional archaeologist to the standards and guidance set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

This is in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 141: "*Local planning authorities should ... require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible*".

If you need any further information or would like to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

*Peter Iles*

Peter Iles, Specialist Advisory Services