



John Macholc
Head of Planning Services
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
CLITHEROE
BB7 2RA

Phone: 07847 200073

Email: Lancashire.archaeology@gmail.com

Your ref: 3/2016/0695

Date: 9th August 2016

Dear Mr Macholc,

Planning Application 3/2016/0695: Lift existing stone flag floors to lay underfloor heating, formation of new opening from scullery of 'Friends Cottage' through to corridor of the lean-to extension at rear of 'Meeting Room' to link the dwellings and create one property. Removal of an existing pantry in the corner of the living room of 'Friends Cottage', Removal of the existing kitchen units and appliances in the existing lean-to extension to create new entrance hall. Opening up of wall between kitchen and dining room in 'Friends Cottage'; Meeting House, Sawley Road, Grindleton BB7 4RS

The above planning application impacts a Grade II Listed Friends Meeting House of 1777, which replaced a building of 1742 on the same site (Heritage List for England 1072149, LHER PRN 17939). Proposals for a similar scheme were submitted earlier this year (3/2016/0236 and 0238) and were granted consent on 24 May 2016.

We would note that a new Heritage Statement (HS, R Martin Seddon, 19 July 2016) has been provided with this application, but its author does not appear to have checked the Historic Environment Record (HER). It also downplays the significance of the building when compared to the 2015 assessment by Clare Hartwell (held by the HER) who considers it to be of high significance and worthy of consideration for Grade II* status.

The major change in the present proposals over those given consent is the inclusion of the underfloor heating system. Brief arguments for and against this are given in the Heritage Statement (p.6), but a number of issues are not mentioned. Firstly, there is no consideration of the impact that the proposals may have on buried archaeological remains – the sketch detail on Plan 2593.01/M02A implies that significant excavation will be necessary to install the underfloor heating even though no dimensions are given. There is potential for this excavation to impact and remove remains associated with the construction and use of the present building and the previous (1742) structure. Burials within the chapel itself are unlikely, but there is a slight possibility that burials which were outside the 1742 structure are now within the present building, or that bones were disturbed during the rebuilding and have ended up under the present floor. The Design and Access Statement (DAS, IWA 19 July 2016, p.4) notes that the issue was raised in

pre-application discussions with RVBC, but that "*The scheme was considered acceptable, subject to an Archaeological Watching Brief, during the works*". This would appear to be an acceptable approach.

Secondly, the new heating system is shown on the plans to extend under the existing raised platform and pews. The DAS notes that "Existing joinery would be protected during the work" (p.3), but it is not clear how the platform and pews can be protected if it is necessary (as it appears) to remove them to allow this work to progress, nor what the impact of the new heating would be on the historic woodwork. The Heritage Statement says "*It is noted that there are no proposals to alter the fixed benches and panels on the west internal wall of the former meeting room, nor of the gallery on the eastern wall. The benches and gallery are important indicators of the original use of the building and are specifically mentioned in the listing*" (HS, p.7). It would seem sensible to require either (i) an assessment of the impact of the new heating on the historic woodwork along with a method statement setting out how the pews, platform and other joinery are to be protected, dismantled and reinstated as part of the works; or perhaps preferably (ii) that the underfloor heating scheme is amended so that it does not extend under the platform and pews.

We would again raise the issue of the loss of the remaining loose benches from within the chapel. These are described by Hartwell as:

"... large pine benches of simple design with shaped ends, matching the profiles of the fixed furnishings and probably of the same date. They form a good historic ensemble [with the fixed seating]."

Could a single example of these benches be retained within the building or would this be too onerous a requirement? Any benches not to be retained should be offered first to another Friends Meeting House or chapel before being put up for sale.

We would again note that it is recommended that the originals of the burials and other registers are placed in the County Record Office or a similar accessible archive. Finally, we would again state that given the record provided by Hartwell and the plans provided as part of the application, recording of the building is not a high priority, and a photographic record to supplement the existing is all that would be required.

The following planning condition is thus recommended:

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 site.

Note: The programme of works should include (a) the provision of a photographic survey of the building as existing, utilising the standards and guidance of "Understanding Historic Buildings, a Guide to Good recording Practice" (Historic England 2016); and (b) the formal supervision, monitoring and recording of the lifting of the existing historic flagged floors and all excavation work required for the installation of the new underfloor heating system. This work shall be carried out by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional archaeological contractor to the standards and guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, see www.archaeologists.net).

It is hoped that the above is self-explanatory, but please do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely

Peter Iles