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FAO R Major

Dear Mr Macholc,

Planning Applications 3/2017/0294 and 0295: Conversion of former Punch Bowl Inn into five holiday lets and cafe including demolition and extensions. Creation of new caravan park with fifteen units; Former Punch Bowl Inn, Longridge Road, Hurst Green BB7 9QW

We have looked at details of the above planning applications on the Council's web site and note that they are a revision of the earlier applications 3/2016/0056 and 0057. The former County Archaeology Service was consulted on these previous applications and recommended that a formal building record was created prior to any development taking place. These applications were refused in May 2016, one of the reasons given being that the harm caused by the proposals on the Listed Building and its setting were not (or inadequately) justified. As a result of this refusal, we have looked a little deeper into the impact of the proposals upon the fabric of the historic building.

The site is a Listed Gd II building and is included in the Lancashire Historic Environment Record as PRN17583. It was recorded as 'The Fenton Arms' in 1847 (OS 1:10,560 mapping, sheet Lancashire 54, surveyed 1844) and seems to have been a conversion of a row of late 18th (datestone '1793 R E') and earlier 19th century buildings. It should be noted that datestones do not always refer to the construction date but can relate to events such as changes in ownership or a marriage, or to significant alterations or extension to an extant building. It was no doubt named after Joseph Fenton of Bamford Hall, Rochdale, who had purchased the Manor of Bailey (and those of Dutton and Ribchester) in 1831 from Cardinal Thomas Weld. Cardinal Weld's father, another Thomas, had gifted Stonyhurst to the Jesuits in 1794 to establish the present school.

This new application includes a smaller number of caravan units. It proposes a similar scheme of demolition and subdivision of the extant buildings but omits a rear extension to the three central holiday lets from the earlier proposals. A slightly revised but still quite short Heritage Statement is also provided.

We would have no objection to the demolition of the extant rear kitchen extension and the attached male toilets, as these features seem to be of fairly recent date and do not appear on the OS 1:2,500 mapping of 1893 (sheet Lancashire 54.07, surveyed 1892). We do have some concerns over the following:

- (i) The loss of the rear barrel vaulted cellar (unless this can be shown to be modern);
- (ii) The loss of much of the rear wall of the right-hand former barn section and partial demolition of the outshut under the catslide roof; and
- (iii) The loss of the rear stair in the former cottages and the subsequent changes to the circulation pattern.

Of these only item (iii) is mentioned in the Heritage Statement "*The staircase running up this wall is probably not original or in an original location and has been entirely destroyed by dry rot*". Examination of the plans 'as existing' provided with the application would support the suggestion that this stair is a later insertion as it appears to bridge the space between the two original cottages. It seems possible, perhaps even probable, that this change would have been associated with the original conversion to an inn, and thus pre-dates 1847. It would have been helpful if further description and photographs of the stair had been provided and/or that the date of the stair and its state of repair could have been assessed.

Item (i) is not mentioned in the Heritage Statement, but the cellar is noted in the Structural Assessment (Norman Williams Partnership, nd, p.2) and its date is unknown – although it seems probable that the 1847 inn would have needed such a cellar. It is not clear if the intention is to completely demolish and infill the cellar, which sits under the rear kitchen extension, or if it simply to be cleared to ground level. If the former is proposed, then this needs some further investigation, description, impact assessment and justification. If the intention is simply to remove the above-ground access to the cellar and to carefully pave over its entrance stair, retaining it intact, then this will need less investigation and justification but will require a method statement for the demolition and covering-over.

Similarly the removal of the rear wall of the 18th century barn is not mentioned in the Heritage Statement, nor is the impact of this work assessed except perhaps in the statement "*The existing 'original' rear wall of the range of buildings has only one surviving original feature...*" The rear outshut to the barn, covered by a catslide roof, is also not described or discussed, although it would appear to be present on the OS 1847 map.

Finally it is noted that the building is suffering from an extensive dry rot outbreak, as well as considerable damage occasioned by the theft of lead from the roof and the subsequent water ingress. There is no assessment of the extent of the rot provided with the application nor any indication of the location and scale of the works that may be required to eradicate the rot and repair the building. It is thus impossible to assess the impact on any surviving historic fabric.

We would therefore recommend that some further information is obtained from the applicants before the application is determined. This should include a more thorough assessment of the elements of the building to be altered or repaired and the impact of

the proposals upon them. Further details of the rot and other damage to the building and the extent of repair works to the historic fabric required should also be provided.

If the above information can be obtained and the Council's Conservation advisor is satisfied with the proposals, we would recommend that a formal record of the building is compiled prior to any development work starting on site. The following wording for an appropriate planning condition is suggested:

Condition: No development, site clearance, preparation, strip-out or demolition shall commence 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 recording and analysis should comprise the creation of a record of the building to Level 2 as set out in 'Understanding Historic Buildings' (Historic England 2016). It should include a full description of the building, inside and out, a drawn plan, elevations and at least one section (which may be derived from checked and corrected architect's drawings), and a full photographic coverage, inside and out. The record should also include a rapid desk-based assessment, putting the building and its features into context. This work should be undertaken 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