

STANWORTH HOUSE, YORK STREET, CLITHEROE, LANCASHIRE:

HERITAGE STATEMENT

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement has been commissioned by the purchasers of the grade II listed Stanworth House, to inform design proposals and to support pre-application advice from RVBC for various proposed external and internal alterations at the site, as presented in the scheme by IWA Architects (drawing 2317.SK.01). This document assesses the heritage significance of the existing building, the site and its setting, in order to inform the application, and justifies the impact of the proposed development, as recommended by the NPPF and the HEPPG *Planning for the Historic Environment*. It has been produced by Stephen Haigh MA, buildings archaeologist, following a site visit on 22 August 2016.

2 Site location

- 2.1 Stanworth House is a detached house standing within its own grounds on the north side of Clitheroe town centre, between York Street to the east and Church Brow to the west; adjacent properties include other houses and the historic Royal Grammar School. The NGR is SD 74513 42052.
- 2.2 Access to the house is from York Street, via a vehicular gateway, with the house set at the west end of the gardens, which are of relatively large size for a town centre dwelling.

3 Relevant heritage assets

- 3.1 Stanworth House has been a grade II listed building of special architectural or historic interest since 1976¹, and lies within Character Area 3 of the Clitheroe Conservation Area, where it forms one of three “key” listed buildings².
- 3.2 The listed building description for the house reads:
Mid C19 Gothic villa dated on plaque in gable end. 2 storeys, pebbledashed, with slate roof. 2 windows with rectangular drip moulds and slightly arched lights. Angle porch with columns, parapet and cornice. Gable to right has date stone and 3 finials. 1 window above canted stone bay with parapet and finials, arched lights. To the right a wing of 1-storey height with window of 2 lights beneath rectangular drip mould. Parapet and cornice. Nos 11 to 23 (odd), Stanworth House and Clitheroe Royal Grammar School for Boys form a group.

¹ National Heritage List no. 1362230

² Conservation Studio 2005 *Clitheroe Conservation Area Appraisal* p29

4 History of the site

- 4.1 The date stone referred to in the National Heritage List entry is (as far as can presently be ascertained, given the vegetation which partly obscures it) of 1887, but Stanworth House appears to have been built earlier in the nineteenth century, so this stone may have been put in to commemorate a later event, such as major changes to the building. The house clearly post-dates Lang's 1766 map of the town³ and may well have been built following the establishment of York Street as a new thoroughfare in 1826, when the turnpike road to Skipton was improved.
- 4.2 The house is shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:1056 map of Clitheroe surveyed in 1844-6, although marked as "Strawforth House", apparently mistakenly however, as the present name Stanworth was used in the 1841 census and the tithe award schedule, also of the 1840s. These latter sources indicate that at that time the owner and head of household was William Hargreaves, a stone mason, who in 1841 was about 40 years of age; elsewhere it is noted that William married in 1839 and was the son of Cornelius Hargreaves, also a stone mason. William's own son John, born in about 1820, was recorded as "apprentice to stone mason" in the 1841 census.
- 4.3 The 1887 date stone also bears the initials
- H
W M
- which are believed to be those of William and his wife Mary, though in 1887 William would have been around 87 years of age, so unlikely to have been carrying out any building work himself.
- 4.4 The sequence of Ordnance Survey maps beginning with that of 1849 (below) shows that between the mid 1840s and 1884 the canted bay window was added to the front, east elevation, and between 1884 and 1910 the house was extended up to the boundary to the west and south, with new outbuildings also being built to the north-west. Information on-line also indicates that at about the turn of the twentieth century Stanworth House had become the home and practice of a dentist named Frederick Bulcock.

³ A Plan of the Borough of Clitheroe, referred to in this book by the title of Lang's Map of 1766

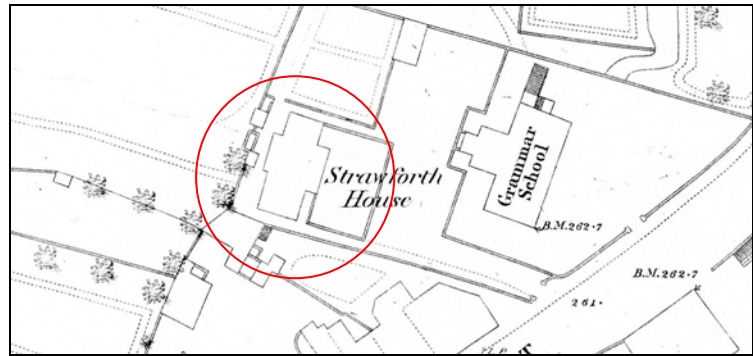


Figure 1: 1849 OS map⁴

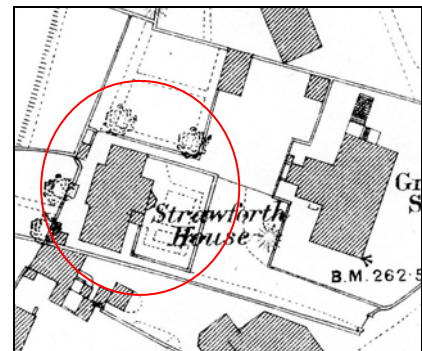


Figure 2: OS 1886 map⁵



Figure 3: OS 1:2500 map, 1912⁶

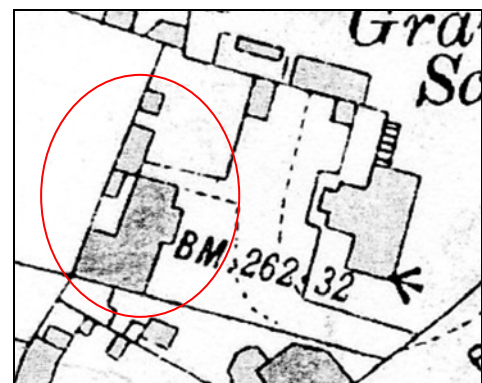


Figure 4: OS 1:2500 map 1932⁷

⁴ Clitheroe, sheet 1. Surveyed 1844-6

⁵ Clitheroe, sheet 1. Revised 1884

⁶ Lancashire, sheet 47.10, revised 1910. Enlarged to 1:1056

⁷ Lancashire, sheet 47.10, revised 1930. Enlarged to 1:1056

5 Recent planning history

- 5.1 I have not undertaken a comprehensive search of planning history relating to the site, but the RVBC website shows that consent was granted for the present conservatory in 1992 under application 3/1992/0456. An application for tree work was submitted in 2010 (ref 3/2010/0509), and listed building consent was granted for essential repairs to the kitchen wall, parapet and roof in 2012 (ref 3/2012/0645), with a subsequent application being made for discharge of attached conditions (3/2012/1036).

6 Assessment of the setting and buildings

Setting

- 6.1 Stanworth House is a small villa set within what are relatively generous grounds for its town centre location. The garden is level and contains a mix of shrubs and lawned areas, with a number of single storey outbuildings at and near the west side. Some of them, and the house itself, adjoin the site boundary close to the backs of other buildings within adjacent properties. Because of its position and the nature of the garden, the house is not currently visible from York Street or Church Brow, but it does have a visible relationship with the historic Grammar School building.

House

- 6.2 The house faces east and has a strongly Gothic theme, though to some extent this is thought to reflect changes in the second half of the nineteenth century, and it may have been established earlier in that century as a more modest house in a more restrained, possibly classical idiom. It has a three-bay plan: the south bay was originally only a single room deep (the present lounge), with the central entrance hall with modest staircase situated next to it. The adjacent bay to the north breaks forward and appears always to have been two rooms deep (presently a pair of dining rooms), but the northern end of the historic house has a less coherent form and is suggestive of having undergone substantial change. The external form of the present kitchen is unusual and this single storey gabled unit, set back from the front elevation and provided with a parapet, may have been an addition to the original building, or much altered (perhaps reduced in size) during the nineteenth century. At the rear of the house the present "sitting room" is a ground floor extension under a blue slate roof perpendicular to the main house, dating from around the turn of the twentieth century, and appears to have been built in conjunction with the insertion of the stained glass rear window.



Front elevation



North elevation

- 6.3 A number of external aspects point to historic work at the house having been carried out with salvaged masonry and without a wholly coherent or competent scheme of design, so might perhaps be attributed to the Hargreaves family whose stone mason members would have had a good knowledge of construction methods as well as ready access to stone, whether new or discarded, but perhaps no formal training in design. Work at the house which might be attributed to such origins include the mis-matched dressings for the canted bay window, and the front wall and parapet of the kitchen wing, the window of which incorporates an octagonal capital (such as might have come from a church) over the mullion, visible internally.
- 6.4 The present conservatory is entirely an addition of *circa* 1992, and did not replace any historic structure, though it is not certain whether there was formerly an access into the present kitchen here, or if the present one was enlarged from a window at that time.

- 6.5 Linked to the house, to the rear and to the north of the kitchen, is a range of lean-to outbuildings including workshop and potting shed, under a corrugated asbestos-cement type roof, which in their current form appear to date from the mid twentieth century.
- 6.6 In some areas the house interior retains something of its nineteenth century character in terms of fixtures and fittings, including the staircase and balustrade, doors, cupboards and fireplaces, but significant changes have taken place in the present kitchen and on the first floor, where there has been considerable twentieth century rearrangement to accommodate the present bathroom and the rear WC. The access to bedrooms 2 and 3 also appears to have been altered and the historic layout of this part of the house has been lost.

7 Statement of significance

- 7.1 Stanworth House is significant as a small villa, likely to have been established in the early nineteenth century but altered during its lifetime, which is of historic and architectural interest chiefly because of its architectural form both outside and inside, though externally it is principally the front, east elevation which is significant and merits listing of the building. Its setting near the north end of Clitheroe town centre, and its relationship with other important buildings in the vicinity, also contribute to its significance. However the weight given to its architectural qualities should not be overstated, as on close examination the house's present overall form cannot be attributed to the coherent designs of an architect or pattern-books, or to piecemeal evolution responding to vernacular traditions, but in part has developed in a rather whimsical and quirky fashion, probably as its stone mason (and later) owners felt desirable or practical. The present conservatory of the 1990s detracts from the building's architectural appearance and value and lends the house a pastiche feel.
- 7.2 Other values which contribute to the building's significance include its identifiable association with a family of stone masons during the mid nineteenth century, and landscape value. It is not considered to have any communal value due to its private and secluded location.

8 Impact of the proposals

- 8.1 The proposed alterations include a number of aspects:
- the demolition of the existing 1990s conservatory
 - the replacement of the existing workshop/potting shed with a new workshop/studio, utility and shower room

- the extension of the building's north end, to provide the existing kitchen with a garden room, and a new staircase to an additional bedroom over, with en suite bathroom
 - the addition of a fifth bedroom over the present single storey, rear sitting room
 - further various minor changes to the internal layout, including improved bathroom provision
- 8.2 The existing conservatory is a modern structure simply “tacked on” to the house without regard for its appearance or historic character, so its removal would have a beneficial impact on the appearance of the listed building.
- 8.3 The extension of the kitchen to form a garden room, replacing the present conservatory, is intended to provide a larger and better-lit living space than the existing kitchen, while retaining the key architectural component, specifically the unusual front wall with two-light window and parapet. The kitchen extension and the new bedroom over it on the first floor would be in coursed ashlar with stone slate roof, and would draw on architectural themes from the existing house, without attempting to mimic or replicate them, but would remain clearly subservient in terms of scale and massing. No meaningful negative impact on existing internal spaces or fabric would result from extending the house northwards in this way, with access to the additional bedroom being achieved by a new staircase within the enlarged ground floor. The historic doorway between kitchen and west part of the dining room, currently blocked, would be re-instated, and the modern opening at the east side altered to form a cupboard, thereby restoring something of the previous pattern of circulation.
- 8.4 The reconstruction of the lean-to outbuildings is an opportunity to enhance the appearance of the listed building and its setting, as these are currently of rather shoddy appearance and do not contribute positively to the heritage asset.
- 8.5 The proposed second additional bedroom is set at the rear of the building over the sitting room, itself an extension added after the 1880s. This side of the house is almost entirely hidden from view except from the small adjoining yard to the north, and its painted brick exterior cannot be said to contribute towards the architectural or historical significance of the listed building. Access into the new bedroom would be achieved with the minimum intervention possible, by means of a new doorway off the landing, at present housing an incongruously placed WC.

9 Justification

9.1 It has been established that Stanworth House is architecturally and historically significant and merits its grade II listed status, and contributes positively to the conservation area, although a number of disparate architectural elements give it something of a pastiche appearance. It can also be seen that overall, the proposed scheme of alterations and extension would result in no measurable harm to the heritage asset, and that the asset's significance would be enhanced by the removal of components whose present appearance has a negative impact, and by the addition of thoughtfully and sympathetically designed additions.

9.2 With reference to the historic environment, the National Planning Policy Framework states that:

In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

9.3 In regard to these, it is clear that the proposed scheme is in accordance with these requirements, as the optimum viable use for Stanworth House cannot be achieved without such a degree of intervention necessary to improve the living accommodation and bring it to a standard commensurate with the building's optimum role as a family home. Without such improvements, the conservation of the heritage asset is at risk through under-utilisation, because the present scale and quality of the internal accommodation falls well below the architectural significance of the building's exterior and its setting within its own spacious grounds and the conservation area. Through minor internal improvements and careful extension to the accommodation, the scheme would represent a positive contribution to the local character and economic vitality of the town centre.

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