

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT THORNBERS

WADDINGTON, RIBBLE VALLEY



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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HISTORIC BUILDING CONSULTANCY

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1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed development at Thornbers, an isolated former moorland farmhouse north of the village of Waddington in the borough of Ribble Valley. Thornbers is statutorily-listed at Grade II.

Pre-application advice is being sought from Ribble Valley Borough Council upon proposed external and internal alterations at Thornbers. The heritage issue arising is the impact of the works upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the listed building. The scope and purpose of this report is to inform pre-application discussions by identifying this significance and analysing the impact of the proposals upon it.

The list description states Thornbers is late 18th century, but it is in fact considerably earlier. At its core is a cruck-framed longhouse of likely 16th or early 17th century date, clad in stone in the late 17th century and re-fenestrated in the late 18th-early 19th century. Attached at the west end are two small outbuildings, a single-storey former cartshed or garage, perhaps early 19th century but converted to domestic use in the 1970s, and a mid-19th century L-shaped single-storey range now converted to a garden room. East of the house is a free-standing two-storey former stable, now converted to garages, along with an early-mid 20th century cartshed of austerity construction.

The Grade II designation of Thornbers confirms it is a building of national importance for its special architectural and historic interest. This special interest stems from its intrinsic merits as a stone-built moorland farmhouse of complex evolution, extending from the 16th/17th centuries to the early 19th. The significance of the building is embodied in the elements and features of these periods, and therefore not all its components are of equal significance. The main range is most important as it is the principal structure and incorporates the oldest fabric. The former garage/cartshed and stables are of moderate significance as notable later additions, while the garden room and timber cartshed are of low significance as they are of relatively little interest. Furthermore, the appearance of the cartshed harms the setting of the listed building.

This report demonstrates that the significance of Thornbers lies primarily in the main range, which contains the cruck structure and is of the highest significance. The proposals are intended to adapt the building to modern living while at the same time preserving the elements and features from which its significance derives. Consequently the works are focussed upon the former cartshed and garden room, which are of moderate and low significance respectively, and largely affect the alterations made during the 1970s. The proposed internal works to the main range are of a minor nature and will not harm the legibility of its original layout. It is therefore considered that the significance of Thornbers will be preserved, and that the proposals ought to receive favourable consideration during the pre-application discussions.

2: THE SITE

Thornbers is an isolated former moorland farmstead at Waddington in the borough of Ribble Valley, Lancashire. It is located around one kilometre north of the village centre on the west side of the road to Slaidburn, where it faces south across the valley of the Ribble. The listed building stands end-on to the road and consequently public views of it are limited to glimpses obtained from the entrance to the site and also more distantly from Slaidburn Road, in which it is largely concealed by surrounding trees. To the rear of the house the ground rises steeply towards Newton Fell, while to the southeast are the ruins of former agricultural outbuildings



Map 1. Location plan of Thornbers (Historic England mapping)



1. Thornbers, viewed from the entrance to the site



2. Glimpse amid trees, looking south along Slaidburn Road



3. Ruins of agricultural buildings southwest of the house

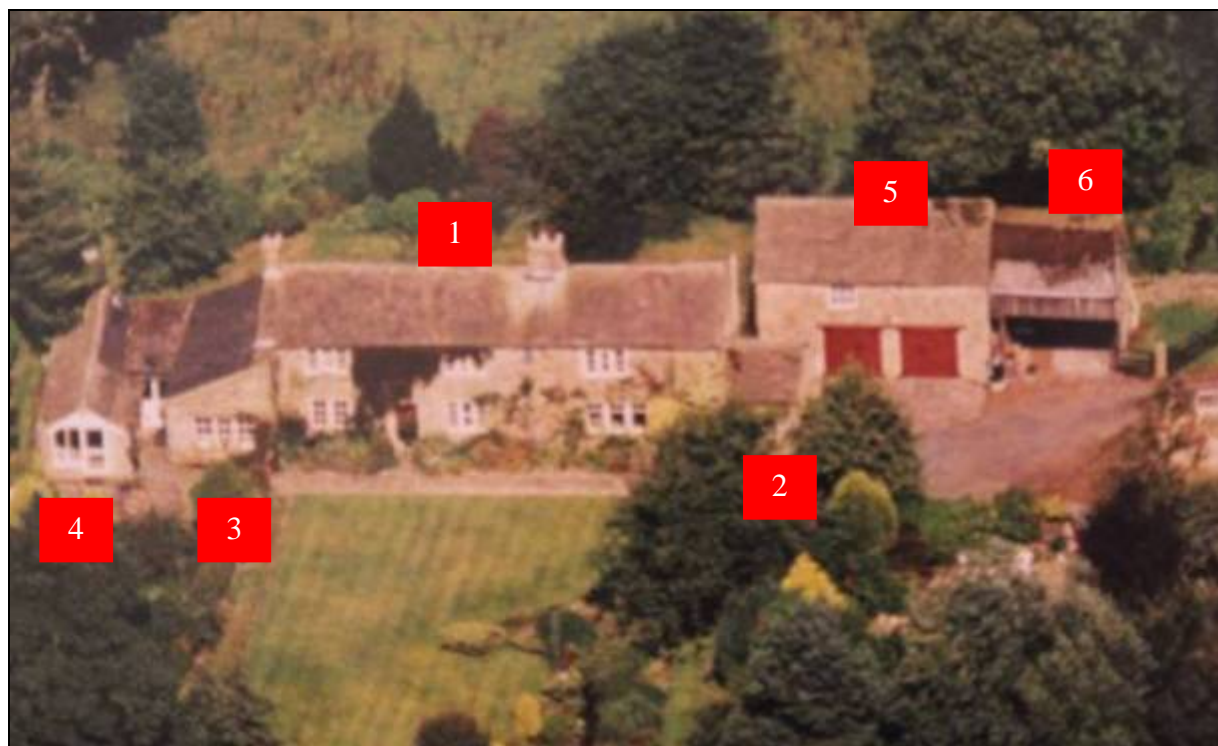


4. Distant views across the Ribble Valley, looking south from the end of the garden

2.2 Elements of the site

Thornbers comprises the following:

- 1** **The main range**, a rectangular three-bay structure. Originally a single-storey cruck-framed longhouse of 16th-early 17th century date, this was clad in stone and raised to two storeys in the late 17th century and re-fenestrated in the late 18th-early 19th century
- 2** **A single-storey porch** at the east end of the range, probably mid-later 19th century
- 3** **A single-storey former cartshed or garage** attached at the west end, perhaps late 18th or early 19th century. This was converted to domestic use in the 1970s
- 4** **An L-shaped range of outbuildings** attached to the cartshed, probably mid-late 19th century but incorporating an earlier and originally free-standing single-storey building, possibly a privy, at the northwest corner. They were converted to a garden room in the 1970s
- 5** **A two-storey former stable**, now converted to a garage, located immediately east of the house and probably early-mid 19th century
- 6** **A timber open cartshed** of austerity construction, attached to the east end of the former stable and of early-mid 20th century date



5. Elements of the building, taken from circa 1980s aerial image

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Designation

Thornbers is listed at Grade II, and is therefore considered a building of special architectural or historic interest in the national context.

3.2 The proposal

Pre-application advice is being sought from Ribble Valley Borough Council for alterations and extensions at Thornbers, which are intended to adapt parts of the building for modern living.

3.3 Heritage impact/relevant planning policies

The heritage issue raised by the proposal is its impact upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the listed building.

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to describe the significance of the listed building, and to assess the impact of the proposed works upon this significance. It is considered the level of detail is, in accordance with paragraph 128, proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and the impact of the proposed works. The report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation produced in support of the pre-application enquiry.

3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

1. A short summary of the historical background relating to the site (Section 4)
2. A description of the listed building (Section 5)
3. A summary of the significance of the listed building (Section 6)
4. A review of the relevant planning policies (Section 7)
5. An assessment within this policy context of the impact of the proposals upon the significance of the listed building (Section 8)

4: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 Overview

Thornbers occupies a site which is probably considerably earlier than the buildings which stand today, and is of likely medieval origin. The main range contains a cruck frame which is likely to be 16th or early 17th century, and it is understood that documentary evidence refers to the building in the 1620s. The farm probably takes its name from its occupants the Thornber family, who were resident in Grindleton and Waddington in the 18th century. Henry, son of John Thornber of Grindleton, was baptised on September 10, 1745 at Bolton-by-Bowland, and by the 1770s had moved to Waddington, where several of his children were baptised. The burial of Henry Thornber at Waddington is recorded on 20 May 1789. In 1801, Thornbers is thought to have comprised almost 100 acres and was one of three farms owned by George Walmsley of Rochdale but later acquired by Thomas Taylor of Eaves House, West Bradford, and later of Waddow Lodge, Waddington.

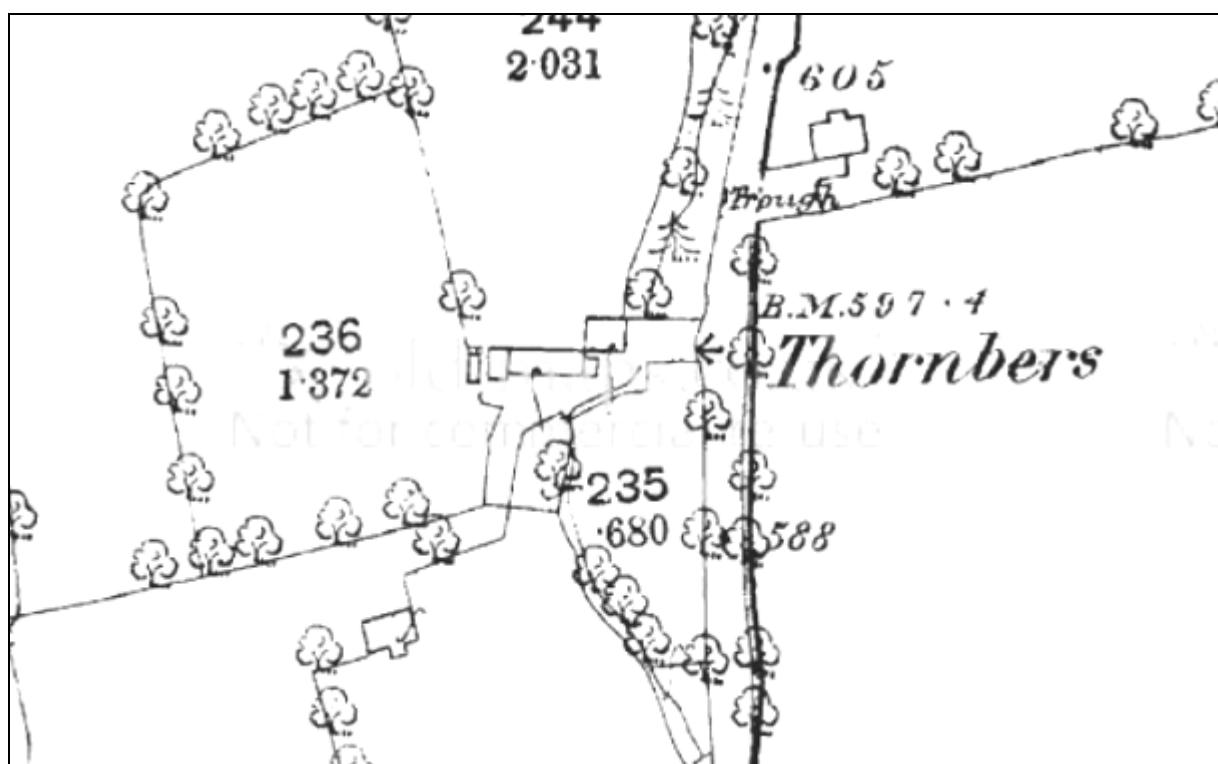
4.2 Development of the building

It has already been noted that Thornbers is the product of a complex sequence of rebuilding. This can be summarised as follows:

- In the early 19th century, a building of somewhat different footprint existed, as depicted by the six-inch OS map of 1847 (Map 2).
- Most notably, a projection is shown at the east end of the front of the main range, which no longer stands. At the west end, only the present cartshed/garage existed, along with a small, narrow free-standing structure; the range also appears to have extended further east, perhaps with a longer structure occupying the site of the present porch.
- Four decades later the projection had gone and the outbuilding that now forms the garden room had appeared; it seems likely the narrow building was incorporated within it.
- In the late 1970s, when farming had ceased and the house had become a private residence, further alterations were made which included the conversion of the cartshed/garage and outbuilding to domestic use and the stable to garages.



Map 2. Thornbers as depicted by the six-inch OS map of 1847(enlarged)



Map 3. 1886 25-inch edition shows the alterations which had taken place in the interim



6. Circa 1970s view of the main range and porch



7. The original garage/cartshed at the west end, photographed circa 1970s

5: ANALYSIS OF THORNBERS

5.1 Overview

A house of earlier date and more complex evolution than its exterior suggests. A cruck-framed longhouse of likely 16th or early 17th century, Thornbers was clad in stone in the late 17th century and re-fenestrated in the late 18th-early 19th century. In the mid-later 19th century the building experienced further alteration with the construction of attached outbuildings. Internally, few features pre-date the 20th century.

5.2 List description

The National Heritage List description of Thornbers, compiled probably in the mid-1980s, is brief and does not include the interior. It reads:

House, late C18th. Sandstone rubble with stone slate roof. 2 storeys, 3 bays. Windows have plain stone surrounds and square mullions and are of 3 lights except for the left-hand ground-floor one which is now of 2 lights. The right-hand ground-floor window is wider than the others. The door, between bays one and 2, has a plain stone surround. Chimney on left-hand gable and between bays 2 and 3. In the right-hand (east) gable is a re-used C17th hollow-chamfered mullioned window, formerly of 4 lights, now with one light blocked.

5.3 Further analysis: exterior

The appearance of Thornbers largely disguises its earlier origins. The plain surrounds of the doors and windows, and the square-cut mullions of the latter, suggest a date of the late 18th or early 19th century. The only major external clue to an earlier date is the four-light low mullioned window on the first floor of the east gable. Although the list description states this is reused, it appears integral with the surrounding rubble masonry and hence is probably in its original position. The inference therefore is that the original timber-framed cruck-built house was clad in stone probably in the late 17th century, and thereafter re-fenestrated in the late 18th-early 19th century. As noted above, further alterations occurred in the mid-later 19th century, involving demolition of a projection to the front; this rebuilding may have been extensive as there are no witness marks to tell of this vanished structure. There is however evidence of a blocked window at the east end of the main range, left of the junction with the porch. As to the windows, their framing is largely modern, but some of the facade windows incorporate 19th century glazing.



8. Thornbers, looking north across its gardens



9. The 17th century four-light window of the east gable is a crucial piece of evidence in the dating of the building



10. The plain surround of the door and windows suggests a late 18th-early 19th century date



11. First floor window, showing 19th century centre light glazing and late 20th century replacements in outer lights



12. Evidence of blocked window at east end of main range



13. The plain north-facing rear of the main range



14. The single-storey porch, probably late 19th century

5.4 The interior

- a. **Layout.** The main range is of three-unit, single-depth plan, most likely corresponding to the configuration of the original cruck structure. The front entrance leads directly into the middle bay, which would have acted as the *housebody* (original living/dining room) of the cruck building. The position of this entrance is unlikely to be original however: in cruck structures the entrance normally opened against the spere (side wall) of a fireplace or into a passage behind it. The doorway was therefore probably moved here during the late 18th-early/mid 19th century alterations. The first bay, at the west end, was originally subdivided to form two rooms, each with separate doors from the housebody. This accords with the traditional arrangement of the upper end of a cruck house, which was usually subdivided to form a small parlour and adjoining dairy. The third bay is now a parlour but during the cruck phase may have been a service room or of non-domestic function, i.e. a shippon or barn. If this was the case, the presence of the mullioned window on the first floor indicates it was upgraded to domestic use during the 17th century rebuilding.
- b. **Details.** The principal feature of the interior is a single cruck truss, whose frame is embedded in the crosswall which separates the first and second bays of the main range. It is visible on the first floor only, but the lower portion is likely to be present in the wall below. Only the blades and a portion of tie beam are evident: the original framing within the truss has been replaced by stone. Elsewhere, apart from some exposed purlins, stone fireplaces and some plain ceiling beams, the appearance of the interior is

largely mid-later 20th century. The staircase, in the central bay, dates from this period also, as witnessed by its first floor newel, and is unlikely to be in the original position. Visible in the third bay, left of the fireplace, is a lintel which suggests an earlier, now-blocked doorway between this room and the housebody. The door from the kitchen to the outbuildings is 19th century and incorporates a sliding panel for ventilation.



15. The northern cruck blade, viewed from stair landing



16. Southern blade, exposed within middle bedroom



17. Staircase: its position in housebody is unlikely to be original



18. Evidence of blocked doorway to housebody in third bay of ground floor



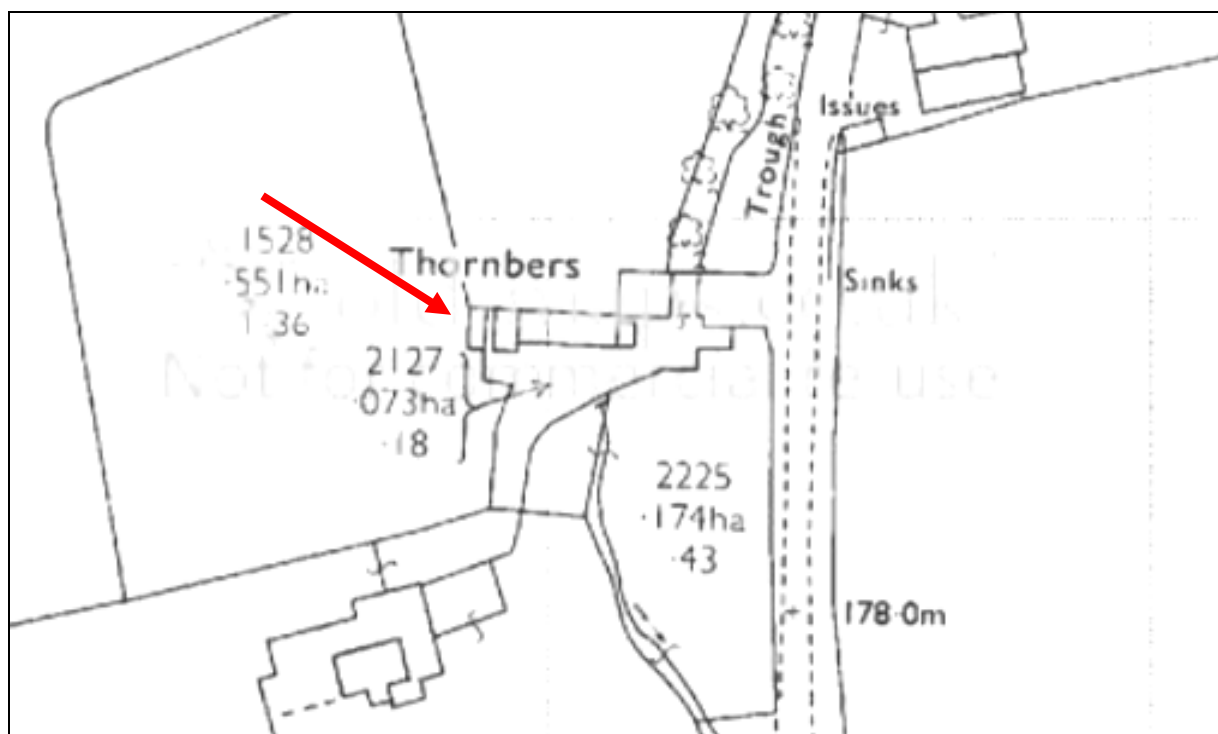
19. Door from kitchen to outbuildings with sliding panel



20. First floor staircase balustrade, mid-late 20th century

5.5 The outbuildings

- a. **The former cartshed/garage.** During its conversion to domestic use in the 1970s, a tall three-light mullioned window, in matching style to those in the main body of the house, was fitted to replace the original entrance. This only serves however to mask its original agricultural role. There are no features of note internally.
- b. **The garden room.** This is not of particular interest, being a late 1970s alteration of the mid-late 19th century outbuilding which also incorporated a small earlier structure at its northwest corner (see Maps 2 and 3) that was probably a privy. The garden room remained separate from the cartshed until the 1870s alterations as Map 4 (following page) demonstrates. During these alterations, the space between the garden room and cartshed was filled with a flat-roofed link to form a utility room. The present full-height stone wall linking these structures at the rear probably dates from this period, or is a heightening of an earlier low wall. Large modern windows were also introduced into the west elevation of the garden room at this stage.
- c. **The garage.** A two-storey, two-bay structure with large paired off-centre ground floor wooden doors. The interior is of no particular note, with alterations on the first floor.
- d. **The wooden shed.** This austerity structure is of no interest and somewhat dilapidated: it both masks and detracts from the views of the listed building.



Map 4. 1968 1:2500 mapping shows how the present garden room still stood separately



21. The front elevation of the former cartshed/garage (compare Plate 4)



22. Rear showing junction between main range and the cartshed/garage



23. The garden room, a mid-19th century outbuilding converted in the late 1970s



24. Interior of the garden room



25. Rear of garden room, looking southwest, showing how it incorporates a small originally free-standing building, perhaps a privy (indicated by red arrow). To its left is the rear wall of the flat-roofed 1970s link (blue arrow)



26. The former stable, converted to garages



27. Rear of the former stable



28. The wooden cartshed, viewed from Slaidburn Road

5.6 Evolution of the listed building

The evolution of Thornbers can be summarised as follows:

- The earliest phase is a single-storey cruck-framed structure of the 16th or early 17th century. This is likely to have been of three bays. i.e. occupying the footprint of the main range of the present house
- This was then rebuilt in stone and raised to two storeys in the late 17th century on evidence of the four-light mullioned window in the east gable
- In the late 18th or early 19th century the house was upgraded, with the present tall mullioned windows and entrance installed
- The former cartshed/garage, now converted to domestic use, was existing by the early 19th century. Map evidence of 1847 suggests there was a projection to the front of the main range, and the building may have extended further east. The stable appears to have existed by this time
- The 1886 map shows the projection to the front had been removed and the outbuildings that now form the present garden room had been built, perhaps reusing material from the demolished elements
- The porch was probably existing by then
- Further alteration occurred in the 20th century, particularly from the late 1970s when the cartshed/garage was converted to domestic use and the outbuildings to the garden room

6: SIGNIFICANCE OF THORNBERS

6.1 Rationale

Paragraph 129 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimize conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Significance is defined in the NPPF Glossary as:

'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'

The Glossary defines setting as:

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

6.2 Significance of the listed building

Essentially the significance of Thornbers derives from the special architectural and historic interest which has warranted its Grade II designation as a building of importance in the national context. This special interest stems from its intrinsic merits as an example of a stone-built moorland farmhouse of complex evolution, spanning several centuries. This development is clearly legible, beginning with the cruck structure of the 16th or early 17th century, then followed by the late 17th century rebuilding in stone and thereafter the improvements of the late 18th and early 19th century; map evidence suggests other alterations occurred in the mid-later 19th century. The physical significance of the building is therefore embodied in the elements and features which date from these principal phases, i.e. from the 16th-17th centuries to the early 19th. In the historical sense, the building possesses further significance from its likely connection with the Thornber family of Grindleton and Waddington, but this is relevant more to the local rather than national context. The moorland setting of Thornbers, little altered since the time it was built, makes a positive contribution to the significance of the listed building.

6.3 Relative significance of the elements of the site

As touched upon above, not all the elements of the site contribute equally to the significance of the listed building. The relative significance of these elements is as follows:

High significance

- **The main range of the building**
Reason: encapsulates the original cruck structure and shows clear evidence of cladding in the 17th century and late 18th-early 19th century adaptation

Moderate significance

- **The former cartshed/garage**
Reason: probably the earliest of the outbuildings, likely to be late 18th-early 19th century
- **The former stable, now garage**
Reason: the most substantial outbuilding, probably early-mid 19th century
- **The single-storey porch**
Reason: prominent addition to the main range probably of the mid-later 19th century

Low significance:

- **The garden room:**
Reason: much-altered mostly mid-later 19th century outbuilding
- **The wooden cartshed**
Reason: early-mid-20th century structure of little intrinsic interest; masks and detracts from the listed building



29. Relative significance of the elements of the site

7: POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 Statutory duty

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require local planning authorities to give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest.

7.2 Relevant policies

Guidance on applications affecting the historic environment is provided in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*, March 2012). Paragraph 131 states that in determining 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

Paragraph 132 states that ‘*great weight*’ should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset, and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be; that significance can be lost through development within its setting; and that as heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to, or loss of, a Grade II listed building should be exceptional; substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, including Grade II* buildings, wholly exceptional. Paragraph 133 states that where a proposal will lead to substantial harm to, or total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use.

Paragraph 134 however states that where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

In the local planning context, the most up-to-date policy relating to the historic environment is Key Statement EN5 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008-2028, adopted December 16, 2014. This states:

There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings. The Historic Environment and its Heritage Assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance for their heritage value; their important contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place; and to wider social, cultural and environmental benefits. This will be achieved through:

- Recognising that the best way of ensuring the long term protection of heritage assets is to ensure a viable use that optimises opportunities for sustaining and enhancing its significance.*
- Keeping Conservation Area Appraisals under review to ensure that any development proposals respect and safeguard the character, appearance and significance of the area.*
- Considering any development proposals which may impact on a heritage asset or their setting through seeking benefits that conserve and enhance their significance and avoids any substantial harm to the heritage asset.*
- Requiring all development proposals to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness/sense of place.*
- The consideration of Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights where the exercise of such rights would harm the historic environment.*

8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

8.1 *The proposed works*

As the project is at pre-application stage only and designs have not yet been finalised, this section will examine the impact of the works in broad terms only. The main element of the proposal involves external alteration of the former cartshed and garden room, along with internal alterations to both, to create a kitchen/dining and sitting room. In the main body of the building, a limited amount of subdivision is also sought.

8.2 *The kitchen/dining area*

- a. **External changes.** The external changes to the former cartshed involve removal of the existing three-light window in the front wall (which masks its original agricultural use) and reinstatement of the original large opening, within which will be fitted a bifold door. The present unattractive flat-roofed link (see Plate 30, following page) between it and the garden room will be replaced by a frameless glazed link, which will provide a suggestion of the separation that originally existed between these elements (see Maps 2, 3 and 4). The rear wall, which either dates from the 1970s or was heightened at this time, will be lowered to accommodate the link. The larger openings of the end wall of the garden room will be replaced by smaller openings that are more in keeping with the character of the building and the status of this particular element.
- b. **Internal changes.** The internal partitions between the garden room and former cartshed and flat-roofed link will be removed to create an open-plan space to be used as a kitchen/dining and sitting room. Given that the configuration of this area dates from the 1970s alterations, these changes will not harm the significance of the listed building.

8.3 *Internal alterations*

The proposal also seeks consent for limited internal alterations involving new partitions or re-alignment of existing ones to create a ground floor WC and also ensuite bathrooms in each of the first floor bedrooms. These changes are of a minor nature overall and will not affect the legibility of the original three-unit layout of the building.



30. The flat-roofed 1970s link between former cartshed and garden room

8.4 Summary and conclusion

This report has demonstrated that the significance of Thornbers lies primarily in the main range, which contains the cruck structure and is of the highest significance. The proposals are intended to adapt the building to modern living while at the same time preserving the elements and features from which its significance derives. Consequently the works are focussed upon the former cartshed and garden room, which are of moderate and low significance respectively, and largely affect the alterations made during the 1970s. The proposed internal works to the main range are of a minor nature and will not harm the legibility of its original layout. It is therefore considered that the significance of Thornbers will be preserved, and that the proposals ought to receive favourable consideration during the pre-application discussions.

APPENDIX 1: PRINCIPAL SOURCE MATERIAL

Six-inch OS mapping, 1847; 25-inch 1886

Historical information and photographs provided by former owners of Thornbers

<http://www.thornber.net/famhist/htmlfiles/thornber.html#William> (Thornber family history website)

APPENDIX 2: GARRY MILLER HISTORIC BUILDING CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is an architectural historian who has spent more than 35 years studying buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as ‘*scholarship as its best*’ by *Country Life* (June 2003), and ‘*well analysed and presented*’ in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); and was widely cited in the 2006 *Buildings of England* volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings. His specialism are the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment, and his area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands and North Wales. Several local authorities have cited his reports as examples of best practice, and on average reports on more than 80 buildings and sites are produced annually.