

## Heritage Assessment



## Great Mitton Hall, Clitheroe, Lancashire

On behalf of Mr and Mrs Kay

May 2018

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This heritage assessment has been prepared by Heritage Collective on behalf of Mr and Mrs Kay, who are the occupiers of Great Mitton Hall, Clitheroe, Lancashire.<sup>1</sup> Mr and Mrs Kay propose a number of improvements to their home, which is a grade II listed building first listed on 16 November 1954, officially described as follows:

*"House, c.1600. Rubble, pebbledashed towards south-west, with steep slate roof. 2 storeys with attic and cellar. Original windows mullioned with outer chamfer and inner hollow chamfer. The south-west wall has a single-storey gabled porch near the centre having a re-used outer doorway, probably C14th, with pointed head and with a roll moulding with fillet. Above is a coping with finial. To the right is a gabled single-storey extension with the remains of the hood to a blocked window on the 1st floor. To the left is the line of what appears to be a demolished wing, implying that the porch is an addition. At the left is an enlarged 3-light window with hood. On the 1st floor is a 5-light window with hood. The left-hand gable has a chimney with brick cap Gable copings, the left-hand one with finials. The left-hand (north-west) gable has a hood remaining on the 1st floor and an attic window with hood and with one light remaining. The right-hand gable is buttressed and has a mullioned cellar window, a 14-light mullioned and transomed ground- floor window, a 7-light 1st floor window and a 5-light attic window. The north-east wall has a turret at its left-hand end, gabled with a coping and finial. Chamfered lights at intermediate levels suggest that it may once have contained a stair. It has a 2-light window with hood on the 1st floor and a similar blocked window to the attic. Its right-hand return wall has a wooden door surround with triangular head, probably re-set. A Buckler drawing of 1809 shows a doorway in the left-hand return wall, now blank. Near the centre of this facade is a gabled dormer with blocked window and hood, and with a small chimney cap. At the right on the ground floor is an original window with one mullion remaining. Above is a 4-light window with hood, with a 3-light window to its left. There are a number of blocked window openings, but the 4 remaining windows are C19th with chamfered stone surrounds. The door has a chamfered stone surround with hood. Interior not*

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<sup>1</sup> Great Mitton Hall is within the historic parish of Mitton, which was part of the West Riding of Yorkshire until it was transferred (April 1974) to Lancashire for administrative purposes. The application site is within the jurisdiction of Ribbles Valley Borough Council. It is about 4 kilometres south-west of Clitheroe.

*accessible at time of survey but said to contain no features of particular interest.”*

- 1.2 Standing on high ground on the north side of the River Ribble, Great Mitton Hall is closely associated with the Church of All Hallows, which is listed grade I. The Church, which dates in part from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, was also first listed on 16 November 1954, and it is probable that the Hall and the Church are on an ancient Church-Manor site with early medieval origins.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.3 A 14<sup>th</sup> century cross, reset in 1897, stands about 15 metres to the south of the chancel of the Church. It was listed grade II on 20 February 1984.
- 1.4 A sundial dated 1683 stands five metres south-east of the porch of the Church, also listed grade II on 20 February 1984.
- 1.5 An aisled barn dating to c.1600 stands about 35 metres west of Great Mitton Hall, on the west side of the B6246. The barn was listed grade II on 20 February 1984.
- 1.6 Mitton Bridge, which carries the B6246 over the River Ribble about 180 metres south of Great Mitton Hall, is also listed grade II. Dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the bridge was first listed on 29 December 1952.
- 1.7 For the avoidance of doubt, all the listed buildings described above share the same interconnected setting on the steep northern bank of the River Ribble. They are also within the wider context of two other grade II listed buildings, namely the Old Vicarage (which stands to the north-east of the Church) and the Three Fishes Inn which stands north of the aisled barn on the west side of the B6246.
- 1.8 An appeal decision (APP/T2350/D/13/2210765) relating to a car port was allowed in February 2014. This decision, which is material to the assessment of effects on designated heritage assets, is referenced below where applicable.

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<sup>2</sup> Site observation confirmed that part of the roof of the Hall appears to be earlier than c.1600, the date suggested in the list description.

## 2.0 RELEVANT HERITAGE POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The decision maker is required by sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting. The decision maker must also give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the listed building. There is a strong presumption against the grant of permission for development that would harm the special interest of the listed building, though the presumption can be overcome if the harm is mitigated or outweighed by public benefits, as is explained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 2.2 For the purposes of this assessment “preserve” means to do no harm.<sup>3</sup> Harm is defined by Historic England as change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset.<sup>4</sup>
- 2.3 The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the NPPF as being made up of four main constituents, architectural interest, historical interest, archaeological interest and artistic interest. The setting of the heritage asset can also contribute to its significance. Setting is defined in the NPPF as follows:
- “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.”*
- 2.4 This assessment has regard to Historic England’s guidance on setting, generally known as GPA3, revised in December 2017. GPA3 does not prescribe a single methodological approach for assessments relating to the setting of heritage assets.

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<sup>3</sup> South Lakeland District Council v Secretary of State for the Environment and Another, House of Lords, [1992] 2 W.L.R. 204.

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 84 of *Conservation Principles* 2008 (this document is currently undergoing public consultation as part of a revised draft).

- 2.5 The assessments of heritage significance and impact are normally made with primary reference to the four main elements of significance identified in the NPPF.
- 2.6 The NPPF requires the impact on the significance of the heritage asset to be considered in terms of either “substantial harm” or “less than substantial harm” as described within paragraphs 132 to 134 of that document. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) makes it clear that substantial harm is a high test, and recent case law describes substantial harm in terms of an effect that would vitiate or drain away much of the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.7 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset when considering applications that affect its significance.
- 2.8 This assessment is confined to the significance of heritage assets and the impact of change on that significance. It does not address the planning balance in which public benefit is weighed against the degree of harm, if any.

## 3.0 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSETS

### Historic background of Great Mitton Hall

- 3.1 Writing in 1882, William Pollard's<sup>5</sup> description of Great Mitton Hall was as follows:

*"After crossing over the Ribble we notice Great Mitton Hall, which is [...] in the Tudor style of architecture, and proceeding a short distance further, on rising ground, we come to MITTON CHURCH, an interesting old structure of the period of Edward the Third."*

- 3.2 The Hall appears to have been occupied by the Sherburne (Shireburne) family in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, who aspired to the social status of the minor gentry, but by the time of the 1851 census it was occupied by John Holden, a farmer of 100 acres. Holden appears to have been in partnership with three other male relatives, probably his younger brothers. Members of the Holden family lived at the Hall until at least 1881, but by 1891 it was in occupied by a different farmer, James Hird, and his family – at which time it was called Mitton Old Hall. The disposition of the buildings as they were shown on the O.S. map of 1848 can be seen in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 Site observation (9 March 2018) suggests that parts of the fabric predate c.1600 and that the roof may originally have been of pre-Tudor construction. The external stone shell of the building, and in particular the gabled elevation overlooking the valley of the River Ribble, has a noticeably Tudor appearance as was noted by Pollard in 1882. The lines of mullioned windows on three storeys are of particular note (Figure 8).
- 3.4 The single-storey extension attached to the south-western corner of Great Mitton Hall is a modern structure that is not of historic interest or significance, and which postdates the list description (Figures 5, 6 and 7).

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<sup>5</sup> A Hand Book and Guide Book to Preston, William Pollard, 1882.



## Significance of Great Mitton Hall

### 3.5 Great Mitton Hall is significant for the following reasons:

Architectural interest: The Hall is a good example of the vernacular architecture of what was originally the West Riding of Yorkshire, using local materials in a style that aspired to the Tudor fashion of the late medieval period. It is an early example of a building that has a conscious relationship with its surrounding natural landscape in the form of lines of windows placed in the gable to as to enjoy the view over the valley of the River Ribble (Figures 8 and 9).

Historic interest: The Hall has associations with the Sherburne family, and it illustrates the evolution of a building that began as part of a Church-Manor group and that gradually descended through the rigid social hierarchy of the post-medieval period until it became a farmhouse.

Archaeological interest: The physical fabric of the older part of the building, and its gradual evolution over time, is of archaeological significance in its own right.

Artistic interest: There is an artistic component within the demonstrably Tudor element of the building, and in many respects the building is aesthetically pleasing. The list description makes reference to an engraving of part of the Hall by made by John Buckler (1770-1851) in 1809.

### 3.6 Great Mitton Hall is a building of local and regional heritage interest that has a clear contextual link with the Church and aisled barn which are described further below. For the avoidance of any doubt, the modern single storey extension attached to the south-western corner of the original building is not of special architectural or historic interest and it is not of heritage significance.

## Significance of the Church of All Hallows and its attendant structures

### 3.7 Dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Church of All Hallows has a 15<sup>th</sup> century west tower and a late 16<sup>th</sup> century north chapel (Figure 4). It is a particularly well preserved building which contains important monuments, roof

structures and a west gallery, together with old pews, old glass and other notable fixtures and fittings.

Architectural interest: The Church is of exceptional architectural interest as an example of an ancient place of worship in a commanding location on the Ribble valley. Numerous architectural periods and styles are represented between c.1250 and the modern era, including the stone cross and sundial in the churchyard. All further references to the Church in this report should be taken to include the separately designated sundial and cross.

Historic interest: The Church is of particular historic significance to the local community, acting as a physical link with a remote time in the past and as a focal point for generations of people. It has particular associations with past members of the local gentry, notably the Sherburne family who seem to have been associated with Great Mitton Hall.

Archaeological interest: The physical fabric of the building, and its gradual evolution over time, is of considerable archaeological significance in its own right.

Artistic interest: The Church contains many fixtures and fittings that are of considerable artistic importance in their own right, including the pews, pulpit and alabaster effigy of Sir Richard Shireburne (d.1594) to name but three examples. The tombs were the subject of a painting by the artist Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) – see Figure 2.

- 3.8 The Church is justifiably listed grade I as a building of exceptional architectural and historic interest.

## Significance of Mitton Bridge

- 3.9 Mitton Bridge is of significance for the following reasons:

Architectural interest: It is a substantial and technically impressive early 19<sup>th</sup> century bridge that was constructed as part of the improvement of the local road network.

Historic interest: The bridge is a late Georgian structure that reminds us of the way in which remote rural communities were being linked by ever better communication at a time of rapid social change.

Archaeological interest: The physical fabric of the bridge is of industrial archaeological significance in its own right.

Artistic interest: The bridge was sketched by J.M.W. Turner c.1816 (Figure 3).

- 3.10 Mitton Bridge is demonstrably of special architectural and historic interest.

## **Significance of the aisled barn**

- 3.11 Close inspection of the aisled barn was not possible during the site visit, but it is considered to be of significance for the following reasons.

Architectural interest: The barn is an example of a vernacular farm building dating to the late Tudor period.

Historic interest: The barn has an obvious association with the Church-Manor group to on the east side of the road.

Archaeological interest: The physical fabric of the building, and its gradual evolution over time, is likely to be of archaeological significance in its own right.

Artistic interest: There are no known artistic associations or connections.

- 3.12 The barn appears to be a building of special architectural and historic interest.

## **The settings of the listed buildings**

- 3.13 The setting of the listed building (that is, the surroundings within which its significance can be experienced) can be described as follows:

Great Mitton Hall: Great Mitton Hall overlooks the steep northern bank of the River Ribble, commanding and dominating a setting that includes the natural river corridor and the river crossing from Whalley to Great Mitton. The Hall and Church have a strong spatial relationship with is an important part of their historic connection and interest. There is also a spatial connection with the aisled barn, although the barn is set slightly apart and does not play such a visually important role in the group. Mitton Bridge is a significant structure within the setting of the Hall, but in relative terms it is a latecomer on the scene, being of Georgian rather than medieval construction. While views towards the Hall are very important, this is a building that is significant for what appears to be a relatively early attempt to facilitate views from elevated windows over a wide swathe of natural landscape (Figures 8 and 9).

The Church etc: The Church has an ancient relationship with the Ribble valley, and the river crossing, with its square tower standing on the skyline as an important local landmark. The Hall is an important part of the setting of the Church, and the aisled barn is also part of that context, albeit that it is physically separated from the Church by the Hall. Mitton Bridge is a significant structure within the setting of the Church.

Mitton Bridge: Mitton Bridge clearly has a very strong association with the River Ribble itself, and with the road crossing the valley from south to north. It does not command the valley in the same way as the Church and Hall, but it nevertheless stands as an important focal point in the valley floor, near the Aspinall Arms.<sup>6</sup>

The aisled barn: The roof of the aisled barn appears on the skyline when looking north across the valley of the River Ribble, but it is not as dominant as the Hall or Church. It is not a particularly influential component in the relationships between the historic buildings, except when seen at close quarters from the road.

- 3.14 In summary, the Hall and Church dominate their setting on the northern edge of the Ribble valley, and they have a spatial relationship with Mitton Bridge, a focal point where the B6246 crosses the river. The principal

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<sup>6</sup> The Aspinall Arms was originally known as the Mitton Boat and is said to date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

historic buildings have been important landmarks on the skyline, in much their present form, for at least 400 years – and possibly rather longer than that. The aisled barn plays an important contextual role, but it is less obvious as a component of the historic landscape here.

## Contribution of setting to significance

- 3.15 The natural river valley setting of the historic buildings contributes to an appreciation of their significance in a number of ways, notably by providing a sequence of different views as the traveller moves through the landscape. Much of the emphasis is on views moving along the southern bank of the River Ribble, looking northward to the Church and the Hall, and on views when travelling from south to north along the B6246. The following specific points should be noted.

Great Mitton Hall: The tall southern gable of the Hall, with its lines of mullioned windows overlooking the Ribble valley, has a strong influence on views from the road and from the south bank of the river (Figures 8 and 9). It is immediately apparent to the observer that this is a site of considerable antiquity.

The Church etc: The tower and roof profile of the Church signals to observers on the road and on the south bank of the river that this is an ancient place of worship that has a close connection with the Hall.

Mitton Bridge: The bridge is predominantly experienced from its deck, which has solid stone parapets on either side, but in views from the south bank of the river it can be seen to be an important component of the group of historic buildings here.

The aisled barn: The contextual or abstract connections between the aisled barn and the other nearby historic buildings are important to its significance, but the special interest of the building is not particularly apparent in longer views.

- 3.16 In summary, the Ribble valley provides a fine natural setting for the historic buildings, particularly the Church and Hall which respond to their surroundings by acting as landmarks. There is a sense in which the Hall

overlooks (looks out over) the valley, interacting positively with the landscape in which it stands.

## **Statement of significance**

3.17 Great Mitton Hall is of special interest for the following principal reasons:

- Architecturally it is a good example of a Tudor manor house, later a farmhouse.
- It illustrates an aspect of the social structure of the West Riding of Yorkshire in the late medieval period, and it has links with the ancient Sherburne family.
- It has fabric of intrinsic archaeological interest.

3.18 Considerable importance and weight should be attached to the preservation of the Hall as a designated heritage asset, including the setting and significance of the Church (which is a building of outstanding interest) and the setting and significance of the aisled barn and Mitton Bridge.

## 4.0 EFFECTS ON HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

### The application proposal

4.1 The application proposal was discussed with Mr and Mrs Kay during the site visit on 9 March 2018, after which modifications and improvements were made. The main elements of the proposal are:

- A small extension on the south side of the modern range of the Hall.
- Reconfiguration of the existing patio and railings (Figure 7), to make them less evident in long views.
- Removal of the pointed arch in the south wall of the modern range of the Hall.
- Painting the white render on the south gable of the Hall, so that it harmonises tonally with the Church.

4.2 A coniferous tree will also be removed from the south side of the Hall, in order to improve its appearance and setting.

### Physical change affecting the character of the listed building

4.3 The proposed extension has been designed and sited so that it will have minimal effect on the historic character of the listed building. Key points are as follows:

- No historic fabric will be removed or affected. The wall structure and roof structure of the range in question are of modern construction and character.
- The roof of the extension has been designed as a monopitch, so that it consists of a single plane following the pitch of the (modern) host building as closely as possible. The intention is to keep the appearance of the new roof as subtle as possible.

- The materials of the proposed extension will copy the surrounding materials, so that it blends in with minimal visual impact.
- The windows of the proposed extension will also take their cue from existing windows on either side.

4.4 The removal of the pointed arched opening from the south wall of the modern range (Figure 7), and its replacement with a new window to match others on the same elevation, will improve the overall character of the listed building in the following ways:

- It will remove a feature that is not original or authentic, and which is not characteristic of a modern structure – see Figures 10 to 13.
- It will bring consistency to the fenestration of this elevation – see Figures 10 to 13.
- It will reduce the architectural confusion that currently exists here. The pointed opening is more characteristic of the Church than the Hall, and by being located at the western end of the modern range (furthest from the Church) it visually muddles the distinction that should really exist between the Hall as a domestic dwelling and the Church as a place of worship – see Figures 10 to 13.

4.5 Reconfiguration of the patio and railings (Figure 7) will simplify this feature, without affecting any historic fabric, so that it becomes a less evidently modern feature beside the older part of the Hall.

4.6 The gable wall of the Hall has already been rendered and painted, so repainting will not affect any historic fabric. By toning down the stark white gable to a stone colour, the Hall will be tonally balanced with the adjacent Church (Figure 8).

4.7 The proposed adaptations and improvements will not cause any harm within the meaning in paragraphs 132 to 134 of the Act, and the special interest of the Hall will be preserved for the purposes of the decision maker's duty under section 16(2) of the Act.



## **Change within the setting of the other listed buildings**

- 4.8 The proposed development will bring about change within the setting of the Church, the aisled barn and Mitton Bridge. That change will be beneficial insofar as the current visual confusion with the Church is concerned (that is, the removal of the arched opening from the south wall of the modern range of the Hall).

## **Effect on the significance of the listed buildings**

- 4.9 The Church, aisled barn and bridge will be just as significant after the completion of the proposed development as they are today. There will be no effect on the historic skyline, and no interference with any significant views. The setting of the Church, in particular, will be improved. In all other respects there will be no harm within the meaning in paragraphs 132 to 134 of the NPPF, and there will be preservation for the purposes of the decision maker's duty under section 66(1) of the Act.

## **Summary of effects**

- 4.10 On the evidence of the Framework Plan there is no reason to believe that either the setting or the significance of the listed building will be harmed as a result of the change arising from the proposed development.
- 4.11 There is no reason, on present evidence, that paragraphs 133 and 134 of the NPPF would be engaged.
- 4.12 There is good reason to believe that there will be preservation for the purposes of the decision maker's duty under section 66(1) of the Act.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Mitton Hall dates from c.1600, or perhaps earlier, and it forms an important manorial group with the Church of All Hallows in an elevated and commanding position above the north bank of the Ribble valley. Dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Church is a building of exceptional interest, and there is also an important contextual link with an aisled barn on the west side of the road beside the Hall. The artists John Buckler and J.M.W. Turner were active in the area in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and they recorded the interesting topographical relationships between the buildings and their natural landscape – including Mitton Bridge, which, although apparently a later structure, is an important focal point in the valley where the road crosses the river.
- 5.2 A small extension is proposed on a modern range attached to the Hall, together with improvements to make the patio (Figure 7) less obvious, to tone down the colour scheme of the southern gable of the Hall so that it harmonises with the Church, and to remove an pointed arched doorway in the modern extension that is not authentic to the listed building. These works will not affect any historic fabric. The extension will be visually unobtrusive, and the other works will improve the character of the Hall, including the removal of a coniferous tree.
- 5.3 Paragraphs 133 and 134 of the NPPF will not be engaged, and there will be preservation for the purposes of the decision maker’s duty under section 66(1) of the Act.



Figure 1 – Extract from the O.S. map of 1848 showing Mitton Hall, circled.

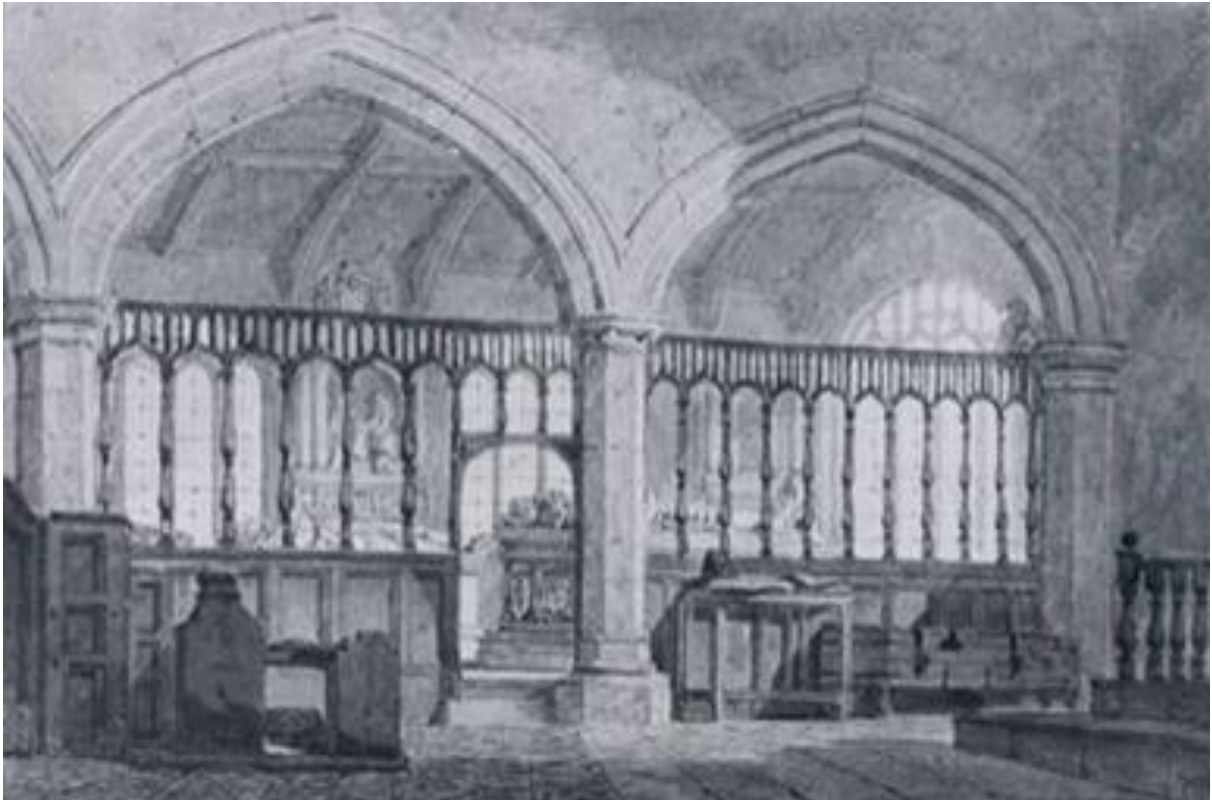


Figure 2 – Sherburne tombs in the Church of All Hallows, by J.M.W. Turner, early 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Figure 3 – Mitton Bridge – sketch by J.M.W. Turner, c.1816.



Figure 4 – The Church of All Hallows





Figure 5 – Great Mitton Hall (front, south-west elevation) with the single storey modern range to the right.



Figure 6: Great Mitton Hall seen from the road, with the modern range to the right (compare Figure 5).





Figure 7: The modern range, pointed opening and modern patio overlooking the Ribble valley.



Figure 8: The painted and rendered south gable of the Hall, with windows overlooking the Ribble valley.



Figure 9 – View from the south gable over the Ribble valley and Mitton Bridge.





Figure 10 – View from Mitton Bridge northward towards the Hall and Church on the skyline.



Figure 11 – The Hall and Church seen from the south bank of the River Ribble (near the Aspinall Arms).





Figure 12 – The Hall, Church, aisled barn and Mitton Bridge all seen from the south bank of the River Ribble.



Figure 13: Zoomed view of the Church, Hall and aisled barn (the barn is at the extreme left of view).