

PROPOSED RE-ROOFING AT WILKINSON'S FARMHOUSE

SIMONSTONE, BOROUGH OF RIBBLE VALLEY, LANCASHIRE



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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CONTENTS

1: Executive Summary	4
2: The Site	5
3: The Proposal/Scope of this Report	8
4: The Listed Buildings	10
5: Summary of Significance	13
6: Planning Policy Context	14
7: Impact of the Proposal	15
 Appendix: Garry Miller Historic Building Consultancy	 19

1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed replacement of the roof covering at Wilkinson's Farmhouse, Simonstone, in the borough of Ribbles Valley, Lancashire. The building is listed at Grade II; an adjoining freestanding pig sty is separately listed at II.

The roof is presently covered with deteriorating modern tile and the proposal seeks to replace this with natural slate. The heritage issue arising is the impact upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the listed building. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify this significance and to assess the proposal's impact upon it.

The property was first listed in 1985 on the basis that it was considered to possess special architectural and historic interest as a farmhouse of likely early 18th century date. The building has however been altered externally and internally in the mid-late 20th century and extended to the rear around 2013. The interest of the building has consequently been devalued and now primarily resides in the appearance of its front elevation only. The present roof tiles date probably from the mid-late 20th century alterations and are a non-traditional material that is alien to the character of the building and detracts from its significance and special interest.

It cannot be established what preceded the roof tile, whether stone flag or slate, as the evidence is inconclusive. There is however a historical precedent for the use of slate in the roof covering of the pig sty, which is original; furthermore, slate was approved for the roof of the 2013 rear extension of the house. Slate roof coverings are therefore the predominant historical roof covering present on the site today. Replacement of the present tiles with slate is therefore entirely appropriate as it is in keeping with the character of the site, and will enhance the appearance and significance of the listed building, as well as better-preserving its historic fabric.

The proposal is thus in keeping with the requirements of national planning guidance along with the local development plan, and therefore it is considered that listed building consent for the works should be granted.

2: THE SITE

2.1 Location

The application building is Wilkinson's Farmhouse, which is located on the west side of Simonstone Lane in Simonstone, one of the communities within the borough of Ribble Valley, Lancashire. The property was built as a farmhouse, but has been a private residence for some decades.



Map 1. Location of Wilkinson's Farm

2.2 Elements of the site

The site contains two buildings, both separately listed at Grade II:

- 1** The house itself, probably originally early 18th century but extensively altered and extended in the mid-late 20th century and around 2013
- 2** A freestanding pig sty with poultry loft above, mid-later 19th century



Map 2. Elements of the site



1. Wilkinson's Farmhouse, originally early 18th century but much altered and extended



2. The pig sty, mid-later 19th century

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Designations

Both Wilkinson's Farmhouse and the adjacent pig sty are each listed at Grade II. They were first designated on 12 February 1985.

3.2 The proposal

Listed building consent is being sought from Ribble Valley Borough Council for replacement of the existing modern tiled roof at Wilkinson's Farmhouse with natural slate.

3.3 Heritage impact

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

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 189 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) 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 evaluate the impact of the proposal upon it. It is considered the level of detail is proportionate to this significance, in accordance with paragraph 189, and no more than is sufficient to understand the proposal's impact. The report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation supporting the application.

3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

1. A brief description of the listed buildings of the site (Section 4)
2. A summary of the heritage significance of the farmhouse, including that of the present tiled roof covering (Section 5)

3. A summary of the heritage planning policies against which the application will be assessed (Section 6)
4. An assessment within this context of the proposal's impact upon the significance of the listed building (Section 7)

4: THE LISTED BUILDINGS

4.1 List descriptions

The National Heritage List for England description of Wilkinson's Farmhouse was compiled at the time of designation in 1984 and notes the exterior only:

Farmhouse, probably earlier C18, altered, now house. Coursed sandstone blocks (end and rear walls now rendered and painted white), tiled roof with chimney at left gable. Rectangular 3-bay plan. Two storeys; at junction of 1st and 2nd bays a doorway with large jambstones and rectangular lintel, windows of 4 lights to the left, 3 lights to the right, and 2, 2 and 3 lights above, all with flush mullions and plain surrounds; 3rd bay has 3 square windows at ground floor. End and rear walls altered; interior not inspected.

The pig sty, which is identified in the List as *Pigsties with poultry loft, c.15 metres northwest of Wilkinson's Farmhouse*, is described thus:

Pigsties with poultry loft, probably C18. Random sandstone rubble with quoins, slate roof. Rectangular 2-storey range built back-to-slope, containing 5 pigsties, the 1st somewhat larger and projecting; 5 rectangular doorways with punched lintels, and 5 smaller rectangular windows to the poultry loft above, a slit breather to each pigsty (some blocked); at right gable end a raised doorway to the loft approached by external steps. Listed as good example of type of agricultural building rare in this area.

The pig sty is in fact mid-later 19th century, as it is not shown upon the six-inch OS mapping of the mid-1840s (Map 3, following page).



Map 3. The six-inch OS mapping of 1844-1846 shows the pig sty did not exist at this time

4.2 Further analysis

The house was extensively altered probably during the mid-late 20th century with the result that beyond the front elevation little of its historic character now remains. Public views of this are glimpsed only, obtained through the entrance in a tall stone wall screening the building along Simonstone Lane. The present roof tiles probably date from the mid-late 20th century alterations, and were present when the building was listed in 1985. Thereafter, the house was further altered internally and extended to the rear around 2013, with slate approved as the roofing material for the new single-storey extension. This was probably accepted on the basis that it matched that of the pig sty, which has the only remaining original roofing material upon the site.



3. Public views of the house are restricted to glimpses only from the entrance to the site



4. The single-storey slate-roofed rear extension dates from circa 2013

5: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 Introduction

Paragraph 190 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.

5.2 The farmhouse

The Grade II designation of Wilkinson's Farmhouse denotes it is considered a building of importance in the national context for its special architectural and historic interest. Its significance derives essentially from this intrinsic special interest, which is that of stone farmhouse built on a linear plan probably in the early 18th century. However this special interest has been diluted owing to extensive modernisation which occurred in the mid-late 20th century and subsequently. This significance therefore now essentially resides in the appearance of the building's front elevation, as the rear is masked by an extension and the interior has been altered throughout with few features remaining.

5.3 Contribution of the present roof tiles

The present roof tiles were fitted during the alterations of the mid-late 20th century. They are not a traditional material and hence are alien to the historic character of the building and detract from its special interest and significance.

6: POLICY CONTEXT

6.1 Statutory duty

Sections 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires 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.

6.2 Relevant policies

Chapter 16 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*, July 2018) provides the guidance on how this statutory duty is to be put into practice. Paragraph 192 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

Regarding designated heritage assets, paragraph 193 states that ‘*great weight*’ should be given to their conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be; that significance can be lost through development within its setting. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

The most up-to-date local 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.

The policy goes on to state that (among other things) 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.*
- *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.*

7: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

7.1 Summary of the scheme

To recap, the proposal seeks listed building consent for the replacement of the present deteriorating modern tiles and replacement with a natural slate roof covering. The justification for the works is that they will improve the appearance of the building and better preserve its historic fabric.

7.2 Previous roof covering

It is unclear what material preceded the present tiled roof. Although a photograph of the house exists (below) that was taken probably circa 1900, it is not possible to determine from it whether the covering was stone flag or slate. The components have a thin look which tends to suggest slate, but this is cannot be considered conclusive.



5. Circa 1900 photograph of the house showing earlier roof covering

7.3 Existing coverings

As noted earlier, there is already a strong precedent for the use of slate upon the site. The pig sty roof is of slate and its use of the roof of the extension was clearly found acceptable when awarded approval in 2013.



6. *Slate used on the roof of the mid-later 19th century pig sty*

7.4 Summary and conclusion

The present roof covering of the house is historically inappropriate and therefore alien and detractive to the character and significance of the listed building. It cannot be established what preceded the tiles as there is inconclusive evidence. Slate roof coverings are therefore the predominant roof covering present on the site today, as they are present on the sty and probably for this reason were considered acceptable for the extension in 2013. Replacement of the present tiles with slate is therefore entirely appropriate as it is in keeping with the character of the site, and will enhance the appearance and significance of the listed building as well as better-preserving its historic fabric. The proposal is thus compliant with national planning guidance in respect of paragraphs 192 and 193 of the NPPF, along with the requirements of local development plan Key Statement EN5. Listed building consent should therefore be granted.

APPENDIX: GARRY MILLER HISTORIC BUILDING CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is an architectural historian who has spent more than 40 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 extensively cited in the revised *Buildings of England* volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire (2006). 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 and advising planning applications affecting the historic environment. His field of operation extends throughout the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire, and projects range from the £40m Wolstenholme Square redevelopment in central Liverpool to the Grade I Barkisland Hall, Ripponden, West Yorkshire and to cottage extensions and barn conversions. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and reports on more than 100 buildings or sites are produced annually.