

STARTIFANTS FARM, LONGRIDGE ROAD, CHIPPING, LANCASHIRE:

HERITAGE STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PLANNING APPLICATION FOR DEMOLITION AND REBUILDING OF FARMHOUSE AND CONVERSION ETC

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement has been produced to support a forthcoming planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council for a development at Startifants Farm, Chipping, on the instruction of the owners Mr & Mrs Robinson, through their agent J Hadfield. It has been produced by Stephen Haigh MA (a buildings archaeologist with 20 years professional experience of assessing, investigating and recording historic buildings in the region), following a site visit on 9 October 2018.
- 1.2 The principal historic buildings at the site comprise the farmhouse with attached garage (former trap house), and a detached traditional stone barn to the south-east. None of the buildings are listed or form part of a conservation area, but all lie within the Forest of Bowland AONB, which is considered to be a heritage asset. The historic buildings are themselves considered to be non-designated heritage assets.
- 1.3 An earlier planning application (3/2017/0742) for the site was withdrawn in October 2017. In a response to that application, the local planning authority's archaeological advisor, Lancashire Archaeological Advisory Service, commented that there is historical evidence for settlement at the site from the early 19th century, and *"it would seem appropriate to require that a formal heritage statement be produced and submitted as part of the application, prior to its determination. This should assess the significance of the farmhouse and barn and the impact of the proposals upon this as described in NPPF section 128. Without such an assessment it is not possible for an informed decision to be made concerning the balance of harm of loss of significance with regard to the benefits of the development (NPPF 135)"*.
- 1.4 The current NPPF (July 2018, paragraph 189) states that: *"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance."* The subsequent paragraph (190) makes clear that it is actually the duty of the local planning authority, rather than the applicant, to assess the impact of proposals¹.

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¹ See <http://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/statements-of-significance/statements-of-significance.htm>

2 Location

- 2.1 Startifants Farm lies in Chipping civil parish, 600m from the south-east of the village centre. The farmstead is centred on NGR: SD 62457 42651, and has an altitude above Ordnance Datum of about 95m. It stands on the east side of Longridge Road, straddling the Chipping Brook, a tributary of the River Loud. The site is surrounded by pasture fields for the most part, which form part of a plain drained by the river.

3 Current use

- 3.1 The farmhouse is occupied as a family home by the Robinson family, who also use the attached garage as a domestic outbuilding, although its upper floor is disused. Part of the barn is in use as an ice-creamery, and part is derelict.

4 Development proposals

- 4.1 The parts of the proposal which are directly relevant here are the demolition of the existing farmhouse and garage (to be replaced by a new dwelling and garage on the same site), and the conversion of the traditional barn to two dwellings. In addition, the application includes the demolition and partial re-location of modern farm buildings, which will affect the setting of the historic buildings.

5 Historical background

- 5.1 The historic landscape character of the site is described as “post-medieval enclosure” on Lancashire County Council’s Mario map.
- 5.2 The origins of settlement at the farm itself are not known, but as LAAS note, the name Startifants, derived from Sturtevant, with numerous variants in spelling, is documented in the area from the 14th century. The family name appears to have died out locally during the mid 19th century, but has been memorialised in the farm’s name, as well as Startifants Lane, 2km to the north-west of Chipping. The name most likely indicates ownership by members of the family at some date, not necessarily at the establishment of the farm. Although an uncommon name, there is no suggestion that members of the family were situated above the yeoman level of society, and its rarity should not accord undue significance to the present buildings.
- 5.3 The earliest known firm evidence for the date of the present buildings is the inscribed stone of 1820 on the farmhouse (see below). However, deeds in the owners’ possession include an indenture of 1773, referring to the transfer of “*all that messuage and tenement commonly called or known by the name of Startifant*”. The parties were Sir George Warren of Poynton, Cheshire, and Richard Howson of

“Bolland” (Bowland). The property remained in the Howson family until about 1908, when it was bought by Richard Rhodes; it was then sold to the present family in about 1938. Throughout this period, and up to the present day, the landholding attached to the farmhouse has been about 34 acres.

- 5.4 The depiction of the site on the Ordnance Survey's first edition 1:10560 map, surveyed in 1844, indicates that house, garage and barn were extant by that date (figure 1). It is worth noting that the map shows Longridge Road passing closer to the rear of the house than at present, on the line of the existing private drive.

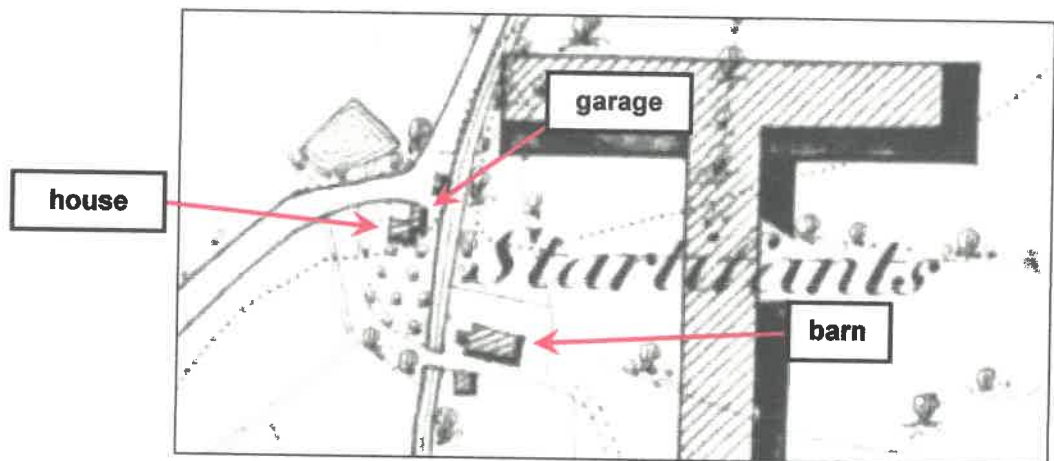


Figure 1: OS 1:10560 map, 1847²

- 5.5 The larger scale 1:2500 map, surveyed in 1891 and revised in 1910 and 1930, shows greater detail, but an essentially identical layout for the buildings for this period (figure 2). However between 1910 and 1930 Longridge Road was re-aligned across the south-east end of the former pond, leaving a remnant as the present drive passing the rear of the farmhouse (figure 3).

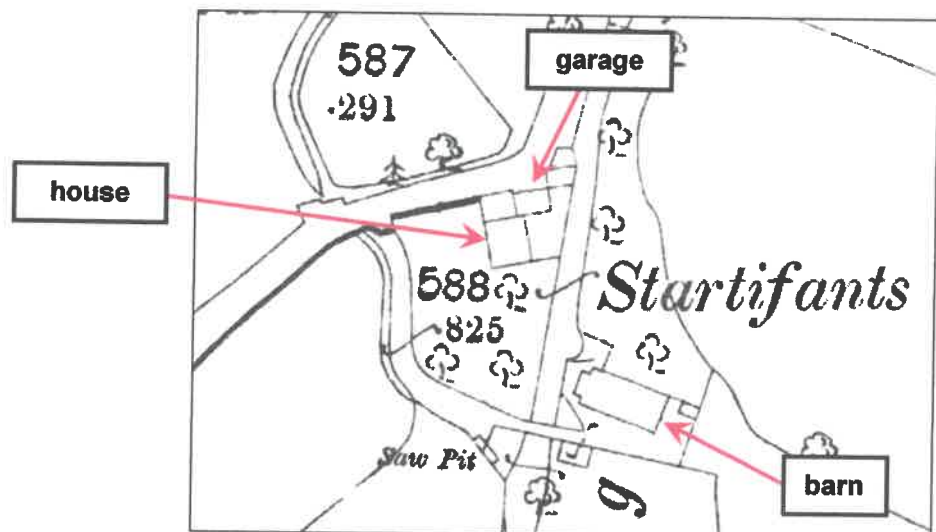
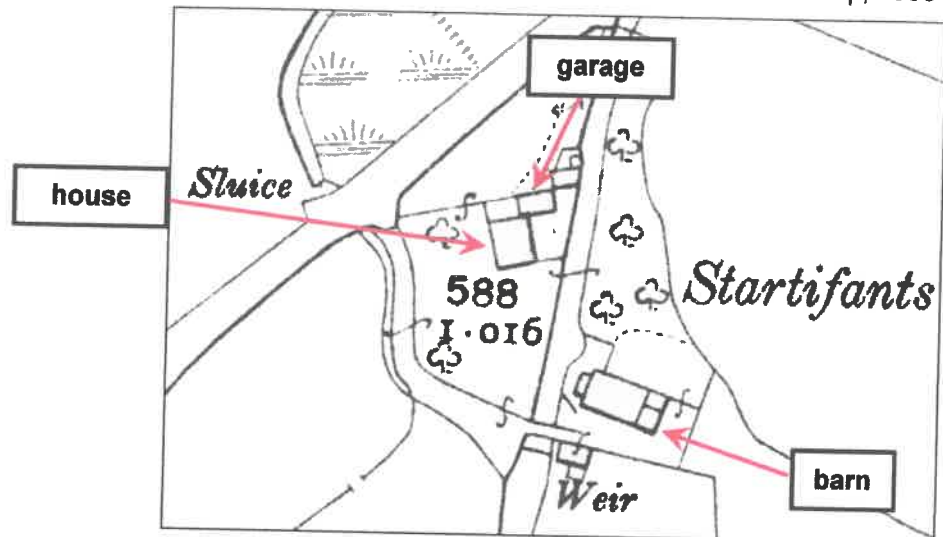


Figure 2: OS 1:2500 map, 1893³Figure 3: OS 1:2500 map, 1932⁴

6 The historic buildings

Farmhouse

- 6.1 Architectural evidence, in the form of a prominent date-stone to the front elevation, indicates that the present farmhouse was built in 1820, a date entirely in keeping with the building's outward and internal appearances, including its plan-form. The date-stone also bears the initials TH, for Thomas Howson.
- 6.2 The house is south-facing and its front is of coursed sandstone, embellished by projecting ashlar quoins, a heavy, decoratively tooled door surround, monolithic ashlar quoins to the windows, and a cyma-moulded eaves cornice, as well as the date-stone. The sides and rear appear to be of random rubble, although west gable and rear are rendered, the latter with pebble-dash. The west side is blind, but the east gable contains a tall stair window, with small opening at attic level above, as well as a modern, inserted doorway. There is an original doorway in the rear elevation and four plain windows, two of them slighted by the later garage/trap house; the guttering here is borne on moulded corbels. All windows throughout the house have uPVC frames, and two of the doors are uPVC, though the front door is timber (modern softwood).
- 6.3 The roof is of simple two-pitch design, covered with graduated blue slate incorporating large modern Velux-type roof lights, and there are solar panels to the front pitch. The ridge is of modern interlocking clay tiles, and there are two stone

² Lancashire, sheet 46; surveyed 1844. Not at original scale.

³ Lancashire, sheet 46.9 surveyed 1891. Not at original scale.

gable chimneys, with a total of three flues, suggesting heating was confined to the ground floor.

- 6.4 The house plan is two-bay and double-depth, on two storeys with attic, in keeping with farmhouse design predominant in the 18th/19th century, but it lacks a central passage and stair hall, and instead has a direct, right-of-centre entry into what would have been the housebody, with the stairs located behind this room, lit by the window in the east gable. Two masonry cross-walls on the ground and first floors divide the house into four unequal quarters. The two front ground floor rooms, housebody (right) and parlour (left) have been opened into one; the only feature of significance here is the large fireplace opening with moulded cornice, to hold a cooking range, in the housebody. The two rear rooms appear to have been back kitchen and pantry originally, and there is a small sunken pantry or dairy beneath the staircase. Historic joinery on the ground floor appears confined to one or two isolated architraves and the staircase (with modern balustrade): all doors have been replaced, and there is evidence that the pattern of internal doorways has also been altered.
- 6.5 The four-room plan on the first floor survives, with the north-east room having been converted to a bathroom. A single doorway architrave remains, but there are no historic doors or fireplaces (none are believed to have existed on this level), and the appearance of all areas is modern.
- 6.6 The staircase continues to the attic (possibly as a result of alteration), which is also divided into four, although in this case by lightweight partitions rather than masonry walls. An original, pegged roof truss provides the frame for one of these, between the east and west parts: it is of sawn softwood, with an interrupted tie beam which accommodates a pair of doorways, either side of the east-west partition. These four rooms would have been either servants' bedrooms or storage areas; the small single-light opening in the east gable, which was shuttered, may have been the only lighting originally.

Garage (former trap house)

- 6.7 According to the Ordnance Survey, this addition at the north-east corner of the house must have been built by 1844, ie within a generation of the 1820 rebuilding by Thomas Howson. This perpendicular addition adjoins rather awkwardly (its site confined by the brook), and is much plainer in form, with mixed limestone and sandstone rubble walls (two of them pebble-dash rendered), and punch-dressed quoins and surrounds to openings, some of which have been inserted or altered. The graduated blue slate roof and sandstone ridge appear original.

⁴ Lancashire, sheet 46.9 revised 1930. Not at original scale.

- 6.8 Pedestrian doorways in the south and west sides (the latter reduced to a window) lead into the building, and there is a wider doorway in the north side with massive monolithic lintel, indicating that this was an entrance for a horse-drawn trap or similar. There are also three large windows in the east side, but these may be secondary.
- 6.9 Internally, the ground floor is now a single space of three bays with concrete floor, but there may have been internal divisions at one time, and the west part of this room may have been a stable historically, though the only physical evidence to suggest that is a blocked breather in the west wall. A flight of modern stairs leads to the loft, which was a joiner's workshop in the early 20th century and remains partly fitted out for that purpose. However there is a chimney breast and fireplace opening on this floor in the south wall, which may indicate an original use as a bothy or office.

Barn

- 6.10 The barn is situated apart from the farmhouse, on the opposite bank of the brook, and although together they form a loose group, such a degree of separation is not an entirely characteristic farmstead arrangement.
- 6.11 This would have been a modest four-bay combination barn originally, relatively narrow in plan, lacking porch or outshut, and with a lower roof than at present, possibly covered with thatch rather than slate, and it seems likely that this building was established in the 18th century. Its walls contain a high proportion of cobbles, rather than quarried stone. At some date during the 19th century, the barn was extended to the east by a bay, and its eaves heightened at the same time, with the new stonework being primarily random sandstone rubble, and incorporating squared dressings with prominent tooling. The present graduated blue slate roof and sandstone ridge probably date from this phase, along with the trusses that support them.
- 6.12 The front elevation of the original barn is largely preserved, and contains a typical cart entrance with stone arch, beneath which is a cambered oak lintel, incorporating the sockets for a pair of doors (now removed). There is a pedestrian doorway to a shippon in the west end of the building, and two blocked breathers to the right of the main entrance. A clear straight joint beyond these, with some quoins, marks the original east gable, with the second phase of the building having been added to it. A large pedestrian doorway, its jambs with linear tooling, suggests a shippon or stable occupied the east end of this addition.
- 6.13 The barn's west gable lacks any openings or any clear indication of an earlier roof line, so has perhaps been rebuilt. There are marks of a modern single storey lean-

to, whose north wall survives, but this was not the earlier projecting building shown on the historic maps above, which must have been replaced in the mid 20th century.

- 6.14 The rear is largely overgrown and partly built against, but an original winnowing door opposite the cart entrance remains intact, under a stone arch similar to that on the front.
- 6.15 The east gable, which dates from the 19th century phase, has a blocked doorway, a wide ground floor window which appears to be at least partly modern, and a forking hole with sawn stone surround, apparently a 20th century insertion.
- 6.16 The barn interior contains very little of interest. On the ground floor, the east half contains an area enclosed by blockwork, to accommodate three rooms created for an ice-creamery. The remainder, at the west end, formerly contained a shippon with loft over in the end bay, though nothing remains of this, except the areas of cement render to the walls. There are no historic floor surfaces or fixtures visible.
- 6.17 The present roof structure dates from the extension of the barn and comprises three identical king post trusses of imported, machine-sawn softwood, with bolts to the joints. These are clearly 19th century and not of historic or architectural interest.

7 Assessment of significance

- 7.1 The farmhouse has heritage significance, as a dated, early 19th century farmhouse with intact frontage and association with a known individual, Thomas Howson. The front elevation is of good quality, with intact openings, date-stone and eaves cornice, but the exterior is tempered by the less ornate sides and rear, and the awkward juxtaposition of the garage/trap house. The house interior is not of special interest: it does have a few isolated original features, but floor plan and other arrangements are of largely standard early 19th century design.
- 7.2 As an individual building, the adjoining garage (former trap house) is architecturally plain and of typical early to mid 19th century construction, though its physical juxtaposition as an addition to the house contributes interest, as do its subservient form as a domestic outbuilding, and its location at the rear corner. There is little interest in terms of its detailing or interior, with the only distinctive features being the north doorway and first floor fireplace.
- 7.3 The barn has only external heritage significance, and comprises a large, simple rectangular building which dates to two phases. The principal features which confer significance are its plain outer walls with high solid to void ratios, the few but varied existing openings, and the clear differences in walling which indicate the two

construction phases. Recent conversion of part of the interior, the previous removal of the shippon, and historic replacement of the original trusses all mean that significance is essentially confined to the outside appearance, and its setting in the landscape and in relation to the farmhouse.

Setting

- 7.4 The historic buildings currently form part of a wider farmstead, which includes a number of mid to late 20th century buildings, which are not of architectural interest and do not positively contribute to significance. Otherwise, the farm has an isolated location outside other settlement and within open countryside, which forms part of the Forest of Bowland AONB, although other dwellings and a waste water treatment plant neighbour the site.
- 7.5 The heritage significance of the historic buildings, particularly the barn, is presently diminished by these later ephemeral structures, in various states of repair, which stand on the east side of the brook.

8 Impact assessment

- 8.1 The proposed demolition and rebuilding of the farmhouse and adjoining garage/trap house would result in the total loss of these undesignated heritage assets of relatively low significance, albeit the coherence of the historic farmstead as a group would be maintained by the new-build occupying the same site. While these buildings undoubtedly hold heritage significance, this derives from certain aspects only, and is borne out by the fact that neither is listed as a building of special architectural or historic interest.
- 8.2 The proposed conversion of the barn would result in a small number of new openings to the historic building, with the majority of existing openings and fabric being conserved. Residential conversion would provide the barn with a new, sustainable use, which it presently lacks, and arrest the structural decay which is now apparent. Removal of a number of surrounding modern sheds from its vicinity would also enhance its setting and that of the farmstead as a whole.
- 8.3 Paragraph 197 of the NPPF states that: *"The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."*

- 8.4 In summary, the proposals would result in both gains and losses of heritage significance at the site, and these should be balanced against the other benefits of the scheme, the overall emphasis of which is sustainable development, in line with the aim of the NPPF. Mitigation for any loss of heritage significance deemed to arise from any consent could include the creation of a detailed archaeological record of the historic buildings.

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Photo 1: Farmhouse, with garage/trap house to right



Photo 2: Farmhouse: detail of date-stone



Photo 3: Farmhouse: east gable, with stair windows



Photo 4: Farmhouse: rear elevation, with adjoining garage/trap house at left



Photo 5: Farmhouse: housebody (present kitchen), with original fireplace opening for range



Photo 6: Farmhouse: housebody (present kitchen), with modern opening to parlour (left)



Photo 7: Farmhouse: roof truss forming partition on attic floor



Photo 8: Garage/trap house: north entrance, onto former Longridge Road



Photo 9 Garage/trap house: first floor, latterly joiner's workshop



Photo 10 Barn: south front



Photo 11 Barn: 19th century addition, east end



Photo 12 Barn: site of shippon (removed), in west end



Photo 13 Barn: blockwork enclosing ice-creamery, east end