

HERITAGE STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PLANNING APPLICATION
FOR ALTERATIONS AT THE WHITE HOUSE, SAWLEY
PLANNING APPLICATION: 3/2019/0975

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement has been produced to support a current planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council, for the applicants Mr and Mrs Monaghan, through their agent Peter Hitchen Architects Ltd. It has been written by Stephen Haigh MA (a buildings archaeologist with over 20 years professional experience of assessing, investigating and recording historic buildings in the region), following a site visit on 16 January 2020.
- 1.2 The White House lies within the Sawley Conservation Area. Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; a conservation area is defined as “an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.
- 1.3 In summary, this statement finds that the White House does not contribute towards the special interest or character of the conservation area, and the proposals are of a modest scale and of a character in keeping with the existing building, so they would not result in harm to the significance of any heritage assets.

2 Location

- 2.1 The White House stands in Sawley civil parish, on the west side of the road through the village, at NGR: SD 77600 46498. It is a detached house surrounded by its own garden, situated within a mixed, primarily residential row. The property borders agricultural land to the west, and there is similar land directly to the east of the road, which forms part of the scheduled monument of “Sawley Cistercian abbey and associated earthworks”¹. The standing remains of the abbey lie to the south-east of the house.
- 2.2 The house faces south-east onto a gravel drive, and this front elevation has a conservatory attached. The north-west side, where ground level is considerably lower, faces across the garden.

¹ National Heritage List for England, ref: 1015492

3 Planning context

- 3.1 The building lies within the Sawley Conservation Area, designated in 1971, an appraisal for which was produced in 2005². Management Guidance has also been published³.
- 3.2 Pre-application advice was provided by RVBC in 2019 (ref: RV/2019/ENQ/00060).

4 Proposed development

- 4.1 There are a number of elements to the proposals:
- new two-storey and single-storey extensions to the front elevation (replacing the existing conservatory)
 - a new single-storey extension (utility room) to the north-east side
 - a terrace to the north-west side
 - conversion of loft with new roof-lights to the south-east roof pitch and dormers to the north-west

5 Planning policies

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1 Section 16 of the NPPF, "Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment", sets out the relevant part of national planning policy regarding heritage assets. 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."*
- 5.2 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF reads: *"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."*

² Conservation Studio 2005 *Sawley Conservation Area Appraisal*

³ Conservation Studio 2005 *Sawley Conservation Area Management Guidance*

Local policy – Ribble Valley Core Strategy

- 5.3 The relevant policies within the Core Strategy are Key Statement EN5 (“*Heritage Assets*”) and DME4, “*Protecting Heritage Assets*”.

6 Historical background

- 6.1 The village of Sawley grew up around the abbey (established in 1147), particularly following its dissolution in the 16th century, and for the early post-medieval period remained a small settlement chiefly comprising small farms and scattered cottages. In about 1790 a textile printing works was built close to the abbey mill, and continued to work for the first half of the 19th century, but the village remained small in size and rural in character. During the 20th century there was piecemeal residential development, particularly along the west side of the road, where the White House was built, it is believed in the 1960s.

7 The existing building

- 7.1 The White House is a detached house of two storeys and basement, stone-faced at lower levels and with painted render above. The roof is gabled and has plain concrete tiles, with a low, flat-roofed dormer and stone chimney stack to the south-east side. There is also a late 20th century conservatory on this elevation. The north-west side has two garage doors at basement level under a projecting roof, and the north-east end a small, flat-roofed porch. Window openings are generally large, in keeping with the age of the house, and most have uPVC frames.

8 The conservation area: statement of significance

- 8.1 According to the CA appraisal, the special interest which justifies the designation of the Sawley Conservation Area is manifold, with the remains of the abbey being a primary feature in this regard, whose significance is obvious from its scheduled and grade I listed status. Other individual components include the bridge over the Ribble and other grade II listed buildings, which are scattered through it. The riverside setting is noted for its contribution to scenic views in the appraisal, along with the village’s open and dispersed character, and the backdrop formed by more distant high ground. The appraisal also notes the Ribble Way footpath and the village’s location within the Forest of Bowland AONB. Several non-listed buildings of “townscape merit” are noted, which make a positive contribution to character and appearance.

- 8.2 The White House is one of a number of 20th century houses believed to have been established within the CA prior to its designation, and was formerly known as The Cloisters. In overall design and character it is very much of its time, and is of quite simple appearance, with large windows and a restricted palette of materials, most of which are modern and non-traditional, in particular the white-painted render and concrete tile roof. It does not contribute to the special interest of the CA, but is an established building within it which forms part of a row of other modern houses, interspersed with older and more traditional buildings. A number of those other nearby modern houses display similarly non-traditional features, for example many are bungalows or have rendered elevations to the road, and some have dormer windows (eg Monks Lodge). Like the White House, these do not contribute to the CA's special interest, but do constitute a major part of the building stock within it, as acknowledged within the Management Guidance.

9 Assessment of impact

- 9.1 While it is accepted that certain aspects of the scheme would not contribute positively to the conservation area's character or appearance, given the building's detached location set back from the road, and its already modern, non-traditional form and materials, it is considered that the house could withstand the degree of change proposed, without negatively affecting the character and appearance of the conservation area. The changes would be relatively minor alterations to an existing modern building, and in form would respond to their immediate environment. Additionally, their distance and physical separation from other designated heritage assets (in particular the remains of the abbey) are such, that the scheme would not result in harm to heritage significance, and so would be acceptable in terms of impact on the historic environment.

Stephen Haigh, MA
Buildings Archaeologist
21 January 2020

photographs below

11 Browcliff Silsden Keighley West Yorkshire BD20 9PN
Tel: 01535 658925 Mobile: 07986 612548
www.stephenhaigh.co.uk enquiries@stephenhaigh.co.uk



Photo 1: View north, showing physical separation between the White House (left) and standing remains of the abbey (right)



Photo 2: South-east front (to left)