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Our ref: 3_2020_0548-LCC

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FAO A Dowd

Dear Mr Macholc

Planning Application 3/2020/0548: Proposed internal alterations including replacement staircase and bringing attic room back into use; reinstatement of second floor window; alteration to outshut flooring and alteration to ground floor window opening. (Resubmission of 3/2019/0939)
26 Church Street, Ribchester PR3 3XP

Thank you for your consultation on the above application. We will restrict our comments to the archaeological implications of the scheme and defer to Mr Dowd's expertise with regard to the impact of the works on the significance of the standing building and any requirement for its mitigation.

The plans submitted with the application on the Council's web site are very poorly reproduced and very difficult to read, however the title blocks strongly suggest that they are identical to those submitted with refused application 3/2019/0939. An additional detail drawing showing a section 'as existing' and 'as proposed' across the rear outshut is appended to the document entitled "26 Church Street, Ribchester – Proposed Internal Finishes" and is presumably that referred to in the text as drawing 1999/1F. The existing floor make-up detailed there is also briefly described in the Additional Heritage Statement (AHS) provided by Stephen Haigh and dated July 2020. This Statement includes a photograph of a test pit cut against the north wall of the outshut and states that the present concrete floor is of 20th century date and is c.50mm deep over a rubble and soil infill. No historic floor level is noted but the internal plaster/limewash is described as continuing below the extant floor level for "*at least 300mm*", showing that the present floor level has been built up. It was concluded that this was probably done to manage the dampness within this former loomshop.

The details in drawing 1999/1F 'as existing' do not completely tie up with the AHS, as they suggest that the internal "render" only continues 175mm below the existing floor, but adds that "loamy soil" is seen at 460mm below the floor and implies that this is the foundation level of the outshut, with the infill below the concrete being a layer of cobbles underlain by crushed brick and slate. The adjacent drawing 'as proposed' seems to show that the new finished floor level is 175mm below that of the existing, with that

amount covered by a new skirting. Below this is a 70mm underfloor heating screed, a 100mm concrete slab, 60mm of insulation, a layer of visqueen DPM and 150mm of compacted hardcore. This adds up to 555mm, of which at least 300mm is within the make-up discussed above.

A telephone call with the applicant Mr Bennett today has suggested, however, that the new floor make-up may not need to be as deep as this.

Whilst the site has clearly been disturbed by the construction of the house and outshut, and the floor of the outshut has certainly been raised, there is some small potential for remains associated with its use for textile manufacture to survive here. It is also probable that Roman deposits will also survive here below this. An archaeological watching brief carried out within the outshut of no. 24 Church Street in 2010 demonstrated that whilst the ground within that structure had been disturbed to at least 700mm below existing floor level, but finds indicated that there was significant potential for intact Roman deposits to survive below this. On the opposite side of Church Street, observations during the construction of Alandale House revealed substantial intact Roman deposits were found at about this depth; these included a substantial ditch and gravelled surfaces. Excavations to the rear of no. 25 Church Street in 1982 revealed remains of a Romano-British hut and what may have been a second century smithy or metal-working hearth, as well as a wall which may have been associated with a hypocaust (underfloor heating system) seen in 1981 in the adjacent playing field.

The scale of the proposed works and their potential impact would not suggest that pre-determination archaeological investigations are merited, but it is recommended that a formal watching brief would be appropriate. This can be required by a planning condition – the following wording is suggested:

Condition: No excavation works on the application site, including any required for clearance/demolition or site preparation shall take place until the applicant, or their agent or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works, to include a formal watching brief to the standards and guidance set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists as an integral part of the groundworks required for the development. This watching brief must be carried out by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional contractor and in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which shall first have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall include a contingency plan for the unexpected discovery of significant remains. A copy of a formal report on the works undertaken and their results shall be submitted to the Lancashire Historic Environment Record prior to the dwelling being first occupied following the consented works.

Reason: To ensure and safeguard the recording and inspection of matters of archaeological/historical importance associated with the buildings/site.

Note: Relevant archaeological standards and lists of potential contractors can be found on the ClfA web pages: <http://www.archaeologists.net> and the BAJR Directory: <http://www.bajr.org/whoseWho/>.

I hope that the above is self-explanatory, but please do not hesitate to contact us should you need further information.

Yours sincerely

Peter Iles

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Historic Environment Team