

HERITAGE STATEMENT TO SUPPORT PLANNING APPLICATION 3/2021/0280

FOR PROPOSED CONVERSION OF BARN TO TWO DWELLINGS AND CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS TO PROVIDE HOME OFFICE SPACE AND GARAGES

AT NEWHURST FARM, BOLTON-BY-BOWLAND, BB7 4NZ

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement has been produced to support the current planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council, and 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), on the instruction of the owners and applicants Mr & Mrs Holt, through their agent David Wrigley, and follows a site visit made on 25 March 2021. At that time there was a considerable quantity of stored hay and straw on the upper floor.
- 1.2 The buildings concerned comprise a stone-built barn with attached historic former dwelling, as well as more modern agricultural structures. The historic (pre-20th century) components are considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. The site also lies within the Forest of Bowland AONB.
- 1.3 Paragraph 197 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.*"

2 The existing site

- 2.1 Newhurst is a working farm located 300m to the south of Knotts Lane, 1km west of Forest Becks, and some 2km north of Bolton-by-Bowland village. The site is surrounded by pasture land, and lies at an altitude of about 140m AOD, within Bolton-by-Bowland civil parish.
- 2.2 The barn proposed for conversion lies at the west side of the group, at NGR: SD 77711 51214, and currently forms the focus of farming activity. Two other barns within the group were converted to residential use about 20 years ago, prior to which they were recorded by the present writer¹.

¹Stephen Haigh 2001 *Newhurst Farm, Bolton-By-Bowland, Lancashire: Archaeological Building Recording*

3 Proposed development

- 3.1 The proposals would involve the conversion of the barn to two dwellings, incorporating two adjoining 20th century additions on the north-east and north-west ends. Other parts of those additions along with the larger portal frame shed to the south-east would be demolished, and a new below-ground garage constructed to the south-west of the barn.

4 Historical background

- 4.1 There is no known documentary history specifically relating to the barn. Historic maps show that in the mid 19th century it formed the largest structure within the group (figure 1²), and had its present outline, with the addition of two small projections to the north-east side. By 1908 those additions had been demolished (figure 2³), and the main part of the building was shown as divided into two.



Figure 1: OS 1:10560 map, 1850

²Yorkshire, sheet 165, surveyed 1847

³Yorkshire, sheet 165.8, surveyed 1893, revised 1907

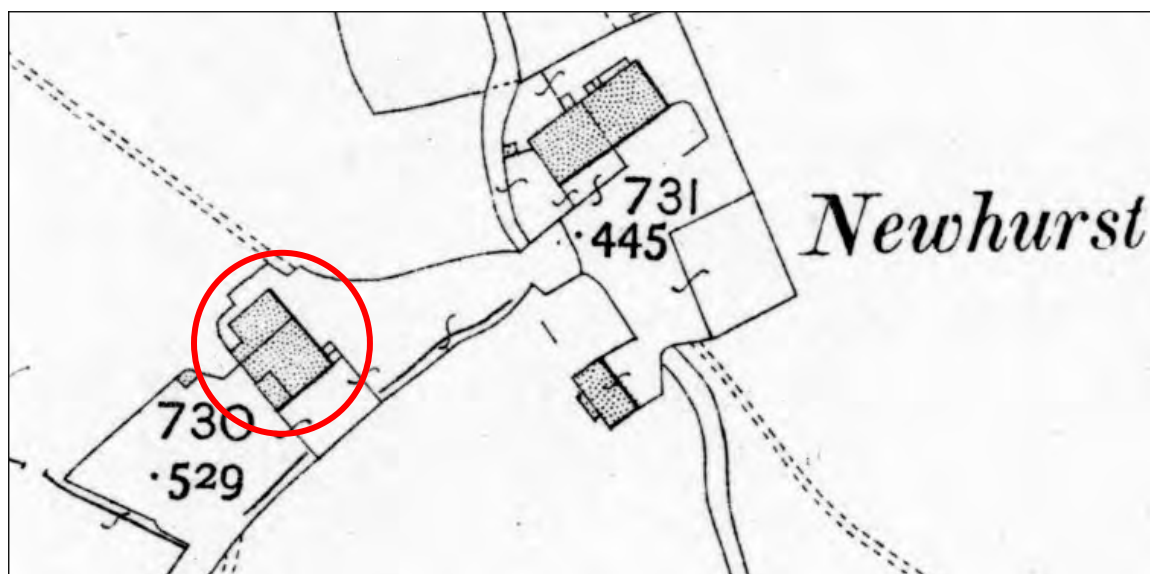


Figure 2: OS 1:2500 map, 1908

5 The present buildings

- 5.1 The stone building is a bank barn in form, probably dating from the second half of the 18th century, and with a curious twin porch arrangement to its south-west side (as shown on the 1908 map), which appears to be original, and suggests it was intended to be shared by two occupiers (photo 1). At the south corner of the barn is a domestic extension, late 18th or early 19th century, which communicated with the south-east bay of the barn, which was itself adapted to residential use. All parts are now in agricultural use.
- 5.2 The main part of the building has walls of coursed, watershot sandstone, and a stone slate roof with sandstone ridge; there is no indication that it has been enlarged to its present size at the north-west end, which the twin entries might suggest. It is set into ground which rises to the south-west, so as to permit direct entry to the upper floor (hayloft), via a ramp to the pair of cart entries (one of which is presently blocked), while the ground floor would have been used for housing cattle. The bank barn is not the predominant form in the local area, but the former barn to the south at Newhurst Farm is another example. As a building type it is more closely associated with Cumbria and adjoining areas.
- 5.3 While there are twin cart entries in the south-west side, there appears to have been only a single winnowing doorway in the opposite, north-east side (although feed silos conceal some of this elevation) (photos 2 and 3). This is now blocked up, but is notable for the quality of its tripartite lintel, with joggled skewbacks to the central member. Intact original openings in this side of the building are otherwise confined to a regular arrangement of breathers, in two rows, and a

ground floor doorway at the right-hand end, but there are various other openings, which have either been inserted, or altered.

- 5.4 The south-east gable has a wide, modern, central doorway under an RSJ, flanked by a pair of pedestrian doorways which have concrete lintels, but were probably original openings. Above these are two rows of former windows (four in total), inserted when this end of the barn was occupied as a dwelling.
- 5.5 The north gable has a similar wide entrance at ground floor level, above which are further breathers, and a plain owl hole (photo 4).
- 5.6 There is a substantial dividing wall on the ground floor of the barn, but not within the hayloft, in line with the division between the two cart entries above. It now has a wide doorway through, beneath RSJs, and is rendered. The two ground floor spaces which this separates contain a mid 20th century shippon arrangement, with rendered walls and concrete boskins, and nothing of the historic layout, likely to have contained two timber framed shippons, survives (photo 5). The first floor is carried on steel beams and has been replaced in its entirety.
- 5.7 The hayloft is of five bays, with the two bays at the north-west end being slightly shorter than the others. There are now no divisions within it, and no sign that the dividing wall below formerly continued at this level, but plastered walls and former window or doorway openings within the south-east bay indicate that at one time this part contained two floors of living accommodation, albeit apparently unheated; these were probably contained within stud partitions. An inserted doorway in the south-west side communicated with the top floor of the purpose-built part of the domestic accommodation.
- 5.8 The roof structure appears entirely original, is constructed from local hardwood, and contains four trusses of uniform design, with king-posts and V-struts, very typical of the 18th century. However there are also small ridge braces, which are a much less common feature of such roofs. The rafters are very irregular and short in length, which contributes to the roof's distinctive appearance (photo 6).
- 5.9 The domestic extension or cottage at the south corner of the barn has a ground floor entrance in the south-east side, but a first floor doorway and window openings in the south-west side (photo 7). These all vary in their forms, implying less concern over appearance than is apparent within the original building. There were three floor levels; the attic floor survives, but the first floor has been removed. The latter contains a stone fireplace (infilled, but designed for a hob-grate), in the south-east end (photo 8).

- 5.10 20th century additions to the building are all single-storey, and include a rendered blockwork lean-to against the north-east elevation, and similarly built shed at the north-west end. These are associated with the post-war expansion of dairy farming. There is also a small 20th century brick privy attached to the south-west elevation of the barn, in the angle with the left-hand cart entry. None of these have any architectural or historic significance.

6 Statement of significance

- 6.1 Overall, the building is significant for its evidential, historic and aesthetic values, and is of local historic and architectural interest, as a slightly unusual component of a traditional farmstead. It is not considered to merit any greater level of protection as a heritage asset than it currently enjoys.
- 6.2 The barn is a well-built, traditional, 18th century farm building, of bank barn form, unusual for its twin porch arrangement, and for the division of its ground floor into two unequal parts. Its stonework and surviving original roof structure are of relatively high quality, although it lacks ornamentation, as is typical for the locality. The historic adaptation and extension to provide domestic accommodation confer additional interest. However, extensive modern changes to the barn itself, which principally affect the ground floor, have led to the loss of some historic character and fabric. Its setting has also been compromised by its presently very cluttered surroundings, brought about by the large number of 20th century additions.

7 Potential impact of proposals

- 7.1 The proposed scheme aims to convert the barn and two small parts of its 20th century additions to residential use in a sympathetic manner, retaining significant aspects, and enhancing its external appearance.
- 7.2 The most obvious improvement would arise through the removal of the majority of the modern accretions, which conceal much of the building's exterior from view, in particular the portal frame shed, and the pair of feed silos. Those 20th century additions proposed for retention would be improved by being clad with stone, and having new slate roofs to replace the existing asbestos cement coverings.
- 7.3 The vast majority of openings proposed would use existing apertures (some presently blocked), and the small number of entirely new ones would be confined to the inconspicuous west corner. Proposed windows are modest in size and window and door frames would be stained timber, to minimise impact on the

building's agricultural character. The left-hand cart entry would be reinstated as an entrance, so enhancing significance.

- 7.4 Significant aspects of the interior (which presently are very largely confined to the upper floors) would be retained where possible, and in property one, the historic roof structure would remain visible over the first floor.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 The proposed conversion is a means of achieving the optimal viable use of the barn, as a heritage asset; although presently in use for farming, it is badly suited to current farming methods, and does not provide sufficient return for its long-term upkeep. The conversion to residential use has been drawn up so as to lead to minimal loss of heritage significance, and would also enhance significance through the reduction in inappropriate modern accretions, which detract from its setting and appearance. The scheme is therefore entirely acceptable, in terms of its impact on the historic environment.

Stephen Haigh, MA
Buildings Archaeologist
6 April 2021



Photo 1: South-west front of barn, with twin porches to hayloft (left) and domestic extension (right)



Photo 2: North-east rear, with modern additions



Photo 3: Blocked winnowing door to hayloft in north-east side, with distinctive lintel



Photo 4: View from north, showing extent of modern additions, most of which would be removed



Photo 5: Ground floor. Entirely modern in character



Photo 6: Roof structure over hayloft



Photo 7: Domestic extension



Photo 8: Fireplace and attic floor above, within domestic extension