

HERITAGE STATEMENT TO SUPPORT RESUBMITTED PLANNING APPLICATION FOR ALTERATIONS AND FIRST FLOOR EXTENSION TO THE REAR OUTBUILDINGS AT PROSPECT HOUSE, CHURCH BROW, CLITHEROE

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement has been produced to support a planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council, for alterations and a first floor extension to the linked rear outbuildings at Prospect House, which lies within the Clitheroe conservation area. It has been written by Stephen Haigh MA, on the instruction of the applicants Mr & Mrs Brunt, and with reference to scheme drawings by Peter Hitchen Architects. A site visit was made by the writer on 9 May 2022.
- 1.2 Application 3/2022/0520 was refused on 8 November 2022. The present resubmission omits the proposed terrace area and glazed link which formed part of that scheme.

2 Prospect House

- 2.1 Prospect House is a large, early Victorian house of two storeys with attics, standing in an elevated position just north of, and set below the grounds of, the parish church of St Mary Magdalene, in Clitheroe town centre (NGR: SD 74446 42107). It faces east onto Church Brow, from which it is set back behind a terraced garden and retaining walls. The front elevation has some distinctive architectural features, in particular the Gothic style porch.
- 2.2 A covered vehicular entrance from the street, at the south side of the house, gives access through to a courtyard, enclosed on the west side by a two-storey outbuilding, now containing a garage on the ground floor, and probably a coach house originally. This is linked to the house itself via a group of single-storey structures, the largest of which is now a garden room ("store" on plan), but was formerly a vet's surgery. The house's garden lies to the north of this, where it is enclosed by stone walls on the west and north sides.

3 Historic development

- 3.1 Prospect House (so-named for the views it gives across the north part of the town and surrounding countryside) is thought to have been built in the 1830s; it is shown in useful detail on the first edition Ordnance Survey town plan, surveyed in 1844-6 (see figure 1 below). It was then known as Prospect Place, and its courtyard and coach house formed part of the property. The second

edition of the town plan (figure 2) shows that changes to the outbuildings on the west side of the house had been made by the 1880s, but that the coach house remained detached.

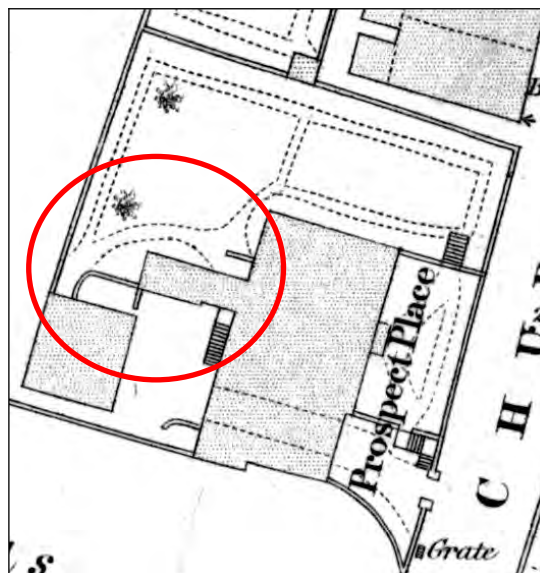


Figure 1: OS town plan, 1849

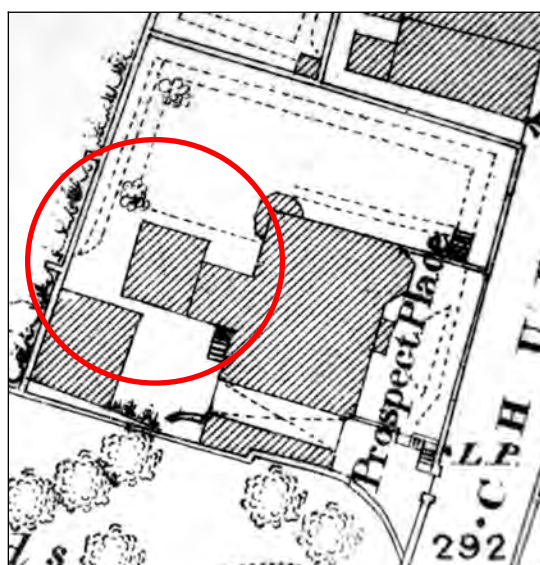


Figure 2: OS town plan, 1886

- 3.2 Further additions were made to the outbuildings during the twentieth century, to link them to the former coach house, and as a result, the single-storey structures which now join the house to it comprise three parts, of different dates. They were the subject of an approved planning application in 2005, for change of use from veterinary surgery to domestic use (ref: 3/2005/0253).

4 Proposals

- 4.1 It is proposed to alter and rebuild the group of three, single-storey linking ground floor structures, within their existing footprint, to provide a large kitchen/dining room, joined to the house by a glazed link. There would also be a small “gallery” extension on the first floor, forming an addition to the north gable of the garage.

5 Identified relevant heritage assets

- 5.1 The property lies within the Clitheroe conservation area¹, a designated heritage asset under the terms of the NPPF, and falls within what the appraisal terms Character Area 1, “Clitheroe’s Historic Core”. The adopted *Townscape Appraisal Map* identifies Prospect House and the garage as “buildings of townscape merit”; this status is not extended to all of the linking outbuildings however. It also identifies the grounds of the neighbouring church, and some adjoining areas, as “significant open spaces”.
- 5.2 The neighbouring Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene is a grade II* listed building², and is identified as a “focal building” on the *Townscape Appraisal Map*. The potential impact of the proposed development on its setting is considered in this statement.
- 5.3 The listed building at 4 – 8 Church Brow is screened from the proposed development and so not considered relevant.

6 Statement of heritage significance

- 6.1 Prospect House is an early Victorian villa in a prominent and prestigious location within Clitheroe town centre, close to the parish church. Its east front is architecturally distinguished by a number of original and later embellishments, including the porch and the arched entrance to the small rear courtyard, with ornate oriel window above (photo 1, below). These readily merit its status as a “building of townscape merit”. The rear of the house (west elevation) is plainer, and very largely concealed from public view; it appears to have been extended upwards, and the corner bay window is known to be an addition, which probably formed part of a wider scheme to enhance the building in the second half of the nineteenth century.
- 6.2 The rear of the house and its roof are also visible in views north from the churchyard, although the latter’s boundary wall conceals the lower parts, and

¹Designated in 1973; extended and given Outstanding Conservation Area status in 1979. See: The Conservation Studio 2005/6 *Clitheroe Conservation Area Appraisal*

²National Heritage List, entry 1362179

nearly the entirety of the outbuildings (only the chimney stack of the former coach house is visible above it: see photo 2). House and outbuildings are also visible from the west (eg from St Mary's Street), and north, but these aspects are more distant, and lack any particular distinction (photo 3).

- 6.3 Significance is also contributed by the form of the small courtyard (laid to concrete) and its immediate surroundings, but this is an entirely private space, which is not in public view.
- 6.4 The courtyard is enclosed by the house and covered entry on the east side, by quarried bedrock and churchyard wall on the south side, and otherwise by outbuildings. The garage (former coach house; photo 4) was standing by the 1840s and was probably contemporaneous with the house; it is distinguished by the first floor window with arched head.
- 6.5 The north face of the courtyard is formed by two phases of buildings (photo 5). The east one, adjoining the house ("utility", with adjacent passage), has openings with stone surrounds. It dates from between the 1840s and 1880s (see maps above), and the awkward way in which its roof has been contrived so as not to slight the tall stair window, demonstrates that it is not original to the house. The west part ("store") is a twentieth century addition with rendered, blockwork walls, which seems to have replaced an earlier building (to judge from the maps above); it returns at the west to link with the garage, while its north side projects into the garden, where it is dominated by large modern window openings (photo 6). Between it and the house is a small twentieth century black and white structure ("store"), borne on a timber post and with a flat roof. This lean-to addition has no historic value or architectural interest, beyond the trefoil shapes incorporated within the applied decoration.



Photo 1: Front elevation, overlooking Church Brow



Photo 2: Rear elevation, from St Mary's Street



Photo 3: Front of garage (former coach house), overlooking courtyard



Photo 4: South side of outbuildings, linking house to garage



Photo 5: North side of outbuildings, linking house to garage

7 Impact of proposals

- 7.1 The proposals would lead to the loss of a small amount of historic fabric, specifically the late nineteenth century, south-east part of the linking outbuildings; however, this is only visible in private views, and so is not prominent within the conservation area. Any negative impact resulting would be very small. The other parts of the building which would be demolished and rebuilt are twentieth century and lack significance, so no harm would arise from their loss.
- 7.2 The proposed new structures themselves would have a neutral effect on significance: there would be no increase in the building footprint, and the design would replace an incoherent, largely modern arrangement, with a unified, coherent form, which would remain clearly distinct from the historic house and coach house. The first floor gallery extension would have a very low visual impact within the conservation area, which would not amount to harm.
- 7.3 In summary, the proposals would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, by the replacement of a group of outbuildings which contribute very little to its significance, and are for the most part modern and of

no architectural merit, with a coherent linking structure which would serve to enhance the appearance of both the house and former coach house.

- 7.4 The setting of the grade II* listed parish church would not be affected by these minor works, which are very largely screened from it; church and churchyard are already surrounded by the town's rich palimpsest, which can readily accommodate minor changes such as this without harm.
- 7.5 Given the above, it is considered that the revised scheme is acceptable in terms of impact on the historic environment.

Stephen Haigh, MA
Buildings Archaeologist
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