

Heritage statement

to support planning and listed building consent applications

for alterations at 1 Spread Eagle Barn, Sawley, Lancashire

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement supports planning and listed building consent applications to Ribble Valley Borough Council, for alterations at 1 Spread Eagle Barn, Sawley. It has been written by Stephen Haigh MA, on the instruction of the applicant Mr Gregory, through his agent Andrew Hawthorne Architects. A site visit was made on 21 April 2023.
- 1.2 The application building lies within the Sawley Conservation Area and has previously been considered by the local planning authority to form part of the grade II listed building *Spread Eagle Hotel*.

2 Location

- 2.1 The application building stands on the west side of the main street through Sawley village, and is the eastern one of two dwellings which occupy a converted barn to the south of the Spread Eagle Hotel, and which are physically linked to the hotel via an intermediate range (Mystle Cottage). The national grid reference for the dwelling is SD 77633 46531.
- 2.2 The dwelling faces south with its entrance set within an arched entry, which opens onto a yard, on the south side of which is the grade II listed Arches Cottage. The east gable faces almost directly onto the highway, and at the rear is a yard or patio enclosed by a timber fence, beyond which is an asphalt parking area.

3 Relevant heritage assets

- 3.1 The former barn is not an independent designated heritage asset, but has previously been treated by the local planning authority as a curtilage structure to the Spread Eagle Hotel.

- 3.2 The Spread Eagle Hotel was first listed as a building of special architectural or historic interest in 1984¹. The official list entry (which makes no mention of the barn) reads:

Public house, early C19th. Slobbered watershot rubble with stone slate roof. 2 storeys 3 bays with chamfered quoins. Windows sashed. Outer bays have 2-storey canted bay windows. Middle bay has tripartite windows with plain stone surrounds and square mullions. The door, to the right of the latter bay, has a plain stone surround under an open timber porch. Chimneys on left-hand gable, between bays 1 and 2 and between 2 and 3.

- 3.3 The Sawley Conservation Area, within which the application site lies, was designated in 1971. The special interest which justifies its designation is detailed in the adopted appraisal², and includes the remains of the Cistercian Abbey (a scheduled monument, within which is a Grade I listed building), as well as the bridge over the River Ribble, numerous listed buildings, a former textile printing works, and an early Friends Meeting House.

- 3.4 It is worth noting that the council's adopted Townscape Appraisal Map, which accompanies the appraisal document, does not identify the former barn as a listed building, nor as a "Building of Townscape Merit".

4 Planning background

- 4.1 The initial conversion of the barn, to bedroom accommodation in connection with the hotel, was granted planning permission in 1981 (3/81/0786/P) (ie prior to the listing of the Spread Eagle Hotel).
- 4.2 An application for the building's change of use to two dwellings and an extension was approved under planning permission and listed building consent in 2000 (3/00/0372/P & 3/2000/0373/LBC).
- 4.3 An application for a new window opening was refused in 2005 (application 3/2005/0728).

5 Setting

- 5.1 The dwelling forms one of a number of varied residential properties of widely different dates, on the west side of the street within the village, and is linked to the Spread Eagle Hotel to the north, with which it was no doubt historically associated, in both functional and ownership terms. However modern surfaces and fences to the north of the dwelling mean the unity of the former courtyard

¹ National Heritage List, entry 1072101 <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1072101>

² The Conservation Studio, 2005 *Sawley Conservation Area Appraisal*

between barn and hotel has been lost. To the south of the dwelling, Arches Cottage is thought to date to about 1600 and forms a parallel range to the converted barn, separated from it by a yard.

- 5.2 East of the road are the remains of Sawley Abbey, a Cistercian monastery founded in the mid twelfth century, now represented by a combination of ruined buildings and earthworks.

6 The existing building

- 6.1 The dwelling (no. 1) forms the east end of a former agricultural barn, probably built in the early nineteenth century, which would have accommodated farming operations at the Spread Eagle, when it combined those with the functions of a hotel. It is a two-storey structure built from random rubble with blue slate roof and stone ridge, and its dominant features are the former cart doorways in front and back, with dressed quoins and four-centred arches.
- 6.2 The cart doorway to the south front is partly open, with timber boarding to its upper part, but glazing is shown below this timber on the 2000 application drawing (3/00/0372/P), when the building served as the hotel annex.
- 6.3 The rear cart doorway is closed off with a mixture of timber boarding and glazing, and contains the back door to the house, from the adjoining patio.
- 6.4 The south front of no. 1 has seven modern window openings (including two narrow ones over the cart entrance), and these have a regimented, non-agricultural arrangement, which is matched by several more such apertures in the west part of the former barn. Two such windows have also been inserted in the east gable, where they sit alongside some original, agricultural openings (considered to be important features), and two more in the rear elevation of the dwelling, in addition to one window which has been set within a former doorway.
- 6.5 The roof of the dwelling has no openings or flues on the south pitch, but there are two roof lights to the rear, as well as two vent pipes or flues.
- 6.6 The building interior is almost entirely modern, and is arranged unconventionally, with bedrooms on the ground floor and living room and kitchen on the first floor.

7 Statement of significance

- 7.1 A low level of significance is attributable to the dwelling's general form, as half of a former agricultural barn of the early nineteenth century, which retains only a

few key features, including two arched cart entries in the main elevations, and a circular forking hole in the east, roadside gable.

- 7.2 A low degree of significance can also be seen to arise from the dwelling's setting, as part of what was historically a farmstead associated with the Spread Eagle Hotel, standing close to the former Cistercian abbey, and a crossing of the River Ribble.
- 7.3 The conversion of 1981 was very unsympathetic by present-day standards: although it retained the few surviving key features, it also introduced a very domestic pattern of windows, which diminishes significance considerably, and clearly the agricultural interior was entirely lost as part of the same process. The domestic character of the residential curtilage on the north side of the former barn also has a negative impact on significance.
- 7.4 It seems very likely the converted barn was not considered suitable for listing at the same time as the hotel (in 1984), and its significance has not risen since then, so while it may in principle be deemed a curtilage structure to the hotel, its significance is nonetheless of a low level, and confined to only a few aspects of its external appearance and setting.
- 7.5 The former barn also makes a small contribution to the significance (character and appearance) of the conservation area, for the reasons noted above, but it is not noted as having townscape merit in the adopted character appraisal.

8 Proposed development

- 8.1 The overall aim of the proposals is to re-organise the very largely modern interior into a conventional arrangement with bedrooms on the first floor, rather than ground floor as at present. The vast majority of these changes would have no impact on the heritage significance of the building.
- 8.2 External changes are proposed for the two cart entries, and the south roof pitch. The south cart entry would revert to the appearance it bore between 1981 and 2000, through the reinstatement of a glazed screen below the existing timber boarding. The north one would have slight changes made to it, with a reduction in the glazed area. Two new roof-lights are also proposed for the front, the details of which would be agreed during the application. A black flue would also be installed near the east gable, to serve a wood-burning stove.

9 Impact of proposals

- 9.1 Given the low significance of the building, and its small contribution to the conservation area's significance, it is considered that these modest proposals would have only a neutral impact on identified designated heritage assets, and not result in any harm to them.
- 9.2 The external changes are very minor, and would make no material difference to the appearance of the building. Reinstatement of glazing to the south cart entrance, similar to the pre-2000 arrangement, and the changes to the north cart entrance, would retain the essential appearance of these arched doorways, which are fundamental to the perception of the building as a former barn. The addition of two new roof-lights within a relatively inconspicuous part of the building, and the proposed flue, would also have no impact on significance. The extensive interventions carried out as part of the 1981 conversion mean that the building should not be considered primarily agricultural in character, and also that it can accommodate further change relating to its established domestic function, where this does not compromise those historic features which do remain.

Stephen Haigh, MA
Buildings Archaeologist
28 April 2023

photographs below



Photo 1: The building in its setting, between the Spread Eagle Hotel (R) and Arches Cottage (L)



Photo 2: South front (no. 1 is the right-hand part)



Photo 3: Rear (no. 1 is the left-hand part)



Photo 4: Rear cart entry