

Heritage statement to support planning application

for the conversion of Eveson's Barn, Simonstone

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement supports a planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC), for the conversion of a disused barn known as Eveson's Barn, at Simonstone, Lancashire. It has been written by Stephen Haigh MA, on the instruction of the applicant Ben Simmonds, through his agent Peter Hitchen Architects Ltd. A site visit was made by the writer on 23 May 2023, with reference to proposed plans and elevations dated 14 February 2023.
- 1.2 Pre-application advice from RVBC notes that the site lies "*in close proximity to a Listed Building [Evesons Farmhouse and Evesons Farm Cottage] and therefore whilst it is not considered that the proposed conversion would result in harm, a Heritage Statement will need to be submitted confirming this*".

2 Location and setting

- 2.1 The application building stands on the south side of a private track, 20m to the east of (and elevated above) Simonstone Lane, 270m south of its junction with the A671 Whalley Road. The national grid reference for the barn is SD 77477 34144.
- 2.2 The listed building of "Evesons Farmhouse and Evesons Farm Cottage" (shown on some maps as Nest Cottage) stands some 8m to the north-east of the barn, on the opposite side of the track ("LB" on figure 1, and photo 1, below).
- 2.3 The barn's north side faces directly onto the track, and the east side onto a cobbled yard and a small, single-storey traditional building (photo 2). These are included within the property boundary but no works to them appear to be proposed as part of the present application. The south and west sides of the barn face onto a pasture field, and ground level slopes down from east to west, so that there are a number of different floor levels within the building.

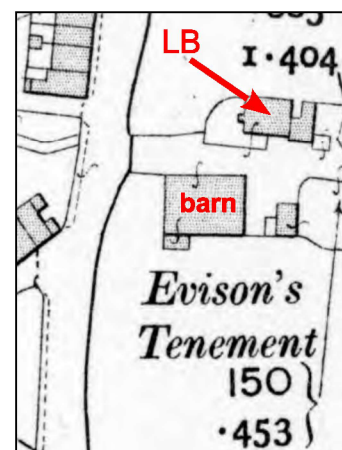


Figure 1: OS 1:2500 map, 1912

3 Relevant heritage assets

3.1 The pre-application advice from RVBC notes no heritage assets other than the listed building¹. It does not identify the barn as a heritage asset, nor as part of the listed building's curtilage. Similarly, no other heritage assets, designated or non-designated, have been identified by the present assessment.

3.2 The listed building's official entry (dating from 1986) makes no mention of the barn, and reads:

Farmhouse, late C16 or early C17, altered, now 2 dwellings. Limewashed sandstone rubble with quoins (gables rendered), stone slate roof with a ridge chimney at the junction of the 2nd and 3rd bays, a large external chimney stack at the left gable. Three-bay baffle-entry plan with projecting stair turret to 3rd bay, large rear outshut to the left half and smaller lean-to to 3rd bay. Two storeys; original doorway to left of stair turret altered as a 2-light window (a similar inserted window above this), an inserted doorway to the left of this, and another doorway to the right of the stair turret; to the left two 4-light windows with recessed ovolo and fillet moulded mullions and moulded hoodmoulds, at 1st floor above these 2 similar 3-light windows without hoodmoulds, and in the stair turret a matching 2-light window. Left gable has 2-light window with chamfered mullion; right gable has 3 and 2-light windows at ground floor, and at 1st floor a 4-light window with hoodmould. Rear: outshut has 3 other mullioned windows variously altered. Interior: house part in 2nd bay has large inglenook bressumer, the front end housed in a heck-beam, both with cyma-stopped chamfer; similarly chamfered ceiling joists; C18 rectangular stone fireplace with shouldered jambs (head altered); stair turret to 3rd bay contains stone spiral staircase.

¹ National Heritage List, entry 1238940 <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1238940>

4 Current use of the building

- 4.1 The barn is believed to have been disused for over 20 years, since the cessation of its use for farming. There are obvious signs of previous alteration to suit its earlier dairy farming purpose, but its character as a traditional agricultural building remains very strong.

5 Proposed development

- 5.1 It is proposed to convert the barn to a six-bedroom dwelling, incorporating all parts of the existing structure with the exception of a small lean-to at the south-west corner, which would be demolished.

6 The existing building

- 6.1 The building comprises a five-bay, stone-built, combination barn, likely to date from the early nineteenth century, which has a pair of brick-built, mid-twentieth century outshuts on the south side (photos 3 to 6).
- 6.2 The original part of the barn is primarily of coursed sandstone, and its roof (likely to have been stone slate formerly) has been replaced with modern artificial tiles. There are shaped kneelers at all four corners, and an owl-hole cut into a single stone in the east gable, but no other decorative features within the masonry.
- 6.3 The building has an essentially symmetrical plan, based around a nearly central threshing bay, which has arched cart entrances in both north and south sides. In both cases, these originally led into covered porches enclosed by stone walls on either side, with the doors inset from the outer walls by 5 or 6m, but the doors on the north side have been re-sited on the building's outer face, and those on the south side removed altogether. Both porches do however retain their original lofts, supported on oak beams (photo 7).
- 6.4 The other existing openings in the outer walls of the stone building are a mixture of original ones, identifiable by their surrounds entirely of stone, and twentieth century ones, whose surrounds all have at least some concrete components. In particular, the majority of the ground floor windows are modern insertions. There also seems to have been some partial rebuilding in the west gable.
- 6.5 The interior of the stone barn has been much altered during the twentieth century, but its main divisions, comprising a cross-wall on the east side of the threshing bay (photo 8), and a wall enclosing a shippon in the north-west corner, are no doubt historic, albeit at least partly rebuilt. The threshing bay retains its

flagged floor, and is open on the west side, where there is a large, full-height space, with a modern brick wall to the north, enclosing the shippon on a slightly lower level, and supporting a hayloft over it. To the east of the threshing bay is another modern shippon with concrete floor and with hayloft over supported by concrete beams (photo 9).

- 6.6 The barn's roof is carried on four queen-strut trusses of imported pine; the central two tie-beams are at a higher level than the outer two, and supported on piers of dressed stone (photo 10).
- 6.7 On the south side of the stone barn, two brick-built and rendered outshuts, with stone slate roofs, were added in the mid twentieth century (perhaps the 1950s), to provide additional cow housing. These have a lower solid-to-void ratio than the stone structure. There is a small projecting lean-to at the south-west corner (proposed for demolition), which forms part of these extensions. The roof of the west outshut has partly collapsed.

7 Statement of significance

- 7.1 The barn is significant for its architectural and historic interest as a traditional agricultural building of the early nineteenth century, which retains much of its original fabric and character, particularly on the exterior and in the porches at both south and north ends of the central threshing bay. Modern interventions include the insertion of several windows, but these are of a number, size and form which have resulted in only a low impact on the appearance of the barn. They also include the addition of two modern outshuts on the south elevation, whose impact has been greater, but which are nonetheless agricultural in character.
- 7.2 The barn also contributes positively to the setting of the nearby listed building of Evesons Farmhouse and Evesons Farm Cottage, a seventeenth century vernacular house, whose south front faces the barn's north-east corner and the cobbled yard and outbuilding associated with it. It may be that the farmhouse and barn had a functional relationship historically, and there is certainly a close visual relationship between the two, particularly given that the barn's north elevation is relatively little altered.

8 Impact of proposals

- 8.1 The conversion of the barn, retaining all but a very small proportion of the existing structure, would in principle have an overall positive impact, through establishing the optimum viable use for a presently redundant structure, which is

dilapidating. Its retention largely in its present form would also maintain the close relationship which the barn has with the nearby listed building.

- 8.2 The conversion would involve relatively little change to the exterior of the building, with the majority of openings being retained, and no new ones being proposed for the north side. Additionally, the arched doorways to south and north would remain as dominant features, and so there would be no negative impact on the setting of the nearby listed building. The barn's interior has few features of interest, because of previous adaption to changing farming practice, and no negative impact would therefore arise from its conversion.
- 8.3 In summary, the proposed conversion is considered entirely acceptable in terms of any impact on the historic environment.

Stephen Haigh, MA
Buildings Archaeologist
2 June 2023

photographs below

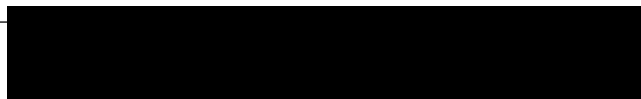




Photo 1: The barn (left) in relation to the listed building (right). Looking west, down towards Simonstone Lane



Photo 2: East gable of barn (left), outbuilding (right), and listed building (centre)



Photo 3: North elevation of barn



Photo 4: View of barn from Simonstone Lane, looking north-east



Photo 5: South side of barn, with mid twentieth century brick-built outshuts either side of arched cart entrance



Photo 6: View of barn, looking north-west

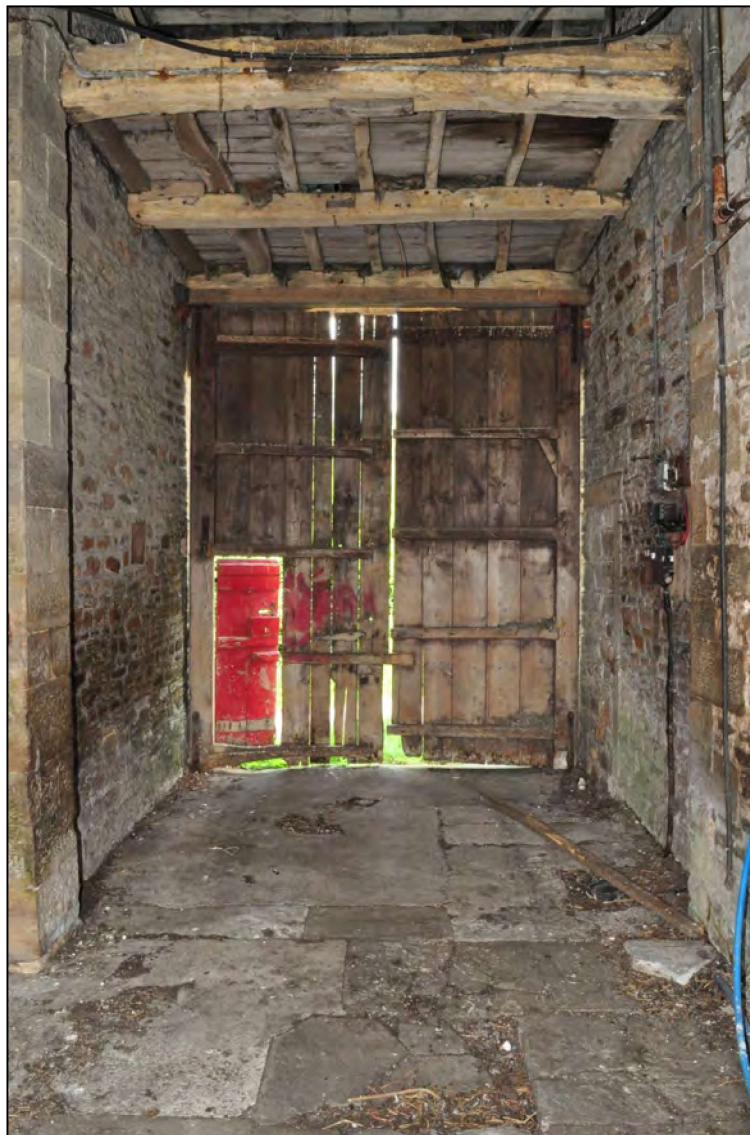


Photo 7: Former porch at north end of threshing bay (doors re-sited to outer end)

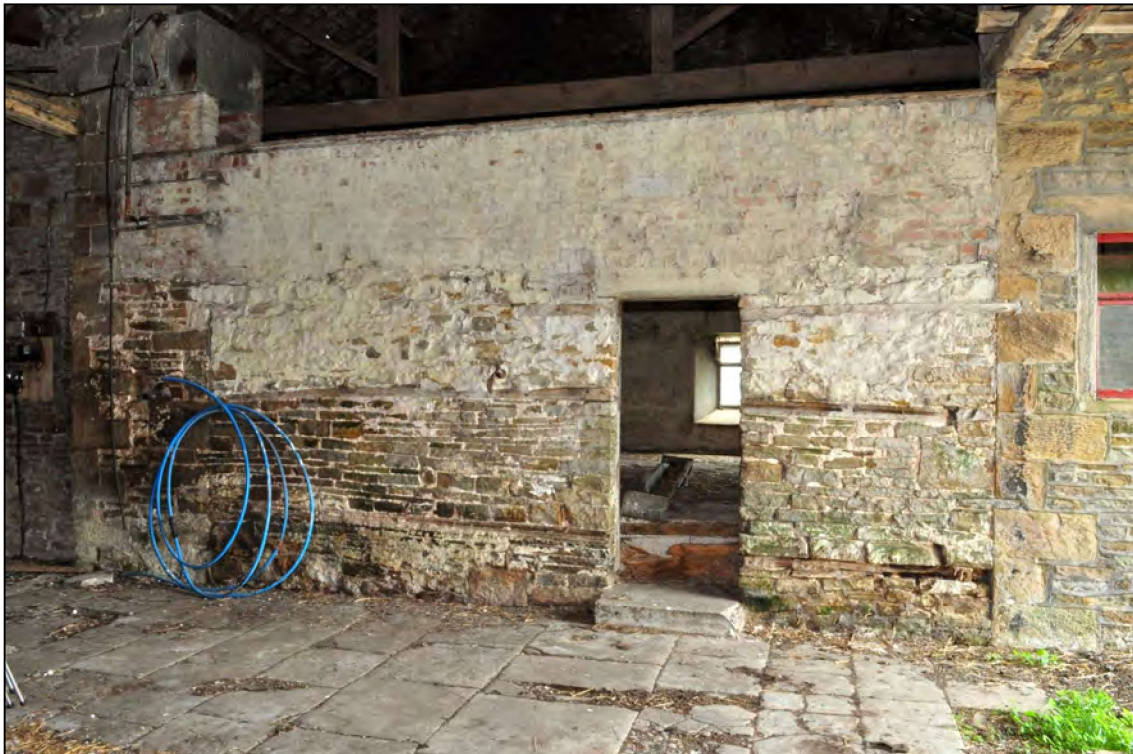


Photo 8: Cross-wall, east side of threshing bay



Photo 9: Modern shippon in east end of barn, with concrete beams over



Photo 10: Roof trusses over barn