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DESIGN AND ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT PROPOSED DOMESTIC STORE WITHIN THE REAR GARDEN OF THE OLD READING ROOM MAIN STREET GISBURN LANCASHIRE



1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared to assess proposals to construct a domestic store at the southern end of the residential curtilage at The Old Reading Room, Gisburn. The proposal site is in the garden area of the grade 2 listed house. The dwelling itself is within the Gisburn Conservation Area but the garden is outside of this designation, therefore, care is needed to avoid harming the significance and the setting of the listed building in line with the requirements of planning law and policy.

1.2

The statement assesses heritage significance and guides proposals for the proposal in a manner that conserves significance and avoids harm. The approach adheres to the principle of managing change intelligently, which lies at the heart of national planning policy for conservation of the historic built environment.

1.3

The statement has been prepared in accordance with the general guidelines set out in the Historic England publications 'Informed Conservation' and 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance' and in particular responds to heritage policies outlined in Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

The legal context is set by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990.

1.4

The local planning policy context is set by Key Statement EN5 and Policy DME 4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy which need to be given the appropriate weighting.

Methods of Research and Investigation

1.5

An inspection and survey of the site area of the site was carried out in June 2023 to assess its physical nature. Background research has also been conducted to ascertain all relevant contextual matters appertaining to the proposals. In accordance with the NPPF, background research has been proportionate to the nature of the proposed works and their likely impact.

2.0 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Location

2.1

The site is located on the southern side of Main Street. The property is two storeys and sits within a terraced row (Lyndale Terrace). Access to the garden and the plot for the domestic store is via Bentlea Road to the south.

3.0 HERITAGE APPRAISAL

3.1

The following appraisal adheres to guidance published by Historic England (2008)² and relates specifically to the requirement contained in paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), given in extract below:

3.2

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary."

3.3

The appraisal begins by identifying and assessing any heritage values which might be affected by the proposals, before evaluating these values and expressing them concisely within a 'Statement of Significance'. The essential purpose of this Statement is to set priorities for conservation of significance and enable an objective assessment on the likely impact of the proposals.

Heritage Values

3.4 The heritage values explored below are distilled under the following headings: evidential value; historic value; communal value; aesthetic value. The exploration focusses specifically on those values deemed of relevance to the proposals and is therefore not an exhaustive assessment of the relevant heritage assets.

Evidential Value

3.5

Historic England (2008) suggests that "Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity."

3.6

The listing status is as follows :-

SD 82 48 GISBURN LINDALE TERRACE

12/64 Offices of Lindley Pate (formerly listed 16-11-19511 as the Village Institute, Lindley Terrace)

GV II

House, now used as offices, 1674. Slobbered rubble with stone slate roof. 2 storeys, 3 bays. Windows double-chamfered with mullions. To the right of the door are ones of 4 and 3 lights. To the left is a single chamfered light. On the 1st floor are windows of 4 and 3 lights, with a single chamfered light between. The door has a chamfered surround with lintel inscribed: 'RA AA TA 1674 IR'. End chimneys.

There may be items of interest internally which may yield evidential value and provide evidence of the plan form of the building, however these will not be of any importance within the scope of this assessment.

3.7

The evidential value of the setting of The Old Reading Room been relatively static since its construction; the street pattern around the area hasn't changed and can be readily interpreted, and much of the building stock is contemporary to it, or predates it. The garden land to the south of the house holds some evidential value in terms of its links to the house as a residential garden but the pattern/topography and alterations carried out historically have significantly diluted it's value.

3.8

The conservation area provides evidential value of the growth of the settlement, much of the building stock being from the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries, the church being from the earlier medieval period. Effectively, due to the lack of 20th Century buildings across the

conservation area, the extant building stock is evidence of the creation of the settlement and incremental growth. Historical Value

3.9

Historic England (2008) suggests that - “Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative”.

3.10

The House conserves an element of Gisburn’s historic past and demonstrates a particular style of building from the mid 17th Century, particularly its front elevation facing the street. As such the building has some illustrative historic value due to its ability to depict images of the past as well as providing a physical connection to bygone times. The rear elevation being more subordinate and concealed due to the topography of the raised and terraced garden area.

3.11

The historic setting of the building and conservation area is relatively intact in the wider sense. The building is connected to the village, however this is tempered somewhat by the busy A59 passing through. The intimate, immediate historic setting of the building has changed. The garden is now clearly ancillary to the residential usage of the house.

3.12

The conservation area possesses strong historic value which is conveyed by its collection of many historic buildings, its location in a strategic location along the A59 and the A682 will have played a part in its inception and growth, much of the historic building stock pre-dating the arrival of the railway in the late 19th Century. The area will also have some tangible links to the Gisburne Park Estate to the north of the conservation area boundary.

Communal Value

3.13

Historic England (2008) suggests that: “Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory”.

3.14

As a private dwelling on a private road, communal value will be limited to some extent, however, its location on Main Street will provide some communal value. Its Grade II Listed status and its prominence as a landmark historic building within the area, can provide a source of shared community pride, and will foster some local pride as a building of national importance.

3.15

The garden space will yield little in the way of communal heritage value. Its prominence is relatively low, as it is screened to the south by existing buildings, and when approached from the west via Bentlea Road as an associative piece of land this value is relatively low.

Aesthetic Value

3.16

Historic England (2008) suggests that: “Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place”. good

3.17

The Old Reading Rooms has a visually appealing and architecturally interesting front elevation. It displays features typical of a mid 17th century design, namely double chamfered and mullioned windows an element of symmetry. The building is stone slate over stone adding to the townscape value, with detailing provided by the head and cill banding. To the rear, whilst not unpleasant to the eye, the layout of the elevation is of a more subordinate nature, but not untypical, for a building of this era.

3.18

The setting of the house retains a mix of aesthetic values. The adjoining and adjacent residential buildings make a pleasant contribution to the setting whilst to the south, later residential development, commercial development and car parking has changed the aesthetic setting.

3.19

The garden contributes to the aesthetic quality of the building in terms of its ancillary use as garden space. In terms of visibility from the public realm, the upper garden cannot be seen as it is concealed by later development and set back from Bentlea Road and therefore provides a position of lower sensitivity.

3.20

The rich aesthetic values of the Conservation Area are established by the quality and diversity of the historic built environment and the important contribution made by the collection of buildings across the area including The Old Reading Room and its neighbours, which contribute to the overall aesthetic value of the Conservation Area, in particular the front elevations.

Statement of Significance

3.22

Having assessed the heritage values associated with the site, it is possible to take a more informed approach to the assessment of site significance, giving specific consideration to conservation priorities in light of the proposals for change. In this context a statement of significance is given below.

3.23

The building is a Grade II Listed building and possesses a range of heritage values, including notable aesthetic value, mainly contained within its front elevation, whereas the rear possesses little in terms of aesthetic value and it is concealed largely by the raised terrace area. Any proposal for this property would respect that conserving views from Main Street is a key requirement for protecting its significance. This proposal has no impact on this. Evidential, historic and communal values are relatively high with the building, whilst the setting also holds a range of values. The immediate setting of the building includes the

garden, which contains no evidential and historic value in terms of its contribution to significance as a domestic garden.

The conservation area is well conserved and is high in all 4 values.

4.0 ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSALS

General Principles

4.1

General guidance on assessing proposed changes to heritage assets is given in Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021). The policy establishes the premise that conserving significance should be a guiding principle when developing proposals for any new scheme. In order to do this it is first necessary to conduct an appraisal of heritage values and identify the significance(s) of heritage assets before commencing with design.

Part 3 of this appraisal fulfils this need, and the findings of part 3 have informed the development of the proposals. There follows, here in section 4, an objective review of the finalised scheme to verify to what extent conservation of significance has either been secured or compromised.

Summary of the Proposals

4.2

The proposals consist of the construction of a domestic store within the garden of The Old Reading Room at its furthest southerly position away from the house within the garden. Full plans have been submitted as part of the planning application. The scheme has been designed to relate in scale to its surroundings and to be domestic in style and nature to relate to the residential nature of the garden, as a building which is ancillary to the use of the premises for residential purposes.

Analysis of the Proposals:

National Planning Policy Framework

4.3

As discussed earlier, Chapter 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF (2021) considers heritage planning and identifies the following key drivers in the decision making process:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.4

In order to establish a clearer, objective assessment of the proposals in the context of the NPPF, the following commentary considers how the proposed scheme aligns itself to the NPPF heritage policy drivers listed above.

4.5

The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation – the significance of the heritage assets

and their setting has been assessed within this statement which has established that The Old Reading Room has high, evidential, historic, communal and aesthetic value, the latter two being more notable in the front elevation. The setting of the listed building is of a relatively regular nature, consisting of a garden space as one would ordinarily associate with a residential premises. The upper part of the garden is all but bypassed within views of the heritage asset as it can only be approached from the south.

4.6

The surrounding area which forms part of the wider setting of the listed building and conservation area is both residential and commercial in nature, and as such, the proposal will harmonise with this in terms of use, i.e. ancillary domestic use. It is worth highlighting the fact that the building is located adjacent to the commercial building (neighbour to the west). The provision of the store will allow for the continued enjoyment of the house as a dwelling as ancillary storage, avoiding the need for more radical intervention elsewhere across the site.

4.7

The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality – the heritage asset i.e. The house will be preserved and will not be physically altered. The provision of ancillary domestic garden buildings will help maintain a family unit within an established residential area on the edge of the village, contributing to sustainable development, whilst also continuing a contribution to local economic activity.

4.8

The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness – the building has been designed to appear as a simple wooden structure so as to not compete for attention from the listed building. It utilises traditional timber as a shed would do, to appear as the domestic store that it is.

4.9

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states: “When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.” - the proposal under scrutiny is whether the development causes harm to the setting of the listed building. As demonstrated through this report, the proposal will not impart harm upon the significance of the building’s setting; the key drivers of significance of the setting of the building being aesthetic. The proposals site will not be seen within the view of the building from the rear or either side. Whilst inside the garden, from the lower certain vantage points the building can be easily seen as a domestic garden building, within a domestic garden, maintaining evidential and historic value.

Analysis of the Proposals: Local Planning Policy

4.10

Current Planning Policy is provided through the Ribble Valley Core Strategy Key Statement EN5 and Policy DME 4. EN5 states:- KEY STATEMENT EN5: HERITAGE ASSETS There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings.

The Historic Environment and its Heritage Assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance for their heritage value; their important contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place; and to wider social, cultural and environmental benefits.

This will be achieved through:

- Recognising that the best way of ensuring the long term protection of heritage assets is to ensure a viable use that optimises opportunities for sustaining and enhancing its significance.
- Keeping Conservation Area Appraisals under review to ensure that any development proposals respect and safeguard the character, appearance and significance of the area.
- Considering any development proposals which may impact on a heritage asset or their setting through seeking benefits that conserve and enhance their significance and avoids any substantial harm to the heritage asset.
- Requiring all development proposals to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness/sense of place.
- The consideration of Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights where the exercise of such rights would harm the historic environment.

4.11

The report has demonstrated that the significance of the setting will be preserved. The provision of domestic storage will ensure the long term protection of the building by making it fit for family life, whilst clearly avoiding substantial harm. The proposal is small scale and makes a contribution to local distinctiveness by using materials that complement the listed building without competing for attention. As such, EN5 is satisfied.

4.12

The relevant parts of Policy DME 4 states:

POLICY DME4: PROTECTING HERITAGE ASSETS IN CONSIDERING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THE COUNCIL WILL MAKE A PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF THE CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS AND THEIR SETTINGS.

1. CONSERVATION AREAS PROPOSALS WITHIN, OR AFFECTING VIEWS INTO AND OUT OF, OR AFFECTING THE SETTING OF A CONSERVATION AREA WILL BE REQUIRED TO CONSERVE AND WHERE APPROPRIATE ENHANCE ITS CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE AND THOSE ELEMENTS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS ITS SIGNIFICANCE. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE CONSIDERATIONS AS TO WHETHER IT CONSERVES AND ENHANCES THE SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE AREA AS SET OUT IN THE RELEVANT CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL. DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAKES A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION AND CONSERVES AND ENHANCES THE CHARACTER, APPEARANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AREA IN TERMS OF ITS LOCATION, SCALE, SIZE, DESIGN AND MATERIALS AND EXISTING BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, TREES AND OPEN SPACES WILL BE SUPPORTED. IN THE CONSERVATION AREAS THERE WILL BE A PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF THE CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF ELEMENTS THAT MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA.

2. LISTED BUILDINGS AND OTHER BUILDINGS OF SIGNIFICANT HERITAGE INTEREST ALTERATIONS OR EXTENSIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS OR BUILDINGS OF LOCAL HERITAGE INTEREST, OR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ON SITES WITHIN THEIR SETTING WHICH CAUSE HARM TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET WILL NOT BE SUPPORTED. ANY PROPOSALS INVOLVING THE DEMOLITION OR LOSS OF IMPORTANT

HISTORIC FABRIC FROM LISTED BUILDINGS WILL BE REFUSED UNLESS IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES EXIST.

Land adjacent to The Old Reading Room as demonstrated through the report and the dialogue above, the proposals do not impart harm upon the primary drivers of the conservation area's significance, and given the design, small scale nature and location at the rear and distance from the host dwelling this will not adversely impact upon any views in, out or through the conservation area.

The domestic store has been designed to be small scale and of materials to complement the listed building and to relate to other buildings across the conservation area.

The relevant parts of local policy have been complied with.

5.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

5.1

This heritage statement has reviewed the likely impact of a new domestic store upon the setting of The Old Reading Room and the Gisburn Conservation Area. The findings of the statement are that the proposed development will harmonise with the existing building and will not harm the heritage values and significances it. The removal of an unsightly garden shed and overgrown evergreens and its replacement with something more appropriate which responds to the aesthetic setting of the building offers the opportunity to enhance the setting.

5.2

The proposals satisfy national and local heritage planning policy and represent what in the context of the NPPF is described as sustainable development, and as such the proposal is wholly supportable.