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HERITAGE STATEMENT

Submitted in support of Application for Listed Building Consent for alteration to listed building – 16 Church Street, Ribchester, PR3 3XP

Listing Number 1147455

1 Property description

The property is one of the Weaver's Cottages on Church Street, Ribchester, PR3 3XP which was listed in November 1983 by Historic England (list entry number 1147455). It is well-documented in locally produced books of record available in Ribchester and photographs from these publications are included in this statement. From these sources, it is clear that there is a particular significance to these seven cottages which originally comprised two rooms on the ground floor, a staircase to the first floor which comprised two rooms, one – fairly large - with a cross-cladded ceiling beams and a smaller room (probably a small bedroom) also with the original beams intact.

It was built in 1793, as shown on a date stone above the doorway of an adjoining cottage. (*Photo 1*). Evidence from these photographs suggests that very few changes have been made to the external appearance of the property. At some point in the 20th century, the cottages must have been cleaned (method not known) because the present condition is of a much lighter-coloured stone than the early photographs indicate. (*Photographs 2 & 3*)

An interesting feature is the existence of a second floor (into the roof space) which, up until quite late in the 20th century extended across the seven cottages. Research (and local lore, gleaned from older residents who used to work in the weaving trade) supports the view that the top floor was used for storage of the yarn. There is some, unsubstantiated, belief that the weaving took place in that space, but it would seem unlikely that the looms could have been installed at that level, given the steep rise of the staircase and the dimensions of that upper storey.

The ground floor comprises a beamed room at the front, a room behind – for which there is some evidence of a beamed kitchen which opens into a kitchen at the rear with a door opening to the garden beyond.

Although much changed through the years into a garden, there is evidence again from the other cottages that there were a small 'privies' at the end of the properties, which were bounded by a wall, behind which is the current Ribchester Playing Field.

2 Current Ownership

The current owners purchased the property in 1984 and chose the property because of its historical interest and for the interesting features within. Those features have been carefully preserved and – hopefully – enhanced by sympathetic decoration and furnishing. The main area of modernisation since the 18th century had been in the kitchen and the bathroom. Both were clearly 1970s/1980s improvements which have been enhanced since, but still maintain a 'cottage style' of presentation and decoration.

A significant change has been made to the garden which, when purchased, comprised one rectangular area of lawn, one path down the right-hand side to the shed (on the site of the original privy) and one small Acer tree. The current owners have planted trees, bushes and added flower beds, retained the shed, but had electricity installed to it. The trees have matured since planting and the whole gardenscape is one of a 'cottage garden'.

At the front of the house, the wooden windows which were in situ on purchase are still extant, although they probably are not environmentally sound in terms of heat loss but there are no plans to apply for permission to replace with UPVC at this time.

3 Alteration to the Building

The alteration which is now the subject of this application was the replacement of the antiquated and inefficient central heating system. A gas Service engineer advised on the necessity of replacing this for a modern system run from a condenser boiler. No visible alterations can be seen on the interior of the house, given that the new boiler simply went into the space created by the removal of the water tanks and the hot-water cylinder.

The one different element is that the flue pipe exits the first floor wall between the window and the adjoining property (No.15). The impact of this was carefully considered by the installer and by the householders. Conscious of the existing of the listed building status, regulations were consulted (on-line) as to the propriety of making such a change to the cottage.

Particular note was made of the advice available that *'Listed Building Consent is needed for works to listed buildings which affect the 'character' as a listed building and the historical interest'*. In a genuine consideration of these points it was concluded by both the owners that it could not be asserted by an external agency that the small flue could affect the 'historical interest' of the property nor the 'character'. The property was built as a home for a working family and – as it turned out, was purchased by the same in 1984. The owners are still working, maintaining the house, tending the garden and endeavouring to respect the property and its place in the history of Ribchester.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo 1



Photo 2



Reproduced from 'Ribchester: 100
years in photographs.

Pub. Ribchester Parish Council
1994

Marked to show position of No.16

Photo 3



Church Street

It looks as though school is out in the above photograph from around 1910. Church Street looks little different from today, except for the cobbles and absence of traffic.

On the left are the Walton family inside their house at No. 15. The Walton was handloom weaver to trade. James Walton, who was the vergor at St. Wilfred's Church, can be seen to the right of the doorway holding Janet Satchell. His wife is on the left of the doorway with Mary Walton behind her. The child in front of Mr. Walton is Anne Fidler.

From same source as above:

Showing residents of No.16 – the Walton family – who were handloom weavers.

Photo 4

Present day. Taken in
Spring 2024.

Showing position of flue
pipe beyond the aerial
(small black object on left
of photograph)



Photo 5



Close-up of Flue pipe emerging from the first floor bedroom cupboard.