

Heritage assessment to inform planning application
for replacement of existing dwelling
at Avenue Farm, Avenue Road, Hurst Green

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage assessment has been commissioned by the owner of Avenue Farm to inform proposals for its development, via his agent AW+A Architects, and has been written by Stephen Haigh MA, following a site visit on 30 April 2024.
- 1.2 The site is not a designated heritage asset, nor is it believed to have been identified by the local planning authority as a non-designated heritage asset, and an appraisal of the building supports the view that it has very low heritage significance. The plot does however adjoin the grade II* listed park and garden of Stonyhurst College and lies within the vicinity of a number of listed buildings and the Hurst Green Conservation Area (all designated heritage assets), whose settings development within the site has the potential to affect.

2 Location and setting

- 2.1 The application property is a detached house which stands in a large plot to the west of Avenue Road and to the north of Hurst Green village, at NGR: SD 68276 38410. It comprises a single, linear range built on a terrace within the slope above the Dean Brook, with its long axis running from south-east to north-west (photo 1, below). Access is via an unmade track from the north-east, off Avenue Road.
- 2.2 There is a formal plantation between the plot and Avenue Road, and less formal woodland on the slope to the south-west, as well as a pasture field to the north-west.
- 2.3 The plot itself serves as a very informal garden, principally of grass, but with some trees and shrubs around its perimeter. There is a forecourt along the north-east front of the house, paved with concrete slabs, while at the north-east side of the plot is an entirely modern carport.

3 Planning background

- 3.1 Planning permission was granted in 2014 (ref: 3/2014/0083) for "*Change of use from dwelling (C3) to house in multiple occupation for visiting students (sui generis)*", following which the interior of the building was much altered. This change of use was effectively reversed by permission granted in 2024 (ref: 3/2023/0964), for "*Change of use from house in multiple occupation for visiting students (sui generis) to dwelling (C3)*", although no physical change has taken place. In neither case does it appear that any heritage significance was attributed to the building by the local planning authority.

4 Historical background

- 4.1 The building is not known to have any significant documented history. It is shown with its present proportions, unnamed, on the Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map of 1847, and similarly but with the name Avenue Farm, on the 1895 edition and later maps¹.

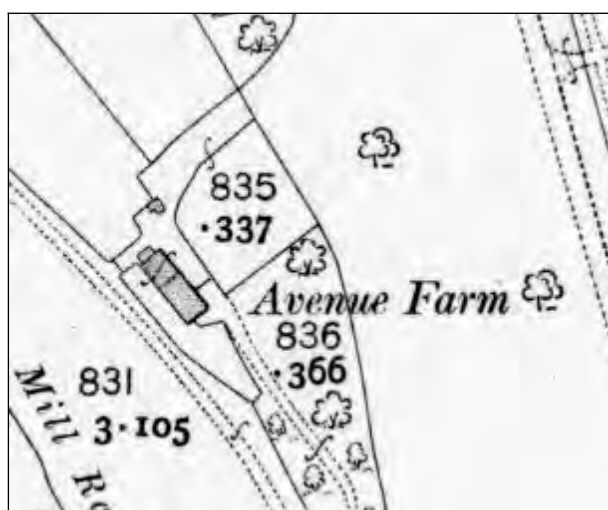


Figure 1: OS 1:2500 map, 1912

5 The present structure

- 5.1 The building has a simple rectangular footprint and is of two storeys (the upper one partly within the roof), except at the north-west end, where there is a single-storey lean-to.
- 5.2 The north-east side is the front and is of exposed sandstone masonry, which varies in its character. The stonework at the south-east end (photo 2) is coursed and watershot in style, up to about 2.5m, while above this and throughout the

¹ Lancashire, sheet 54, surveyed 1844; sheet 54.NE, surveyed 1891-2; sheet 54.8, revised 1910

north-west part the wall is of largely random rubble, albeit with well-finished dressings and quoins. The house entrance is within the coursed stonework (photo 3), where it seems to have been inserted: it has mortared jambs and a re-used lintel, inscribed with the word "Mitton" in a 19th century style. The other openings in this front are all within the random stonework and appear to be original to it: they include a former doorway at the right-hand end, and a forking hole at first floor level (photo 4).

- 5.3 The south-east gable and south-west rear (photos 5 & 6) are both covered with modern, scored render, meaning little can be deduced regarding their underlying character, but one of the two ground floor gable windows is a former doorway, and within the south-west wall a number of window openings are clearly 20th century, to judge from their size and proportions. The north-west gable is not rendered, but has a large, two-light window to the upper floor, which also appears to be 20th century.
- 5.4 The roof is covered with blue slate and stone ridge and there is only a single chimney, one of brick added to the south-west side. A former chimney on the south-east gable can be inferred from the internal arrangements, but is not at all evident externally.
- 5.5 The interior of the house allows very little deduction regarding its origins or development, as its subdivision and fittings are almost entirely those introduced as part of the change of use, circa 2014. There are two cross-walls which divide the house into three roughly equal parts, and which appear to support the roof purlins; these are partly exposed within the north-west end, and are a mixture of softwood and hardwood. The upper floor is confined to this end, and rises into the roof; at the south-west end there is only a roof void at first floor level.
- 5.6 The lean-to at the north-west end of the house is a mid 20th century agricultural addition, rather crudely built from brick and rubble, and with a slate roof carried on steel members. It contains stalls for young animals.

6 Interpretation

- 6.1 The architectural and map evidence suggests that the coursed stonework at the south-east end represents the earliest part of the building, and was perhaps a small cottage or agricultural building dating from about 1800. This was then heightened to a dwelling of one and a half storeys, and extended to the north-west by the addition of a shippon and hayloft in the early 19th century, which merited the title Avenue Farm. The dwelling was later extended by conversion of the agricultural north-west end, probably in the mid 20th century.

7 Statement of significance

- 7.1 The building has very low heritage significance, as it has only very slight architectural or historic interest, in part because of the extent of 20th and 21st century changes. The slight interest lies within the relatively isolated setting outside the village, the long linear footprint, and the stonework of the north-east front; the other three elevations and the interior do not make any contribution to significance.
- 7.2 It is considered that the heritage significance is too low to merit consideration in any planning decision, and the building would not merit identification as a non-designated heritage asset.

8 Settings of nearby designated heritage assets

- 8.1 The grade II* park and garden Stonyhurst College² borders the north-east edge of the site and is a designated heritage asset, first listed in 1986. In addition, two grade II listed buildings stand within the vicinity of the site: The Mausoleum³, situated within St Joseph's Catholic Cemetery; and 51 and 53, Avenue Road⁴. The Stonyhurst Conservation Area takes in the latter building.
- 8.2 Avenue Farm is considered currently to make no contribution to the setting of any of these heritage assets, but a replacement dwelling of a different size or with a different location within the plot might affect the setting of one or more of them.
- 8.3 Paragraphs 205-208 of the NPPF require that great weight should be given to the conservation of such designated heritage assets, and any harm to them, including that arising from development within their setting, would require at least some public benefits to accrue. Proposals for redevelopment within the site will therefore need to take these considerations into account.

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photographs below

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² National Heritage List, entry 1000953 <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000953>

³ National Heritage List, entry 1072303 <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1072303>

⁴ National Heritage List, entry 1072332 <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1072332>



Photo 1: The present house, looking south



Photo 2: North-east front



Photo 3: Present entrance, with re-used lintel, no jambs



Photo 4: North-east front: agricultural openings within rubble wall



Photo 5: South-east gable



Photo 6: South-west elevation (rear)



Photo 7: Entrance lobby and staircase