

**Higher Edge Farmhouse, Slaidburn:  
Written Scheme of Investigation  
for Programme of Archaeological Work**

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**Ribble Valley Borough Council, ref: 3/2024/0022**

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**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This written scheme of investigation (WSI) sets out a proposed programme of archaeological work at Higher Edge Farmhouse, as commissioned by the developer Michelle Dixon, to support the current planning application for proposed alterations and extensions.

**2 Location**

- 2.1 Higher Edge Farm lies about 3km east of Slaidburn, to the north of the minor road known as Tinklers Lane, in area dominated by fields of rough grazing and meadow, classified as "rolling upland farmland". It has a relatively elevated and exposed position close to the 250m contour, and the national grid reference for the farm is SD 74364 52565. The site lies within the Forest of Bowland AONB.
- 2.2 The farm comprises a single range of two-storey buildings, with the barn at the south end and the farmhouse at the north, set within a long plot.

**3 Current use**

- 3.1 The farmhouse is currently vacant, but was occupied as a dwelling within recent years.

**4 Project context**

- 4.1 There are no designated heritage assets within the site. In their consultation response<sup>1</sup> to the application, Lancashire County Council's Historic Environment Team noted that the farm may have been constructed around 1800 when the area was enclosed from moorland, and that the house is of some historical interest, being indicative of the type created to exploit newly enclosed and improved ground around that time, but with extensions and improvements reflecting rising profitability. They also advised that an archaeological building record should be made prior to conversion, to be controlled by the following condition:

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<sup>1</sup> of 11 February 2025

No development, site clearance/preparation, or demolition shall commence until the applicant or their agent or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The programme of works should comprise the making of a Level 2 record of the building to specifications set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*. (Historic England 2016). An initial survey should be made with a follow up record after the removal of any wall coverings during development work. These works shall be undertaken by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional archaeological contractor and comply with the standards and guidance set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

- 4.2 To avoid the delay to development which such a condition would create (should permission be granted), the applicant seeks approval of this WSI prior to determination of the current planning application, so that permission could instead be conditional upon compliance with it.

## **5 Archaeological and historical background**

- 5.1 The Historic Environment Team suggests that the original farmhouse may have been of a single unit on two storeys, when it and the barn would have shared a common roof level, but that the farmhouse was later extended with an additional storey. The enlargement was probably related to economic growth of the farm, and increasing desire for privacy.

## **6 Aim of the project**

- 6.1 The proposed development would lead to changes to historic features and fabric, and the aim of the project is to identify, interpret and record significant evidence relating to the building's historic character and development, and place the data in the public domain by deposition with the Lancashire Historic Environment Record and the Archaeology Data Service.
- 6.2 The recording may contribute to research initiatives included within the North West England Regional Research Framework<sup>2</sup>, including question Ind14<sup>3</sup> ("*How can we establish a typology of and assess the significance of buildings and other structures associated with country and farming estates?*"). Any contribution to these questions which might be made by the programme of work will be considered during recording and analysis and noted within the report.

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<sup>2</sup> see <https://researchframeworks.org/nwrf/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://researchframeworks.org/nwrf/researchframework/v1/question/question-5e1745f434a44/>

## **7 Statement of recording standards**

- 7.1 All work which forms part of this project will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Standards and Guidance issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

## **8 Methodology**

- 8.1 The recording will be carried out to Historic England's Level 2, as recommended by the Historic Environment Team in their consultation response. Level 2 is a "descriptive" record<sup>4</sup>; the Historic England guidance does not specify precisely what such recording should entail, but advises a minimum, with the exact scope to be determined using the judgement of those involved.
- 8.2 The recording would comprise a survey of the building as at present, with further recording following any interior strip-out and removal of wall coverings, to record any previously concealed features.
- 8.3 Recording will include drawn, photographic, and written records, while limited historical research, primarily using secondary sources, will also be carried out.
- 8.4 The drawn record will comprise a ground floor plan of the farmhouse at 1:100 scale, together with a cross-section at 1:50. These will be based on a new, hand-measured survey and will show all features of historic and architectural interest, such as additions to the house, blocked openings, and any significant fixtures and fittings. Conventions used in the drawings will be those specified by Historic England.
- 8.5 The photographic record will be made using a digital camera with a resolution of 12 mega pixels, in JPG format. It will comprise general photographs of the site and setting, and the exterior and interior of the building, along with detailed photographs of any structural or decorative features that are relevant to the building's design, development and use, and which are not adequately recorded on the general photographs. Such detailed photographs will be taken at medium to close range and framed in such a way as to ensure that the element being photographed clearly constitutes the principal feature of the photograph.
- 8.6 Detailed photographs will contain an appropriately positioned graduated photographic scale and a graduated ranging-rod, discretely positioned, will be included in a selection of general shots, sufficient independently to establish the scale of all elements of the building and its structure. The size, graduations, and any other relevant data relating to the scales and ranging-rods will be noted in the methodology section of the report.

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<sup>4</sup> Historic England 2016 *Understanding Historic Buildings* p26

- 8.7 A rapid desk-based study of the site will take place, which will examine historic maps and any other readily available sources or documents which relate to the house.

## **9 Timetable**

- 9.1 The date at which site work is expected to take place is not yet known, although it would be before any development for which permission is granted.

## **10 Report preparation**

- 10.1 A report will be produced, within two months after the completion of all site recording. It will be illustrated appropriately, with location maps, extracts from historic maps, copies of the survey drawings, plans showing positions and directions of photographs, and photographs taken. Stephen Haigh will submit it to the Lancashire Historic Environment Record and OASIS<sup>5</sup> (from where it is expected to be published to the Archaeology Data Service Library), and supply it to the client for them to issue to the local planning authority.

## **11 Archive deposition**

- 11.1 The project archive will be entirely digital. It will comprise a full set of photographs and all other "born-digital" material generated during the recording such as text, data, and drawings, as well as files generated from digitised material, such as scanned images or text, and will be submitted to the Archaeology Data Service via ADS-Easy for long term curation. This will be linked to the full report containing a full set of drawings, which will be submitted via OASIS to the ADS as above.

## **12 Personnel**

- 12.1 All work will be undertaken personally by Stephen Haigh MA, a buildings archaeologist with many years experience of investigating and recording historic buildings in Lancashire and elsewhere. He reserves the right to seek amendments to this project design where dictated by professional judgement or health and safety considerations, for example.

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<sup>5</sup> An online reporting form to provide information about archaeological investigations to Historic Environment Records, etc <https://oasis.ac.uk/>