

Heritage statement to support a planning application
for a proposed farm worker's dwelling and creation of a new access off the public
highway
at Thornley Hall Farm, Thornley, Lancashire

RVBC planning ref: 3/2025/0289

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement supports the recently submitted outline planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council, ref: 3/2025/0289. It has been written by Stephen Haigh MA on the instruction of the applicant, through his agent Gary Hoerty Associates, and a site visit was made on 16 May 2025.
- 1.2 The site of the proposed dwelling near the grade II listed *Thornley Hall* (a designated heritage asset) means that the local planning authority must consider the potential impact on the heritage asset's significance through changes to its setting, arising from development. A heritage statement is therefore required, to assess the significance of the listed building, and the potential impact on it. NPPF paragraph 213 states that: "*any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.*"

2 Location

- 2.1 Thornley Hall Farm stands in a rural location on the north side of Up Bedlam Road, between the River Loud and Longridge Fell (NGR: SD 63387 41082).
- 2.2 The farmhouse is known as Thornley Hall and stands about 40m north of the road, behind a substantial front garden, which is enclosed by a prominent boundary wall with narrow gateway, onto which the house faces approximately south (photo 1, below). Thornley Hall Cottage stands about 30m to the south-east of the farmhouse, and to the north and west is a large group of varied domestic and agricultural buildings, most of which make up the working farm. To the south of the road, Thornley Smithy Cottage stands some 200m to the west, and New House Farm some 350m to the south-east.
- 2.3 The proposed dwelling would stand in a pasture field to the south of the road, about 65m south-west of the farmhouse.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 The dwelling would be of two storeys, with attached single-storey garage. The anticipated eaves height is 5.2m and the ridge height 7.85m; the length is

approximately 12m and the width 9m. The garage would measure about 6.7m by 5.6m in plan. The existing field gateway would be used as access from the highway.

4 Relevant heritage asset and its significance



Photo 1: Front of the farmhouse, with gateway of ca.1900 to front garden

- 4.1 The grade II listed building *Thornley Hall*¹ is the only heritage asset identified as relevant to the proposal. It was first listed in 1967 and the official entry reads:

House, early C18th with C17th remains, much altered. Rendered rubble with slate roof. 2 storeys with attic. Facade has quoins with channeled rustication, continuous drip courses over ground and 1st floor windows, and a cyma moulded cornice gutter. The porch is gabled with a coping and 2 balls and a chamfered outer doorway with triangular head. On the lintel there is an inscription, difficult to read, but said by the VCH to be as follows: 'B.O. Michael Doughtie 1605'. Inside the porch is a cupboard door, once in the dining room, inscribed 'EPM 1709'. The windows are sashed with no glazing bars in plain stone surrounds with 2 rebates and a chamfer. The ground-floor windows are larger, with 2 to the left of the porch and one to the right. The 1st floor windows probably originally had a mullion and a transom, with 4 to the left and one to the right of the porch. Chimneys on the gables. The left-hand gable wall has, towards the rear, a one-light rebated and chamfered window, now unglazed and opening into a compartment divided from the dining room, possibly associated with an alteration in the fireplace arrangements. Under the apex is a circular chamfered opening to the attic. The

¹ National Heritage List, entry 1147567 <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1147567>

rear wall has 2 projecting external chimney stacks, now with later C19th caps. Against the wall is a later extension. Inside no C17th features are visible.

- 4.2 The farmhouse's significance arises principally from its historic interest, as a dwelling at the yeoman level of society, with its likely origins being in the 17th century; its architectural interest is limited by the degree of change which it has undergone in its later life, and even in 1912² it was described as plain and "very much modernized", with "little architectural interest", although "the front lay-out is effective with balled gate piers, low fence wall and a tall clipped yew tree close up to the building rising to the level of the eaves." The present front gateway with ramped wall and ball finials to the piers dates from about 1900, according to the Ordnance Survey.



Photo 2: Farm and domestic outbuildings to west and north of the farmhouse

- 4.3 In summary, the building can be described as a yeoman farmhouse which has undergone some degree of gentrification from the 18th century, a process which seems to have diminished the interest of the building itself, but also enhanced it to a small degree by the creation of the front garden and gateway. Throughout this period the house continued to be part of a working farm, with outbuildings to the west increasing in number and extent through to the present day. Many of

² 'Townships: Thornley with Wheatley', in *A History of the County of Lancaster: Volume 7*, ed. William Farrer, J Brownbill (London, 1912), British History Online <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/lancs/vol7/pp32-36> [accessed 20 May 2025].

these are modern steel and concrete structures which have no affinity with the historic farmhouse.



Photo 3: Proposed access to new dwelling, viewed through entrance to farmyard

- 4.4 The Hall is and seems always to have been perceived as the heart of a working farm, with all the outbuildings and activity that entails, and although previous owners may have had aspirations to elevate its status to that of a country house, the physical evidence for that is largely confined to the rather small ornamental front gateway of ca.1900.
- 4.5 Insofar as its relevance to the application is concerned, the house's setting includes the ornamental front garden (clearly bounded by its walls), the working farmyards to the west, the nearby dwelling of Thornley Hall Cottage, and the farmland to the south, for which there is no suggestion of any ornamental treatment historically.

5 Impact on significance

- 5.1 The new dwelling would lead to no harmful impact on the setting of the listed building, for a number of reasons. It would readily form, in visual and functional terms, part of the extensive and diverse group of existing buildings at the farm which has the listed house at its core. However, in common with the various farm buildings and the subordinate dwelling Thornley Hall Cottage, the proposed site clearly stands apart from the listed building and its sensitive surroundings.

There would be no intervisibility between the site and the farmhouse, in part because of intervening trees, and no intrusion on views of the Hall or significant aspects of its curtilage or setting.

- 5.2 In light of these observations, the proposed dwelling would have an entirely acceptable level of impact on the historic environment, which does not require justification.

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