



A National Amenity Society

Maya Cullen
Planning Case Officer
Ribble Valley Borough Council
By email: planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk

29th July 2025

Lower Reaps Farm, Whinney Lane, Mellor , BB2 7EL. Application No. /2025/0508 and 3/2025/0507

Dear Ms Cullen,

Thank you for notifying the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) about the above application. Based on the information supplied with the application, we offer the following observations and advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Significance

Lower Reaps Farm dates from the early 17th century and has phases of development from the 18th and 19th centuries, all of which contribute to its significance as a typical agricultural holding in this area of north-west England. Its national importance as such is established by its designation at a Grade II Listed building (NHLE No. 1362343). The historic agricultural structures within the farmhouse's curtilage should be viewed as curtilage listed.

The principal barn is a highly significant structure within this agricultural range. The central core of the structure is likely to be roughly contemporary with the earliest phases of the farmhouse. The extensions and adaptations made to the original core hold evidential value about the agricultural practices in the area over hundreds of years and the economic fortunes of the site. This makes a considerable contribution towards the site's significance.

Comments

The CBA have commented on two previous applications for Lower Reaps Farm, making the above appraisal of the site's significance and the contribution of the barn to the listed site. The CBA support the conversion of the barn into a single dwelling with a reduced level of internal subdivision than the currently consented scheme.

We are concerned that the three sets of bifold doors proposed in the southern shippon will erode the agricultural character of the building (and site) on an elevation that is prominent within the landscape. Being south facing this large quantity of glass will create highly visible glare. We therefore advise that any new openings to this elevation are kept to a minimum and are less overtly domestic in character.

The CBA note the proposal to line the internal walls of the barn, although no details of a methodology or materials are given. The CBA object to strategies like tanking and internal dry lining of buildings of this construction type as all moisture present is forced into the historic stone walls which sacrificially decay without the ability to 'breathe'. It is important not to inhibit the hygroscopic qualities of organic building materials by introducing impermeable 20th century materials that suit modern air-tight construction. Such materials are wholly inappropriate in 17th / 18th / 19th century buildings and should be expected to result in the long term decay of the historic building fabric. Although it may take a decade or more to fully materialise the impact of impermeable materials like a concrete floor screed and drylining of this building will be the sacrificial decay of the historic fabric. Even though well intended, such interventions are contrary to the requirements of sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have "special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses". It is also contrary to NPPF paragraph 212, which requires that "great weight" be given to the asset's conservation.

For the sustainable longevity of this barn, the CBA strongly advise the applicants use Historic England have published guidance to devise a successful methodology for damp proofing and thermally insulating this barn. these buildings. (Available here – [Energy Efficiency and Retrofit in Historic Buildings.](#))

It is not clear what interventions are proposed for the ground floor, although photos demonstrate an existing agricultural use which suggests a domestic floor screed will be part of the proposed works. For the reasons set out above, it is important that any consented underfloor heating system should be achieved in a limecrete screed. The CBA have recently reviewed proposals for similar works at a farmhouse in Lancashire. The applicants may find the Planning Statement, which contains manufacturers details in the appendix, helpful in establishing appropriate details to their proposals. [Writtenstone Farm, PR3 2ZN, 3/2025/0511](#)

I trust these comments are useful to you; please keep the CBA informed of any developments with this case.

Kind Regards,



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Catherine Bell. MA (cons), ACIfA
Listed Buildings Caseworker

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) is the national amenity society concerned with protection of the archaeological interest in heritage assets. Local planning authorities have a duty to notify the CBA of applications for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition, under the procedures set out in, **Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification To Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of state (England) direction 2021.**



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