

**Barn at Houlker's (Holker's) Farm
Whins Lane, Read, Lancashire:
Written Scheme of Investigation
for building recording, analysis and reporting**

Ribble Valley Borough Council, ref: 3/2025/0398, condition 8

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This written scheme of investigation (WSI) sets out the work proposed for the recording of the barn at Houlker's Farm, as commissioned by the owner and developer. The work is required by condition 8 of a prior approval for conversion to a dwelling.

2 Location

- 2.1 Houlker's Farm stands about 0.5km north of the A671 Whalley Road in Read, on Whins Lane. The barn lies on the south side of the lane, opposite the farmhouse, at NGR SD 76608 35030, and at about 140m above sea level, in area dominated by farmland but with scattered linear settlement. The landscape character is "industrial foothills and valleys" and the historic landscape character "modern settlement"¹.
- 2.2 The barn is detached and forms a thick L-shape in plan, its sides measuring about 20m by 18m, but this form has clearly arisen through the enlargement of a once smaller building.

3 Project context

- 3.1 Prior approval under Class Q (a) and (b) was granted on 18 July 2025 and is for *"the proposed change of use of one agricultural building to one two-storey, four-bedroom dwelling"*.
- 3.2 Lancashire County Council's Historic Environment Team (the local planning authority's consultee), in their response of 9 June 2025, made observations regarding the site and commented, that *"the proposed conversions will have a significant impact on the historic character and appearance of the building and will result in the loss of, or obscuration of, historical features relating to the use of the building and the changes during its working life...."*

¹ Lancashire County Council MARIO map

3.3 They also advised that "*should the Local Planning Authority be minded to grant consent to this scheme, a formal building record be made... before any works commence...*"

3.4 Consequently, condition 8 of the approval stipulates:

No development including any demolition works shall take place on the site until the applicant, or their agent or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of building recording, analysis and reporting works. This must be carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme of works should comprise the creation of a record of the building to Level 2-3 as set out in 'Understanding Historic Buildings' (Historic England 2016). It should include a full description of the building, inside and out, drawn plans, elevations and at least one section (which drawings may be derived from checked and corrected architect's drawings), and a full photographic coverage, inside and out. The record should also include a rapid deskbased assessment, putting the building and its features into context. This work should be undertaken by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional contractor to the standards and guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. A copy of this record shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and the Lancashire Historic Environment Record before the dwelling hereby approved is first occupied.

3.5 Stephen Haigh has been commissioned to carry out the work necessary to satisfy this requirement.

4 Archaeological and historical background

4.1 Little is presently known of the building's history, but the first edition Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map shows a narrower building than at present, which suggests the barn was then standing in some form, but was later extended. Recent photographs show a stone structure with gabled cart entry in the north-east side, with much of the stonework apparently 19th or early 20th century in character.

4.2 The core of the building is likely to have been built as a combination barn, with lean-to shippens added to increase cattle housing.

5 Aim of the project

5.1 The proposed conversion will lead to the loss or masking of some historic features, fabric, and character. The aim of the project is to identify, interpret and record significant evidence relating to the building's historic character and development, and place this in the public domain by deposition with the Lancashire Historic Environment Record and the Archaeology Data Service.

- 5.2 The recording has the potential to contribute to research initiatives included within the North West England Regional Research Framework², a possibility to be considered during recording and analysis, and noted within the report.

6 Statement of recording standards

- 6.1 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.

7 Methodology

- 7.1 The recording will be carried out to Historic England's Level 2 to 3; a Level 2 record is "descriptive", while Level 3 is "analytical"³. 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.

- 7.2 Recording will include drawn, photographic, and written records of the building to be converted. Limited historical research, mainly concerned with historic mapping, will also be carried out.

- 7.3 As specified in the planning condition, the drawn record will include:

- a site plan (at 1:500 scale)
- a ground floor plan (at 1:100)
- elevations (at 1:100)
- a cross-section (at 1:50).

Where possible these will be based on existing drawings, but where necessary new measured survey will be undertaken. The drawings will show all features of historic and architectural interest, such as additions to or insertions within the buildings, historic structural timbers, blocked openings, and significant fixtures and fittings. Conventions used in the drawings will be those specified by Historic England.

- 7.4 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 and 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.

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

³ Historic England 2016 *Understanding Historic Buildings*

- 7.5 Detailed photographs will contain an appropriately positioned graduated photographic scale (not measuring tapes or surveying staffs). 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. The size, graduations, and any other relevant data relating to the scales and ranging-rods so utilised will be specifically noted in the methodology section of the written report.
- 7.6 A rapid desk-based study of the site will take place, which will examine historic maps and any other readily available documents which relate to the site.

8 Timetable

- 8.1 The site work is expected to take place during summer 2025, although the start date is subject to prior approval of this WSI by the local planning authority.

9 Report preparation

- 9.1 Following all site work, a report on the recording will be produced within two months. It will be illustrated appropriately, with location maps, extracts from historic maps, copies of the survey drawings, and a full set of photographs. Copies will be supplied to the client and the Lancashire Historic Environment Record. It will also be submitted to OASIS⁴, from where it is expected to be published to the Archaeology Data Service Library.

10 Archive deposition

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 The archive will be submitted to the Archaeology Data Service via ADS-easy for long term curation and will be linked to the full report (in pdf format), which will be submitted via OASIS to the ADS as above.

11 Personnel

- 11.1 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.

⁴ An online reporting form to provide information about archaeological investigations to Historic Environment Records, etc <https://oasis.ac.uk/>

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