

HERITAGE STATEMENT

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The Smithy
Smithy Row
Hurst Green
Lancashire
BB7 9QW

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application at The Smithy , Smithy Row, Hurst Green and to assess the significance of The Smithy, Smithy Row, Hurst Green, Lancashire, and to consider the contribution that the property makes to the historic environment of Hurst Green. The statement has been prepared in accordance with the principles set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting.

2. Site Location and Context

The property is situated within the historic settlement of Hurst Green in the Ribble Valley Borough of Lancashire. Hurst Green is a rural village of considerable historic interest whose development reflects its agricultural origins and later expansion associated with local industries, including milling activity along Dean Brook during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Smithy Row forms part of the historic core of the village and comprises a collection of traditional buildings arranged along a narrow lane. The surrounding townscape is characterised by vernacular stone buildings, traditional roof forms, stone boundary walls and informal historic street patterns that collectively contribute to the distinctive rural character of the conservation area.

The property lies within the Hurst Green Conservation Area, designated by Ribble Valley Borough Council in recognition of the area's special architectural and historic interest.

3. Historical Development

Historically, village smithies were essential components of rural settlements, providing blacksmithing services for agricultural communities. Such buildings were commonly located close to principal routes through a settlement and served local farms, estates and residents.

The name "The Smithy" and its location on Smithy Row strongly indicate its historic function as the village blacksmith's workshop. The Hurst Green Conservation Area Appraisal specifically identifies a former smithy in Smithy Row as one of the historic buildings contributing to the area's significance. The appraisal notes that traditional local building materials, including sandstone masonry and stone slate roofing, survive on the former smithy and contribute positively to the character of the conservation area.

The property forms part of the historic evolution of Hurst Green and illustrates the former economic and social functions that supported rural village life.

4. Heritage Significance

4.1 Architectural Significance

The principal significance of the building derives from its vernacular architectural character. Traditional rural buildings within Hurst Green are typically constructed of locally quarried sandstone with simple elevations, modest detailing and traditional roof forms.

Key features likely to contribute to the building's significance include:

- Traditional stone wall construction.
- Historic roof structure and covering.
- Simple vernacular proportions.
- Evidence of former smithy use, where surviving.
- Historic openings and traditional joinery.
- Relationship with neighbouring historic buildings within Smithy Row.

The building reflects local building traditions and contributes to the architectural cohesion of the historic village.

4.2 Historic Significance

The building possesses historic value through its association with the former blacksmithing trade, an activity fundamental to the operation of rural communities before mechanisation.

The former smithy represents an increasingly rare surviving element of the village's historic infrastructure and contributes to an understanding of how Hurst Green functioned as a self-sustaining rural settlement.

Its significance is enhanced by its survival within its historic location and by the continued legibility of the historic street pattern surrounding it.

4.3 Townscape Significance

The Smithy makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Hurst Green Conservation Area.

The building contributes to:

- The historic streetscape of Smithy Row.
- The rural vernacular character of the village.
- The visual continuity of traditional stone-built development.
- The appreciation of Hurst Green's historic evolution.

Its scale, materials and form are consistent with the traditional built environment identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal.

4.4 Evidential Value

The building may retain evidence of its former use through surviving structural fabric, internal arrangements, historic openings or construction techniques. Such features may provide information regarding historic blacksmithing activities and traditional building methods in the Ribble Valley.

5. Setting

The setting of The Smithy is defined by the wider historic village of Hurst Green, including surrounding stone cottages, historic routes, boundary walls and open rural landscape.

The significance of the building is enhanced by:

- Its location within the historic core of the village.
- Its relationship with neighbouring historic properties.
- Views along Smithy Row.
- The continued rural character of the surrounding landscape.

The setting allows the historic function and development of the building to be understood and appreciated.

6. Assessment of Heritage Impact

Any future alterations should seek to preserve those elements that contribute to the building's significance, including historic fabric, traditional materials and the building's relationship with the surrounding conservation area.

Works that utilise sympathetic materials and traditional detailing are likely to preserve or enhance the significance of the asset and its contribution to the conservation area.

Particular care should be taken to:

- Retain historic masonry and traditional finishes.
- Preserve historic openings and proportions.
- Avoid the loss of surviving historic fabric.
- Ensure that any extensions remain subordinate to the original structure.
- Use materials that match the character and appearance of the existing building.

7. Conclusion

The Smithy is a heritage asset of local significance that contributes positively to the special architectural and historic interest of the Hurst Green Conservation Area. The building derives significance from its historic role as a former village smithy, its vernacular architectural character, and its contribution to the historic townscape of Smithy Row.

The property forms an important component of Hurst Green's historic development and helps illustrate the economic and social history of the village. Any future works should seek to conserve those features that contribute to its significance while ensuring that the character and appearance of the conservation area are preserved and, where possible, enhanced.