

Country House Report: Hodder Grange, Ribble Valley, Lancashire



Plan 1a. Proposed Hodder Grange at Hodder Higher Bridge

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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this Country House Report is to provide an understanding of the tradition of country houses in England, Lancashire, The Ribble Valley and The Forest of Bowland and, specifically around a site at Hodder Higher Bridge (Plans 1a-c), where the site's owners have aspirations to build a new country house, to a design and scale which have been substantially informed by the national and local tradition of country houses. The Country House Report also explains the process through which the design evolved and includes an assessment of the submitted design and its impact on Hodder Higher Bridge itself.

1.2 The Country House Report is strongly based upon *The Tradition of Country Houses in the Forest of Bowland, Ribble Valley, Lancashire and England (2020)* by the same author, which was submitted with a pre-application consultation to Ribble Valley BC. This Country House Report seeks to respond to some of the comments received in that consultation and in subsequent consultations with the Traditional Architecture Group. The Traditional Architecture Group's Design Review Panel met at the site on the 21st June 2021, when the author of this Country House Report was in attendance and participated in the constructive initial discussion.

1.3 This Country House Report has been produced over many months with research and site visits undertaken to the site of the proposed house and some of the houses referred to in this document. The role of the author in addition to producing the country house study has been to inform and comment on the emerging design of the proposed house as a 'critical friend' and to ensure that the emerging house designs relate well to both the local country house tradition and the tradition of Georgian architecture.

1.4 It is acknowledged that the site at Hodder Higher Bridge is within the open countryside and within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), where new houses would not normally secure planning permission but this report acknowledges the potential for exceptions to this general presumption which are created by Para. 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF):

80. Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;*
- b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;*
- c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;*
- d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; or*
- e) **the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:***
 - **is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and***
 - **would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.***

1.5 This Country House Report therefore aims to assess the "defining characteristics of the local area" to demonstrate that it has informed the design of the proposed new house to ensure that the design is sensitive to those defining characteristics. The site at Hodder Higher Bridge is just within the SE boundary of the main body of the Forest of Bowland AONB. It is also within the wider Ribble Valley, which has its own defining characteristics. The site is now in Lancashire and is closely associated with the history of Lancashire even though, in the past, it was just within Yorkshire, as the River Hodder historically formed the boundary between Yorkshire and

Lancashire, (Maps 1 and 2). The “defining characteristics of the local area” therefore need to be considered in the context of the Forest of Bowland, the Ribble Valley, Lancashire and indeed England.

1.6 Hodder Higher Bridge is a Grade II listed building. The proposal therefore has the potential to have an impact on its setting.

1.7 This Country House Report has been prepared by John Hinchliffe of Hinchliffe Heritage for Rural Solutions. The author of this report: has over 40 years experience in dealing with developments in the historic environment in the public and private sectors; is a member of the Georgian Group; was secretary to the West Lancashire Conservation Areas Advisory Panel for 14 years; was secretary to the Liverpool Urban Design and Conservation Advisory Panel for 5 years, during the period of Liverpool’s intensive renaissance in the early 21st C and; is retained as the Heritage Consultant to Craven District Council.



Plan 1b. The site of a proposed new country house



Plan 1c. Proposed site plan for new house of outstanding architectural quality at Higher Hodder Bridge

2. General Description of the Forest of Bowland

2.1 For many people, the Forest of Bowland is an undiscovered rural area, somewhat off-the-beaten track, located just outside the more popularly-visited Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks and with few major routes running through its main body. However, the national importance of its landscape was recognised in 1964, when it was designated as area as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Its relative lack of public appreciation has assisted in enabling it to remain largely unspoilt by mass tourism.

2.2 The Forest of Bowland is fundamentally characterised by open windswept moorlands, intricate patterns of fields, wooded valleys, ornamental parklands and a tradition of stone-built walls, villages, isolated farms, manor houses and country houses. Whilst it is essentially an area of natural beauty, created by its topography, geology, vegetation and water systems, it is a cultural landscape - the result of the inter-action of man and nature. Mankind has cultivated the landscape and introduced man-made structures in the form of roads, footpaths, boundaries, villages, hamlets and farms and individual houses.

2.3 The Forest of Bowland is approximately 32km in diameter and is bounded by the valleys of the River Lune to the N and the River Ribble to the S and by the Fylde Plain to the W. To the E, its NE boundary almost merges into the Yorkshire Dales. Pendle Hill is within the AONB but lies to the SE of the main body of the AONB and separated from it by the lowlands of the Ribble Valley. At 567m, Pendle Hill is the high point of the Forest of Bowland but there are three other moorland tops over 400m high in the centre of the main body which create an upland core of deeply-incised gritstone fells.

2.4 The wilderness spirit of the moorland summits is in contrast with the gentler scenery of the foothills, which have steep-sided and intimate wooded valleys that open out into the broad green lowland valleys of the rivers Ribble, Lune, Were and Hodder. The latter emerges from the central moorlands and winds its way S through the middle of the S part of the Forest of Bowland before turning E to join the River Ribble. The network of country lanes through the Forest of Bowland inevitably cross the rivers over a series of bridges, many of which are of ancient origins.

2.5 The Forest of Bowland is sparsely populated and 75% of those who do live there are in the villages and the other 25% live in loosely-knit hamlets and isolated dwellings of varying types, including farms and country houses. The Countryside Commission¹ Stated:

*The picturesque qualities of most of these villages and settlements in Bowland and their **successful integration in the landscape owes much to an adherence to vernacular architecture, the use of local gritstone** and, perhaps most importantly, the lack of significant expansion or development during the 20th C."*

It goes on to state:

*The landscape of the Hodder Valley... draws its particular identity from the contrasting geology of the gritstone fells and limestone reef knolls that contain it and the influence of **estate management that has favoured the upkeep of traditional boundary features and buildings, and the planting and management of woodlands for amenity and sporting purposes***

The Countryside Commission identifies the cultural influences on the landscape of the Forest of Bowland. It states:

*The history of Bowland as a royal hunting forest and subsequent evolution and dominance of the country estate, has left an indelible mark upon the landscape **in the presence of fine country houses**, attractive estate villages and well-tended parkland and estate landscapes.*

¹ *Landscape Assessment of The Forest of Bowland Landscape* Countryside Commission 1992

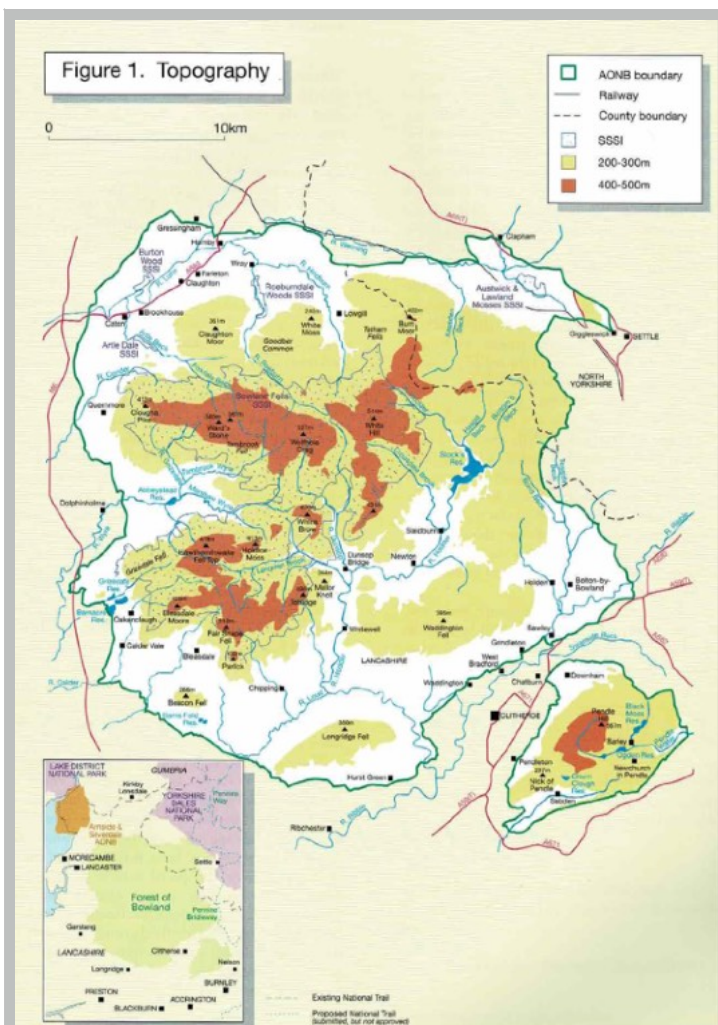
The Countryside Commission document provides a brief analysis of the settlement Character of the Forest of Bowland:

The traditional buildings and settlements of Bowland make a significant contribution to the aesthetic qualities of the landscape. Constructed predominantly out of local stone and in a vernacular style, they complement the natural features in the landscape and contribute to its strong character and identity.

The use of the local gritstone is the most important unifying feature throughout the AONB, being the predominant building material for domestic properties, farmsteads, churches and individual structures , such as bridges and architectural follies...

The main building period was, however, during the 17th and 18th centuries at a time of prosperity and rebuilding in the countryside...The first generation of these stone houses were built furthest from the fells, for the gentry of the newly-rich professional classes....

*Outside of the main villages, **the large country house**, with manicured parkland landscape and pictures estate buildings and cottages, is a particularly significant element in the **Bowland landscape**, imposing a highly distinctive and very attractive character to the rural scene. Many of the buildings are the product of 19th century England financed by the industrial prosperity of Victorian times.*



Plan 2. Forest of Bowland AONB and its topography (from Countryside Commission publication)

2.6 In a more recent landscape character assessment of another part of the Forest of Bowland, Natural England² explains that much of the landscape character derives from the underlying geology of the area: the Millstone Grit under the high fells; the existence of a substantial boundary fault separating the soft Permo-Triassic rocks from the harder Carboniferous rocks and varying depths of glacial deposits. It states:

One such complex (of glacial deposits), in the Ribble and Hodder valleys at Stonyhurst and Hurst Green, imparts a special quality of small wooded knolls to the local landscape...

*The settlement pattern is of small stone villages, hamlets and farmsteads. **The isolated country houses set in formal parkland, such as Browsholme and Quernmore, are a typical feature of the landscape.** These managed estates are enclosed by belts of woodland and estate fencing, and typically consist of open grassland with ponds and lakes, scattered trees of oak, ash, sycamore and lime, enclosed by blocks of secondary woodland...*

The Ribble and Hodder drain the southern flanks of the Bowland Fells. Within the valleys, strong mounded outcrops or 'reef knolls' form distinctive landscape features that give the area its special character.

The lush pasture and arable land in the Lune Valley has long supported prosperous farms – from the medieval period and earlier – and this is reflected in the number of large farms and country estates that are scattered along the valley sides...

A particular feature of this area is the number of large country houses and halls set in parkland, such as Ellel Grange, Waddow Hall, Bolton Park and Leagram Hall, as well as country estates, such as Abbeystead, which have developed from the medieval period. In addition to these country houses and halls, there is a distinctive architectural legacy of stone-built farmsteads, houses and settlements, mostly dating from rebuilding in the 18th and 19th centuries."

2.7 It is thus clear that the Countryside Commission and Natural England both recognise that isolated country houses and farms are fundamental to the character of the Forest of Bowland.

2.8 The appeal of the landscape of the Forest of Bowland and the contribution of the buildings and structures to the picturesque and romantic quality of the landscape has long been recognised by artists and poets:

- JMW Turner (1775-1851) visited the area in the early 19th C and produced many paintings which capture the country houses and bridges in their romantic and naturalistic landscape settings, including Browsholme Hall and Eadesford Bridge

- Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) was a teacher at Stonyhurst College and was inspired by the beauty of the Hodder Woods to write "Ribblesdale" in tribute to its beauty.

² National Character Area profile: 33. Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill Natural England

3. Brief History of Forest of Bowland, The Area around the Site and the Site Itself

3.1 *The Forest of Bowland*

3.1.1 The origins of the name “Bowland” are uncertain. One popular assumption is that, as it was formerly Bolland, it derives from the Norse “Bu”, meaning cattle or English Bull Land. Another popular theory is that it simply derives from the bows or bends in the rivers which wind their way through the area. Initially, the name Bowland was not applied to the whole of the current AONB or even the moorland areas but to just one of the many chases and forests (between Chipping and Wierdale Forest - see Map 1) that constituted the Royal Forest of Lancaster which had developed in medieval times.

3.1.2 In medieval England, the term “forest” implied “...a particular tract of land subject to the governance of a special body of law, having for its objective the preservation of certain animals for hunting purposes, and of the woods and underwoods in which they lived”. Only the king could hold a forest. The Forest of Bowland was thus initially created as a royal hunting ground and this has remained an important controlled activity in the area for the capture of food and for sport to this day, even though it is no longer a strictly royal preserve.

3.1.3 The forests of NE Lancashire and the border with Yorkshire (Map 1) were rich in wildlife and were fruitful hunting grounds for those who were privileged enough to be allowed to indulge in the activity. They were the preserve of red and fallow deer, wild boar, hares, foxes, rabbits. The moorlands on the higher ground were popular ground for wolves but after their extinction around 1500 in this country for moorland birds such as grouse, partridge and then the introduced pheasants, which still abound today.

3.1.4 Within the unenclosed forest, there were initially two enclosed deer parks or “launds”: at Leagram at Little Bolland and at Radholme (shown on Map 2), adjoining Browsholme. These parks were enclosed primarily to maintain protected areas for deer. The rest of the Forest was moorland or divided up into farms and some subsequently became other parkland estates. Speed’s Map of 1610 shows that there were also parkland estates by that time at Stonyhurst, Salmesbury, Barton Hall and Greenhalgh Hall.

3.1.5 The last English king to hunt deer in the Forest was James I in 1617 and the crown maintained a holding in the Forest of Bowland until 1661, but then Charles II granted the territories to the Duke of Albemarle. Since then, the ownership and control has been much split up, although the Duchy of Lancaster has revived an interest and some limited renewed ownership, based on the Whitewell Estate.

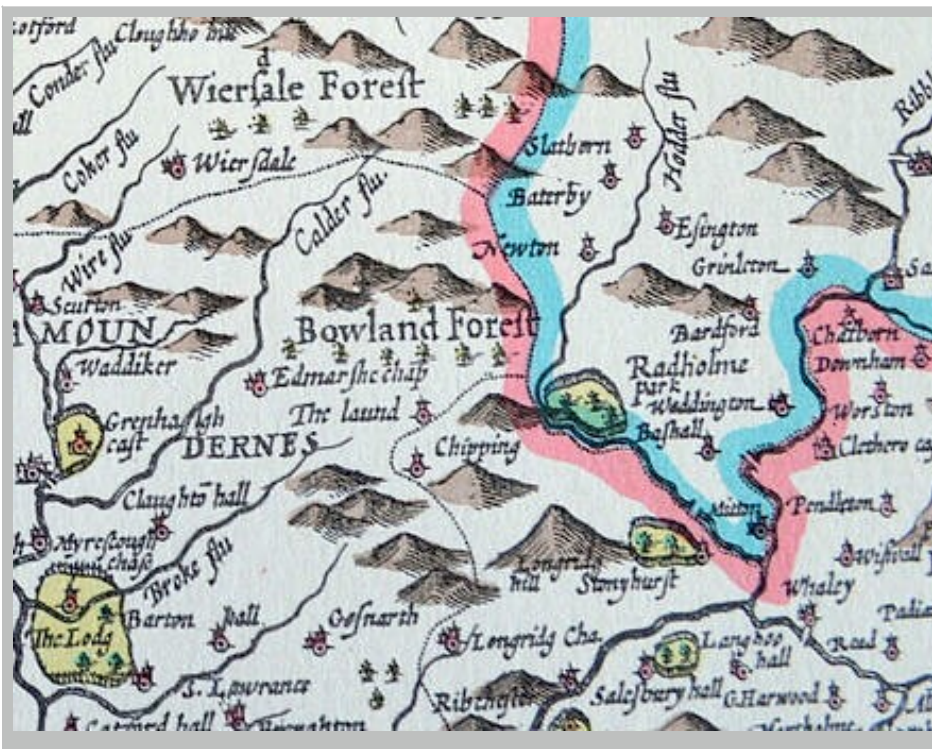
3.1.6 Much of the land which was not reserved for hunting was put to agricultural use and a significant impact on the landscape took place in the 16th and 17th centuries when parts of the wild moorlands and woodlands were enclosed and converted to meadow and pasture, with boundaries of earthen banks and hedges and then dry-stone walls where bedrock was easily available.

3.1.7 Up until the 17th C most farmers lived in villages and buildings were mostly timber-framed, many with cruck frames and having thatched roofs. The great barn at Stonyhurst is one of the finest examples of this building type. Only the more prestigious homes and buildings were built in stone up until the 17th C but then the use of became more widespread during the great period of building and rebuilding.

3.1.8 The landscape of the Bowland uplands has changed little over the last 300 years and continues to be used for grouse shooting, as well as other leisure pursuits, such as hiking and cycling. Indeed, the Bowland Fells provide some of the best shooting conditions in the country - the Abbeystead Estate holds the record bag for any grouse moor in England for a haul of almost 3,000 birds shot by eight guns in a single day!



Map 1. Speed's Map of Lancashire 1610



Map 2. Detail of Speed's Map of Lancashire 1610

3.2 The Area around Hodder Higher Bridge and the Application Site

3.2.1 Yates Map of 1786 (Map 3) shows the site of the proposed house at Hodder Higher Bridge (immediately below the H of Higher Bridge at the top). Although the site itself is not shown in detail, it can be seen that there is a ridge of higher land to the W, Longridge Fell: a house called “Ridding” on the W bank in a bend in the river just to the S; Stonyhurst lies further SW with its designed parkland and; other halls in the vicinity are (Great) Mitton Hall, Hacking Hall, Brock Hall, Dinkley Hall and Priest Hall.



Map 3. Yates Map 1786

3.2.2 Greenwoods Map of 1822 (Map 4) shows that at the beginning of the 19th C, there was also a Loyds Hall to the N of Hodder Higher Bridge and, although Chaigley Manor is shown, it is not named (probably as it has not been fully rebuilt at that time). The earliest maps to show the site around Hodder Higher Bridge in any great detail, are the first editions of the OS Map of the 1840s but, as the River Hodder formed an administrative boundary (between Lancashire and Yorkshire at that time), the maps on each side of the river were surveyed at slightly different times. The W bank in Lancashire was surveyed in 1844. Map 5 shows *The Holme* just to the N of the bridge and Chaigley Hall to the NW, partway up towards the top of the fell. Interestingly, it also shows two sandstone quarries at Kemple End and two limestone quarries further N (as well as several lime kilns), confirming that the geological split runs through the area. Indeed, the detailed plan from 1844 (Map 6) shows a lime kiln on the W bank of the River Hodder at Hodder Higher Bridge, an “Old Defaced Bank” and an “Old Pier”, crossing on to the site of the proposed new house.

3.2.3 The land on the E side of the River Hodder was surveyed in 1847 (Maps 7 and 8) and illustrates that on that side there was: Hodder House to the N of the bridge; Bashall Lodge (now demolished) further to the N; Bashall Hall and “Town” to the NE and; Edisford Hall to the E. The detailed plan also shows the “Old Pier” and that the small settlement on the E bank of Hodder

Higher Bridge had started to be developed with two buildings on the road side (high up above the river bank); Hodder Bridge Barn, partway down the track and a "Ruin" further down the track. The application site itself was undeveloped and so presumably farmland.

3.2.4 The next edition of the OS Map (Map 9) show that by 1907: one of the two roadside buildings at Hodder Bridge had become the Bridge Inn; two further buildings had been built, on the E side of the road; *Hodder View* had been built and; Hodder Bridge Barn had been developed further with more buildings. The application site itself was still undeveloped and so presumably still farmland.

3.2.5 The 1907 and 1910 maps are also helpful in showing that Chaigley Manor had by then created its own extensive parkland and was presumably served by Holme Farm that there was an "Owlets Hall" to the W.

3.2.6 The site of the proposed house is shown as being undeveloped on all of these plans but the presence of the "Old Pier" for a period suggest that the small triangle of land at the N end was at some point used as the landing point for this early crossing of the river, prior to the construction of the existing bridge.

3.2.7 The publication of several postcards of Higher Hodder Bridge (Plates 42-49) in the late 19th and early 20th Cs illustrates that the bridge has long been seen as a popular beauty spot as well as a crucial river-crossing point.

3.2.8 Not much has changed on the application site itself during the late 20th and early 21st Cs, as it continues to be field of grassland but its ownership has changed. It was once owned by the Co-operative Society and was then gifted by the society to the town of Accrington in 1916. It changed hands several times and was once owned by the Townson brothers but it is now within the holding of Manor Farm (formerly Holme Farm), on the W bank of the river and on the N side of Chipping Road. There is no record of it being associated with Stonyhurst College

3.2.9 A utilitarian gate and stone wall have been erected at the entrance to the site from Chipping Road and a timber boarded shed has been erected to the N of the entrance. The Bridge Inn has closed and been converted into residential use. Further afield, some of the country houses which are shown on the historic maps have been demolished, including Bashall Lodge, The Ridings and Leagram Hall.



Map 4. Greenwoods 1822



Map 5. OS Map of Land W of the site and Chaigley surveyed 1844



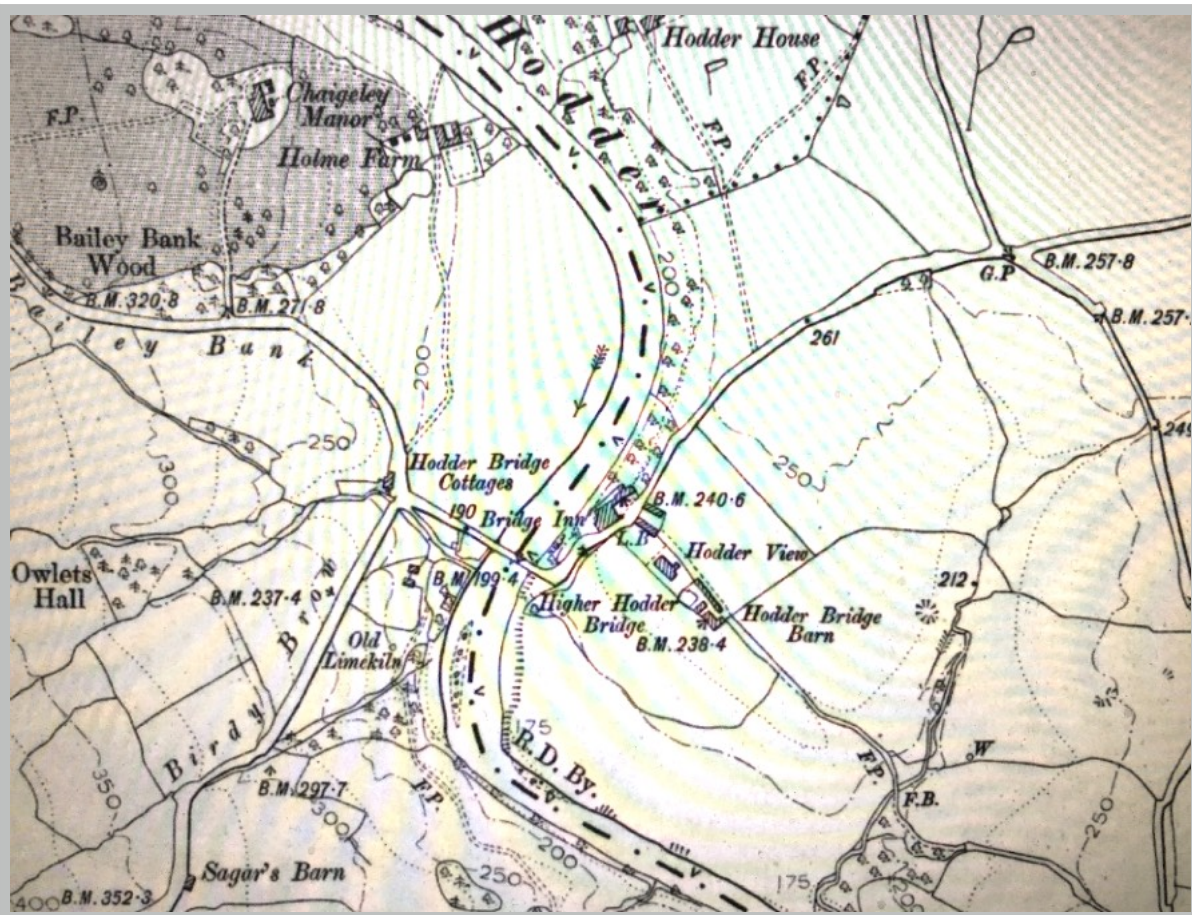
Map 6. Detail of 1844 OS Map



Map 7. OS Map of the site and Bashalls Eaves surveyed 1847



Map 8. OS Map of the site surveyed 1847



Map 9. OS Map of site revised 1907



Map 10. OS Map of site revised 1910

Country House Report: Hodder Grange

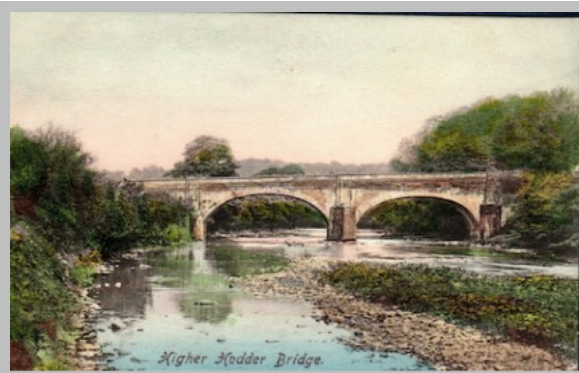


Plate 42. Postcard of Higher Hodder Bridge



Plate 43. Postcard of Higher Hodder Bridge

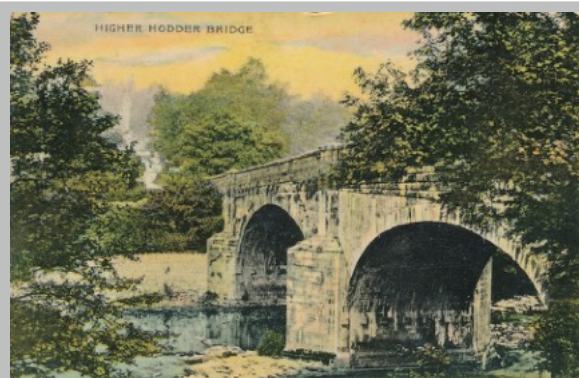


Plate 44. Postcard of Higher Hodder Bridge

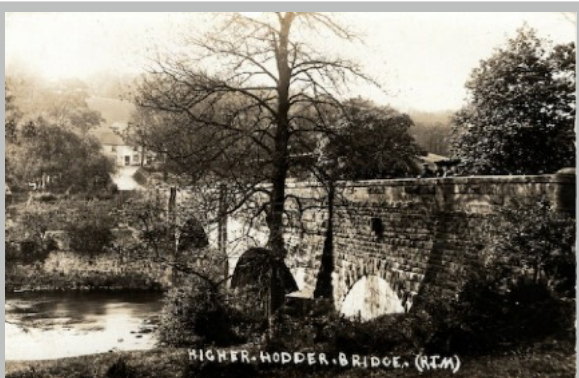


Plate 45. Postcard of Higher Hodder Bridge



Plate 46. Postcard of Higher Hodder Bridge



Plate 47. Postcard of Higher Hodder Bridge



Plate 48. Postcard of Higher Hodder Bridge



Plate 49. Postcard of Higher Hodder Bridge

4. The National and Regional Tradition of Country Houses

4.1 Introduction

The construction of fine and imposing country houses is a national tradition. They are part of the landscape and social fabric of the country and display: our history; our architectural tastes; our regional building materials; the status and means of their owners and; the skill and capability of their architects or builders. They vary immensely in size and appearance but their tradition and role in the display of taste, craftsmanship and society cannot be ignored. Many are considered to be national treasures, and visited as a source of education, leisure and pleasure. Many are owned by the National Trust, English Heritage or individuals and are much-visited and appreciated as an essential part of our heritage - what we have inherited from the past. They are part of the national psyche but, although some may be kept privately-owned and not open to the public, they are all equally part of our national heritage and have heritage significance, displaying evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values to varying degrees.

Country houses are thus more than simple architectural expressions - they are symbols of power, influence and wealth. Mark Girouard³ describes them as “power houses”: from medieval manor houses from where the squire would exercise control over the activities of the local population to massive mansions which were the seats of noblemen, royalty and the national politicians who made and enforced the law of the land. He asserts that much of the power was based upon ownership of large tracts of the surrounding land and this enabled the owners to shape the surrounding landscapes to their taste so that the house and the surrounding landscape were effectively a single entity.

Country houses are rarely completely static in their usage, design and condition, as they need constant alteration and maintenance to continue to fulfil their changing functions and technology.

Some country houses were financed through “old money”, as historic families took advantage of hereditary titles and long-established incomes from their estates. However, there has equally been a tradition of an influx of “new money”, as successful individuals made their fortunes from professions, trade and industry and thus earned the means to establish their own new power houses for the future. Girouard states:

Well before the Industrial Revolution had create a multitude of new fortunes, the wool trade, the law, service in India or sugar from Jamaica, lending money or supplying the army, had produced the means with which to buy estates and building houses on them.

He goes on to say that:

The size and pretensions of such houses were an accurate index of the ambitions - or lack of them - of the owners.

Country houses are of course also in indicator of the means and varied tastes of the owners but, in any event, they make an impression upon the landscape and its appreciation. The rich and influential families have historically had both a town house for urban activities, often in London, and a country house for rural activities and the two dwellings may not have been in the same style. In the 1840s, the Earl of Ellesmere built a symmetrical Palladian palazzo in Mayfair and an irregular Tudor-style mansion in Lancashire.

The late 17th C was a great period of building of country houses after the turmoils of the civil war often in vernacular or Baroque style, loosely interpreting the renaissance styles of mainland Europe.

The fashion for fine country houses continued into the 18th C as more purist and scholarly classical influences took hold as clients and architects learnt from their studies on “The Grand Tour” and in particular from the influence of Andrea Palladio who had inspired the more rigorous

³ *Life in the English Country House* Mark Girouard

application of the principles of Roman architecture established by Vitruvius and others. He published the influential *Quattro Libri dell'Architettura* (Four Books of Architecture) in 1570 to provide a guide and inform scholarly replication of historical architectural principles: 1) fundamentals of architecture and the classical orders; 2) domestic design (mostly examples of his own work); 3) public and urban design and engineering and; 4) temples. It took some time for Palladio's works to influence English architectural tastes. Inigo Jones (1573 – 1652) is generally credited with being the first significant English architect to: employ Vitruvian/Palladian rules of proportion and symmetry in his buildings and; introduce the classical architecture of Rome and the Italian Renaissance to Britain, leaving his mark on London with the Queen's House and the Banqueting House, Whitehall.

The new movement of classical revival took stronger hold in England in the early 18th C, with the publication of two influential books: the translation into English of Palladio's *Quattro Libri* by Giacomo Leoni and Nicholas Dubois and; *Vitruvius Britannicus* by Colen Campbell, strongly patronised and supported by Lord Burlington. Leoni, Campbell and Lord Burlington all designed several country houses based upon the classical principles established in these books. Two of Leoni's best examples were in Lancashire: Lathom House near Ormskirk and Alkrington Hall in Middleton.

James Ackerman⁴ attempts to explain the principles of Palladio's architecture:

Palladio's view of architecture as natural philosophy helps to explain unique qualities in his design, especially a subtlety of proportion, composition and equilibrium...

He identifies:

... the uniformity of schema in plans and elevations: a triadic composition with a central block built around an axis of the carriageway, and two symmetrical flanking blocks...

He goes on to examine Palladio's use of proportion in three dimensions, in the length and breadth of rooms and the height of the walls:

To extend a proportional relation into three dimensions so that the wall and the floor plan could be integrated, they used what they called a 'proportionality', or 'the relationship of proportions', in which there or more terms could be linked (e.g., 9 : 6 : 4)...not only rooms and faces can be designed proportionally, but whole plans...harmonic proportionality's..

In the 19th C, tastes became more catholic, with a nostalgic return to gothic architecture and historical influences from other periods of the past such as French Renaissance, and English Elizabethan, other mixing and matching styles and changing the scale to suit new requirements, technology and the relatively easy availability of materials through improved transportation systems.

In the 20th and 21st C, many economic bases, social structures and customs have continued to change and there has been a dramatic decline in the distribution of large country house throughout the country and much change in their ownership. The massive costs of upkeep and death duties have always been problems for their continued ownership by historic families and their proper maintenance. For example, Lathom House near Ormskirk was one of Giacomo Leoni's finest Palladian mansions, built for Sir Thomas Bootle, a local merchant and politician. It was built on the site of an earlier defensible house which had been built for the Earls of Derby in the 15th C which was besieged in the Civil War and raised to the ground afterwards. But the Bootle family's fortunes declined, maintenance costs spiralled, fortunes were gambled away and the main house was dismantled in the 1920s. Nearby, Rufford Old Hall, a timber-framed medieval house, was deemed too "old-fashioned" by its owners the Heskeths in the 18th C and has since come into the ownership of the National Trust. The Heskeths then built Rufford New Hall, a couple

⁴ *Palladio* James Ackerman

of miles away, in more elegant classical style in a parkland created by clearing a medieval village but it too changed use in the 20th C - firstly into a hospital and more recently into apartments.

The national history and tradition of country houses is thus often somewhat complex but for sure the existence of country houses and the limited demand for new country houses will continue.

4.2 Country Houses of Lancashire

4.2.1 The County of Lancashire first emerged as an identifiable area in its own right in the second half of the 12th century, taking its name from the old town of Lancaster on the River Lune. In the following centuries it became a Duchy, with the title of the “Duke of Lancaster” being borne by the monarch of England. The control over the county and the country as a whole was hotly disputed in the Wars of the Roses and the English Civil War. During the 18th and 19th centuries, Lancashire emerged as an industrial powerhouse which made its influence felt across the world. At that time, Lancashire covered a much wider area, including: the industrial metropolis of Manchester; the international seaport of Liverpool and; the ship-building and iron town of Barrow. The rich and influential history of the county, its varied sources of wealth and its varied topography resulted in a great variety of country houses throughout the county. Many survive today as famous examples of vernacular architecture, rooted strongly in local styles and materials and of classical architecture and revivalist architecture, such as gothic and neo-Tudor, despite some regrettable losses.

4.2.2 In 1896 James Waite⁵ undertook a study of the various medieval lesser halls and manor houses of Lancashire. He identified a general unity of design in the layout of many of them, whereby they had a large extent of farm buildings “...in many cases a quadrangle...” . He estimated that in Lancashire (albeit when it was bigger than at present) there were about 300 such lesser halls and manor houses and even more smaller halls and farms. He explains that as the 17th Century progressed towards the 18th C the defensive nature of the buildings gave way to an enlightenment in design and the introduction of the park and garden as aesthetic settings for the hall rather than moats and means of fortification.

4.2.3 William Singleton⁶ similarly undertook a study of traditional house-types in rural Lancashire (and Cheshire) in an article published in 1952 and he also concentrated on pre-18th C domestic vernacular architecture which he described as the homes “...constructed by the village mason, carpenter, thatcher and other craftsmen”, rather than the designs of distinguished architects and prestigious builders/artists of national repute. He describes:

- the structures of timber houses, especially cruck framed houses;
- stone houses, stating “...their character was determined by the local masonry and the form in which it could be obtained...invariably built with stone from the local quarry.” and “Millstone grit... in and around the Pennines”;
- brick houses, mostly “...from the latter half of the 17th or the first few decades of the 18th century.”;
- roof structures, of which the “...keynote of the structure was simplicity.” but which occasionally were more complex to respond to plan-forms such as “E”, “H”, “T”, or “U” plans.
- roofing materials of: stone flags, where available locally; thatch of wheat-reed” used on steeply pitched roofs and; Westmorland slates

4.2.4 John Champness⁷ provides a comprehensive analysis of the architectural developments throughout Lancashire. He makes a distinction between the early “traditional” country houses and the “houses in the classical tradition”. He categorises those which have some “classical” influences on fundamentally vernacular houses, as well as those which are purely classical. For example, he refers to the Ionic columns on Houghton Tower and the engaged pilasters which define the centre pieces of Stoneyhurst College (originally built as a country house for the Shireburnes) and the attempt at symmetrical front facing gables at Browsholme Hall. He also explores the “Battle of the Styles”, principally during the 19th C, pointing to the Gothic re-

⁵ Lesser Halls and Manor Houses of Lancashire James Waite (article)

⁶ Traditional House-types in Rural Lancashire and Cheshire William Singleton (art.) 1952

⁷ *Lancashire's Architectural Heritage* John Champness

interpretation of the underlying Georgian carcass of Leighton Hall by Paley and Austin and; the more purist Gothic creation of Scarisbrick Hall by ANW Pugin in the 1830s.

4.2.5 Other architectural commentators on Lancashire's architectural heritage, such as Peter Fleetwood-Hesketh⁸ focus more strongly on Lancashire's extensive collection of Georgian country houses, especially the modestly-scaled houses of the lesser gentry, rather the major mansions. He points to the stone-built Parbold Hall and describes it as :

A Palladian reconstruction of an earlier house, it is an instance of the 18th century genius for investing small houses with a dignity that comes near to grandeur.

He draws attention to Standen Hall (Plate 2), near Clitheroe - a 15th century stone house rebuilt in the Palladian style in 1757 and Kirkland Hall (Plate 3) near Garstang, of 1760 by John Carr of York. Both embody the intrinsic qualities of balance, symmetry, order, hierarchy and muted classical details which are typical of the mid-18th century country house.

4.2.6 Norman Bilborough for the NW Civic Trust⁹ describes the architecture of the county by region. In his section on "Preston and the Ribble Valley", he considers Stonyhurst College and admires it as a remarkable piece of architecture "...enjoying a marvellous landscape setting". He talks about the River Hodder to the E which "...winds its tranquil way through woods and fields..." and he states that "

From Higher Hodder Bridge at the foot of Longridge Fell it is a short distance to Bashall Town, once a sizeable settlement but now just a tiny hamlet. The dwellings that used to be here were clustered around Bashall Hall (Plate), a Tudor house which was the home of the Talbot family... evidence still to be seen is the retainer's dwelling at the rear of the hall, a barn-like building which is an example of a 15th century barracks.

Bilborough also goes on to highlight Browsholme Hall (Plates 37-39) - "a substantial house which reflects the importance of the (Parker) family in the area, having been built in 1507 but then refaced in attractive red sandstone in 1604" - with asymmetrical front facing gables, three-tiered central engaged columns and drip-moulds over all windows.

4.2.7 Frank Graham¹⁰ has compiled two collections of historic prints of buildings throughout Lancashire, which contain several examples of Georgian country houses (Plates 6-10), including Rufford New Hall, Trafford Hall, Quernmore Park, Worsley Hall, Gillibrand Hall and Giacomo Leoni's masterpieces of Bold Hall and Lathom House. He briefly introduces them:

...country houses when they were in a better state of preservation than they are today (1968) !

The prints are romanticised interpretations, often with deer, sheep or cattle grazing in the foreground but what they also clearly illustrate is how the houses sit comfortably within their own extensive landscaped parks, with water-bodies and specimen trees as prominent landscape features.

4.2.8 An almost comprehensive compilation of the country houses in the Lancashire (and Cheshire, Cumberland and Westmorland) is provided by John Martin Robinson¹¹, who states:

No county in England can show greater extremes of scenery and architecture than Lancashire...

⁸ *Murray's Lancashire Architectural Guide* Peter Fleetwood-Hesketh

⁹ *The Treasures of Lancashire* Norman Bilborough

¹⁰ *Picturesque Lancashire and Lancashire One Hundred Years Ago* Frank Graham (comp)

¹¹ *A Guide to the Country Houses of the North West* John Martin Robinson

and

... the cultural zenith...the late 18th century and the 19th century. This was partly a result of the influx of industrial money at that time...

He provides brief descriptions and histories of over 330 historic country houses and photographs for most of them. Of the more smaller, classically-designed country houses, he includes:

- Bank Hall (Plate 10a), Warrington (which became Warrington Town Hall) and which he describes as “...to the designs of James Gibbs...and is the best house of its date in Lancashire”
- Broughton Lodge (Plate 10b), Broughton East: “A miniature Palladian house with a 5 bay centre and pedimented side wings with Venetian windows...”
- Parbold Hall (Plate 10c), Parbold: “...remodelled in the Palladian style ca 1740...the interior is handsomely fitted out to match...”
- Quernmore Park (Plate 10d): remodelled “...to the designs of Thomas Harrison of Chester... embellished with Grecian plasterwork...The beautiful park with lake and artfully disposed plantations was laid out by John Webb...” and
- Read Hall (Plate 10e), Read: “...built 1818-25 to the design of George Webster...It is an excellent Grecian design in the Wyatt manner with a semi-circular central bow window carrying a shallow lead-covered dome....”



Plate 2. Standen Hall, near Clitheroe



Plate 3. Kirkland Hall near Garstang



Plate 4. Rufford New Hall



Plate 5. Trafford Hall

Country House Report: Hodder Grange



Plate 6. Quernmore Park, Near Lancaster



Plate 7. Worsley Hall



Plate 8. Gillibrand Hall

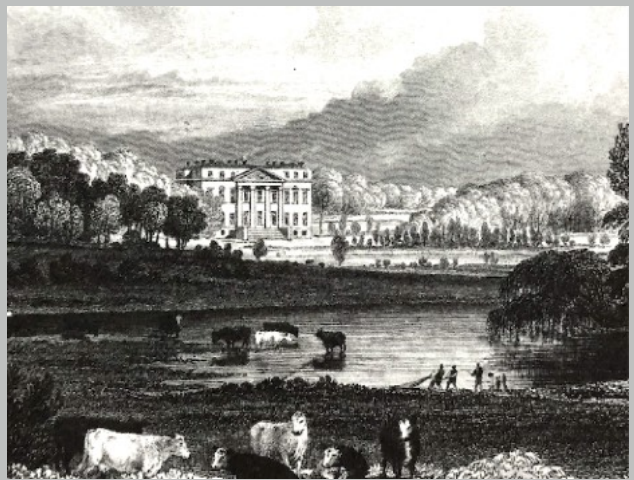


Plate 9. Bold Hall



Plate 10. Lathom House

Country House Report: Hodder Grange



Plate 10 a. Bank Hall, Warrington (Town Hall)



Plate 10b. Broughton Lodge



Plate 10 c. Parbold Hall



Plate 10d. Quernmore Park



Plate 10e. Read Hall

4.3 The Landscape and Country Houses of the Ribble Valley

Ron Freethy¹² explores the route of the River Ribble, its history, tributaries, the landscape and its relationship with the historic buildings. Within the Hodder Valley, he cites that between the Higher Hodder and Lower Hodder Bridges "...lie some of this lovely river's most magnificent gifts..." in the form of landscape quality, bird-life and flora which were the inspiration for some of the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, when he was a pupil at Stonyhurst - a building Freethy describes as "...one of the finest in the whole of England."

In discussing the old halls of the Calder valley, slightly further away, he refers to Huntroyd Hall (Plate 10f), in which he states that Inigo Jones (1573-1652) played a part in the rebuilding of 1633 (although there is no mention of this in the listing description). It was much rebuilt and remodelled in 1777 in more typical Georgian style and the again in the 19th C with in crenellations and then substantially reduced in size in the mid-late 20th C.

Freethy opines that there is no hall along the whole River Ribble which has more "character" than the stone-built Martholme Hall (Plate 10g), with its mullioned and transomed windows, wide semi-circular central doorway and sculptured shield of the eagle with two heads.

He goes into some detail about the changing fortunes of the ancient Read Hall (Plate 1), but clarifies that the huge estate was broken up in 1799, the old manor house was rebuilt in its current restrained classical classical style, which he describes:

The prominent feature of the South front is a semi-circular colonnade of six detached columns of the Ionic order, projecting from the building and supporting a railed balcony to the upper storey...

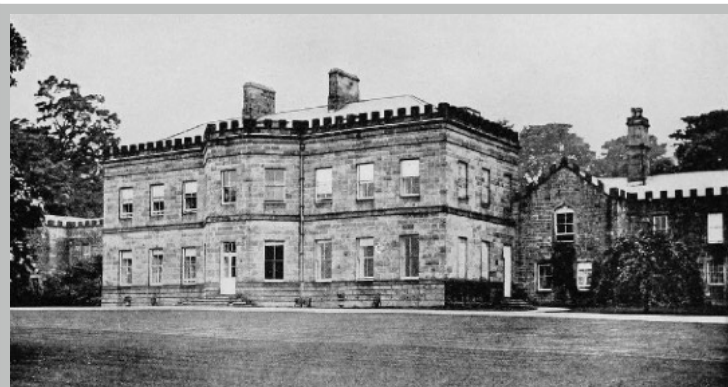


Plate 10f. Huntroyd Hall c.1880



Plate 10g. Martholme Hall

4.4 Country Houses of North-East Lancashire

4.4.1 Neil Webster¹³ has undertaken a specific study of almost ninety country houses of North-East Lancashire for his collection of sketches (Plates 11-18a). He does not provide an over-view of their architectural styles but it is clear from the sketches that they represent a wide variety of styles. The majority are in the vernacular style, such as Martholme Hall (Plates 10g and 12). However, of the sizeable number of those halls and manor houses which are either in the fundamentally classical "Georgian" style or include some prominent classical details, he includes examples such as: Read Hall (Plate 18a), Bashall Hall (Plate 11 and 27); Bank Hall (Plate 13), rebuilt in the 18th century; Read Hall (Plate 1); Broadclough Hall (Plate 14); Newton Hall (Plate 16); Standen Hall; Leagram Hall (Plate 15) and; the slightly eccentric White Hall (Plate 17). He also includes Chaigley Manor (Plate 18).

¹² *The River Ribble* Ron Freethy

¹³ *Halls and Manor Houses of NE Lancashire* Neil Webster.

Country House Report: Hodder Grange



Plate 11. Bashall Hall



Plate 12. Martholme Hall



Plate 13. Bank Hall, Burnley - Rebuilt 18th C



Plate 14. Broadclough Hall, Bacup - early 19th C



Plate 15. Leagram Hall, Chipping - 1822



Plate 16. Newton Hall, Newton - 1705



Plate 17. White Hall, Grindleton



Plate 18. Chaigley Manor dating back to 1248 but rebuilt in 19th C



Plate 18a. Read Hall, Read

4.4.2 Inevitably, Webster could not draw every country house in NE Lancashire or in the Forest of Bowland or encompass their landscape setting. Glebe House (Plate 19), Slaidburn, is omitted but is a mid-sized country house on the edge of the settlement in the classical tradition. It stands in its own landscaped grounds, just off the road, behind a stone wall and a set of piers (Plate 19) - those beside the entrance being the most impressive, each having a rusticated and battered plinth and a cusped finial on a pyramidal cap.

A few miles to the W of Slaidburn at Dunsop Bridge, Thorneyholme Hall stands on the S bank of the River Hodder but its main entrance from the road (Plate 20) is across a bridge on the N bank and it is marked by eye-catching gothic-style cast iron railings laid out in quadrants and with panelled stone piers with trefoil panelled caps (Plate 20).



Plate 19. Entrance walls and cusp-topped piers with rusticated bases to Glebe House, Slaidburn



Plate 20. Gothic entrance piers and railings at Thorneycroft Hall, Dunlop Bridge

4.4.3 The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England (RCHME)¹⁴ undertook a scholarly analysis of the rural houses (1560-1760) of the Lancashire Pennines in 1985 to investigate this building type in the pre-industrial period and its evolution in the context of the economic and social history of the area. The study area was restricted to the area around Burnley and Colne and did not stretch quite into the Forest of Bowland. It concentrated on the vernacular buildings built up until 1710 but also includes a chapter on “Postscript - The Eighteenth Century, which begins:

The large number of substantial dwellings erected before c.1710 had considerable consequences for house-building during most of the 18th C. First, since so many houses were already stone-walled and well-built, the number of new houses which were erected in the second and third quarters of the century was relatively few, many earlier houses being just adapted and enlarged ...secondly, few new houses were introduced during his time.

The area around Hodder Bridge is just to the W of the RCHME’s study area and so that assessment does not fully apply but it partially explains the relatively few number of purely Georgian country houses around Hodder Bridge.

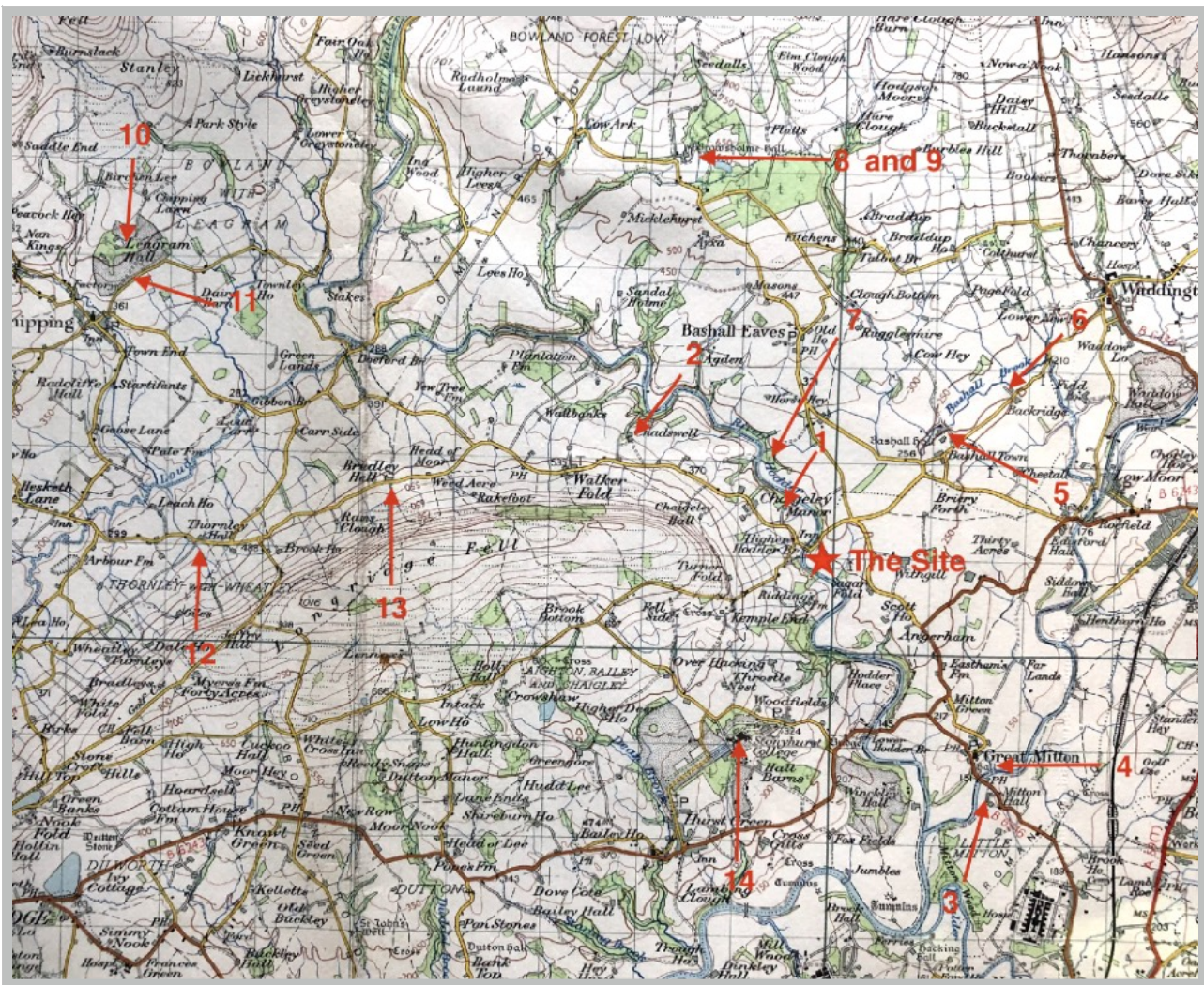
4.5 Country Houses around the site at Hodder Higher Bridge

4.5.1 As with the variety of country houses throughout Lancashire, the architectural style and size and of the country houses around Higher Hodder Bridge and their landscape setting display a wide variation, but they are given some unity by the almost ubiquitous use of local sandstone or Millstone Grit for their principal construction material. Representative samples of these country houses “of the local area” are described briefly below and their locations are identified on Plan 2.

4.5.2 One of the nearest to the site is Chaigley Manor (Plate 21) to the NW of the site on Bailey Bank. It dates back to 1248 but was rebuilt in 1857 in stone, with its current crenelated parapet wall, drip moulds and low slate-covered hipped roof.

4.5.3 Chadswell is another, more recent, large country house built in stone, which stands in extensive grounds further W along Bailey Bank on its N side. The entrance at the road is grandly marked by substantial formal quadrant stone walls and piers (Plate 22) but only glimpses of the house can be seen in the distance from the public road.

¹⁴Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) *Rural Houses of the Lancashire Pennines 1560-1760*



Plan 2. Location Plan of country houses around the site: 1. Chaigley Manor, 2. Chadswell, 3. Little Mitton Hall, 4. Great Mitton Hall, 5. Bashall Hall, 6. Blackridge House, 7.(Former) Bashall Lodge, 8. Browsholme Hall, 9. Browsholme Farmhouse, 10. Leagram Hall, 11. Lodge at Leagram Hall, 12. Thornley Hall, 13. Bradley Hall and 14. Stonyhurst.

4.5.4 Another nearby hall, to the SE of the site is the vernacular Little Mitton Hall (Plates 23 and 24), with its long frontage of gables, some of medieval origins. Again, the hall was much-rebuilt, around 1840, and it is now a restaurant with rooms and its forecourt is now dominated by its car park.

4.5.5 Great Mitton Hall (Plate 25), adjacent to All Hallows Church in Great Mitton, is another strongly vernacular stone-built building of the early 17th C. It was built on high ground on the road frontage and backing on to the churchyard.

4.5.6 The aforementioned Bashall Hall (Plates 26 and 27) (c.1600 with early 18th C alterations) lies in the valley bottom of the Bashall Brook to the NE of Hodder Bridge. It is part of an ensemble, together with period agricultural buildings and enclosing stone walls, mostly sited in front of the principal elevation and obscuring it from close-range view. The hall is a curious mix of: vernacular details, notably the transomed and mullioned windows in the two end bays and; classical details, notably its small-paned sliding sash windows in ashlar surrounds, string courses and bracketed doorway with a broken curved pediment. There was formerly a “Bashall Lodge”, some distance away to the W, much closer to a bend in the River Hodder but, although the lodge has been demolished, Bashall Lodge Plantation survives and the outline of the plot remains legible (Plates 28 and 29).

4.5.7 On the higher ground to the S of Bashall Hall, just set back from the road is Backridge House (Plate 31), another older house in local stone which has some sophisticated classical

details in the elegant ashlar door surround, regular tall window openings with ashlar surrounds and an ashlar string course but it is asymmetrical and is constructed of coarser blocks and has cruder quoins and a roof of stone flags with over-hanging eaves.

4.5.8 Approximately 3 miles to the N of the site is Browsholme Hall (Plates 32 and 33), another ancient building which displays a hybrid of architectural styles: part vernacular and part classical. It has a forward-facing gable from different periods at each end of the frontage but they are far from identical. In the centre of its frontage are three tiers of classical columns, introduced in 1604 which John Champness describes as being designed “with less understanding” (than at Stonyhurst) and it employs comprehensive use of drip-moulds. It has a large garden and is approached via a shared private road and despite its size is discreet within the wider landscape, set on sloping ground and amongst trees but at the immediate approach it has a formal entrance of stone gate piers, topped by ball-finials.

4.5.9 Browsholme Farmhouse (Plate 31), which lies just outside the formal grounds of the hall, is a smaller later and far more purist classical house with: a fully symmetrical articulation; a central pilastered doorway with a moulded lintel; small-paned hierarchical windows within ashlar surrounds and ; rusticated quoins. However, it curiously has gabled ends with kneelers which are not truly representative of the period.

4.5.10 Approximately five miles NW of the site, immediately N of Chipping, is the large Leagram Park (Plate 36) which was originally a deer park granted to Robert de Lacy around 1102. The park is now mostly grazed with the occasional specimen tree and has a central woodland which substantially screens the existing Leagram Hall (Plate 34) from public view, apart from a few glimpses from the public bridleway. Leagram Hall has had many incarnations, including substantial rebuilding in 1787 and 1881 and it has been much altered and rebuilt since then but still has a simplified Georgian appearance. Although the existing hall is recessive in its visual contribution to the wider landscape and the existing entrance to the park is very lightly announced by two curves of estate railings and a cattle grid, an earlier and grander entrance is marked further S by a former stone lodge and a set of panelled stone piers (Plate 37).

4.5.11 Approximately 3 miles W of the site is Thornley Hall (Plate 38), a far more modest country house, first built in rubble stone (now rendered) in the 17th C but re-ordered in the early 18th C with: quoins with channeled rustication; continuous drip courses over ground and 1st floor windows; a cyma moulded cornice gutter and a gabled porch with a coping and 2 balls which are replicated on the later stone piers which terminate the quadrant stone walls fronting onto the road.

4.5.12 Approximately a mile further E, nearer to the site, is Bradley Hall (Plate 39), which is of a similar scale and similarly set back from the road, but in this case it is behind more modest stone piers and cast iron railings. It appears to date from the late 18th/early 19th C and is similarly constructed of rubble stone but is elevated (stylistically) by: a symmetrical arrangement of windows around the central doorway with a corniced hood; a low hipped slate roof and; the use of ashlar for a plinth, window and door surrounds, quoins and cornice and parapet wall.

4.5.13 Only approximately a mile away from the site to the SW, but topographically separated from it by Longridge Fell, is the imposing Stonyhurst College which makes a dramatic statement in the landscape due to: its huge size; its soaring towers; the long straight approach road with pair of flanking orthogonal lakes and; the huge white religious statue on top of a tall tapered stone pedestal and a mound which terminates the vista of the road. The hall itself dates back to the late 14th but has been added to incrementally many times since and is thus a palimpsest of styles and materials, although the use of stone predominates. The fragmented frontage has a frontispiece of four orders of paired columns which Pevsner describes as “one of the proudest in England. The orders are correctly arranged - Roman Doric, Ionic, and two Corinthian.”. Its historic parkland extends around all sides, except to the SW, but have been converted to sports pitches alongside the approach drive.

Country House Report: Hodder Grange



Plate 21. Chaigley Manor 1857



Plate 22. Grand entrance to Chadswell, W of Chaigley



Plate 23. Little Mitton Hall



Plate 24. Little Mitton Hall



Plate 25. Mitton Hall



Plate 26. Bashall Hall with ensemble of farm buildings in front



Plate 27. Bashall Hall with its walls

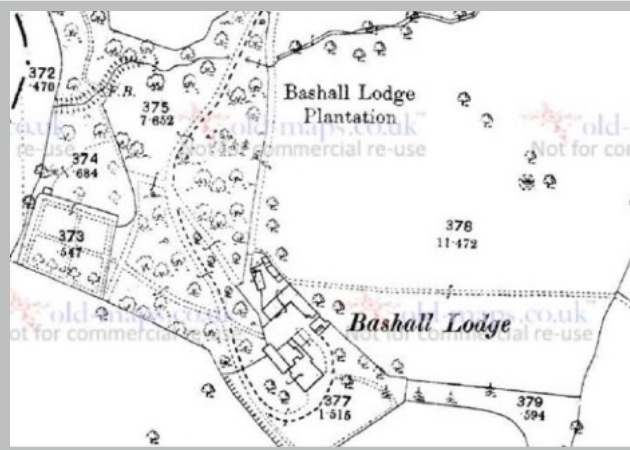


Plate 28. Historic map of Bashall Lodge



Plate 29. Bashall Plantation and outline of plot



Plate 30. Backridge House



Plate 31. Browsholme Farmhouse

Country House Report: Hodder Grange



Plate 32. Browsholme Hall, seen through its ball-topped gated piers



Plate 33. Browsholme Hall



Plate 34. Leagram Hall



Plate 35. Lodge to Leagram Hall



Plate 36. Current entrance and parkland at Leagram Hall



Plate 37. Four tiers of pilasters on frontage of Stonyhurst



Plate 38. Pair of lakes in front of Stonyhurst



Plate 39. Religious statue on pedestal and mound at Stonyhurst



Plate 40. Thornely Hall



Plate 41. Bradley Hall

4.6 The Influence of George Webster

George Webster (1797 – 1864) was an English architect who practised in Kendal, approx 35 miles NW of Hodder Bridge. All of his works were executed near his practice in Cumbria, Lancashire, and Yorkshire. Most of his work was carried out on domestic buildings, but he also designed churches, and public and commercial buildings. In particular, he made an impact on local architectural fashion, by designing and constructing several country houses with a strong classical influence. He came from a family of master designers and craftsmen, known as ‘The Websters of Kendal’.

The Webster’s were historically master masons providing and supervising work to the design of others and George initially took the same position but soon started to design his own buildings and became a leading regional architect, responsible for many of the finest buildings of the area.

George was responsible for the design of Downham Hall, Read Hall and the re-modelling of the front of ‘Broughton’ Hall’, all of which are near to the application site. These fine examples show a particular style reflective of the area and can be clearly understood as a distinct regional variation of Georgian Architecture. This is evident in the following ways:

- The simplicity of the composition combined with a more squat form
- A restrained style where a ‘less is more’ attitude is employed. See the simplicity of the portico and pediment at Downham Hall.
- Window details have vernacular influences with simple heads, jambs and cills and rarely employ more complex classical detailing
- Pediments are simple with little or no decoration. The pediment at Downham Hall has Roman classical proportions whereas the 4 columns below are of Greek design thus demonstrating a ‘play’ with various styles to achieve the simple, rural appearance desired.
- Similarly, the entablature and parapet/balustrade are simple, unadorned elements sometimes with a plain solid parapet wall and occasionally castellated as in Downham.
- Bowed porticos are a particular feature of Georgian architecture in this area- as seen in Read Hall, Whins House and Casterton Hall. These are arguably the most elaborate forms within the composition of these buildings, creating a classical focal point in the elevation.

4.7 Summary of Tradition of Country Houses

1. There is a strong national, regional and local tradition of building country houses.
2. The Forest of Bowland is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but it is actually a cultural landscape.
3. The Countryside Commission and Natural England both recognise that isolated country houses and farms are fundamental to the character of the Forest of Bowland.
4. The size, materials and architectural style of country houses varies considerably throughout the country and the County.
5. The finest examples generally embody a consistent high quality of detail throughout, from: the inter-face with the public highway with ornamental gate piers and railings; the outer informal landscaping; the route along the driveway into the forecourt and; in the formal gardens around the house, as well as throughout the interior and exterior of the buildings.
6. The size and architectural style of country houses in NE Lancashire and the area around Hodder Bridge also varies considerably but they have a general unity of being constructed of local sandstone/Millstone Grit, sometimes with random rubble coursing, sometimes with regular coursing and sometimes with ashlar for the principle facing material and sometimes only for architectural features.
7. The majority of the country houses around Hodder Bridge are vernacular houses of the 17th C or earlier but many of them incorporate classical motifs and details such as columns and pilasters.
8. A substantial number of country houses in the wider Forest of Bowland exhibit a pure classical Georgian style, and embody the principles of Palladian design: symmetry, order and balance.
9. Many country houses within the Forest of Bowland stand within their own extensive parkland estates and vary in the extent to which they can be appreciated from publicly accessible viewpoints but almost all announce their presence at the interface with public routes through refined architectural gateways which provide a foretaste of the architectural expression of the house beyond.

6. Description of the Site and Hodder Higher Bridge

6.1 The Application Site

6.1.1 The application site is an isolated “greenfield site” in the open countryside approx 4 km W of the historic market town of Clitheroe. It lies in the valley bottom and on the S bank of the River Hodder, with a narrow frontage on to Chipping Road, immediately on the S side of Higher Hodder bridge.

6.1.2 The site is approx hectares and approx “L” shapes with its long NW-SE axis along the river bank and its shorter SW-NE axis extending uphill behind a gentle promontory towards a plateau beyond.

6.1.3 The majority of the site is open grassland, although there are mature hedges and extensive bands of mostly deciduous trees around all boundaries, especially along the river bank and at the SE and NW ends.

6.1.4 The principal vehicular access to the site is in the NW corner at a bend in Chipping Road and at the bottom of the hill. The boundary on to the road is set back a few metres from the road and is a modern wall approx 1.3 m high with a crenellated coping, constructed of coursed stone on the road side but having concrete blocks on the field side. The wall abuts the SE pier of Hodder Higher Bridge but was built and is owned by Lancashire County Council. It is therefore outside the control of the applicant. The existing gate is a modern metal security gate, although there was previously a timber 5-bar gate.

6.1.5 The access track through the gate has a hard surface of compacted gravel for a few metres which slopes down into the site. To the SW of the access is a small timber shed at a lower level, used by anglers.

6.1.6 The River Hodder and its river banks at this point are renowned for their scenic beauty. A public footpath runs along the opposite side of the river from the application site, through the woods. An historic pier (presumably from an earlier bridge) is shown on maps in the river W of the existing bridge, albeit it is outside the application site.

6.2 Hodder Higher Bridge

6.2.1 Hodder Higher Bridge is a road bridge over the River Hodder, which is very similar, although not identical, to Hodder Lower Bridge, approx 2km further S downstream. It was probably built in the late 18th C to replace an earlier bridge and was probably designed by Bernard Hartley (father of Jesse Hartley, the great dock builder who created the Albert Dock, Stanley Dock etc in Liverpool), who was the Bridge Surveyor for the West Riding County Council at that time.

6.2.2 It is constructed of coursed sandstone ashlar with some rebuilding of the upper courses in rock-faced sandstone. It has two elliptical arches spanning the river with a central cutwater of triangular section, although a further partial arch runs into the rising ground at the SE end. It has a solid parapet with bevelled coping and a string course. In the centre of the S parapet wall, on the former county boundary is a raised pyramidal coping panel with two incised pointing fingers and the inscription “Mitton Yorkshire: Chaigley Lancashire”. It has some masons' marks visible on ashlar blocks. At the termination of each parapet wall is a rounded pier with a spherical cap and an iron ring.

Country House Report: Hodder Grange



Plate 42. Access to site from Chipping Road



Plate 43. Access and inside face of wall at entrance to site



Plate 43a Hodder Higher Bridge and wall (owned by LCC) and as previously ivy-covered



Plate 44. Timber shed below access



Plate 45. View SE into site

Country House Report: Hodder Grange



Plate 46. View NW towards the bridge from approx middle of site



Plate 47. View NW towards the bridge from further SE



Plate 48. View SE from within site



Plate 49. View W towards tree-lined river bank and ridge of higher ground



Plate 50. View into site from bridge in December



Plate 51. Inscription on bridge



Plate 52. Arches of bridge



Plate 53. Pier at termination of S parapet and view into site in December

7. Heritage Designations

7.1 Listed Buildings

7.1.1 The only listed building within 400 metres of the application site is Hodder Higher Bridge, which is approx 10m from the access into the site from Chipping Road. A stone wall adjacent to the existing access abuts the E end of the S parapet wall of the bridge.

7.1.2 The listing description (for identification only) is:

Higher Hodder Bridge 13.2.67

II

Bridge over the River Hodder, probably late C18th. Sandstone ashlar with some rebuilding of the upper courses in rock-faced sandstone. 2 elliptical arches, with cutwaters of triangular section and solid parapet with coping and string. Some masons' marks visible on ashlar blocks.

7.1.2 S16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 states:

*In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have **special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting** or of any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.*

7.1.3 The NPPF (2021) states:

*206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. **Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset** (or which better reveal its significance) **should be treated favourably.***

7.2 Other Heritage Designations

There are no other heritage designations at or around the application site, although it is within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where the land protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) with the aim of conserving and enhancing its natural beauty.

The 'natural beauty criterion' could be a combination of factors, such as:

- landscape quality, where natural or man-made landscape is good quality
- scenic quality
- relative wildness, such as distance from housing or having few roads
- relative tranquillity, where natural sounds, such as streams or birdsong are predominant
- natural heritage features, such as distinctive geology or species and habitat
- cultural heritage, which can include the built environment that makes the area unique, such as archaeological remains or historic parkland

8. The Current Proposal

8.1 The current proposal is for: the construction of a new country house with ancillary buildings, in the form of a “stable courtyard” and; a comprehensive landscape plan, including structural planting, a new access drive and new gates and gate piers, set back from Chipping Road.

8.2 The current proposal is fully explained and presented in a range of supporting documentation, including a Design and Access Statement and scale drawings. Some of the drawings are reproduced below (not to scale) for reference.

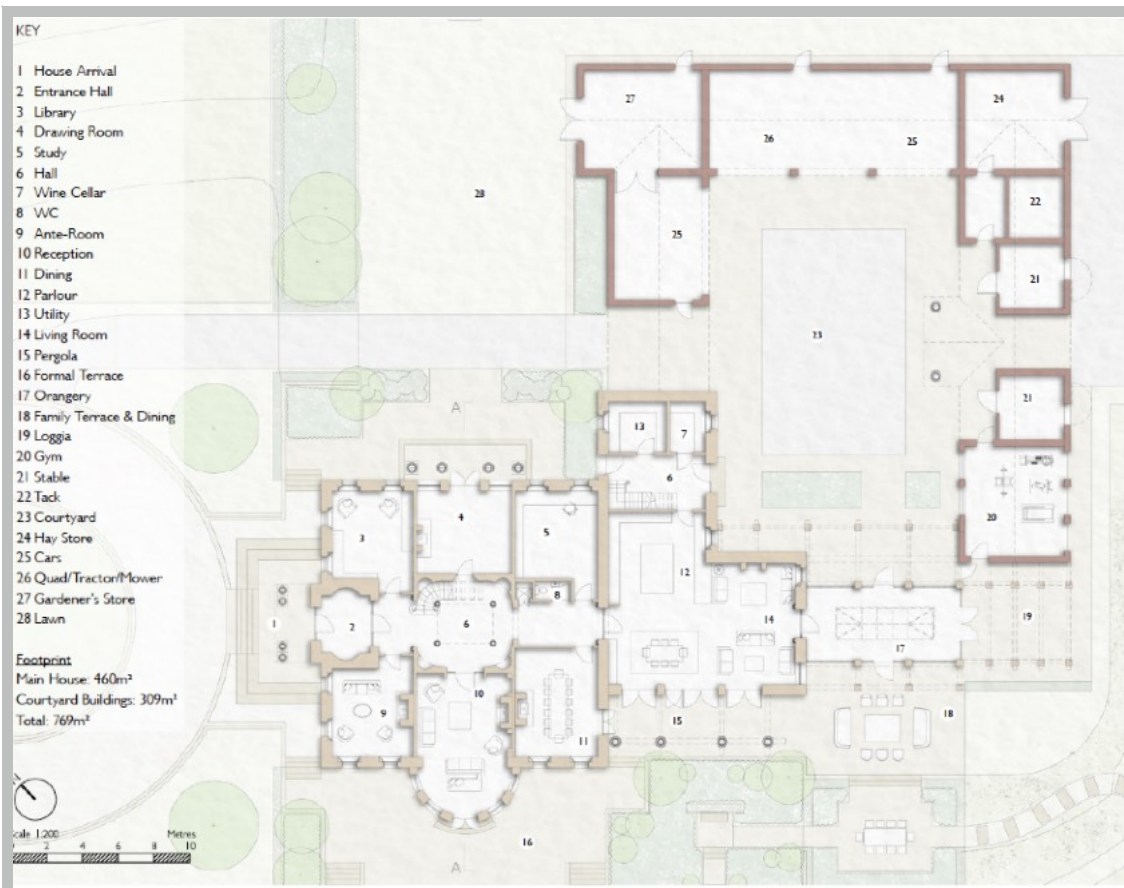


Plan 4. Proposed site plan for new house of outstanding architectural quality at Higher Hodder Bridge



Plan 5. Proposed house and landscape proposals around it

Country House Report: Hodder Grange



Plan 6 Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Plan 7. Proposed NW elevation

Country House Report: Hodder Grange



Plan 8. Proposed SW elevation

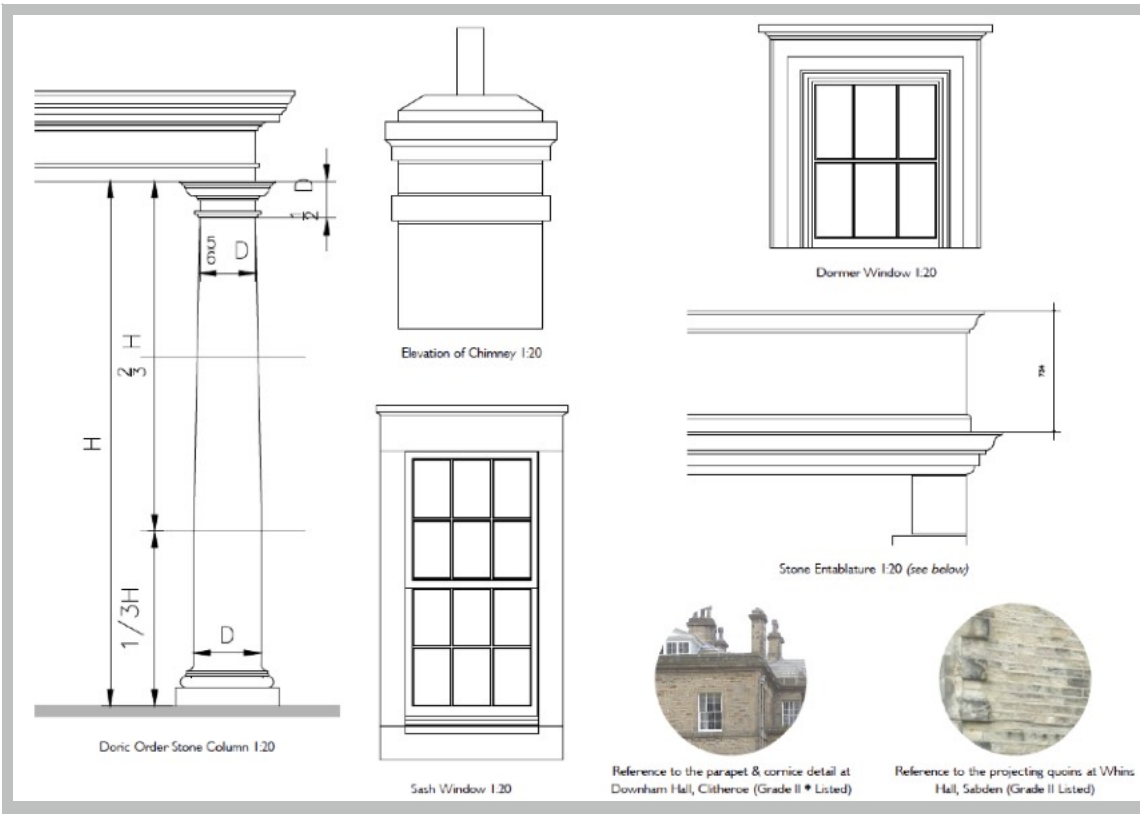


Plan 9. Proposed NE elevation

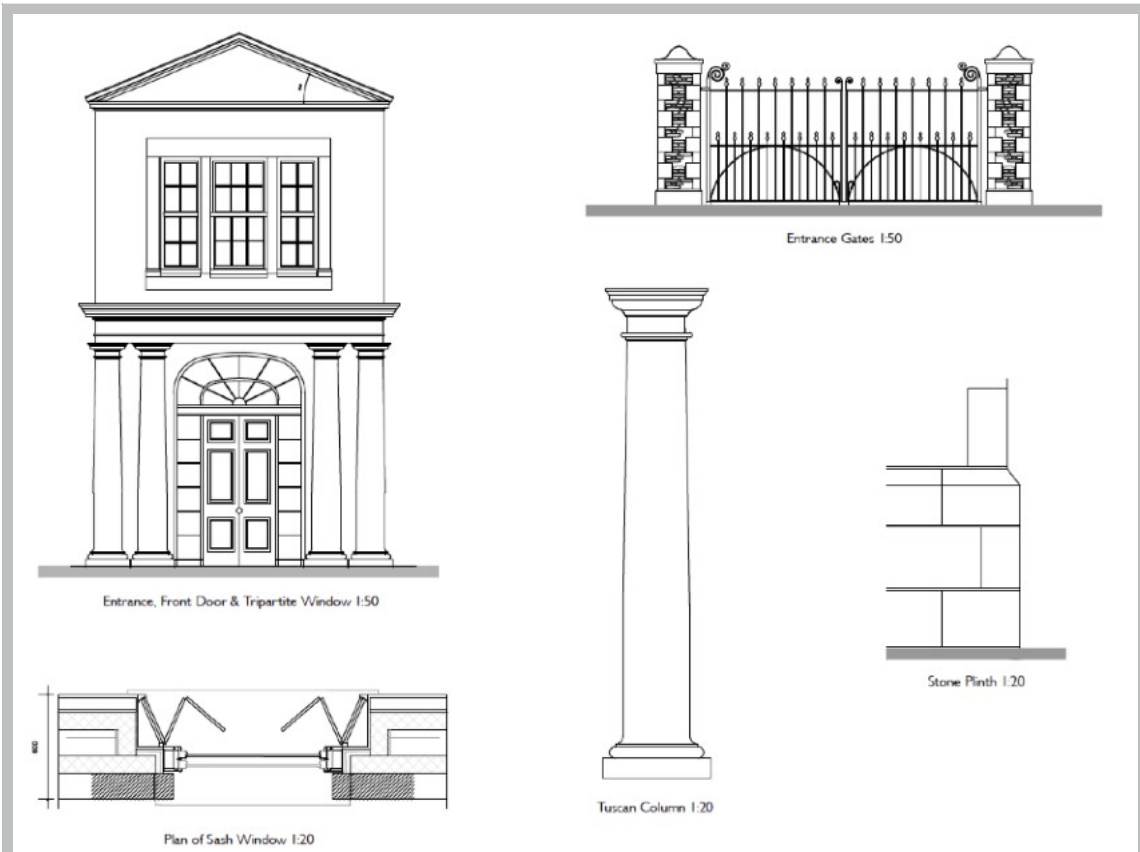


Plan 10. Proposed SE elevation

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Plan 11. Architectural details



Plan 12. Architectural details

9. Assessment of the Design for the Proposed House and Landscape Proposals and their Impact

9.1 The Design Concept of the Proposed House

8.1.1 The design concept for the proposed new house is driven by the clients desire to create a home of the highest standards, in which they can enjoy the country pursuits of riding and landscape management. Their vision is for the new house to be: strongly-rooted in Georgian design principles, with some contemporary elements which will be harmoniously integrated with that the over-riding Georgian aesthetic; to set new standards of energy efficiency in such a Georgian-style house and; for the house and its associated landscape to integrate harmoniously into its landscape context.

9.1.2 The design concept is based on the principle that classical architecture has an international and timeless quality: first introduced in ancient Greece and Rome; revived in the Renaissance, notably by Andrea Palladio with his villas etc in Vicenza and elsewhere; introduced into Britain by Inigo Jones; celebrated and used more widely in the “Georgian” era; interpreted more loosely in the “Beaux Arts” buildings of the late 19th and early 20th Cs and; still relevant today.

9.1.3 The study of country houses in this Country House Report has found examples within the locality which embody a range of classical detailing in various ways, often integrated with some vernacular and/or quirky detailing and these establish a local tradition which the design concept seeks to follow.

9.1.4 Paragraph 80e. of the NPPF establishes a criterion that, a new house in the countryside may be acceptable if:

- ...the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:***
- is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and***
- would significantly enhance its immediate setting,.***

The close working relationship between the client, the architect, the landscape architect, the passivhaus consultant and the heritage professional has ensured that the design of the proposed house and its setting are of exceptional quality and are sensitive to the “defining characteristics” of the local area and set ground-breaking standards for classically-designed sustainable houses.

9.1.5 On the generic issue of new work in historic areas, Historic England advises in its *Conservation Principles*:

- 138. New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if:*
 - a. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place;*
 - b. the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;*
 - c. the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;*
 - d. the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future.*

The study of country houses in this Country House Report provides sufficient information to understand the prevailing tradition of country houses and aid understanding of the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place.

The study of country houses in this Country House Report has identified that there is a tradition of country houses in the AONB and makes the case that the principle of a well-designed new country

house will: not materially harm the values of the Forest of Bowland and; indeed that the current proposal is a positive continuation of this tradition.

It is clear that the proposal aims to be respectful of its landscape setting and to aspire to a quality of design and execution which will be valued now and in the future.

The proposal will change the current character of the land from over-grazed agricultural land into more cultured, domestic land through substantial planting with native species and positive landscape and ecological enhancements that have been designed with close regard to the character of the area and its country house tradition. The objective is that the long-term consequences of these changes will be beneficial.

9.1.6 *Conservation Principles* goes on to advise:

143. There are no simple rules for achieving quality of design in new work, although a clear and coherent relationship of all the parts to the whole, as well as to the setting into which the new work is introduced, is essential. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but will normally involve respecting the values established through an assessment of the significance of the place.

Throughout the design process for the proposed house and landscape proposal at Hodder Higher Bridge, great care has been taken with its design to work in “a traditional way”, following an assessment of the significance of the place, to ensure a clear and coherent relationship between the house, its grounds and the surrounding landscape and to complement the character and appearance of the site. The aim is for the proposed house to be seen as an impressive and fundamentally “traditional” ensemble, with some elements delivered in a “new way”.

9.1.7 The importance of the inter-relationship between buildings and their landscape setting is undeniable. The combination of individual buildings and their immediate landscape setting can contribute positively to the picturesque beauty of the wider cultural landscape and its appreciation. This has been demonstrated historically in the Forest of Bowland by the paintings of JMW Turner and the poems of GM Hopkins. It is also demonstrated by the recent inscription of the Lake District on to UNESCO’s World Heritage list, partly on the basis that this inter-relationship between country houses and the rural landscape contributes to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Lake District. Indeed, the Lake District World Heritage Site’s *Statement of Outstanding Universal*, which has been agreed by UNESCO, states:

*...In the 18th century the quality of the landscape was recognised and celebrated by the Picturesque Movement, based on ideas related to both Italian and Northern European styles of landscape painting. These ideas were applied to the English Lake District **in the form of villas and designed features intended further to augment its beauty.** The Picturesque values of landscape appreciation were subsequently transformed by Romantic engagement with the English Lake District into **a deeper and more balanced appreciation of the significance of landscape, local society and place.** This in turn inspired the development of a number of powerful ideas and values including **a new relationship between humans and landscape** based on emotional engagement, and the universal value of scenic and cultural landscape which transcends traditional property rights.*

and

*A number of ideas of universal significance are directly and tangibly associated with the English Lake District. **These are the recognition of harmonious landscape beauty through the Picturesque Movement; a new relationship between people and landscape built around an emotional response to it,** derived initially from Romantic engagement; the idea that landscape has a value and that everyone has a right to appreciate and enjoy it; and the need to protect and manage landscape.*

Although the Forest of Bowland is outside the Lake District WHS, the same principles apply: its landscape is a cultural landscape; well-designed houses are part of that landscape and; the harmonious combination of houses and their immediate setting can contribute to the appreciation of the wider landscape.

9.1.9 Importantly the design of the house and the landscape treatment has been through a rigorous assessment by the Traditional Architecture Group Peer Review Panel (WWW.TRADITIONALARCHITECTUREGROUP.ORG), which visited the site on 21st June 2021, engaged in a discussion and issued a supportive report on 29th June 2021. The report included some constructive comments and concluded:

The Panel thought that the project has the potential to achieve an exceptional design. The building process that would be part of this project in itself would be a significant exceptional and innovative departure from the norm.

Subject to the production of more detailed information and further evidence to support the ability of the design to achieve the Passivehaus standards (which formed an integral and highly important aspect of the proposal) in association with further development of the design with regard to the impact in the setting this has the potential to be truly outstanding.

The consultation process with the TAG has continued and further work has been undertaken on the details of the design to respond positively to the constructive comments of the panel. The architect responded to further suggestions from the TAG in an email dated 17th November 2021:

Following my recent research into George Webster and the Georgian architecture of the Ribble Valley, I have been developing the design for Hodder Grange, refining the details and inserting them into the drawing package. I could describe the changes in detail but there is a basic principle behind all the changes: simplify the composition and ensure that the details reflect the design. The simplification of the design emphasises the restrained, vernacular feel of the Georgian architecture of the North-West of England where the detailing is particular to this region. George Webster's architecture exemplifies this in 'Read Hall' and 'Downham Hall' both of which show a regional variation of Georgian country house architecture.

It is understood that TAG Review Panel is now supportive of the proposal and considers the 'exceptional quality' test of paragraph 80e is met.

9.1.10 An advanced draft of the designs has also been reviewed by Jeremy Musson, Architectural historian, former Architectural editor of *Country Life*, who commented that:

...I feel it draws on the models of discreet later Georgian villas, by designers such as Repton and Nash... & more locally with Harrison & Webster. This proposal while drawing on clear local & national precedents also will create a new reference point for the evolving Modern Classical style in this context, a chapter which is currently missing in the Ribble Valley architectural story.

9.2 The Current Proposal

9.2.1 The study of country houses in this Country House Report sets out the role of the country house as a defining characteristic of the Forest of Bowland in the wider context of the tradition of country houses. The architect, landscape architect and heritage consultant have worked together on the proposals, in conjunction with the Traditional Architecture Group, based upon the understanding created by the study of country houses. There is therefore some certainty that the proposal will be 'sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area' and its country house tradition.

9.2.2 For example, as part of the initial iterative design process and in response to the emerging design, the Heritage Consultant commented to the architect and landscape architect in an email of 10th January 2020 that:

"I consider that the initial design is well-balanced, elegant and has potential to be redeveloped into a highly-pleasing composition. Orientation through the house flows well through both axis and is well-integrated with the service block at the rear..."

...the ultimate proposal should ideally demonstrate a consistent high quality of detail throughout, from the interface with the public highway, the outer informal landscaping, the route along the driveway into the forecourt and in the formal gardens around the house."

He then provided advice on specific detailing. The design has developed since that time and has generated the subsequent comment that it is:

"... strongly rooted in the classical tradition but with some quirky contemporary elements."

9.2.3 Similarly, the Traditional Architecture Group Design Review Panel commented:

Detailing of columns, cornices, surrounds, quoins and parapets should all follow the general rules of classical detailing.

The detailing of these elements has been further refined following those comments, taking references from: scale drawings in seminal architectural books such as *Houses of the Wren and Early Georgian Periods* by Tunstall Small and Christopher Woodbridge and; details of historic country houses in the locality, notably the work of George Webster at Read Hall, Downham Hall and Broughton Hall.

9.2.4 The current proposal is for a new two storey country house, with accommodation in the roof space, and an attached service wing, off-set to the rear and with its own dignified entrance through a segmental arch, all set within a landscaped parkland.

The design concept of the building has resulted in a building which will have an over-riding appearance of a traditional and classically designed "Georgian" country house which sits discretely but comfortably within its site and the wider landscape of the Hodder Valley and the Forest of Bowland. The principal (NW) elevation, in particular, embodies the fundamental classical attributes of symmetry, order, balance and vertical hierarchy, especially with its diminishing window heights, plinth, main plane and cornice, below a solid parapet. It has a Tuscan porch as its focal point, reminiscent of the strong local tradition, informed by similar (but not identical) features at several local country houses such as Browsholme Hall. The influence of George Webster, a renowned local architect of the early 19th C, is especially expressed in this principal elevation.

All elevations are well-articulated with traditional windows, doors, other architectural details, projecting planes and recessed planes, as they continue the traditional feel right around the building. They create a building which has a conventional hierarchy between components and visual interest in the round - in kinetic views from all angles.

The architectural details have been academically informed by a study of authoritative pattern books and by their interpretation at a local level, creating a building which bears scrutiny at the macro and the micro level and which maintains its homage to the local tradition. Importantly the proposal is for the use of traditional painted timber vertically sliding sash windows with true glazing bars but with high levels of thermal efficiency delivered through slim-line double glazing and traditional internal timber shutters.

Internally, the building maintains its adherence to classical proportions of rooms, with special emphasis on creating a grand main hallway and strong axes through the building to connect the building into the landscape.

The proposed “stable block” is also based on an understanding of local precedents, recognising that all country houses needed ancillary buildings to support the activities of the main house. Accordingly, the proposal at Hodder Grange is for an attached range of smaller and more modest buildings around a formal courtyard but still with their own strong character within the established hierarchy and local practice.

The proposed materials for the house of local Millstone grit, with ashlar dressings for the plinth, windows surrounds etc will also tie the building to its locality, as though it “rose up from the ground”. Although vernacular houses of the locality often had stone slate roofs and the very grandest houses used Cumberland green slates, the vast majority of local country houses have roofs of natural blue Welsh slate, as proposed at Hodder Grange, again to replicate the long-established practice within the area.

The proposed size of the building, with a total footprint of 769m sq, is comparable to that of the nearby Chaigley Manor (674m sq) and within the parameters of the slightly further afield Bashall Hall (595m sq) and Browsholme Hall (1,138m sq).

Hodder Grange has been designed to be: the first classically-designed Passivhaus Plus property in the world; the first Passivhaus Plus New Build property in the NW, and; a ‘True’ Zero Energy / Zero Carbon House. It will employ petrochemical-free building fabric and concrete-free foundations, setting a new low carbon standard for the rural built environment. And yet these remarkable energy-efficient exemplars have not diluted the time-honoured classical character of the building. The combination of maximum energy efficiency and traditional design in the current proposal actually demonstrates: how traditional architecture can respond to the challenges of climate change and the need to build sustainably and; sets a standard for others to follow.

The proposed landscape plan has equally been informed by a detailed study of the site and the landscape characteristics of the area. This has ensured that the proposed building sits comfortably into the topography - discretely from almost all public vantage points but impressively-revealed in private views. It is based on a Landscape Masterplan which includes: the creation of an appropriately formal forecourt and gardens immediately around the house which merge seamlessly into the more naturalistic wider grounds and setting and; impressive two way views between the house and its landscape setting.

The landscape master plan is also based on a scholarly study of the site’s past and it involves: positive landscape enhancements to re-create naturalistic woodlands, corridors and hedgerows of indigenous species and to re-establish natural habitats.

A formal gated entrance of traditionally designed piers and gates, with architectural hedges on each side, will be positioned S of the Hodder Higher Bridge to appropriately and modestly mark the entrance to the parkland. The new estate entrance will be located beyond the Anglers Association club hut and parking to avoid conflict with that existing use. The gate and piers will provide the foreground to a rural yet quality arrival-experience before a small tunnel of woodland and then a more open-parkland of more dispersed specimen trees, as commonly found in country estates. The proposed driveway follows the contours and winds around through the wide parkland to provide glimpses of the principal elevation and then turn gently to approach it dramatically in a direct approach and thereby enhance the arrival journey with kinetically changing vistas.

In summary, this Country House Report finds that the scholarly design of the proposed Hodder Grange will create an exceptionally fine country house and estate, which is heavily influenced by the local classical Georgian tradition. Importantly, it finds that the design is of exceptional quality, in that it is truly outstanding and reflects the highest standards in architecture, which will: help to raise standards of design in the Forest of Bowland; significantly enhance the site and its immediate setting and; be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

This Country House Report also finds that the proposed Hodder Grange is truly innovative, in combining exemplary and unparalleled energy efficiency in a classically-designed house.

Accordingly, this Country House Report makes the case that the proposed Hodder Grange is exceptional in that it fully meets the criteria for a new house as set out in Para 80e of the NPPF (2021).

9.3 Assessment of Impact of the proposal on Hodder Higher Bridge

9.3.1 Hodder Higher Bridge is a Grade II Listed Building.

8.3.2 Direct Impact

The proposal does not include any interventions in Hodder Higher Bridge. Hodder Higher Bridge and the adjacent wall between the bridge and the entrance to the site from Chipping Road are owned by Lancashire County Council and so are not within the control of the applicant.

The proposal involves no works to the bridge or the wall, other than the removal of the existing modern security gate. The proposal will therefore have **no direct impact** on this Grade II listed building

8.3.2 Impact on Setting of Hodder Higher Bridge

8.3.2.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1900 and the NPPF both establish the importance of the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings.

8.3.2.2 Historic England also stresses the importance of preserving the setting of listed buildings, not least in its *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice Planning Note 3*. (December 2017)

i) This document reinforces the importance of the setting of heritage assets and provides guidance on managing development that may affect the setting of heritage assets. It begins by stressing the importance of setting and its careful management:

The significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence and historic fabric but also from its setting – the surroundings in which it is experienced. The careful management of change within the surroundings of heritage assets therefore makes an important contribution to the quality of the places in which we live.

ii) It defines setting:

...as ‘the surroundings in which [the asset] is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral’.

iii) It sets out key principles for the understanding of setting:

- *Setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced...*
- *The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations...*
- *Setting will, therefore, generally be more extensive than curtilage...*
- *The setting of a heritage asset can enhance its significance whether or not it was designed to do so. The formal parkland around a country house... may...contribute to the significance.*
- *The contribution that setting makes to the significance does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting.*

iv) It provides guidance on assessing proposed and past changes:

11. Protection of the setting of heritage assets need not prevent change; indeed change may be positive, for instance where the setting has been compromised by poor development. Many places are within the setting of a heritage asset and are subject to some degree of change over time. NPPF policies, together with the guidance on their implementation in the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), provide the framework for the consideration of change affecting the setting of undesignated and designated heritage assets as part of the decision-taking process (NPPF, Paragraphs 131-135 and 137).

v) In providing guidance on the management of development affecting the setting of heritage assets, it recommends the following broad 5-stage methodology:

- Step 1: identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;*
- Step 2: assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);*
- Step 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;*
- Step 4: explore ways of maximising enhancement and avoiding or minimising harm;*
- Step 5: make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.*

vi) Importantly, the advice note confirms that:

Additional advice on views is available in “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment”, 3rd edition, published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (in partnership with Historic England).

The LI’s guidelines provides criteria for assessing magnitude of change (Table 1 below) on views and setting caused by development proposals. One scenario which has a Neutral Impact is where “There will be a change to the composition of the view, but the change will be in keeping with the existing elements of the view”.

Category	Criteria
Major adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a dominant or complete change or contrast to the view, resulting from the loss or addition of substantial features in the view and will substantially alter the appreciation of the view.
Moderate adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a clearly noticeable change or contrast to the view, which would have some affect on the composition, resulting from the loss or addition of features in the view and will noticeably alter the appreciation of the view.
Slight adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a perceptible change or contrast to the view, but which would not materially affect the composition or the appreciation of the view.
Negligible adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a barely perceptible change or contrast to the view, which would not affect the composition or the appreciation of the view.
No change	The proposals will cause no change to the view.
Neutral	There will be a change to the composition of the view, but the change will be in keeping with the existing elements of the view.

Table 1. Scale and Criteria for Magnitude of Effect from Landscape Institute guidance

8.3.3 The 5-stage Assessment Methodology

Step 1: identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;

The heritage asset which might be affected is Hodder Higher Bridge - a Grade II listed building.

The general setting of Hodder Higher Bridge is: its location over the picturesque River Hodder; its rural location of open fields and woodland; its siting at the bottom of a bend in Chipping Road; its siting in the undulating topography of the Hodder Valley, with country roads approaching from both directions and the River Hodder itself passing underneath the bridge.

However, the setting also includes some dispersed houses, including: some modest roadside houses; some modern detached houses in mid-sized grounds, especially along Birdy Brow ; some mid-sized historic country houses such as Chaigley Hall and; isolated farmsteads, such as Manor Farm.

Step 2: assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);

The bridge's location over the picturesque River Hodder, together with the surrounding country roads, provides the very justification for the bridge and its location and so contributes very positively to its setting.

The combination of the winding river, the topography, the woodlands and open fields along its banks create a delightful visual setting for the bridge and some enchanting views both from the bridge along the river and over the fields and from the river toward the bridge. They all therefore contribute positively to its setting.

The area around the bridge is essentially rural but the various isolated houses are mostly very much appropriate elements in the rural scene. They generally make a neutral contribution to its setting.

Step 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;

The proposed development does not involve any intervention in the relationship of the bridge with the River Hodder and so will have no impact whatsoever on this most important attribute of its setting.

The application site is within the wider setting of Hodder Higher Bridge but the proposed house itself will be approximately 300m S of the bridge and so cannot have an impact on its immediate setting. More importantly, there is a spur of higher ground between the bridge and the proposed house which will prevent any inter-visibility between the bridge and the house. The contours of the land are shown on the Landscape Masterplan (see Plan 13) and it can be seen that the spur of higher ground intervenes in the straight line between the bridge and the house. Views from the bridge towards the site of the house are provided at Plates 50, 51 and 53. They demonstrate that, even in winter when there are no leaves on the trees, the spur of land obstructs views beyond it. Furthermore, the view towards the site is even more strongly filtered when the existing trees around the bridge are in leaf and it is proposed that there will be substantial additional planting of trees on the land between the bridge and the site. Thus, even though the existing houses do not detract from the setting of the bridge, the proposed house itself will have no impact on the setting of the bridge.

As stated, the Landscape Masterplan includes some changes to the application site, including: the planting of indigenous woodlands, trees and hedges in the existing field SE of the bridge; the change of management of the field from intensive pasture to parkland pasture and meadow; the

formation of a new driveway from the existing access to the house and; the construction of some gate piers and gates a short way along the drive from the access point. The judicious additional planting will actually enhance the setting. A specific area for additional planting will be immediately S of the wall adjacent to the bridge which will help to screen the unsightly concrete blocks which are on the inside face of the wall. The driveway itself will be narrow and sinuous and mostly follow the contours and so will have minimal impact on the landscape.

The gate piers and gates will be visible in a narrow view corridor from the road in the same view as the bridge and will marginally domesticate the scene, but: they have traditional Georgian designs; will be constructed in traditional materials and; traditional gate piers and gates are a common sight at the entrance to houses and farms throughout the area (Plates 19, 20 and 22) and they do not appear in any way incongruous or unsightly.

These minor works will cause a marginal change in the appearance of the land and thus the setting of the S side of the bridge but that part of the field which forms a visual setting for the bridge will remain as fundamentally soft green space with a more sylvan character and will not detract from the positive contribution that this area makes to the setting of the bridge.

The proposal will introduce a further mid-sized house into the tertiary setting of the bridge but, as the existing houses make a neutral contribution to its setting, so the proposed house will have a neutral impact on that extended setting.

Overall, the proposal will slightly enhance the setting of Hodder Higher Bridge.



Plan 13. Extract from Landscape Masterplan

Step 4: explore ways of maximising enhancement and avoiding or minimising harm;

As the proposal will cause no harm to the setting of the bridge, there is no need to explore ways of maximising enhancement and avoiding or minimising harm.

Step 5: make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

It is for Ribble Valley BC to make and document the decision.

9. Conclusion

9.1 This Country House Report has provided a comprehensive study of country houses in the locality of the application site and found that mid-sized country houses are an essential component of the cultural landscape. It has found that they are significant elements of the area's heritage assets and that they still contribute positively to its existing environmental character and its economy.

9.2 The designs of the proposed building and landscape plan for Hodder Grange are scholarly works which are based on a comprehensive understanding of the defining characteristics of the area and have been informed by a constructive dialogue with heritage and design experts, including the Traditional Architecture Group and leaders in the emerging technology of passivehouses.

9.3 The proposals have evolved into a cohesive and sympathetic design which will integrate harmoniously into its landscape setting, due in part to: the holistic design of the house, the service buildings and the landscaped grounds; the scale of the ensemble as a mid-sized country house; the proposed use of local sandstone/Millstone Grit, as the principal building material; the close attention to detail throughout and; the discrete location of the house in the wider landscape, in which its presence will be quietly but assertively announced at the public realm with the proposed complementary gates and gate piers.

9.4 The proposal will: have minimal impact on the setting of Higher Hodder Bridge; cause no harm to its setting in any respect and; will slightly enhance its setting through more appropriate management of the application site and the judicious additional planting of trees, especially adjacent to the bridge.

9.5 This Country House Report finds that the scholarly design of the proposed Hodder Grange will create an exceptionally fine country house and estate, which is heavily influenced by the local classical Georgian tradition. Importantly, it finds that the design is of exceptional quality, in that it is truly outstanding and reflects the highest standards in architecture, which will: help to raise standards of design in the Forest of Bowland; significantly enhance the site and its immediate setting and; be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

9.6 This Country House Report also finds that the proposed Hodder Grange is truly innovative, in combining exemplary and unparalleled energy efficiency in a classically-designed house.

9.7 Hodder Grange will thus be exactly the type of house for which Para 80e. of the NPPF was originally formulated - to enable the tradition of fine country houses in rural areas to continue - in exceptional circumstances. Accordingly, this Country House Report makes the case that the proposed Hodder Grange is exceptional and that it fully meets the criteria for a new house, as set out in Para 80e of the NPPF (2021).

This report was prepared by:

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