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PLANNING STATEMENT & COMBINED GREENBELT ASSESSMENT

Proposed Erection of an Agricultural Equipment and Feed Storage Building with Associated Stables.

Land to the side of 19 Salley Street, Calderbrook, Littleborough.

Applicant: Thomas Rollins Agricultural Contractors
Applicant Address: The Barn, Bents Farm, Littleborough, OL15 8RE
Site Address: Land to the side of 19 Salley Street, Calderbrook, Littleborough
Proposal: Erection of an Agricultural Equipment and Feed Storage Building with Associated Stables

1. Introduction

This Planning and Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of Thomas Rollins Agricultural Contractors, the applicant for of the proposed application site. The statement has been prepared in support of a proposal for the '*Agricultural Equipment and Feed Storage Building with Associated Stables.*'

This Planning Statement supports a full planning application for the erection of a 15m × 15m agricultural equipment and feed storage building incorporating stables for horses on land to the side of 19 Salley Street, Calderbrook, Littleborough.

The purpose of the proposal is to provide a secure, weather-resistant facility for the storage of agricultural machinery, feed, bedding and fencing materials, together with high-quality stabling to support the established agricultural and equestrian activities carried out by Thomas Rollins Agricultural Contractors.

The site lies within the Green Belt as defined on the Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) Proposals Map. The design, scale and siting have been carefully considered to preserve the openness and character of the Green Belt in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 149 and 150 and Rochdale Core Strategy Policy G4.

During pre-application consultation with Rochdale Borough Council regarding a different proposal for the site, the Council Planning Officer considered the application property to be located close to 9-19 Salley Street and nearby Ventilation Chimney/Shafts associated with Summit Tunnel both of which were considered to be 'non-designated heritage assets'. As a result, the applicant has researched the historical development of the locality and these assets before submitting the detailed plans which form part of this planning application. The information gathered as part of this review has provided an understanding of the significance of these heritage assets which has allowed the applicant to confirm that the scheme does not harm the significance of either asset.

The pre-application consultation with the Council did not identify any listed buildings or conservation areas which were sufficiently close to the application site to require assessment as part of a heritage assessment.

The purpose of this Planning and Heritage Statement is to provide information to help Rochdale Council to make an appropriate judgement and decision with regard to this application. This Statement should be read in conjunction with the plans and other technical reports which together comprise the planning application.

The Planning and Heritage Statement has been prepared following a visual and photographic survey of the application site and surrounding area, in addition to an analysis and assessment of available historic cartographic sources. The planning history of the site has also been reviewed on Rochdale Council's online database although this review did not identify any previous applications for the site which might affect the assessment of this application. In order to provide a clear understanding of the planning and heritage considerations associated with the proposal this statement includes:

- A description of the application property and a description of the surrounding area.
- A description of the proposed development.
- A review of relevant national and local planning and heritage policy of relevance to the proposed development.
- An appraisal of the proposed development in relation to planning policy guidance and setting out the material considerations against which a planning application should be determined.
- A heritage appraisal which considers the potential impact of the proposal on the settings of nearby non-designated heritage assets; and
- A conclusion.

2. Site Context and Existing Use

The application site extends to approximately 0.124 ha and adjoins existing equestrian and agricultural buildings. It forms part of a small rural cluster off Salley Street, bounded by established hedgerows and stone walls, with access taken from the existing track serving the adjacent buildings.

The land has been in continuous use for grazing, equestrian turnout, and agricultural storage for at least 15 to 20 years. Aerial imagery from Google Earth (2005 onwards) confirms its established character.

Four small timber buildings currently occupy the site, used for housing chickens, storage of feed and tools, and shelter for animals. These structures are now aged and in poor condition, providing inadequate security, welfare, and operational efficiency.

The Proposed Application Site

The proposed application site is in Rochdale MBC and lies just to the north of Calderbrook. To the south of Calderbrook is the town of Littleborough. In 2001, Littleborough and its associated suburbs of Calderbrook, Shore and Smithy Bridge had a population of 13,807. Littleborough occupies the upper Roch Valley below the foothills of the South Pennines and lies approximately 4.5 miles northeast of Rochdale Town Centre. Littleborough lies 12.6 miles north-northeast of Manchester. Milnrow and the M62 motorway are to the south. To the east are the rural uplands of Blackstone Edge which is largely undeveloped.

The application site is located just to the north of Calderbrook. It lies on the northwest of Salley Street and comprises an area of land upon which a series of timber sheds which have a domestic appearance have been constructed. Further smaller timber structures are present which may have been used for the keeping of Chickens and minor storage of an agricultural nature. At the time of our site visit, the site was overgrown, and the sheds appeared in initial stages of dilapidation.

The site is 0.12 hectares in size and aside from the three timber buildings does not contain any permanent masonry buildings. The southern boundary of the site is formed by Salley Street, a tarmacked road, which runs southwest to northeast. The northern boundary of the site is formed by 'Higher Calderbrook Road' which runs southwest to northeast and adjoining the application site is a public footpath as opposed to a 'road.' The eastern boundary of the site is formed by land and buildings associated with Dean Hurst Farm which straddles Salley Street. Adjacent to the western boundary of the application site is land which appears to be associated with the side/rear of 19 Salley Street.

The topography of the site slopes from the public footpath ('Higher Calderbrook Road') at the northwest of the site downwards to the southeast – where the site meets Salley Street. Also running from the northwest to southeast is a gully. Whilst not an active stream bed, the vegetation present suggest this part of the site is poorly drained. Whilst Salley Street is adjacent to the lowest part of the site, the highway occupies an elevated position allowing extensive views down the valley and over Summit in the direction of Higher Chelburn Reservoir and Blackstone Edge beyond. A short row of trees lies in the verge of the highway which separates the application site and Salley Street.

With regard to the site's boundaries, these are:

- at the northern boundary, a timber post and wire mesh fence beyond which are the remains of a low drystone wall.
- at the western boundary, a short section of timber post and rail fence close to Salley Street and beyond a longer section of drystone wall backed by a timber post and rail fence.
- at the southern boundary with Salley Street, a low drystone wall with a post and wire mesh fence adjoining the northern side of the wall; and
- at the eastern boundary with the farm, a timber post and wire mesh fence.



Figure 1: The application site looking south towards Salley Street, with The northern boundary in foreground.



Figure 2: View looking north towards the application site with the farm. beyond.



Figure 3: View looking towards the western boundary of the application site looking towards land at the rear of 19 Salley Street.

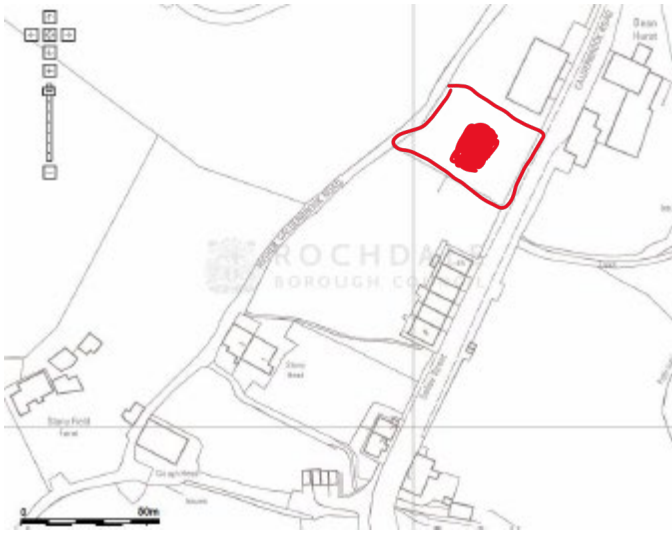


Figure 4: The application site (identified by a red outline and dot)

The Surrounding Area

The application site lies close to Summit and Calderbrook, semi-rural settlements located close to the long-established township of Littleborough. Calderbrook is formed by a range of residential properties, diverse in both their ages and architectural styles, including traditional stone-built terrace cottages, late twentieth century bungalows and houses along with some contemporary residential development by Barratt Homes at St. James' Place. St. James Parish Church is a focal building locally and is visible from within and outside the settlement.

Whilst the general appearance of the application site can be described as open, it lies within an area which accommodates a variety of farm buildings, cottages, and other residential dwellings. Adjoining the southern side of the site are a row of 6 terraced dwellings at 9-19 Salley Street and to the north is Dean Hurst Farm which includes the farmhouse and associated farm buildings. To the south of 9-19 Salley Street are a further grouping of dwellings which comprise of dwellings 1, 3, 5 and 7 Salley Street on the north side of the road with a further dwelling at 2 Salley Street on the southern side.

To the west of the site are further buildings at Stoney Field Farm, Cloughhead and two dwellings at Stony Head. The area in which the site is located is characterised by randomly positioned dwellings set within a landscape which is generally open. A few hundred metres to the south of the application site and a five-minute walk is Calderbrook with the majority of this area being identified as being within the Defined Urban Area. St James' Parish Church and all the dwellings and buildings which lie to the north of Calderbrook Road, including the building groupings known as 'Middle Calderbrook' and 'Higher Calderbrook' lie within an area designated as Green Belt which is characterised by randomly located dwellings set within large curtilages.



Figure 5: Extract from UDP showing the settlement boundary of Calderbrook.

The application site lies within an area alongside Salley Street which is semi-rural and contains groupings of farmhouses, cottages, and other buildings. Land further to the north becomes more open and rises up to the adjacent to moorland.

3. Description of the Proposal

The proposal seeks permission to erect a 15m × 15m (225 m²) steel-framed building with dual-pitch roof, maximum height 6.3m. The building will comprise:

Agricultural storage area for a small tractor, ride-on mower, fencing materials and wood-chipping equipment.

Feed and bedding store with internal separation.

Six stables designed to modern welfare standards, with two secure tack and feed rooms.

Materials: juniper-green box-profile metal cladding to walls and roof, with matching flashings, juniper green metal roller shutter door, and concrete base.

Siting: directly adjacent to existing buildings, forming a cohesive group and avoiding encroachment into open countryside.

4. Agricultural and Equestrian Justification

The applicant operates a small-scale agricultural contracting business undertaking land maintenance and hay production in the Calderbrook and Littleborough area. The land at Salley Street is used for grazing and storage associated with these activities.

The proposed building is required to:

- Provide secure storage for agricultural equipment, feed, and hay to avoid spoilage.
- Replace four dilapidated timber sheds with one consolidated, fit-for-purpose building.
- Support animal welfare through compliant stabling with adequate ventilation and protection from the elements.
- Ensure continued and sustainable management of the applicant's landholding.

The operational need is genuine and evidenced by the existing, long-established use of the site and the presence of livestock, equipment, and associated infrastructure.

There is also demonstrable local demand for small-scale stabling: Rochdale Council's own data indicate a 6–7 year waiting list for public equestrian facilities, with over 300 registered applicants. The proposal therefore provides a modest contribution toward meeting this demand within a controlled, rural setting.

5. Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

Paragraph 149(a) – The construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate except for “buildings for agriculture or forestry.”

Paragraph 150(b) – Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate where they preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

Paragraph 135 & 136 – Planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and support thriving rural communities.

Rochdale Core Strategy (Adopted 2016)

Policy G4 – Protecting the Green Belt – Development will only be permitted where it constitutes appropriate Green Belt development as defined by national policy.

Policy G6 – Enhancing Landscapes and Townscapes – Encourages siting and design that respect local topography and rural character.

Policy G7 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Development should maintain and, where possible, enhance biodiversity.

Policy P2 – Design Quality – Requires development to be visually attractive, well designed, and appropriate in scale.

Policy T2 – Improving Accessibility – Ensures safe vehicular access without detrimental impact on the highway network.

6. Green Belt Assessment

Principle of Development

Under NPPF 149(a), buildings for agriculture or forestry are not inappropriate in the Green Belt. The proposed structure is for genuine agricultural and equestrian purposes, directly serving the established lawful use of the land.

Openness and Character

The proposed building is sited adjacent to existing structures, maintaining a compact built envelope and avoiding sprawl. Its footprint replaces existing smaller sheds; therefore, the overall impact on spatial and visual openness is negligible.

The 6.5 m ridge height is modest in agricultural terms and will sit comfortably within the local topography. External materials (green cladding, dark roof) will blend with the landscape and reduce visual prominence.

Purposes of Including Land in the Green Belt

The development does not conflict with the five purposes of the Green Belt:

- Check urban sprawl – No encroachment beyond the existing developed cluster.
- Prevent merging of towns – The site lies well within the rural fringe and does not reduce separation between settlements.
- Safeguard the countryside – Supports rural land management.
- Preserve historic setting of towns – No heritage assets nearby.
- Assist urban regeneration – Irrelevant in this case but not undermined.
-

Accordingly, the proposal satisfies national and local Green Belt policy tests and constitutes appropriate development.

7. Landscape and Visual Impact

A limited landscape appraisal has been undertaken. The site is low-lying and screened by boundary vegetation / small trees to the front of the site with a small section to be removed to create access. The proposed building will be seen in context with existing rural buildings and will not be visible from the wider Calderbrook valley except in filtered winter views.

Mitigation will include:

- Native hedge planting to the north and west boundaries.
- Juniper-green cladding and trims to reduce reflectivity.
- Management of existing hedgerows to maintain screening.

These measures ensure that the development preserves local landscape character in accordance with Core Strategy Policies G6 and P2.

8. Access and Highways

Access will be taken via the existing track from Salley Street. Occasional vehicle movements will occur for feed deliveries and maintenance; these will be negligible and well below thresholds requiring formal assessment.

There will be no material intensification of traffic, and the proposal therefore accords with Policy T2. The access geometry, visibility and surface condition are adequate for small agricultural and equestrian vehicles.

9. Ecology and Drainage

The land is improved grassland of low ecological value. None of the existing small timber buildings contain bat roosting potential. A precautionary ecological note accompanies this application confirming that:

- No protected species are likely to be affected.
- Replacement hedge planting will provide a modest biodiversity enhancement in line with Policy G7.

Surface water from the roof will discharge to a stone-filled soakaway within the applicant's land, ensuring compliance with Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) principles. No foul drainage is required other than a simple sealed system for occasional wastewater from stable cleaning.

10. Design and Materials

- The building has been designed with rural authenticity and durability in mind:
- Steel portal frame with juniper-green box-profile cladding.
- Concrete blockwork base (2100 mm) with external timber cladding.
- Juniper green roller shutter door.
- Dual-pitch roof with 8° slope finished in juniper green coated steel profiled roof sheeting.

This simple, functional design mirrors the established character of agricultural structures across the borough and will deliver a visual enhancement by replacing weathered timber sheds with a single coherent structure.

11. Heritage Appraisal

Introduction

This section reviews the potential heritage impact of the proposed new building. It demonstrates that the applicant has considered the potential impact of the application proposals on all non-designated heritage assets identified during pre-application discussions with the local planning authority.

The analysis considers the following potential heritage impacts:

- The potential impact associated with the development of a new building on the two nearby ventilation shafts associated with the Summit railway Tunnel and.
- The potential impact associated with the development of a new building on the adjacent row of terraced properties at 9-19 Salley Street.

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF advises that *'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting'*. The onus on defining the heritage significance of the building therefore falls on the applicant.

The English Heritage Publication 'Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance' (English Heritage, 2008) suggests a number of criteria which will assist in the recognition of heritage values in the historic environment. These are:

- Evidential Value which derives from the potential of a place to reveal evidence about past human activity.
- Historical Value which derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.
- Aesthetic Value which derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. This may include Design Value relating to the conscious design of a building and embracing composition, materials, decoration or detailing and craftsmanship.
- Communal Value which derives from meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from those. Communal values are tightly bound up with historical and aesthetic values but tend to have additional and specific aspects which may be commemorative or symbolic or social. Compared with other heritage values social values tend to be less dependent on the survival of historic fabric and may survive the replacement of the original physical structure so long as its key social and cultural characteristics are maintained.

The following section applies this guidance to the potential impact of the application proposal.

The Potential Impact associated with the development of a new building on the two nearby ventilation shafts associated with the Summit railway Tunnel.

The Heritage Significance of Summit Tunnel

The following section applies this guidance to the potential impact of the application proposal.

Summit Tunnel runs below the Pennine hills, linking Littleborough and Walsden, near Todmorden. It represents a major feat of engineering and is the critical engineering structure which allowed the opening of the first trans-Pennine rail line. Summit Tunnel forms the highest section of the 51 miles (82 km) long Manchester and Leeds Railway, which was built parallel to the Rochdale Canal which it superseded.

It is understood to be one of the world's oldest railway tunnels being constructed between 1838 and 1841 by the Manchester and Leeds Railway Company to provide the first direct trans Pennine line between Leeds and Manchester.

Summit Tunnel was a major feat of engineering and was designed by Thomas Longridge Gooch, assisted by Barnard Dickinson. Gooch was a collaborator of George Stephenson and his son Robert Stephenson and had involvement with several railway schemes. Between spring 1835 and 1844, Gooch was the engineer for the Manchester and Leeds Railway on behalf of George Stephenson, who was working on other projects.

In September 1837, during Gooch's tenure, work commenced boring the tunnel. The tunnel was driven by hand through coal measures geology and cut through shale, coal, and sandstone. The walls were lined with six courses of brick, using more than 23 million bricks in the construction.

The tunnel is just over 1.6 miles long and carries two standard-gauge tracks in a single horseshoe-shaped tube, approximately 24 feet (7.2 m) wide and 22 feet (6.6 m) high. On completion the Summit Tunnel was the longest railway tunnel in the world. The tunnel took longer to complete than had been anticipated and by its opening on 1 March 1841, Summit Tunnel had cost £251,000 to build and cost the lives of 41 workers.

Remarkably the Tunnel has operated almost continuously since it opened other than after a fire on 20 December 1984 which resulted in a temporary 5-month closure whilst repairs were undertaken.

The original contractors were Evans, Stewart, and Copeland. At the peak of construction, a workforce of between 800 and 1,250 men and boys was active, aided by about 100 horses and 13 stationary steam engines. The bedrock was removed using physical strength and hand tools, illuminated only by candlelight. In March 1839, because of slow progress, the original contractors were dismissed, and George Stephenson took over, after which the pace of work increased until a strike of the bricklayers occurred in March 1840.

Alignment of the tunnel was achieved by drilling 14 vertical shafts to provide survey points. When the tunnel was complete, two shafts were sealed and the remaining 12 were retained as ventilation. The ventilation shafts were up to 92 to 308 feet (28 to 94 m) deep. During the tunnel's service life, No.6 was sealed after rock falls. Some of the construction work was also facilitated by removing debris via these vertical shafts using steam engines.

Evidential Value

The two chimney/ventilator shafts are evidence of the construction and use of the Summit Tunnel and having an association with the tunnel have medium evidential value.

Historical Value

The chimney/ventilator shafts were formed to align the route of the tunnel, assisted with its construction and subsequently provided natural ventilation to one of the world's oldest railway tunnels being constructed between 1838 and 1841 by the Manchester and Leeds Railway Company to provide the first direct trans Pennine line between Leeds and Manchester. The service ventilators whilst not part of the main tunnel have medium historical value.

Aesthetic Value

The construction of the chimney/ventilator shafts construction is purely utilitarian having been built to serve an engineering function. This gives the structures, whilst distinctive features within the landscape, a low aesthetic value.

Communal Value

The structures whilst unusual features within the landscape do not function as local landmarks and there is no public access. The communal value is low.

Figure 9: Summit Tunnel Ventilation shaft to the southeast of the application site.

Figure 10: Summit Tunnel Ventilation shaft to the north of Salley Street.

Setting

The chimney/ventilator shafts appear to break the ground without any regard to their immediate setting. The reason for this is that they were located to denote and plot the route of the tunnel being constructed below. The result is that they have no setting simply emerging from the topography wherever the engineering requirement demanded a shaft be located. The installations are not associated with a heritage setting.

Overall Significance

The two chimney/ventilator shafts in proximity to the application site evidence the construction and use of the Summit Tunnel and have an evidential and historical association with Summit Tunnel. The structures are functional engineering constructions without embellishment and have limited communal value. They

are not associated with a heritage setting. Overall, these features have medium-low heritage value and are likely to have group interest with other similar installations along the line of the tunnel.

The Potential Impact of the New Building on the Significance of Summit Tunnel

The application proposal would not directly impact on any fabric associated the Summit Tunnel. With regard to the potential indirect impact of development on the shafts it has been established that the shafts do not have any setting of note.

The shaft to the north of Dean Hurst is located in an open grassed area without landscaping and as result has a dramatic appearance (Figure 10). There is however no inter-visibility with the application site due to the surrounding topography and the presence of a low ridge meaning it cannot be affected by the new development. With regard to the Summit Tunnel Ventilation shaft to the southeast of the application site (Figure 9) this has a series of single storey buildings on land adjoining the shaft which detract from how the shaft might otherwise be viewed. The shaft, however, continues to read as a marker of the line of the tunnel. It is apparent that the new building proposed on the application site would have little if any impact on the way the shaft is viewed and experienced. The new building can therefore be regarded to have a neutral impact on Summit Tunnel.

The Potential Impact associated with the development of a new building on 9-19 Salley Street

The Heritage Significance of 9-19 Salley Street

9 to 19 Salley Street is a row of altered stone cottages. They are recorded on the County Plan of 1851 although are likely to date from the first part of the eighteenth century. They are not included on the Council's schedule of locally listed buildings. They are likely to have been built to accommodate workers and were likely associated with farming, wool production, and weaving. They are constructed in local stone. Door and window surrounds are rectangular with plain stone door and window jambs and mullions. Stone flags are used as roof slates and stone chimneys are evident. Inappropriate strap pointing is noted on some properties which overtime will cause premature deterioration to the stonework.

Evidential Value

The cottages are evidence of simple agricultural workers dwellings of which there are numerous survivals throughout the local area. They have low evidential value.

Historical Value

The cottages are likely to date from the first part of the eighteenth century, although are altered. They have low historical value.

Aesthetic Value

These workers cottages are utilitarian having been built to serve as accommodation for workers. They lack architectural embellishment and there are no features of note. This gives a low aesthetic value.

Communal Value

Many similar houses exist locally, and communal value is low.

Setting

The dwellings are sited to front Salley Street to which they provide strong enclosure. They benefit from views down the valley towards Summit. Private gardens have been formed to the sides and rear in what was originally an agricultural field. The rear of the cottages can be viewed from the public footpath to the rear. The setting is unremarkable and makes a neutral contribution to heritage significance.



Figure 11: Frontage of 9-19 Salley Street viewed from front Salley Street



Figure 12: OS County Series, Lancashire and Furness, 1851.

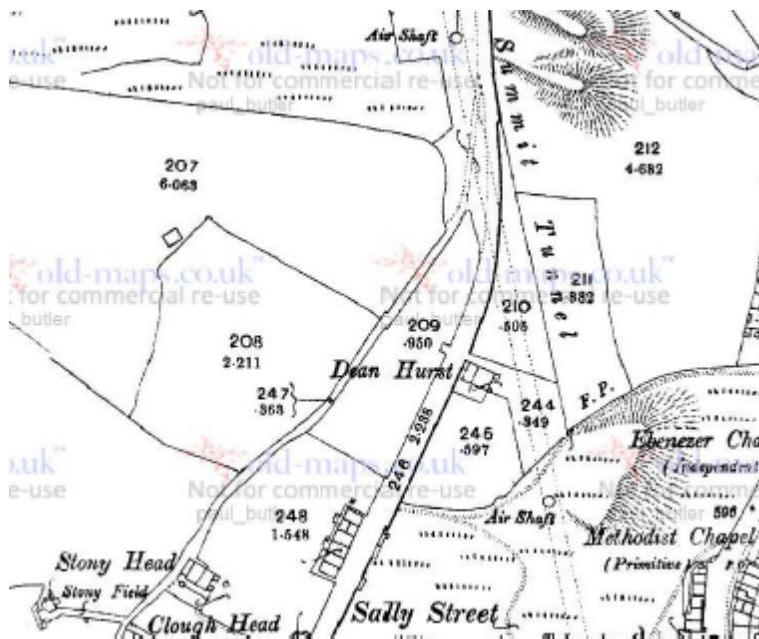


Figure 13: OS County Series, Lancashire and Furness, 1893.



Figure 14: View of the rear of 9-19 Salley Street

The Potential Impact of the New House on the Significance of 9-19 Salley Street

The application proposal would not directly impact on any fabric associated with 9-19 Salley Street. Regarding the potential indirect impact of development on these dwellings it has been established that the setting of the cottages is unremarkable and makes a neutral contribution to heritage significance. Furthermore, it is noted that a new dwelling set well back from Salley Street would not have any implications for the way in which 9-19 Salley Street are experienced. The formation of a domestic curtilage from former grazing land would be not impact since this has already happened on land closer to the cottages where gardens have been created without detriment to heritage significance. The new building and curtilage can therefore be regarded to have a neutral impact on 9-19 Salley Street.

NPPF Paragraph 209 advises that *'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'* Regarding the review above, the planning balance lies in favour of the new building as a result of the neutral impact the application proposal will have on the setting of the Summit Tunnel and 9-19 Salley Street. Considerations which add further weight to the planning balance include:

- Securing investment into the local community through the provision of jobs during the construction stage and spending in nearby facilities by future residents/employees once the new dwelling is completed and functional.
- The re-use of site without a use to accommodate a large new family dwelling; and
- The sustainability benefits listed elsewhere in this report.

12. Planning Balance and Conclusions

The proposal represents appropriate development in the Green Belt under NPPF 149(a). It serves an essential agricultural and equestrian purpose, preserves openness, and improves the functionality and visual quality of the site.

Key benefits include:

- Replacement of dilapidated, scattered sheds with a single, well-designed building.
- Enhanced appearance and reduction of visual clutter.
- Support for rural enterprise and equestrian welfare.
- No harm to openness, landscape, or highway safety.

Compliance with national and local policy (NPPF 149–150; Core Strategy Policies G4, G6, G7, P2 and T2).

Accordingly, the proposal is a modest, proportionate, and policy-compliant form of development that strengthens rural land management and preserves the Green Belt's essential characteristics of openness and permanence.