

EXTENSION AT HIGHER EAFIELD FARM COTTAGE

LITTLEBOROUGH, METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF ROCHDALE



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

GARRY MILLER
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GARRY MILLER HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is a heritage consultant, architectural historian and published author who has spent more than 40 years studying and working with buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as ‘scholarship as its best’ by *Country Life* (June 2003), and ‘well analysed and presented’ in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); and was widely cited in the 2006 *Buildings of England* volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings, in particular the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment. His area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and reports on more than 150 buildings or sites are produced annually.

THIS REPORT

Date of issue: December 2023

Purpose: for planning submission

Text: Garry Miller

Site survey: Peter Miller

CONTENTS

1: Executive Summary	5
2: The Site	6
3: The Proposal/Scope of this Report	8
4: Historical Summary	10
5: The Application Building	12
6: Significance of the Application Building	16
7: Planning Policy Context	17
8: Impact of the Proposal	18

1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed works at Higher Eafield Farm Cottage, Littleborough, in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The property was built around ten years ago onto Higher Eafield Farmhouse, which dates from the mid-19th century and is in separate occupation. The farmhouse is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

Proposals have been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for an extension to the application property. The heritage issue arising is the impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the undesignated farmhouse that it adjoins.

The significance of Higher Eafield Farmhouse resides in the local context only, for the following reasons:

- For its architectural interest as an example of a mid-19th century farmhouse (probably 1840s-1850s) which is likely to be the rebuilding of an earlier, probably 18th century, dwelling
- For its historical interest as evidence of the area's farming economy in the 18th and 19th centuries

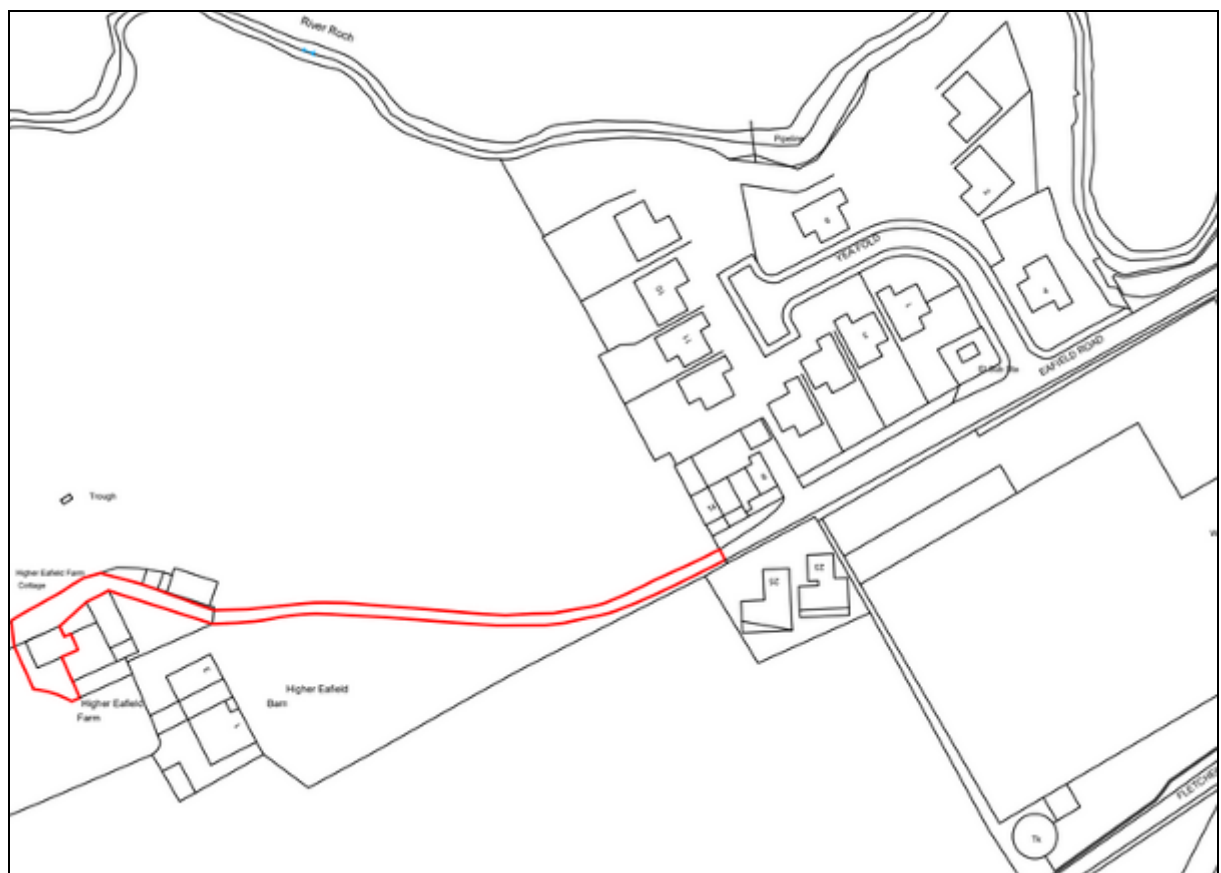
Higher Eafield Farm Cottage is built on the site of an earlier structure, and is of stone contrast to the brick of the farmhouse. As a modern structure dating from the early 2000s, it does not contribute to the architectural or historic interest of the farmhouse. Its appearance is however traditional and not detractive, and the nature of its visual contribution to the site is essentially a neutral one.

The scheme involves the addition of a two storey extension to replace an existing single-storey store built against the end wall of Higher Eafield Farmhouse. The store does not make a positive contribution to the appearance of the non-designated farmhouse. The proposed extension is in keeping with the traditional appearance of the existing cottage, its use of stone walling continuing the clear differentiation between it and the farmhouse. No features of any importance will be lost as a result of the extension, as the affected west elevation of the farmhouse is a blank section of rendered wall.

The proposed extension will therefore sustain the significance of Higher Eafield Farmhouse, whose legibility as a mid-19th century property with possible earlier origins will remain. In the balanced planning judgement that is required in the case of non-designated heritage assets, the scheme is entirely favourable and merits approval without delay.

2: THE SITE

The application building is Higher Eafield Farm Cottage, Littleborough, in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The property is located on the rural fringe of the town, at the end of Eafield Lane and is a cottage built around ten years or so ago onto Higher Eafield Farmhouse, which dates from the mid-19th century and is in separate occupation. A stable, probably early 19th century, is attached at the opposite end of the farmhouse. The site also comprises various other buildings, including a large converted barn, single-storey outbuilding and modern sheds.



Map 1. Location of the application property



1. Higher Eafield farmhouse, with Higher Eafield Cottage attached to left



2. The wider site, viewed on approach, with farmhouse in centre distance

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Proposed development

Proposals have been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for an extension at the application property.

3.2 Designation

Higher Eafield Farmhouse is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset by Rochdale MBC.

3.3 Heritage impact

The heritage issue arising is the impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the undesignated farmhouse.

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 194 of Chapter 16 (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*) the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised, July 2021) states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the particular significance of the heritage asset, including the contribution made by its setting. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to identify the significance of the undesignated building, and to assess how this will be affected by the proposal. In accordance with paragraph 194, the level of detail is considered proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset, and no more than necessary to understand the impact of the proposal. The report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation submitted in support of the application.

3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

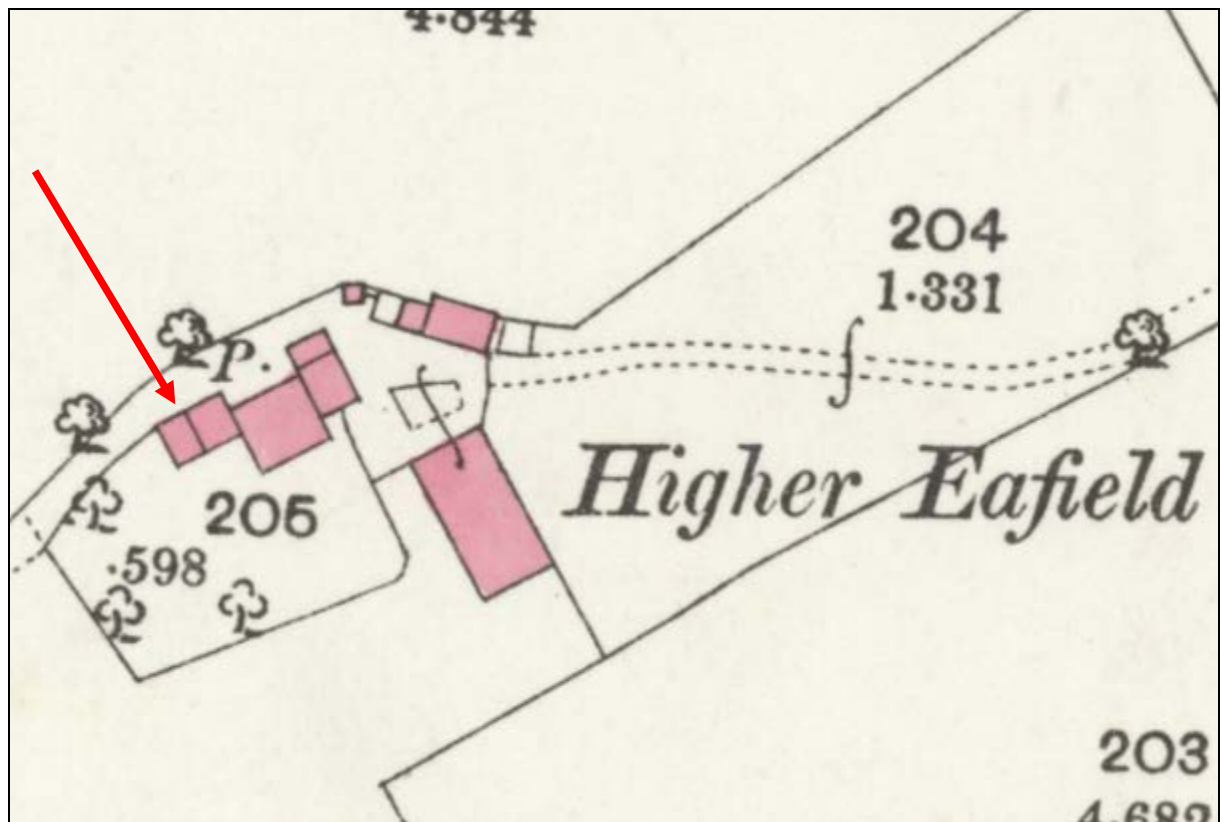
1. A brief summary of the historical background relating to the site (Section 4) followed by a concise, proportionate description of the undesignated building (Section 5)
2. A summary of its heritage significance (Section 6)
3. A summary of the planning policy context in which the application will be determined (Section 7)
4. Evaluation within this context of the impact of the proposal upon the significance of the undesignated building (Section 8).

4: HISTORICAL SUMMARY

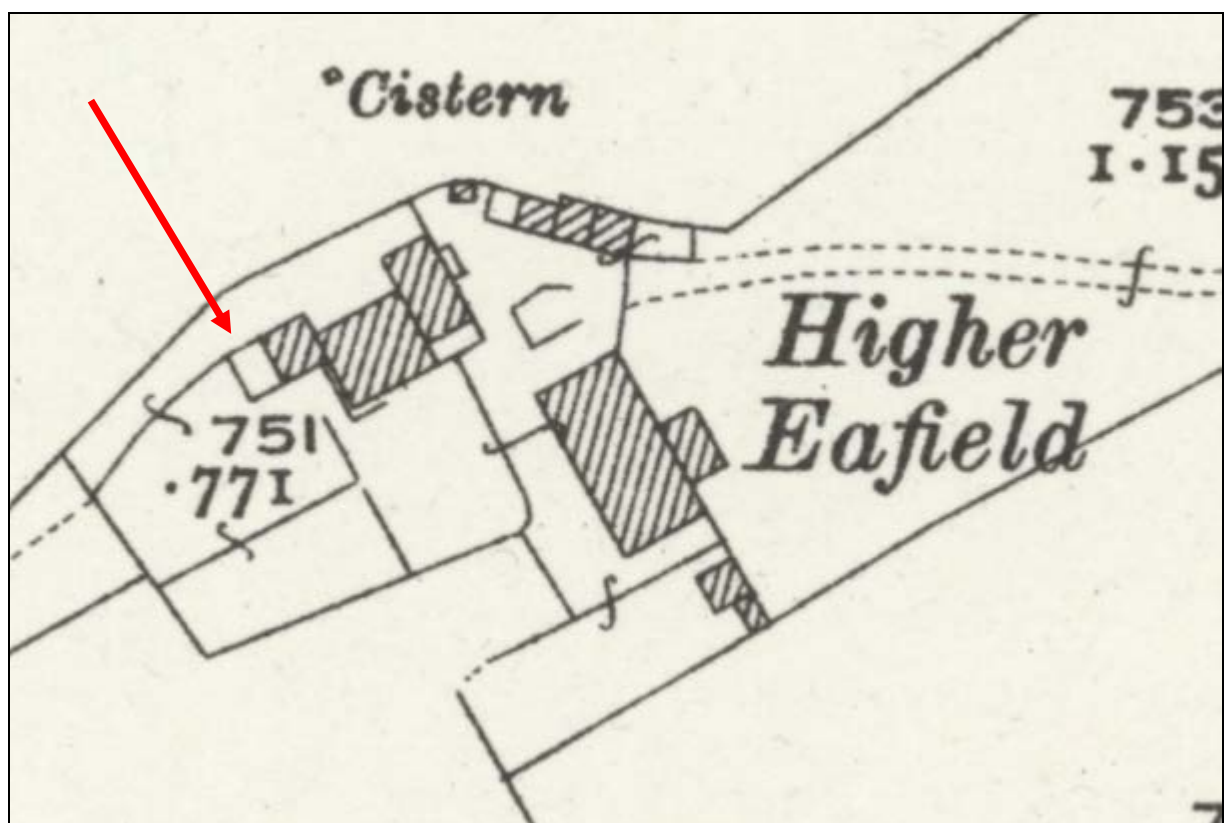
Higher Eafield is an isolated farmstead located on rising ground above a meander of the River Roch. The present farmhouse has a mid-19th century appearance but is probably a rebuilding of that date of an earlier property. Higher Eafield Cottage is a modern addition, dating from the early 2000s but replacing an earlier building in this location. The OS map of 1847-1848 (Map 2, below) shows this predecessor, along with a building on the opposite side which is probably the present stables. The 25-inch edition of 1891 (Map 3) records the predecessor building was subdivided into two units, but by 1928 (Map 4) the westernmost one had been removed.



Map 2. The farmstead as depicted by the six-inch OS map of 1847-1848, with earlier building on the site of the cottage indicated



Maps 3 and 4. The 25-inch OS edition of 1891 (above) shows the predecessor of the present cottage was subdivided, with the western portion removed by 1928 (below)



5: THE APPLICATION BUILDING

5.1 Overview

Modern cottage built in stone onto brick farmhouse of mid-19th century.

5.2 Higher Eafield Farmhouse

This property is a medium-sized brick farmhouse whose front elevation has a mid-19th century appearance (most likely 1840s-1850s), characteristically symmetrical with a central entrance with moulded surround and two-light windows on the ground and first floor, along with a blocked window above the door. The rear is however more irregular with blocked and altered openings, which suggests the mid-19th century work involved a remodelling of an earlier, 18th century, property.



3. Front elevation of the farmhouse is of the mid-19th century



4. *Rear elevation is more irregular and may be earlier*



5. *East side elevation, showing stable attached to the house*

5.3 Higher Eafield Cottage

The property is a modern building, dating probably from a consent granted in 2008 (08/D51113) for *Alterations, First Floor Side Extension And Single Storey Rear Extension To Dwelling*. The property is built in stone, in contrast to the farmhouse and matching the stable at the opposite end, and is a two-storey structure designed in traditional manner. Its front adjoins the rear of the farmhouse and has a single-storey porch. To the rear is a single-storey lean-to store, built in lean-to manner against the west end wall of the farmhouse.



6. Rear elevation of the cottage and adjoining store



7. Front elevation of the cottage, with porch



8. Side elevation of the cottage

6: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE APPLICATION BUILDING

6.1 Rationale

Paragraph 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimize conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Significance is defined in the NPPF Glossary as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

6.2 Summary

The significance of Higher Eafield Farmhouse resides in the local context only, for the following reasons:

- For its architectural interest as an example of a mid-19th century farmhouse (probably 1840s-1850s) which is likely to be the rebuilding of an earlier, probably 18th century, dwelling
- For its historical interest as evidence of the area's farming economy in the 18th and 19th centuries

As a modern structure dating from the early 2000s, Higher Eafield Farm Cottage does not contribute to the architectural or historic interest of the farmhouse. Its traditional appearance is not however detractive, and the nature of its visual contribution to the site is essentially a neutral one.

7: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework) provides the guidance on how applications affecting the historic environment are to be dealt with. Paragraph 197 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation*
- *The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, and*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*

Regarding designated heritage assets, paragraph 199 states that ‘great weight’ should be given to their conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be; that significance can be lost through development within its setting. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 203 specifically applies to non-designated heritage assets:

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.

Locally, Policy P2a (Protecting and Enhancing Character, Landscape and Heritage) of the Rochdale Core Strategy, formally adopted on October 19, 2016, states that key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, will be conserved, enhanced and promoted, including consideration of their wider settings.

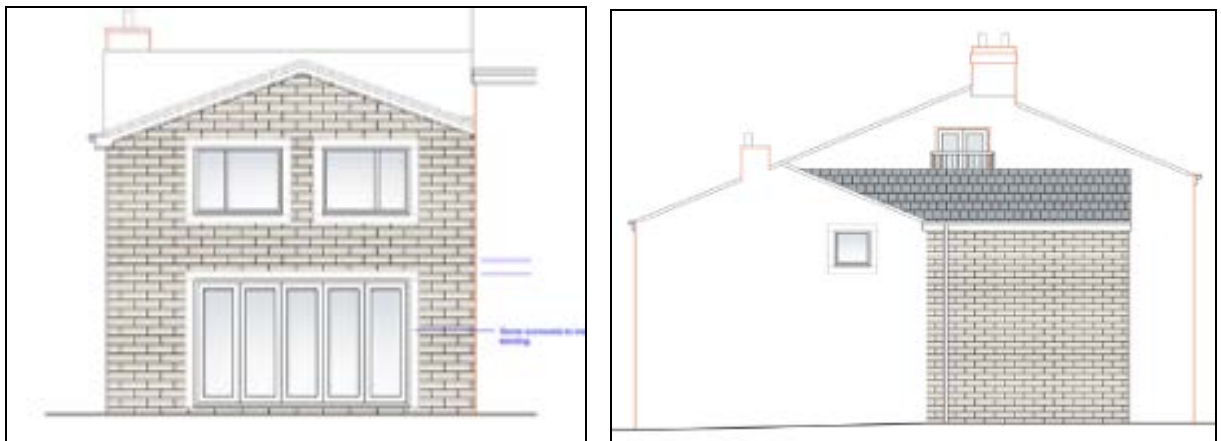
8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

8.1 Summary of the scheme

The scheme involves the addition of a two storey extension to replace the existing store, as detailed in the submitted drawings.



9. Location of the proposed extension



10. Proposed rear (left) and side elevations

8.2 *Its effect*

The existing store does not make a positive contribution to the appearance of the non-designated farmhouse. The proposed extension is in keeping with the traditional appearance of the existing cottage, its use of store continuing the clear differentiation between it and the brick farmhouse. No features of any importance will be lost as a result of the extension, as the affected west elevation of the farmhouse is a blank section of rendered wall.

8.3 *Concluding statement*

The proposed extension will sustain the significance of Higher Eafield Farmhouse, whose legibility as a mid-19th century property with possible earlier origins will remain evident. In the balanced planning judgement that is required in the case of non-designated heritage assets, the scheme is entirely favourable and merits approval without delay.