

PROPOSED EXTENSIONS AT NEW PLATT FARM

LITTLEBOROUGH, METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF ROCHDALE



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

GARRY MILLER
Heritage Consultancy

PROPOSED EXTENSIONS AT NEW PLATT FARM
LITTLEBOROUGH, METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF ROCHDALE

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

SEPTEMBER 2022

GARRY MILLER
Heritage Consultancy

*Crosby House, 412 Prescot Road, Eccleston Hill, St Helens, Lancashire WA10 3BT
Telephone: 01744 739675
garrymillerhbc@gmail.com*

© Garry Miller 2022

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: September 2022

Status: final version for planning submission

Text: Garry Miller

Site survey: Garry Miller, 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 Undesignated Building	12
6: Significance of the Undesignated Building	20
7: Planning Policy Context	21
8: Impact of the Proposal	22

1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The application building is New Platt Farm, Littleborough, in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The property is a *laithe house* – with dwelling and farm buildings under the same roof, typical of Pennine districts – that dates from around 1800. The agricultural elements of the building (barn, shippson, stables and store) are now redundant. In planning terms it is being treated as an undesignated heritage asset.

Proposals have been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for conversion of the barn, shippson, stables and store to form three new dwellings, along with associated extensions and works. The heritage issue arising is the impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the undesignated building. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify this significance and assess how the proposal will affect it.

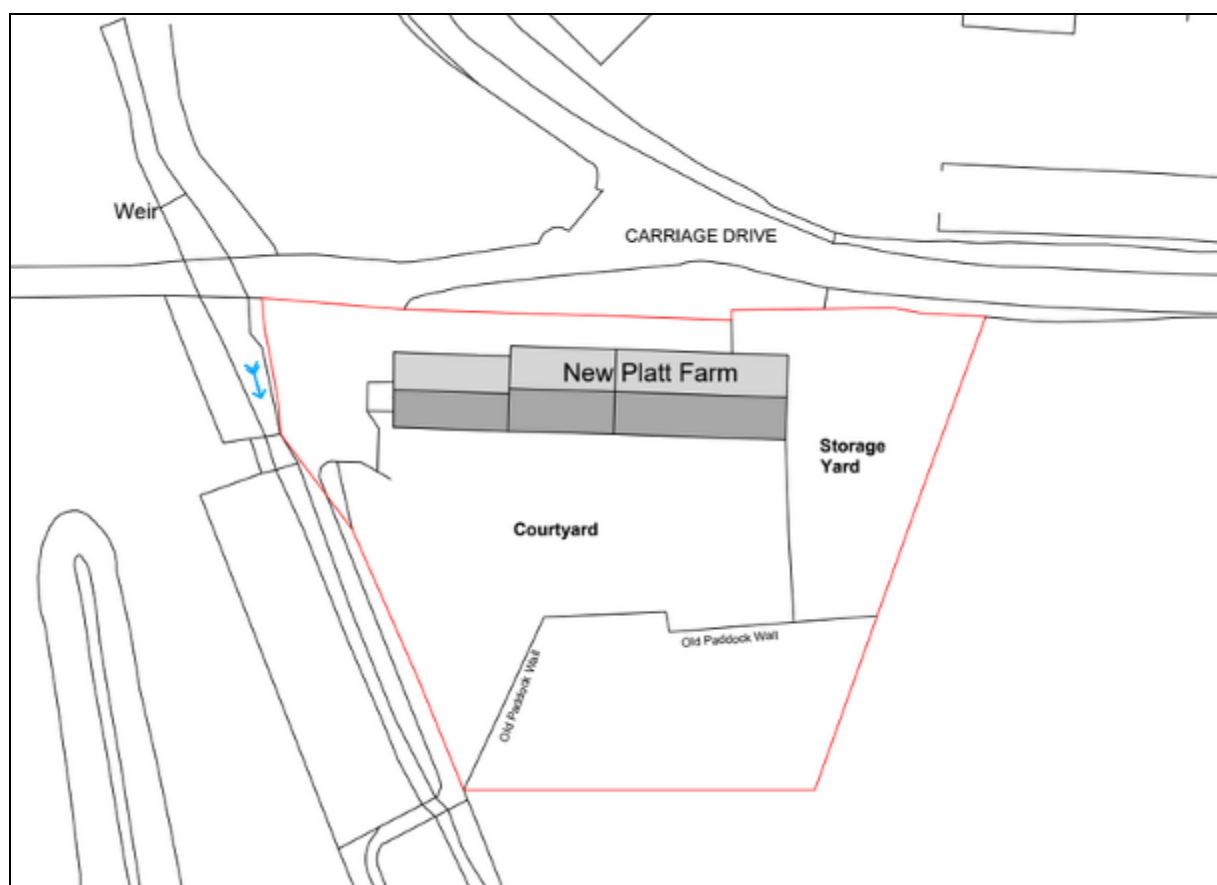
Given its nature, relatively later date and level of alteration, the significance of the unlisted building is restricted to the local context only (i.e. to Littleborough rather than Rochdale as a borough). This significance derives from its local interest as a modest example of a *laithe house* of circa 1800 date, combining dwelling and agricultural buildings in a single long range. As it is undesignated, this significance resides primarily in the external envelope of the building. This significance does not extend to the store added at the east end, as it is later and of no particular interest.

The agricultural elements of the building are redundant. The application seeks consent for their conversion to residential use forming three dwellings. The works involve an additional storey to the stable and shippson and store along with a further two-storey extension at the eastern end of the building.

Where heritage assets are undesignated, guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework requires simply a *balanced planning judgement* and not the presumption to preserve or enhance that applies to designated heritage assets. In making this balanced assessment, the principal consideration in this case is that the future of the redundant agricultural buildings is secured by putting them to sustainable use. The extent of intervention is not inappropriate given the nature and development of the building as described in this report, and it will remain recognisable as a *laithe house* of circa 1800 date. The scheme therefore merits approval.

2: THE SITE

New Platt Farm is located on the rural fringe of Littleborough, in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. It is an isolated farmstead which stands off the eastern side of Carriage Drive, a moorland track leading westwards off the A58 Todmorden Road. The property forms a long, rectangular single range of buildings, comprising a house at the west end with attached barn, both of similar height, and a single-storey shippon, stable and store, the latter a later addition/alteration.



Map 1. The application building



1. The application building, New Platt Farm



2. Probably 1970s/1980s view of the building

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Proposed development

Proposals have been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for conversion of the barn, shippon, stables and store to form three new dwellings, along with associated extensions and works.

3.2 Designation

The building is being treated for the purposes of the application as an undesignated 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 building.

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 their 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:

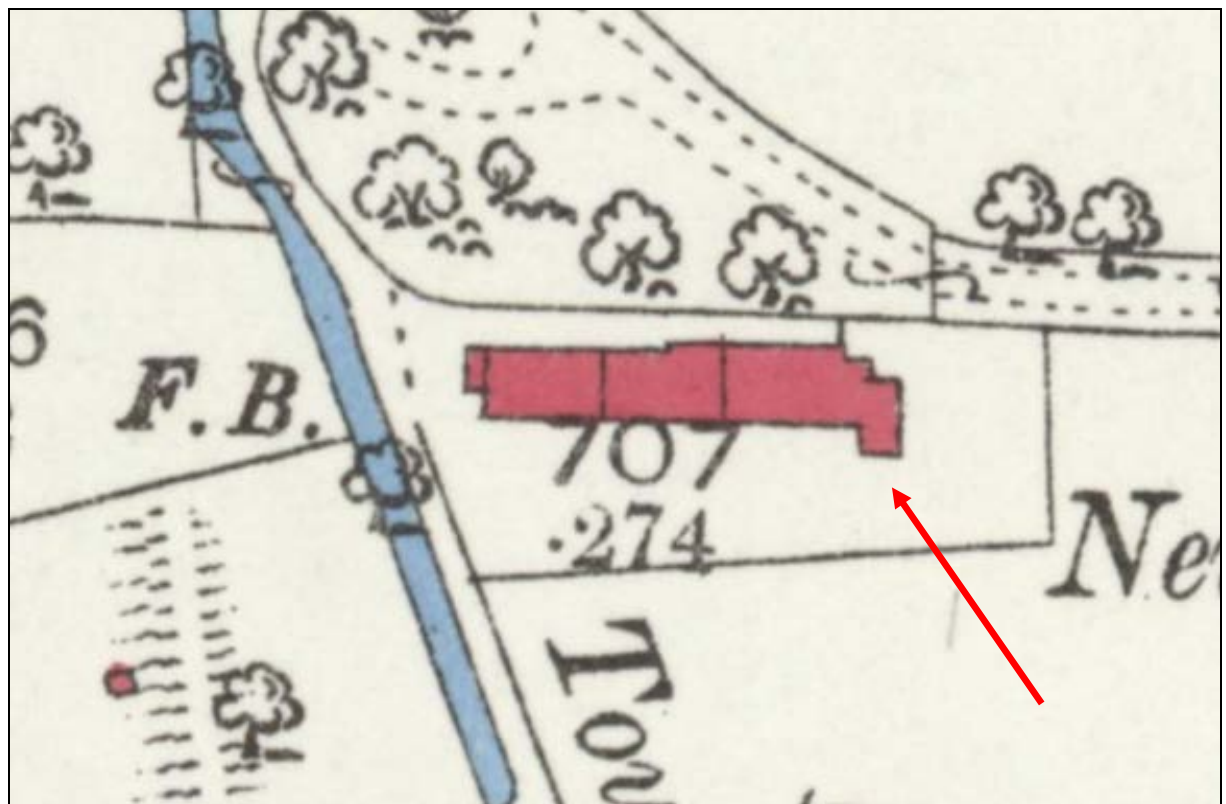
1. A summary of the historical background relating to the site (Section 4)
2. A description of the undesignated building (Section 5)
3. A summary of its heritage significance (Section 6)
4. A summary of the planning policy context in which the application will be determined (Section 7)
5. Evaluation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

4: HISTORICAL SUMMARY

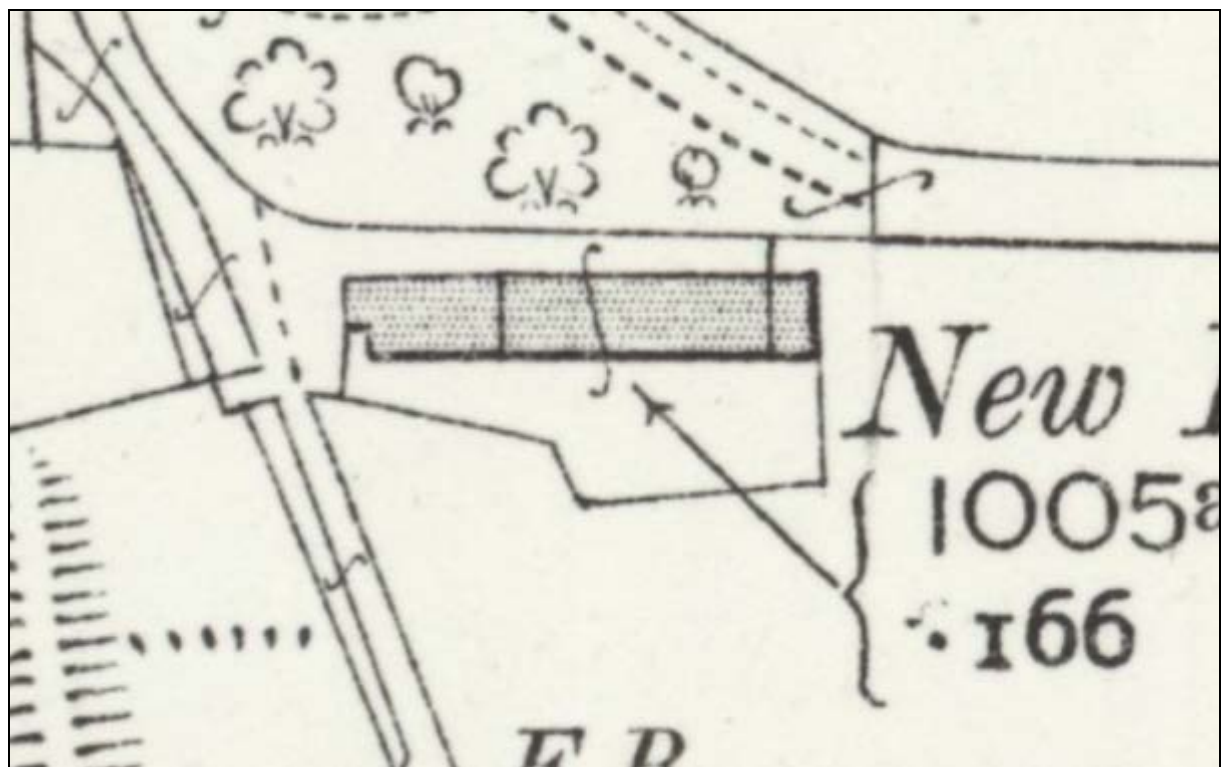
The property is a *laithe house*, a form typical of Pennine farmsteads that comprises domestic and agricultural buildings under the same roof. The building is likely to date originally from around 1800, by virtue of its plain, rugged appearance and the machine-cut roof trusses within the barn. The property was certainly existing at the time of the late-1840s OS mapping (Map 2), which depicts it as having a rather different footprint, that of an inverted T-shape. Thereafter, the 25-inch edition of 1890-1891 (Map 3) records an L-shaped configuration, with a short, staggered projection at the east end, where the store is now. This had gone by 1909 (Map 4) when the entire building is shown in more or less its present configuration suggesting the present shippon/stable/store were altered or rebuilt during this time.



Map 2. The building as recorded by the six-inch OS map surveyed in 1847-1848



Map 3. The staggered projection at the east end shown by the 25-inch edition of 1890



Map 4. This had gone by 1909, and a simple, rectangular footprint is shown

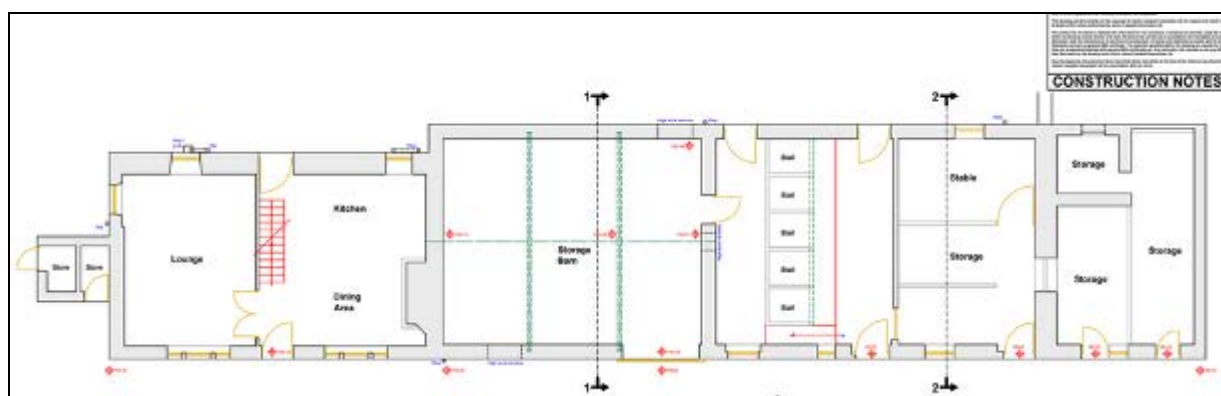
5: THE UNDESIGNATED BUILDING

5.1 Overview

Laithe house comprising dwelling, small barn and long single-storey shippon and stable range, the latter rebuilt around 1900 and probably reduced in height.

5.2 Form

A long rectangular main range comprising (from the west) house, barn, shippon, stable and store.



3. Ground floor plan of the building as existing

5.3 Date

The likely date is around 1800, on evidence of the simplicity of the building style and the machine-cut roof trusses of the barn.

5.4 The house

A small, moorland farmhouse of rugged moorland appearance, of two-bay centralised double-depth plan. The front elevation has a narrow central doorway with tall three

light windows on each floor on either side. The rear is more irregular, with small windows and central door. All windows have modern frames. The interior has been modernised with no features of interest visible.

5.5 *The barn*

- a. **Description.** The predominant feature is the large wagon door on the front elevation, which seems too almost big for the building. Left of this is a blocked first floor loading door, the remainder of the elevation is blank. The rear is also blank apart from a small hayloft window beneath the eaves. The east elevation has a narrow, later-looking window in the gable. Internally the building is open to the roof, which is carried on two machine-cut kingpost trusses.
- b. **Evolution.** Map evidence suggests the barn underwent alteration circa 1900, as a stepped rear elevation depicted by the edition of 1890-1891 (Map 3) is no longer there in 1909 (Map 4). This may have coincided with a rebuilding of the shippson/stables (see below). Further evidence of alteration of the barn comes in the form of the redundant loading door and rear window. They confirm that a hayloft floor, which as the window shows extended across where the wagon door is now, has been removed.

5.6 *The shippson/stable/store*

- a. **Description.** These also appear to have been affected by the circa 1900 rebuilding suggested by map evidence. Together they form a long single-storey three-bay range, the shippson the wider of the three elements; all have a modern tiled roof. It has a single door with two windows in stone surrounds to its left, that closest to the door narrow and of similar appearance to the window in the barn gable. Internally, there are five wooden stalls, with low stone troughs. The door enters into a manure passage with drainage channel, while at the opposite side of the stalls is a feeding passage. Both passages have corresponding doors in the rear elevation. The stable has a single door and small high-level window on the front elevation, and a similar window at the rear, now blocked. Inside there are two stalls, with ramped timber divider and a decorative cast iron tethering post, suggesting they housed carriage rather than working horses. At the rear is a loose box. The store is an altered later addition, as it contains a window in the former end wall of the stable. This has exposed stone and a blocked window at the rear, but the sides and front are rendered.
- b. **Evolution.** The shippson contains evidence of ceiling joists in the crosswall between it and stable. As the building is single storey and too low to have had a loft fitted, this suggests it was originally have been two-storied, perhaps of similar height to the barn, but was later cut down to its present form. This again was probably part of the rebuilding circa 1900 suggested by the OS maps. The vanished storey would have provided the hayloft typically found above stables and shippsons.



4. The house and barn



5. Front elevation of the barn



6. *Rear of the barn*



7. *Barn interior, looking east, with former hayloft window on left*



8. Kingpost roof trusses of the barn



9. Front elevation of the shippon (left) and stables; store on far right later



10. Rear of the shippon and stable



11. Timber stalls in the shippon



12. Evidence of joists in the shippon, indicating it was originally lofted



13. Stalls in the stable and loose box beyond



14. Rendered front and side elevations of the store



15. Interior of store, showing stable window

6: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE UNLISTED 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

Given its nature, relatively later date and level of alteration, the significance of the unlisted building is restricted to the local context only (i.e. to Littleborough rather than Rochdale as a borough). This significance derives from its local interest as a modest example of a laithe house of circa 1800 date, combining dwelling and agricultural buildings in a single long range. As it is undesignated, this significance resides primarily in the external envelope of the building. This significance does not extend to the store, as it is an altered later addition of no particular interest.

.

7: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides the guidance on how applications affecting the historic environment are to be determined. 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 undesignated heritage assets, paragraph 203 specifically applies:

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 application seeks consent for conversion of the former agricultural buildings to residential use, forming three dwellings. The works involve an additional storey to the stable, shippon and store along with a further two-storey extension at the eastern end of the building.



16. Proposed front elevation

8.2 Principle of the scheme

The agricultural elements of the building are now redundant. The scheme will put them to an alternative sustainable use, and thereby secure their future.

8.3 Its effect

- a. **The barn.** There will be a limited degree of external change to the barn, involving a new front elevation window, of similar appearance to those of the house, along with small windows and a doorway on the rear elevation. The wagon entrance will be glazed. The extent of change is not however excessive, and the barn's character will remain clearly agricultural and not domestic.
- b. **Stable and shippon.** It has been demonstrated in this report that it is likely this element of the building was originally two-storied, with hayloft over, before being

lowered around 1900 to its present form. The proposed upward extension of the building is therefore not unreasonable in these circumstances.

- c. **The store.** As a later, altered element of the building this is of low significance. The proposed alteration and extension to form a two-storey dwelling does not represent inappropriate change therefore.

8.4 Conclusion

Where heritage assets are undesignated, the guidance in paragraph 203 of the NPPF requires simply a *balanced planning judgement* on the scheme; there is not the presumption to preserve or enhance that applies to designated heritage assets. In making this balanced assessment, the principal consideration in this case is that the future of the redundant agricultural buildings will be secured by putting them to sustainable use. The extent of intervention is not inappropriate given the development of the building and it will remain recognisable as a laithe house of circa 1800 date. The scheme therefore merits approval.