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BENTGATE HOUSE, NEWHEY ROAD, OL16 4JY

**ERECTION OF NEW DWELLING ON LAND TO THE SIDE
OF BENTGATE HOUSE**

Heritage Impact Assessment

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1 INTRODUCTION

Bentgate House is a historically significant property, recognised as a valuable part of the local heritage due to its architectural features and contribution to the character of the surrounding area. Heritage assets like Bentgate House are an irreplaceable resource, and their conservation is a key objective in balancing development needs with cultural preservation. This Heritage Statement evaluates the significance of Bentgate House and its setting, identifies the potential impacts of the proposed development, and outlines strategies to ensure the site's historical and architectural value is respected.

This assessment has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which emphasises the need for sustainable development that balances housing growth with the protection of cultural and historical assets. Specifically, the NPPF requires that proposals affecting heritage assets demonstrate an understanding of the asset's significance, provide a balanced consideration of the impact on that significance, and justify any changes in the context of public benefits.

The proposed development involves constructing a new dwelling within the curtilage of Bentgate House. This site has been identified as a sustainable location for additional housing, benefiting from proximity to existing infrastructure and services. The design process has been informed by a thorough analysis of the property's historical and architectural context to ensure that the new structure complements the existing heritage asset while meeting contemporary housing needs. This document provides a detailed account of the historical and architectural significance of Bentgate House, outlines the proposed changes, evaluates their potential impact, and explains the steps taken to deliver a sensitive and appropriate solution.

2 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.1 The Objective And Why Changes Are Necessary

The primary objective of the proposed development is to address the ongoing housing shortage at both local and national levels. Housing demand has consistently outpaced supply, leading to a pressing need for new homes across a range of sizes, styles, and affordability levels. Increasing the housing stock is vital not only for meeting current demand but also for ensuring sustainable growth and creating vibrant, inclusive communities.

By adding a new sensitively designed dwelling within the grounds of Bentgate House, the proposal contributes to alleviating housing pressure in a way that minimises the environmental and infrastructural impacts often associated with greenfield development. Instead, this development makes efficient use of an existing site within a built-up area, leveraging established infrastructure and utilities while respecting the character of the locale.

The project aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which emphasises the importance of delivering sustainable development. This includes providing high-quality housing that meets local needs while safeguarding and enhancing the historic environment. The proposal seeks to achieve this balance by carefully designing a dwelling that harmonises with the heritage context of Bentgate House, ensuring that the addition supports both the preservation of the historic asset and the broader goals of sustainable development.

The necessity for change is further underscored by the practical and social benefits of creating new housing within well-connected and established communities. The selected site offers proximity to local amenities, schools, and transportation links, making it a highly suitable location for residential development. Additionally, the choice to locate the new dwelling within the secondary garden area of Bentgate House minimises disruption to the primary setting and ensures that the visual prominence of the main structure is retained.

The proposed development also seeks to enhance the site by introducing a dwelling that complements the architectural features of Bentgate House while adhering to modern standards of sustainability, energy efficiency, and design. By doing so, the project not only meets the immediate housing needs but also adds long-term value to the community and respects the legacy of the existing heritage asset.

2.2 Understanding The Significance Of The Historic Asset



Figure 1: Ordnance Survey Map 1894

Historical Context

Bentgate House is a significant stone-built dwelling with key architectural features typical of the Georgian period. The property is an important part of the local heritage, contributing to the historical character of the area. While the exact date of construction is not known, the building is estimated to date from the early 18th century, as evidenced by its design elements and first appears on the 1894 Ordnance Survey Map (figure 1).

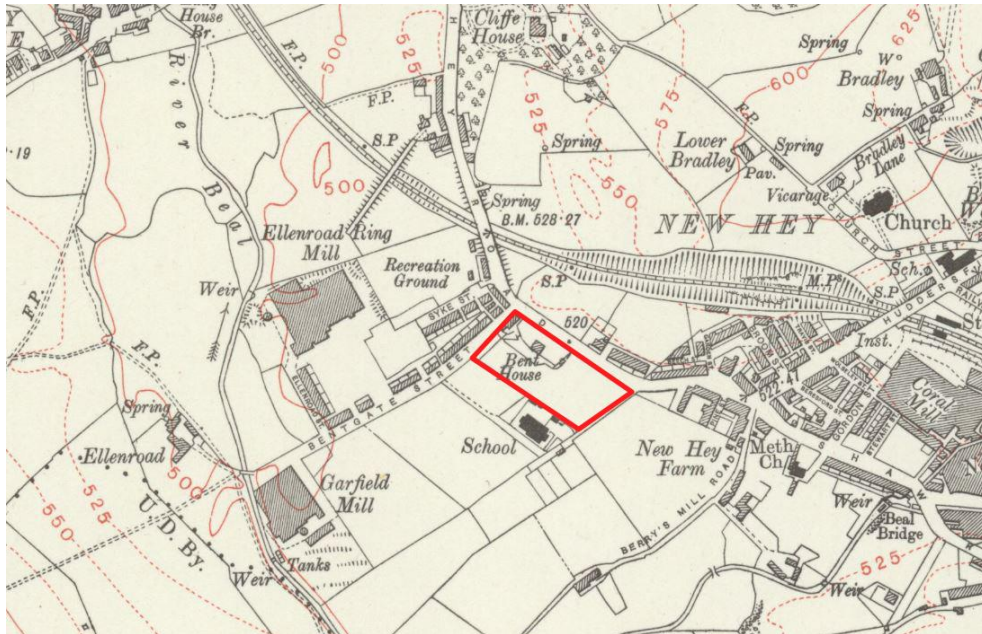


Figure 2: Ordnance Survey Map 1931

Originally situated on a larger plot, the estate has undergone significant changes reflecting broader historical land-use patterns. In the early 20th century, part of the land was repurposed for Newhey Community Primary School, reducing the estate's size. This can be seen in figure 2. This subdivision continued into the mid-1970s with the construction of housing on Bentgate Close. This can be seen to the south west of the site in figure 3. Despite these developments, Bentgate House retains its status as a key historic asset in the area.



Figure 3: Google Maps 2024

Over the years, Bentgate House has undergone a number of alterations and additions that have impacted its architectural integrity and reduced its overall significance. These changes include both two-storey and single-storey extensions, as well as the construction of a detached three-car garage located to the north of the house. The property was, for a period, used as a commercial property but has since been converted back into a residential dwelling. While the internal alterations associated

with the commercial use are not fully documented, it is difficult to assess their impact on the building's external appearance without more information.



Figure 4: Detached Garage

The most notable external alteration is the extension on the west elevation, which disrupts the building's original symmetry. Although the extension attempts to match the original structure through the use of stone coursing, it fails to replicate the exact proportions and detailing of the original masonry. The coursing does not align precisely with the stonework of the house, and the sash windows, while also attempting to mirror the original style, differ in size and configuration. The stone quoins on the extension are also of a different size and style compared to the original, which further detracts from the overall harmony of the design. These differences undermine the coherence of the property's architectural character, reducing its historical significance.



Figure 5: Existing Extension on West Elevation of Bentgate House

The conversion of the property into commercial premises led to internal alterations, but there is little available information regarding any external modifications made during this period. Without further details, it is difficult to assess how these changes may have affected the property's exterior, but it is likely that the impact was limited to internal adjustments.

The detached three-car garage, located to the north of the house, is a single-storey structure that, while reducing the visibility of Bentgate House from Newhey Road, remains subordinate to the main building. The garage is lower in height and much smaller in scale, allowing it to maintain a secondary role in relation to the house. Despite its placement and size, the garage does not significantly harm the property's overall significance, as it is not visually dominant and does not intrude upon the key features of the house.



Figure 6: Front Elevation of Bentgate House

Architectural Features

Bentgate House is characterized by a range of architectural features that underscore its significance as an example of early Georgian design. These features include:

- **Shallow-Pitched Main Roof:** A defining element of Georgian architecture, the roof's low pitch adds to the building's classical proportions and understated elegance.
- **Multiple Chimney Stacks:** Positioned symmetrically at either end of the structure, the chimneys reflect the original design's functional requirements and contribute to the building's silhouette.
- **Symmetrical Front Façade:** The balanced arrangement of windows and doors is a hallmark of Georgian design, emphasising order and harmony.
- **Pediment and Pilasters at the Front Door:** This classical detailing frames the entrance, adding a sense of grandeur and architectural refinement to the façade.
- **Stone Quoins:** These prominent cornerstones enhance the structural clarity and aesthetic precision of the building.
- **Stone Window and Door Surrounds:** The detailed masonry around these openings is an example of the craftsmanship typical of the period.
- **Slate Roof:** The use of slate not only reflects the materials traditionally used in the region but also contributes to the building's visual cohesion and durability.
- **Stone Boundary Wall and Railings:** These features along Newhey Road and Bentgate Street define the curtilage and enhance the property's interaction with the streetscape, offering an attractive and historically relevant frontage.

While many of these features retain their original character, some modifications have reduced their historical integrity.

- **Replacement of Original Sash Windows:** The traditional timber sash windows, a significant feature of Georgian architecture, have been replaced with modern uPVC alternatives. This change diminishes the building's authenticity, as the modern materials and construction lack the refinement and character of the originals.
- **Replacement of the Original Front Door:** The front door has also been replaced with a modern alternative, further detracting from the building's architectural significance and period authenticity.

Contribution to Local Character

Bentgate House contributes significantly to the character of Newhey Road, offering a glimpse into the area's historical architectural heritage. Its Georgian style and traditional stone construction distinguish it within the broader streetscape. However, the house's visibility from the road is severely limited by existing trees and vegetation, which obscure much of the property from view. As a result, passing traffic may only catch partial glimpses of the building, reducing its immediate visual impact on the surrounding area.

The property is more visible from Bentgate Close, though this view is from the rear of the building, which is the least architecturally significant elevation. The rear façade has been altered with three of the six windows bricked up, further diminishing its original character. Bentgate Close itself is a cul-de-sac with limited foot and vehicle traffic, as it is a dead-end road. This reduces the frequency with which the property is observed, further lessening its presence in the local environment.

Nevertheless, for those who are aware of its location, Bentgate House stands as an important historical feature that enriches the cultural and architectural identity of Newhey, contributing to the heritage character of the area.

Summary of Significance

Bentgate House holds historical, architectural, and cultural significance as an early Georgian dwelling that has adapted over centuries while retaining many defining features of its period. While some alterations, such as modern windows and doors, have reduced its authenticity, the property remains a valuable asset that enriches the character of Newhey Road and the wider community.

2.3 Identifying The Proposed Changes

The proposals do not directly impact Bentgate House but are within its curtilage and do affect the site. The proposed dwelling is located in the south-east secondary garden, a part of the site that is underutilised and has been identified as a suitable location for new development.

The appearance of the new dwelling has been designed to complement the existing character of Bentgate House. It incorporates similar materials, such as stone coursing and slate roofing, and matching exterior features, including traditional detailing, to harmonise with the historical context of the site. These design choices ensure that the new structure will blend with the surrounding built environment while still being identifiable as a contemporary addition.

A new timber fence is proposed to divide the existing driveway between Bentgate House and the new dwelling. This separation will provide clear demarcation between the two properties, offering privacy and defining individual boundaries. While functional, the introduction of the timber fence will subtly alter the visual unity of the driveway area.

2.4 Assessing The Impact Of The Proposals

The proposed development has been designed to minimise its impact on the significance of Bentgate House and its setting, while making use of underutilised land within the property's curtilage. The placement of the new dwelling in the south-east secondary garden ensures that the primary view of Bentgate House from Newhey Road remains unobstructed, preserving its historical and architectural contribution to the streetscape. The south-east garden is already visually and physically detached from the main surrounds of Bentgate House, making it a logical area to allocate for development.

The west elevation of Bentgate House, which includes a later extension that has altered the original symmetry, is partially obscured by existing trees and vegetation. These features will mostly remain, further reducing any potential visual impact of the new dwelling when viewed from a distance. This alteration to the view of the west elevation is the most significant impact of the proposals but is still considered minor due to the reduced prominence of this elevation and the mitigating presence of trees and vegetation.

From Bentgate Close, the new dwelling will not be visible due to the presence of existing dwellings to the south of the site, which block direct lines of sight. The view of Bentgate House from this area is largely confined to its rear elevation, and the new development will not alter this existing visual relationship.

The introduction of a timber fence to divide the driveway between Bentgate House and the new dwelling will slightly alter the spatial layout of the site. However, the visual impact in this area is already limited by the existing garage block, which reduces the prominence of the driveway. The proposed materials for the new dwelling, including stone coursing and slate roofing, have been carefully selected to harmonise with the architectural character of Bentgate House. By incorporating similar materials and features, the new dwelling is designed to sit sympathetically within the site, helping to preserve its overall aesthetic and historical coherence.



Figure 7: CGI of Proposal – Front View

2.5 Getting The Best Solution

To get the best solution Jeffrey Jordan Architects reviewed the building's history and existing features. A lengthy design process was undertaken, including a pre-application, with the current design further reviewed after the pre-application report feedback.

To achieve the best solution for the site, a comprehensive design process was undertaken, including an in-depth review of the property's history, character, and existing features. Jeffrey Jordan Architects conducted a detailed analysis to ensure that the proposals were sympathetic to the historical significance of Bentgate House and its setting.

The design process included pre-application feedback, which informed further refinements to the proposals. By addressing the planning considerations and incorporating suggestions from the pre-application report, the design evolved to balance modern requirements with the heritage values of the site.

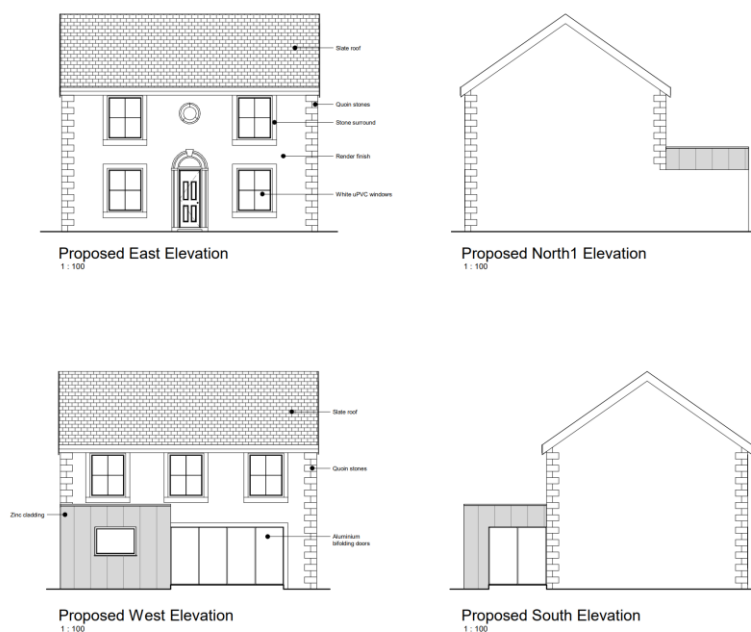


Figure 8: Proposed design submitted at the Pre-Application stage

Figure 9 shows the adjustments to the proposed elevations compared to the pre-application design as shown in figure 8. The overall massing and scale remains the same as this was deemed appropriate. Additional design detailing and features were added to the north and south elevations. The east and west elevations were refined.

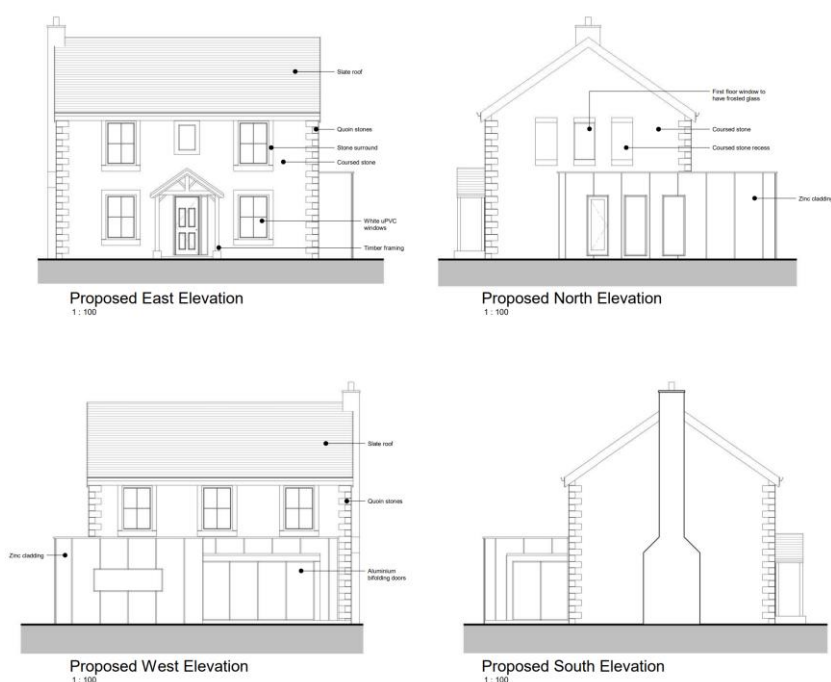


Figure 9: Proposed design submitted with this application

The final proposal carefully integrates the new dwelling within the curtilage of Bentgate House, respecting the architectural language of the property while addressing the need for additional housing. This approach aims to minimize impact, enhance compatibility, and preserve the overall character of the site and its surroundings.

3 CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been carefully considered to minimise its impact on the heritage significance of Bentgate House while providing a sensitively designed new dwelling within its curtilage. The south-east secondary garden, visually and physically detached from the primary setting of the property, has been identified as a suitable and logical location for development, ensuring the principal elevations and key features of Bentgate House remain prominent and unaffected.

The new dwelling has been designed with materials and architectural details that harmonise with the historic character of Bentgate House. This includes the use of stone coursing, slate roofing, and complementary features that respect the existing aesthetic while creating a sympathetic addition to the site. Furthermore, existing trees and vegetation will be retained wherever possible, maintaining the character of the property and mitigating any visual impact from public vantage points.

While the proposals result in some changes to the visual and spatial relationship between Bentgate House and its surroundings, these impacts are considered minor. The most significant change relates to the west elevation, which is already partially obscured by trees and includes later extensions that have reduced its architectural symmetry. From other vantage points, such as Bentgate Close and Newhey Road, the visual relationship between the property and its setting is largely preserved or unchanged.

Through a comprehensive design process informed by historical research and pre-application feedback, the proposals strive to balance the need for modern housing with the preservation of

heritage values. The design ensures that Bentgate House retains its historical significance and continues to contribute positively to the character of the local area.

In conclusion, the proposed development represents a carefully considered and appropriate approach to incorporating a new dwelling into the site, ensuring that the heritage asset is respected and its significance sustained for the future.