

Lower Starring farm cottage

Structural Engineers Report

Prepared for

Mr & Mrs Gumbley

FS 4850 pkd/pkd

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Introduction

Sir Frederick Snow & Partners were engaged by Mr & Mrs Gumbley to undertake a structural survey of the property called Lower Starring farm, Littleborough, OL15 8HN.

A purely visual inspection was undertaken in the morning Friday 4th June 2021 in the presence of the present owner. No opening up works were carried out during this inspection and therefore no comments can be made on parts of the structures that were covered or remained inaccessible.

This report is based on the observations made on that visit and subsequent desktop study.



The building is recorded on Lancashire LXXXI 1851 and the OS 1888 six inch to a mile series maps (extracts given over page). Which show the cottage/barn although they name it Starring / Middle Starring in the earlier version. Either way the basic structure is at least 130 years old.

While both maps show there has been coal mining in the area there was no evidence of significant movement in the property and recent construction of the Estate around the cottage suggests that there is no issue from the old coal workings under Birch Hill.

Access is via Starring Road, this is a private road and becomes a public footpath that passes directly to the north west of the property.



Lancashire LXXI 1851 extract.



OS 6inch to 1 mile series 1888.

Survey Report

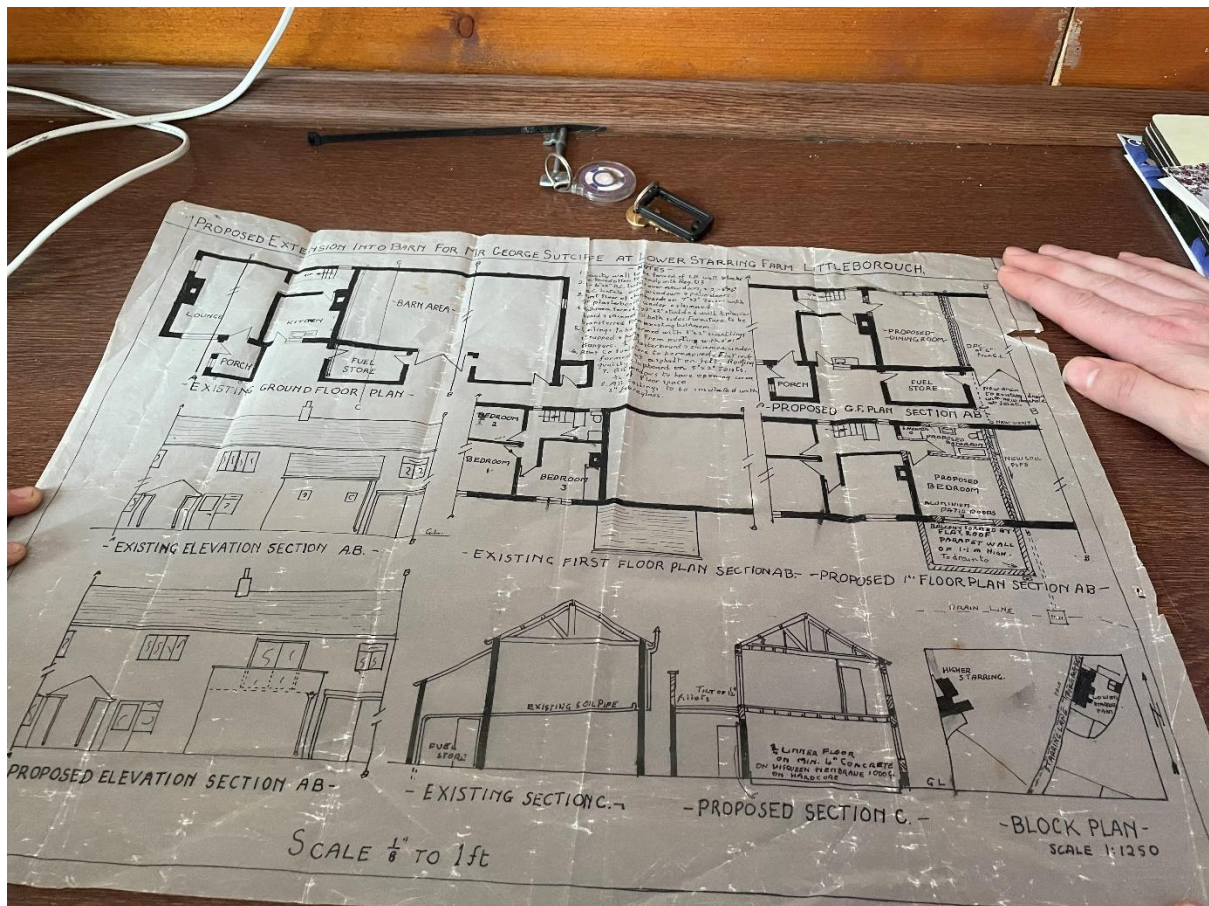
The present building configuration consists of a solid mortared brick white washed perimeter wall some 400mm thick approximately 20m x 7m in plan. There was no evidence of a damp proof course. All walls appeared reasonably plumb with no significant signs of distress for a building of this age.

Generally the windows had stone lintels.



The roof is flagged and under felted sitting on machine cut joists that have obviously been reroofed with in the last fifty years or so. These in turn sit on rafters spanning some 4m onto king post truss frames or cross walls. The roof generally is in good repair and the timbers appear in reasonable condition.





Plans for works undertaken in the last fifty years show an extension into the barn and describe the existing configuration of the building. The works appear to have been carried out in compliance to the Building Regulations current at that time.

This introduced a new dining room, bathroom and bedroom and central heating has subsequently been installed from a gas fired boiler. As part of the works the staircase was reconfigured and the access to the cellar reduced as it is now under the staircase via a trapdoor which accesses the original stone stairs part way down the run.

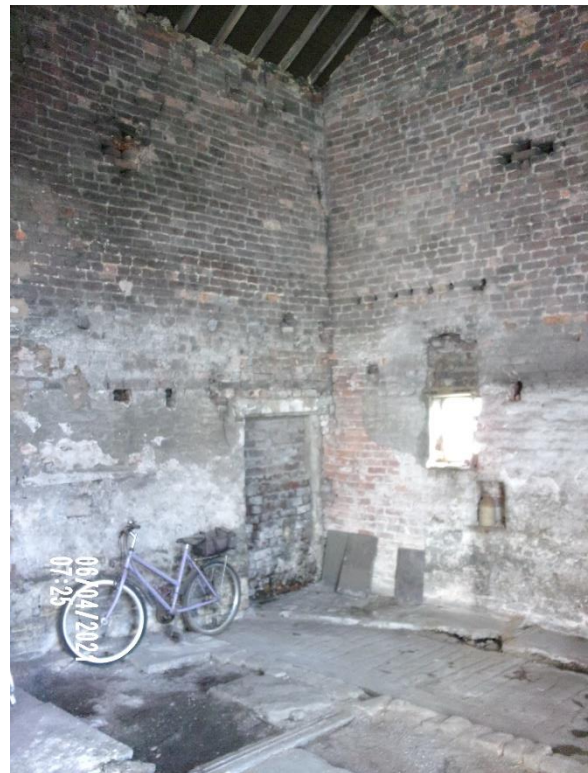
The cellar is a barrel vaulted construction with a slate table. The condition is generally good structurally. There is some water ingress on the bottom step which soaks away through the unlined stone flags. There is no evidence of any washout and nothing to suggest this has not been the condition through out the life of the building.

If it is considered necessary to line and seal the cellar then suitable cross drainage would need to be incorporated in any lining design.

The ground floor is carpeted over uneven flags and concrete screeds. In the lounge the west corner is raised and this follows the ground profile externally.

Generally the habitable section of the building is in reasonable repair but given the lack of damp proof coursing some damp patches / staining were evident.

The remaining Barn does show signs of distress with a vertical crack evident internally on the brickwork in the northern corner of the barn.



The brick shows the configuration of infilled openings and disused joist holes has altered over the years as the use of the building has changed. The floor also shows a mixture of flags, cobbles, screed and earth reflecting varied uses.

The crack in the corner should ideally be tied/stitched back as while there is no immediate danger of collapse long term movement may cause further distress and movement in this gable corner. The cost of such works should be under £2000. In the short term tell tales could be applied to see if further movement occurs.

The front porch roof has a slipped flag which should be repair. The cost of such work should be under a £1000.

Summary

The property valuation is under review and the surveyor has reported;

'There is evidence of structural movement in the form of distortion to/around openings, bowed walls and uneven/sloping floors. This may be progressive. Obtain a report from a structural engineer with regard to the structural condition of the property and carry out any recommendations under professional supervision.'

While we understand the reason for the concerns raised given the age and condition of the building as presented our assessment based on our visual survey is that the movement at openings, bowed walls and uneven floors described are not progressive in the sense of rendering the structure unsafe or in need of essential repairs.

Structures of this age will exhibit movement and masonry in soft mortar is more forgiving than newer constructions.

The uneven floor reflects the construction on the existing ground

Paul Drobig

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For Sir Frederick Snow & Partners