

PROPOSED CONVERSION AT SHEPHERD HEY BARN

ASHWORTH MOOR, ROCHDALE, GREATER MANCHESTER



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

GARRY MILLER
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DECEMBER 2023

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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

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1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed works at Shepherd Hey Barn, Ashworth Moor, in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. Shepherd Hey is an isolated farmstead located off Ashford Road amid the Pennine moorlands between Rochdale and Bury. The barn dates probably from the mid-late 18th century and is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

Proposals have been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for conversion of the barn to a dwelling. Conversion has already been granted under a previous consent (application reference 20/00716/FUL), which in turn was identical to an earlier consented application, 17/00361/FUL. The heritage issue arising from the proposal is the impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the undesignated building.

The significance of the non-designated building resides in the local context only, as an example of a barn associated with a small isolated upland farmstead that probably resulted from mid-18th century moorland enclosure. The barn is notable for its piecemeal evolution, beginning first with its addition to the house in the mid-late 18th century, and then its subsequent enlargement via a series of additions in the late 18th or early 19th century and the early 20th century. Given the loss of most of the interior, this significance is embodied primarily within the external envelope of the building – principally the barn and a long outshut on the east side, with the other added structures being of less interest – along with its presence in the surrounding moorland landscape.

The building is disused and derelict and the purpose for which it was originally built has long since ceased. The proposal seeks to put the building to a sustainable alternative use which will secure its future and preserve the essence of its local architectural and historic interest. The scheme, as with the previous submissions, seeks demolition of a small outshut on the south side of the barn along with a freestanding outbuilding, with retention and conversion of the barn and a long outshut on its east side. The loss of the outshut and outbuilding, as secondary later elements, is not considered to harm the core significance of the undesignated building. The proposal seeks to replace these with an extension at the south end of the barn – of agricultural appearance, with its principal feature a large glazed opening – and will therefore be in accordance with the character of the site and its surroundings.

Where heritage assets are undesignated, national guidance requires simply a balanced planning judgement on the scheme. In making this balanced assessment, the proposal emerges as entirely favourable because:

- It rescues the unlisted building from redundancy and decay
- It puts it to a sustainable use that will secure its future
- It sustains the core elements from which its significance is derived

For these reasons, the application merits approval without delay.

2: THE SITE

The application building is a disused barn at Shepherd Hey Farm, Ashworth Moor, in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. Shepherd Hey Farm is an isolated farmstead, principally comprising the barn and a farmhouse (in separate ownership) to which it is attached. The property is located on a track leading off Ashford Road and amid the Pennine moorlands between Rochdale and Bury.



Map 1. Location of the application property



1. The barn, with farmhouse beyond



2. The moorland setting of the barn: view to the southeast

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Proposed development

Proposals have been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for conversion and extension of the barn to form a dwelling.

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3.2 Designation

The barn 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 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 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

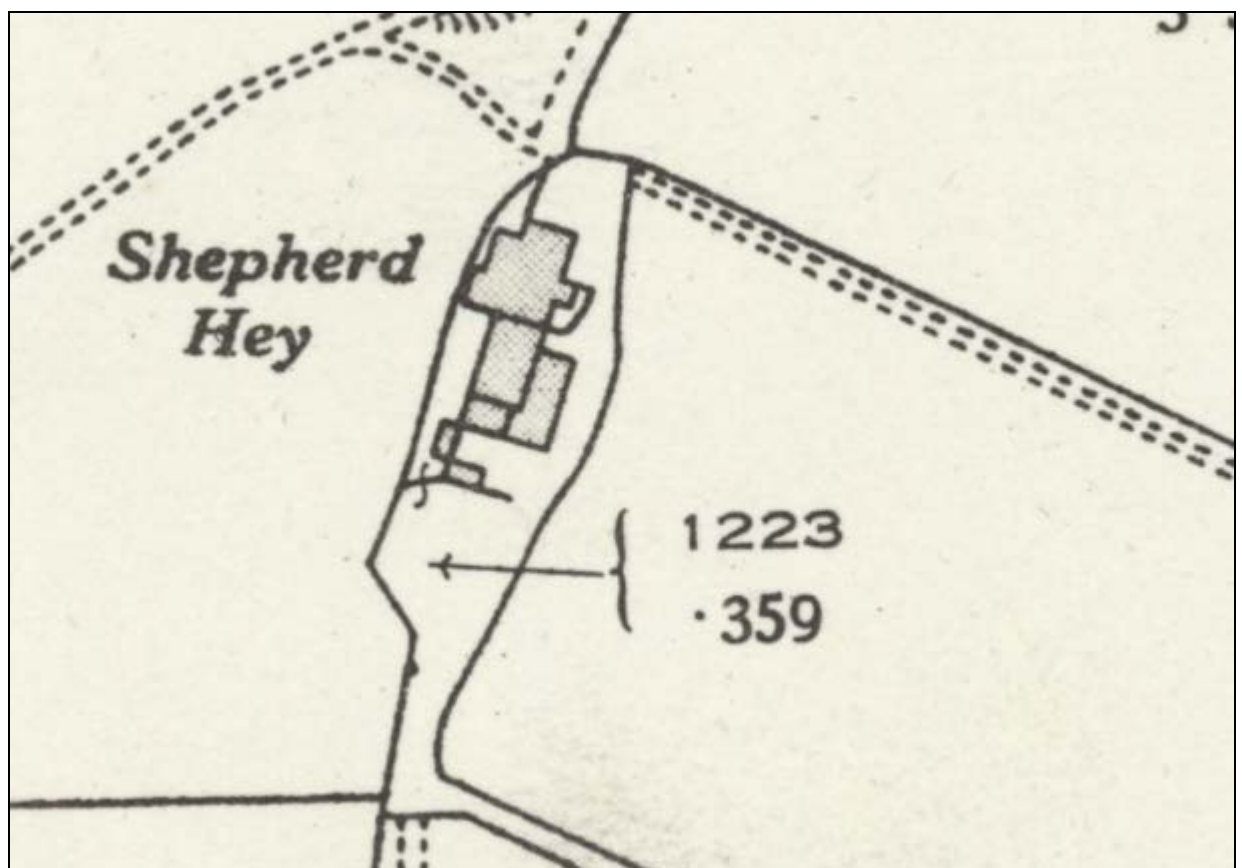
The application site is one of a number of small isolated farmsteads located on the north side of the valley of the Cheesden Brook, south of Ashworth Road, where it stands at the junction of moorland tracks. The site probably represents mid-18th century enclosure of open moorland, given the surrounding rectilinear field pattern shown on the 1840s OS mapping (Map 2, below). The farmhouse itself appears to be of this date, while the barn appears to have been added later. The entire building had essentially acquired its present footprint by the 1840s and has thereafter remained little altered.



Map 2. The farmstead as depicted by the six-inch OS map of 1844-1847



Maps 3 and 4. Little change is shown by the 25-inch OS editions of 1890 (above) and 1939 (below)



5: THE APPLICATION BUILDING

5.1 Overview

Derelict small moorland barn, mid-late 18th century, with outriggers and outbuildings of the late 18th-early 19th century and the 20th century.

5.2 Description

- a. **The barn.** As noted earlier, the barn appears to be an addition to the house, whose south wall is watershot and hence would originally have stood exposed. Hand-sawn roof trusses in the barn suggest a mid-late 18th century date. The roof pitch has however been lowered, as redundant water tabling in stone remains on the gable of the house. The west elevation of the barn is blank apart from a doorway blocked in probably early 20th century brick. The south and east sides are now obscured by the later outshuts. The east elevation has however been entirely opened up above the long outshut on this side, but retains a wagon entrance adjoining the house. Internally, the barn is a single open space whose sole interest resides in its roof structure, with two kingpost trusses already referred to along with hand-sawn purlins.
- b. **Outshuts/outbuildings.** The principal outshut is a long single-storey structure along the east side of the barn. This was latterly used as cattle accommodation, with mid-20th century stalls within, but is now roofless and derelict. It originally stopped at the south end of the barn (as witnessed by quoins) but was later extended beyond it. On the south end of the barn is a further small outshut. Both these elements are probably late 18th-early 19th century, and appear to be existing on the 1840s map. The third and most recent structure is a freestanding small single-storey outbuilding south of the barn that is of rendered brick. This dates from the early 20th century. To the east of the site are modern single-storey outbuildings of no interest.



3. The barn and its additions, viewed from south



4. The barn and the outshut added at its south end



5. End wall of the house is watershot, indicating the barn is an addition



6. Blocked door in west elevation of the barn and redundant water tabling (indicated)



7. The barn contains a single open space



8. Its kingpost roof trusses



9. The long outshut on the east side



10. The south extension of the long outshut



11, Derelect interior of the long outshut



12. The early 20th century brick outbuilding

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 the non-designated building resides in the local context only, as an example of a barn associated with a small isolated upland farmstead that probably resulted from mid-18th century moorland enclosure. The barn is notable for its piecemeal evolution, beginning first with its addition to the house in the mid-late 18th century, and then its subsequent enlargement via a series of additions in the late 18th or early 19th century and finally in the early 20th century. Given the loss of most of the interior, this significance is embodied primarily within the external envelope of the building – principally the barn and the long outshut, with the other added structures being of less interest – along with its presence in the surrounding moorland landscape.

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 change of use and extension of the barn, including demolition of the outshut on its south side along with the outbuilding, as detailed in the submitted drawings. Conversion has already been granted under a previous consent (application reference 20/00716/FUL), which in turn was identical to an earlier consented application, 17/00361/FUL.



13. Proposed front and rear elevations

8.2 Its effect

- a. **Principle of the scheme.** The building is disused and derelict and it is at risk owing to its condition. The purpose for which it was originally built has long since ceased. The proposal seeks to put the building to a sustainable alternative use which will secure its future and preserve the essence of its local architectural and

historic interest. The two previous consents have confirmed that the principle of the conversion is favourable.

- b. Design.** The scheme, as with the previous submissions, seeks demolition of the south outshut and freestanding outbuilding, with retention and conversion of the barn and long east outshut. The loss of the outshut and outbuilding, as secondary later elements, is not considered to harm the core significance of the undesignated building. The proposal seeks to replace these with an extension at the south end – of agricultural appearance, with its principal feature a large glazed opening – and will therefore be in accordance with the character of the site and its surroundings.

8.3 Concluding statement

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 scheme emerges as entirely favourable as:

- It rescues the unlisted building from redundancy and decay
- It puts it to a sustainable use that will secure its future
- It sustains the core elements from which its significance is derived

For these reasons, the application merits approval without delay.