

Heritage Statement Addendum

Silverhill Farm, Rochdale

November 2023

Introduction

1. This Heritage Statement Addendum has been prepared by Turley Heritage on behalf of Barrett David Wilson Homes North West in connection with an application for full planning permission together with listed building consent for the refurbishment of Silverhill Farm, conversion of the associated Barn and erection of 57 dwellings (the 'Proposed Development') at Silverhill Farm, Rochdale (the 'Site').
2. Following the submission of the planning application (ref 22/00998/FUL) and associated listed building consent application (ref 22/00999/LBC) in July 2022, there has been extensive engagement and consultation with Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and the following amendments, relevant to built heritage considerations, are now proposed:
 - **Revised layout to former farmyard element:** the layout of the two new build units within the farmyard has been revised to offset axial alignments between the buildings and create a more irregular and organic character. The footprint of Plot 55 (formerly 64) has changed from a T-shape to an L-shape and has been re-orientated to provide greater enclosure and screening between the listed farmhouse and the Kingsway Business Park to the north east.
 - **Retention/rebuild of a larger portion of the c.1910 brick range:** It has been agreed with RMBC that the c.1910 element of the brick range will be retained/rebuilt in full, with demolition limited to the later, eastern section.
 - **Revised layout for the wider Site (Plot W):** The revised layout includes a reduction in the number of units within the wider Site from 60 to 53 units and a revised road layout. This reduces the density of development and amount of hard landscaping and allows an increased offset and landscape buffer between the farmyard element and development within the wider Site. Irregular building lines within the development also act to create a less formal character.
 - **Revised farmyard new build elevations and materiality:** From discussions with the RMBC Conservation Officer, it was agreed that one of the new builds would be predominately stone and the other metal. The elevations have also been revised to reduce the regularity of fenestration to achieve a more agrarian character.
 - **Revised elevations and materiality to the wider Site:** The properties in the wider Site will be faced in brick. The seven units facing the farmyard cluster will have natural slate roofs, including their respective garages, and chimneys. The remainder of the Site will have replica slate roofs and no chimneys.
 - **Revised landscaping:** Key landscaping changes across the Site relevant to heritage considerations are the increased landscape buffer with native planting, a footpath linking

Plot W to Lower Lane and revised farmyard landscaping proposals including additional tree planting.

3. The purpose of this Addendum is to update the Assessment of Impact and Conclusions of the Heritage Statement (dated July 2022) in light of the proposed amendments. It should be read in conjunction with that Heritage Statement, the revised drawings, the Design and Access Statement and Planning Statement.

Summary of the Conclusions of the Heritage Statement

4. As described in greater detail in the Heritage Statement, the former farmhouse and associated barn are vacant and in a poor and deteriorating condition with serious structural concerns despite the Site being secure and remedial works having been completed (propping, structural ties, repointing etc). To secure their future and protect the significance of the listed building, a long-term sustainable use is required for the house and barn. A degree of harm to the significance of the listed building is unavoidable to bring the house up to a habitable standard and to convert the barn to residential use. There are also additional impacts on the grade II listed farmhouse arising from the wider Proposed Development. The following harm was identified and summarised in the Heritage Statement as follows:

- New openings in north east elevation of the house which will result in the loss of some historic fabric and legibility. This effect has been reduced through minimising the number of openings and reusing existing blocked up openings. Due to the previous alterations and lack of architectural uniformity or intent on this elevation, the impact of the altered and new opening on the significance of the listed building will be negligible.
- Minor alterations to the house floorplan, which are required to revert the building back to one dwelling (as originally constructed). The house has been adapted and reconfigured throughout its history and the proposed room arrangement fits well into the existing floorplan; retaining the principal structural walls with minimal loss of historic fabric and limiting subdivision to less significant rooms. The impact on the significance of the listed building is limited.
- The loss of the stone flag floor at ground floor. As set out in the Building Survey Report and Repairs Schedule (Appended to the Heritage Statement), the stone flags have been covered in places with a concrete screed and it is not possible to retain and repair the stone flag floor. This aspect of harm is unavoidable and would arise in any scheme.
- A reduction in the ability to appreciate internal volume of the barn and its agricultural character. The impact has been minimised through the design development as set out above. The Building Survey Report and Repair Statement notes the requirement for an internal bracing wall which would reduce the internal volume of the Barn to a degree irrespective of the Proposed Development. The barn will remain legible as a historic barn and a sense of its volume will be maintained by the retention of double height space between the cart doors.
- The demolition of outbuildings which provide an appreciation of the growth of Silverhill's farming operations in the 20th century. This is better appreciated through historic mapping and the poor visual appearance of the outbuildings and their proximity to the listed

building detracts from the quality of its setting. The farm's 20th century expansion is not a key element of the listed building's special architectural and historic interest as a late 18th century Yeoman House and later, farmhouse. The harm arising from the removal of the outbuildings is concluded to be limited.

- Development within the wider Site, which will bring suburban development closer to the listed building and Barn. It will also result in the development of a field which had a historic association and functional relationship with the listed building and Barn. The existing security fence and planting have physically and visually divorced the house and barn from the field. Accordingly, the legibility of that former historic functional and associative relationship has been greatly eroded. Considering the current setting of the listed building including the existing suburban context and the design mitigation, it is concluded the impact on the significance of the listed building will be limited.

5. Having considered the significance of the listed building and the contribution made by setting including the wider Site, the Heritage Statement concluded that the harm arising would be 'less than substantial' under the terms of the NPPF and at the lower end of that scale for the reasons set out above.

6. The Heritage Statement also identified the following heritage benefits to be weighed in the planning balance as part of the public benefits of the Proposed Development.

- The principal listed building will be refurbished and brought back into use in its original domestic purpose.
- Sustainable long-term viable use for the Barn.
- There will be an extensive programme of repair and rebuilding for the House and Barn as detailed in the Building Survey Report and Repair Statement and Drawing 21-088-021.
- Windows and openings in the House and Barn will be unblocked and timber framed windows of an appropriate design reinstated to the House (to be finalised in collaboration with the conservation officer).
- The appreciation of the special interest of the listed building and the architectural resonance and historic relationship between the House and Barn will be more readily appreciated through; the removal of the security fence and planting and creation of public open space, demolition of the low-quality intervening brick structures, the more generous space within the farmyard which the new development will provide.
- Higher quality farmyard setting replacing the existing concrete surface with a hard landscaped area, incorporating high quality materials including sandstone.
- Reinstatement of a garden to the south east of the House.

Review of Assessment of Impact on Silverhill Farm (grade II listed building)

7. The revised proposals, as set out at paragraph 2 above, seek to further minimise the level of harm to Silverhill Farm:

- Retention of a greater proportion of the c.1910 range will retain more historic fabric and understanding of this phase of the smallholding's development. As set out in the Heritage Statement, this phase of development is not central to the significance of the farmhouse and its reasons for listing and therefore the effect of the change on that significance is considered to be minimal.
 - The increased irregularity in the layout and elevations of the two new build dwellings within the farmyard will create a more organic character and reflect the ad-hoc expansion typical of farms and small holdings.
 - The greater enclosure of the farmyard to the east through the re-orientation of Plot 55, planting within the farmyard and the landscape buffer will screen/filter views to the east towards Kingsway and the wider Site and therefore soften the urbanising/suburbanising effect caused by opening up views to the east through the removal of the existing, inappropriate boundary planting.
 - The reduction in density and hard landscaping, as well as the more irregular layout, of the wider Site will further soften the suburbanising effect of the Proposed Development and, along with the intervening native planting, provide reference to the former rural character of the area. Increased design quality through higher specification materials on the plots facing the listed building further mitigated against the negative impacts of the Proposed Development.
 - The new footpath linking Lower Lane and Plot W will allow key views north towards the principal elevations of the listed farmhouse and barn to be more widely appreciated.
8. Having considered the nature and extent of the proposed amendments, it is concluded that the level of harm arising from the Proposed Development will be reduced as a result of the revised proposals. There will remain a degree of harm, but this will be very much at the lower end of the 'less than substantial harm' scale.
9. There is also an additional/expanded heritage benefit created as a result of the proposed footpath and the resultant increased appreciation of the significance of the listed building via views from that footpath looking north.

Conclusions

10. The Heritage Statement identified a degree of less than substantial harm to the significance of Silverhill Farm, a grade II listed building. The revised design is considered to reduce that level of less than substantial harm.
11. As set out in this addendum, the revised proposals are well-considered and informed by an understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting, as currently found. This approach is in accordance with the guiding principles set out in paragraph 197 of the NPPF, which encourages local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. It also recognises the positive contribution that the conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, including their economic viability, and also the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

12. Paragraph 199 establishes that great weight should be given to the conservation of the listed building as a designated heritage asset. Where Annex 2 of the NPPF defines 'conservation' as the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance. It is not a process intended to prevent or arrest change, particularly where proposals can demonstrate that they have made determined efforts to avoid, minimise and/or mitigate harm to heritage significance, and also have the potential to deliver wider public benefits (also including heritage benefits).
13. Paragraph 200 sets out that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of the listed building as a designated heritage asset would require clear and convincing justification. In this instance, the limited level of harm arising from the Proposed Development is justified by the desirability of the farmhouse and barn being repaired and brought back into use which necessitates some loss of historic fabric, subdivision and conversion of the barn, replacement of poor quality/derelict late 19th and early 20th century outbuildings and the removal of the securing fencing and planting which opens up views to the wider suburban context and Kingsway.
14. Paragraphs 201 and 202 provide the necessary policy framework for addressing 'harm' to the significance of designated heritage assets through the planning system and case law has confirmed that in applying this framework decision makers can discharge their statutory duties under the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act.
15. Paragraph 202 in particular states where an application proposal will lead to the category of 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. The low and limited level of 'less than substantial' harm arising from the Proposed Development should therefore be weighed against the public benefits, including heritage benefits. Importantly, an application should be judged on its merits and the quantification of harm and benefits should be based on the current baseline, not a previous point in history or an alternative scheme.
16. Appendix 1 of this Addendum provides a summary of heritage harm and benefits to assist with this planning balance.

Appendix 1: Summary of Heritage Harm and Benefits

Heritage Benefits	Heritage Harm
The principal listed building will be refurbished and brought back into use in its original domestic purpose.	New openings in north east elevation which will result in the loss of some historic fabric and legibility. This effect has been reduced through minimising the number of openings and reusing existing blocked up openings. Due to the previous alterations and lack of architectural uniformity or intent on this elevation, the impact of the altered and new opening on the significance of the listed building will be negligible.
Sustainable long-term viable use for the barn.	Minor alterations to the house floorplan, which are required to revert the building back to one dwelling (as originally constructed). The house has been adapted and reconfigured throughout its history and the proposed room arrangement fits well into the existing floorplan; retaining the principal structural walls with minimal loss of historic fabric and limiting subdivision to less significant rooms. The impact on the significance of the listed building is limited.
There will be an extensive programme of repair and rebuilding for the house and barn as detailed in the Building Survey Report and Repair Statement and Drawing 21-088-021. Both buildings are vacant and in a deteriorating condition despite stabilisation works.	The loss of the stone flag floor at ground floor. As set out in the Building Survey Report and Repairs Schedule, the stone flags have been covered in places with a concrete screed and it is not possible to retain and repair the stone flag floor. This aspect of harm is unavoidable and would arise in any scheme.
Windows and openings in the house and barn will be unblocked and timber framed windows of an appropriate design reinstated to the house (to be finalised in collaboration with the conservation officer).	A reduction in the ability to appreciate internal volume of the Barn and its agricultural character. The impact has been minimised through the design development. The Building Survey Report and Repair Statement notes the requirement for an internal bracing wall which would reduce the internal volume of the Barn to a degree irrespective of the Proposed Development. The Barn will remain legible as a historic Barn and a sense of its volume will be maintained by the retention of double height space between the cart doors.
The appreciation of the special interest of the listed building and the architectural resonance and historic relationship between the house and barn will be more readily appreciated through; the	The demolition of outbuildings which provide an appreciation of the growth of Silverhill's farming operations in the 20th century. This is better appreciated through historic mapping and the poor

removal of the security fence and planting and creation of public open space reinstating key views of the asset, demolition of the low-quality intervening brick structures, the more generous space within the farmyard which the new development will provide.	visual appearance of the outbuildings and their proximity to the listed building detracts from the quality of its setting. The farm's 20th century expansion is not a key element of the listed building's special architectural and historic interest and its designation as a late 18th century Yeoman House and later, Farmhouse. The harm arising from the removal of the outbuildings is considered to be limited.
Higher quality farmyard setting replacing the existing concrete surface with a hard landscaped area, incorporating high quality materials including sandstone.	Development within the wider Site, which will bring suburban development closer to the listed building and Barn. The impact should be considered in relation to the existing baseline i.e. there is no visual connection with the wider Site and the listed building is currently experienced alongside suburban development.
Reinstatement of a garden to the south east of the House.	The Proposed Development will result in the development of a field which had a historic association and functional relationship with the listed building and barn. The security fence and planting have physically and visually divorced the House and Barn from the field. Accordingly, the legibility of that former historic functional and associative relationship has been greatly eroded. Considering the current setting of the listed building including the existing suburban context and the design mitigation, it is concluded the impact on the significance of the listed building will be limited.
Reinstating an appreciation of the historic visual, physical and functional connection between the farmyard and land to the east and south. The benefit is tempered given the existing and proposed changes to setting. The footpath proposals as part of the amended design, across land to the south of the farmhouse will increase appreciation of the principal elevation of the listed building and the adjacent barn.	