

Heritage Statement

Charehead Barn, Acomb

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Heritage Statement

1.1 Background Information

The site is located in the village of Acomb, near the market town of Hexham. Located in the southern part of Northumberland, the small village is home to approximately 1268 people as of the 2011 census. The existing barn building is found on Main Street, the principal street which runs through Acomb, and lies adjacent and attached to the site owners home.

The revision 1 proposals have been changed from a stand alone airbnb type facility, to that of a simple extension to the existing. The new proposal for the site is to convert the run down and mainly unused out-house into a master bedroom suite with ensuite. The existing building is proposed to be adapted to provide a new structure within the footprint of the existing barn walls to work sensitively with the existing fabric yet bringing it up to modern insulation standards. The proposed adaptation is designed to be as minimal an impact on the existing environment as possible.

The barn and the surrounding buildings are constructed from stone with slate roofs; this is the predominant local vernacular of the village. The importance of this local aesthetic is admired and is to be carried through into the proposed design, by retaining the original structure and working with it to create a sensitive and attractive addition. The site sits within the Acomb Conservation Area shown in Figure 2 which was established in 1991.

The barn itself looks to date from the late 1700's or 1800's. It is in a relatively poor state of repair and has been re-roofed on what could be a number of occasions. The timber lintels to the door and window openings have all failed and suffer from both rot and infestation. These are not salvageable. The masonry is also in a poor state of repair but would be capable of being repaired and restored. A separate structural report has been provided to consider the stability of the existing masonry walls.



Figure 1: Aerial image of the site highlighted in red and adjacent land of owner shown in blue

1.2 Statement of Significance

Heritage Category: Conservation Area

List Entry Number: N/A

Date first listed: N/A

Statutory Address: Chare Head Farm, Main Street, Acomb, NE46 4PL

The property is not listed.

The Acomb Neighbourhood Plan - February 2019 "made plan" includes Policy 8 which covers the Acomb Conservation Area.

A detailed Acomb Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009) is referred to in the 2019 plan.

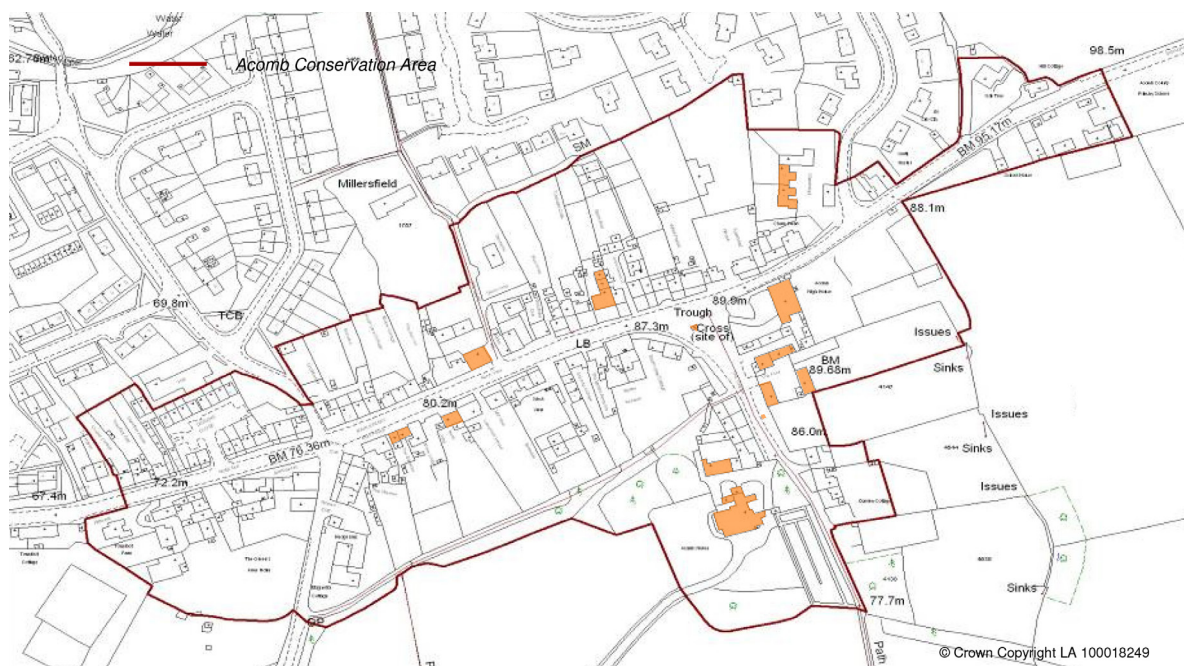


Figure 2: Map showing the Acomb Conservation Area.

Source: Acomb Conservation Area Character Appraisal, Tynedale Council, February 2009

The Acomb Neighbourhood Plan - February 2019 "made plan" includes Policy 9 which covers "non designated" heritage assets.

The two nearest listed buildings are both grade 2, with Acomb High House to the South and the Chare Head barn to the North.

The Armstrong Map of 1769 is "pictorial" in nature and shows a small isolated block which looks to sit under, what is now, the main house. The mapping from the Tithe award 1810 shows a linear structure that sits over the area of the house, the barn and the neighbouring property. The 1860's first edition mapping shows what is very likely to be the current footprint with the house and barn at Charehead clearly defined. This is further reinforced in the 1897 OS mapping.

The barn looks to have been part of a larger structure which has been demolished to allow the construction of Charehead Barn (Main House) to the East and also the neighbouring property to the West (circa 1990's). The building has been used for storage and a gym area.

The walls and part of the floor look to be the only original elements of the building, the roof having been replaced over time and is now showing signs of failure. All timber elements built into the walling are rotten and falling away.

The Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides statutory protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest. S.72 (1) states that with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. The site is located within the Acomb Conservation Area as shown above.

Key material considerations include the NPPF (February 2019); National Planning Practice Guidance (2014, as updated); relevant Historic England guidance.

The background, nature of the asset and extent of the asset is covered in the background section 1.1.

The Significance of the Asset

The significance of an historic asset is determined by a wide range of influences including setting, context, use, history, tradition, distinctiveness and ecology as well as its physical fabric.

- Historical significance
- Architectural significance
- Townscape significance
- Archaeological significance
- Social and community significance
- Ecological significance

Each of these themes is ranked as follows:

- High: Those aspects considered to be essential to the buildings' character, the alteration or development of which would destroy or significantly compromise the integrity.
- Medium: Those aspects that help to define the architectural, historical and aesthetic character of the buildings, without which the character and understanding would be diminished but not destroyed.
- Low: Those aspects which have only a minor connection with the architectural, historical and aesthetic character, the alteration of which could have a limited effect on the understanding.

Adverse effects to the significance of designated heritage assets are assessed in terms of substantial harm/total loss of significance (NPPF para 195) or less than substantial harm (NPPF para 196).

The existing building has been considered as follows:

- Historical significance **- ranked Medium**

The building is not listed, however some of the fabric is likely to date from 1790-1810. The building does provide links back to the formation and development of the old village.

- Architectural significance **- ranked Low**

The building has limited architectural significance.

- Townscape significance **- ranked Medium**

The Acomb CACA states that *"The historic core of the village comprises a good collection of predominantly late eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings, with some later twentieth century infill housing. The predominant building material is local light buff/cream coloured sandstone and Welsh slate, with splashes of contrasting red bricks and flat applications of render"* and that *"The conservation area comprises the surviving remnants of the late medieval street village, with its roots in agriculture, and its later history affected by the social and economic impact of mining. It rolls over the slope of Acomb Fell to create a single, linked, settlement marked by slightly different characteristics determined by age, topography and function"*.

The building, whilst dilapidated, does reinforce the original townscape and opportunities to repair and bring the building back into use should be explored.

The BCO commented on the previous proposals and stated that *"it is considered that the submitted proposal through its scale, design and massing and use of the roadside verge would not preserve the character of the conservation area"*. In direct response to this, the proposals have been reduced in size and scale and simply become additional living accommodation for the existing property.

- **Archaeological significance - ranked Low**
The site has been developed from the 1750's and the building on the site adapted and altered over time. The HER's and Acomb CACA make no reference to archaeological significance within the Charehead footprint.
- **Social and community significance - ranked Low**
The building has not served a community or social purpose, however there is growing attachment to the historic fabric of the town which is reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- **Ecological significance - ranked Low/Medium**
The building occupies the full width of the site and there is amenity grass/lawned areas to the front and rear.
Fauna is likely to be restricted to nesting birds or bats to the upper levels and this should be taken into consideration for any development. An initial PEA is to be provided.

The proposals have been considered as follows:

- **Historical significance - ranked Low/Medium**
The original masonry fabric is to be retained, consolidated and repaired. Minimal adaptation are required to the existing openings to the rear however a single new opening is proposed to the front elevation which has been kept to a minimum.
The slate roof and timbers are to be replaced as part of the proposals, however these have been previously replaced over the years and the existing timbers are in poor condition.
- **Architectural significance - ranked Low**
The retention of the walling and expression of the new element as a separate entity allows the building to be understood. This retains the fabric for generations to come.
The stonework is to be cleaned and re-pointed in a lime mortar. The existing timber lintels that have failed are to be replaced to the rear of the existing stone and backing lintels provided to the stone lintels where the stonework is distressed or where the openings to the rear have been adapted.
A simple structure is provided internally and a slate roof (using the reclaimed material) is to be provided which would appear to "float" over the existing walling. Where possible the timber can be recycled and re-used within the construction of the building.
- **Townscape significance - ranked Medium**
There is an impact to the primary street view, although there is very limited impact to the rear elevation. The building is currently in a poor state of repair and in danger of being lost as an asset. The work has the opportunity enhance the building and create an interesting vista to the top of Main Street.
- **Archaeological significance - ranked Low**
There is limited excavation work required and the formation level is likely to be similar to that of the original structure.
- **Social and community significance - ranked Low**
The changes to the scheme allow the building to be re-purposed and used for generations to come. This will likely enhance the social and community significance.
- **Ecological significance - ranked Low / Medium**
There is no evidence of a likely ecological impact within the flora with limited works proposed to remove the existing grass to the front of the property.
The PEA will dictate whether the significance would move from low to Medium.

The overall Significance of the work can be considered Low to Medium primarily as a result of the condition/merit of the asset itself.

In summary there will be less than substantial harm as a result of the these proposals.

1.3 Design Concept and Development Impact

The concept for the design was developed from the essential need to retain the original stone structure of the barn which is important to the local vernacular and the history of the setting. The location of the barn is within one of the oldest parts of the village and the street is characterised by stone walls and traditional countryside feel.

The building is located within the Acomb conservation area and therefore, the concept was to keep the impact of the proposal to a minimum; to reduce the impact on the street scene and to reduce the scale of the design to the existing confines of the structure.

The material palette is limited with the re-used slate and durable natural timber, both of which complement the natural stone but provide a feeling of a new sense of life within the barn reflecting its new use.

The eaves details and rafter ends reflect the traditional cast gutter and rafter brackets but used in cast Aluminium. Depending on their condition when removed, it is proposed the existing brackets are to be reused where practically possible.

The proposal is "reversible" if the need required.

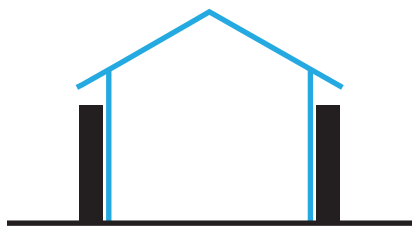


Figure 3: Simple "Parti" diagram highlighting the new structure (blue) sitting within the existing (black)

1.4 Photographs

Included below are annotated photographs to illustrate the building in context and its exterior and interior characteristics. Refer to existing drawings for complementary and further annotation of building condition.



Townhead House - new build within the footprint of the previous barn

Charehead House (owner's home), built on the footprint of the previous barn.

Charehead Barn. Existing stone barn which is the subject of this application.

Figure 4



Existing slate roof in a state of disrepair. The ridge line is sagging badly and there are no rainwater goods remaining.

Existing timber entrance door

Random roughly coursed rubble walling. Removal of vegetation and soft mortar is required and re-pointing in lime mortar.

Figure 5



Townhead House; note the remnant of the barn gable to the single storey extension to the property.

Charehead House

Charehead Barn

Figure 6



Existing rear window with collapsed internal lintel.

Stone walling to be repaired with stainless steel "stitching" to areas of significant cracking.

Existing rear door opening

Figure 7



Existing timber roof structure showing previous roof member replacement. The timbers are to be salvaged, treated and dressed for use in the new construction.

Figure 8



Interior currently used as storage. The internal walls are to be cleaned and sand blasted to remove the old limewash and prepared for re-pointing in lime mortar

Figure 9



Existing channel and cobbles are to be lifted and relaid as part of the new external work to the front of the property.

Figure 10



Rotten wooden beam (4 number timbers with blocking between) with woodworm infestation. Requires replacement.

Rear Opening - doors no longer present.

Figure 11



Existing collapsed stone supported on a rotten timber lintel. Opening to be adapted and made good.

Existing rear door opening. Jamb to be made good and stone head raised.

Figure 12



Figure 13