

Lean Park Farm,
Liskeard, Cornwall

Heritage Impact Assessment



April 2023

PORTICO
HERITAGE

Introduction

- 1 This report has been prepared to accompany the listed building application for the insertion of a new bathroom at Lean Park Farmhouse, near Liskeard. This report should be read in conjunction with the plans and design statement that form part of this application.
- 2 Lean Park Farm is Grade II listed.

The Farmhouse

- 3 The farmhouse dates to the late 17th/early 18th century although it was extended in circa early to mid 18th century to the north west and to the rear in the mid 19th century¹.
- 4 It is built in rubblestone, with its south west front rendered and the rear partly slate hung. The south eastern end is slate hung.



Figure 1&2: The south west front and north east rear of the farmhouse

¹ Historic England LEN: 1329404

- 5 The rear elevation is formed of two hipped returns with a single storey 'boot room' formed from a former enclosed yard containing a slate stone water trough.
- 6 It is likely that the original plan form was 2 rooms with a central cross passage, extended to the left – with the additional giant brick chimney stack; further extended to the rear with a kitchen and dairy in the early and mid 19th century².
- 7 Both the Tithe Map of 1840 and the Ordnance Survey Map of 1906 shows that from the early/mid 19th century the farmstead has remained largely un-changed in terms of the broad footprint even though, as to be expected on a working farm, many of the structures have been physically altered, re-built and re-purposed.



Figure 3 & 4: Extract from the Tithe Map (1840) and Ordnance Survey Map 1906

² ibid

- 8 Internally the evolved plan form remains largely in tact and the house, whilst simply detailed, retains its key features: chimney breasts/fireplaces and staircases. The following images illustrate a number of these, including the slate stone drinking trough.



Figures 5-9 Interior of Farmhouse

Heritage Context & Significance

- 9 Lean Park Farmhouse was listed Grade II in November 1985. There are no other listed buildings in the vicinity, although the subsidiary farm buildings surround the house to the north east and south west form part of its setting.
- 10 In terms of the assessment of the proposal for the farmhouse it is consideration of its effect on the special 'architectural and historic interest' of the listed building that is most pertinent.

Assessing heritage significance

- 11 Lean Park Farmhouse is a 'designated heritage asset'.
- 12 'Significance' is defined in the NPPF 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'. The Historic England 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' puts it slightly differently – as 'the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest'.
- 13 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment' (Historic England, April 2008) describes a number of 'heritage values' that may be present in a 'significant place'. These are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value.
- 14 The historic interest of the farmhouse is as a good example of a traditional farm in this part of Cornwall, reflecting the evolving nature of the humble farmstead from

the original two-room plan through to the larger building that now exists over the course of 300 years. It forms part of a group with its associated farm buildings.

- 15 Its architectural interest is reflected in its representation of a vernacular Cornish farm and is manifested in its evolved architectural form, detailing and appearance. This includes, externally, the use of traditional materials – rubble stone, slate, timber windows – and for the later 19th century chimney stack, brick as well as the plan form referred to above.
- 16 As well as the internal plan form of the farmhouse, a number of walls retain their lathe and plaster construction, with some of the timber structure exposed. Some plank-board partitioning and chimney breasts/fireplaces also remain.
- 17 The continued evolution of the building forms part of its special interest. As to be expected, services such as bathrooms have been added over time and subsequently updated. Elements such as the existing bathroom fittings, kitchen fittings etc are modern, however these do not detract or lessen the special interest of significance of the building.
- 18 The proposal (which is described in further detail later in the report) relates to an existing bedroom at first floor over the ground floor central hall/cross passage. Whilst the room does not contain any features of particular special interest it is nevertheless an important element of the plan form of the farmhouse.

The Policy Context

- 19 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has recently been revised and re-issued in July 2021.
- 20 Section 16 deals with ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’. The NPPF says at Paragraph 189 that:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

- 21 A description and analysis of the heritage and townscape significance of the site and its context is provided in this report.
- 22 At paragraph 197, the NPPF says that:

In determining planning 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 viability; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

23 Paragraph 201 says:

Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable use of the site; and
- No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

24 Paragraph 202 says that ‘Where a development proposal will lead to 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 securing its optimum viable use.

Cornwall’s Local Plan

25 Policy 24 of the Cornwall Local Plan 2016 relates to the Historic Environment. In particular, it states that:

Development proposals will be expected to: sustain designated heritage assets; take opportunities to better reveal their significance; maintain the special character and appearance of conservation areas, especially those positive elements in any Conservation Area Appraisal.

The proposals and their impact on heritage significance

26 The proposals are described and illustrated in the plans and design statement that accompanies the application. The proposals are for the conversion of an existing bedroom into a bathroom.

27 The proposals have been carefully designed to ensure that the majority of fixtures and fittings are effectively free standing and will have a minimal impact on historic fabric. There will be no change to plan form, existing wall structures, doors etc.

28 The plumbing routes have been investigated to ensure that pipework runs either in parallel with floor joists or is boxed in along the edge of walls or through floor voids to ensure that the structure is not damaged – with just nominal openings for pipes to pass through – as shown in the drawings – to connect into the existing plumbing/drains network.

29 The external drainage run will be along the rear of the house, linking to the existing soil stack and a small vent will be discretely fitted to the front.

- 30 The proposals will be light touch and notionally entirely reversible. They should not affect the special interest of the listed building or its significance.

Compliance with policy and guidance

- 31 This report has provided a description and understanding of the heritage context and significance of the building, as required by paragraph 189 of the NPPF. In addition, the report describes how the proposed scheme will affect that heritage significance.
- 32 The proposed scheme complies with paragraph 201 of the NPPF – it certainly does not lead to ‘substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset’. It also complies with Paragraph 202 for the reasons given above – following an assessment of where the special interest of the building lies, we do not believe that the proposals will cause harm to its significance.
- 33 In terms of Cornwall Council’s Local Plan Policy 24, the proposals have been designed to ensure that the listed building is sustained and enhanced.

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The author of this report is Nick Collins BSc (Hons) MSc MRICS IHBC. Nick has over twenty years experience in the property sector, including most recently as a Director of the Conservation Team at integrated design consultants, Alan Baxter & Associates. Nick spent eight years at Historic England as a Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings & Areas where he led a specialist team of historic building inspectors, architects, and archaeologists on a wide range of heritage projects. Previously Conservation Officer at the London Borough of Bromley, Nick began his career at international real estate consultancy Jones Lang LaSalle as a Chartered Surveyor. This experience has given Nick a good understanding of the property industry, listed building and planning process, heritage policy, guidance and funding bodies. Locally Nick has provided advice for The Lost Gardens of Heligan, Porthleven Harbour Company, The Market House St Austell, Kresen Kernow, Redruth as well as other projects across Cornwall.