



Heritage Impact Statement

New window

The Old Dairy, Ashton Hall,
Kelsall Road, Ashton Hayes

Mr. and Mrs. Lutton

September 2023

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The Old Dairy, Ashton Hall

Executive Summary

This report is submitted in support of listed building consent for a new window in the rear west elevation, and minor internal changes, in retrospect, at The Old Dairy, Ashton Hall Farm, Kelsall Road, Ashton Hayes, CH3 8BH. This Heritage Impact Assessment has been written to identify the impact of the proposed development on the significance and setting of heritage assets. This is in accordance with national and local planning guidance on the historic environment. It should be read alongside supporting documents associated with the proposal.

Ashton Hall farmhouse is on the north side of Kelsall Road on the east side of the village separated from the village development by open fields. It was formerly a farmstead. It comprises a former farmhouse with a range of former outbuildings to the north that date from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The outbuildings are residential and their former use as agricultural buildings related to the site's previous use as a working dairy farm of over 100 acres. Collectively the buildings and site have historic group value that contribute to the setting of each other. Ashton Hall Farmhouse is of early 17th century origin and is a Grade II* listed building. A cottage was added in the later 17th century. The farm building attached to north end of Ashton Hall is separately listed at Grade II. The Old Dairy is a curtilage listed building to the north of Ashton Hall farmhouse, built in the last quarter of the 19th century, creating a regular U-shaped courtyard with other former ancillary agricultural buildings on the site built at that time. The building's size and shape indicate that it was more than likely a stable with hayloft above, that was altered in the 1940's with metal windows to comply with hygiene regulations for dairies. The building was granted permission to convert to residential in 1990, and 1993, with other redundant farm buildings in the group.

The significance of The Old Dairy lies in the external agricultural architectural vocabulary that is still retained as part of the residential conversion, and its simple form, scale, massing, and materials, expressed in the use of local red brick and a slate roof. It does not have special architectural and historic interest but is of interest as part of an historic farm group associated with Ashton Hall farmhouse. The layout of the farmyard, as a regular U-shaped courtyard to the north of the farmhouse is relevant to its rural setting and context, where the layout provides an understanding of the farming process in the late 19th century which became increasingly focused on the housing of dairy cattle, the storage of hay and of roots which were chopped up as feed for livestock. The Old Dairy is not a rare survival of its type. It is seen in incidental views from Duck Lane that contributes to group value, views, and vistas of the historic farmstead of Ashton Hall Farm; and its relationship and layout of its buildings to each other and the farmhouse and wider rural landscape help define its sense of place in Ashton Hayes conservation area.

The proposal will not adversely affect the character of The Old Dairy, the setting of Ashton Hall Farmhouse, the historic farm group, or the conservation area's special architectural or historic interest, and the scheme should respectfully be supported.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage impact assessment has been prepared on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Lutton, to accompany a listed building consent application in support of a new window in the rear west elevation, and minor internal changes, in retrospect, at The Old Dairy, Ashton Hall Farm, Kelsall Road, Ashton Hayes, CH3 8BH.
- 1.2 The purpose of the assessment is to identify the significance of the heritage assets affected, and to consider and describe the effects of the proposals to them. This includes direct and indirect impacts on the listed building and its setting. This includes how the proposals will preserve and enhance the special architectural interest of The Old Dairy, Ashton Hall farmhouse and Ashton Hayes conservation area. It identifies mitigating measures, where necessary, to address this impact.
- 1.3 This document has been prepared a site visits in May 2023, and historical research. It is to be read in conjunction with other associated documents in relation to the listed building consent application.

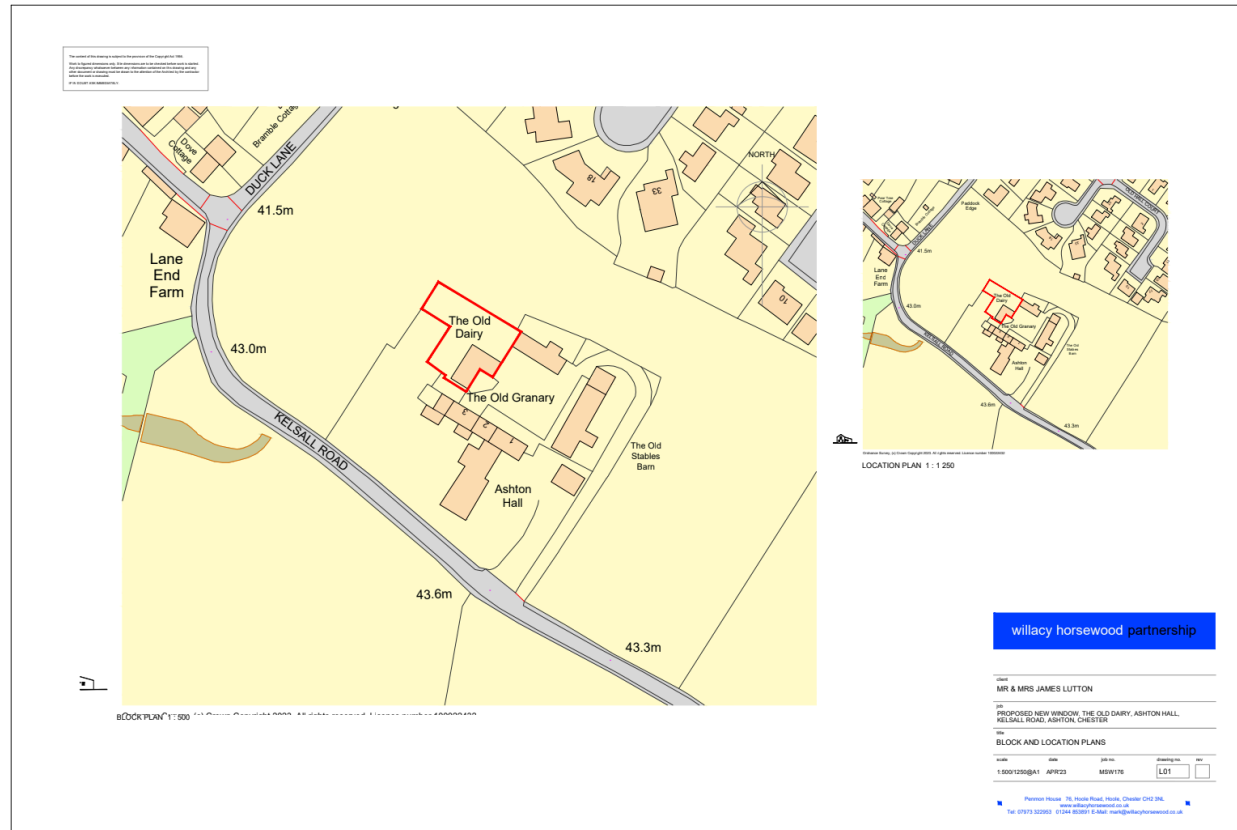


Fig 1. Location and site plan (Copyright: Willacy Horsewood).

2.0 Relevant Conservation Planning Policy and Guidance

- 2.1 Under Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local authorities must give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest. Section 72 of the same Act states, in the exercising of planning functions in conservation areas special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, when assessing planning applications.
- 2.2 National guidance is within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Policies 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Of relevance is policies on Proposals Affecting Heritage Assets, which states 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.” In Considering Potential Impacts the NPPF states that “193. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation ... irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 194. states that “Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 196. advocates 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.” Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that “Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset should be treated favourably.”
- 2.3 A **heritage asset** is described in the glossary of the NPPF (Annex 2) as a “building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).” (*Annex 2: Glossary, National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, June 2021*). Designated heritage assets as those designated under legislation. These are a “World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area”.

- 2.4 The definition of **significance** in relation to heritage policy is defined in the glossary of 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, and historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting. “
- 2.5 The **setting** of a heritage asset is defined as “The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.” Setting is not a heritage designation.
- 2.6 In the Bramshill case in the Court of Appeal, Lord Justice Lindblom stated “what amounts to "substantial harm" or "less than substantial harm" in a particular case will always depend on the circumstances. Whether there will be such "harm", and, if so, whether it will be "substantial", are matters of fact and planning judgment.” This is balanced against the public benefits generated by the proposals. Harm does not mean that no change can occur.
- 2.7 Relevant local plan policies are in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan: Part 1: ENV5 Historic Environment, and ENV6 High quality design and sustainable construction; and Part 2: DM 3 - Design, character and visual amenity, DM 46 – Development in Conservation Areas, DM 47 – Listed buildings. These policies reflect national planning policy in the preservation and enhancement of the building environment. Other relevant policies are in the Ashton Hayes Neighbourhood Plan June 2017 – Policy E1 – Local character.

3.0 The application site and identified heritage assets.

3.1 The application site is The Old Dairy, Ashton Hall, Kelsall Road, Ashton Hayes. Ashton Hayes is located approximately 8 miles east of Chester on the B5393 road. The Old Dairy forms part of the historic curtilage of Ashton Hall Farmhouse, but is now in separate ownership. It is located on the north side of Ashton Hall farmhouse and accessed from Kelsall Road to the south. The building is in residential use. The building lies within the Ashton Hayes conservation area, which was designated in 1979.

3.2 The designated heritage assets that are relevant in considering the proposed development are identified below:

Directly impacting:

- Curtilage Listed Building: The Old Dairy - the application site.
- Conservation Area: Ashton Hayes

Indirectly impacting: -

- Listed Building: Ashton Hall farmhouse (Grade II*) – listed 1967.
- Listed building: Farm building attached to north end of Ashton Hall (Grade II) – listed 1985.
- Curtilage Listed Building: The Old Stables Barn (no access at time of survey)

4.0 Historical context and heritage assets

- 4.1 Ashton Hayes was a township and chapelry, in the parish of Tarvin, in the union of Great Boughton, in the hundred of Eddisbury. Ashton Hayes is a village and former civil parish, now in the parish of Ashton Hayes and Horton-cum-Peel, in the unitary authority of Cheshire West and Chester and ceremonial county of Cheshire, England. It is named after the Ashton Hayes estate and comprises the civil parishes of Ashton, Mouldsworth and Horton-cum-Peel.
- 4.2 In 1086, the village was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Estone, and the manor was given to Richard de Vernon for services to William the Conqueror. It comprised 12 households. During the reign of Edward I, the manor was held by the Mainwaring family, from whom it descended to the Veres and Trussells. In the late 16th century, the manor was sold by Edward Vere (1550 –1604), Earl of Oxford, and English peer, to Sir Christopher Hatton (1540 –1591), from whom it passed down to successive owners.
- 4.3 In 1780 “Ashton-Hayes”, a substantial country house of 72 rooms was built. Ashton-Hayes was bought by Booth Grey Esq (1783 –1850) in 1805, who lived there until 1839. The estate consisting of 1658 acres of land, was sold in 1843 to William Atkinson, Esq., of Manchester, (1797-1883), a textile manufacturer from Knaresborough in Yorkshire who made improvements to both the mansion and grounds, and who donated funds to erect the church of St. John the Evangelist in 1848 after petitioning the Bishop of Chester. The church was consecrated at a service held on 9th March 1849. The church was built on a plot of land known as Little Riddings to the north of the village at a cost of £3000. The church was designed in a Gothic Revival style by Edwin Hugh Shellard (1816 - 1885) a Manchester architect whose principal works were ecclesiastical, the building is constructed in the perpendicular style of Gothic architecture from stone quarried at Manley. The church bell was made in 1848 by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, London. The clock was fitted in 1855 by J.B. Joyce & Co.
- 4.4 Ashton Hayes parish was formed in 1849. Two Methodist chapels were also erected around the same time, a Wesleyan chapel, and a Primitive Methodist chapel, although only one remains today. At this time a vicarage and a free school, also funded by Atkinson, was built; the latter built to hold sixty girls and infants. The original school is now the Village Hall.

4.5 Historical context relevant to the site

- 4.5.1 Ashton Hall is a former farmhouse forming a dominant focal point to the village centre from east on Kelsall Road. It is described as a farmhouse of the early 17th century, with a cottage added later 17th century and the top storey remodelled early C19. In the late 17th century, probably as part of planned agricultural improvements, the former stables and granary, were built. These were built in a linear fashion at right angles to Ashton Hall farmhouse and were constructed in the local orange brick in an English bond, with a Welsh slate roof.
- 4.5.2 Nineteenth century records identify previous tenants. The Ashton Tithe Map of 1839 shows that the Hall was owned by George Speakman and occupied by Henry Parry. The tithe details for the house, Plot 125, describe it as a homestead. Plot 126 and 127 to the west and north west are both described as a garden. Plot 124 to the north is described as an orchard. This plot has a parallel farm range to the former stables and granary. The land that Henry Parry tenanted was to the east and south of the farmhouse and included fields for cattle and meadow– such as Cow Hay Croft (Plot 105), Marl (Plot 89), Dove House Field (Plot 121) and Old Meadow and Big Meadow.
- 4.5.3 Census records identify the persons occupying the farm and it indicates that the farm changed hands many times in the 19th century. The census of 1841 records Henry Parry, living with his wife Elizabeth and children. In 1851 Henry Parry and his family are still there, living with their four children, daughter in law, nephew, lodger and four servants: a farm labourer, waggoner, farm servant and house servant. They farmed 118 acres. The census of 1861 records Thomas Dale, a young farmer aged 33 with his wife Ann. Four children, mother in law, sister in law and nephew and house servant and nurse girl. They farmed 118 acres. In 1871 the farm was tenanted to William Reece, his wife Hannah, three children, a house servant and three farm servants, and William a widower by the time of the 1881 census, remains farming there with four daughters and four servants. It was either Dale or Reece that implemented the additions to the farm, both young farmers, to create the farm buildings to the north, including the Old Dairy. He remains there in 1891, with three daughters and two servants, and in 1901 he is 70, living with a daughter: a general servant and a carter. In 1911 the farm has greatly reduced in production, tenanted by William Cooper, his wife, a lodger, and servant.

- 4.5.4 In terms of the farmyard layout the 17th century historic farmstead pattern appears to be of a parallel range of farm buildings with the house set at right angles to the south range. The farmhouse was set back from the range, facing east. The closeness of the ranges to each other suggest that they were built to shelter the yard in between. The small number of buildings suggest that the farmstead was not that large, and the barns were multi-functional. It was important the yard was not seen from the house to avoid proximity to the animals and manure.
- 4.5.5 The more affluent times for the farm appeared to be in the middle to the late 1800's, and this would correlate with the erection of the buildings. The layout of the buildings is indicated in Ordnance Survey mapping sources. The first map of c1875 shows that the farm buildings are in a U-shape to the north-east of the farmhouse. To the southwest of the farmhouse is an orchard and north-east of the farmhouse are pigsties attached to a shippon.
- 4.5.6 Courtyard farmsteads with working buildings of mostly 19th- and early 20th-century date are found across Cheshire and relate to the reorganisation of fields with straight boundaries. They may also have been influenced by planned architect designed farmyard groups in the area, such as those of the late 19th century on Cheshire estates such as the Tollemache and Duke of Westminster's estates. The fundamental principles that underpinned their planning was production and efficiency led – the hay that fed the cattle over the winter was stored in lofts or sometimes large hay barns, the manure was taken into a central midden and the pigsties were sited close to the house: pigs were fed on whey, a by-product of making cheese and butter.
- 4.5.7 The Old Dairy was built at a time of an increased dairy farming in Cheshire the 19th century. The building was built after 1839 and before 1875, and it was originally a two storey stable with hayloft above. The farmyard layout changed after 1839 with the addition of new buildings to create a U-shaped regular courtyard. The relationship between the use of buildings related to the layout to maximise efficiency. Cattle required being close to the barn for straw as feed or litter. Stables could be located beyond the shippon. Horses were used for agricultural work. Stables had windows for light and ventilation for the horse, with a hayloft or granary store above.
- 4.5.8 Horses were extremely important to the running of the farm. Stables were typically well built and generally, as at Ashton Hall Farm, located close to the house, as easy access to the fields and road was essential which in turn was essential to the running of the farm. Stables were often separated from the processing room to separate the horses from fodder preparation. Stable size was generally relevant to the number of arable fields that was farmed. Horses became largely redundant following the introduction of tractors and other mechanisation in the middle of the 20th century. This was at the same

time as the introduction of modern electrical milking and cooling machinery, and consequently, which appears to be the case here, the stable was converted to a dairy

- 4.5.9 It is clear that from the 'as existing' drawings submitted in 1990 that The Old Dairy had been subject to change since it was built. The timber stable doors are unremarkable and typical of the period, but are modern replacements of originals, added during the conversion. The windows are modern casements based on the 1940's metal hopper head windows, altering the building's appearance to comply with hygiene regulations for dairies. Nonetheless the conversion reads as a stable conversion. Internally there were no features of interest evident prior to conversion.



Fig 4. a) The Township of Ashton Tithe map 1839, Plot 125 showing the house, a T shape with an assumed south east facing front elevation, as today. There is a linear attached range to the north east forming part of the T shape at right angles to the house. Also note Plot 124, a parallel range of outbuildings to the north east forming a linear courtyard with Ashton Hall. This was demolished by the time of the issuing of b) Ordnance Survey maps 1899 showing that the courtyard plan is now regular, with the old dairy (arrowed orange) built to the north of the farmhouse with a parallel shippon to the east. The linear range now demolished. c) Ordnance Survey map Cheshire XXXIX.7 Revised: 1897, Published: 1898 shows largely the same, with giggeries attached to the shippon to the east.



Fig 5. Top. Existing and approved plans approved in 1993 (Copyright: Sandra Murray Associates). Bottom: photograph of The Old Dairy, May 2023.

5.0 The significance of the heritage assets


5.1 Heritage values that contribute to a greater understanding of significance are identified within Cadw's Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales (2011) as being: -

- Evidential
- Historical
- Aesthetic
- Communal


5.2 There are six commonly accepted levels of significance. These are as follows: -

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| • Outstanding | Highest level of importance, SAMs, WHS, Grade I / II* listed buildings, Historic Parks & Gardens |
| • High (significant) | Grade II listed buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens and conservation areas |
| • Medium (moderate) | Locally listed buildings, and those buildings that contribute to a listed building's setting. |
| • Low (limited) | Limited heritage value |
| • Neutral | Neither positive nor negative features |
| • No significance | Features that detract from the heritage values |


5.3 Heritage Values – Ashton Hall Farmhouse (Grade II*)

Evidential Value - High	<p>The site has a history of agricultural use, as evidenced in archival records and physical evidence. The 19th century character is preserved. The site has a built form that is preserved as indicated by historic mapping sources and aerial photography, where its original external character, appearance and modular character are largely unchanged since the late 19th century.</p>	<p>Overall significance High</p> 
Historical Value – High	<p>The building is a good example of 17th century farmhouse of some status, using the local red sandstone as an indicator of wealth, complete with well-considered 19th century extensions, created within a planned and evolved farmyard layout as part of the rebuilding of many farmsteads for dairying in the mid- to late 19th century, driven by estates set within landscapes reorganised in this period.</p>	
Aesthetic Value - High <i>(Special Architectural Interest)</i>	<p>The building is a good example of a 17th century large, rectangular, manor type farmhouse of high status, where the architectural language is clearly expressed, and architectural features are used to empower its position as a farmhouse in a prominent position on the east side of the village.</p> <p>A three storey building, built of tooled dressed red and buff sandstone blocks, and a renewed slate roof, with brick gable chimneys. It has a five bay east front to main house. Details of interest include a plinth, cyma-moulded band at 1st floor and stepped cornice, moulded stone doorcases and 3-light, rebated and chamfered mullioned and transomed windows with 3-light wooden casements to the top floor. To right is 2-storey and attic, 2-bay cottage, with cyma-moulded band at 2nd floor.</p> <p>The red sandstone creates a distinct visual reference to the underlying geology of the area.</p> <p>Its significance lies in its aesthetic visual quality, craftsmanship and decorative detail. The building is listed at Grade II* for its special architectural and historic interest and is within the Ashton Hayes conservation area.</p>	
Communal Value - high	<p>The building was a farmhouse built for an upper middle-class owner. It was tenanted in the 19th century and used as a dairy farm. It is now in private residential use, and its contribution to the history and character of the village is high.</p>	


5.4 Heritage Values – Farm building attached to north end of Ashton Hall (Grade II)

Evidential Value - High	<p>The site has a history of agricultural use, as evidenced in archival records and physical evidence. The 19th century character is preserved. The site has a built form that is preserved as indicated by historic mapping sources and aerial photography, where its original external character, appearance and character are largely unchanged. The shape and boundary are well preserved.</p>	<p>Overall significance High</p> 
Historical Value – High	<p>The building was recorded with certainty on the Ashton Tithe map of 1839, and later first edition Ordnance Survey maps of 1875 onwards, and identified as a farm in census records dating from 1841. The building forms part of an agricultural holding that has historical and social interest regarding the understanding of types of historic land ownership and farming tenure of the 17th - 19th century in this part of Cheshire.</p> <p>The regular courtyard and wider rural setting adds to its historical value.</p>	
Aesthetic Value - high <i>(Special Architectural Interest)</i>	<p>The building is a good example of stable and granary, now a former general farm building used as ancillary residential accommodation to Ashton Hall farmhouse, of late 17th century with 19th century alterations. This shows the evolution of farming processes and building uses relating to dairy farming in the area from the period, where the architectural language is clearly expressed.</p> <p>Built of English bond orange brick, Welsh slate roof. Brick band at 1st floor. 2-storey, 4-bay north front. 3 stable doors with shallow segmental brick heads and inserted larger opening in 3rd bay under wooden lintel. Upper storey has line of ventilation slots and 3, 6-pane windows. Left side has flight of steps with stone treads to granary door. Small elliptical opening in the gable.</p> <p>Its significance lies in its contribution to the understanding of farm building types in the Cheshire plain area, dating from the 17th century, adapted in the 19th century and its contribution to the setting of Ashton Hall farmhouse and the regular courtyard grouping of former agricultural buildings. The building is listed at Grade II for its special architectural and historic interest and is within the Ashton Hayes conservation area.</p>	
Communal Value - medium	<p>The building was a farm building and is now in private use, and its contribution to the history and character of the village is high.</p>	

5.5 Heritage Values – The Old Dairy (Curtilage listed building)

Evidential Value - Medium	<p>The site has a history of agricultural use, until its conversion into a house, as evidenced in archival records and physical evidence. The site has a built form that is preserved as indicated by historic mapping sources and aerial photography. The facades have evolved in relation to its various uses over the centuries.</p>	<p>Overall significance Medium</p> 
Historical Value – Medium	<p>The building is an example of a mid to late 19th century stable, converted to a dairy in the mid 20th century, and a house in the latter part of the 20th century. It is not unique or of special historic interest. The building was recorded on the later first edition Ordnance Survey maps of 1875 onwards. The building forms part of an agricultural holding that has historical and social interest regarding the understanding of types of historic land ownership and farming tenure of the 19th century in this part of Cheshire.</p> <p>The regular courtyard and wider rural setting adds to its historical value.</p>	
Aesthetic Value - Medium <i>(Special Architectural Interest)</i>	<p>The building's architectural language is clearly expressed as a converted stable / dairy / residential building, where architectural features of the previous use have been retained. New windows show the change of use and evolution of the building as residential.</p> <p>Built of English garden wall bond in the local red brown brick, Welsh slate roof. Brick band at 1st floor. 2-storey, 4-bay west front. 3 stable doors with shallow segmental brick heads and small paned timber casement windows in 1940's openings under wooden and concrete lintels. Upper storey has hayloft door, and eaves show exposed rafter feet.</p> <p>Its significance lies in its contribution to the understanding of farm building types in the Cheshire sandstone ridge area, dating from the late 19th century and its contribution to the setting of Ashton Hall farmhouse and the regular courtyard grouping of former agricultural buildings. The building is not listed and is within the Ashton Hayes conservation area. It is not the best example of its type in the area.</p>	
Communal Value - moderate	<p>The building was a stable and dairy and is now in private residential use, and its contribution to the history and character of the site is moderate.</p>	

5.6 Heritage Values – Ashton Hayes Conservation Area

Evidential Value - Medium	<p>The conservation area has not been assessed and appraised in a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. However, the part of the Conservation Area in which the application site is on the eastern fringe of the village, with the farmhouse and associated outbuildings houses in a rural setting separated from the dense development of the village and surrounded by fields in a character area identified by Historic England as Cheshire plain area.</p>	<p>Overall significance Medium</p> 
Historical Value – Medium	<p>The area has a history of use that has gradually evolved over time, as evidenced in archival and archaeological records. This includes historic use, including the shape and boundaries, which are well preserved as indicated by historic mapping sources and reports.</p>	
Aesthetic Value - Medium <i>(Special Architectural Interest)</i>	<p>Most properties are of brick with slate roofs which creates a sense of harmony and antiquity. There is extensive use of sandstone within the conservation area. This is most found in retaining walls, which are a strong feature of the village, to gateways and in buildings, a good example being Ashton Hall and Peel Hall. Key consistent features include street boundaries and associated landscaping, and a good mix of coherent architectural detailing including fenestration patterns to principal elevations. Views within and around the village which are strongly valued and which, together contribute to the village's character include those towards the church, across the Cheshire plain, open countryside, including those to Tarvin, Beeston and the Welsh Hills, and wooded areas, and those of characterful buildings such as Ashton Hall, April Cottage, Ashton House, Peel Hall. The area in which Ashton Hall farm is located is positive to the character of the conservation area.</p>	
Communal Value - medium	<p>The conservation area has local interest for the wider community in which it serves, with Ashton Hall farm contributing to the distinct sense of place.</p>	

5.7 Key Points of Significance: -

- The relationship and context of Ashton Hall farmhouse and the associated former farm buildings, that contribute to its group value.
- The planned courtyard farmyard layout and setting and the inter-relationship of buildings and former functions with each other.
- Its locally distinctive context in the Cheshire plain character area, which defines its sense of place and which the farm group is characteristic of this area.

6.0 Impact of the development proposal

- 6.1. The proposal is for a new window in the rear west elevation and minor internal changes, in retrospect, at The Old Dairy, Ashton Hall Farm, Kelsall Road, Ashton Hayes, CH3 8BH.
- 6.2 Previous relevant planning history is as follows: -
- 6/22340L - Conversion of Redundant Farm Building to Form a Single Dwelling. Demolition Of Some Farm Buildings (Block C) - Ashton Hall Farm Kelsall Road Ashton Hayes Chester Cheshire CH3 8BH – approved 06/09/1990.
- 6/26811 - Amendment To Approval to Convert to Living Accommodation. C.O.U From Agricultural Land to Domestic (Block C) - Ashton Hall Farm Kelsall Road Ashton Hayes Chester Cheshire CH3 8BH – approved 16 September 1993.
- 6.3 The plans submitted as part of application reference: 6/26811 shows that the building prior to conversion had been altered significantly in the 1940's following its conversion to a dairy. It shows that flat concrete lintels had been inserted into both the east and west facades. It appears that the stables faced west when they were built, as evidenced by the door openings and hayloft door. It appears that these doors were absent by 1990 but that metal hopper head windows remained. The photograph taken in May 2023 and the elevation drawings accompanying this application shows that the proposed scheme has been adhered to in terms of detailing.
- 6.4 The proposed window will exactly match the profile as the existing, which have already introduced a degree of domesticity in terms of a cottage character to the stable previously approved in 1993. There is a minor change to first floor but not one that is considered to affect the existing residential character of the building. If it was felt pertinent to do so, the window aperture could mirror that on the hayloft with shutter, but equally the new window will mirror the window detail approved in 1993. It be seen as a neutral change to the building as it is a new intervention that respects the evolution of the building's change and the context in which it is located.



Fig 6. Left: Existing elevations 1993. Right: Proposed plans.

6.5 Minor internal changes do not impact on the character of the building. These are stud partition walls, and their relocation is a neutral change to the internal character of the building.

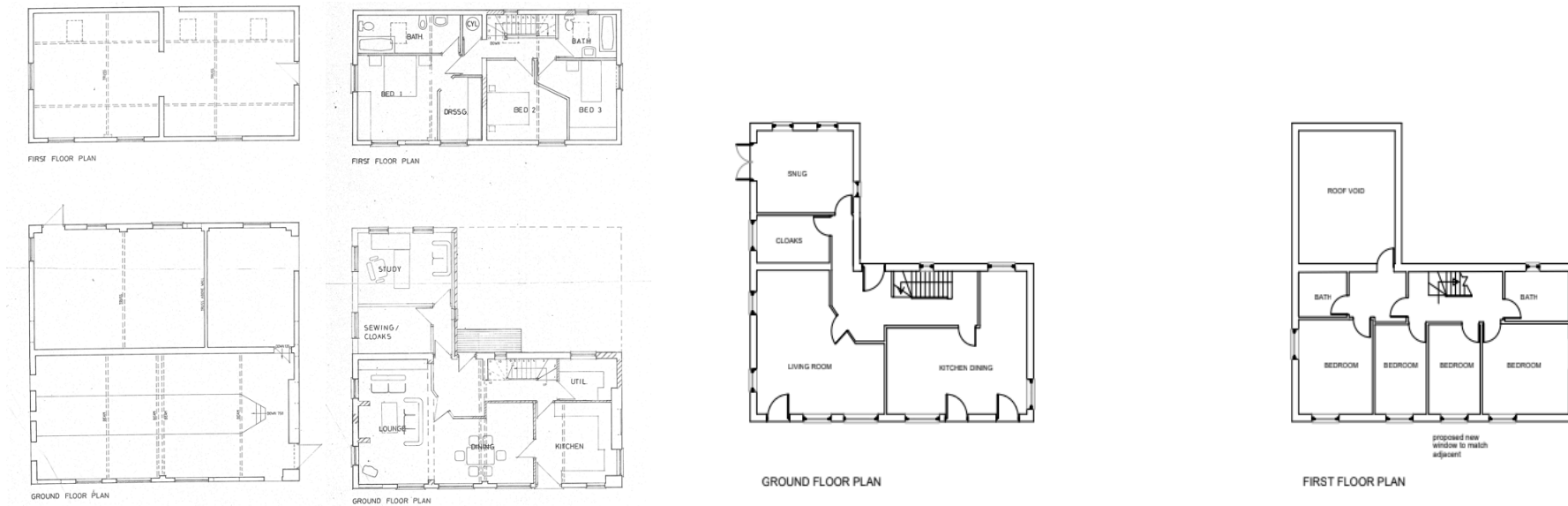


Fig 7. Left: Existing and floor plans 1993. Right: Proposed plans.

6.6 To summarise: -

- The building is not of special architectural or historic interest, but it is a curtilage listed building which at the time of listing was in the same ownership, ancillary to the main farmhouse function at the time of listing.
- There is a minor change to the solid to void ratio to first floor, but this aspect is not seen to be a significant feature of the building, given its conversion which has changed its character to clearly domestic.
- The proposed development would have a neutral impact on the significance of the buildings and would not cause harm to their significance. It would not affect the ability to appreciate or understand their previous form and function and is in accordance with policies in the NPPF.
- The west façade of the building is visible from Duck Lane and is seen together with Ashton Hall Farmhouse, but the change is not considered to be significant or detrimental to the setting of Ashton Hall Farm, nor will it compete in any way with the hierarchy of buildings on site, with Ashton Hall Farmhouse the most important and significant on the site.
- It has no impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.



Fig 8. Google maps view from Duck Lane taken May 2023. The Old Dairy is arrowed in orange.

6.7 Summary of impacts on the heritage values

- Evidential – The setting and views of the heritage assets has changed marginally. The proposed changes are reflective of the existing character and appearance and are classed as de minimus. The building is not listed but by virtue of its historic association with Ashton Hall Farmhouse it is curtilage listed. Its features are not formally recorded. However, its relationship with the farmstead is of interest. The site's setting will be preserved.
- Historical - The historical significance of the building can still be appreciated, and the scheme demonstrates an evolutionary process of development for the 21st century. The historic function and original historic fabric has some interest. However, it has not been in use as a stable for a considerable time and is now clearly residential in character with domestic windows. The solid to void has changed over time since the stable was built in the latter part of the 19th century, and was significantly altered again in the 1940's. The new window is a very minor intervention since its conversion to residential was approved in 1993.
- Aesthetic – The proposals are neutral, and the agricultural appearance remains legible. It retains its domestic character created by the conversion.
- Communal – None.

6.8 Compliance with national planning policy

In Considering Potential Impacts the NPPF states that “193. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation ... irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 194. states that “Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

The proposal is not harmful to the significance of The Old Dairy as it is a minor change representative of the present change of use, which retains the legibility and features of the original use as a stable; the mid-century use as a dairy and the late 20th use as a domestic building.

6.9 Compliance with local planning policy

The proposal complies with Policy DM 46 - Development in Conservation Areas in the following way: -

- It pays special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, taking account of the significance of heritage assets.
- It does not adversely impact on existing townscapes, local landmarks, views, and skylines.
- It is the same quality and nature of materials, both traditional and modern as existing
- It retains architectural, historical, and archaeological features and their settings and adds a feature sympathetic in design, scale, mass, and use of materials to existing.

The proposal complies with Policy DM 47 – Listed Buildings in the following way: -

- It pays special to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- It conserves the significance of a listed building and its setting.
- It preserves a curtilage listed structure.
- It retains architectural, historical, and archaeological features and their settings and adds a feature sympathetic in design, scale, mass, and use of materials to existing.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposed development would have a neutral impact on the building.

- 7.2 The immediate setting would not change, nor would that of Ashton Hall Farmhouse. The changes do not impact on the appreciation of the setting of Ashton Hall Farmhouse, appreciated the most from Kelsall Road, or impact adversely on the U-shaped layout of the courtyard group.

- 7.3 The change is considered an evolutionary process of minor change that has occurred over the last 170 or so years, from its original use as a 19th century stable, to a mid-20th century dairy and to a late 20th century house. The proposals would not cause overall harm to the low / medium significance of the building. The proposed development has been designed with care to avoid harming the essential elements that contribute to their significance. It would therefore be in accordance with the national and local planning policies.

- 7.4 The application should respectfully be supported.

Appendices

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/historic-farm-buildings-extending-the-evidence-base/historic-farm-buildings-ext-evidence-base/>
<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/national-farmstead-assessment-framework/farmsteads-assessment-framework-2015/>
<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/constructive-conservation/conservation-principles/> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-principles-sustainable-management-historic-environment/> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/>
<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/8079/ShropshireCheshireandStaffordshirePlainWesternMixed> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/national-farm-building-types/national-building-types-2014/>

RCAHM 1997 *English Farmsteads 1750 – 1914*