



Heritage Impact Statement

Window alterations

Ashton Hall, Kelsall Lane, Ashton
Hayes

Mr. and Mrs. Johnston

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Ashton Hall

Executive Summary

This report is submitted in support of listed building consent for replacement single glazed windows with double glazed window with bronze casements and associated selective stonework repair at Ashton Hall, 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 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 a 17th century gentleman's house, and in the 19th century was a farmstead. It comprises a former small country house 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 19th century 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 is of early 17th century origin, with a cottage added in the late 17th century and a top floor added early 19th century. It is a Grade II* listed building. The farm building attached to north end of Ashton Hall is separately listed at Grade II.

Ashton Hall's significance lies in the strong architectural vocabulary which despite clear and distinct phasing, is harmonious and in context. It is expressed in the dominant mullioned and transomed windows and clearly articulated door detailing, with surviving 17th century fabric of tooled dressed red and buff red sandstone blocks. Its special architectural and historic interest is as a high status gentleman's house of the 17th century that has sensitively evolved over the centuries to become a family home. The building makes an important contribution to this part of Cheshire and the village of Ashton Hayes. It has a strong relationship and context to the wider rural setting on the edge of the village of Ashton Hayes, that contributes to group value, views, and vistas; and its historical and aesthetic value, which helps define its sense of place.

The proposal is for window replacement and their thermal upgrade. Key changes will be the overall visual impact created by the bronze casements and the slight widening of reveals to accommodate the new double glazing. Some older casements, which look to date from the 1920's, will be replaced with new bronze opening casements. The panes of all the windows are almost all dating from the 20th century and are not historic.

Whilst the change will result in a slight visual difference from existing, and will have to be carefully considered, it is felt that this proposal is a positive private and public benefit to the building, which will considerably improve the character of the building, improve thermal efficiency of the building, and reduce the carbon footprint. There are 99 windows to the building. The window panes and casements are not original to either the 17th century, when the building was first constructed or 19th century, when major interventions had taken place. Original windows would have most likely to have been wrought iron. There will be a slight visual change to the windows as the window panes will be set into bronze frames, which will then be set into the stonework. The bronze, although seen as different, is a metal that has historically been used in historic window manufacture for high status houses. The colour will not contrast with the stonework but will complement it, the colour being like the mellow stonework of the mullions and transoms. At present the single panes directly fix into the stonework, undertaken with white silicon, and there are cementitious mortar repairs to the mullions. The works, which were originally undertaken approximately 30 years or so ago, under the guidance of previous conservation officers at the Council, have not stood the test of time well, and the intervention will be a chance to address the issues associated with them, as well as the visual aspect of repair to the stonework to the mullions and transoms, which were undertaken well during that repair cycle, but which have naturally degraded over time.

There has and continues to be a considerable investment into the building and the impact is a positive intervention in the life cycle of the building. The building has been looked after and restored by Mr. and Mrs. Johnston as custodians of the building over many years and this aspect is the final intervention to leave the house in a good condition before in time it is passed down to family.

The proposals have been considered to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or any features of special interest which it possesses'. In this case the window mullions are historic, but the window panes are not. The mullions and transoms to the windows will be preserved. The windows are 'features of special interest'. The glazing rebates are deep and robust enough to accommodate the thickness and weight of the double glazing without significant alteration. The design is sympathetic and in keeping with the character and status of the property. The new windows are a more sympathetic design than existing, and the net impact will be positive. Given the size and number of windows, the heat retention to the building is a significant requirement in addition to other insulating measures.

The proposal will not adversely affect the character of Ashton Hall, 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. Johnston, to accompany a listed building consent application in support of for window alteration, adaption and selective repair and reinstatement at Ashton Halls, Kelsall Lane, Ashton Hayes, CH3 8BH.
- 1.2 The proposal includes, and is described in more detail in Section 6: -
- The introduction of slim double glazing profiles in bronze casement windows
 - Repair or replacement of stone mullions
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 This document has been prepared after various site visits and meetings in 2023, and historical research. It is to be read in conjunction with other associated documents in relation to the listed building consent application.

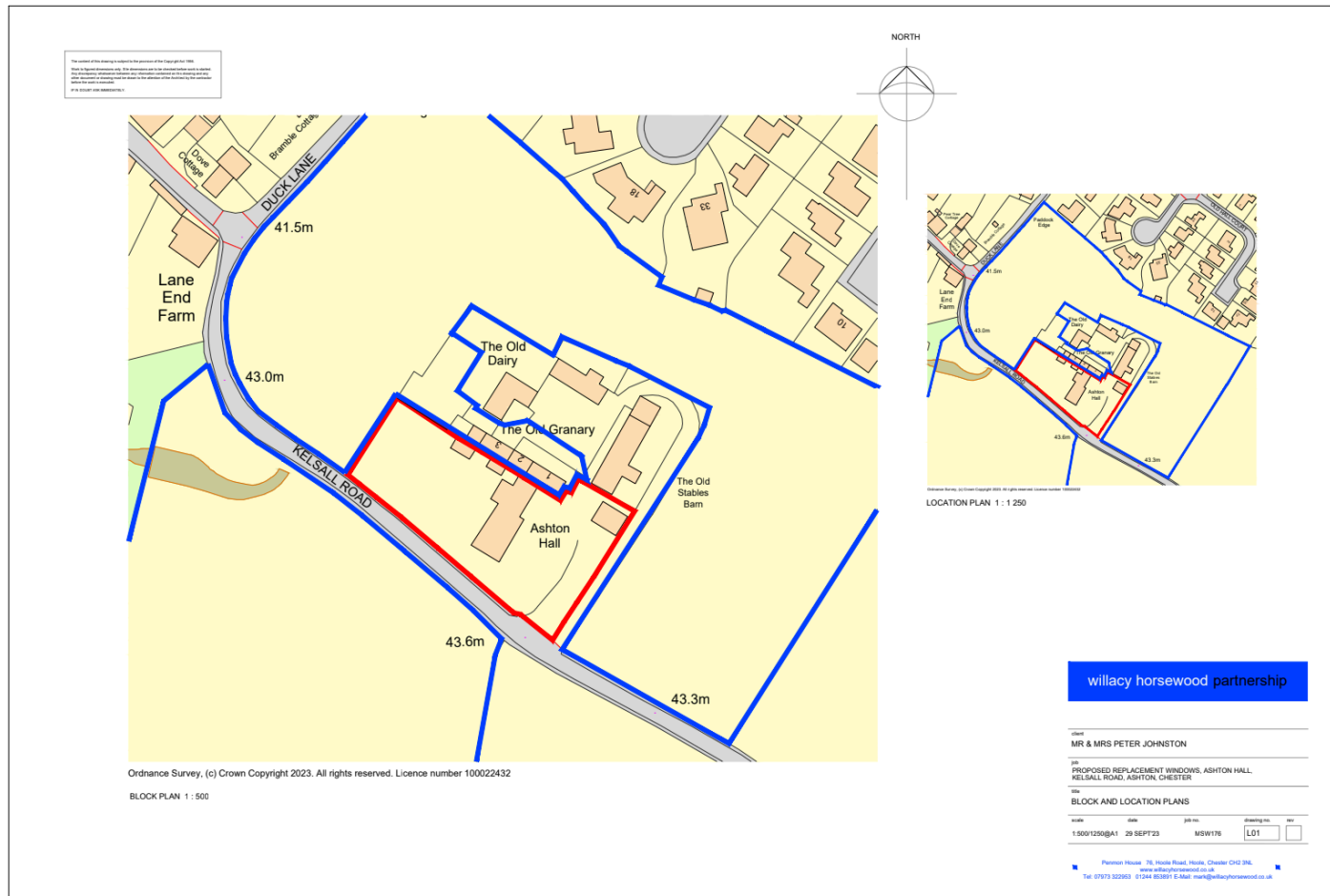


Fig 1. Location and site plan (Copyright: Willacy Horsewood).

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 Ashton Hall farmhouse. Ashton Hayes is located approximately 8 miles east of Chester on the B5393 road. Ashton Hall farmhouse is located on the north side of Kelsall Road. 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:

- Listed Building: Ashton Hall – the application site (Grade II*) – listed 1967.
- Conservation Area: Ashton Hayes

Indirectly impacting: -

- Listed building: Farm building attached to north end of Ashton Hall (Grade II) – listed 1985.
- Curtilage Listed Building: The Old Dairy
- 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 gentleman's house and former farmhouse forming a dominant focal point to the village centre from east on Kelsall Road. It is described as dating from 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 The house is well built, using the local stone probably from nearby Manley. This house was not a vernacular timber framed or brick farmhouse of the type seen in Cheshire but was built of expensive materials to a high standard, is assumed, by a wealthy landowner. It has an historic floor plan – in this case the cross passage, which is typically where the front and rear door are on opposing sides of the building and a sub medieval stone doorway surround with a single stone rectangular lintel over a splayed jamb. It shares some similarities of detail, albeit less elaborate, with Peel Hall, including its Jacobean detailing (1603 – 1625), its dressed red sandstone blocks, a stone plinth, cyma-mouldings, and rebated and chamfered ovolo moulded mullioned and transomed windows. Peel Hall is dated 1637; it is assumed that Ashton Hall dates around the same.
- 4.5.3 The listing description refers to Richard Latchford 1711...TD, on a loose and worn inscribed stone against the house. Richard Latchford was a gentlemen of Ashton, who Wills in Probate was issued 1702. Historical research has uncovered evidence of a Bond and Mortgage by Richard Latchford of Mickledale in Frodsham Lordship - possibly Richard Latchford's son - and Hugh Foulkes of Ashton Hall in Ashton. 16 Mar.1722/3. George Speakman is recorded in the Chester Courant and Chronicle as gentleman of Ashton Hall in 1792, 1798, 1803, 1805, and 1807 respectively, where it is recorded that he was issued with a game duty certificate, at 3 guineas, for the killing of game.
- 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 In the early 19th century, the house was extended an upper storey in buff dressed sandstone, with timber windows. The Ashton Tithe Map of 1839 records the Hall was owned by George Speakman, gentleman of Tarvin, 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. 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.
- 4.5.6 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. On 11 November 1865, The Chester Chronicle records Dale and his family selling the farm at auction. The stock included 26 choice dairy cows, 5 calves, 15 store pigs, 8 sheep, stacks of hay, oats, wheat, straw, 40 tons of swede turnips, potatoes, and 80 prime dairy cheese, as well as oak furniture and pewter plates.
- 4.5.7 By 1871 the farm was tenanted to William Reece, his wife Hannah, three children, a house servant and three farm servants. The year prior Reece had a ploughing competition at the farm, so it is assumed that he took over the farm in 1865 or thereabout. William was a widower by the time of the 1881 census, farming there with four daughters and four servants. It was Reece that implemented the additions to the farm, to create the farm buildings to the north, including the Old Dairy. Reece 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.
- 4.5.8 The more affluent times for the farm appeared to be in the last quarter of the 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.
- 4.5.9 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. 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 shippin. Horses were used for agricultural work. Stables were often separated from the processing room to separate the horses from fodder preparation. Horses became largely redundant following the introduction of tractors and other mechanisation in the middle of the 20th century.



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 shippin to the east. The linear range now demolished. c) Ordnance Survey map Cheshire XXXIX.7 Revised: 1897, Published: 1898 shows largely the same, with piggeries attached to the shippin to the east. The west side of the house is an orchard.

- 4.10 In 1993 alterations were approved and undertaken to the house by the present owner, Mr. and Mrs. Johnston. These included stonework repair, new doors, new windows, replacement of modern metal windows and the removal of other modern features that restored the character of the property.



Fig 5. Let – East elevation; right; west elevation.

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 west, south and east facades are articulated primarily by the windows and doors.
- 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 the following: -

- The introduction of slim double glazing profiles in bronze casement windows
- Repair or replacement of stone mullions

6.2 The main issue to be considered, is the effect of the proposal on the special architectural and historic interest (or significance) of the listed building (a designated heritage asset).

6.3 Listed buildings are defined as of “special architectural or historic interest”. They can be both. To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its architectural design, decoration, or craftsmanship. It also includes important examples of building types and techniques; for example, buildings which display technological innovation or virtuosity, and significant plan forms. Historic interest includes buildings that illustrate important aspects of England’ social, economic, cultural, or military history. Group value includes buildings which contribute an important architectural or historic unity, or are fine examples of planning, such as squares, terraces, or model villages. Ashton Hall farmhouse’s special architectural and historic interest lies in its origins as a 17th century gentleman’s house of some status, where the windows were designed to form a key architectural feature of the house and were designed to maximise light into the building and views out of it. It was a farmhouse in the 19th century, later converted into a single dwelling house in the 20th century. The decorative detailing lies in its windows and doors. The building was listed in 1967.

6.5 The property has suffered from various inappropriate alterations in the past including the insertion of poor-quality window panes to all elevations, which detract from the building. There is no original glass to the building. Of those that have been altered, the detailing is not historically appropriate and as such can be argued are causing harm to the significance of the building.



Fig 5. Top. Window photographs March 2023. Note silicon and historic cementitious repair.

- 6.6 The windows are a series of equal sized rectangular lights, grouped into regular tripartite rectangular units, creating a rhythm to the façade using mullions and transoms the same fabric as the rest of the building, in sandstone, which could be carved and moulded into shapes to add depth and articulation to the facade.
- 6.7 Glazing only became common to large domestic properties in the late 16th century, and to small domestic properties in the late 17th century. Ashton Hall was a large domestic property, built for a gentleman of means. No evidence exists of what the windows looked like in the 17th century, but it is highly likely that the glazing was small glass quarries in wrought iron lead comes, as early glass was cut from blown discs, and was typically very thin and heavily pockmarked. Later glass was made from disc or cylinder and was set in thick glazing bars.
- 6.8 The use of metal as an integral window frame has been long established in Britain but declined in use following the introduction and popularity of the timber sash window and the importation of slow grown, Baltic softwood for timber window manufacture. It wasn't until the Industrial Revolution that the metal window regained prominence in English architectural detailing where technological advances meant that metal windows could be made that were of good quality, rigidity, strength, durability, weathertight, aesthetically pleasing and economically viable. Windows and their frames were given more frames made entirely of a more rigid metal with greatly improved weathertightness, durability.
- 6.9 Both cast and wrought iron were subject to rust. Higher quality non-ferrous materials such as copper, bronze, and brass were used when these became more easily available from the 1720s onwards but became in more widespread use in the second half of the eighteenth century saw a much greater diversification in the kinds of metal employed in window frames. Increased production and advances in industrial chemistry brought down the cost of the materials. Bronze window section have been used over the course of the 18th century.
- 6.10 It wasn't until the 19th century, when glass was not taxed by weight that larger panes of cylinder glass was produced in more affordable quantities. In this case, the window panes are modern, and as such there are no visible defects in the glass at Ashton Hall.

- 6.11 Historic England guidance on 'Modifying Historic Windows as Part of Retrofitting Energy-Saving Measures' published 10 January 2023 states that: -
- "Where historic windows or replacement windows of historic pattern survive without historic glass it may be possible to introduce slim-profile double-glazing without harming the significance of the listed building. There are compatibility issues to consider as the introduction of double-glazing can require the renewal of the window frame to accommodate thicker glazing, thereby harming significance."
 - "Where historic windows have been replaced with ones whose design does not follow historic patterns, these are unlikely to contribute to the significance of listed buildings. Replacing such windows with new windows of a sympathetic historic pattern, whether single-glazed or incorporating slim-profile double-glazing, may cause no additional harm. It also provides an opportunity to enhance the significance of the building, which is the desired outcome under national policy."
 - "Where a new window or re-glazing is agreed, the reflective properties of secondary and double-glazing as compared to modern, polished single glazing, do not usually harm the significance of the building. But when new multi-paned windows are proposed, the desirability of reproducing broken reflections by individually glazing each pane should be considered. Where the aesthetic value of the building is high, then the impact on the whole of the relevant elevation should be considered, including the desirability of accurately matching other windows."
- 6.12 Historic England goes on to state in its guidance note 'Traditional Windows - Their Care, Repair and Upgrading' (2017) that double glazing could be considered where a historic window retains no significant glass and has sufficiently deep glazing rebates and is robust enough to accommodate the increased thickness and weight of insulating glass units without significant alteration, or where an existing replacement window of sympathetic design is to be retained and is capable of accommodating insulating glass units.
- 6.13 It should be noted that the aesthetic taste of owners was a key consideration when a 17th century gentleman's house was constructed, based on the very best of materials and technology that the owner could afford. The property today has thin glazing of approximately 4mm, which is neither historic, authentic, or thermally efficient, and it has been inserted in a manner that detracts from the building. Most of the lights are fixed, but there are several that are later casements dating from the 1920's and are not significant. It should be noted that when the house was built the window glazing would have been very expensive, with aesthetic and functions requirements that were of the highest standards at the time. Whilst it is recognised that historic windows are often of considerable importance to the significance of historic buildings there does need to be an understanding of this point. It should also be noted that Bank Hall, Warrington (1750) has copper alloy fenestration, as did William Porden's Eaton Hall, Cheshire (1804-12), which had Gothic cast-iron traceried windows with bronze sliding sashes. The bronze frames for the sashes together with the stained glass were provided between 1807 and 1810 by J. S. Jordan & Co. Birmingham and were emulated at Alton Towers in Staffordshire. There is precedent in the region of using historical bronze for windows. In more recent times the Art Deco cinema windows at Storyhouse (The former Odeon, 1935) was built with bronze frames.

- 6.14 In this case the potential noticeable difference visually between the proposed replacement windows and their historic 'template' windows would be the double glazing and bronze casement. It is noted that the visual effect of double glazing, and thickness of glazing and seal could affect light patterns in different ways and under certain conditions make them appear slightly different to how the original windows would have looked. However, as there are a mix of poor-quality windows, the proposed windows in their form submitted would present an element of architectural unity. It is proposed to replace all the windows with bronze slimlite casements to the same profile. Overall, it is felt that the historically accurate proportions within the proposed windows will not be adversely affected. Elevation and section drawings of the proposed windows will be provided as will a sample on site. The replacement of the existing poor-quality windows with a set of high quality, appropriate casements will have a clear positive benefit to the building.
- 6.15 Double glazing in historic properties needs careful consideration and justification. In Historic England's document 'Traditional Windows - Their Care, Repair and Upgrading' it is acknowledged that "windows are one of the most vulnerable parts of a building to noise transmission due to their relatively lightweight construction." The owners of the property at that time used the very best of glass technology available to maximise light, ventilation, and heat retention. As glass technology has advanced, it will inevitably perform better in response to current concerns. Thicker glass has greater mass, and it will have influence on the level of noise insulation and will improve the acoustic performance.
- 6.16 It is appreciated that each case must be considered on its own merits. However, in this case it is considered that the changes can be undertaken so that the windows, the most important feature of the building, will have profiles that are very similar to the existing windows and will subtly visually lift the appearance of the windows. The impact on the building's character will be positive in terms of evidential, historic, and aesthetic significance with thermal benefits. Please note that although this is a listed building, all but one of the windows have been compromised anyway. As most of the existing windows lack any architectural or historic integrity or significance, it is considered that their replacement by new windows with a traditional section profile will enhance and restore the integrity and visual appearance of the listed building, rather than detract from it or cause it any visual harm. The detailing to the rebate will be slight and will be capable of accepting the proposed slim profile double glazing to improve their thermal performance.
- 6.17 Slim profile double glazing has been selected because of their proven thermal values and they are compliant with Building Regulations Part F. They have a similar visual appearance to single glazing whilst providing the enhanced thermal performance that is required to enhance the energy efficiency of the property. Because of its reduced thickness, slim profile double glazing does not produce to any significant degree the unacceptable double reflection that is characteristic of both conventional double and secondary glazing. Consequently, slim profile double glazing has been recognised as suitable for application to the windows of historic buildings and can be as narrow as 12mm. Slimlite double glazing has a cavity of 4mm, and it can be as slender as 12 mm (4mm glass to each side of a 4mm cavity). The slight visual impact of double glazing can be minimised with each pane of glass using black spacers.

- 6.18 Alternatives include vacuum glazing. Vacuum sealed glazing still has a cavity, and whilst slimmer than double glazing (approximately between 6.7mm to 11.7 mm) there exists a slight double reflection, and a line 10mm in from the edge of each pane. The vacuum glazed units are aesthetically distracting at close quarters due to the matrix of spacers throughout the unit. In terms of safety, it is not toughened glass, and is therefore slightly less robust than slimlite. Acoustically in terms of noise performance, double glazing performs better. Fineo vacuum glazing for example, offers 35 dB sound reduction; Slimlite because it is filled with a mixture of Krypton and Xenon inert gases, are heavier than argon and provide better thermal and sound reduction of 38dB, which is a considerable difference. There is also a clear thermal and economic benefit of using double glazing rather than vacuum glazing and given that the window does not have glazing bars, the change to the window will be slight. Crucially, the vacuum glazed units are not compatible with the bronze casements and the performance of vacuum glazing installed directly into stonework is entirely unproven both in terms of longevity of the units and thermal performance. The manufacture categorically rules it out as a known installation option and will offer no guarantee on the units if they are directly installed into stonework without a frame. It is not known if a mortar fillet alone will hold them in place well enough to resist weather.
- 6.19 Retaining the existing casement, which are not historic, will look odd and the existing casements will require some adaptation to take the thicker glass of vacuum glazing. They would not be able to be retrofitted to accommodate slimlite double glazing.
- 6.20 Installing secondary glazing would have a significant and detrimental impact on internal appearance. Ventilation between secondary glazing and external glazing must be very carefully designed to prevent damage to interstitial stone via condensation / poor environmental conditions.
- 6.21 It should be noted that the changes to the windows have been given very careful consideration. It is considered that the proposed windows will not result in disproportionate window proportions and will be viewed externally as like existing. In this case, there will be a clear aesthetic benefit from installing windows that are new, and the rebate will be slightly deepened to accommodate the double glazed units. Furthermore, this approach is endorsed in Historic England's guidance 'Traditional Windows Their Care, Repair and Upgrading' on replacement windows states that: "In cases where the significance of a building has been harmed by the installation of replacement windows of non-historic design, consideration may be given to the installation of new slim-profile double-glazed replacement windows where:
- the new windows are of a more sympathetic design and the net impact on significance will be neutral or positive.
 - no incidental damage to the building fabric will result from the removal of the existing windows.

6.22 Summary of impacts on the heritage values

Evidential	Historical	Aesthetic	Communal
<p>Most window frames and casements and most glazing has been altered. The present windows are modern casements.</p>	<p>The windows and glazing are not significant. They were inserted to a specification that almost certainly predated the listing in 1984, and in the 1990's using a style at the time to replace an historic window type.</p> <p>Where historic fenestration survives, it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset. Where it does not survive, the quality of its replacement can adversely affect that significance. In the case of Ashton Hall, it is important to recognise that the existing windows are of relatively recent glazing and have no architectural or historic interest. The glazing is modern float glass the ironmongery is not historic.</p>	<p>The present character of Ashton Hall relates to its 17th century Jacobean character, despite alterations made in the 19th century. The design of the new windows is the proposed option for all the proposed replacement windows, which given the mullioned and transom style and clear window panes, would be suitable.</p> <p>Fenestration is undoubtedly one of the most significant features of a building. There would be a small adjustment in rebate because of the double glazing and the double pane may alter the appearance a little.</p>	<p>None.</p>

6.23 Summary of impacts on the heritage values and planning policy: -

- Evidential – The materials to parts of the heritage asset will change slightly. These have changed over time. The proposed changes respect the building’s character, which is still legible.
- Historical – The historic window paned and casements have already been lost and it is not known what existed in the 17th century, or indeed the 19th. The historical significance of the heritage assets can still be appreciated and the change in glazing is evolutionary. Bronze would not be an inappropriate material to use.
- Aesthetic – The proposals are beneficial with the restoration of the property. All windows are dilapidated and have been poorly inserted. This is a key opportunity to invest in these key important features, and the thermal longevity of the house for the 21st century. Mullions and transoms will also be repaired where necessary. The proposed windows would be far superior to those in place at present. The change in the light pattern because of the double glazing would be limited. The proposed windows in the form submitted would preserve the listed building.
- Communal – the change of windows needs to be considered in the context of both the proposed user and seen within the overall rural context, setting and views and the overall experience as appreciated from the conservation area, where the change will be seen as positive. As such they would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, given the fleeting kinetic views of Ashton Hall within the conservation area.

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 Ashton Hall as it is a well-considered and sympathetic response to an evolutionary glazing pattern where the original window type is not known, and the change representative of the original and present use as a high status house, which retains the legibility and features of the stone mullion and transom windows.

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 of materials, both traditional and modern
- 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 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 Ashton Hall is a Grade II* listed building, a designated heritage asset of high significance. The window panes do not make a positive contribution to the character of the listed building because of their crude detailing, even though they are single glazed.
- 7.2 The proposed development will have some historic and aesthetic impact on the character of Ashton Hall. In terms of window alteration. By designing carefully and to resemble as closely as possible the existing window design, by copying the detail of the existing windows as closely as possible, the overall magnitude of the development on the impact on the special character of Ashton Hall will be neutral to positive. Beading will be triangular and painted to match the windows, and the timber frame and casements detail will match the existing fenestration design, appearance, and character. The window design has been specified to match the existing windowpane proportions, and the design is a close match. Whilst there are inevitably going to be some differences, such as beading rather than putty, it is not of a significant scale of development to overwhelm or compromise the special character of the building.
- 7.3 It would not affect the ability to appreciate or understand the special architectural and historic interest of the building or conservation area, but rather to evolve with it. The historic stone mullioned and transomed window frames will be retained and carefully repaired to safeguard the significance of the building and protect historic fabric. Double glazing will also reduce energy consumption, noise, and improve the general level of comfort for, and security and protection of the occupants. The investment and work undertaken is substantial and will improve the visual cohesiveness of the building.
- 7.4 The loss of the low evidential value of the window panes is offset by beneficial improvements to the aesthetic significance of Ashton Hall and is an opportunity to better reveal the building's significance. The proposals would not materially harm the values of the building overall to any significant degree. The quality of the design and execution must add value to the existing asset. The designs and materials chosen are a careful response to the building's character. The consequences of the proposals would not affect the ability to appreciate and understand the architectural and historic interest of the building.
- 7.5 It is therefore considered that while Ashton is a designated heritage asset of very high significance and contributes to the wider post medieval agricultural landscape setting of the area, the development is of a size and scale that is appropriate to its context and surroundings. The original identity of the building would still be appreciated, and the evolution and significance of the building still understood. The level of visual change does not detrimentally impact upon how the building is viewed or experienced. On balance, the works do not cause harm to the heritage asset. As such the development accords with the relevant requirements of both the legislation and the National Planning Policy Framework in terms of harm or loss of the significance of the designated heritage assets, or their setting.

Appendices

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/glass-glazing-conservation/glass-marketing-spreads/>

<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://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/traditional-windows-care-repair-upgrading/heag039-traditional-windows-revfeb17/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/modifying-historic-windows-as-part-of-retrofitting-energy-saving-measures/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/building-regulations/>

Tutton, Hirst and Pierce, '*Windows, History, Repair and Conservation*', Donhead 2007