

PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT ADJOINING NEW HOLT LODGE FARM

HOLT, COUNTY BOROUGH OF WREXHAM

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HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed redevelopment adjoining New Holt Lodge Farm, Hugmore Lane, Holt, in the county borough of Wrexham, North Wales. New Holt Lodge Farm is listed at Grade II. The application building is a vacant late 20th century light industrial structure attached to an L-shaped farm outbuilding now in commercial use. This lies within the curtilage of New Holt Farm and therefore is treated as listed in planning terms.

Proposals have been submitted to Wrexham Borough Council for demolition of the existing industrial building to provide mixed business use buildings, but with retention of the attached outbuilding. The heritage issues arising are the proposal's impact upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the outbuilding and the setting of New Holt Lodge Farm.

The Grade II designation of New Holt Lodge Farm denotes it is of national importance for its special architectural and historic interest. It is from this special interest that the significance of the listed building essentially derives. It is important primarily for its evidential, historic and aesthetic values. The evidential value is clearly present in the surviving fabric of the building, which is legible as an early 19th century Neoclassical remodelling of an older structure. Its historic value is evident through records of the site as a gentry property mentioned in 1670, along with evidence of its 19th century remodelling. The aesthetic value is apparent in its distinctive Neoclassical appearance with Tuscan porch and gable pediment with lunette window, all the legacy of the 19th century facelift.

The curtilage listing of the outbuilding means it is also considered as possessing special architectural and/or historic interest. Its significance does not rank as highly as that of the house owing to their later date and alteration. Nevertheless it is important in terms of its intrinsic interest as a probably early 19th century farm building, along with its collective value and setting in relation to New Holt Lodge Farm. Its evidential value derives from its form, legibility and presence as a large outbuilding belonging to a site of gentry status. Its historic value also stems from this association, and its aesthetic interest is evident in its vernacular, functional appearance which contrasts with the polite appearance of New Holt Lodge Farm. Of less interest is a mid-20th century outshut which is the element that is directly attached to the application buildings. Owing to its later date and lack of interest, its significance is therefore low in comparison to the original elements.

The proposal will replace the existing detractive industrial building by structures whose scale, appearance and materiality are respectful of the listed buildings and their settings. The original outbuilding will be unharmed and all its existing openings retained. It is therefore concluded that the proposal will preserve the significance of the curtilage-listed outbuilding and enhance its setting along with that of New Holt Lodge Farm. In doing so, the proposal satisfies the requirements of national planning policy along with those of the local development plan. It is therefore considered the proposal should receive approval without delay.

2: THE SITE

The application building is a vacant late 20th century light industrial structure located amid countryside 2.7 miles west of the village of Holt, within the county borough of Wrexham, North Wales. The site lies on the eastern side of Hugmore Lane, and outside the boundary of Wrexham Industrial estate within land designated as open countryside. The northern boundary of the site is formed by New Holt Lodge Farm. Here, an L-shaped outbuilding that within the curtilage of the farm is attached at right angles to the application building. This is now in commercial use. A freestanding further outbuilding, physically unaffected by the proposal, stands to the north to form a U-shaped group around a courtyard. The east of the site is bounded by open countryside and the south by Francis Lane.



Map 1. Location of the application site



1. The application property, looking north towards the attached outbuilding of New Holt Lodge Farm



2. The outbuilding group, viewed from Hugmore Lane. The range on the right is that attached to the application building

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 The proposal

An application has been submitted to Wrexham County Borough Council for demolition of the existing light industrial building to provide mixed business use buildings (B1 and B8 use classes) and associated car parking, but with retention of the adjoining outbuilding.

3.2 Designations

New Holt Lodge Farm is listed at Grade II. The outbuilding lies within its curtilage and therefore is treated as listed in planning terms.

3.3 Heritage impact

The heritage issues arising are the proposal's impact upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the curtilage-listed outbuilding the setting of New Holt Lodge Farm.

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to examine the impact of the proposal upon the significance and setting of the heritage assets. It has been produced in accordance with Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 24, *The Historic Environment* (May 2017) which states that heritage assessments should be proportionate both to the significance of the asset and to the proposed degree of change, and include sufficient information to enable both of these considerations to be understood; and with the CADW guidance document *Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales* (May 2017). This report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation supporting the planning submission.

3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

1. Analysis of New Hall Lodge Farm (Section 4) and the proposal buildings (Section 5)
2. A summary of the significance of the heritage assets and of the contribution made by the application building (Section 6)
3. A summary of the relevant planning policies by which the application will be assessed (Section 7)
4. An assessment within this context of the proposal's impact upon the significance and setting of the affected heritage assets (Section 8)

4: THE LISTED BUILDING

4.1 List description

The CADW description of New Holt Lodge Farm, compiled in 1996 during the national resurvey of listed buildings, reads:

History

Early C19 brick house with earlier origins. New Holt Lodge Farm was originally called Croes Iorcyn and it charged for 7 hearths in the Hearth Tax of 1670. At that time it was occupied by Howell Lloyd Gent. Remains of an earlier house survive but the building was extensively remodelled in the early nineteenth century in a Neo-classical style. The house has been recently restored.

Exterior

Front elevation: 2 storeys, brick of 3 bays wide, central bay projects slightly and is finished in a pediment. Renewed slate roof. 3 full height arched recesses. Centrally placed stone porch with 2 supporting Tuscan columns. Door with side windows with margin lights. 2 3-light windows to ground floor with similar margin lights, with 3 more to first floor. Lunette window to pediment. To rear various additions and extensions, with C20 windows. Left hand return elevation clearly shows the evidence of the early C19 refronting with a straight joint marking the divided between it and earlier fabric. Remains of red sandstone projecting chimney stack.

Interior

Interior was not accessible at time of re-survey (March 1996).

Reasons for Listing

Listed as a well designed early C19 house with interesting earlier origins.

4.2 Setting/relationship with the outbuildings

Owing to a high boundary wall fronting Hugmore Lane, public views of the listed building are limited principally to a glimpse through its gated entrance. The building forms a historic group with the adjacent outbuildings, but its legibility is partly obscured by the boundary wall, where it runs along the frontage of the site. The outbuildings form a visual separation between the house and the application building.



3. Public view of the listed building from Hugmore Lane

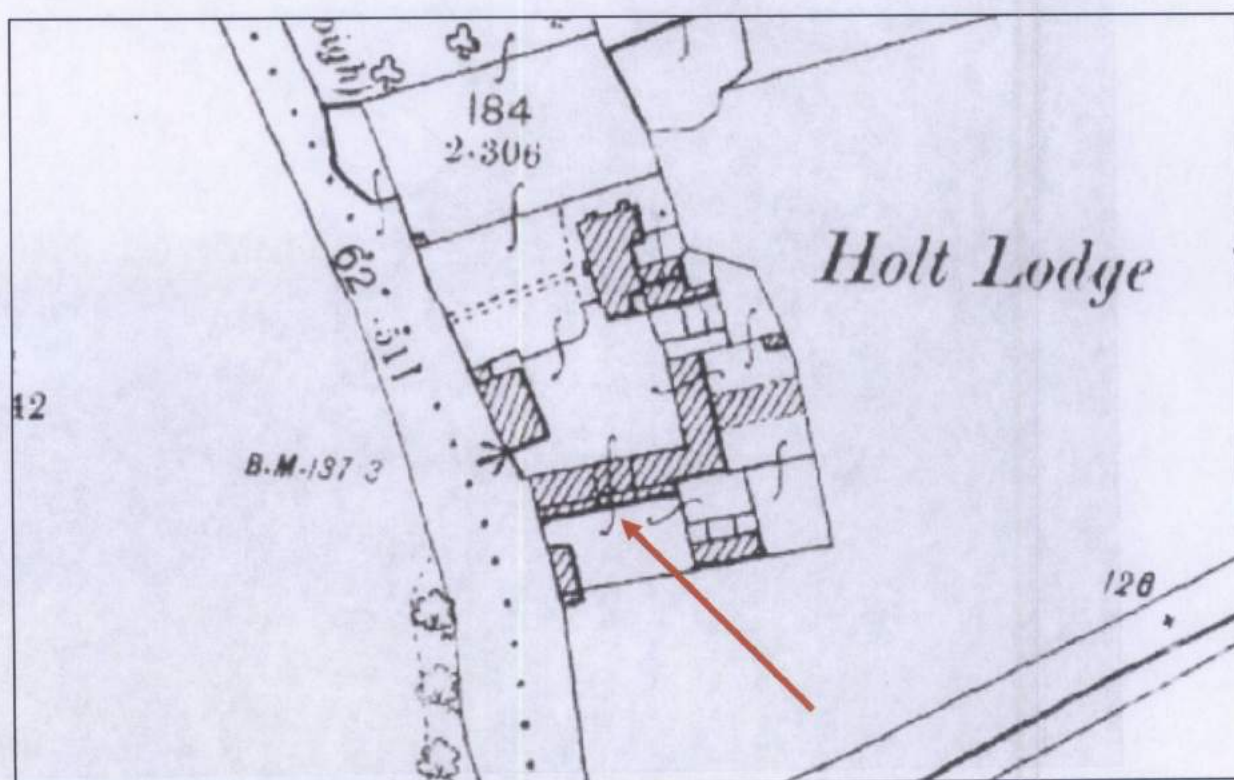


4. Relationship of the house and its outbuildings in the view from Hugmore Lane

5: THE PROPOSAL BUILDINGS

5.1 The outbuildings

- a. **Form.** The principal outbuilding of the group is the two-storey L-shaped range at right angles to Hugmore Lane, which has been adapted to commercial use and is the element affected by the application. This has two arms, the longer running west-east and the other north-south. At the rear of the west-east range is a single-storey outshut. This is the portion directly attached to the application building. The final building of the group is a freestanding two-storey structure fronting Hugmore Lane. The buildings together define a U-shaped courtyard accessed from an entrance between the west-east range and the freestanding building.
- b. **Date.** The appearance of the buildings suggests they are early 19th century, perhaps of similar date to the remodelling of the house. The exception is the single-storey outshut. Its date is the mid-20th century. It appears to have replaced an earlier outshut in this location, shown by the mapping of 1899 (Map 2, below)
- c. **Appearance.** The buildings are all built in a functional vernacular style, of brick with a slate roof, in contrast to the polite appearance of New Holt Lodge Farm.
- d. **Function.** The L-shaped range appears originally to have contained stables or shippens with haylofts above.



Map 2. The outbuildings as depicted by the 25-inch OS mapping of 1899



5. The single-storey outrigger at the south end of the west-east range, which is the element attached to the application building, is probably mid-20th century



6. Side view from Hugmore Lane showing the outrigger



7. East end of the west-east range showing relationship with the industrial building (left)



8. Distant view from east showing relationship of the industrial building, the outbuildings and New Holt Lodge Farm beyond

5.2 The industrial building

This is a large late 20th century structure of no interest which with its tall metal-clad sheds is unattractive in its scale and appearance and therefore detracts from the setting of the listed buildings.



9. The south elevation of the industrial building

6: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

6.1 *New Holt Lodge Farm*

The Grade II designation of the listed building denotes it is of national importance for its special architectural and historic interest. It is from this special interest that its significance essentially derives. The submitted planning statement has already noted that in terms of the guidance offered by CADW, New Holt Lodge Farm possesses strong interest through all of the four categories of evidential value, historical value, aesthetic value and communal value. The greatest contribution is made by the first three of these categories. The evidential value is clearly present in the surviving fabric of the building, which is legible as an early 19th century remodelling of an earlier structure. The date and extent of this earlier fabric is not however unspecified in the listing description, but given the nature of the present application, it is not relevant in this instance. Its historic value is evident through the documentary records of the site dating back to at least 1670, along with evidence of its 19th century remodelling. Aesthetic value is apparent through the distinctive Neoclassical appearance of the building with its Tuscan porch and gable pediment with lunette window, all of which are the legacy of the 19th century facelift.

6.2 *The outbuildings*

The curtilage listing of the outbuilding group means they are also considered listed in planning terms and are to be treated as possessing special architectural and/or historic interest. The significance of the buildings does not rank as highly as that of the house however, owing to their later date and alteration. Nevertheless they are important in terms of their interest as a probably early 19th century outbuildings group, along with their collective value and setting in relation to New Holt Lodge Farm. In terms of the CADW guidance they principally possess evidential, historical and aesthetic value. Their evidential value derives from their form, legibility and presence as a large group of outbuildings of likely early 19th century date associated with a site of gentry status. Their historic value also stems from this association, and their aesthetic interest is evident in their vernacular, functional appearance which contrasts with the polite Neoclassicism of New Holt Lodge Farm. However the interest and significance of the structures resides primarily in the original range of buildings. The mid-20th century outshut attached to the application buildings is of later date and lacks interest, with the consequence that its significance is low in comparison to the original elements.

6.3 *The industrial building*

This is a modern structure of no architectural or historic interest which therefore has negligible significance in heritage terms. Via its alien, unsympathetic appearance, it detracts from the setting of New Holt Lodge Farm and of the outbuildings.

7: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 Statutory duty

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest.

7.2 Relevant planning policies

In the national context, the policies by which the statutory duty is put into practice are contained within Chapter 6 (Conserving the Historic Environment) of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, November 2016). In relation to listed buildings, paragraph 6.5.11 states:

There should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation of a listed building and its setting, which might extend beyond its curtilage. For any development proposal affecting a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The aim should be to find the best way to protect and enhance the special qualities of listed buildings, retaining them in sustainable use. The continuation or reinstatement of the original use should generally be the first option, but not all original uses will now be viable or appropriate. The application of development and listed building controls should recognise the need for flexibility where new uses have to be considered in order to secure a building's survival or provide it with a sound economic future

In addition, Technical Advice Note 24 (The Historic Environment) provides guidance on development procedures in relation to listed buildings. It states that the controls that apply to a listed building also apply to any objects or structures fixed to the building or that are within its curtilage. The exact definition of what constitutes a fixture and curtilage may have to be treated on a case-by-case basis and has been the subject of case law.

The local planning context is established by policies of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, adopted February 2005. Policy EC9 relates to listed buildings and states that alterations, additions and development or redevelopment within their curtilage must respect their setting and character.

In addition, a new Local Development Plan for Wrexham is currently emerging to replace the UDP, covering the period 2013 to 2028, and hence carries only limited

8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

8.1 Summary of the scheme

The scheme intends to retain the existing traditional outbuilding and demolish the existing light industrial building. The latter will be replaced by a smaller building of better design and less intrusive presence. This replacement building will be single-storey in accordance with the height of the existing outbuilding, and connected to the L-shaped outbuilding by an oak glazed link. The walling will be clad in larch boarding. The proposal will provide 795 square metres of warehouse and 29 square metres of office space within the existing barn outbuilding. The new buildings will provide 1,800 square metres of storage and distribution. Parking provision will comprise 47 standard spaces and six ambulant parking space. The existing boundary wall will be retained with native hedgerow planted behind it.

8.2 Effect upon the setting of New Holt Lodge Farm

Although visually separated from it by the outbuildings, the existing light industrial building detracts from the setting of the listed building. The new building will enhance this setting by providing a smaller scale and better-designed structure of lower height and traditional materiality.

8.3 Effect upon the outbuilding

It has been demonstrated in this report that the industrial structure is in contact only with the mid-20th century outshut, which is of lower heritage significance than the original 19th century element of the outbuilding. The latter will be unaffected by the works and its significance will therefore be preserved. Although of lower importance, the interest of the outshut is respected in that all existing openings are to be retained. In the wider context the setting of the outbuildings will be enhanced by the scale and design of the new building.

8.4 Conclusion

For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the proposal will preserve the significance of the curtilage-listed outbuilding and enhance its setting along with that of New Holt Lodge Farm. In doing so, the proposal satisfies the requirements of national planning policy along with those of the local development plan as outlined in section 7 of this report. It is therefore considered the proposal should receive approval without delay.

APPENDIX: GARRY MILLER HISTORIC BUILDING CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is an architectural historian who has spent more than 35 years studying buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as 'scholarship as its best' by *Country Life* (June 2003), and 'well analysed and presented' in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); and was widely cited in the 2006 *Buildings of England* volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his *Douglas Valley* book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings. His specialism are the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment, and his area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and reports on more than 100 buildings or sites are produced annually.