

Heritage Impact Assessment

Regarding

**The Restoration and Reuse of Buildings at the App Chem Ltd. Site,
together with Associated Development**

Hugmore Lane, Wrexham



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In August 2015 Jeff St. Paul was commissioned by Chris Counsell, Managing Director, The Tintometer Ltd., to advise on heritage issues and to prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment in connection with an application to Wrexham County Borough Council for Planning and Listed Building Consent for a scheme for the redevelopment of the site of App Chem Ltd. in Hugmore Lane, Wrexham.
- 1.2 This Statement forms part of that application and should be read in conjunction with all the submitted information, in particular the submitted drawings and Design and Access Statement.
- 1.3 New Holt Lodge Farm is a listed building Grade II. The range of outbuildings which form part of the site of App Chem Ltd. were formerly part of the farm complex and are cartilage buildings within the meaning of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, see 3.1.1 below. It is proposed to retain and restore the outbuildings for residential use as part of the scheme to redevelop the site. This Heritage Impact Assessment is being submitted to consider the impact of the Proposals on the Heritage Asset.
- 1.4 This Statement involves an examination of New Holt Lodge Farm, and in particular the outbuildings referred to, their significance and importance to the Heritage Asset including their significance as Statutory listed buildings. The proposals for the re-use and restoration of the former industrial site will be examined and how this affects the heritage asset. This will then be used to reach an assessment of the impact of the scheme on the Heritage Asset.
- 1.5 National guidance on such matters indicates that the level of information provided in a Heritage Impact Assessment should be proportionate to the significance of the Heritage Asset and to the potential impact of the proposals on that asset.

2.0 Background and Historical Context

- 2.1 The site lies in a predominately rural setting on a quiet lane and adjacent to the Wrexham Industrial Estate.
- 2.2 New Holt Lodge Farm itself is essentially an early 19th Century house with earlier origins. The outbuildings which form part of the application may be of an earlier date although they are much altered and extended, especially on the App Chem Ltd. side.
- 2.3 It is not known when the site changed from agricultural use to industrial but certainly by the 1980s it was occupied by a motor repair company, Demon Tweaks. App Chem Ltd. initially took a lease then bought the site and buildings in 2001.
- 2.4 App-Chem Ltd. has used the site for production of water test kits for industrial applications. It is planned that all production on the site will cease by latest April 2017. This is due primarily to the unsuitability of the site as a modern, up-to-date and efficient production environment, due to the design of the buildings, especially the former farm buildings.

3.0 New Holt Lodge Farm and outbuildings– Description, Statutory Designations and the Heritage Asset

- 3.1.1 New Holt Lodge Farm enjoys statutory protection as a Building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (listed building) Grade II. It is listed under Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended. It was first included on the list in June 1952 and amended in July 1996. The listing ensures that the building cannot be altered in any way which affects its character, internally or externally, without Listed Building consent. A copy of the Listing entry is shown at Appendix 1.

The Cadw reference for the record of the building is: Wrexham/ Holt/ 1541.

- 3.1.2 The reason given for listing is, 'Listed as a well designed early 19th Century house with interesting early origins.'

3.1.3 The outbuildings are not mentioned in the non-statutory listing description. However, Section 1 of the 1990 Act referred to in 3.1.1 above (5) b states that, '*Any object or structure within the curtilage of the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948, shall be treated as part of the building.*' That is, they enjoy the same statutory protection as the listed building.

3.1.4 Welsh Office Circular 61/96 gives further guidance on the curtilage of listed buildings and how it might be applied. This is covered particularly in paragraphs 84 – 90 of the Circular.

These paragraphs concede that the question of curtilage is not always an easy one to determine and that all cases should be considered individually. It is clear that the initial decision should be one for the local planning authority, paragraphs 86 and 87, more detailed guidance is given in 88 and 89 and these are considered in more detail below. Paragraph 90 states that the question of curtilage is, '...ultimately a matter for the courts'.

3.1.5 As stated above, paragraph 89 states five tests which may be applied to any particular case to determine curtilage. These are:

- The historical independence of the building.
- The physical layout of the principal building and other buildings.
- The ownership of the buildings now and at the time of listing.
- Whether the structure forms part of the land.
- The use and function of the buildings, and whether a building is ancillary or subordinate to the principal buildings.

3.1.6 By any reasonable assessment, the outbuildings within the former App Chem Ltd. Site and which form part of this application, are curtilage buildings within the meaning of the Act and therefore should be treated as listed buildings.

3.2 Assessing the Heritage Asset

3.2 In the publication, 'Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the Historic Environment in Wales', March 2011, Cadw set out the principles behind conservation philosophy which guides their decision making in managing change in the historic environment. The Cadw guidance acknowledges the foundation provided by an earlier English Heritage publication, 'Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance,' 2008.

Both publications give detailed guidance on the assessment of the built heritage and propose four categories into which they might be grouped. These are assessed below in relation to the listed New Holt Lodge Farm

but with particular reference to the outbuildings. The sections in italics which follow each heading are taken directly from the Cadw publication.

3.2.1 Evidential Value

Evidential value ... Those elements of an historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity.

As an example of an historic house with attendant outbuildings, New Holt Lodge Farm has a high significance based on evidential value. The house and outbuildings, with their many changes, illustrate the development of a moderate size estate.

3.2.2 Historical Value

An historic asset might illustrate a particular aspect of past life or it might be associated with a notable family, person, event or movement.

New Holt Lodge Farm is recorded in the Hearth Tax of 1670 as being in the possession of Howell Lloyd Gent when it was known as Plas Iorcyn. It was largely rebuilt in the early C19th although it retains elements of the earlier structure. The outbuildings may in part pre-date the rebuilding of the house. As such they exhibit a high significance in terms of Historical Value.

3.2.3 Aesthetic Value

Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

As a substantial house with early origins and many interesting features New Holt Lodge Farm exhibits undoubted Aesthetic Value.

3.2.4 Communal Value

This derives from the meanings that an historic asset has for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. It is closely linked to historical and aesthetic values but tends to have additional or specific aspects. Communal value might be commemorative or symbolic.

New Holt Lodge Farm exhibits moderate to high Communal Value through its evocation of a past means of farming and living in this area of north east Wales.

3.2.5 Summary

In terms of the guidance offered by Cadw, New Holt Lodge Farm offers a strong contribution to the Heritage Asset through all of the four categories of Evidential Value, Historical Value, Communal Value and Aesthetic Value. Of these the Evidential and Historical elements are particularly strong.

However, it has to be recorded that with regards to the outbuilding the heritage asset has been severely degraded. Although the elevation facing New Holt Lodge Farm is essentially intact, the elevation within the App Chem Ltd. Site is very much changed to the detriment of the Heritage Asset, see 4.1.

4.0 Present Position, The Proposals and the Impact on the Heritage Asset

4.1 Present Position

- 4.1.1 The outbuilding is probably of late 18th early 19th century date but much altered. The building is of two wings with a raised central section. It is probable that the central section predates the wings as window openings in the gable have been obscured by the later build and blocked. Although the interior has been lost it seems probable, judging by the position within the farmstead and the nature of the original openings, that it housed stables, grain and fodder storage, and tack and general storage. It may well also have had accommodation for ostlers although no chimneys are present.



Farm Courtyard elevation showing blocked window to gable and blocked oculi

- 4.1.2 The New Holt Lodge elevation is fairly complete although some modern windows with concrete lintels have been inserted. The brick built structure has some fine detailing with a good modillion cornice, especially to the raised central section. There are also brick ringed oculi with sandstone cills, some blocked, and x patterned ventilation slits all blocked.
- 4.1.3 The elevation facing the App Chem Ltd. Site has been completely changed. A brick, slate roofed lean-to extension possibly early to mid 20th century completely obscures the wings with only the central section rising above it.



Internal elevation with later lean-to blocking the facade, cornice detail apparent.

- 4.1.4 Little remains of the interior. The elevation behind the brick lean-to extension has been almost completely removed and the interior stripped to accommodate the industrial processes. In the lean-to the supporting trusses are of machine planed timber although the fact that purlin seats appear on the underside of the blades seems to indicate re-use.

The only internal features of interest are the king post trusses with struts which support the roof of the original outbuilding. The timber here is riven or adzed, not planed, and although blades and tie beams show of re-use they are an interesting survival.

4.2 The Proposals

4.2.1 The overall intention is to redevelop the App Chem site for residential use. The somewhat ramshackle collection of modern industrial buildings will be demolished and the site developed for 12 residential units in addition to the four units in the restored outbuilding, as shown on the submitted plans. The effect of this redevelopment on the setting of the listed building is examined in Section 4.5.

4.2.2 With regard to the listed outbuilding it is proposed that the courtyard elevation to New Holt Lodge Farm remains essentially as present with very few changes. There are fundamental changes proposed to the elevation facing the App Chem Ltd. Side and these are detailed below.

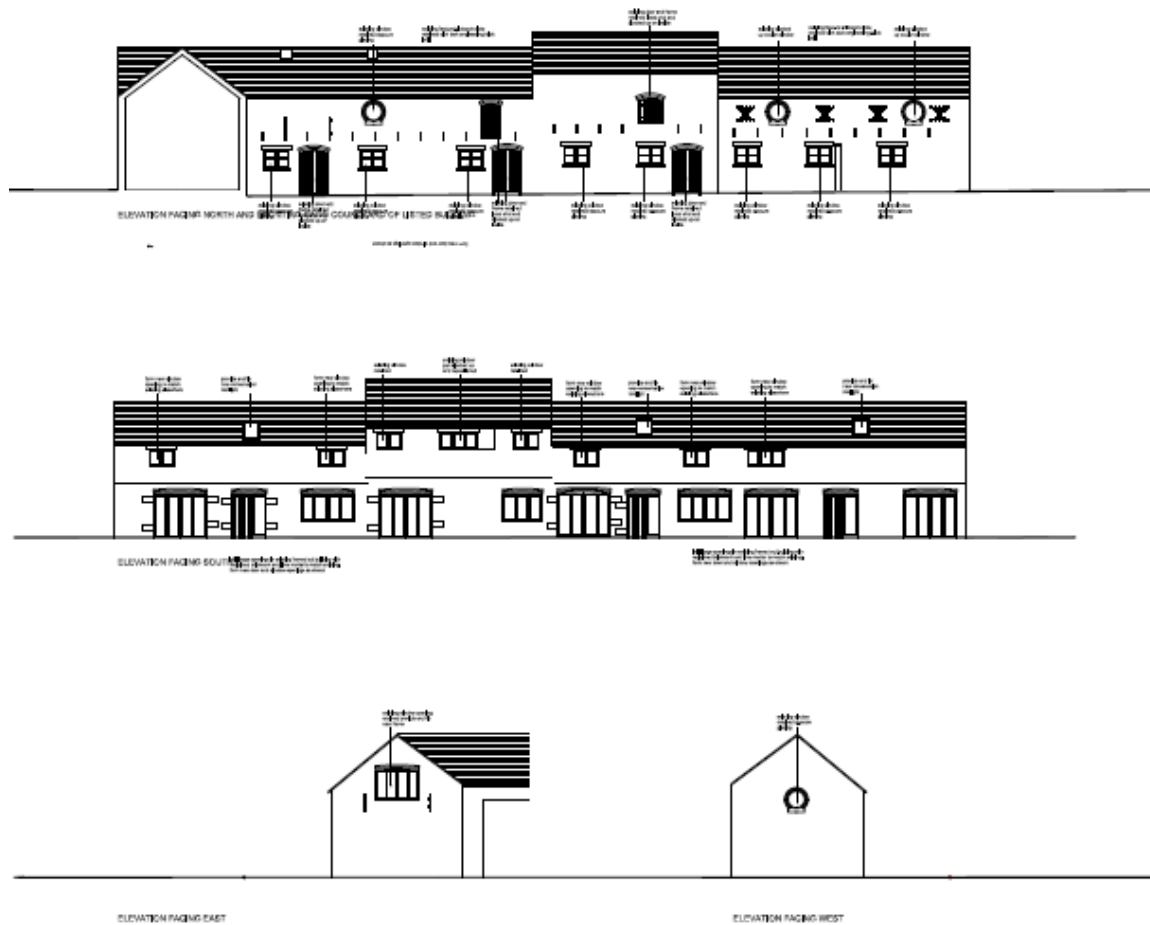
4.2.3 The outbuilding will be restored to provide four residential units.

4.3 External Proposals

4.3.1 No radical changes are proposed to the elevation to the farm courtyard. Existing door and window openings will be used and glazed with obscure glass for privacy reasons. Blocked window and door openings will remain so to avoid impact on the farm complex. Two small conservation pattern rooflights will be retained to bring light into the upper storey. The relatively small size and low profile of the rooflights will minimise impact.

The treatment of the elevation is an appropriate and compatible response to the re-use of the listed outbuilding. The few changes proposed do not damage, and indeed enhance, the special character of the building.

4.3.2 There is, necessarily, a more radical approach to the internal elevation of the outbuilding. It is proposed to demolish the relatively modern brick built lean to extension. This exposes the internal elevation which has very largely been lost. In the re-use of this building for four residential units it is proposed to use a style echoing as far as possible the existing farm courtyard elevation.



Farm courtyard elevation above, internal elevation below.

It is intended to re-build the elevation with lime pointed re-claimed bricks. Window and door proportions will be similar to existing and what is necessary to convert the building for residential use.

Without documentary evidence it is not possible to know what the treatment of this elevation was but the treatment proposed is fully compatible with the status and special character of the listed building. It is an undoubted enhancement to the special character of the listed building as it stands at the moment.

- 4.3.3 The western gable will be unaltered with the existing oculus retained and obscure glazed. The eastern gable will retain the window opening but the unsightly industrial doors will be removed and the brickwork made good.



Existing eastern gable

4.4 Internal Proposals

- 4.4.1 As noted earlier, the use of the building has removed nearly all features of note or interest except for the kingpost roof trusses. These will be retained in the re use of the building.



Example of existing King post truss, part obscured by inserted ceiling

The proposals will enhance what features remain internally and by removing the suspended ceiling the trusses will be better appreciated.

4.5 The Setting of the Listed Building

- 4.5.1 The setting of the main house will be enhanced by the re-use and restoration of the outbuilding and by the removal of the industrial buildings.
- 4.5.2 The removal of these buildings will have an even more beneficial effect upon the outbuilding which forms part of the proposed development.
- 4.5.3 The setting will also be enhanced by the proposed development itself. As the submitted Design and Access Statement says the intention is to create a 'village vernacular' feel with appropriate layout, design, and use of materials.

As part of the redevelopment, the proposed landscaping will also add to the enhancement of the setting.

5.0 Conclusions

- New Holt Lodge Farm and its attendant outbuildings is a Grade II Listed Building and is a good example of a 19th Century House with earlier fabric.
- The proposals will resume a beneficial use for the outbuilding which will secure its future. Clearly, without a beneficial use the future of the building is under threat.
- The quality of the Heritage Asset has been assessed and the impact of the proposals on the Heritage Asset considered. The conclusion of this is that the proposals are positive and do not damage the character of the building or its setting.
- By the removal of the later lean-to extension, the restoration of existing features and new detail compatible with the character of the existing, the proposals complement and enhance the special character of the listed outbuilding.

- The setting of the listed structures will undoubtedly be enhanced by the removal of the mish-mash of industrial buildings and the new residential proposed with their compatible design, layout, landscaping and materials will enhance the setting.
- In their totality, the proposals represent a good re use of the site compatible with and complementing the listed structures.

Appendix 1 Listed Building Entry

Historic Wales Report

Dataset	Cadw Listed Buildings
Title	New Holt Lodge Farm
Type	Listed Building
Dataset UID	1541
Community	Holt

Location

Situated at crossroads where Hugmore Lane meets Francis' Lane and Brynestyn Road.

Date Listed	6/9/1952
Last Amendment	7/17/1996
Grade	II

History

Early C19 brick house with earlier origins. New Holt Lodge Farm was originally called Croes Iorwyn 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.

Reason for Listing

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

History

E Hubbard, Clwyd, 1994, p183;

A N Palmer, The Town of Holt In the County of Denbigh: Its Castle, Church, Franchise, Demesne, Fields etc together with the Parish of Isycoed, 1910, p282.

Interior

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

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.