

Heritage Statement

The Old Vicarage, Leek Road, Longsdon
Mr & Dr R Burnham

1.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

Introduction

- 1.1. This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of the conversion of a detached garage to ancillary accommodation for the Old Vicarage, Longsdon. This is in line with the requirements of paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF), which requires all applicants to provide an assessment of significance and potential impact of works that might affect heritage assets.
- 1.2. The property in question is an early 20th century garage and coach house situated within the curtilage of the vicarage previously belonging to St. Chad's church, but now privately owned. This heritage statement has been prepared due to the close proximity of the Grade II* listed church.

2.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

Description of the Asset

- 2.1. The Old Vicarage is located in the village of Longsdon, to the north side of the A53 between Leek to the northeast and Endon to the southwest.
- 2.2. The property dates from the mid-19th century, built in brick with a charming symmetrical frontage facing the road. It pre-dates the associated Saint Chad's church, which was built in the early 1900s.
- 2.3. Originally known as Yew Tree House, the property, outbuildings and 3 acres of land were offered for sale in April 1888 by a Mr Myatt. The house is described in the auction catalogue as containing "dining and drawing rooms, kitchen, four bedrooms and a bath or dressing room," while the outbuildings comprised "two cow houses, stable and coach house, with good lofts over, calf-cote and piggery." A picture from the catalogue shows the house as it originally looked from the road, with the cow house situated behind. This layout is reflected in the OS map of 1898.
- 2.4. During the 19th century, the people of Longsdon attended the church at Endon, approximately 2 miles away. In 1899, John Robinson, of Westwood Hall in Leek, purchased land off Leek New Road for a burial ground, and redeemed the mortgage on Yew Tree House which had previously been purchased for a curate (presumably at the auction of 1888). The 1901 census shows Stephen Warren, a clergyman, living at 'The Parsonage' with his wife, 2 young children and 3 domestic servants.
- 2.5. In 1901, Robinson gave land adjoining the burial ground as a site for a new church. At the same time, the house was enlarged, the cow houses demolished to make way for a new parish room, and a detached garage and coach house built to the eastern side of the plot.

- 2.6. The church of Saint Chad was built between 1903 and 1905, in a 14th-century style by Gerald Horsley, with fittings in the contemporary arts and crafts style. The provision of church, burial ground, house, and parish room was described as 'one of the most complete gifts that the diocese of Lichfield has ever known.' (Staffs Advertiser, 1905)
- 2.7. Saint Chad's church was Grade II* listed in February 1967, with the following description:

Parish church. 1903-5 by Gerald Horsley. Rock-faced coursed stone; smooth dressings; blue machine tile roof; verge parapets. West tower and spire, nave, south porch, north aisle, vestry and chancel; inspired by the work of Norman Shaw and of a variation on the Perpendicular style. Tower: of approximately 3 stages on plinth (as remainder of Church); 3-stage angle buttresses; half-octagonal stair turret projection set to left of centre on south side and run out under bell-chamber; modillioned eaves; 3-light square-headed (with reticulated tracery) bell-chamber openings, 2 to a side set in rebates. Small, square-headed, 2-light windows to lower stages on north and west sides; 6-light pointed geometric 'Y'-tracery west window; broach spire with massive gargoyles at heads of broaches; large gabled lucarnes just over eaves to each face; further miniature range below apex. Porch: attached to south side of tower, artfully set between stair turret and buttress to right; pointed arch entry with label and shield stops, and inner vestibule. Nave: 3 bays, rather low divided by single-stage buttresses; 3-light pointed Geometric tracery windows. North aisle: cat-slide from nave; 3 bays, low walled, with buttresses between bays; square-headed 3-light C17-style windows; further, lower aisle bay continued to west beyond parapet to west of north aisle and set against tower wall; 2-light windows to north and west; gabled vestry set into aisle roof to east side with 2 single-lights and one 3-light mullion and transom window flanking central boarded door with Carnaervon-arch head. Chancel: roofed continuously with nave but of higher eaves, of 2 bays; high-set labelled pair of square-headed 2-light windows to south and 5-light low pointed east window with inscribed stone below "To the glory of God/this Church of St Chad is built by the sons/of John Robinson late of Westwood Hall, Leek/carrying out herein what he had himself/intended to do - this stone was laid/by the Right Rev Sir Lovelace T Stamer, Bart/Bishop of Shrewsbury : October 26 : 1903". Interior: of pale stone with darker dressings. 3-bay octagonal north arcade columns with moulded capitals; pointed chancel arch with moulded imposts; heavily corbelled angles to tower ceiling; arch brace collar; king post and upper collar truss roof; boarded soffit; boarded barrel-vaulted chancel roof. Pulpit: octagonal, timber. Font: on peninsular plinth set against west wall of tower; octagonal stone basin. Lectern: of unusual design in timber; large aedicular, rectangular plinth with conventional stand rising from centre. East window only in stained glass by Comper.

- 2.8. The full extent of the expansions to the house and the building of the garage can be seen by overlaying the 1898 OS map with the map from 1922, tying in with the building of the church in the early 20th century.

- 2.9. The garage/coach house is a long, single gabled structure of 4 bays, with several interesting features. The foremost bay is likely to have acted as garage, while the smaller room behind contains a fireplace and wood panelling, and was likely used by a coachman, chauffeur and/or stable hand. The stables were situated in the third room towards the back, while the rearmost bay was likely occupied by pigs at some stage. Remnants of the external enclosure is still visible at the rear, and a low opening (now filled) is visible in the gable end.
- 2.10. Externally, there are 4 windows and 2 doors to the western elevation, facing towards the house. These are, unusually, timber sash windows, rather than hopper windows (as might be expected). The original stable door is no longer present, though the pintle hinges are still in place. Two small timber windows are present to the eastern elevation, facing the field, within the stable bay, with one further sash window to the rear gable.
- 2.11. The large timber doors to the garage bay are unusual, being sliding rather than hinged. Sliding one door behind the other leaves a rather narrow space through which to get a car or coach, though it's possible these are a more recent addition. The small openings at high level are a later insertion, a remnant of a previous owner that kept birds as a hobby.
- 2.12. The brickwork is high quality, in a Flemish bond, though surprisingly there is a cavity present, and the headers visible both internally and externally are snapped bricks. This method reflects the techniques used in the late 19th and early 20th century, as modern cavity walling became more common, but architects/builders continued to use the more ornamental forms of brickwork. However, it's unusual to find such methods in use on an outbuilding, where you would still expect to find a 9" solid wall or even a single skin with piers.

3.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT **Assessment of its Significance**

- 3.1. Under the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), any alterations should seek to "conserve and enhance" the historic environment. Section 12 of the NPPF states that LPAs should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting, with a level of detail proportionate to its importance (P128).
- 3.2. The garage to the coach house is a rather unique structure with an interesting history. It would have been built alongside the expansion of the house to form a large vicarage befitting the new church. The cavity walling in Flemish bond and description as a garage/coach house reflect the changing times in which it was built, as newer construction techniques became more prevalent and motor cars very slowly began to replace horse power.

- 3.3. Although now in private ownership, the close association of the house and the church reflects a high level of historic and communal value, particularly as the house now retains the old parish hall.
- 3.4. The high-quality construction and surviving windows add to the interest and significance of this unusual outbuilding. It retains much character on its own merit, but particularly when grouped with the early-20th century alterations to the house and the association with John Robinson of Westwood Hall.
- 3.5. However, the garage is situated a good distance (approx. 70m) from the principal heritage asset, being the Grade II* listed church, and is not visible within its immediate setting. Other heritage assets within the area include the New Inn (HER 54828), and Stonelow Hall (HER 00315), but the garage is not visible from any historic buildings or monuments within 250m.

4.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

The Design Concept

- 4.1. It is proposed to convert the garage into ancillary accommodation for use by the owners of the main property and their family.
- 4.2. The front bay will be retained as an accessible garage, but principally utilised as a gym area. To improve thermal efficiency, the space will be insulated internally and a set of bi-fold doors installed inside the timber doors. The sliding timber doors will be repurposed as hinged doors (set on castors and a rail within the ground), so they can be fully opened when necessary.
- 4.3. A new partition wall will section off the former domestic bay to form a new shower room accessible from both the guest bedroom and gym. The original stove will be retained as a feature.
- 4.4. The former stables are to be utilised as a guest bedroom. The applicants have a large family, and an additional self-contained bedroom for visitors would prove incredibly useful.
- 4.5. The rear bay is to be converted into a family hobby room for arts and crafts, music etc. A new set of French doors opening out onto the small courtyard at the rear will make this area particularly useful during the summer months.
- 4.6. Externally, it's proposed to retain the original features, such as the timber sash windows and cast-iron guttering, and repair or replace like-for-like wherever necessary.

- 4.7. Two new windows to match existing (potentially repurposing the end gable sash) and a set of 4no. conservation rooflights to the eastern elevation will maximise daylight within the internal spaces.
- 4.8. The existing ground level to the field side will also be lowered slightly to prevent penetrating damp and allow a set of French doors to be installed within the end gable.

5.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

The Impact

- 5.1. The aim of this report is to assess the impact of proposals on the significance of any heritage assets that might be affected. In line with current NPPF guidance, proposals should seek to conserve and enhance historic character.
- 5.2. The principal heritage asset in this case is the Grade II* listed St. Chad's church. The church is some 70m away from the garage and is shielded by the vicarage and a series of trees. Therefore, conversion of the garage will have no impact on the setting or character of the church.
- 5.3. When the property was purchased, a covenant was in place stating that the garage must retain its use, presumably to prevent the building being converted to a separate dwelling and sold off. The retention of an accessible garage at the front, albeit to be used as a gym by the current owners, seeks to satisfy this requirement. The doors have been designed to still allow vehicle access, and the room will retain its original proportions.
- 5.4. While small changes to the outside, such as the addition of new windows, will have some impact on historic legibility, the garage, whilst interesting, is of relatively low heritage value.
- 5.5. The garage is currently in a poor state of repair and in need of renovation. The owners currently use it purely for storage but want to undertake a program of renovation and maximise its potential. Conversion of the building to ancillary accommodation will ensure its continued survival for years to come.

6.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

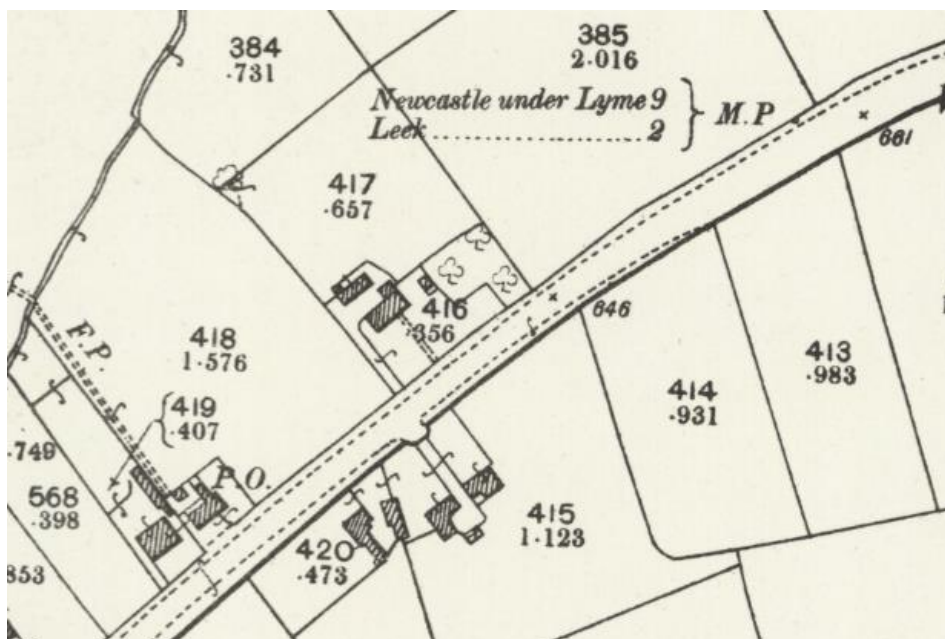
Photos



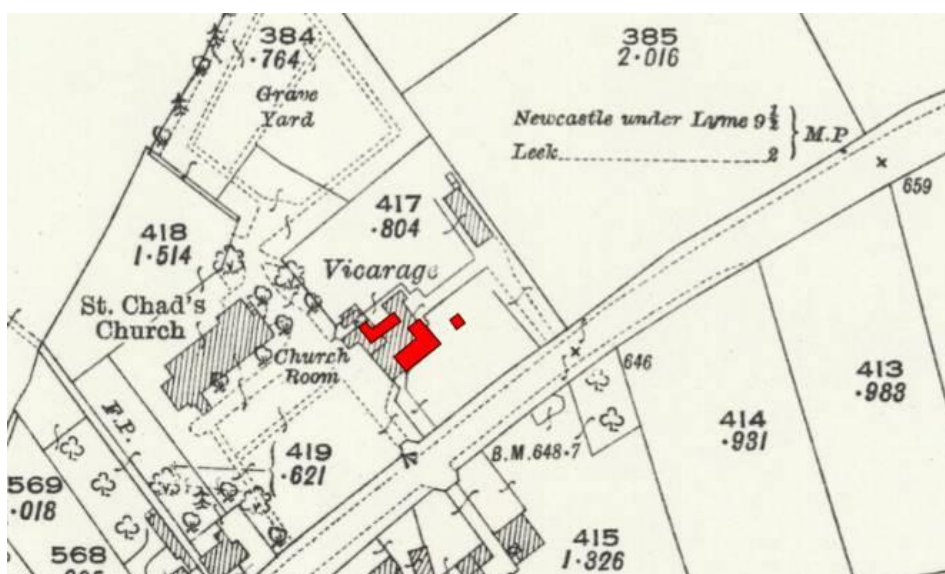
1: Photo of Yew Tree House (1888 Auction Catalogue)



2: Garage (2021)



3: OS Map (1898)



4: 1922 OS plan overlaid with 1898 planform

Sources

Staffordshire HER - <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>

Staffordshire Records Office - <http://www.archives.staffordshire.gov.uk>

Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance – Historic England (2008)

www.old-maps.co.uk

www.historicengland.org.uk

A History of the County of Stafford: Volume 7, Leek and the Moorlands. Via [www. british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk)

Auction catalogue (1888), kindly provided by Mr & Dr Burnham