

## Heritage Advice: The Folly

### Site: The Folly, Settle

Application: 2020/22037/LBC

Proposal: Re-point front elevations; North Range: replace under floor air grates to North Range; North Garage: convert to kitchen and storage areas; remove outhouse; Rear Middle Range partial re-roof; re-plaster internal walls; strip out and replace staircase and flooring timbers; remove partition and sanitary fittings to first floor; South Range: remove boiler and boiler room partitions; install accessible platform lift to serve three floors; fit new boiler and relocate disabled WC in redundant kitchen; form new staircase to second/first floor; remove external metal escape bridge; South Garage: re-roof

Date: 6.10.20

Heritage Advice from Hinchliffe Heritage to Craven District Council

## 1. Introduction

1.1 My comments are restricted to heritage and design issues connected with the proposal.

1.2 The advice is given following an email request from Ros Parker dated 2nd October and a site visit on 5th October, when I: met the applicants and the architects to discuss and assess the proposals and; took several photographs (some of which are provided below but others can be made available).

## 2. The Status of the Heritage Assets

2.1 The Folly is a Grade I listed building.

2.2 The Folly is within the Settle Conservation Area, for which a CA Appraisal was prepared in 2008.

## 3. The Heritage Significance

3.1 *The Listing Description (for identification only) is:*

*THE FOLLY, VICTORIA STREET*

*Grade: I*

*Date first listed: 20-Feb-1958*

*Details*

*SETTLE VICTORIA STREET SD 8263 (east side) 11/26 The Folly 20.2.58 GV I Hall, now house and shop. 1670s by Richard Preston. Coursed rubble, stone dressings. Stone slate roof. Lobby-entry plan. 3 storeys, recessed centre and 2 projecting gabled wings. The principal entrance to left of centre has an ornate surround: stepped bases support 2 unusual columns; with panelled flutes, which narrow near their necks, before swelling again; they have moulded capitals and finials. A massive lintel is decorated with traditional C17 Craven decoration which incorporates a Gothic motif, it is capped by a finial. c.1980 door. To the right is a 9-light double chamfered mullioned and transomed window with bead mouldings, king mullion and round-heads, the right hand light is now blocked. A single light continues this window into the right hand wing which is similar, but with 11 lights and ovolo mullions and transoms, this window continues into the right hand return. The left hand wing has a similar window, but with 9 lights, which is also continued into the right hand return of the bay. To its left is an entrance with a similar lintel to that of the principal entrance but less elaborate, the door is c.1980. A continuous dripmould rises over the principal entrance. The remaining windows have flat heads. The central bay has 6-light double-chamfered mullioned and transomed windows on the first and second floors with 3 blocked single lights between the floors. A 3-light double-chamfered window on the first floor of both wings has ovolo mullions and a transom which rises to form an arch over the central lower light,*

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*which supports a single mullion above. Both windows are flanked by 2-light double-chamfered mullioned and transomed windows which continue into the left and right hand returns of both bays. On the second floor of each wing are two 2-light double-chamfered mullioned and transomed windows with hoodmoulds. The left and right gables have a blocked 2-light and 3-light double-chamfered mullioned window respectively. The corners of the wings are defined by chamfered quoins, except where the ground and first floor windows return. Gable end projecting chimney stack. Interior: panelled hall contains inglenook fireplace on north wall with moulded surround, basket arched head and 21 joggled voussoirs. Lobby entry to left of fireplace has chamfered surround and basket arched lintel; plank door. Similar entrance to right of fireplace but with round-headed lintel. Oak dog-leg staircase in hall has closed string and barley sugar balusters. Room to north on ground floor is reputed to contain an inglenook fireplace with moulded surround and basket arched head of 21 voussoirs.*

*Listing NGR: SD8207563568*

3.2.1 The Folly occupies a prominent location in the CA, at the back of the pavement and thus makes a major contribution to its character and appearance. The CAA states:

*... at the bottom of School Hill, the Folly is probably the best known historic house in Settle. It is thought to have been built in 1679 by Richard Preston, a tanner and landowner; additions were made at a later date and many alterations and repairs have taken place. The house was never lived in as a grand family house and was later sub-divided into shops and flats, tea rooms and a lodging house. It has been restored and designated a Grade I Listed Building.*

and

### *Recommendations:*

*Bearing in mind that the Market Place is the principal visitor destination in the Settle Conservation Area, Craven District Council is strongly recommended to work with the County Council Highways and Landscape Officers to address the fundamental issues of **building entrances, disabled access**, pedestrian footways, seating areas, landscape features, settings of listed buildings and vehicle parking and circulation around the whole Market Place, including the Duke Street bus stops and pedestrian crossings.*

3.2.2 Dr Diane Green, a former inspector for Historic England described it thus;

*"This unique building has high designed and fortuitous aesthetic value on account of its design, both externally and internally. The main front faces onto the street and is both impressive and highly idiosyncratic, with its long runs of mullioned and transomed windows which (as Leach & Pevsner wrote in "Yorkshire West Riding") have greatest transparency at ground floor level with disconcertingly more solid masonry above. The highly windowed front elevation and the distinctive 'wrap round' windows at the corners give a great deal of light to the spacious interiors"*

3.2.3 The Folly is the most significant historic building in Settle. Its operation by the North Craven Building Preservation Trust as a museum and cafe ensures that: its proper care is in good hands; enables better understanding of the history of the building and local heritage and; enables access into the remarkable (albeit not entirely authentic) interior.

## 4. Assessment of the Proposal

### 4.1 Pointing of Front elevation (Plates 2,3 and 4)

#### *Timing*

The Trust has been offered a grant from the HLF for emergency repairs, including the repointing and is keen to undertake the repointing asap, before temperatures drop to a level which may lead to any pointing being damaged by the low temperature (normally repointing should not be done below 5 degrees C). However, as it is now October, temperatures are already falling considerably. It was agreed that, although the effects of pointing in cold weather can be mitigated by: covering in hessian/bubble wrap, this does not work at very low temperatures and; “anti-freeze-type” additives are sometimes added to mortar, these can have a harmful effect on the appearance and performance of mortar. It was agreed that ideally the repointing should be deferred until the Spring, when the chances of frost have significantly receded. The Trust has already written to the HLF to seek agreement to this. The timing to be reviewed on receipt of a response.

If a start on pointing must be made imminently, it should be restricted to those areas where there are obvious signs of water ingress, although this has implications for the requirement and cost of temporary scaffolding and possible road closures. However, if the mortar mix, extent and pointing finish can be agreed, at least informally, with Historic England and myself and if the weather remains mild (ie 5 degrees C or above), I consider that there would be benefits in undertaking the pointing in advance of formal approval by HE and CDC, at the risk of the trust.

#### *Historic England*

The architects have much experience of specifying and supervising repointing of highly graded local buildings (eg Skipton Castle) but it was agreed that the involvement and advice of Historic England is necessary and helpful. The architects have been in touch with HE in York who advised that they intend instruct their pointing specialist to visit the site and provide advice, when a specification has been prepared. As I have limited experience of hot lime pointing (as will probably be proposed), I advised that I would almost certainly defer to the opinion of HE’s national expert on the mortar mix and preparation, although I should be involved in the decision-making process, on behalf of CDC.

#### *Extent of Pointing*

The extent of proposed repointing at this stage is limited to the front elevation and the immediate returns. It was agreed that, although a consistent appearance of pointing/mortar on the front is desirable, it should not be pursued at all costs, as there is no necessity to remove any sound suitable or original sound mortar and any removal of mortar can cause damage to the stone. It was agreed that the extent of repointing should be informed by a survey of the type and condition of the existing pointing and that the architects would mark up a survey elevation, highlighting the main areas which are defective and/or inappropriate, although it was accepted that a final decision can only be made on close inspection. Whilst I was inspecting the other parts of the proposal, the architects undertook a rapid survey and came to the conclusion that they consider that the whole of the front elevation would benefit from being repointed. The architects agreed to submit a survey result and a justification statement.

#### *Mortar*

The architects had previously taken samples of mortar and have sent it for analysis and, although they are awaiting the results, their initial inspection of the mortar suggested to them that the original mortar had been a hot lime mix (due to large pieces of pure lime) and that they would therefore be likely to propose to undertake the pointing with a similar mix. They agreed to include

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the analysis results and the proposed mix in a detailed methodology (to be based on the HE and SPAB guidance documents) for further consideration by CDC and HE.

### *Pointing*

It was agreed that a flush or slightly recessed pointing finish should be used but that a sample panel should be prepared for approval. It was agreed that if the mortar and pointing sample is agreed at an early stage, this would avoid the need for a pre-commencement condition.

### 4.2 Replace under floor air grates to North Range (Plate 3)

Some of the under-floor air grates are damaged and need to be replaced. I consider that any of the samples shown on Page 5 of the Draft Heritage Statement would be acceptable, although the honeycomb pattern is the most simple and probably most appropriate.

### 4.3 North Garage/Coach house: convert to kitchen and storage areas (Plates 5 and 6)

It makes sense operationally to have the kitchen next to the cafe and I do not consider the proposal would involve any works which would cause harm to the heritage significance of the building. The architect said at the meeting that it is now proposed to omit the pedestrian door in the garage door (and thereby avoid intervention in the decorative iron hinges) and to block up the opening immediately behind and create a larger kitchen. A revised plan will be submitted.

### 4.4 Remove outhouse (Plates 7 and 8)

The rear outhouse is created by the rear wall of the garage/coach house, a crucial rear retaining wall, a wall to the public footpath to the W, a wall alongside an external staircase (with an altered window opening) and a flat concrete roof. The proposal cannot realistically involve the removal of the first three walls. The removal of the concrete roof would turn the outhouse into a small open yard and would enhance the heritage significance of the building. However the wall alongside the staircase appears to have quoins of a considerable age and so may have some historic value. It was agreed that further research would be undertaken by the trust to ascertain the date and purpose of the outhouse/yard and further consideration would be given to the removal or enhancement of the wall alongside the staircase, as there is no necessity to remove it.

### 4.5 Rear Middle Range partial re-roof (Plates 9 and 10)

It is clear from an internal and external inspection that the roof is defective and requires repair. Whilst I have every confidence that the works will be undertaken to an appropriate high standard, it is normal in such circumstances to require the submission of a methodology and specification of the works, including the code of lead, either prior to approval or by condition prior to implementation.

### 4.6 Re-plaster internal walls (Plates 11 and 12)

It is clear from an internal inspection that some of the interior plaster work has been damaged by water ingress and it needs to be replaced with a new application of plaster. The proposal is for the use of a traditional haired lime plaster which I consider is appropriate.

### 4.7 Strip out and replace staircase and flooring timbers (Plates 13)

The staircase has been adversely affected by the ingress of water and in any event is a none original staircase of pine treads. The removal of the existing staircase and its replacement with one of similar form and materials will cause no harm to the heritage significance of the building.

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### 4.8 Remove partition and sanitary fittings to first floor (Plate 14)

The partition wall and sanitary fittings are relatively recent and their removal will cause no harm to the heritage significance of the building.

### 4.9 South Range: remove boiler and boiler room partitions and; fit new boiler and relocate disabled WC in redundant kitchen (Plate 15 and 16)

The walls of the boiler room to be removed are modern concrete blocks and the kitchen has no decorative features of any heritage value. The proposed works will therefore cause no harm to the heritage significance of the building.

### 4.10 Install accessible platform lift to serve three floors; form new staircase to second/first floor; remove external metal escape bridge (Plates 17-20)

I was initially concerned that these works might involve the loss of some original fabric but, having inspected the proposed route of the lift from GF to 2nd F, I am satisfied that all of the floor and wall fabric which will be disturbed is relatively recent and will therefore cause no harm to the heritage significance of the building. Furthermore, the proposal will enhance the accessibility of the building to a wider group and will enable the removal of the metal bridge, which, although in a relatively discrete location, detracts from the appearance and significance of the building. I was also assured that the lift will not require excavation of a pit or the creation of an over-run in the roof. The drawings suggest that the rear GF needs to be widened but, although this will involve some intervention in structural masonry, the doorway has clearly been altered or created relatively recently and this is an acceptable level of intervention, provided it is made good in matching stone and mortar. The precise details of the extent of intervention required internally should ideally be provided. Overall the proposed works will enhance the operation and significance of the building.

### 4.11 Re-roof South Garage

The South garage is a detached building in traditional materials but of no heritage significance. Its reproofing in natural slate will enhance its performance as a storage area and its contribution to the Settle Conservation area. No objection.

## **5. Recommendation**

5.1 Although some further details and amended details are required, as stated above, I fully support the principle of the proposals and look forward to a continuing constructive dialogue to ensure good custodianship of the building by the trust.

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Plate 1. The Folly



Plate 2. Sample pointing at LH end



Plate 3. Sample pointing and damaged vent grill



Plate 4. Sample pointing at LH end



Plate 5. Garage/coach house doors



Plate 6. Interior of garage/coach house doors

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Plate 7. Outhouse



Plate 8. Roof of outhouse



Plate 9. Area of roof to be repaired



Plate 10. Area of roof to be repaired



Plate 11. Damaged internal plaster



Plate 12. Damaged internal plaster

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Plate 13. Defective staircase



Plate 14. Modern partition wall

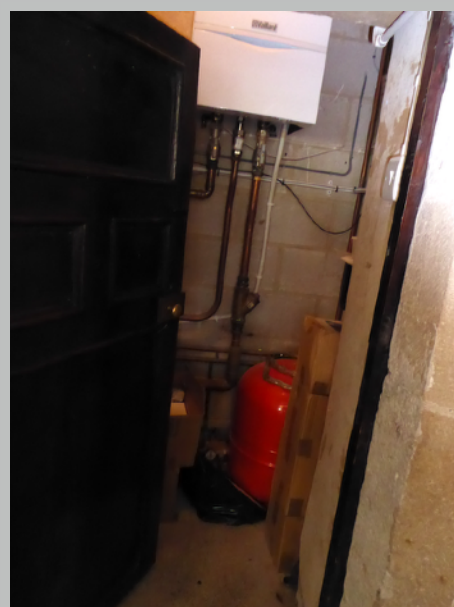


Plate 15. Boiler room



Plate 16. Kitchen

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Plate 17. Doorway to be widened



Plate 18. Bridge to be removed



Plate 19. Staircase to be replaced



Plate 20. Modern door to be replaced