

**A Former Farm Building at
Lyncroft, Hill Street, Corbridge**

Heritage Statement



ARS Ltd Report 2012/63
September 2012

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Executive Summary

Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned to produce a heritage statement in advance of the submission of an application for planning consent for the demolition of a former farm building and its replacement with a kitchen extension to the rear of Lyncroft, Hill Street, Corbridge, Northumberland. The proposals involve the removal of the current dilapidated building and the construction of a new replacement rear kitchen extension to the property. The property is not listed but is located within Character Area 1 of the Corbridge Conservation Area.

Corbridge Conservation Area was designated in March 1974 and revised in March 1996 in response to the clear historic and architectural significance of the village that can be traced back to Saxon times with the construction of St Andrew's Church in the seventh century. The nearby Roman town and fort of Corstopitum adds depth to the settlement's historic envelope and a ready source of building material in past times. The collection of 31 listed buildings in the conservation area is testimony to its heritage importance. The boundary of the conservation area was amended in March 1996.

The former farm building is constructed of local roughly coursed sandstone with dressed quoins. The building is located on the south side of Hill Street, to the rear of "Lyncroft", a two-storey, stone, terraced dwelling. The building is surrounded by other buildings and cannot be viewed from Hill Street. It is only accessed by a private driveway for the residents of the immediate dwellings. The building is currently used as a basic store, and is somewhat dilapidated with obvious structural defects apparent.

The current building is considered to be of little historical or architectural significance. Whilst the building may be said to make a low level of contribution to group value as an example of the local vernacular architectural style within the conservation area, its current structural condition alongside its lack of significant or readily identifiable historical associations, and the lack of views to or from the building mean that its overall significance is extremely limited. Further to this, any significance the building does hold cannot currently be appreciated due to its position within the group of buildings which surround it.

The impact of the proposed demolition and construction works to the conservation area is considered to be negligible. This is based on the limited significance of the current building, and the introduction of high quality architecture which will reflect the local vernacular style in the new kitchen extension. The current building does not contain any internal or external features of significant architectural and historic interest. It seems entirely possible that the proposed scheme will be neutral to, or even beneficial to the significance and sustainability of the conservation area through the sensitive management of positive change which reinforces the distinctive character of the area.

Appropriate mitigation measures may be requested by the Local Planning Authority to record the former farm building prior to demolition, as well as careful consideration to the architectural style and quality of the proposed extension.

1 Introduction

1.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) were commissioned to produce a heritage statement in advance of the submission of an application for planning consent for the demolition of a former farm building and its replacement with a kitchen extension to the rear of Lyncroft, Hill Street, Corbridge, Northumberland (NGR: NY 98920 64387, Fig. 1). The proposals involve the removal of the current dilapidated building and the construction of a new replacement rear kitchen extension to the property. The property is not listed but is located within Character Area 1 of the Corbridge Conservation Area (Tynedale Council 2009).

1.2 The Heritage Statement has been carried out in accordance with government guidance on the historic environment and planning (NPPF).



Figure 1: Location plan of Former Farm building to the rear of Lyncroft, Corbridge. (Ordnance Survey data Copyright OS, reproduced by permission, Licence No. 100045420).

2 Planning Policy Context

2.1 National

2.1.1 *The National Planning and Policy Framework (NPPF)*

This assessment is carried out under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (DCLG 2012). The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government’s requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. The purpose of the NPPF is to contribute to the achievement of *sustainable development*, which includes “...contributing to, protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment...” (DCLG 2012, 30).

Section 12 of the NPPF deals with government policy in relation to conserving and enhancing the historic environment and its role in sustainable development.

Paragraph 128 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. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation*” (DCLG 2012, 30).

2.1.2 *PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*

This document provides guidance on the practical implementation of PPS 5 (now superseded by the NPPF, but still the only detailed extant Historic Environment guidance) and is consequently a much more in-depth document than the policy statement itself. This practice guide “supports the implementation of national policy, but does not constitute a statement of Government policy” (CLG/DCMS/EH 2010, 6). This document has been presented by English Heritage as a 'live' document and is therefore intended to be subject to future changes as techniques and practice develop.

2.1.3 *Scheduled Monuments*

Scheduled Monuments, as defined under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) are sites, which have been selected by a set of non-statutory criteria to be of national importance. These criteria comprise period, rarity, documentation, group value, survival/condition, fragility/vulnerability, diversity and potential. Where scheduled sites are affected by development proposals there is a presumption in favour of their physical preservation. Any works, other than activities receiving class consent under The Ancient Monuments (Class Consents) Order 1981, as amended by The Ancient Monuments (Class Consents) Order 1984, which would have the effect of demolishing, destroying, damaging, removing, repairing, altering, adding to, flooding or covering-up a Scheduled Monument require consent from the Secretary of State for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

2.1.4 *Listed Buildings/ Structures*

Buildings of national, regional or local historical and architectural importance are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. Buildings designated

as ‘Listed’ are afforded protection from physical alteration or effects on their historical setting.

2.1.5 *Hedgerows*

Hedgerows of historic importance are afforded protection under The Hedgerow Regulations 1997, section 97 of the Environment Act 1995 (coming into effect in 1997). Any hedgerow which is defined as being of historical or ecological importance may require consent from the local planning authority prior to removal.

2.1.6 *Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments*

This guidance (IfA 2008) is non-statutory guidance representing industry best practice. It is commonly stipulated by local planning authorities that archaeological work is undertaken to IfA standards. The IfA also operates an accreditation scheme of Registered Archaeological Organisations in order to monitor the application of standards across the industry.

2.1.7 The English Heritage guidance document, *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2011) has also been utilised during this assessment.

2.2 **Local**

2.2.1 On 1 April 2009, the seven local planning authorities of Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth Valley, Castle Morpeth, Tynedale, Wansbeck and Northumberland County merged together to create one single local planning authority for Northumberland. In the past, each of these local planning authorities had produced its own set of planning documents to guide development in their area. These documents have been brought together to form the Consolidated Planning Policy Framework for Northumberland. This Framework includes the previous development framework for Tynedale. The Saved Tynedale Local Development Framework (LDF) is the folder of local development documents that outlines how planning will be managed in Tynedale. The LDF consists of several documents and plans that form a framework for planning future development in Tynedale, including where new housing, employment and community facilities will be located and for safeguarding the environment of the District. The key relevant parts of the LDF Core Strategy and saved Local Plan policies that impact upon the conservation area are as follows:

a. The LDF Core Strategy:

Core Strategy BE1 includes:

To conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the quality and integrity of Tynedale’s built environment and its historic features including archaeology giving particular protection to listed buildings, scheduled monuments and conservation areas.

Core Strategy GD3

The existing boundaries of the Northumberland Greenbelt will be maintained. It is designed, in part, to protect the character and setting of historic settlements.

b. Saved policies from Tynedale District Local Plan

BE19 - Demolition of Listed Buildings

The total or substantial demolition of a listed building will not be permitted.

BE18 - Development affecting the character and setting of a Conservation Area

Outside a conservation area, development will be permitted if it would not harm the character setting or views into or out of the conservation area.

BE20 - Demolition of structures in the curtilage of a listed building

Listed building consent for the demolition of structures within the curtilage of a listed building will be permitted where:

- the structure to be demolished does not make a significant contribution to the character of the Listed Building or its setting,
- any redevelopment proposals meet the requirement of Policy BE22; and
- the structure is not listed in its own right or mentioned in the list description

BE21 - Alteration and extension to listed buildings

Proposals for the alteration or extension of listed buildings will be granted consent where:

- the essential character of the building is retained and its features of special interest remain intact and unimpaired,
- the works proposed make use of traditional and/or sympathetic building materials and techniques which match or are in keeping with those found on the Listed Building,
- the architectural details (e.g. doors, gutters, windows) match or are in keeping with the Listed Building; and
- the proposal meets the requirement of General Development Policy GD2.

All applications for such development must be accompanied by detailed drawings of both the existing structure and the proposed development

BE22 - The setting of listed buildings

Proposals for development which would adversely affect the essential character or setting of a Listed Building will not be permitted.

Proposals for development within the setting of a listed building will only be appropriate where the following criteria are met:

- the detailed design is in keeping with the listed building in terms of scale, height, massing and alignment; and
- the works proposed make use of traditional or sympathetic building materials and techniques which are in keeping with those found on the listed building

BE23 - Change of use of listed buildings

The change of use of a listed building in order to restore or maintain its viable use will be permitted provided the proposal accords with Policy BE21

BE27 - Regional and locally important archaeological sites and settings

Development which would be detrimental to regionally or locally important archaeological sites or their settings will not be permitted unless the proposed development is considered to be of overriding regional importance and no alternative site is available

BE28 - Archaeological Assessment

Where it is not clear how important an archaeological site is, or where the impact of a development proposal on an existing archaeological site is uncertain, the developer will be required to provide further information in the form of an archaeological assessment and, where such an assessment indicates that important archaeological remains may be affected, a full archaeological evaluation.

BE29 - Development and preservation

Where sites or monuments of archaeological importance would be affected by development, their preservation in situ is preferred. Where the site is not considered to be of sufficient importance to merit preservation in situ and development is subsequently permitted, planning permission will be subject to an archaeological condition, or a Planning Obligation will be sought, which will require the excavation and recording of the remains prior to or during the development. In such instances, publication of the findings will also be required.

2.2.2 Corbridge also has a Village Plan (Corbridge Parish Council 2006), which was adopted by the Parish Council on behalf of the community in 2006. Although not a formally adopted planning document the village plan provides advice on the design of suitable development considered appropriate within the conservation area and is intended as an advisory document in the determination of planning applications in the village (Corbridge Parish Council 2006: 3). The provision and use of guidance on suitable design is considered as an opportunity by the Corbridge Conservation Area Character Appraisal to promote the enhancement of the Conservation area's appearance and heritage significance (Tynedale Council 2009: 47).

3 Conservation Area Background

3.1 Conservation areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (*Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s69*). They are designated by the local planning authority using local criteria. Conservation areas are about character and appearance, which can derive from many factors including individual buildings, building groups and their relationship with open spaces, architectural detailing, materials, views, colours, landscaping and street furniture. Character can also draw on more abstract notions such as sounds, local environmental conditions and historical changes. These things combine to create a locally distinctive sense of place worthy of protection.

3.2 Corbridge Conservation Area was designated in March 1974 and revised in March 1996 in response to the clear historic and architectural significance of the village that can be traced back to Saxon times with the construction of St Andrew's Church in the seventh century. The nearby Roman town and fort of Corstopitum adds depth to the settlement's historic envelope and a ready source of building material in past times. The collection of 31 listed buildings in the conservation area is testimony to its heritage importance. The boundary of the conservation area was amended in March 1996 (Tynedale Council 2009).

3.3 Conservation area designation remains the principal means by which local authorities can apply conservation policies to a particular area. The Council has a duty, in exercising its planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. This includes when determining planning applications. It also has a duty, from time to time, to draw up and publish proposals for its preservation and enhancement, and consult local people on them. The protection and preservation of historic environments are now extensively recognised for the contribution that they make to the country's cultural and historic heritage, its economic well-being and quality of life. Public support for conservation – both in the built and natural environments – is also well established. National and regional government guidance reflects this. It is not the purpose of conservation areas to prevent change but to manage change in such a way as to maintain and, if possible, strengthen the area's special

qualities. Current legislation is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This places a duty on the Council to declare as conservation areas those parts of their area that they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest. It also imposes on the Council a duty to review past designations from time to time. Conservation area status also means that there are stricter controls on changes that can be made to buildings and land including the need to secure consent to demolish any building, strengthening controls over some minor forms of development and the automatic protection of all trees in conservation areas (Tynedale Council 2009).

4 Description

4.1 A site visit was undertaken by Chris Scott of ARS Ltd to assess the heritage potential of the former farm building and to assess the likely impacts on this heritage potential by the proposed works. The following description outlines the results of this site visit, supplemented with a selection of photographs.

4.2 The former farm building is constructed of local roughly coursed sandstone with dressed quoins. The building is located on the south side of Hill Street, to the rear of “Lyncroft”, a two-storey, stone, terraced dwelling. The building is surrounded by other buildings and cannot be viewed from Hill Street. It is only accessed by a private driveway for the residents of the immediate dwellings. The building is currently used as a basic store, and is somewhat dilapidated with obvious structural defects apparent. These structural defects are recorded within a structural engineer’s report supplied by the client (Crawford Higgins Associates Ltd. 2012).



Figure 2. General view of the west elevation of the former farm building looking east.



Figure 3. Rooftop view of the former farm building in the left foreground.

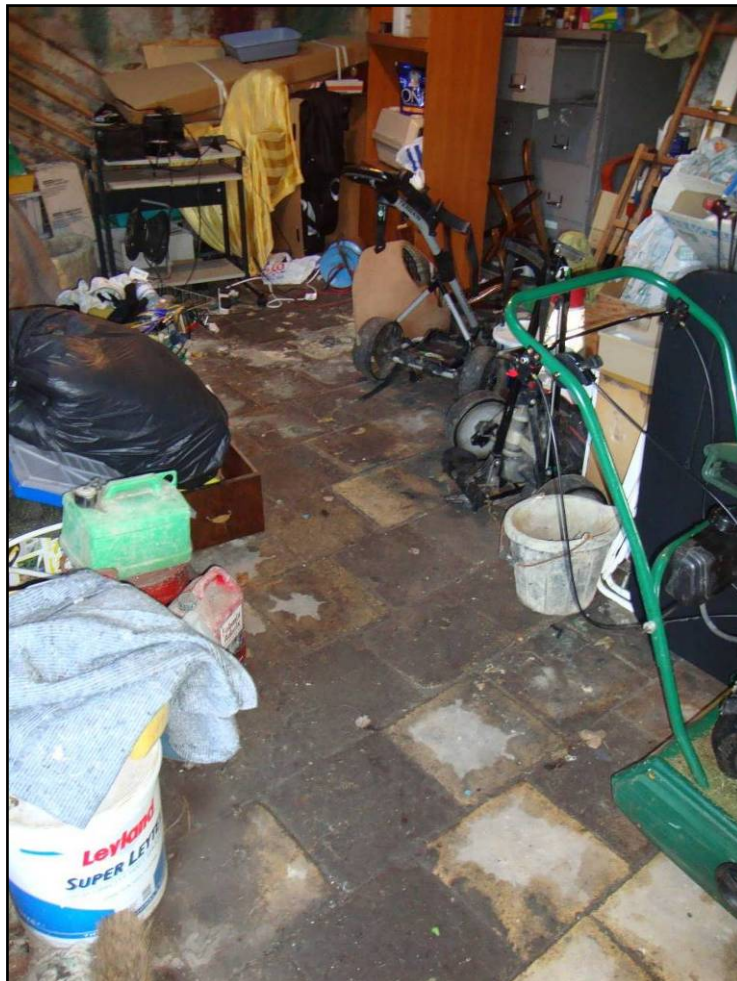


Figure 4. Internal view of the former farm building showing quarry tiled floor and current use as a store.



Figure 5. Internal view of the former farm building showing inserted mezzanine floor and structural defects in main wall.



Figure 6. Internal view of the former farm building showing modern re-roofing.

4.3 On the approach to the site, the western elevation is the first to be encountered (Fig. 2). It consists of a stone built elevation with dressed quoins, a window and hatch openings and a double door opening with timber doors.

4.4 The rest of the building exterior is similar in nature, with a blocked external door opening to the southern elevation and a blocked internal door opening to the obscured eastern elevation. Modern plastic rainwater goods have replaced the presumably cast iron originals.

4.5 Internally the building comprises a single room, with an inserted mezzanine floor (Fig. 5) at its southern end. The building retains its original floor of square quarry tiles (Fig. 4). No other internal features of note are apparent.

4.6 Some structural alterations have occurred in the past; in particular the later insertion of the mezzanine floor to the southern extent of the interior and the blocking of the two door openings mentioned above. Further to this, the replacement of the original rainwater goods and the boarding over of the original window opening to the western elevation have altered the original appearance of the building. It appears that at some point the building has been re-roofed as the underside of the current roof exhibits modern felt and rafters (Fig. 6).

5 Assessment of the Heritage Asset

5.1 The former farm building at “Lyncroft” is constructed of local roughly coursed sandstone with dressed quoins. The building probably represents a former farm store or workshop. The building is surrounded by other buildings and cannot be viewed from Hill Street or any other thoroughfare or routeway. It is only accessed by a private driveway for the residents of the immediate dwellings on the south side of Hill Street. The building is currently used as a basic store, and is somewhat dilapidated with obvious structural defects apparent. These structural defects are recorded within a structural engineer’s report supplied by the client (Crawford Higgins Associates Ltd. 2012).

5.2 The current building is considered to be of little historical or architectural significance. Whilst the building may be said to reinforce some group value as an example of the local vernacular architectural style within the conservation area, its current structural state alongside its lack of significant or readily identifiable historical or group associations and the lack of views to or from the building mean that its significance is extremely limited (Fig. 3). Further to this, any significance the building does hold cannot be appreciated due to its position within the grouping of buildings which surround it.

5.3 The impact of the proposed demolition and construction works to the conservation area is considered to be negligible. This is based on the limited significance of the current building, and the introduction of high quality architecture which will reflect the local vernacular style in the new kitchen extension. As mentioned above, the current building does not contain any internal or external features of significant architectural and historic interest. It seems entirely possible that the proposed scheme will be neutral to, or even beneficial to the significance and sustainability of the conservation area through the sensitive management of positive change which reinforces the distinctive character of the area.

5.4 No heritage assets in the surrounding area have any significant potential to have their setting impacted upon by the proposed works beyond the current building itself. The proposed development site is closely surrounded by other buildings and has extremely constrained views in every direction, mainly looking to the rear aspects of surrounding properties (Fig. 3).

5.5 Considering the present structural condition of the building (see Crawford Higgins Associates Ltd. 2012), its demolition represents an opportunity to introduce a more architecturally significant construction, which is more sustainable, and that better enhances the distinctive character of the area and the dwelling it is attached to. The structural engineer's report also makes the point that any re-use of the current structure would require such invasive intervention and renewal works as to leave the current building with little originality and therefore historical significance. As such, this would seem little improvement on complete replacement.

5.6 Appropriate mitigation measures may be requested by the Local Planning Authority to record the building prior to its demolition. Suitable measures would likely entail an Archaeological Building Recording to English Heritage Level II (English Heritage 2006).

5.7 Further to recording of the current building, the limited loss of historic fabric within the conservation area could also be appropriately mitigated by the introduction of high quality architecture, adhering to the design principles laid down in the Village Plan (Corbridge Parish Council 2006), and reflecting and promoting the distinctiveness of the area through the use of the local vernacular style of construction. This would serve to replace the current unused and unusable building, which does not contribute significantly to the character of the area, with a more architecturally significant construction that better enhances the distinctive character of the area and the dwelling it is attached to.

6 Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright

6.1 Any publicity will be handled by the client.

6.2 Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

7 Statement of Indemnity

7.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

8 Acknowledgements

8.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved with the project, especially Jenny Waddell of George F. White and Mr. Chris Joyce.

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