

**FLETCHER FOLD
BURY**

HERITAGE STATEMENT



March 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site at Fletcher Fold, Goshen Lane, Bury, was formally occupied by Millwood school which is now demolished. It forms part of the setting of the grade II listed Manor House (including The Crest and The Nook) parts of which date back to the late 17th/early 18th centuries. The Manor House appears to have been constructed for the Earl of Derby, and was later owned by the Bealey family, who were prominent industrialists. Map regression analysis shows that the site was occupied by buildings at the time of Yates map of Lancashire (1786) and the Earl of Derby's Estate Plan of 1785, and 5 buildings are shown on the site in the 1st OS plan of 1844.
- 1.2 The Manor House (along with the Crest and The Nook) is grade II listed, and is of several periods, perhaps extending back as far as the late 17th century. The house has been extended and has features which date these extensions to the 18th century through to the 20th century, with the earliest surviving residual element a mullioned window in the rear of the central section of the house.
- 1.3 The area has seen substantial changes since the construction of the Manor House, and its immediate associational context has been compromised by the encroaching development of housing. This includes a modern detached house to the immediate north of The Nook, named Woodlands Cottage, and a larger development immediately south-east of the Manor House.
- 1.4 As a heritage asset any planning application is required to address the provisions within the National Planning Policy Framework concerning heritage and enhancement of the historic environment. The significance of the asset is described in this report, and the impact of the proposed changes are assessed.
- 1.5 The report has been prepared by Rob Burns, an urban designer and specialist in heritage issues, who has 35 years of experience in dealing with historic townscapes and buildings. Formerly employed by English Heritage (now Historic England) as a specialist in conservation and regeneration/development.

2. HISTORY AND CONTEXT

2.1 The site was once part of a dispersed pattern of houses, set in an extensive rural landscape, but at a time when Radcliffe/Redvales was experiencing increased industrialisation. The Bleach Works on Dumers Lane was opened by the Bealey family in 1750, who eventually constructed 18 bleach works in the area. Water powered mills began to be constructed in the area from the 1770's, and the bleaching works were a manifestation of the importance of both wool and cotton manufacture, as well as the availability and quality of water which was required as part of the process, and which led to the construction of a number of reservoirs. The number of industrial uses prompted an expansion of the population, and between 1773 and 1801 the number of houses in the Bury township grew from 464 to 1384, housed in purpose built, terraced accommodation. Alongside the industrial works and housing, new turnpike roads were constructed, including from Radcliffe to Ainsworth, Starling Lane Radcliffe to Bury and Manchester Road near Fletcher Fold, which was created by an Act of 1836.

2.2 The 1844 map also shows that Fletcher Fold was occupied by a complex of buildings, which appear to be a collection of houses, with ancillary buildings. The Manor House is seen in extended, linear form, set within large grounds, and with a long water feature or lake within the garden area.



Figure 1- OS map of 1844 (detail)

- 2.3 The OS plan of 1890 shows the area on greater detail, with the buildings within Fletcher Fold shown subdivided (Figure 2). They appear to be a series of houses, arranged around an informal courtyard, and an early, although undated, image of the site seems to show them from the trackway adjacent to the reservoir to the south (Figure 3).



Figure 2- OS plan of 1890



Figure 3- undated image of Fletcher Fold (James Bentley Archive). The southern gable of the Manor House can be glimpsed through the trees, in the background to the right of the image. View from the footpath adjacent to the reservoir to the south of Fletcher Fold

- 2.4 Barrets Directory of 1880 shows that at this time, Adam C Bealey of R. Bealey and Co lived in the Manor House. Adam Compton Bealey was the President of the Radcliffe and District Literary and Scientific Society, and bought the site of Radcliffe Library in 1902, which was part funded by the Carnegie Trust, as well as making a donation to complete the construction. A.C. Bealey died in 1905, and the Manor House was sold. Other members of the Bealey family lived in Close House, near their Bleach Works on Dumers Lane, and which they donated to the township in 1925, as a Child Welfare Centre, with the grounds to be used as a public park.



Figure 4- Adam Compton Bealey

3. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1 The site of Fletcher Fold is shown as having no protected status in the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER Number: 9388.1.0), and there is little archaeological significance given the earlier arrangement of houses on the site, and their replacement with Millwood School. The site has heritage significance only in relation to the setting of the grade II listed Manor House to the north west.

- 3.2 Appraised against the methodology for assessment of cultural significance in *Conservation Principles (English Heritage, now Historic England)*, the following values are identified:

Evidential Value

- 3.3 The Manor House (including The Nook and The Crest) was constructed in the pre-industrialisation era, but extended and heavily adapted across the course of 200 years. It is a manifestation of the establishment of industrialists who came to live in the area to be close to their factories, and who required houses close to these. Radcliffe did not develop the urban villa typologies which are of significance in other suburbs of Greater Manchester, and which collectively form a distinct character. The encroachment of suburban housing, and the loss of the Bleach Works nearby has negatively impacted on the setting and associational value of the Manor House, which, whilst retaining intrinsic merit, has seen its spatial related context much reduced.

Historic Value

- 3.4 The building is of historical interest for its associations with the Bealey family, who were prominent industrialists in Radcliffe, and undertook civic works in the town as well as leading Wesleyans. There is some evidence that the house was originally constructed for the Earl of Derby, but this is anecdotal, and the only family connection is the estate plan of 1785. Nevertheless, as the house of A.C Bealey, the house does have wider value than its physical attributes.

Aesthetic Value

- 3.5 The building is grade II listed, and despite substantial interventions, it has retained the essential elements of its mature plan-form, decoration and detailing. This includes its sub-division into three residences as identified within the list description. The list description also states that the windows to the main façade are mainly sash, although they appear to have been replaced, and 20th century bow fronted windows have also been introduced to the two main gables. The southern gables are three window canted structures with hipped roofs. A curved garden wall in common bond secures the boundary of The Crest, with separate boundaries for the Manor House and The Nook. The texture and tone provided by the construction materials, with a limited palette, acts as an element of continuity, allowing some overall cohesion.

Communal Value

- 3.6 The communal value of the building relates to the role it plays in providing a distinctive character to this part of Radcliffe, and its relationship with the early industrialisation of the area, and the pre-eminent Bealey family.

4 POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 4.1 In relation to the historic environment, The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) states that strategies should take into account:
- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
 - the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
 - opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place. (para. 196).
- 4.2 In relation to the determination of planning applications, Para 203 calls for Local Authorities to take account of:
- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 4.3 Para 206 relates to development proposals and the degree of harm to a designated heritage asset, and states that *Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional.*
- 4.4 Para 207 discusses substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, stating that proposals should be refused unless it can be proved that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefit, including the outweighing of harm by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

- 4.5 Although the Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Plan is now in its final stages, the Bury UDP is the current policy framework. Policy EN2/3 (Listed Buildings) states that:

EN2/3 - Listed Buildings

The Council will actively safeguard the character and setting of Listed Buildings by not permitting works, alterations or changes of use which would have a detrimental effect on their historical or architectural character and features. Proposals for demolition will be opposed and will only be considered where it is demonstrated conclusively that the building(s) cannot be retained.

In considering applications for Listed Building Consent, the Council will have regard to the following criteria: a) the impact of the proposal on the historic fabric of the building;

- the relationship of any extension to the Listed Building in terms of its height, size, design, and roofscape;*
- the need to protect the setting of the Listed Building;*
- the impact of associated ancillary facilities and infrastructure works.*

4.6 **The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice, Planning Note 3 (Second Edition), Historic England, 2017**

This provides guidance on setting and takes as its starting point the NPPF definition as; *‘The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance, or may be neutral’.*

The document considers that setting does not just relate to visual considerations, but also *‘the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.’*

Setting also includes a whole range of attributes which may be considered intangible, cultural or intellectual as well as sensory, and the guidance advises that these should also be considered in defining the contribution to values and significance. These include:

The asset’s physical surroundings

- Topography*
- Aspect*
- Other heritage assets (including buildings, structures, landscapes, areas or archaeological remains)*

- *Definition, scale and 'grain' of surrounding streetscape, landscape and spaces*
- *Formal design eg hierarchy, layout*
- *Orientation and aspect*
- *Historic materials and surfaces*
- *Green space, trees and vegetation*
- *Openness, enclosure and boundaries*
- *Functional relationships and communications*
- *History and degree of change over time*

Experience of the asset

- *Surrounding landscape or townscape character*
- *Views from, towards, through, across and including the asset*
- *Intentional intervisibility with other historic and natural features*
- *Visual dominance, prominence or role as focal point*
- *Noise, vibration and other nuisances*
- *Tranquillity, remoteness, 'wildness'*
- *Busyness, bustle, movement and activity*
- *Scents and smells*
- *Diurnal changes*
- *Sense of enclosure, seclusion, intimacy or privacy*
- *Land use*
- *Accessibility, permeability and patterns of movement*
- *Degree of interpretation or promotion to the public*
- *Rarity of comparable survivals of setting*
- *Cultural associations*
- *Celebrated artistic representations*
- *Traditions*

5 ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The proposal is for the development of specialist over-55's housing on the site of the former school, comprising a 3 storey linear apartment block, and bungalows. The linear block is located to the eastern part of the site, allowing for the continuation of the existing footpath

which bisects Fletcher Fold, with the bungalows to the west. Figure 5 is a current aerial image showing the relationship of the site to the listed buildings, and the degree of mature landscaping which partially screens the site to the east.



Figure 5- development site, with the listed buildings to the north-east

- 5.2 The setting of the listed buildings is restricted spatially due to the topography and the existing townscape around it, although there are glimpses of the building from a public footpath to the north of the buildings which leads from Goshen Lane to the sports centre to the east. Goshen Lane itself is unadopted and is not a through route, but it does lead to the new development immediately south east of the listed buildings along Manor House Gardens. The approach to the listed buildings is along Fletcher Fold Road, characterized by the semi-detached inter-war houses, and then into Goshen Lane. Figures 6-8 illustrates the approach.



Figure 6- Goshen Lane, with the development site to the right of the image, and The Nook and The Crest in the background.



Figure 7- approach further along Goshen Lane



Figure 8- arrival point at the gates of The Crest, with the entrance to The Nook to the left.

- 5.3 From the rear, the existing garden areas, with mature, verdant planting and extensive woodland, prevents views of the listed buildings, with only a glimpsed view from the public footpath to the north (Figure 9). To the south east of the listed buildings, the new development on Manor House Gardens effectively encloses the setting of the buildings not with a soft landscape, but with a harder built form (Figure 10).



Figure 9- only the roof line of the listed building is visible from the public footpath to the north



Figure 10- new development to the south east of the Manor House, illustrating continuity of built form as part of the setting

- 5.4 Views out from the listed buildings towards the site are characterised by the tree group which forms the eastern edge of the development site, and which sit on a slightly raised embankment (Figure 11).



Figure 11- outlook from the entrance to The Nook/The Crest

- 5.5 The view from the footpath which crosses the site (Figure 12) provides views to the listed buildings, but these are heavily screened by the tree groups. Historically, and in recent years, these views would not have been possible as the site was previously developed first with housing (see Figures 1, 2 and 3) and then with Millwood school, which effectively blocked views from this location (Figure 13).



Figure 12- view from the footpath which crosses the site



Figure 13- Millwood School, 2008, with the footpath seen as the tarmac path to the right of the buildings

- 5.6 The listed buildings as a long, linear block set within its own enclave, contrasts with the surrounding suburban area to the north which is laid out in streets. This characteristic of a separate enclave is shared with other adjacent developments, including the new housing at Manor House Gardens to the south, and Millwood Court to the south west. The shared features are an area of axial housing layouts, enclosed by well treed landscape, and of a more organic and informal appearance than the more regimented streets around them, with a single access point. The proposed development site also shared this characteristic with the earlier housing. Figure 14 identifies these areas.

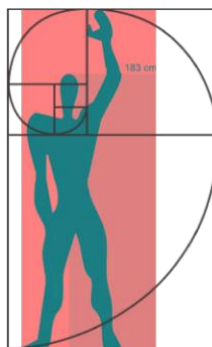


Figure 14- enclave housing typology

- 5.5 The design of the proposal resonates with the axial alignment of the surrounding 'enclave' dwellings, including the listed buildings, and uses architectural devices such as iterative

gables, a patterned fenestration arrangement, and a shared palette of materials including differentially toned brickwork. The layout places the largest building at the eastern edge of the site, allowing for the backdrop of trees which characterize the boundary, to soften any potential impacts, and relating the apartment block visually to the long, linear form of the listed building. The bungalows are located at the western edge of the site, allowing for continuity of enclosure from Fletcher Fold Road, and providing some definition for the public footpath which crosses the site.

- 5.7 The listed buildings, set within the mature grounds, were not intended to be a focal point in the area, and their location on a no-through road, and set back from this, illustrate the intent for the Manor House to enjoy a semi-private and discreet setting, marked by the prominence of the surrounding garden landscape. This is a repeated theme in the other “enclaves”, and the proposal uses this characteristic as a key design driver, which resonates with the arrangement of the listed building, and the later developments. The site has been continually occupied by buildings from at least 1844 (Figure 1), and this historic context would be restored with the proposal. Although the proposed buildings extension are contemporary designs, this follows the advice of Historic England, with motifs and visual cues utilized which relate them to the surrounding buildings.
- 5.8 The proposal re-provides built form on the site, helping to restore the historic context and setting of the listed buildings. It is partially screened from the historic assets through the enhancement of the tree group which mark the boundary of the site, and which forms part of the existing setting of the Manor House assemblage. Whilst the current glimpsed view of the Manor House from the public footpath will disappear, this is a view which has only been possible since the relatively recent demolition of the former Millwood School, and which has historically not been a feature. The proposal does not cause harm to the setting of the historic buildings, and conforms to the national and local policies, and guidance.



Rob Burns

Place & Context Ltd