

Heritage statement to support planning application for replacement porch at Norcot, Moorbottom Road, Holcombe, Ramsbottom

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement supports an application for a replacement porch at the south-west end of the house known as Norcot, at Holcombe, in Bury Metropolitan Borough. It has been written by Stephen Haigh MA (a buildings archaeologist with over 25 years professional experience of assessing, investigating and recording historic buildings in the region), on the instruction of the owners.
- 1.2 The site lies within the Holcombe Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset within the meaning of the NPPF. The house and a nearby barn are also included within Bury Council's draft local list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest (where they are identified as "Norcot and carriage house"¹), and so are non-designated heritage assets in their own right.
- 1.3 Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Section 69), conservation areas are defined as "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance", and the local planning authority has a statutory duty to consider this in any relevant application.
- 1.4 Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states (inter alia) that: "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected.... 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".

2 Location

- 2.1 Norcot and its barn stand within their own grounds in a small fold or cluster of dwellings of which Hey House is the focus, south-west of Holcombe village and about 1.5km south-west of Ramsbottom town centre. The house backs onto the south-east side of Moorbottom Road (a roughly surfaced vehicular track), although the usual access is from the south-east, via a private drive off Branch Road.

¹<https://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=14900>

- 2.2 The house is located at NGR: SD 77710 15970, and is a linear building built along the slope, which faces approximately south, downhill. The barn is situated some 20m to the south-west, at a lower level, and with its long axis running down the slope, at NGR: SD 77698 15943.



Photo 1: Norcot, and its barn (left), viewed from the drive to the south (June 2021)

3 Description

- 3.1 Norcot appears to have originated as a vernacular farmhouse with historic origins, perhaps associated in some way with the nearby Hey House, but during the later part of the 19th century it was gentrified, a process which involved enlargement and rebuilding, albeit to an unknown extent. The overall appearance of Norcot today is that of a villa with a strong arts and crafts theme, dating from around the turn of the 20th century, but containing a core which may be up to a century earlier, ie of about 1800.
- 3.2 The house is linear in form and south-facing, and built along the slope, so that the lower ground floor is back-to-earth; the ground and first floors back directly onto Moorbottom Road. All parts are built from local coursed or random sandstone, some watershot, and the roof is covered in stone slate.
- 3.3 The earliest part of the house appears to be represented by two bays lying towards its east end, which were extended to both east and west. The additions include a single bay to the east, and two bays of different date to the west, both with gabled dormers to the first floor; a further, new extension is also currently under construction at the east end.
- 3.4 West of the house is a stone-built domestic outbuilding block, linked to the main house by the rear boundary wall and by a modern (essentially late 20th century) timber porch on the south side, which is now proposed for replacement.



Photo 2: Front of timber porch proposed for replacement



Photo 3: Boundary wall linking house and outbuilding, and forming rear of current porch

4 Significance

- 4.1 The significance of the house stems from its modest grandeur as a villa on the outskirts of Holcombe, set within a small fold or hamlet, which has the former

hunting lodge of Hey House at its core. The house's present form very largely dates from around the turn of the 20th century when it underwent gentrification, but it incorporates earlier elements. The house is built from local materials in a traditional manner, and displays good evidence for having reached its present size in a number of phases. The principal heritage value which confers significance is aesthetic, and this is most apparent in views of the building from the south.

- 4.2 Norcot is of sufficient architectural interest to merit its (currently draft) status as a building of local special architectural and historic interest, and undoubtedly contributes positively towards the Holcombe Conservation Area.
- 4.3 The small porch now proposed for replacement incorporates the historic rear boundary wall, which is a key component of the site and highly visible alongside Moorbottom Road, but the other parts of the present structure (timber front and slate roof) make only a neutral or slightly negative contribution to significance, and occupy a largely concealed part of the plot.

5 Proposed porch

- 5.1 The new porch would occupy the same footprint and roofline as the existing, but roof and front wall would be glazed, and there would be a solid timber door.

6 Impact

- 6.1 The new porch would enhance the appearance of the house and conservation area by removing what is presently a rather shabby structure with a new, well-designed porch, whose glazing emphasises the separate entities of the outbuilding and house. There would be no change in views from Moorbottom Road. It is therefore entirely acceptable insofar as its impact on the historic environment is concerned.

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