

HILLBARK FARMHOUSE
HILLBARK ROAD
FRANKBY
CH48 1NP

HERITAGE STATEMENT AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

HILLBARK FARMHOUSE

FRANKBY



FRONT ENTRANCE

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CONTENTS

Executive summary

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the report

1.2. Purpose of the Report

2.0 SIGNIFICANCE

2.1 Assessing significance

3.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

3.1. Summary and justification for the proposals

HILLBARK FARMHOUSE
HILLBARK ROAD
FRANKBY
CH48 1NP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was commissioned to assess the impact of proposals for alterations to the interior and exterior to the hay barn to convert it into holiday accommodation and an addition of a sunroom to the more modern double storey extension to the property.

As a heritage asset the English Heritage have listed this as a Grade II listed building, including the hay barn. The English Heritage listing is shown below:

“Farmhouse. 1875. By J. Douglas. Snecked stone with timber framing to 1st floor, tile roof. 2 storeys, 5 bays, the 1st 2 bays of one storey; 1st bay breaks forward under hipped roof, 4th bay forms 2-storey gabled porch. Single chamfered mullioned windows to ground floor of 3:2 + 1:5:4-lights. 1st floor has 4-light small-paned casements, those to 3rd and 5th bays are gabled half-dormers. Entrance has L date stone above "18 S H 76" (Leadward). 2 return lateral stacks. Built as part of model farm for Hill Bark. Rear has small round-ended projecting bay.”

Proposals to alter the building will affect the less important spaces on the ground floor under the hay barn (already converted as a store) and garden side of the property on the more modern double storey addition to the property .

The proposals will enable this historic out building to be brought into a sustainable use. The proposals are consistent with advice and policies in NPPF (formally PPS5).

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

This report was commissioned to assess the impact of proposals for alterations to the interior and exterior to the hay barn to convert it into holiday accommodation and an addition of a sunroom to the more modern double storey extension to the property.

The brief history of the farmhouse was built in 1875 for Septimus Ledward and designed by the Chester architect John Douglas. It was part of a model farm for Hill Bark. The house is constructed in stone with some timber framing and has a tiled roof. It is built in five bays, three of which have two storeys and the other two are single-storey. At the rear is a round-ended projecting bay. Outbuildings constructed at the same time, designed by Douglas, are also listed at Grade II.

A model farm was an 18th–19th century experimental farm, which researched and demonstrated improvements in agricultural techniques, efficiency, and building layout. Education and commitment to improving welfare standards of workers were also aspects of the ideal farm movement. Farm buildings were designed to be beautiful as well as utilitarian – inspired by the ideals of the enlightenment.

John Douglas (11 April 1830 – 23 May 1911) was an English architect who designed about 500 buildings in Cheshire, North Wales, and northwest England, in particular in the estate of Eaton Hall. He was trained in Lancaster and practised throughout his career from an office in Chester, Cheshire. Initially he ran the practice on his own, but from 1884 until two years before his death he worked in partnerships with two of his former assistants.

Douglas's output included new churches, restoring and renovating existing churches, church furnishings, new houses and alterations to existing houses, and a variety of other buildings, including shops, banks, offices, schools, memorials and public buildings. His architectural styles were eclectic. Douglas worked during the period of the Gothic Revival, and many of his works incorporate elements of the English Gothic style. He was also influenced by architectural styles from the mainland of Europe and included elements of French, German and Dutch architecture. However he is probably best remembered for his incorporation of vernacular elements in his buildings, in particular half-timbering, influenced by the black-and-white revival in Chester. Other vernacular elements he incorporated include tile-hanging, pargeting, and the use of decorative brick in diapering and the design of tall chimney stacks. Of particular importance is Douglas's use of joinery and highly detailed wood carving.

Throughout his career he attracted commissions from wealthy landowners and industrialists, especially the Grosvenor family of Eaton Hall. Most of his works have survived, particularly his churches. The city of Chester contains a number of his structures, the most admired of

HILLBARK FARMHOUSE
HILLBARK ROAD
FRANKBY
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which are his half-timbered black-and-white buildings and Eastgate Clock. The highest concentration of his work is found in the Eaton Hall estate and the surrounding villages of Eccleston, Aldford and Pulford.

The proposed works are intended to equip the out building to serve as a holiday letting property and create further living space to the main house. The heritage statement requires significance to be assessed for applications proposing changes to heritage assets and for the impact of proposals to be assessed in relation to significance.

This report provides some additional assessment of significance but is principally concerned with the alterations currently proposed and the impact they would have on the significance and character of the listed building.

1.2 Purpose of the Report

This report is designed to provide:

- An impact assessment of the proposed works

HILLBARK FARMHOUSE
HILLBARK ROAD
FRANKBY
CH48 1NP

2.0 SIGNIFICANCE

2.1 Assessing significance

Assessing significance is a key principle for managing change to heritage assets, and is embedded within current NPPF

It sets out the following criteria for planning authorities to use to evaluate a planning application:

126. Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment,²⁹ including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities 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.

127. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

128. 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.

129. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal

HILLBARK FARMHOUSE
HILLBARK ROAD
FRANKBY
CH48 1NP

Significance can be measured according to hierarchical levels; the most usual levels are:

- **Exceptional** – an asset important at the highest national or international levels, including scheduled ancient monuments, Grade I and II* listed buildings and World Heritage Sites. Substantial harm should be wholly exceptional.
- **High** – a designated asset important at a regional level and also at a national level, including Grade II listed buildings and conservation areas. Substantial harm should be exceptional.
- **Medium** – an undesignated asset important at a local to regional level, including local (non-statutory) listed buildings or those that make a positive contribution to the setting of a listed building or to a conservation area. May include less significant parts of listed buildings. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is usually scope for adaptation.
- **Low** – structure or feature of very limited heritage or other cultural value and not defined as a heritage asset. May include insignificant interventions to listed buildings, and buildings that do not contribute positively to a conservation area. The removal or adaptation of structures in this category is usually acceptable where the work will enhance a related heritage asset.
- **Negative** – structure or feature that harms the value of a heritage asset. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of setting and opportunities for enhancement.

2.2 Significance of Hillbark Farm, Frankby: overview

The building is of medium significance as there is little in the way of original fabric in the areas the application applies to, and any significant items are to be retained in the way of timbers, floor boards, posts and beams. The main element is to infill an open structure with low impact material such as timber. The sun room extension is to be a minimalistic glass structure which will not detract from the original building, it is light weight, not to dominate the elevation and positioned on an already more modern addition to the house.

The addition of a dormer to the rear of the hay loft area is on a lesser elevation, there has already been a dormer added to the courtyard elevation. This area of the farmhouse has already been much modified including the splitting of the farmhouse at this point in the past to create 2 properties from the out buildings. A number of additions, dormers and roof lights have been allowed to the other “property” when converted, however the changes we proposed are far more in keeping with the existing Grade II listed building.

HILLBARK FARMHOUSE
HILLBARK ROAD
FRANKBY
CH48 1NP

3.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

3.1. Summary and justification for the proposals

DNA Group has prepared a scheme which is aimed at bringing the hay loft structure into holiday accommodation with the minimum of alterations which might affect the significance of the building; the scheme should secure the future viability of the building. Every attempt has been made to preserve historic fabric and in those areas where intervention is proposed it is for functional reasons and every attempt has been made to minimise the loss of historic fabric. This report should be read in conjunction with the Design Statement and the current set of proposal plans and drawings.

3.2 Impact of the proposals

Ground Floor

New Sun room, minimalist design using internal oak supports for the construction of the room.

Dwarf sandstone wall with frameless glazing system and minimalist doors on runners. Solid roof to match that of the existing house.

Hay Loft

New arched opening to rear wall (we have been told by a person familiar with the building in the 1940's and 1950's that this was not original as it was not present in the late 1950's) with buttress detail to echo existing. Having looked at the rear wall materials and construction methodology it is clear that this was either built or re-built at the same time as the modern extension. The re-introduction of an opening will re-instate some of the original vistas from the rear courtyard,

Infill to create stairwell to the first floor, tack room and 2 stables.

New staircase to first floor

First floor partitioning not to interfere with the existing posts and cross beams. (this area has already been converted into store rooms)