

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Proposed Conversion of Existing Stone Barn and Erection of a New Detached Dwelling

Land Adjacent to Long Cottage, North Street, Mere, BA12 6HH

Prepared by: Baxter Green Architects

On behalf of: Mr and Mr Burden.

Addressed Asset: Mere Methodist Church, North Street, Mere, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 6HH

List Entry No. 1318641 – Grade II

INTRODUCTION & SCOPE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Baxter Green Architects on behalf of the applicants to assess the potential heritage impact arising from the proposed conversion of an existing stone barn and the erection of a new detached dwelling on garden land associated with Long Cottage, North Street, Mere.
- 1.2 The report provides an independent and proportionate assessment of the effect of the proposals on the significance and setting of nearby heritage assets, most notably the Grade II listed Mere Methodist Church located directly opposite the site.
- 1.3 Neither Long Cottage nor the Barn are listed buildings, nor are they within the curtilage of a listed structure. The site lies outside the Mere Conservation Area, which is located to the south side of North Street. However, given the site's proximity to the listed Methodist Church, this statement is provided in accordance with Paragraphs 194–208 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023), which require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal to a level proportionate to their importance and the potential impact upon their significance.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 2.1 The purpose of this section of the report is to assess the significance of the site in heritage terms. This will provide a 'baseline' against which the application proposals can be assessed.
- 2.2 The listing and Wiltshire Building Record, produced for the property in 2006, identifies the heritage values of the site and has been used to inform the proposals and to assist with an assessment of the impact of the works on the heritage assets.

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- 2.3** This report will aim to provide supporting information and assess the significance of the site in heritage terms to assist in determining the application. The site is outside Mere Conservation Area which is to the south side of North Street capturing a range of historic buildings.
- 2.4** Policies state that the application should clearly provide a level of detail proportionate to the heritage asset and to ensure sufficient understanding of the impact the proposals will have on that asset. Local planning authorities should consider the particular nature of the significance of the heritage asset and the value that it holds for this and future generations.
- 2.5** In 2017 application 17/08714/FUL and 17/09058/LBC was approved converting the Methodist Church into a single dwelling. The conversion works have been completed.
- 2.6** The former Primitive Methodist Chapel, built mid-19th century with an 1874 schoolroom addition, is a representative example of the period's Nonconformist chapel architecture. Constructed of rock-faced limestone with arched fenestration and a strong gabled frontage to North Street, it contributes prominently to the historic townscape.
- 2.7** The chapel's setting derives from its relationship to North Street and the grouping of surrounding 19th-century dwellings. Its visual prominence, particularly when viewed from the east along North Street and from the junction to the west, contributes to its architectural and communal value.
- 2.8** Although Long Cottage and its associated barn are not historically linked to the chapel, they occupy part of its immediate visual setting across the narrow street and therefore have the potential to influence its appreciation.
- 2.9** The previous application the Conservation Officer noted the importance of the view from North Street at the junction looking north towards the Taylin Kerrysdale and whether the bulk and height of the new dwelling will challenge the setting of the Methodist Church.
- 2.10** This application includes the addition of converting the redundant stone barn connected to Long Cottage.

THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS AND THE HERITAGE ISSUES

3.0 The existing stone barn is adjacent to the Methodist Church, approximately 8.7m away separated via the road and stone wall at a height of just over 1m high. The Methodist Church ridge is 113.92 compared to the barn ridge of 109.65, a difference of 4.2m.

3.1 The conversion of the barn into a dwelling includes the following works affecting the external appearance:

- a) Replace the metal profile roof with a natural slate including conservation style rooflights.
- b) The removal of the metal clad lean-to building attached to the barn and replaced with a new extension.
- c) A modest two storey extension to the north with brickwork walls and natural slate roofing.
- d) Reinstate the chimney and undertake stonework repairs.

3.2 The barn is currently within the residential curtilage of Long Cottage linked to the cottage via a single storey 'modern' constructed garage / store. The proposal includes the removal of the garage / store creating a gap between the barn and cottage.

3.3 The new plot is for a detached 1.5 storey dwelling, sited in front of the garage block, with a ridge height of 111.38 (Methodist Church ridge 113.92 and School Room at 112.93). The design of the new dwelling is of a traditional appearance with natural stone walling with brick detailing and a natural slate roof.

3.4 The first floor window of the new plot is over 21m from the gable window of the Methodist Church and faces the entrance to the Exchange.

3.5 The majority of the site is currently a garden to Long Cottage laid to lawn without any planting or trees and with a variety of fencing set on the kerb. The garden offers limited landscape qualities to the setting of the Church or character to the street scene.

3.6 The proposals include removing the existing road kerbs and replacing part of the stone chipping tarmac with block pavers and courtyard gardens.

3.7 A pair of semi-detached dwelling (Taylin Kerrysdale) approved in 1993 facing the Methodist Church are built with reconstituted stone, concrete pantiles and upvc windows set 15m back from the road with the gardens and parking.

The Heritage Issues.

3.8 Having considered the above, the purpose of this section of the report is to analyse the application proposals against that significance in order to establish the likely effects of the scheme in heritage terms.

3.9 The barn is currently in poor condition and needs urgent stone work repair. The proposals would enable the repairs to be completed in a sympathetic manner with a slate roof matching Long Cottage. The metal cladding lean-to replaced with a two storey extension with English bond brickwork is set back from the barn road elevation and will improve the character and setting.

3.10 The removal of the garage / store linking the barn to Long Cottage will provide benefits in that the gable of the barn will be visible, and a visual gap created for a courtyard garden with opportunity for planting.

3.11 The use of the block pavers not only helps to denote parking and pedestrian areas but provides a more attractive public realm. The pavers will not affect the vehicles for the exchange, emergency services or refuse vehicles and the road is in the ownership of Long Cottage. This approach offers benefit to the overall setting of the Church.

3.12 The new plot is sufficient distance from the Church to comply with design standards regarding overlooking. The siting will conceal the existing garage block without any loss of any landscape features. The scale, form and materials relate to the character of North Street partially concealing Taylin Kerrysdale dwellings when entering the lane and from the Methodist Church.

3.13 The proposal provides a scheme that does not have a detrimental impact of the landscape setting, heritage value or landscape features and does not include felling of any mature trees.

3.14 It has previously been noted that the key viewpoint, in terms of assessing the impact of the proposals on the Church, is from North Street. The most significant views are obtained when approaching the site from the east and west, while views from the junction looking north are of lesser importance.

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3.15 When approaching the site from the east, Long Cottage effectively conceals the proposed development. From the west, the barn conversion will enhance the overall setting, given the current poor condition of the existing structure. Owing to the narrow width of the street and the distance of the proposed plot from the junction, approximately 43 metres, the impact of the new dwelling on the street scene will be minimal.

3.16 When approaching the site from the east Long Cottage conceals both the proposals and when approaching from the west the Barn conversion will improve the setting due to the current poor condition.

3.17 The interpretation of the NPPF, to provide examples of the potential public benefits that may accrue as a result of the proposals on the heritage assets, and the points relevant to this application include:

- a) *Enhances the significance of the heritage asset and the contribution of its setting.*
 - i) The removal of the metal profiled sheeting modern garage attached the Long Cottage enable the stone gable of the barn to be visible from entering the area from the west.
 - ii) The proposed new dwelling is at the appropriate scale and height to remain subservient to the Church and at a significant distance from the junction to act as background setting rather than competing with the presents of the Church.
- b) *It is an appropriate design for its context and makes a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment.*
 - i) The sensitive conversion of the Barn with the brick extension, reflecting the character of both Long Cottage and the detached outbuilding of the Church, will make a positive contribution to the area and setting.
 - ii) The new dwelling due to the materials and design
- c) *It makes a positive contribution to economic viability and sustainable communities.*
 - i) The proposal enables a redundant and structurally unsound building in close proximity to a listed building to be sensitively repaired.
 - ii) The combination of both the Barn conversion and the new dwelling ensure the proposal is financially viable providing two new dwellings within the town of Mere.

CONCLUSION

4.1 This Heritage Statement has assessed the potential impact of the proposed conversion of the existing stone barn and the erection of a new detached dwelling on the significance and setting of the Grade II listed Mere Methodist Church.

4.2 The assessment has demonstrated that the proposals have been carefully designed to respect the scale, character, and materiality of the surrounding built form, particularly in relation to the listed Church. The conversion of the existing barn will secure the long-term preservation of a deteriorating historic structure through sensitive repair and the use of high-quality, traditional materials, while the removal of unsympathetic modern additions will enhance the immediate setting.

4.3 The siting and design of the new dwelling ensure it remains subservient to the Church, maintaining a clear hierarchy within the streetscape. The modest scale, traditional form, and use of locally characteristic materials will reinforce the established character of North Street and improve the visual transition between existing properties.

4.4 Key views along North Street, identified as the most relevant in assessing visual and heritage impact, will not be adversely affected. From the east, Long Cottage screens the development, while from the west, the conversion of the barn will result in an enhancement to the street scene, given the current poor condition of the building. The distance of approximately 43 metres from the junction further ensures that the new dwelling will have minimal impact on the setting of the Church.

4.5 In line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraphs 199–208), it is concluded that the proposed works will result in no harm to the significance of the listed Mere Methodist Church or its setting. The scheme delivers a range of heritage and public benefits, including the conservation of an existing traditional building, the enhancement of the local streetscape, and the provision of high-quality housing within the settlement boundary.

4.6 Accordingly, the proposals represent a sensitive and proportionate response to the site's context and are fully compliant with local and national heritage policy objectives.

Appendix - Heritage Impact Assessment

Plate 1 – View approaching the site from the east



Proposed works.

Conversion of the Barn and a new detached dwelling.

Significance affected.

Impact of the proposed development on the setting of the listed building.

Impact of works on asset

When approaching the site from the east along North Street the proposals are not visible.

Scale / Overall effect of impact

Low/neutral

Justification

No alteration on the setting of the heritage asset.

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Plate 2 – View approaching the site from the west



Proposed works.

Conversion of the Barn and a new detached dwelling.

Significance affected.

Impact of the proposed development on the setting of the listed building.

Impact of works on asset

When approaching the site from the west the modern infill garage to Long Cottage and dilapidated barn provides part of the immediate setting.

Scale / Overall effect of impact

Low/neutral

Justification

The proposals will enhance the setting and have a positive impact from this approach.

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Plate 3 – View looking north along North Street.



Proposed works.

Conversion of the Barn and a new detached dwelling.

Significance affected.

Impact of the proposed development on the setting of the listed building.

Impact of works on asset

The impact of the new dwelling and alterations to the road surfacing.

Scale / Overall effect of impact

Low/neutral

Justification

The new dwelling has a ridge height lower than Taylin Kerrysdale and is partially screened by the Barn while the gable of the new dwelling is 13m back from the gable of the Church brick outbuilding. The new road surfacing will offer a visual improvement to the environment and setting.

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