

**BEEHIVE PUBLIC HOUSE
HALEBANK
HALTON**

HERITAGE STATEMENT

FEBRUARY 2025



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site of the former Beehive PH is located within the Halebank conservation area, in Halton. The existing building is redundant, and is associated with a large neighbouring car park, which is currently a void within the conservation area. Whilst the building has some heritage merit, its current redundancy, and that of the car park, is a negative feature which detracts from the conservation area. There are no listed buildings or other heritage designations within the conservation area or its near setting which would require to be taken account of in a heritage statement.
- 1.2 The site is situated in a rural character zone of Merseyside, and is a nucleated settlement with a distinct ribbon form. The buildings generally front the road, and along with green boundaries to the fields and houses, provide a distinct edge and framing to the road.
- 1.3 The Beehive Inn has a date stone of 1805 plus the initials HJR, and appears to have been built as 2 cottages in 1805 then converted into a single building. Whilst it obtained an alehouse license in 1951, it was a public house for some considerable time before this.
- 1.4 The property has not been used as a public house for some time, although its rural setting remains unchanged. The proposal is to retain and re-purpose the existing building for residential, and to construct two detached dwellings on the adjacent car park. 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 This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared by Rob Burns, a heritage consultant formerly employed by English Heritage (now Historic England) as a Historic Areas Inspector and as an urban design and heritage director in local government, with 35 years experience working within the historic built environment.

2. HISTORY AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 Historically, Halebank formed part of the township of Childwall, and included Halewood as the nearest village. Almost exclusively agrarian in character, the poor state of the roads, although improved through the Enclosure Acts, has led the historian Janet Hollinshead, to identify the late mediaeval Halewood community as static, with marriage records supporting that supposition with only 12% of marriages with a partner originating from outside of the Halewood area (Hollinshead JE, Halewood Township: a Community in the early eighteenth century; Trans Hist Doc Lancashire and Cheshire, 1981).
- 2.2 From the 18th century, the gradual enclosure of land led to the creation of 3 new roads, encouraging movement through the area. Halewood began to grow, and the impacts of easier movement led to a reduction in the number of people employed exclusively in agriculture, as commercial opportunities expanded. This was even more important with the coming of the railways from the 1870's, allowing commuting as well as work constructing and employment on the railways themselves. With the increase in population and improved mobility, the area would require facilities such as public houses to cater for leisure use, and it is possible that the re-purposing of the former farmhouse dates from this time of expansion. The 1783 Earl of Derby Estate Map illustrates that there were no buildings to the south of Halebank Road (Figure 1), and an early OS map dating from the early 19th century also illustrates that there was limited development along Halebank Road at this time.

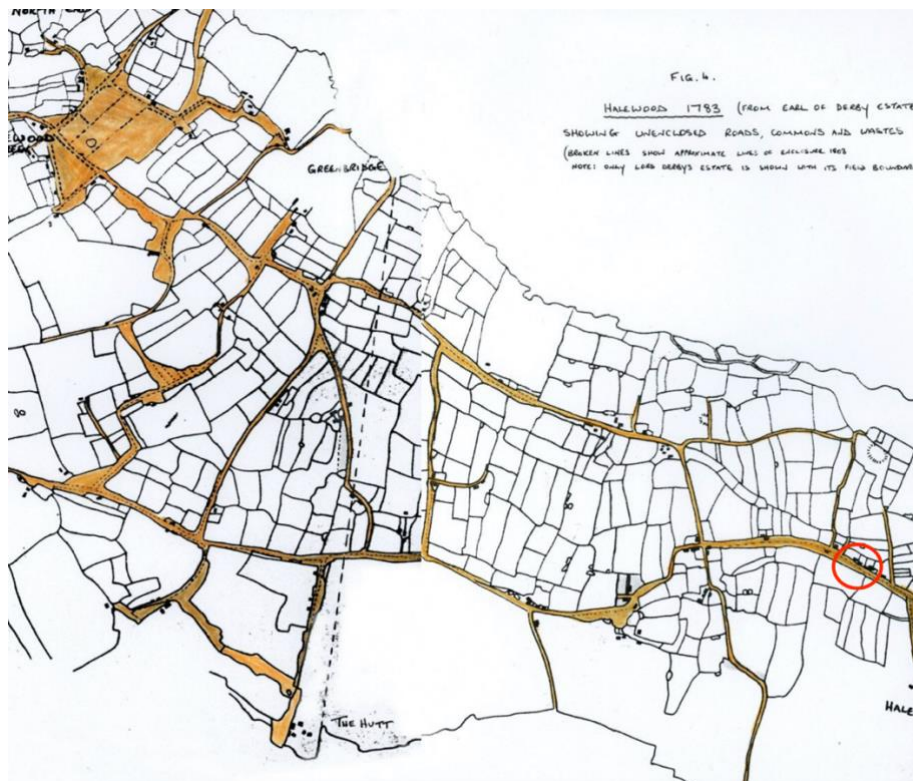


Figure 1- Earl of Derby Estate Map, 1783 (Mike Royden). Halebank CA shown within red oval (Mike Royden)



Figure 2- Early OS plan, c. 1805 (Archi-UK)

2.3 By 1849, a building is shown on the OS map for the area (Figure 3) with what appears to be an orchard or garden with trees adjoining, in what is now the car park. It isn't until 1894 that the building is named on the OS maps as the Beehive PH (Figure 4). Between 1849 and 1894, a number of new houses had been constructed along Halebank Road, either accessing from the road and set back, or fronting the road itself. Havelock Cottages to the west of Linner Farm on the north side of Halebank Road opposite the application site had been constructed, as well as new structures associated with Linner Farm itself. The 1849 map also shows tightly enclosed fields to the south, and a series of wells and areas of osiers. This indicates that the area formed part of an extensive wetland, and the growing of osiers, or willow, a product which helped in providing the raw materials for basket weaving. By 1894, the fields had lost many of the dividing hedgerows and were much larger, indicating more intensive arable farming, and the areas of osiers had largely been abandoned. The cottages which occupied the application site are now named as Bee Hive, and identified as a Beer House. To the north of Halebank Road, the large number of meres seen on the 1849 map appear to have been drained, and a strict grid of field systems imposed, which supports the working of the land as arable. The path leading to the moated site of Lovel's Hall, a 14th century house for the

Holland family, to the north of Linner Farm had been abandoned and brought into the cultivated area.



Figure 3- OS map, 1849

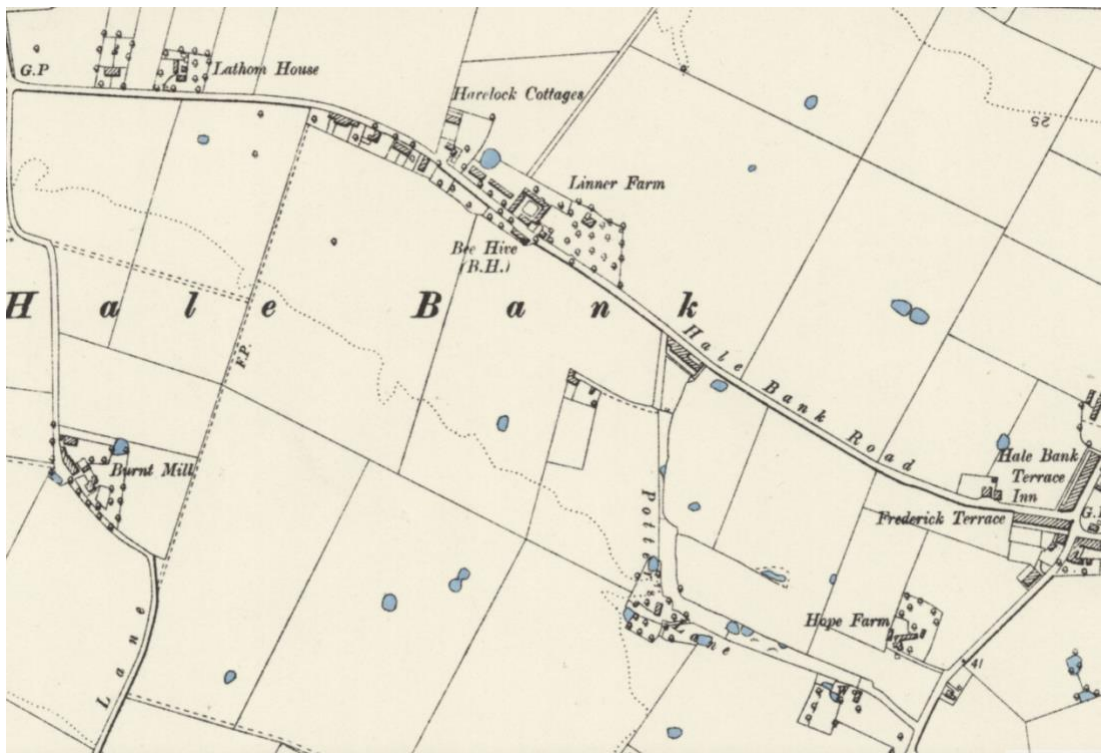


Figure 4- OS map, 1894

- 2.4 The 1928 OS map (Figure 5) illustrates that there had been little change to the Beehive and the surrounding land, although new houses had been constructed to the west and to the east along Halebank Road, in a ribbon form development and Linner Farm had been consolidated.

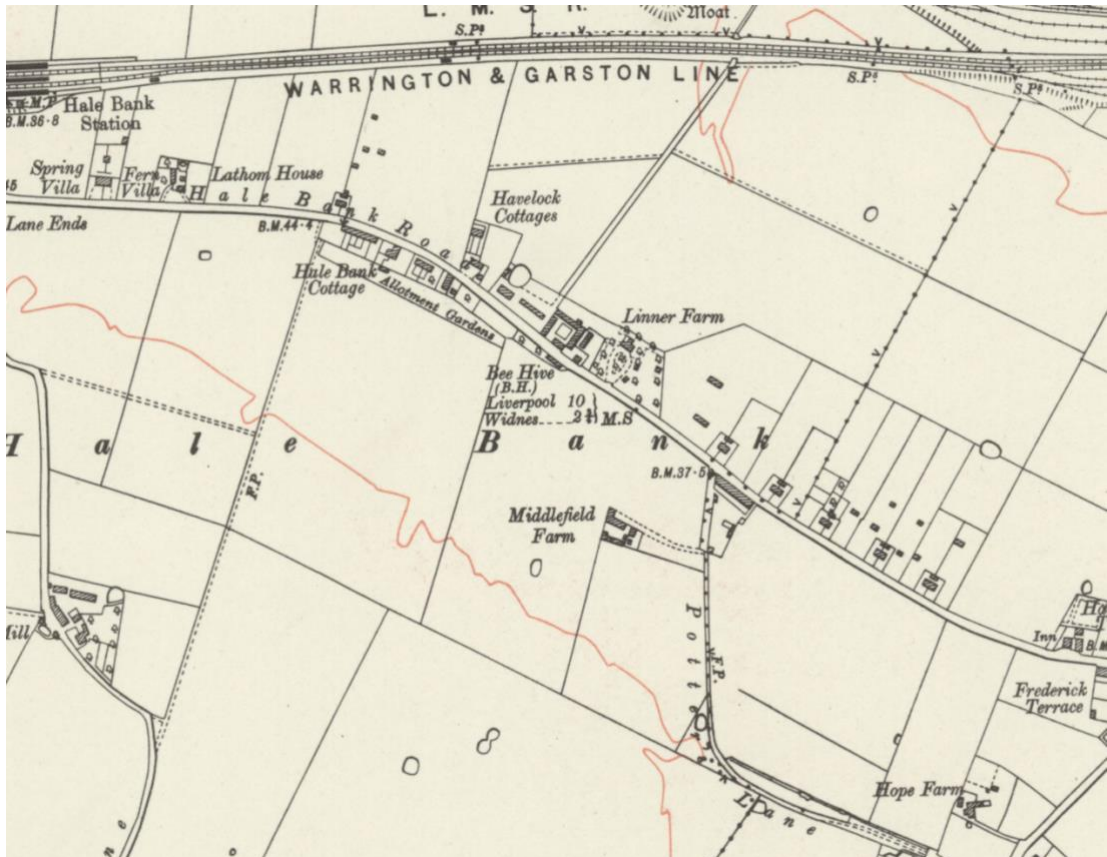


Figure 5- OS Map, 1928

- 2.5 The evolved townscape of the conservation area shows a clear form of ribbon development, but with a cluster of buildings occupying the eastern section. These comprise the extensive buildings of Linner Farm/Linner Farm Cottage to the north of the road, and the Beehive to the south. The structures at this location provide a strong edge to the road itself, defining the route, with the plane of the buildings at back of footpath. Elsewhere within the conservation area, buildings are set back, such as Havelock Cottages and Smithy House, in contrast with the form of Linner Farm and the Beehive, which collectively form a tight and constrained relationship to the road.
- 2.6 Although most of the buildings within the conservation area are orientated parallel to the road, with their primary facades fronting Halebank Road, there are other houses which are at 90 degrees, offering gables elevations to the road, such as no. 59 Halebank Road, Halebank Cottage and the western outbuildings of Linner Farm. This variation in orientation, from longitudinal to latitudinal is a characteristic of the conservation area, and provides for a

distinctive, nucleated settlement which in parts opens up views to the surrounding countryside, whilst in other sections, closes down those views. This is aided by the presence of hedgerows and tree groups, which perform the same function of facilitating and screening more extensive views out of the conservation area. Figure 6 is a plan of the conservation area, and in addition to illustrating the arrangement of the detached buildings, also shows a mix of singular buildings, such as the Beehive itself, and a series of terraced properties, such as 1-6 Halebank Road at the western edge of the conservation area. The building forms provide a layering of structures, with distinctive typologies of terrace, detached and agricultural outbuildings, each adding to a limited variation within the area, whilst sharing a similar scale of two storeys.

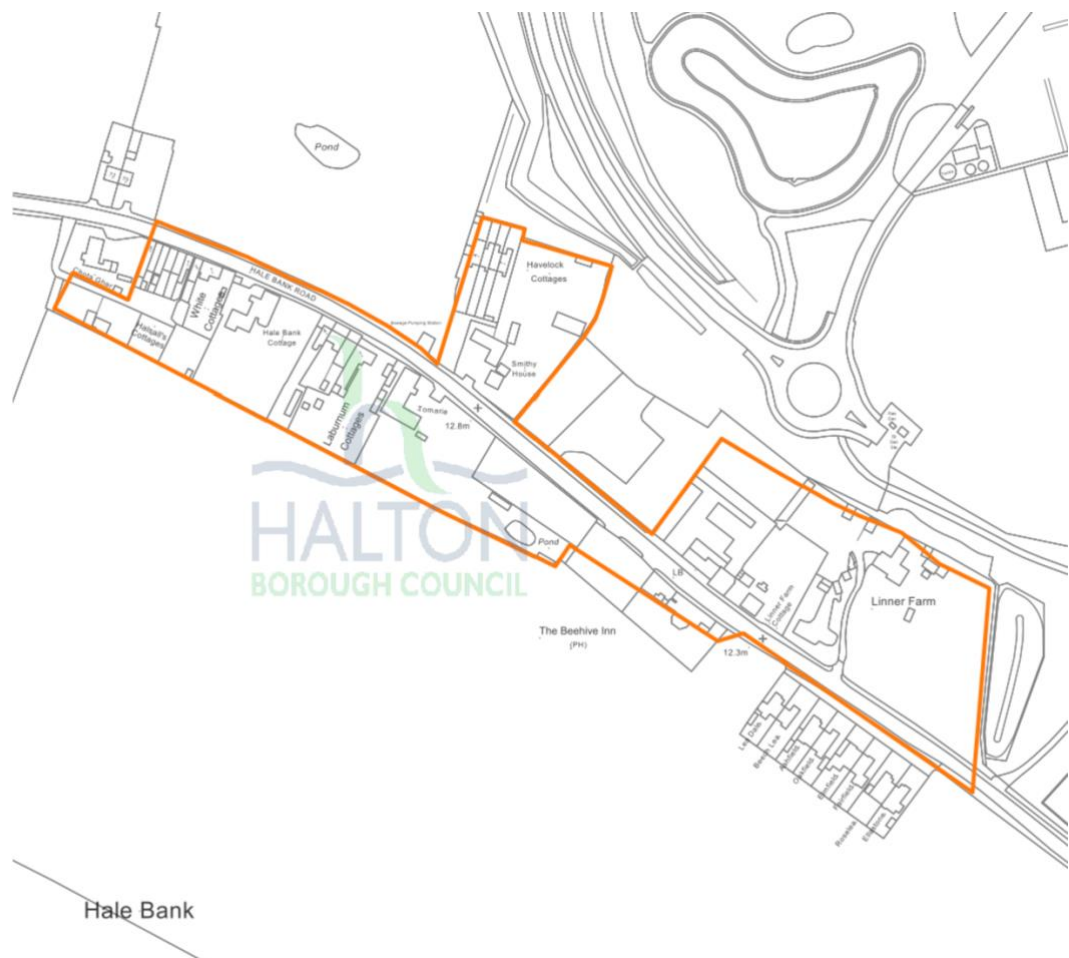


Figure 6- Halebank Road conservation area (Halton Borough Council)

- 2.7 The materials palette and tones of the settlement are limited to red brick, white render and Welsh slate, and this is consistent throughout. Also of prime importance in describing the character of the conservation area are the hedgerows and trees which help to enclose the linear settlement, funnelling views, and also helping to define its rural character. Whilst there

are boundary walls in brick, these are limited in extent and the underlying boundaries are tall hedgerows.



Figure 7- the conservation area and 'clustering' of building groups outlined in red

- 2.8 There are also two areas within the conservation area which are marked by structures which collectively form consolidated clusters. Figure 7 shows the conservation area and the two clusters of buildings which mark focal areas where structures occupy both sides of the road, and which recede back from the road itself. These are distinct from the linear form of development running parallel to the road which is marked at the eastern and western entry points to the conservation area.

3 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1 The application site represents an important aspect of the historic development of the agricultural landscape of the area, and its evolved settlement patterns.
- 3.2 The Beehive has been extensively altered in the past, from what appears to be its agricultural origins, into its last use as a public house. The change of use from farmhouse to public house forms part of the narrative of change in the area as the population expanded, ease of movement was enhanced through the construction of new roads and the railway, and more

opportunities for employment outside of farming were offered. Community facilities such as public houses were a natural result of this process

- 3.3 The assessment of significance has been appraised against the methodology for assessment of cultural significance in *Conservation Principles (2008, English Heritage, now Historic England)*, *Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (2015, Historic England)*, and *Statements of Heritage Significance (2019, Historic England)*
- 3.4 The conservation area character and appearance has been described in Section 2 above, and briefly comprises a layering of building typologies which collectively manifest the agricultural origins of the area. The evolution of the small rural community is represented with the re-purposing of farmhouse/s to public house as the Beehive changed use, and the series of Enclosure Acts which changed the surrounding landscape. The provision of new roads and the railway facilitated better mobility in the area, allowing for an increase in the population and the demand for new housing both here and in the neighbouring settlement at Halewood. The increasing industrialisation in the area allowed for a reduction in agriculture as the main employment, and the gradual abandonment of the buildings within the conservation area as farmhouses and outbuildings.
- 3.5 The approach from both east and west of the conservation area is now more suburban in character, although the conservation area itself retains aspects of its original form, despite the loss of its agrarian base. The consistent scale of the buildings, the limited materials palette and tones of white render and red brick provide a cohesive townscape, despite the increased domesticity and the prevailing features such as uPVC windows.
- 3.6 The conservation area has areas of clustering, where buildings are located on opposite sides of Halebank Road (Figure 8), and also areas of more linear buildings, especially on the southern side of the road. Despite the location of the buildings, wither at back of footpath, or set back from the road, there are breaks in the built form and hedgerows which allows for vistas over the surrounding landscape, and this provides a contextual setting for the conservation area. The hedgerows and trees are a fundamental part of the conservation area's character and appearance, and where they have been lost, including to the car park adjacent to the Beehive, the impact has been harmful to the conservation area.
- 3.7 Whilst the conservation area does retain some aspects of authenticity and integrity in the general forms and limited materials palette, the adaptations to some of the buildings, and the encroachment of more suburban forms to the east, have led to a loss of some of the heritage value associated with the settlement. One of the key areas of denuded townscape is the car park associated with the Beehive pub, and the redundancy of the building itself (Figures 9 and 10). These have a negative effect on the conservation area, especially as they are read

with the abandoned outbuildings of Linner Farm/Linner Farm Cottage which are located directly opposite.



Figure 8- Linner Farm Cottage, the Beehive and no.59 Halebank Road



Figure 9- Beehive with adjacent car park



Figure 10- Beehive and car park from the west

4 POLICY AND GUIDANCE

4.1 In relation to the historic environment, The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) 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. 203).

4.2 In relation to the determination of planning applications, Para 210 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 213 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* and in the case of grade II* buildings, should be *wholly exceptional*.

4.4 Para 214 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 Para 215 states that *Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.*

4.6 The Halton Local Plan (2022) contains the following policy on the historic environment:

Policy HE2: Heritage Assets and the Historic Environment

Designated Heritage Assets

1. Development of designated heritage assets and their settings must:

a. Be based on an analysis of their significance and the impact of proposals upon that significance;

b. Conserve, or where possible enhance, the asset or its setting;

c. Ensure that significance of the asset is not compromised;

d. Protect, or where appropriate, restore original or historic fabric;

e. Enhance or better reveal the significance of assets;

f. Take account of:

i. Topography, landscape, setting and natural features;

ii. Existing townscapes, local landmarks, views and vistas;

iii. The architecture of surrounding buildings;

iv. The quality and nature of materials;

v. Established layout and spatial character;

vi. The scale, height, bulk and massing of adjacent townscape;

vii. Architectural, historical and archaeological features and their settings; and

g. Be accompanied by a Heritage Statement

2. Where it has been demonstrated that potential harm to, or the loss of, a designated heritage asset, including its setting cannot be avoided, the Council will expect the development proposal to:
- a. Demonstrate that, firstly, all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the heritage asset and secondly, to mitigate the extent of the harm to the significance of the asset;
 - b. Provide a clear and convincing justification as to why that harm is considered acceptable. Where that case cannot be demonstrated, proposals will not be supported.
 - c. Ensure that the significance of the asset is not compromised;
 - d. Include appropriate legal agreements or planning obligations to secure the benefits arising from a development proposal where the loss, in whole or in part, of a heritage asset is accepted.
 - e. Appropriately record the asset.

Listed Buildings

3. Development proposals will be required to safeguard or enhance listed buildings.
- a. The demolition of any listed building will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, which outweigh the case for retention.
 - b. The Council will not permit uses, alterations or extensions that would be detrimental to the significance of the Listed Building including fabric, appearance, historic interest or setting.
 - c. The rehabilitation, maintenance repair and enhancement of listed buildings will be encouraged.

Historic Environment

4. In accordance with policy CS(R)20 the Council will support proposals that conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the Borough's historic environment, heritage assets and their settings, especially those identified as being at risk.

Designated Heritage Assets

5. Development proposals affecting designated heritage assets (or an archaeological site of national importance) should conserve, and where possible enhance, the significance of the asset and its setting. The more important the asset, the greater the weight that will be given to its conservation.
6. Harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset will only be permitted where the application meets the criteria set out in Para 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. Approval will be conditional upon the asset being fully recorded and the information submitted to the Local Planning Authority and the Historic Environment Record.

Heritage Statements and Heritage Impact Assessments

7. All proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an analysis of the asset's significance, including the impact of proposals upon that significance, through a

Heritage Statement or Heritage Impact Assessment. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Conservation Areas

8. Proposals that conserve or enhance the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, especially those elements which have been identified in a Conservation Area Appraisal as making a positive contribution to its significance, will be supported, subject to a balance of all other material considerations.

Archaeology

9. Proposals affecting archaeological sites of less than national importance (or local significance) should conserve those elements which contribute to their significance in line with the importance of the remains. Where development affecting such sites is acceptable, any mitigation will be ensured through preservation of the remains in situ as the preferred solution. Where in situ is not justified, the developer will be required to make adequate provision for excavation and recording before and during development. The findings should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and deposited with the Historic Environment Record.

Non-designated heritage assets

10. Proposals that conserve and enhance the significance of non-designated heritage assets will be supported, subject to a balance of all other material planning considerations.

11. Alterations and extensions should be based on an accurate understanding of the significance of the asset including the structure. Proposals should respect the architectural character, and detailing of the original building including the use of appropriate materials and techniques.

12. Partial or total-loss of a non-designated heritage asset will only be permitted where the benefits are considered sufficient to outweigh the harm. Where harm would be acceptable the following will be required:

- a. An appropriate level of survey and recording which may also include an archaeological excavation;*
- b. Provision or replacement of buildings of comparable quality and design;*
- c. The salvage and reuse of special features within the replacement development;*

Historic Environment

13. In accordance with policy CS(R)20 the Council will support proposals that conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the Borough's historic environment, heritage assets and their settings, especially those identified as being at risk.

5 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The proposal is for the conversion of the Beehive PH to residential use and the provision of two detached dwellings within the adjacent car park.
- 5.2 The proposed layout is seen in Figure 11, with Beehive retaining its linear form, although with the removal of the mid-1990's rear conservatory, and two dwellings. The house immediately neighbouring the Beehive is proposed with a gable fronting Halebank Road, whilst the second is set back into the site, with new hedgerow forming a boundary to the street. These forms closely follow those which are already present within the conservation area.



Figure 10 – proposed layout (Revival Architecture)

- 5.3 The arrangement also offers the opportunity to consolidate the 'clustering' of buildings in this part of the conservation area, operating in tandem with the existing Beehive and the buildings at Linner Farm/Linner Farm Cottage. Figure 11 is a graphic showing the existing cluster (in red) with the potential cluster (green). This supports the existing grain and character of the conservation area, and would remove the current negative feature of the existing car park, as well as bringing a redundant building back into sustainable use.

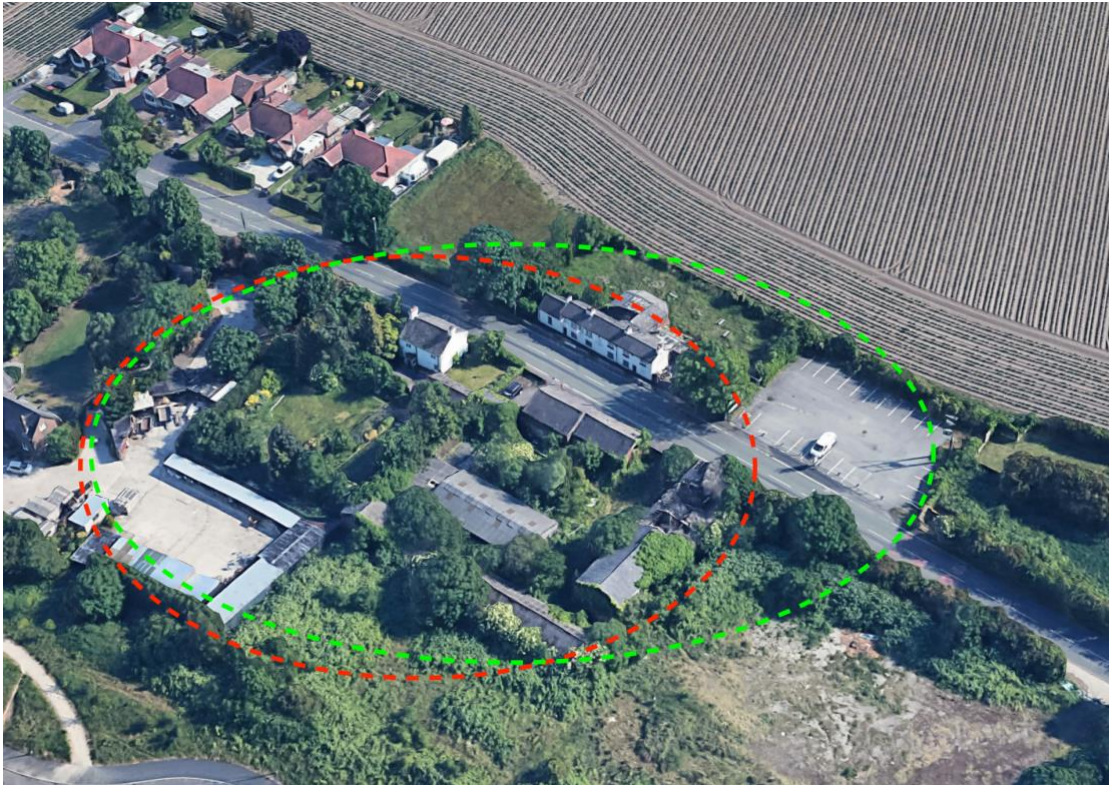


Figure 11- existing cluster (red) with potential, expanded cluster (green)

- 5.4 House Type A presents a gable to the road, echoing the form of Halebank Cottage and no. 59 Halebank Road located to the west of the site, whilst house type B is set back into the site, akin to Linner Farm Cottage and Smithy House to the north. This ensures that varied orientation of the houses within the conservation area, which is a key feature, is used as a compelling design device to ground the proposal in its immediate context, acknowledging the importance of the shifting axis throughout the townscape.
- 5.5 The heritage value of the Beehive is the contribution it makes to the conservation area rather than through its intrinsic merit, and this is respected within the proposals. The frontage is preserved apart from the blocking of a doorway, and the fenestration pattern is retained. The major changes are located internally and to the rear, but the alterations to the rear largely revolve around the demolition of the 1990's extension and its replacement. The tones, textures and form of the current building remains intact, and alterations are considered to have a beneficial impact on the building due to the minimal changes to its form and its re-use.
- 5.6 The location of House A on the site, allows the Beehive to remain the prominent building on approach from both east and west, retaining its prominence in the townscape. The proposed house is 2 storeys, with a red brick finish which picks up on the materials to the outbuildings at Linner farm directly opposite. Windows are proposed as timber, with a Welsh slate roof.

- 5.7 House type B is in white render, but also with timber windows and a Welsh slate roof, and like House A is of 2 storeys. Both houses are designed in a traditional style, with contemporary features such as larger areas of glazing, located to the rear. These offer the opportunity of extensive views over the farmland to the south, and will not be visible from Halebank Road. The rear of both properties lays just beyond the boundary of the conservation area. As part of the proposals, the houses will be provided with hedgerows defining their boundaries to Halebank Road, repairing the landscaping which was present before the car park was formed.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Beehive and its associated car park has a negative impact on the conservation area, and is currently a void in the townscape. However, a refurbished and re-purposed Beehive could contribute positively to the significance of the Halebank conservation area, provided proposals respect and acknowledge the underlying character and appearance.
- 6.2 The conservation area manifests an evolved rural settlement, through a series of built form layers and typologies, and through a shared materials palette and tones. The townscape can be broken down into areas of building clusters, and simpler, linear forms, which can be found in different locations within the conservation area. The proposals are grounded in this context, and use visual cues and an assessment of the characteristics of the settlement as a starting point and key design driver.
- 6.3 It is considered that the proposal is based on its local context, and a rigorous assessment of the existing and design drivers based on this has the potential to repair a fragmented part of the conservation area, and to bring a new, sustainable use to a prominent building. The house types are respectful and an appropriate addition to the townscape. The replacement of hedgerows as part of the development will help to re-establish a landscape device which has been absent for some time, and will also allow views out of the conservation area to the southern farmlands which form its setting.
- 6.4 The proposals do not harm the conservation area and are identified as having a beneficial impact on the former Beehive PH, and an overall beneficial impact on the conservation area. They conform to both national and local policies and guidance.