THE FORMER WHITE BULL HOTEL, HIGHER ROAD, LONGRIDGE, PR3 3SX:

HERITAGE STATEMENT

IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED CONVERSION TO APARTMENTS

1 Introduction

1.1 This heritage statement has been produced to support an application to Ribble Valley Borough Council for planning consent, for alterations to the former White Bull Hotel and its conversion to apartments, and has been commissioned by the developer, via Avalon Town Planning Ltd.

1.2 The site lies within the Longridge Conservation Area, where it is considered to be a “building of townscape merit”, one of a number “which have been judged as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area”, so is taken to be a heritage asset. As such, the planning application requires a statement of significance of the asset and its setting, and a statement of impact of the proposed work (in accordance with paragraphs 128 & 129 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and the advice given in Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide), to enable the planning authority to consider the potential impact of the proposed scheme.

1.3 This statement has been produced by Stephen Haigh MA (a buildings archaeologist with 20 years professional experience of investigating and recording historic buildings in the region), following a site visit on 14 April 2015.

2 The existing site

2.1 The former hotel stands at the junction of Higher Road with Dilworth Lane (NGR: SD 60767 37323), with its principal elevation facing north-west onto Higher Road. It has an irregular plan which in addition to the main block, includes frontage to Dilworth Lane. It is mainly of two storeys, with basement and a small second floor level.

3 Development proposals

3.1 The owners are seeking consent for the conversion of the property to eight apartments, involving some demolition and new build, as set out in plans by Karl Zaldats, which have been amended in the light of pre-application discussions with the planning authority. The areas proposed for demolition are confined to single storey parts of the building on the north-east side and to the rear, with the new build element comprising one additional bay at the north-east side.
4  Historical background and development of the building

4.1  There is limited architectural evidence to suggest that the White Bull originated in the 17th century, possibly as a farmhouse rather than an inn, though the building appears to have been extensively rebuilt subsequently. It has certainly been a public house since the 18th century however, and was one of a number which were found within Longridge prior to its late 19th century expansion, with the landlords probably combining inn-keeping with other activities such as farming or blacksmithing, as was commonly the case. At that time the village was a relatively small settlement of linear form, running from Chapel Hill to Market Place and King Street, and out to the north-west up Higher Road, then known as High Street.

4.2  The building undoubtedly has a complex architectural history, with the lower, north-east end of the main block, which is rubble-built, perhaps the earliest surviving part of it: it contains a small, two-light chamfered window at mid-height. Otherwise, the form of the masonry and the window and doorways suggests that much of the building was altered in the 19th century, probably as the growth of quarrying and textiles nearby brought increased prosperity.

4.3  As well as the main block along Higher Road, the former hotel contains what may have been a separate cottage as well as other outbuildings, on the Dilworth Lane frontage and within the rear yard, but these have been extensively altered to form part of the modern public house kitchen and storage areas. Those to the rear, facing the present car park, now present an incoherent collection.

---

Photo 1: Front elevation, to Higher Road
Photo 2: Elevation to Dilworth Lane

Photo 3: Elevation to Dilworth Lane

Photo 4: Rear outbuildings to car park, proposed for demolition
4.4 Those parts of the building proposed for demolition include the flat-roofed male WCs with the adjoining entrance porch, both of which are 20th century additions with no architectural merit. They also include the larger infill section to the rear, including the present kitchen, which are buildings of indeterminate date, whose historic function is far from clear, because of modern alterations.
5 Statement of heritage significance

5.1 The heritage significance of the building derives from the traditional aspects of its exterior, and it clearly has an important visual role as an early component of the conservation area, dating from the 18th century or earlier, and forming a key part of the street scene which continues up Higher Road. Its elevation to this street is the most important aspect, and displays numerous phases of construction, which give strong visual clues to the building’s history and are of interest for their own sake. The façade to Dilworth Lane is of some but lesser importance, and the side and rear elevations which face the car park have little merit. Extensive internal refurbishment and opening-up during the 20th century, as is the case with most public houses, is believed to have resulted in loss of much of the historic interior.

5.2 The standard procedure for assessing heritage significance, based on four separate values involves a consideration of the following:

- **Evidential value.** The former inn clearly has some potential for providing evidence about its historical development, though this appears confined to certain areas, as the opening-up of the interior which has taken place in the 20th century will have removed much historic fabric. Rating: Medium.
- **Historical value.** Some historical value, by virtue of the building’s former role (for many years it was the seat of the “select vestry”, charged with local administrative tasks). Rating: Medium.
- **Aesthetic value.** Aesthetic value is confined to the street frontages, while the modern additions alongside the car park reduce this value. Rating: Medium.
- **Communal value:** Likely to be of some communal value, because of its prominent position and former public house function. Rating: Medium.

6 Assessment of impact of proposals

Partial demolition to rear

6.1 The demolition of various elements to the rear of the building is justified by the fact that these structures are not of historic or architectural interest, and their removal would enhance the setting of the building. They include the 20th century WCs and entrance lobby as well as the more extensive but no more significant outbuildings, which presently contribute negatively to the building’s appearance.
Addition of new build (unit 7)

6.2 The addition of a single bay at the north-east end of the main block, to replace the demolished WCs etc, would enhance the appearance of the site from Higher Road by reducing the visual “gap” formed by the current car park. This addition would be set back slightly from the historic building, and have a neutral finish with rendered walls, which would contrast with the exposed stonework of the existing structure so as to provide contrast between the two.

Other external alterations

6.3 In general the remaining exterior works are low key and would achieve the aims of the development with a minimum of intervention to the historic building and visual impact on the conservation area. No other alterations are proposed to the Higher Road elevation, except for the replacement of door and window frames, and the only measurable change in the Dilworth Lane elevation would be slight alterations to the ground floor openings within unit 1.

7 Justification for the proposed works

7.1 The former White Bull Hotel is an historic building of local historic and architectural interest which is important as a component of the village setting and conservation area. It is clearly no longer viable as a public house and residential conversion offers the most appropriate alternative use to ensure its continued future, with the present scheme providing the best outcome in terms of enhancing its visual appearance and ensuring that loss of significant historic fabric is kept to a minimum. The proposals have been drawn up in line with the relevant conservation area management guidance, and are in accordance with Policy DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (Protecting Heritage Assets).

Stephen Haigh, Buildings Archaeologist
15 April 2015

As set out in English Heritage 2008 Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance