The Impact of the Proposal on the Heritage Assets and Proposed Mitigation Measures to Minimise Harm to Their Significance



Monkton Farmhouse

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DesignAndAccessStatementAppendix-CBHH-ASA-X-XX-RP-A-001

April 2025

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1.0

Assessing the Setting of the Heritage Asset

The Asset's Physical Surroundings

- The topography of the wider area is flat and significantly a reoccurring landscape condition is that most dwellings are set back from the road. Additionally, there are no major visual breaks between the nearby houses from the street, especially to larger open areas which creates a significant east – west axis and aspect along Monkton Lane.

- The surrounding streetscape is defined by similarly sized properties. More often than not these properties are detached or semi-detached. The road is tree lined in a non-ordered fashion, with a variety of hedges and bushes also.

- Other heritage assets include listed neighbouring properties to the west, the wider Monkton Conservation Area and the war memorial to the southeast over Monkton Lane.

- On approach the site is viewed with a clear boundary line giving a hard edge between public and private. This reinforced, in part, by the solid section of boundary wall and its height above eye level, and by the dense vegetation beyond the metal railings to the remaining southern boundary.

Experience of the Asset

- As previously mentioned in 7.2 of The Heritage, Design & Access Statement, the character within the interior of the site relating to the application can be defined as enclosure, to varying degrees. Directly to the south, the front garden, there is more or less enclosure depending on the time of year due to vegetation either from natural cycles or pruning and additional metal railings give a sense of permeability. The side garden to the east is more enclosed due to its solid wall just above typical eye level, thus not allowing immediate views out or connection to the road/pedestrian footpath.

- The significance of the property's boundary has been reduced as it has been partly lost to a neighbouring development. This resulted in the boundary to the east of the site being removed entirely and the boundary to the north and south being altered also.

- The aspect of the asset is to the south as the principal elevation faces towards Monkton Lane.

- The principal elevation faces onto the front garden and the gable with far fewer window faces east to the side garden.

- Despite the building being grade II* and one of the more important at the core of the village and conservation area, the asset does not visually dominate the landscape as it is sat beyond a deep front garden.

- A low level of pedestrian activity passes the asset on foot to the south.

- A high level of vehicle traffic on Monkton Lane contributes to noise, vibration and accompanying sounds and smells.

- The property is only accessible on foot via the shared entry to the front.

- Diurnal changes come from vehicle lights and streetlights at night.

- Seasonal changes come from the varying density of vegetation in the front garden and tree lined street beyond the boundary of the site.

2.0

Proposal Element: Black Metal Vehicle Entry Gates

Location and Siting of the Proposed Vehicle Entry Gates

- The position of the gates is adjacent to but not in front of listed building's principal elevation (9.5m distance away in total), which lessens their impact upon the asset.

- Public views in and private views out of the site are maintained as existing due to the size of the gates maintaining the silhouette of the former section of wall and due to the gate's material solidity.

- The gates orientation carries some significance due to being parallel to the asset and to the highway, this orientation is maintained from that of the former wall. Sliding gates also chosen over hinged gates to maintain the parallel orientation to existing boundary.

- The intervention's location does not physically or visually isolate the asset; impact may be had via a difference in material and colour, but this is mitigated somewhat by the choice of a matte black paint finish to reduce reflectivity and make the gate's appearance more subtle and subservient to the listed building.

Form and appearance of the Proposed Vehicle Entry Gates

- As the largest element in the tall part of the boundary, the gates will become the prominent element within this section of walling. To avoid dominance over the asset and to remain as inconspicuous as possible, mitigation includes matching the existing height and maintaining opacity.

- The scale and proportion of the proposed gates sitting within the wall's existing height creates little competition with or distraction from the listed building. Nevertheless, attention will be drawn to the gates for a short period when in use as the view opens up into the depth of the site.

- The height of the gates is to be as the former stone wall and to match adjacent remaining stone wall. The scale of the gates is relative to and in keeping with the asset.

- The gates' horizontal proportionality is similar to the section of stone wall, remaining boundary and the principal elevation thus mitigating visual impact.

- No visual permeability maintains the solid wall's character as per the existing.

- The metal gates will contrast with remaining stone walls adjacent but will be matte black in finish so as to not be overly reflective and therefore eye catching.

- The design of the gates has been informed by the existing characteristics and features of the stone boundary wall, e.g. its height and solidity. The repeating vertical motif to the front of the solid gate is informed by the metal railings directly in front of the house. The pattern carried across to the gates uses the same thickness, spacing, height, colour and material to create a harmonious proposal.

- A remote activated mechanism will slide open the gates, which will dock behind the adjacent stone walling. The element of movement and activity is temporary whilst in use, the gates will then return to stationary position within the wall.

<u>Wider Effects of the Proposed Vehicle Entry Gates</u>

- There is to be no change to asset's silhouette.

- Due to land use change from garden to parking, the proximity of noise and vibration to the asset may increase but levels are likely to remain similar overall to existing due to extensive traffic on the road.

- There are to be no changes to fixed architectural lighting. Car lights will have a negligible effect on the area due to the high number of vehicles in the existing area.

- The existing general character of the area is urbanised and no longer the agricultural settlement it once was due to the development of car use and Monkton Lane as a road for vehicles and the number of parked cars along it. The proposal aims to change this trajectory by taking a vehicle off the road when parked and placing in a private safe location.

- The proposal dropped kerb and junction with road is a physical change to surface of the pedestrian route along the pavement of Monkton Lane.

- The proposed work is reversible as the gates can be removed and the wall rebuilt, as has already occurred within the wall.

Conclusion

Impact on Listed building

The removal of part the stone wall and replacement with black metal gates will have an impact on the view of the listed building from Monkton Lane however there is little physical impact on the most significant element of the listing, the house and its principal elevation.

Only a small area of the house's fabric will be altered to allow for services to be installed. This area will be to the lesser side gable and be very discreet.

The most impact will be upon the historic stone boundary, which has been significantly reduced in value throughout the years by a reduction in size and being partial rebuilt.

Impact on Conservation area

The proposal continues the form, height and solidity of the existing stone wall and matches these characteristics of the remaining wall to either side. The difference in material is somewhat impactful. However, there is precedent for the removal of a section of listed stone wall both in the historic boundary of the property and the wider conservation area, specifically following the line of the wall in question.

Level of harm

We believe the level of harm to be less than substantial.

Mitigations

Considered design elements which amass to mitigation are matching to existing height, solidity, materiality, reflectivity and colour of the gates. Additionally, the gates total width is as small as possible (within regulatory parameters influenced by highways) to reduce impact and maintain as much stone walling as possible.

3.0

Proposal: Black metal pedestrian gate.

Location and siting of Proposed Pedestrian Gate

- The proposed pedestrian gate is to be located in front of the asset's principal elevation (approximately 9.5m in distance), which does increase potential impact. However, this impact is mitigated by centrally positioning the intervention within existing railings and visually aligning with front door in principal elevation to achieve symmetry and balance, creating a language with the historic façade design.

- Views in and out of the site are maintained as existing due to the chosen material of the gates matching the existing railings. The size of the gate also maintains the height line of the existing railings.

- The gate's orientation carries some significance due to being parallel to the asset and to the highway, this orientation is maintained except from when the gate is in use. For the majority of the time when the gate is stationary and in position within the metal railing enclosure it will cause little impact.

- The building will be read in the same way as existing the location of the gate will not physically or visually isolate asset as the gate's material is a continuation of the metal railings, with the same spacing and transparency.

Form and appearance of development of Proposed Pedestrian Gate

- There is mitigation by design as the proposed gates have been informed by the existing characteristics and features of the metal railings sat atop the lower stone boundary wall. Such as the height, materiality, visual permeability and spacing. Resulting in the design blending in with the existing railings.

- The height of gate is to be as per former section of railings and match adjacent remaining railings.

- The scale of the gate is relative to the asset.

- The gate's railings are vertical proportional as per the existing railings.

- The gate's visual permeability maintains character as per existing.

- The gate's material of metal is painted matte black to match existing.

- The repeating vertical railings are used as a motif to the front of the solid vehicle gates. The pattern carried across to the gates used the same thickness, spacing, height, colour and material to create a harmonious proposal and design language between the various elements of the boundary.

- During use the gate will open to create a void in the railings. This entrance has been aligned with the front door to the property so will feel balanced and purposeful in the centre of the elevation. There is no competition with or distraction from the asset.

Wider Effects of the Proposed Pedestrian Gate

- The small loss of low section of wall to create opening does not have a large impact on the reading of the space due to the height of the wall.

- The change to general character is as per 1.0.

- As proposed pedestrian access to the farmhouse is to become part of the property rather than an agreement between neighbours to share an access path and gate.

- The metal railings are later and whilst attractive and not negatively affecting the listing they are not considered an important historic element. The gate can be removed and railings replaced to look as before. The small section of lower boundary wall can be rebuilt however, its removal is a, less than significant, level of harm to the property as unlike the taller section of boundary it is less evident this wall has been rebuilt and altered over time.

Conclusion

Impact on Listed Building

The removal of the lower part the stone boundary wall and its replacement with a black metal pedestrian gate will have a small impact on the view of the listed building from Monkton Lane however there is no physical impact on the most significant element of the listing, the house and its principal elevation.

Additionally, as per item 3.4.23 of Ethical Planning's Statement of Heritage Significance, in 1984 permission was granted to erect a 1m high boundary with 900mm high fencing and repoint existing boundary wall and reset copings (ST/0763/8/DM). If this work was carried out, it was put into question the originality of the southern boundary. It is worth noting the metal railings are not evident in historic imagery from the estimated period of 1975-88 but can be seen in an early 1900's postcard. Therefore, the railings are not a surviving original feature.

Impact on Conservation Area

There will be little impact on the Monkton CAA, as the line of the historic wall has already been significantly reduced in value and a variety of pedestrian gates along the street make for a wide-ranging and interesting relationship between house's boundaries and entry ways.

Level of Harm

Less than substantial. The small amount of harm is from removing the lower stone wall.

Mitigations

As previously stated, the mitigations of the impact of the gate are by design. Additionally, the gate can be removed in the future and the railings reinstated. The lower stone wall could also be reinstated but we understand this would not be original fabric; this harm is conceded in the item above.

4.0

Proposal: Removal of the Later Non-Original Inner Garden Wall

Location and siting of the Proposed Removal of the Later Non-Original Inner Garden Wall

- The inner garden wall is located perpendicular to the asset's principal elevation and abutting its southeast corner.

- Views in and out of the site are maintained as existing due to the design of the proposed gates. Vegetation also reduces visibility in and out.

- Views from within the boundary will be impacted. From west to east, within the front garden a slightly longer view to the furthest east boundary wall. From east to west the removal of the wall will allow for the view of the lower ground storey. Neither of these changes are considered harmful.

- The wall's orientation carries some significance due to being perpendicular to the asset and to the highway, this positioning is lost when removed but does not affect overall reading of more important assets of boundary wall and listed building.

- More of the building's principal elevation will be read from within the boundary, especially from the southeast corner of the site. This will not visually isolate the asset as the scale of the site and other adjacent features will remain, for example the southwest boundary wall leading from road to the front of the house, or the path that follows the perimeter of the house – which will now be able to be read more clearly.

Form and Appearance of the Proposed Removal of the Later Non-Original Inner Garden Wall

- The proposal will be somewhat evident, but it is not classed as a dominant change to the setting as it doesn't cause significant nor negative impact on external views of the main asset.

- The removal of the wall will draw more attention to the principal elevation when viewed from within the site. Additionally, visual permeability will be increased from within the site but due to vegetation and design of vehicle gates it is likely the change will not be highly noticeable from outside the property's boundary.

- Some character will be lost from the removal of the stones materiality and its relationship with the stone of the existing boundary walls. However, this impact is lessened by the inner wall being a later and non-original addition. Photographic evidence dates the wall as younger than 50 years.

Wider Effects of the Proposed Removal of the Later Non-Original Inner Garden Wall

- There is of course a change to the built surroundings and space via the loss of section of wall, which has some impact on spatial arrangement from within the site but can be said that removal of non-original later wall improves the reading of the finest elevation of the asset.

- Change to general character will occur within the asset's boundary, the front garden will feel slightly more expansive than previous. The front and side garden will join to become one unifying wrap around exterior space, the existing stone paving will take on the same feeling. External character will be unchanged following this proposal.

- An area of the front and side gardens will be covered with gravel and become space to manoeuvre a car, changing the land use from a garden to parking.

- The result of the proposed change is the outcome of parking within the site's boundary. The impact of this has been mitigated against as the proposed parking is defined at the side of the property not in front of the principal elevation as to remain subservient.

- The position of the wall is shown in some historic maps and then not in more recent ones.

- As seen in the Statement of Heritage Significance drafted by Ethical Partnership, the 1957 OS map shows no dividing wall between the front and side garden.

- Photographic evidence estimated to be between 1975-88 shows a section of poorly constructed wall abutting the house which is different from that of the wall on site today.

- Therefore, it can be said that inner garden wall has possibly been rebuilt on at least two separate occasions and the latest iteration of the wall is younger than 50 years old.

- Additionally, it is constructed in the same design as the southern boundary wall and that of those found in the High Back Close development, which was designed in 1983 (build completion date unknown).

- It can be said that either the boundary walls of the High Back Close development were all designed based on the style of the inner garden wall and southern boundary to Monkton Farmhouse or the extent of rebuilding boundary walls surrounding the High Back Close development exceeded the scope as seen on the associated drawings and all the walls have been rebuilt at the same time.

- The inner garden wall and southern boundary are both topped with a flat contemporary coping stone. Very different to that seen in Historic Image No. 03 from item 4.1 of the Heritage, Design and Access Statement, which show the eclosing southern boundary wall to the adjacent field to the east Monkton Farmhouse, which would later become the High Back Close development.

Conclusion

Impact on Listed building

Removal of the later non-original inner garden wall changes existing views within the site but improves reading of asset when viewed from within the boundary. Impact reduced by lack of historical material value.

Impact on Conservation area

Views are indiscernible from beyond the boundary lessening the impact of the change.

Level of harm

We believe the level of harm is less than substantial

Mitigations

The proposal is reversible as the wall can be rebuilt again in the future if necessary. As previously mentioned, the wall is not materially historic.

5.0

Timber Fence, Electric Vehicle Charging Point & Hidden Services

Timber Fence

To be removed from the scheme following the heritage officer's comments.

Electric Vehicle Charging Point

To be removed from the external gable wall of the asset and installed as a free-standing unit at the east boundary of the side garden, away from the asset, following the heritage officer's comments.

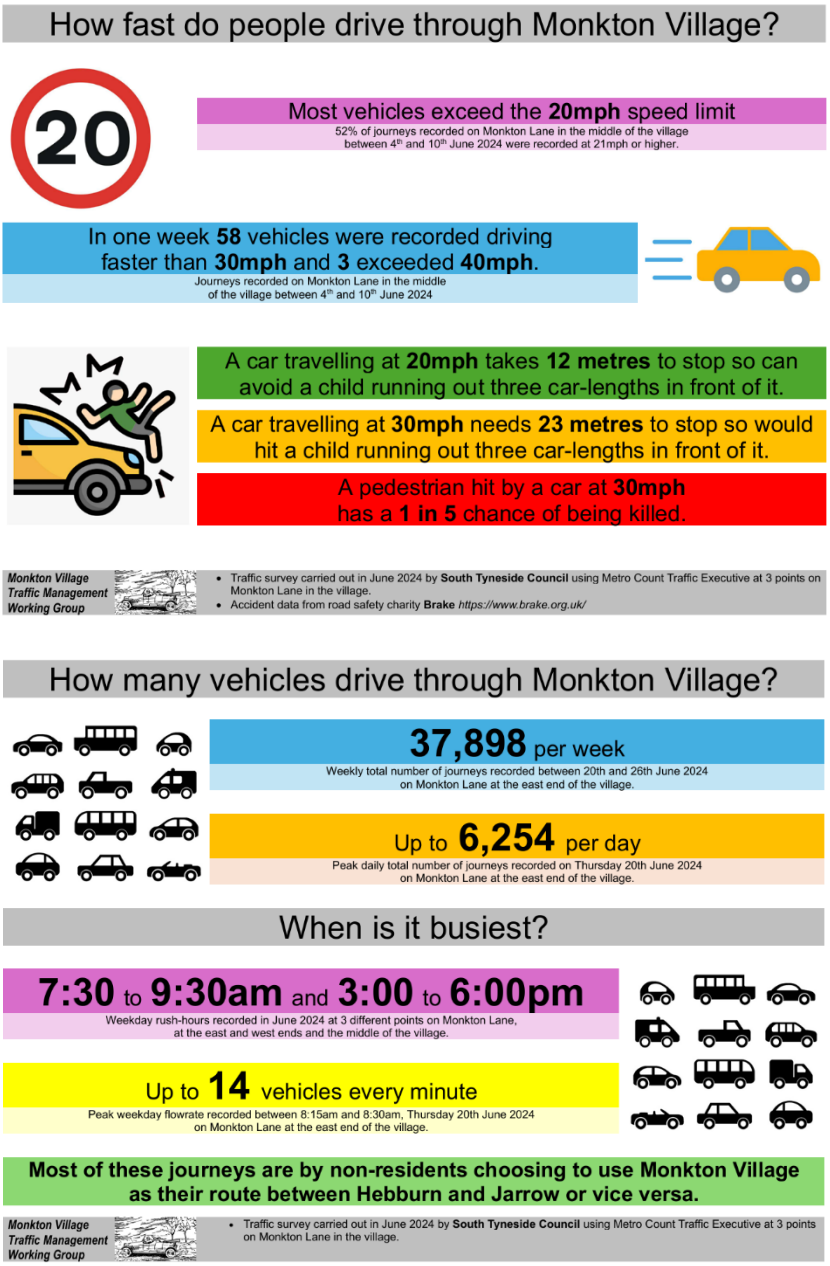
Hidden Services

Further advice from a structural engineer will be sought after to maintain the existing condition of the listed building's wall in the services design stage, installation and post-completion. We believe the minor penetration within the wall will be balanced out by the positive impact of the rest of the scheme. Services will run hidden within the ground, to the electric sliding gates and the freestanding EV charging unit. The only visible impact will be the cabling penetrating the gable wall at the lowest possible level and running into the ground in a slender stainless-steel conduit. This will have extremely low visual impact upon the wall and the wider space.

6.0

Overall scheme weighed against public benefit

Recently Monkton Lane has been in the spotlight for an increasingly poor state of traffic, speeding and damages to parked cars. See below infographic, courtesy of Monkton Village Traffic Management Working Group.



The proposal to take a single car from parking at the side of the road and into a private parking space can achieve the following public benefits:

- Reduced congestion and therefore reduced vehicle emissions
- Increased safety of persons entering and exiting vehicles
- Increased safety for pedestrians using the footpaths and when crossing the highway
- Increased safety for all roads users as there would be a reduction in the number of times a user has to cross into the other side of the road to pass a parked car
- Increased safety of the vehicle joining and leaving the highway to and from a 'T' shaped junction as opposed to, to and from a parallel parking situation on the road.
- Reduces potential damage to residents' vehicles (travelling or stationary)
- Reduces potential damages to the public road and pavement surfaces
- Reduces costly damages to property other than vehicles, such as boundary walls or buildings
- The removal of parked vehicles from the side of the road contributes to the attractiveness of the conservation area, with no cars parked in front of/blocking views of heritage assets such as listed houses and the war memorial
- A private drive is a deterrent to thieves and a reduction in crime is a public benefit as well as providing increased peace of mind to the individual

Additionally, on average car users keep their cars parked at their residence 80% of the time, 16% at their destination and only 3 to 4% in transit. Thus, reinforcing the importance of safety and security around this matter.

John Bates and David Leibling (commissioned by the RAC Foundation), Spaced Out (July 2012)

We believe collectively these public benefits outweigh the less than substantial amount of harm attributed to the proposed scheme.