

APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT – DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT and HERITAGE STATEMENT

BECK HALL, PRIESTMAN'S LANE, THORNTON DALE YO18 7RT

July 2011

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1. Overview

This application is for a refurbishment of a dilapidated boundary wall/ railings for this property, and a redesign of its driveway. The effect will be to bring the wall/railings back up to the standard they were when built, to build gateposts to replace rail end posts, to replace a grey tarmac drive with gravel, and to relocate and reshape a short wall that currently inhibits the use of garaging and the driveway. The current arrangement effectively forces vehicles to be parked on the roadway of this particularly attractive part of the Conservation Area.

Almost all of the planned work is refurbishment, and will re-use brick, stone, and coping stones where possible. The estate railings [which are damaged beyond repair] will be replaced with matching new estate railings. There is no work to be done on the house itself: the work is limited to the driveway and roadside walls.

The work will require a two metre section of wall to be demolished and reused, making a 7.5 metre wall. All new features [essentially the new wall and the gateposts] copy existing design features in the same boundary wall of the property.

2. Changes requiring approval

- a) At the formal pedestrian front gate of the property, to replace iron gateposts with stone pillars of the same height, with flat pyramid capstones. These pillars will be supported by coped concave shoulders dropping down to a low [existing] dwarf wall, topped with estate railings. The capstone design is an imitation of the single pillar on the existing stub wall in the driveway. The shoulders are a direct copy of the shoulder that already exists further south on the boundary where the dwarf wall rises to become a retaining wall. Materials: Mortared stone blocks to match the house and existing boundary wall; sandstone shaped coping stones to match and extend the existing dwarf wall.
- b) To replace the tarmac drive with 20mm local gravel.
- c) At the northern end of the property, to dismantle an existing two metre stub of wall ["the stub wall"]. Also to dismantle the section of the existing wall/railings that separates the driveway from the front lawn of the property.
- d) To build a new, higher wall to separate the driveway from the front lawn of the property. This wall to connect [with a pedestrian gateway] the corner of the house to the roadside wall/railings, at the existing mouth of the drive. The drive opening will remain the same size and location as at present. This new wall to use materials and to

carry design features copied from the dismantled wall¹: a distinct S-curved top with angled coping-stones, local sandstone blocks, lime mortar, pyramid capped pillars, and to include a small lintelled window opening to imitate the blind window in the stub wall.

This wall to connect to the dwarf wall/railings with a concave shoulder to match the existing shoulder at the extreme south end of the estate railings [and the new pedestrian gate pillars].

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3. Heritage Statement²

[Footnote references in this section refer to elements of Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment: 2010, unless otherwise made clear]

Beck Hall is a Grade 2 listed property. It was started in the late 18th century, as a small two roomed building, which has gradually been extended, [mainly northward], throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a notable bow window built where it faces down Thornton Beck, and with extensive Edwardian extensions to the rear and south, which in 1905 finally connected the house to a Victorian vine house in its grounds.

Maintenance work on the house shows multiple phases of extension, with obvious sequences, but there is little evidence of dates.

- i. Extension of the original building 5 metres north to include the current front door
- ii. Further extension north [c 4m] to include the current dining room
- iii. The addition of the Bow window to the west³
- iv. The construction of a service wing, to the north [5 metres], of a distinctly different construction, with a much lower roof line, and at a tangent to the line of the main house. This appears to have been a kitchen [as it is today].
- v. The extension of that service wing, with a continuation of its roofline to form a building that has variously been used as staff accommodation and granary. [This service wing has been repeatedly altered, with a raised roofline, chimneys moved and removed, granary steps fitted and removed, door and windows added and removed, and indeed the whole wing converted into a cottage and sold off in 1979. It has now been bought back, and reconnected and merged into the house.
- vi. The building of a large coach house, later garage block with stable yard [sold off in the 1980s to form Kirkby House]

¹ HE3.1 (iv)

² HE6.1

³ Items 1-3 were all Georgian by date and appearance. The subsequent "cottage" additions are distinctly Victorian.

- vii. A major and well documented extension to the east in 1905, removing lesser service areas and breaking the longhouse line, and building on a major stairwell and extra rooms
- viii. Construction of garage and outhouse sheds to the rear of the service wing [The latest element of which seems to have been built in the 1940s, and was demolished with NPA approval in 2010.]
- ix. The "stub wall" built across a third of what is now the driveway, appended to the extreme north end of the service wing. Photographic evidence shows that this one item of proposed demolition is a later attachment to a wall of the service wing that itself was only fully built in c 1890. Though maps show some form of wall there in the middle of the century.
- x. A boundary wall /railings of brick, with stone coping and steel estate railings, appended to what appears to be a much older retaining wall to the south.

Beck Hall was listed in 1985⁴, *after* the property had been split in three, with the stables/coach house/garage stable yard becoming "Kirkby House", and the service wing becoming "Beck Hall Cottage".⁵

The listing describes:

*"House. 1830 with late C19 extensions. For Joshua Priestman. Sandstone ashlar with pantile roof; stone and rendered stacks. 2-storey, 4-window front, with lower 2-storey, 4-window range to left. Left of centre door of 6 raised and fielded panels beneath divided overlight in fluted pilastered doorcase with moulded frieze and modillion cornice. Full height bow window to right with original tripartite sash to first floor. Ground floor windows are replacement French windows with glazing bars. Remaining first- floor windows are 16-pane sashes with painted stone sills. Bow window openings have moulded friezes and cornices. Other windows have flat arches of voussoirs. Stepped eaves course. Gable wall to right: full height late C19 bay window with sashes. Coped gables and shaped kneelers. End and centre right stacks. **Late C19 extension to left not of special interest. Included for group value.**"⁶*

Pevsner⁷ meanwhile refers to the house as follows;

"... before the bridge one can also turn r., a little up the Thornton Beck, to a fine house of about the same date. It has a spacious bow, with all the details broad and flat."

⁴ English Heritage ref 440325: Dec 10, 1985

⁵ There is no sign that any planning permission was sought to split away the Cottage. The conversion of the stable block and yard to become a separate home was approved after some controversy, but the record shows no consideration of the impact of parking, previously done in the stable yard, now being forced onto the very constricted current driveway of the Hall.

⁶ This refers to service wing to which the proposed demolished wall is itself a late addition

⁷ Pevsner's Architectural Guides: the Buildings of England: Yorkshire: The North Riding . 1966

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The key to the listing of Beck Hall, and to its inclusion in Pevsner, is the main Georgian frontage facing down the beck, and the flattened bow window. Its situation and setting are critical, as is the "sense of place" that it takes from, - and contributes to - Priestman's Lane.⁸ Priestman's Lane is a popular walking and sightseeing point for the same reason, with almost all visitors on foot, using the Beck-side footpath to approach the house, and the lane to walk past it.

Moving traffic in the Lane is minimal, but cars are often parked on the Lane. This clearly detracts from the views of the house, the Lane, and the sense of place. The very limited and constricted driveway at Beck Hall contributes directly to this parking on the Lane. [See "Access" below].

The Applicants would be surprised if the replacement of tarmac or steel end-posts caused any heritage interest. The demolition of the 2 metre wall has been proposed two years ago, in an earlier Application, and at that time received no objections from the "demolition authorities" such as English Heritage who were consulted⁹. This section of wall is not in itself a heritage asset: it is a mid-late Victorian addition¹⁰ to a Victorian cottage style extension, itself an extension of another Victorian cottage addition to the original Georgian house. As a proportion of the heritage asset, it is negligible in physical terms and in value.¹¹ More to the point, this section of wall, set across the driveway, forcing cars to be visible on the road and in the lower driveway, acts specifically to *detract* from the setting and sense of place that is the key characteristic of the actual heritage assets.¹²

Similarly, the new wall is designed not for the convenience or privacy of the owners, but is proposed simply as an architectural contribution to the asset as a whole¹³. Echoing the curved shoulder of the stub wall, and its [badly executed] blind window, this wall is designed to maintain the narrow neck of the driveway, and also limit the visual impact of vehicles on the house and the surroundings, specifically from the main viewpoints at the Beck and the main frontage.

Access and Impact

The proposed works will refurbish the boundary wall of this property, while bringing the front pedestrian gateway up to a standard that is consistent with the overall impact of the property. The driveway will be finished in gravel that matches the colour and textural impact of the building better than the current tarmac, as well as reducing the water run-off of the current drive.

This is a large property with three generations living there, with resulting significant vehicle use. The sizeable double garage cannot be entered or exited if there are two vehicles in the driveway.

⁸ HE3.1(i), HE3.4

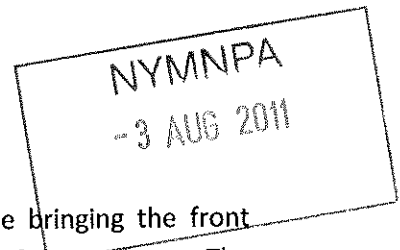
⁹ HE7.1 (v)

¹⁰ Of a construction and proportions that are out of keeping with the wall to which it adheres.

¹¹ HE9.1, HE9.5

¹² HE7.5

¹³ HE10.1



Unsurprisingly, with three generations in residence in this 7 bedroom house, this is a regular occurrence.

The proposed changes will retain the narrow drive opening common to that part of Priestman's Lane, but will allow vehicles to pass each other within the driveway itself. Far fewer cars will need to be on the roadway, and the driveway itself will be significantly obscured and defined by the new wall.

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