

OUTBUILDINGS AT LIGHT OAKS HALL

GLAZEBURY, METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIGAN



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

GARRY MILLER
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Garry Miller is a heritage consultant, architectural historian and published author who has spent more than 35 years studying and working with buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as 'scholarship as its best' by *Country Life* (June 2003), and 'well analysed and presented' in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); and was widely cited in the 2006 Buildings of England volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings, in particular the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment. His area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and reports on more than 150 buildings or sites are produced annually.

THIS REPORT

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I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed works affecting outbuildings at Light Oaks Hall, Glazebury, on the southeastern fringe of the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan, Greater Manchester. Light Oaks Hall is a large detached former gentry house standing east of Glazebury village. It is now a private residence and is listed at Grade II*.

The application buildings are an altered single-storey 19th century structure – probably originally a *shant*, an agricultural workers’ dwelling – and a modern storage shed. Proposals have been submitted to Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council for their demolition and replacement by two detached dwellings. The heritage issue arising is the impact upon the setting and therefore the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value to this and future generations) of the listed building. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify this significance and to assess how this will be affected.

As a Grade II* building, Light Oaks Hall is particularly important in the national context – only 5.8 of the country’s listed stock is designated thus. Its significance essentially derives from its special architectural and historic interest and rarity as large gentry residence dating probably from 1657.

The shant, a two-room brick structure with slate roof, is basically an altered shell. As a result, its significance is low and derives more from its historical role as a worker’s dwelling on a large farmstead rather than the interest of its fabric. Its role in the setting of the hall is a neutral one.

The storage shed dates probably from the 1960s and is understood to have been used as a helicopter hangar in the 1980s. It is of reinforced concrete portal frame construction with walls of corrugated sheet cladding. As a commonplace modern agricultural structure, the shed is of no architectural historical interest. Its significance is negligible and it makes a negative contribution to the setting of the hall.

For these reasons, the loss of the application buildings cannot be considered adverse. Consent has already been granted for a new dwelling upon the site: its impact cannot have been considered harmful otherwise permission would not have been issued. An element of new build is thus already established within the setting of the hall, and the proposed new dwellings will be in accordance with this. It is therefore concluded that the proposal will preserve the setting and significance of the hall, and thereby is in accordance with national planning guidance and relevant local policy and should be approved without delay.

A consultation response issued by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service has recommended that the buildings be recorded prior to demolition should the proposal receive consent. It is considered the buildings do not merit any further investigation owing to their low/negligible significance, and hence it would be disproportionate to impose a recording condition.

2: THE SITE

The application site is Light Oaks Hall, Glazebury, on the southeastern fringe of the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan, Greater Manchester. Light Oaks Hall is a substantial detached former gentry country house of around 1657, which stands east of Glazebury village at the end of Light Oaks Road at its junction with Old Moss Lane. The hall faces east across a wide, lawned front garden, with its former outbuildings (including a barn now in the process of conversion) immediately to the north. The application properties form part of these outbuildings – an altered single-storey 19th century structure – probably originally a *shant*, an agricultural worker's dwelling – and a modern storage shed.



Map 1. The application site: 1 = shant, 2 = storage shed



1. The outbuildings: storage shed with shant beyond



2. The hall itself, viewed from Light Oaks Road

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Designation

Lightoaks Hall is listed at Grade II*, having been first designated in 1966. The list description is contained in an appendix to this report.

3.2 The proposal

Proposals are being submitted to Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council for demolition of the two outbuildings and replacement by two detached dwellings.

3.3 Heritage impact

The heritage issue arising from the proposal is its impact upon the setting and therefore the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the listed building. The impact upon the application buildings themselves is a secondary matter.

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 194 of Chapter 16 (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*) of the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised, July 2021) states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the particular significance of the heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to identify the significance of the listed building and to assess how this will be affected by the proposal. The level of detail is considered proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset, in accordance with paragraph 194, and no more than is necessary to understand the impact of the proposal. This report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation supporting the application.

3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

- 1.** A brief account of the historical background regarding the site (Section 4)
- 2.** A description of the proposal buildings (Section 5)
- 3.** A summary of their heritage significance (Section 6)
- 4.** A summary of the relevant planning policies by which the application will be determined (Section 7)
- 5.** Assessment within this context of the proposal's impact upon the setting and significance of the listed building (Section 8)

4: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 Summary

Light Oaks was originally a gentry estate within the manor of Bedford, and is first recorded in 1356, when held by the Lightokes family (1). By the 17th century it was owned by Henry Travers, who is said to have rebuilt the hall shortly before his death in 1626. The estate was later sold to Sir Henry Slater in 1655, whose family originated from Keighley, and who appears to have given the hall its present appearance in 1657. His son Thomas thereafter sold the estate, which included 115 acres of land and 140 acres of moss, in 1700. By the 19th century, it is likely that the estate had lost its gentry status and its role became more that of a working farm.

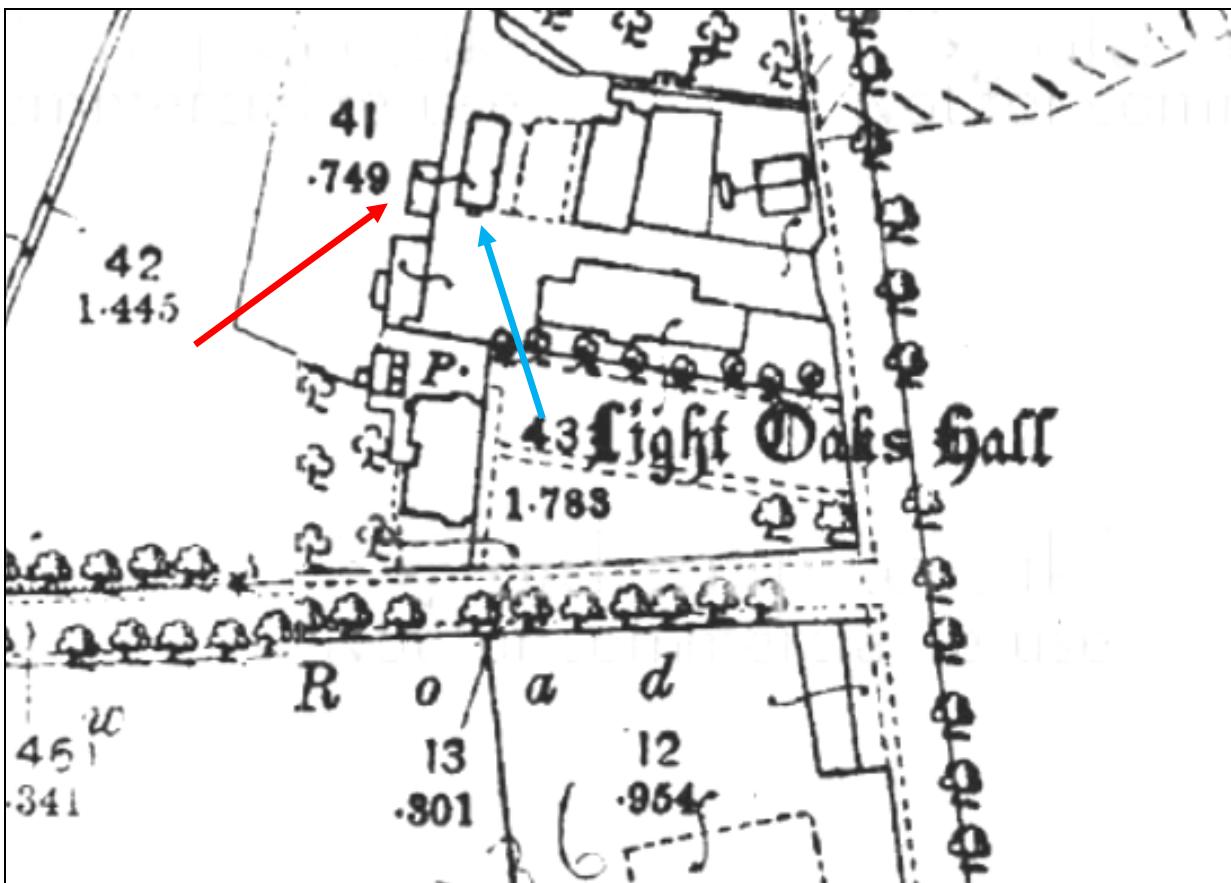
(1) Summary largely drawn from *A History of the County of Lancaster: Volume 3*, ed. William Farrer and J Brownbill (1907)

4.2 The application buildings

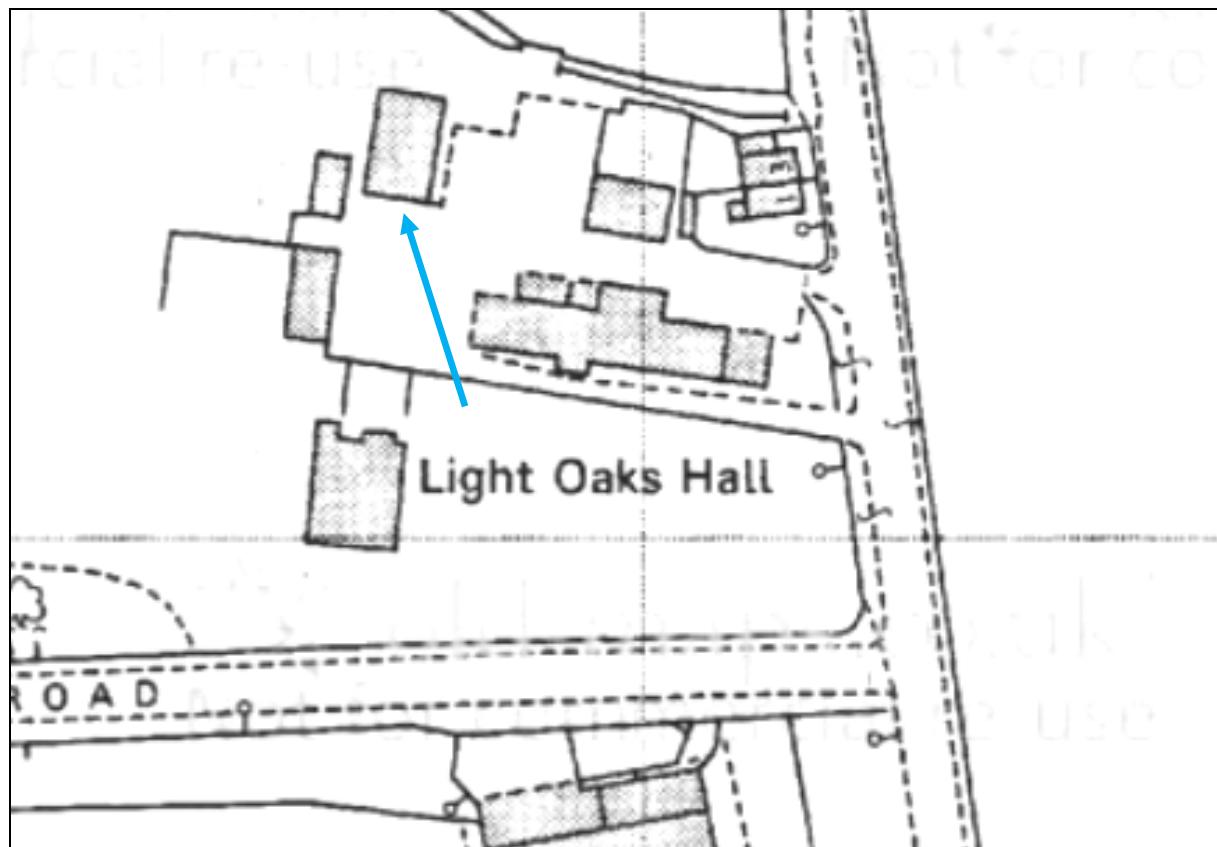
The former shant is mid-late 19th century. It is absent on the OS six-inch edition of 1845-1847 (Map 2, following page), but present on the 25-inch map of 1893 (Map 3). The storage building dates probably from the 1960s. It first appears on the edition of 1971 (Map 4), and replaced a long narrow structure shown in 1893.



Map 2. The shant is absent on the six-inch OS map of 1845-1847



Map 3. The shant appears on the 25-inch map of 1893 (red arrow), along with a larger building on the site of the present storage shed (blue arrow)



Map 4. The storage shed had appeared by 1971

5: THE APPLICATION BUILDINGS

5.1 The shant

- a. **Form.** A small rectangular single-storey structure of two internal bays.
- b. **Construction.** Brick walling (mostly stretcher bond) and a slate roof
- c. **Exterior.** Main east-facing elevation has the principal entrance at left end, with segmental arched brick lintel and part-glazed door (late 20th century), a horizontal UPVC window to the right of this (probably replacing a vertical opening), followed by a blocked vertical window with wedge-shaped brick lintel and finally a further doorway, most likely inserted, at the far right end. The south gable elevation is blank; the rear has three UPVC windows. The north elevation was inaccessible but has a further UPVC window. There is a single chimney on the ridge.
- d. **Interior.** Two rooms of unequal size, the larger heated, and a hallway and bathroom at the east end. No original features are visible apart from a chimneybreast in the larger room.



3. Front elevation of the shant



4. Door and modern window



5. Blocked window and door at north end



6. Single chimney on roof



7. Rear elevation with modern windows



8. Chimneybreast in the larger room



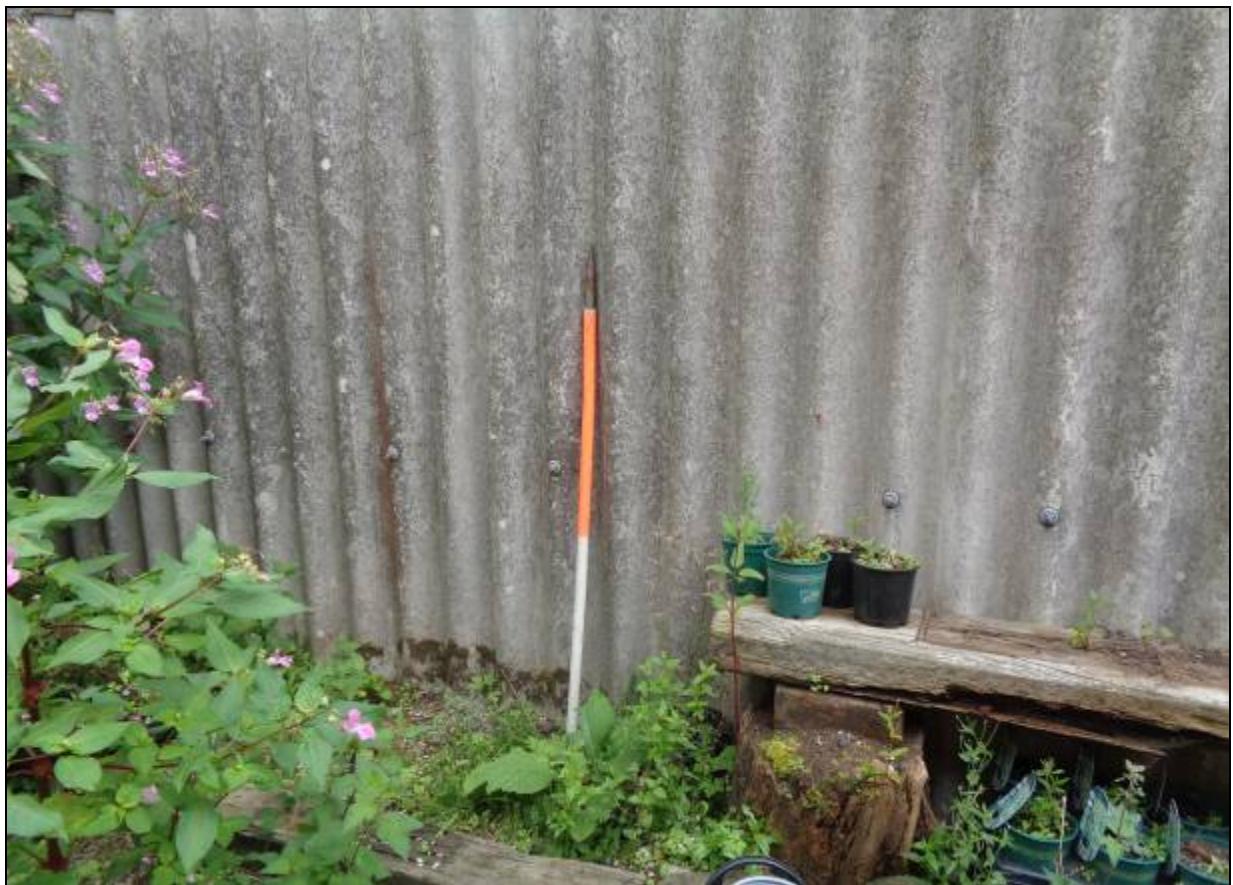
9. The smaller room looking towards hallway

5.2 The storage shed

Of no architectural or historic interest. A large single-space, single-storey structure of reinforced concrete portal frame construction and corrugated sheet walls and roof and concrete floor. The entrance has wide metal folding doors adjoining brick piers, which appear of more recent date. The building was understood to have been used as a helicopter hangar by a former owner of the hall in the 1980s, so the doors probably date from this time.



10. Front elevation of the storage shed



11. Corrugated cladding panels



12. North elevation



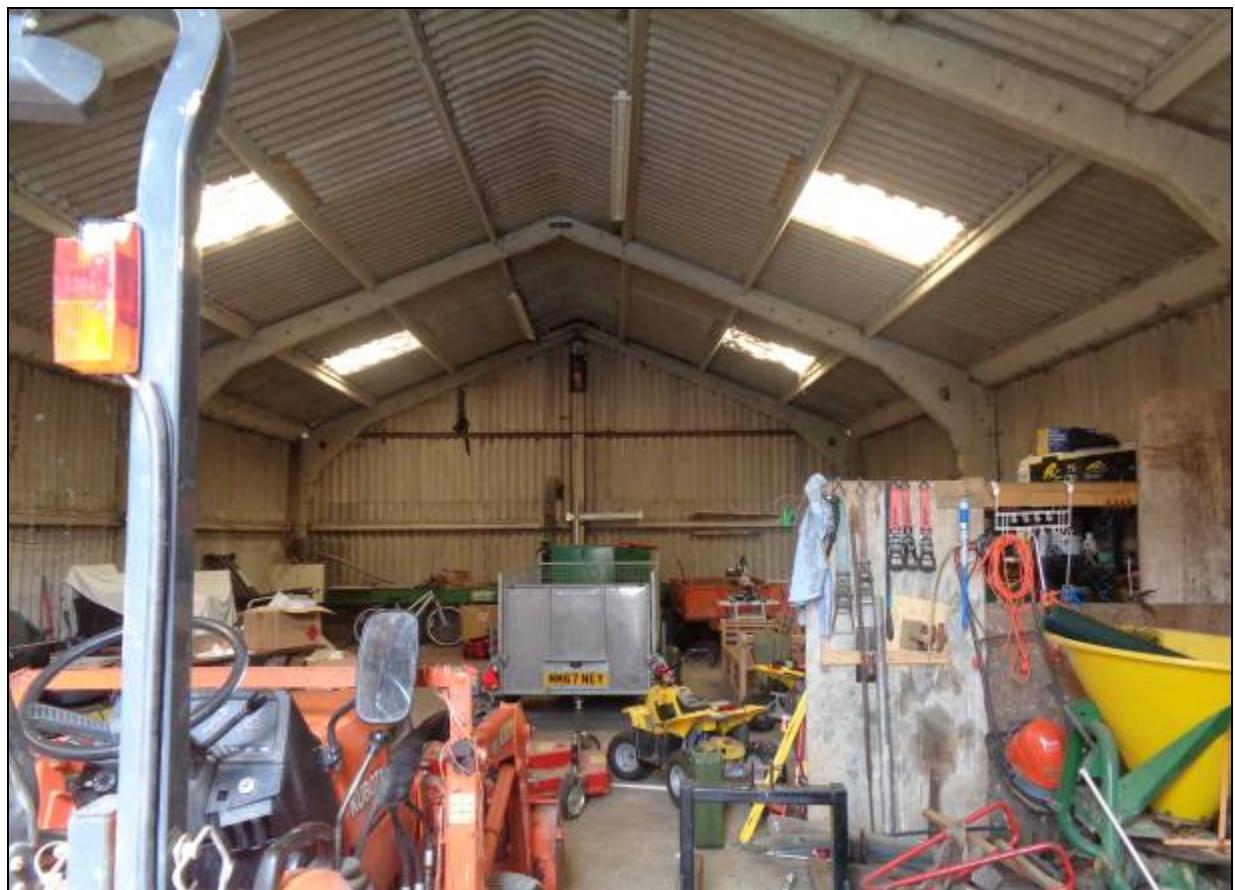
13. The rear and south elevation



14. View from the shed towards the hall



15. Interior of the shed looking to entrance



16. View from entrance

6: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BUILDINGS

6.1 Rationale

Paragraph 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that when determining applications affecting heritage assets, local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of the asset, including its setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimize conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Significance is defined in the NPPF Glossary as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

6.2 The hall

As a Grade II* building, Light Oaks Hall is particularly important in the national context – only 5.8 of the country's listed stock is designated thus – and deemed to be of more than special architectural and historic interest. Its significance essentially derives from this special interest and can be summarised as follows:

- Its architectural interest as large gentry residence dating probably from 1657
- The distinctiveness and rarity of its appearance, characterised by large mullioned and transomed windows on both floors and by prolific diamond pattern brickwork
- The quality of its interior fittings such as panelling, beams and the overmantel dated 1657
- The historic interest of its association with the Travers and Slater families in the 17th century

The intrinsic significance of the listed building is enhanced by its setting, in particular its relationship with its outbuildings to the north, which testify to its decline to a working farm probably by the 19th century.

6.3 The shant

The building is basically an altered shell. As a result, its significance is low, and derives more from its historical role as a workers dwelling on a large farmstead rather than the interest of its fabric. Its role in the setting of the hall is a neutral one.

6.4 The storage shed

As a commonplace modern agricultural building of no architectural or historical interest, its significance is negligible. It makes a negative contribution to the setting of the hall.

7: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 *Statutory duty*

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest.

7.2 *Relevant policies*

Chapter 16 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*, as revised February 2019) provides the guidance on how the statutory duty is to be put into practice. Paragraph 197 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should 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*

Regarding designated heritage assets, paragraph 199 states that ‘*great weight*’ should be given to their conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be.

The relevant local policy is CP11 (*Historic Environment*) of the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted September 2013, which states heritage assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced where appropriate, in accordance with legislation and national planning policy.

8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

8.1 Summary

The proposal seeks consent for demolition of the buildings and replacement by two detached dwellings with associated parking and landscaping. It has been demonstrated in this report that the significance of the shant is low, and its contribution to the setting of the hall neutral. The significance of the storage shed is negligible, and its contribution negative. The loss of these buildings cannot therefore be considered adverse. Consent has already been granted for a new dwelling upon the site: its impact cannot have been considered harmful otherwise permission would not have been issued. An element of new build has therefore already established in the setting of the hall, and the proposed new dwellings will be in accordance with this.

8.2 Conclusion

For the reasons given above, it is considered the proposal will preserve the setting and therefore the significance of the hall. It is thus in accordance with national guidance as stated in paragraphs 197 and 199 of the NPPF, along with core strategy policy CP11, and should therefore be approved without delay.

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8.3 Archaeology

A consultation response issued by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service has recommended that the proposal buildings be recorded prior to demolition should the proposal receive consent. Given the altered nature of the shant, as is evident from the photographs in this report, and the modern date and lack of interest of the shed, it is considered that these buildings do not merit any further investigation and hence it would be disproportionate to impose a recording condition.

APPENDIX: LIST DESCRIPTION OF THE HALL

The National Heritage List for England description of Light Oaks Hall reads:

House. Early C17. Brick with stone dressings and slate roof. 2 bays and 2 storeys remain of a former 3-bay house. The left gable was rebuilt and the rear added to in C20. Bay 1 has a 10-light double-chamfered stone mullion window with king mullion on each floor. Bay 2 has a similar 5-light window on each floor. All have hoodmoulds. In between is the original studded door in a heavy chamfered surround with obtuse-angled lintel. The most notable feature of the elevation is the use of lozenge pattern decoration in black brick headers over the entire first floor. Bold projecting chimney stack to right gable-end. A small wing projects to the rear of the right bay and a C20 extension to rear of left bay. Despite the loss of a bay to the left, the elevation is of exceptional quality. Interior: the main door opens directly into the house-part which has C17 panelling throughout. The panelling includes 3 armorial panels and a fourth with combined arms and a date of 1657. 3 heavy ovololo-moulded beams with stepped stops. C20 fire surround and overmantle. Victoria County History of Lancashire, 1907.