

Heritage Statement

31 Towngate, Marsden – Proposed Removal of Internal Wall

List Entry Number: 1224281

Grade II Listed Building

Evidential Value

The potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

31 Towngate is a late 18th or early 19th-century dwelling, typical of the vernacular architecture associated with weavers' cottages in West Yorkshire. Built of hammer-dressed stone with stone mullion windows, its plan and fabric reflect domestic architecture of the period and the local textile-based economy. The interior retains original stone flag flooring and historic joinery.

The internal wall proposed for removal is of non-original stone construction, likely introduced after the building's original construction. It is not bonded to the external or original structural walls and sits on top of the original stone flags. Its form, materials, and detailing suggest it was added later, possibly in the late 19th or early 20th century for functional subdivision or ad hoc support. The removal of this wall will expose more of the original floorplan and allow for a better appreciation of the historic spatial layout. The floor beneath it and any adjacent fabric will be recorded and conserved as part of the process.

Historical Value

The ways in which past people, events, and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

The location of the property on Towngate—part of the Huddersfield to Manchester turnpike (1760)—places it within a historically significant transport and trade route. This setting and the building's form, with large mullioned windows and a multi-level arrangement, reflect its likely original use as a home and workspace, possibly for textile production.

The internal wall in question does not contribute to this historical narrative. It is a later insertion, interrupting rather than reinforcing the building's original layout. Its removal would not diminish the building's historical interest; rather, it could reveal concealed aspects of the original plan form and improve the legibility of the structure's domestic and/or working arrangements as they were intended.

Aesthetic Value

The ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

31 Towngate is a well-proportioned historic cottage with a distinctive local character, set within the Marsden conservation area. The property's aesthetic value lies in its historic stone construction, traditional proportions, and surviving original features such as flag flooring and stone mullioned windows.

The non-original internal wall is incongruous in form and material with the rest of the internal layout, and its removal will restore a more open and coherent internal appearance. This change will enhance the aesthetic legibility of the space, revealing more of the structure's original craftsmanship and material honesty. Any historic elements uncovered during the works (e.g. floor flags, timber, or voids) will be carefully recorded and retained.

Communal Value

The meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

31 Towngate is a prominent historic building within the village of Marsden and features in multiple archival photographs held in the Marsden Photographic Archive and local records. As part of the historic fabric of Towngate, the building contributes to a shared village identity rooted in heritage, craftsmanship, and industry.

The works proposed are part of a wider programme to sensitively conserve and restore the building in a manner consistent with local character and materials. The intention is to improve the usability of the building while retaining and enhancing its historic value for future generations. The removal of an unsympathetic, non-original wall is consistent with this aim and will reinforce the building's contribution to Marsden's heritage.

Conclusion

The removal of the internal non-original stone wall at 31 Towngate is proposed to restore the historic layout and character of the property. The wall has no heritage value and detracts from the historic interior. The works will be carried out in a way that protects and enhances the listed fabric, ensuring the building continues to serve as a valued part of the local historic environment.