1.0 Introduction

This document provides a Heritage Statement to support the replacement of the three existing timber beams above the Bar Kitchen area adjacent to the main venue of the Barn at Oakwell Hall, Nutter Lane, Birstall, Batley WF17 9LF. Cracks have developed in these beams, which are not original to the existing structure, and have had to be propped to make the area safe although this has meant that the space is unusable until replacements are installed

Although not mentioned within the Listing, the Barn and adjacent ancillary buildings including the Gift Shop and Study Areas could be considered as being within the curtilage as suggested by the Council's Conservation Planning Team. Consequently, this Statement is intended to provide the information that would be required as part of a Listed Building Consent

2.0 Description of the Building

A precis of the building as described by the Historic England Listing (1134609) is Listed as being an "*extremely fine hall house, now museum. Probably 1583, built for John Batt, incorporating timber framed house of the mid C.15, with considerable C.17 refurbishment. Ashlar. Stone slate roof with chamfered gable copings"*. It is believed that the barn dates from 1840 with sensitive additions and amendments being constructed right up to the present day

The Description of the Existing Structure below examines the three beams that require replacement which appear to date from the early 1980s and reflect the changes that have been made to ensure that the functionality of the has been maintained while still preserving the essence of the original. This is followed by a Description of the Proposed Works which looks at replacement option and how this seeks to improve on the existing situation both visually and in terms of the overall integrity of the building by improving the fire protection

2.1 Description of the Existing Structure

The three existing beams above the Bar Area exhibit shakes within them and a subsequent Structural Engineer's report has condemned them and all three are currently propped with monthly site visits being undertaken to ensure that there is no deflection. The propping has meant that the Bar is unavailable for hire until the beams are replaced

It is understood that the existing beams are not original and were installed about 40 years ago and it is clear that the existing T&G timber boarded ceiling with associated fake timber 'beams' is no older than that if not younger. Further investigation has shown that the existing floor structure including beams, joists, ceiling and floor finishes are not original or, at least contemporary to the original construction which is believed to have been about 1840

2.2 Description of the Proposed Works

The need to prevent failure of the existing beams has been temporarily addressed by propping but it has meant that the Bar is no longer open to the public and therefore revenue is being lost. In exploring a permanent solution, it is noted that the lack of originality in the floor build up offers the opportunity to provide a cost effective solution that respects the historical context but also addresses ongoing concerns with regards to Fire Protection

The solution shown replace the whole of the existing floor structure to create both an aesthetic solution as well as providing an hours Fire Resistance between the Bar and the accommodation above in a way that matches the finish to the ceiling in the Barn. In addition, it removes the artificiality of the 'stuck on' joist profile of the existing ceiling which does not reflect the real structure of the floor (see photographs in Section 5.0)

3.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

Although this is a minor amendment to a building which has already seen significant change over the years and is only adjacent to the principal Listing, it is important to set that against guiding principles to establish the significance of the works to the heritage setting. Reference has been made to English Heritage's Conservation Principles to understand the significance of the alterations. To that end, the following established levels of significance have been considered:

- Exceptional; Important at a national or international level
- High; Important at regional level
- Medium; Important at a local level
- Low; Of no more than local value
- Negative or Intrusive Features; Features that detract from the setting

Although Oakwell Hall itself is of 'High Value' through is Grade I Listed status, it is also important to note that the works are internal and on an ancillary building where its 'Communal Value' has been taken into consideration in understanding the impact in the round including the replacement of non-original features which currently have a detrimental visual impact on the space

The works will replace the 1980s beams which have failed after only 40 years with something that will provide better stability and longevity while still maintaining oak as the principle building material. In addition, the ancillary works to the ceilings will both replace imposition of the 'false joists' while improving the overall fire protection of the building

4.0 Justification

The works will replace the 1980s beams which have failed after only 40 years with something that will provide better stability and longevity while still maintaining oak as the principle building material. In addition, the ancillary works to the ceilings will both replace imposition of the 'false joists' while improving the overall fire protection of the building. Therefore, the conclusion is that the proposal will not impact on the significance of the Listed status and that the replacement beams and associated ceiling works will increase the Communal Value of the building

5.0 Photographs

5.1 Photographs showing the shakes to the existing beams and ‘false joists’ to the ceiling



