

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION

BY

MR AND MRS J AND M HINDLE

TO

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

FOR

INTERNAL WORKS

AT

58 CHURCH STREET, RIBCHESTER, PR3 3YE

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT SUPPORT STATEMENT

November 2014

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Support Statement has been prepared to accompany a listed building consent application by Mr and Mrs J and M Hindle, to Ribble Valley Borough Council.

1.2 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the listed building consent application forms, plans, and Heritage Statement also submitted with this application.

2 THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposal is for a range of internal works as detailed further below at 2.2. Some internal works have already been carried out at the property. The applicants did not appreciate the need for listed building consent to be obtained. The applicant has ceased further works at the property pending the outcome of this and another listed building consent application made at this time. Following the Council's decision on a previous application (see section 4 below) and discussions with the Council's Conservation Officer (see Appendix A) it has been decided to amend the proposed scheme. In particular:

- the replacement ground floor to first floor staircase is to be relocated rearward, to reflect the historic plan form of the building;
- the first floor to attic staircase is to be removed, and the attic to be retained as such again reflecting the historic plan form of the building; and
- the severed wooden beam within the ground floor ceiling is to be made good and a supporting post removed.

2.2 The range of internal works proposed for which listed building consent is sought are:

- the removal of partitioning to form an entrance lobby and formation of a new entrance lobby;
- the removal of a staircase leading from the ground floor to the first floor and insertion of a new staircase, in the most rearward position consistent with modern day requirements for the height / depth of risers and steps;
- repairs to the previously severed ground floor ceiling beam and the removal of a previously installed salvaged timber support post to the ceiling beam;
- the removal of partitioning at first floor, installation of non-original partitioning to allow for the formation of a revised room layout; and

- the removal of a recently installed staircase leading from the first floor to the attic floor.

2.3 Planning permission is not required for the works.

3 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

3.1 The application property is situated on the north east side of Church Street in a central location within Ribchester. The application property is an end-terrace, stone-built, slate-roofed dwelling, within an area of other similar and some more modern property.

4 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 The relevant planning history at the site is as follows:

- 3/77/975 – Proposed alterations and extensions (including first-floor extension over existing single-storey side extension). Proposed works constituted permitted development, 9 November 1977; and
- 3/88/0863 – Replacement windows. Listed Building Consent granted 13 February 1989;
- 3/2014/0552 – Internal works – Listed Building Consent refused 12 August 2014;
- 3/2014/0553 – Cleaning of external stonework Internal works – Listed Building Consent refused 12 August 2014; and
- 3/2014/0569 – Replacement of existing windows and insertion of two conservation style velux windows – Listed Building Consent refused 12 August 2014.

4.2 A Housing Act 1974 Improvement Grant for ‘improvements, repairs and replacements’ was granted on 18 August 1978. The works are not specified in the available paperwork. However, it is understood that the works were as per those shown in the 3/77/975 proposal and included the installation of an internal bathroom.

4.3 Following a re-survey of the statutory list of buildings of architectural and historic interest carried out in the early 1980s, the terrace of properties 50 to 58

(consecutive) were listed as grade II on 22 November 1983. The listing description is:

Row of houses, late C18th. Squared sandstone with slate roofs and brick chimney caps. 2 storeys. Each house of one bay, with a door to the right. All the windows are modern, those to nos. 53-56 having plain stone surrounds, those to nos.57 and 58 having plain reveals. The doors have plain stone surrounds, except that to no.57, which has plain reveals. The ground-floor window surround to no.54 is wide and possibly reconstructed. No.55 has an additional ground-floor window to the left, with plain reveals, possibly in a former tunnel doorway. No.56 has a doorcase with fluted pilasters, fluted frieze and open pediment on console brackets. Above is a plaque dated '1795'.

5 RELEVANT POLICY AND GUIDANCE

5.1 The main component of the Development Plan, as relevant to the application, is the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan (adopted in June 1998).

Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan

- 5.2 The following saved policies of the adopted Local Plan are relevant to the proposal:
- Policy ENV16: Conservation Areas – within conservation areas development will be strictly controlled to ensure that it reflects the character of the area in terms of scale, size, design and materials; and
 - Policy ENV20: Listed Buildings – proposals for the alteration or repair of listed buildings should be sympathetic to their character and appearance. The most important features of any listed building will be preserved.
- 5.3 The Local Plan Proposals Map shows the application property to be within the Ribchester settlement area and a Conservation Area (ENV16).

National Policy

5.4 The NPPF clearly states '*that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*' (paragraph 6). Paragraph 197 confirms that '*in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development*'.

5.5 The main body of the NPPF addresses the components of sustainable development. The component of relevance to the application is:

- ‘conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ – *‘in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance’* (paragraph 128). *‘Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent’* unless various criteria are met (paragraph 133). *‘Where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use’* (paragraph 134).

National Guidance

5.6 The relevant provisions of the recently published (March 2014) online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are outlined below.

5.7 In defining the circumstances in which Listed Building Consent is required the PPG refers to *‘any works to demolish any part of a listed building or to alter or extend it in a way that affects its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest require listed building consent’*. It adds that *‘for all grades of listed building, the listing status covers the entire building, internal and external, objects fixed to it and sometimes also attached and curtilage buildings or other structures’*.

5.8 In explaining why ‘significance’ is important in decision-making, the PPG refers to *‘heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals’*.

5.9 In assessing whether there is ‘substantial harm’ the PPG explains that *‘what matters in assessing if a proposal causes substantial harm is the impact on the*

significance of the heritage asset Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm'.

Emerging Local Planning Policy

- 5.10 Ribble Valley Borough Council is in the process of preparing a Local Plan Core Strategy. The Plan is presently at the examination stage.
- 5.11 The following policies of the emerging Local Plan are relevant to the proposal:
- Policy EN5: Heritage Assets – seeks to conserve and enhance heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance for their heritage value, their contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place, and to wider social, cultural and environmental benefits. This will be achieved in a number of ways including carefully considering any development proposals;
 - Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection – development proposals will be refused which significantly harm important features, including townscape elements such as the scale, form, and materials that contribute to the characteristic townscapes of the area; and
 - Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets – in considering development proposals the Council will make a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets. Proposals within conservation areas should not harm the area, including the considerations set out in the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal. Development in conservation areas will be

strictly controlled to ensure that it respects the character of the area in terms of its location, scale, size, design and materials. In conservation areas there will be a presumption in favour of the preservation of elements that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Any proposals involving the demolition or loss of important historic fabric from listed buildings will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that this is unavoidable.

Other Relevant Policy and Guidance Documents

Ribchester Conservation Area Appraisal

- 5.12 The Appraisal (published in 2006) refers to Ribchester being dominated by rows of handloom weavers' cottages, many of which were built in the late eighteenth century. The summary of the area's special interest includes reference to '*narrow, closely developed streets of former handloom weavers' settlement*', '*handloom weavers' cottages, including two with cellar loomshops, particularly in Church Street and Blackburn Road*', and '*the prevalent use of local building stone*'. The Appraisal goes on to note that '*Ribchester has a high number of buildings surviving from the late eighteenth century*', with Ribchester being '*substantially rebuilt from the late eighteenth century into the early nineteenth century corresponding with its growth as an industrial village and centre of handloom weaving. The survival of these buildings in Ribchester has retained a character that would have been shared by many of east Lancashire's textile towns around 1800*'. The Appraisal identifies one of the area's strengths to be the '*historic character and appearance of the core area*'. Negative features identified include '*loss of architectural detail (original windows, doors etc), and insensitive alteration of historic buildings spoiling the conservation area's historic character and appearance*'. The threat to the area is identified as '*continuing loss of original architectural details and use of inappropriate modern materials or details*'.
- 5.13 The Townscape Appraisal Map identifies the application property as forming part of a listed terrace. The view along Church Street is shown as 'important'.

Ribchester Conservation Area Management Guidance

- 5.14 The Guidance (published in 2006) makes recommendations intended to address the threat and negative features identified in the Appraisal. However, none of these are relevant in this instance, given that the works are wholly internal.

6 ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Having regard to the nature of the proposal, its context and relevant national and local planning policies, the main issues for consideration are:

- what is the significance of the heritage asset; and
- what is the impact of the internal works on the heritage significance of the building.

The Heritage Statement also submitted in support of this application addresses these issues.

- 6.2 The application property is a designated heritage asset, being listed as part of the terrace 50 – 58 Church Street, Ribchester and is located within the designated Conservation Area. The Heritage Statement identifies the significance of the building as part of the terrace, representing a period in local history, rather than for any particular internal or external features. There is no evidence to suggest that the internal arrangements or features of the building are of any special heritage significance. Indeed, by its very nature, this is not a building which would have fine or notable internal features. In any event, the interior of the building has been much changed over the years. In particular, the housing improvement grant and extension works carried out in the 1970s resulted in substantial remodelling of the interior, including the installation of a new ground floor to first floor staircase and changes to room layouts. Further internal alterations were carried out later to provide a staircase to attic accommodation. That said, the applicant is mindful of the advice received from the Council's Conservation Officer (Appendix A) and has amended the proposal from that presented to the Council earlier in the year. As such, the proposal would more closely reflect the historic plan form of the building.

- 6.3 The Heritage Statement acknowledges the impact of the internal works on the building's heritage significance, in particular by reason of removal of a section of a ceiling beam. However, given the alterations to the scheme as now proposed and

the other internal alterations that have taken place over the years, the changes proposed are judged to be relatively minor in relation to the significance of this heritage asset. Moreover, these works do not detract significantly from the ground floor rooms' historic appearance and allows the original structural form of the building to be seen. Whilst the significance of heritage assets require appropriate respect, that has to be balanced with the evolving needs of building users. In this instance, the new staircase would have risers and steps to reflect modern day safety and building regulations requirements. One of the pre-existing ceiling beams had been severed as a result of the initial works. This is to be made good so that the original ceiling beam arrangement to the ground floor room remains evident.

- 6.4 The previous attic works and the insertion of the staircase leading to the attic from the first floor post-date the improvement grant works carried out in 1978. These works were a 'diy' arrangement, rather than a professional installation. Recently works were carried out to replace this 'diy' staircase. The works now proposed provide for the complete removal of the first floor to attic staircase so that the attic would function as an attic only and the historic plan form of the building would be reintroduced. As such, there would be no adverse impacts arising from these works for the heritage significance of the building.
- 6.5 The works are wholly internal and, as such, have no implications for or impact upon the designated conservation area.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposals have been amended from those previously considered by the Council, in line with advice from the Council's Conservation Officer. It has been demonstrated that the internal works would have a negligible impact on the heritage significance of the building and, as such, would be in accord with relevant local and national planning policy.
- 7.2 For the reasons set out above, the Council is respectfully invited to grant listed building consent for the internal works.

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APPENDIX A:

Copy of note of site meeting with Adrian Dowd, Ribble Valley Borough Council Conservation Officer, on 9 September 2014, sent by e-mail on 10 September 2014

Adrian

I write further to our meeting on site on Tuesday, 9th September. Mair Hill was also in attendance for part of the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss, understand our respective positions and explore a basis for taking things forward in a way that would receive your support / agreement.

As pointed out on site, our discussions were entirely without prejudice to whatever decisions Mr and Mrs Hindle may decide to make.

I have, below, sought to summarise our discussions around the key elements of change / works that have occurred at the building. I trust you will find it to be a fair summation, and will no doubt let me know by return if not.

Significance

You stated that the significance of the building lay in its late eighteenth century origins as a two-storey house within Ribchester (ie distinct from the three-storey houses that are also evident in Ribchester, housing hand looms in the upper floor / roofspace), and forming part of a terrace. It was clear that many changes had been made to the building, most especially as a result of the side extension and the 1970's improvement grant works.

Stone work Cleaning

You view the stone cleaning works as inappropriate, affecting the visual integrity of the terrace. It was noted that similar cleaning had been carried out to other properties in the terrace at some points in the past. The cleaned stone was now less apparent than it would have been at the time the cleaning took place. But this was after a lengthy period. So, with time any visual impact will lessen. It was agreed that there was nothing that could be done to hasten the process or to reverse the works.

Velux roof lights

It was noted that neither of the two roof lights installed are visible from any public viewpoint, eg on the alley way leading along and away from the side to 58. The only viewpoints are from within the rear yard to 58 and from positions within the rear gardens and rooms of the terraced properties behind 58. You also considered that the insertion of the rooflights, being indicative of a third floor, gave out a confusing message about the historic form of the building given that some terraces in Ribchester were so built in a manner distinct from this terrace. You added that the lack of view of the velux from public viewpoints did not justify the works.

You viewed the installation of the roof lights as visually disruptive within a generally 'solid' slated rear roofscape to the rear part of the terrace. I noted that there were two velux rooflights at high level within another property to the mid of the terrace visible from the rear yard to 58.

For my part, I viewed the nature and position of the two rooflights (black, conservation style) as relatively unobtrusive and not harmful to the significance of the building.

As a way forward, you indicated your preparedness to accept a single rooflight. Your preference to be the removal of the larger and higher (up the roof slope) of the two.

Ground Floor staircase position / plan form

A new staircase has been installed, with a tread / width etc to meet current standards. As part of the works, the stair has been positioned further forward.

Your view was that whilst the previous staircase may not have been the original, it was in the position of the original staircase. You viewed the removal of the staircase to be an unnecessary destruction of a key internal feature. I pointed out that there had been various changes to the original two room ground floor layout. Notwithstanding that being the case, you were concerned by such further changes to the plan form of 58 and could not approve the 'relocation' of the staircase.

Following much discussion, and as a way forward, you indicated your preparedness to accept the new staircase but in a position set further back into the building. This would more closely replicate the position of the original staircase whilst apparently avoiding the cut beam (see below). This would necessitate the cutting of the steel ceiling beam further back in the building and its support by a new post. You were less concerned by the cutting of this beam given that it was self-evidently a non-original one. It would also necessitate an adjustment to the positions of new partly installed stud partitions and the point of entrance to the rear room to the extension (ie to revert to that installed / used at the time of construction of the upper extension floor).

First Floor staircase position / plan form

A new staircase has been installed, with a tread / width etc to meet current standards. The new staircase replaces one that was installed at some previous date to serve a roofspace room and that was positioned closer to the rear wall of 58.

Your view was that whilst there had been a previous staircase (not an original), this and the use of the roofspace for accommodation was an unacceptable departure from the historical integrity of the building. Also, that it was historically confusing (as per comments above).

Despite my comments about the general plan form of the upper floor being retained (ie one room fore and one room aft) and your acceptance that the retained brick wall alongside the new staircase being part of the building's original fabric, you were not prepared to accept the insertion of any staircase to the upper floor / roof space.

Cutting of wooden beam

Associated with the insertion of the new staircase, a wooden cross beam has been cut (to give the necessary head room for users of the stair) and a support post installed (to provide the necessary structural support)..

You viewed this element of the work most seriously. You noted that there were not many internal features of note within the building given its 'humble' origins. Thus, the loss of this part of a feature had more significance. You accepted that your concerns about the structural integrity of the building (associated with the removal of a section of the beam) had been allayed, although you thought the new (recycled, roughly hewn) supporting post to be out of character.

We discussed whether an alternative support post would be acceptable to you, eg one with a more machined / finished appearance. However, you did not consider it would be. I also took the view that it would be 'dishonest' to now try to 'recreate' the beam. Rather, I took the view that changes do inevitably take place over time (and tell an honest story of a building's evolution) and this was one of those instances. However, the only acceptable solution you could see, given the circumstances, was the relocation of the staircase rearward (see above) and works to 'recreate' the beam. The 'recreation' would most probably be by means of splicing in new timber. You added that whilst this may not be an altogether visually pleasing solution, it would be preferable to the current situation.

I commented on the issue of structural integrity and, should the above option be pursued, it would be necessary to check whether a 'splicing' exercise would be sufficient to do away with a supporting post. I do not know, but it may not be. Likewise, if the steel beam has to be cut, this involves further intervention in the fabric of the building and involves its own considerations of the structural integrity of the building. Clearly, we don't want to put the building at further risk. This is particularly the case given that the steel beam carries a brick cross wall at first floor.

Two 'vertical' windows to original front elevation

The two existing front windows are proposed for replacement with a sliding sash with a three over three arrangement of panes. The (yet to be installed) windows were available to view on site.

You did not consider these windows to be suitable for a number of reasons. You cited your concerns as:

- the windows being 'mock' history, not being a true representation of the windows likely to have been originally in place;
- the three over three pane arrangement was not typical or characteristic of windows in Ribchester, it was too distinctive a form and at most such a form of window only being found to rear elevations;
- the glazing bars were far too bulky, glazing bars to traditional sash windows would have been much finer;
- horns are not appropriate on a window with so many panes. They would only have been found on windows with single or two panes to each of the sashes; and
- overall, the nature of the windows are such that they would draw undue attention to the building in a historically inaccurate and unsympathetic way.

You accepted that there is a real dilemma with windows in Ribchester given the variety of styles evident, and that the 'battle' over windows in Longridge had been somewhat 'lost'. But, you still considered the proposed replacements to be unacceptable. You thought that an alternative design could be produced that would be more sympathetic and not compromise the character or significance of the building.

I stressed that the appropriate test was not whether the windows to be installed were historically correct or not. Rather, it is clear that the windows presently in place are 1970s top-hung double-glazed replacements of earlier windows. They are very clearly of no heritage significance and, by definition, no harm can arise from their removal. In that context, the appropriate test is whether the new proposed windows are an improvement upon or have a more harmful impact than the existing. I failed to see that a sliding sash window arrangement can be anything other than an improvement on the existing and more in keeping with the character of the property, and could not be viewed as more harmful. I would add that they are of a noticeably more appropriate design than most of the very varied styles and materials of windows within the remainder of the terrace.

We discussed possible changes to the existing frames to make them acceptable to you. They were essentially two-fold:

1. to remove the three panes of glass in each sash along with the corresponding glazing bars, and replace with two panes of glass. The two panes to be separated by a slender vertical glazing bar. A sub-alternative would be to have a single pane with a 'mock' slender vertical glazing bar. You confirmed that you would find either of these solutions acceptable.
2. to remove the three panes of glass in each sash along with the corresponding glazing bars, and replace them with a single pane (with no dividing glazing bar). You were less keen on this solution (compared to 1), although seemed to indicate that your 'bottom-line' would probably be that you would accept it

I added that I did not know whether such changes were possible and, obviously Mr and Mrs Hindle would have to consult their joiner if they wished to pursue the matter.

Other windows

This relates to the replacement windows to the extension and rear first floor original elevation. You saw the (yet to be installed) windows on site. You accepted that these windows were of a suitably simple form for the openings and positions concerned and would have no objections to their use.

Vestibule

New stud partitioning has been installed to form a new vestibule that is slightly larger than the pre-existing one (presumably a non-original insertion). You indicated that you have no objection to this element of the works.

I asked whether you had any other comments on any other aspects of works at 58 and you didn't. However, if you now have any further comments, please let me know by return.

I will discuss the matters arising with Mr and Mrs Hindle and let you know of their intentions as soon as I can.

Yours,

Mike Gee