


**Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.**

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| <b>Application Ref:</b>            | 3/2015/0509 | <br>Ribble Valley<br>Borough Council<br><a href="http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk">www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</a> |
| <b>Date Inspected:</b>             | 23/12/15    |  |
| <b>Officer:</b>                    | AD          |  |
| <b>DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:</b> |             | <b>REFUSAL</b>   |

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|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Development Description:</b> | Demolition of existing poultry sheds and construction of new detached dwelling. |
| <b>Site Address/Location:</b>   | Land adjacent to Southport House Sawley Road Sawley BB7 4LE.                    |

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| <b>CONSULTATIONS:</b> | <b>Parish/Town Council</b> |
| No objections.        |                            |

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| <b>CONSULTATIONS:</b> | <b>Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies</b> |
| <b>LCC Highways:</b>  |  |

The Highway Development Control Section does not have any objections regarding the proposed new dwelling and are of the opinion that the proposed development should have a negligible impact on highway safety and highway capacity in the immediate vicinity of the site.

Based on the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan the Highway Development Control Section is of the opinion that the applicant has provided adequate off road parking provision for this type and size of development.

The Highway Development Control Section recommends the following conditions as part of the formal planning decision: -

1. The car parking and manoeuvring scheme to be marked out in accordance with the approved plan, before the use of the premises hereby permitted becomes operative and permanently maintained thereafter. Reason: To allow for the effective use of the parking areas.
2. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 and the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment)(No 2) (England) Order 2008, or any subsequent Orders or statutory provision re-enacting the provisions of these Orders, all garages shown on the approved plan shall be maintained as such and shall not be converted to or used for living accommodation without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.

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| <b>LLFA:</b>   |  |
| Not listed in the 'When to Consult the LLFA' document or in the Development Management Procedure Order 2010.   |  |
| <b>Historic England:</b>   |  |
| The now ruined Sawley Abbey was founded in 1147 by William de Percy and dedicated to St Mary and St Andrew. It was of the Cistercian order and was originally built in a woodland clearing beside the River Ribble. The abbey was suppressed in 1536 following the dissolution of the monasteries. The remains of the abbey and the area of surviving earthworks within the abbey precinct are scheduled |  |

and the standing structures are also grade I listed. This makes the site one of the most important heritage assets nationally and of international importance.

The proposal is for the erection of a single dwelling on the site of former hen sheds, adjacent to the grade II Southport House and directly to the south of the Scheduled and grade I listed Sawley Abbey.

The new dwelling would have a minimal impact on the setting of the grade I listed Sawley Abbey and in parts would enhance the site through the removal of the hen sheds. The choice of a contemporary architectural idiom helps maintain the historical authenticity of the village of Sawley and the quality of the design helps reinforce local distinctiveness. The success of the scheme will rely on the quality of the detailed design which should be agreed in consultation with your conservation officer. To assess the impact of the scheme on the setting of Sawley Abbey we recommend that you use the advice in our *Setting of Heritage Assets* Good Practice Advice Note.

The development site lies just to the south of the boundary of the abbey precinct and beside Southport House. The name Southport is suggestive that one of the gatehouses of the abbey might have been positioned at this site. The site therefore has the potential for archaeological remains. The County Archaeologist should be contacted to inform the creation of an archaeological mitigation strategy prior to any development.

**Recommendation:** We would urge you to address the above issues, and recommend that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice.

**RVBC Countryside:**

Taking into account the details as submitted please include conditions relating to the following on any consent:

Tree/hedgerow protection during construction (in accordance with the current BS 5837);  
Advisory note on bat protection;  
Condition requiring mitigation in line with the protected species report dated 24<sup>th</sup> April 2015;  
Condition requiring the provision of bat/bird boxes built into the structure of the new dwelling in accordance with advice within the protected species report dated 24<sup>th</sup> April 2015, and Bat Conservation Trust guidelines.

**RVBC Engineers:**

Condition suggested in respect to any contamination found during works:

Condition D

Once works commence on the site, should site operatives discover any adverse ground conditions and suspect it to be contaminated, they should report this to the Site Manager and the Contaminated Land Officer at Ribble Valley Borough Council. Works in that location should cease and the problem area roped off. A Competent Person shall be employed to undertake sampling and analysis of the suspected contaminated materials. A Report which contains details of sampling methodologies and analysis results, together with remedial methodologies shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. The approved remediation scheme shall be implemented prior to further development works taking place and prior to occupation of the development.

Should no adverse ground conditions be encountered during site works and/or development, a Verification Statement shall be forwarded in writing to the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation of the building(s), which confirms that no adverse ground conditions were found.

**REASON:** To ensure that the site investigation and remediation strategy will not cause pollution of

ground and surface waters both on and off site.

**CONSULTATIONS:**

**Additional Representations.**

Eleven letters of support have been received from nearby properties which in summary state:

Preferable to previously approved development (visual landscape; traffic and highway safety at access (no footpath); sympathy with existing buildings and heritage; occupy a reduced area of site; reduced demand on public and utility services e.g. water supply/pressure);

Site not appealing at the moment (deteriorating chicken sheds; health and safety hazard)

Pleasing architect design and blends with beautiful surroundings;

Enhance the village and echo the establishment of Sawley Hall at the other end of the village;

Site will be landscaped;

Roof height lower than listed Southport House;

Enhance protected views in Sawley Conservation Area Appraisal;

Maintains linear grain of development, avoids extension towards open fields and lines up well with Sawley Abbey;

Retains air of quietude.

One letter of no objection received.

One letter requesting confirmation that there will still be pedestrian access along the lane from Sawley end by Southport House eastwards to the junction of the public pathway which crosses this lane.

One letter of concern from a resident of The Paddock in respect to:

Have experienced flooding problems in the past – proposed development should address the flooding issues which various departments are aware of;

The Paddock is a single track private road with no turning space - proposed development should consider safety of cars reversing out of The Paddock;

Also another planning application in process which adds to safety concerns.

**RELEVANT POLICIES :**

**Ribble Valley Core Strategy:**

Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy

Key Statement DS2 – Sustainable Development

Key Statement EN5 – Heritage Assets

Policy DMG1 – General Considerations

Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations

Policy DME4 - Protecting Heritage Assets

Policy DMG3 – Transport & Mobility

Policy DMH3 – Dwellings in the Open Countryside

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

**Relevant Planning History:**

Pre-application advice was sought in late 2013 (see responses 11 November 2013 and 6 June 2014) and prior to the adoption of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. Concerns expressed related to the size and design of the proposals in relation to designated heritage assets and the sustainability of residential development in this location.

3/2012/0797 – Proposed Static Caravan/Lodge Park. Planning permission granted 15 February 2013. Report identifies that visual prominence on site was minimal due to the low-rise and ‘fragmented’ nature of development.

3/1980/0248 – Erection of 3 poultry breeding houses. Planning permission granted 17 June 2013.

#### **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:**

##### **Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:**

Southport House is a Grade II listed (16 November 1954) house of 1720. The site (which includes the front walled garden of the listed building) is prominently sited within Sawley Conservation Area and the setting of Sawley Abbey scheduled monument and Grade I listed building (the site is also within the setting of the Grade II listed Abbey Cottage and ‘Ivy Cottage, Reading Room and connecting buildings in same range’). Sawley is within the Forest of Bowland AONB.

The existing site track (the former route of the A59 until late C20) forms the approximate boundary of the AONB, the scheduled monument and the conservation area. A plan from 1959 (BO 621) indicates the former extent of ‘Southport House Farm’ and may suggest Southport Barn (now converted) to be within the curtilage.

The Sawley Abbey scheduled monument description identifies “Many monasteries acted as the foci of wide networks including ... farming estates and tenant villages” and “The Cistercians ... led a harsher life than earlier monastic orders, believing in the virtue of a life of austerity, prayer and manual labour. Seeking exclusion, they founded their houses in wild and remote areas where they undertook major land improvement projects”.

The Sawley Conservation Area Appraisal (The Conservation Studio consultants; adopted by the Borough Council 3 April 2007 following public consultation) identifies:

- (i) Southport House and Sawley Abbey to be ‘Focal Buildings’; land to the north of the site to be ‘Significant Open Space’; a number of ‘Important Views’ looking down on the site from higher ground to the north east (Townscape Appraisal Map);
- (ii) *“ruins of the Cistercian Abbey”; “earthworks and St Mary’s Well in fields to the east of the Abbey”; “Its listed buildings, several of which owe their character to the reuse of Abbey masonry” (this includes Southport House); “Its open and dispersed character, with green fields forming an important component of most views”; “location within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty”; “The backdrop of high hills and fells”; “The Ribble Way Long Distance Footpath, which passes through the village and brings visitors to Sawley” (Summary of special interest);*
- (iii) *“The village falls into four distinct areas ... The oldest part of the village consists of the standing ruins and earthworks of Sawley Abbey, which stands on the eastern side of the road that stretches from the A59 trunk road up to the Ribble. This side of the road also has the school, an 18th-century farmhouse and a house converted from the Abbot’s*

- House" (Location and context);
- (iv) *"Sawley lies on the banks of the Ribble, surrounded by meadows and with magnificent views of the surrounding fells ... Though they make less of an impact visually, the remains of Sawley's Cistercian Abbey are also of great importance to the character of the village, partly because they have prevented development on the eastern side of the village, preserving its open character, and partly because the Abbey has been used as a quarry for building stone. As a result, many buildings incorporate medieval carved masonry in their gable walls ... Sawley has a typical agglomerated village plan with no clear nucleus. The earliest settlement probably consisted of six or so tenanted farms established after the Abbey's dissolution. The spaces between these farms remained undeveloped until relatively recently: half of the houses along the main street are modern (1950s or more recent) and of the remainder, half again are recent conversions of farm buildings"* (General character and plan form);
  - (v) *"Only in the 20th century has there been much building in the vicinity of the Abbey itself ... The conservation area takes in most of the village, excluding a battery chicken complex"* (Topography, geology, relationship of the conservation area to its buildings);
  - (vi) *"fits with the Cistercian preference for abbey sites in the wilderness, away from existing centres of population. Even by Cistercian standards, this was a difficult place to tame ... At the Dissolution the Abbey was granted to Sir Arthur Darcy de Gray (who also owned Fountains). For 250 years, the village took shape around the ruins of the Abbey, and consisted of small tenanted farms (such as Bridge End Farm, Laneside Farm and Southport House) and scattered handloom weavers' cottages"* (Origins and historic development);
  - (vii) *"Sawley is a loose-knit village with large areas of open space in between the houses, mostly grazed by sheep and cattle. Some of the houses on the western bank of the Ribble have very generous gardens that descend to the river bank. The open green fields, crossed by footpaths, and the views of the river from various parts of the village and the backdrop of wooded hills all contribute to the special character of the village. The following views are of particular merit and should be protected ... Westerly views across Sawley Park and down onto the Abbey from the Noddle Hill road ... In the twentieth century there has been much infill along the main street and the Sawley Road, so that half of the houses in the vicinity of the Abbey are of recent construction. Again this fact was noted and regretted in the Sawley Conservation Area Draft Proposal (1971), which said that these modern encroachments were not in keeping with the architectural character of the village, competed with the Abbey for visual dominance, and detracted from the setting of these important medieval remains"; note the photograph of Southport House outbuildings* (Spaces and views);
  - (viii) *"The open spaces along most of the eastern side of the main street are a scheduled monument because of the ditches and banks that survive as evidence of monastic fishponds, water meadows, ditches and field boundaries"* (The character of spaces within the area);
  - (ix) *"Two working farms are located within the village: Southport House (a listed building with a date stone of 1720) lies on the southern edge of the conservation area"* (Activities/Uses);
  - (x) *"Most of the historic dwellings in Sawley are farmhouses and converted barns or small cottages, mostly dating from the late 18th and early 19th centuries, built of gritstone rubble (probably sourced from the Abbey ruins) under sandstone roof tiles"* (Plan form

- and building types);
- (xi) *"Sawley's buildings are for the most part relatively simple and conservative, but are attractive because of the homogeneity of the stone walls and roofs all built from local stone with boundary walls of the same material ... Boundary walls are of gritstone, a metre in height and topped by triangular copings or squared blocks of stone set alternately flat and vertical. Field gates and stiles are flanked by 1.5 metre high gate piers of shaped and incised gritstone; several different decorative patterns can be seen in the village, including incised herring bone, concentric arches, chevrons, vertical grooves within a tall arch and diagonal hatching. Similar rectangular columns of decorated gritstone support the roof of the byre at the rear of the 18th century Southport Farmhouse."* (Architectural qualities);
  - (xii) *"Within the conservation area there are many fields and open spaces that add to the character of the conservation area ... The fields surrounding the Abbey, including Sawley Park, have ditches and banks representing possible monastic fishponds, water meadows, field boundaries and barns ... Trees are an important part of the village setting"* (Green spaces, trees and other natural elements);
  - (xiii) *"attractive scenic features of the village that attract visitors, as does the back drop of fells to the north and south"; "Abbey ruins and associated features in the surrounding fields"; "existence of buildings of character and individuality associated with the Abbey"* (Strengths);
  - (xiv) *"The group of four large and redundant silos and battery hen units at the southern end of conservation area, to the east of Southport House, and the use of the track called Hollins Syke for storing unused agricultural plant and old cars"; "The neglected state of Southport House, which is heavily overgrown with Virginia creeper, hiding its architectural details"* (Weaknesses);
  - (xv) *"The hen units at Hollins Syke could be demolished and removed if they are no longer required, and the lane could be tidied up and used as a footpath or bridle track"* (Opportunities);
  - (xvi) *"Continuing loss of original architectural details"* (Threats).

In my opinion, the demolition of the former poultry sheds is to be welcomed. However, the proposed location and prominence of the new building complex is harmful to the setting of Sawley Conservation Area (and views into and out of the conservation area), listed buildings and the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Sawley conservation Area Appraisal identifies the significance of roadside village linearity, the openness of the land further to the east and in the immediate vicinity of the Cistercian monastery and the prominence of historic buildings in the landscape ('Focal Buildings' – in my opinion this should also include the Grade II listed 'Ivy Cottage, Reading Room and connecting buildings in same range'. The proposal's detachment from this strong village morphology, intrusion into the open countryside and undermining of the visual hierarchy of buildings is exacerbated by the residential development's height, materials (including large expanses of glazing) and landscaping. I am mindful of the importance of the cultural heritage of the AONB (NPPF paragraph 115) and of *"The distinctive pattern of settlements"* and *"The landscape's historic and cultural associations"* being reasons for the Forest of Bowland AONB's designation and that *"Collectively these historic and cultural elements of the environment serve to enrich the landscape's scenic quality, meaning and value"* (The Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan April 2014 - March 2019, page 8 and 12).

In my opinion, the proposed development's unsustainable location is contrary to the Borough's development strategy and does not meet any of the policy exceptions. Core Strategy Key Statement

DS1 (Development Strategy) identifies that in 'Tier 2 settlements' such as Sawley, development will need to meet proven local needs or deliver regeneration benefits.

Policy DMG2 states that within the tier 2 villages and outside the defined settlement areas (the proposal is outside of the 1998 Local Plan settlement boundary which is currently under review – note its linear nature) development must meet at least one of five considerations. Additionally, Policy DMG2 requires that development in the open countryside must be in keeping with the character of the landscape. Development affecting the AONB must respect its character in size, design, use of material, landscaping and siting. "The AONB management plan should be considered and will be used by the council in determining planning applications".

I disagree with the submitted Design and Access statement in respect to application of section 55 of the NPPF to this development. In my opinion, the design of the dwelling is not exceptional or innovative (the glass link, double garage wing and large lawned areas are particularly incongruous) and for the reasons above cannot be considered to be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the area.

The site includes the walled garden immediately to the front of the principal elevation of Southport House. This has not been explained and mindful of NPPG (*"What is the setting of a heritage asset and how should it be taken into account? - need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation"*) I am concerned that this may compromise the future re-use of the currently vacant listed building.

In consideration to NPPG (*'substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases'*) the harm to the designated heritage assets (conservation area character and appearance and listed building setting) is *'less than substantial'*. NPPF paragraph 134 requires that any 'public benefits' be considered and highlights the securing of the optimum viable use in this regard. In my opinion, the removal of the existing poultry sheds and contractor employment are public benefits. However and mindful of the statutory duties and national and local policy, these public benefits do not outweigh the harm to the designated heritage assets.

Therefore, in attaching considerable importance and weight to the statutory duties at section 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in giving great weight to conservation and with regard to Core Strategy Policies DMG1 and DME4 I would recommend that planning permission is refused.

| RECOMMENDATION: |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 01              | The proposal's location, size, height, materials and landscaping results in a prominent and incongruous development which undermines Sawley Conservation Area's distinct linear village morphology, its visual hierarchy of buildings ('Focal Buildings') and the significance of its open spaces surrounding Sawley Abbey. This is harmful to the character and appearance of Sawley Conservation Area, the setting of listed buildings (principally Southport House) and the cultural heritage of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is contrary to Key Statement EN5 and Policies DMG1, DME4 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 17 (conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance), Paragraph 60 (reinforce local distinctiveness), Paragraph 115 (conserve cultural heritage), Paragraph 131 (development sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and positively contributing to local character and distinctiveness) and Paragraph 132 (great weight to conservation). |

That planning consent be refused for the following reason(s)

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| <b>02</b> | <p>The proposal is considered contrary to Key Statements DS1, DS2 and Policies DMG2, DMG3 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy Adopted Version in that the approval would lead to the creation of a new dwelling in the defined open countryside without sufficient justification which would cause harm to the development strategy for the borough. It is further considered that the approval of this application would lead to an unsustainable form of development in a location that does not benefit from adequate access to local services or facilities placing further reliance on the private motor-vehicle contrary to the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p> |
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