

LAND TO THE REAR OF 9 DOWNHAM ROAD, CHATBURN:

HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage impact statement has been produced to support an application to Ribble Valley Borough Council, for planning consent for a residential development on land to the rear of 9 Downham Road, Chatburn, and has been commissioned by the landowner and applicant Mr A Jackson, via Avalon Town Planning Ltd.
- 1.2 This statement should be read in conjunction with the Heritage Assessment for the site, produced in July 2015 to inform the design process at an earlier stage.
- 1.3 There are no nationally designated heritage assets within or adjacent to the proposed application area, but the site lies within the Chatburn Conservation Area, and 9 Downham Road is identified as a "building of townscape merit" in the conservation area appraisal¹. Conservation areas are defined by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as areas of "special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Because of this status, the planning application requires a statement of significance of the heritage asset and its setting (see Heritage Assessment), and a statement of impact of the proposed work, to enable the planning authority to consider the potential impact of the proposed scheme as regards the heritage assets.

2 Development proposals

- 2.1 The owners are seeking consent for the conversion of a workshop (formerly a barn), to garage and workshop with apartment to the first floor, and the construction of two new dwellings (three and four bedrooms) with attached garages, to the south of the workshop. This would involve the demolition of a 20th century garage/workshop.

3 Applicable planning policies

- 3.1 The relevant national planning guidance applicable here is Section 12, *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*, of the *National Planning Policy Framework*, and the accompanying advice given in *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*. The local planning policy is contained within the Ribble

Valley Core Strategy: Policy EN5 – Heritage Assets, and Policy DME4 – Protecting Heritage Assets, as well as the Chatburn Conservation Area Appraisal and Chatburn Conservation Area Management Guidance.

- 3.2 The main thrust of these policies relevant here is provided by Policy DME4, which states that:

Proposals within or closely related to Conservation Areas should not harm the Area. This should include considerations as to whether it is in keeping with the architectural and historic character of the area as set out in the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal. Development in these areas will be strictly controlled to ensure that it reflects the character of the area in terms of scale, size, design and materials and also respects trees and important open space. In the 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.

4 The Chatburn Conservation Area and its significance

- 4.1 The Chatburn conservation area was designated in 1974 and the special interest which justifies its designation can be summarised as arising from its origins as an agricultural village, which underwent increasing industrialisation in the 18th and 19th centuries, but still retains its rural village character.
- 4.2 The Conservation Area Appraisal notes a number of specific aspects which confer its special interest, but those relevant here include only two:
- 17th and 18th century farmhouses and barns as evidence of the agricultural origins of the village
 - mainly 19th century buildings along all the roads into the village in the local vernacular style, including terrace rows built for workers in the now defunct Victoria Mill.
- 4.3 The workshop proposed for conversion has been identified as a former barn of early 19th century date, and so makes a significant contribution to the conservation area, as being indicative of its agricultural history, though its partial rebuilding in concrete blockwork limits this contribution, and offers the opportunity for enhancement. The remainder of the site is occupied partly by a 20th century workshop/garage and a storage yard, the appearance of which is a weakness for the conservation area, due to the incongruous form and materials used.

¹ The Conservation Studio 2005 *Chatburn Conservation Area Appraisal*

5 Impact of the proposals

- 5.1 The potential impact of the proposed development needs to be considered at two levels: both on the identified individual heritage asset which the present workshop (former barn) constitutes, and on the conservation area as a whole.
- 5.2 The proposals for the conversion of the workshop include the rebuilding of the west end in natural stone to replace the current concrete blockwork, which will have a major positive impact on the building's appearance. A number of existing openings within the unaltered east end will be retained, including various breathers, and there will be no significant change in the total number of window openings from the present. It is also important to bear in mind that its conversion will ensure the building's continued viable use, and therefore its survival as a reminder of its agricultural origins.
- 5.3 The removal of the 20th century brick-built workshop/garage to the south would enhance the appearance of the former barn and the conservation area as a whole, and the two dwellings proposed for the site would also make a small positive contribution to the conservation area, though their relatively secluded and isolated position means that they would have very little visual impact on it, and particularly on those aspects of it which confer its special interest. The new dwellings would reflect the character of the area in terms of scale, design and materials,

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Given the nature of the proposals, it is considered that the proposed development would result in the enhancement of the conservation area, by improving the visual appearance of the former barn and removing the incongruous brick building which adjoins it, with the new dwellings making a small positive contribution. As such, the application conforms with Policy DME 4, and Key Statement EN5, which states that: *There will be a presumption in favour of the preservation of heritage assets and their settings where they are recognised as being of importance. The Authority recognises that the best way of ensuring the long term protection of heritage assets is to find an optimum viable use that strikes the correct balance between economic or other uses and their impact on the significance of the asset.*

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