

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Application Ref:	3/2016/0740	 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	23 September 2016	
Officer:	AD	
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:		REFUSAL

Development Description:	Application for retention of unauthorised alterations.
Site Address/Location:	Primrose Cottage 4 Main Street Bolton by Bowland BB7 4NW

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
No representations have been received in respect of the proposed development.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
Historic amenity societies:	
Consulted, no representations received.	
CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
No representations have been received in respect of the proposed development.	

RELEVANT POLICIES:

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Bolton By Bowland Conservation Area Appraisal

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

Key Statement EN5 – Heritage Assets
Policy DMG1 – General Considerations
Policy DME4 – Protecting Heritage Assets

Relevant Planning History:

3/2011/0230 - Structural improvements relating to the conversion of external stone building and alterations to rear elevation wall. LBC refused 15 July 2011. The file report identifies "*Pre-application advice was given in early 2010 expressing concern at the extent of the historic fabric to be lost in proposed attic conversion and first floor room sub-division*".

3/2011/0231 - Structural improvements relating to the conversion of external stone building and alterations to rear elevation wall. PP refused 15 July 2011.

3/2010/0735 - Proposal to repair main ridge beam in the loft after fire damage. LBC granted 20 April 2016.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

Primrose Cottage (Primrose Cottage No 4 Main Street and No 6 Main Street) is a prominent Grade II listed (16 November 1954) building of 1716 within Bolton-by-Bowland Conservation Area. The list description suggests that the pair of houses was formerly one; no reference is made to the interior (which does have a number of interesting 17th century/early 18th century features eg chamfered and stopped beams; shouldered fire place).

Primrose Cottage is within the setting of other listed buildings in the street-scene including the adjoining and facing 8 and 8a Main Street, 10 and 12 Main Street, 14 Main Street and 9 and 11 Main Street (all Grade II).

The Bolton-by-Bowland Conservation Area Appraisal (The Conservation Studio consultants; adopted by the Borough Council following public consultation 3 April 2007) identifies the “*YRY IM 1716*” date stone at the front of the property within the Summary of Special Interest of the Conservation Area. The *Threat* to the Bolton-by-Bowland Conservation Area is the continuing loss of original architectural details.

‘The Buildings of England: Yorkshire West Riding’ (Pevsner, 2001) suggests:

“the most interesting house (in Bolton-by-Bowland) is Primrose Cottage, because of the crazy geometrical decoration of its door lintel, dated as late as 1716” (page 115).

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

In my opinion, the submitted ‘Heritage Statement’ does not meet the requirements of NPPF paragraph 128 i.e. describe significance in proportion to heritage asset importance and in sufficient detail to understand the impact of the proposal on significance.

The works have been implemented. The submitted description of works (within the ‘Heritage Statement’ and dated 29 July 2016) does not provide any detail or justification for works to the historic fabric and plan form.

Impact upon listed building and Bolton by Bowland Conservation Area

The building appears to have an interesting history and evolution which may not be adequately reflected in the list description suggested date of origin of 1716 (the current owner suggests that the door plaque may have been relocated from elsewhere; a number of beams are chamfered and stopped and two first floor rear windows have jambs of C17 type).

In the absence of a comprehensive Heritage Statement, consideration has been made to photographs taken by the case officer at previous inspections. In addition to the works associated with relocation of the bathroom from ground to first floor, the rear door has been removed and replaced with a different style.

In my opinion, the works have been harmful to the fabric and planform of the listed building, the setting of nearby listed buildings in the row and the character and appearance of Bolton by Bowland Conservation Area (the conservation area boundary follows the rear hedge of properties on the south side of Main Street; there are public views of the terrace from the car park) because of:

- (i) Loss of door;
- (ii) Removal of ground floor wall – no convincing evidence has been submitted to confirm that this was a concrete block wall. The location of two historic doorways from the hall/lounge into what appears to be a later outshut addition (see depth of intervening wall) may suggest that the ground floor of the outshut has always been divided;

- (iii) Subdivision of first floor room and replacement window with incongruous and visually conspicuous timber mullion – the external fabric (window jambs) indicates that two first floor openings (one at No.6 Main Street) may be original openings. This suggests the recent division of the room and bisecting of the window to be unsympathetic to the special interest. No other window in the listed building or terrace is of this form and it is conspicuous. The impact of the installation of services (floor boards are of the wide and early type) cannot be ascertained from submitted information.

I am mindful of Government guidance in respect to retrospective LBC (NPPG) and the need for clear and convincing justification for harmful works (NPPF paragraph 132), Historic England advice and recent Planning Inspectorate decisions:

NPPG

“Distinctiveness is what often makes a place special and valued. It relies on physical aspects such as: details and materials ... style and vernacular” (Design, paragraph 20).

“where there is evidence of deliberate damage to or neglect of a heritage asset in the hope of making consent or permission easier to gain the local planning authority should disregard the deteriorated state of the asset” (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, paragraph 14).

“The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.” (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, paragraph 13).

“The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting” (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, paragraph 13).

“When assessing any application for development which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change” (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, paragraph 13).

‘Legal Developments: The Big Issue of Little Harm’ in Historic England Conservation Bulletin No. 73 Winter 2014 identifies:

“If we are to look after what matters about our historic buildings and sites – their heritage significance – then we need to not just worry about the major proposals for change, but also about the cumulative effect of the small things ... Fortunately, heritage planning law and policy is as concerned with the small changes as it is with the big”.

‘Making Changes to Heritage Assets’ (HE, February 2016) identifies:

“Doors and windows are frequently key to the significance of a building” (paragraph 15).

“The historic fabric will always be an important part of the asset’s significance ... In normal circumstances, however, retention of as much historic fabric as possible, together with the use of appropriate materials and methods of repair, is likely to fulfil the NPPF policy to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, as a fundamental part of any good alteration or

conversion. It is not appropriate to sacrifice old work simply to accommodate the new” (paragraph 42).

“The junction between new work and the existing fabric needs particular attention, both for its impact on the significance of the existing asset and the impact on the contribution of its setting. Where possible it is preferable for new work to be reversible, so that changes can be undone without harm to historic fabric ... New openings need to be considered in the context of the architectural and historic significance of that part of the asset and of the asset as a whole. Where new work or additions make elements with significance redundant, such as doors or decorative features, there is likely to be less impact on the asset’s aesthetic, historic or evidential value if they are left in place” (paragraph 43).

“The plan form of a building is frequently one of its most important characteristics and internal partitions, staircases (whether decorated or plain, principal or secondary) and other features are likely to form part of its significance. Indeed they may be its most significant feature. Proposals to remove or modify internal arrangements, including the insertion of new openings or extension underground, will be subject to the same considerations of impact on significance (particularly architectural interest) as for externally visible alterations” (paragraph 45).

The Bolton by Bowland Conservation Area Management Guidance (The Conservation Studio consultants; subject to public consultation) also identifies:

“Windows ... It is important that the design, scale and proportion of new windows should be sympathetic to the character of the building”.

“Doors and doorways: Original doors should be retained. Their replacement or defacement is often entirely unnecessary. Replacement doors should copy the original in the materials, the detail of the design, and the paint finish. Modern off-the-peg doors are not generally acceptable for use in historic buildings, nor are doors with incongruous design features”.

“Windows are the eyes of a building - they let in light and give views out - and profoundly affect its appearance ... An assessment of the significance of a window or windows and the contribution they make to the overall significance of a building is an important first step in deciding the right course of action” (‘Traditional windows: their care, repair and upgrading’, Historic England, April 2015, paragraph 3).

“Aesthetic Value - Fenestration may form an integral part of the design of the building or contribute to a building’s visual character” (‘Traditional windows: their care, repair and upgrading’, Historic England, April 2015, paragraph 4).

“The Importance of Windows in Older Buildings: Window openings and frames give a building’s elevation its character. They should not be altered in their proportions or details, as they are conspicuous elements of the design” (‘Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Application of Part L of the Building Regulations to Historic and Traditionally Constructed Buildings’, Historic England, 2011).

“There is little dispute as to how important windows are to historic buildings. After all, the front windows of a building are often the first feature to draw the eye” (‘The Thermal Performance of Historic Windows’ in The Building Conservation Directory 2008, Chris Wood, Head of Building Conservation and Research Team at Historic England).

‘Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment’ (Historic England, 2008) identifies these four groups of heritage values: Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic and Communal.

“Evidential value derives from the physical remains or genetic lines that have been inherited from the past. The ability to understand and interpret the evidence tends to be diminished in proportion to the extent of its removal or replacement” (paragraph 38);

“Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative” (paragraph 39);

“Illustrative value has the power to aid interpretation of the past through making connections with, and providing insights into, past communities and their activities” (paragraph 41);

“The historical value of places depends upon both sound identification and direct experience of fabric or landscape that has survived from the past ... The authenticity of a place indeed often lies in visible evidence of change as a result of people responding to changing circumstances. Historical values are harmed only to the extent that adaptation has obliterated or concealed them, although completeness does tend to strengthen illustrative value” (paragraph 44).

“Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place” (paragraph 46).

‘Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment’ (Historic England, March 2015) identifies:

“The cumulative impact of incremental small-scale changes may have as great an effect on the significance of a heritage asset as a larger scale change. Where the significance of a heritage asset has been compromised in the past by unsympathetic development to the asset itself or its setting, consideration still needs to be given to whether additional change will further detract from, or can enhance, the significance of the asset in order to accord with NPPF policies ... positive change could include the restoration of a building’s plan form” (paragraph 28).

“The objective of conserving heritage assets for generations to come will not be met if there is no deterrent to those contemplating not applying for a consent and no remedy applied when consents are not sought when they should have been. Wrongdoing should obviously not be rewarded and those who obey the law should not be disadvantaged” (paragraph 47).

I am mindful of the following appeal decisions where Planning Inspector’s considered the importance of understanding the full impact of changes to plan form and historic fabric:

APP/T2350/E/12/2185264/NWF 28 Church Street, Ribchester (2 July 2013; Grade II listed building) in respect to the importance of plan form retention as a record of historic building use (even when associated historic fabric does not survive):

“Part of the importance of a listed building lies in the legibility of its original pattern of use – through its plan layout

... However, whilst the statement notes that the interior has been fully modernised and contains very few historically or architecturally significant elements, the plan form and its origins have not been analysed. Although the Framework requires that applicants provide sufficient information regarding the effect of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset to enable the potential impact to be understood, little evidence has been provided as to the evolution of the current plan form

... Internally the plan layout would be further substantially re-configured by the proposal

... Whilst these interventions have been carefully designed and would make good use of the available space to maximise the provision of modern accommodation, they would further distort the original plan form and obscure an appreciation of the historic pattern of use

... I also agree with the appellant that the staircase is modern in its styling and the bottom dog-leg landing arrangement may not be the original one – but I have seen little evidence to convince me that this is not the original staircase position, or that the historic significance of the plan and structure of the building have been properly analysed, as required by development plan and national policy, so as to justify this fundamental alteration and provide sufficient information on which to base a decision”.

APP/T2350/E/07/2041941, 58 Moor Lane, Clitheroe (12 October 2007; Grade II listed building).

“Internally, the proposed provision of an en-suite bathroom within the front first floor bedroom would be uncomfortably close to the existing fireplace and would distort the original shape of the room. Insufficient measured detail has been submitted to reassure me that this could be satisfactorily achieved without a physical conflict with this attractive original fitting. The provision of drainage for the proposed first floor WCs between the floor joists is indicated, but no installation details have been provided to demonstrate that this is feasible, with sufficient falls, within the existing depth of joists” (paragraph 9).

APP/T2350/E/13/2194332 (8 Church Brow, Clitheroe; 13 January 2014; Grade II listed building):

“The third element of the works relates to the installation of a shower room on the landing at second floor level. This large open landing provides access to 2 attic rooms and is currently used as a storage/study area. The proposed shower room would include a wash basin, a WC and a shower. All of those items require servicing, including ventilation and related water/sewage pipe work. However, unlike the basement these would need to exit the building either internally or externally to ground floor level. The appellant has not supplied any information to show how these services would exit the building. I am unconvinced that a condition could adequately control these works so as to prevent harm to the listed building; especially in relation to the required water and soil pipes. As such I conclude that there would be harm to the special architectural and historic interest of No 8”.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

Mindful of NPPG (*“In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases”*) I consider the impact to the special architectural and historic interest of Primrose Cottage, the setting of adjoining listed buildings and the character and appearance of Bolton by Bowland Conservation Area to be less than substantial harm.

The information submitted does not suggest that any ‘public benefits’ (NPPF paragraph 134) will ensue from the proposed development other than contractor employment.

Therefore, in giving considerable importance and weight to the duties at section 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in giving ‘great weight’ to the conservation of the designated heritage assets (NPPF paragraph 132) and in consideration to Key Statement EN5 and Policies DME4 and DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, I would recommend that listed building consent be refused.

RECOMMENDATION:

That listed building consent be refused for the following reason:

The implemented work has had a harmful impact upon the special

	architectural and historic interest of the listed building, the setting of adjoining listed buildings and the character and appearance of Bolton by Bowland Conservation Area because of the loss of important historic fabric and plan form and the installation of an incongruous and visually conspicuous first floor window frame.
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