



RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Officer:	Lee Greenwood	Direct Tel:	01200 414493	Council Offices Church Walk Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 2RA	
Email:	lee.greenwood@ribblevalley.gov.uk				
Our Ref:	RV/2019/ENQ/00062				
Site Location:	26 Church St, Ribchester			Tel: 01200 425111	Fax: 01200 414487
Proposal:	Internal and external alterations including erection of replacement rear extension				
Date:	June 2019				

Pre-Application Enquiry Response

Dear Michael,

I write further to your submission of a request for pre-application advice at 26 Church Street, Ribchester on behalf your clients, Mr & Mrs Bennett. The enquiry seeks the Council's views on various extensions and alterations to the property, which is Grade II Listed.

Relevant Core Strategy Policies:

- Key Statement EN5 – Heritage Assets
- Policy DMG1 – General Considerations
- Policy DME4 – Protecting Heritage Assets
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Principle of Development:

The site comprises a late 18th century weaver's house, located at the end of a terraced row on Church Street. The dwelling is listed along with its attached neighbour (no.25) and also highly visible within the Ribchester Conservation Area.

The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 189 & 190) requires an applicant to describe the significance of any asset which would be affected by the proposed development. In determining submissions, the Local Planning Authority should take account of the desirability of sustaining/enhancing the assets. Great weight should be given to their conservation (the more important the asset, the greater the weight) and any harm to, or loss of significance arising from a development will require clear and convincing justification. Harm will also be weighed against any identified public benefits arising from the scheme.

Accounting for these constraints, any new development which affects the character, appearance or special interest of the heritage assets will need to be closely considered.

Design, Layout and Heritage Impact:

To inform the following comments, I have reviewed the Ribchester Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Guidance documents. Each considers the elements of the designation which both add and detract from its quality. Of relevance to this submission are:

- *Strengths* – the architectural and historic interest of the listed buildings within the village, including the weavers' cottages in Church Street
- *Weaknesses* – intensive alteration of historic buildings
- *Threats* – the continuing loss of original architectural details

With regard to chimney stacks, the Management Guidance identifies that they are an important part of the local roofscape which should be retained or re-built (if dangerous) to the original specifications.

Rear extension

It is indicated in the Design and Access Statement that the projecting outbuilding is likely to have been erected after the main house. However, initial research of historic maps and my observations during the site visit would suggest that it may be contemporary with the property and as such be intrinsic to its special interest. If this is the case, the demolition and rebuilding as proposed would require robust justification as it would, in effect, result in the loss of historic fabric.

It noted that the internal head heights are low and that the justification for the proposed works relate to the need to provide useable accommodation for a dependent relative. I appreciate and understand why this would be a pressing concern and key driver of the scheme. However personal circumstances, whilst capable of being a material consideration, seldom outweigh policy requirements, especially where there are complex heritage implications.

I appreciate that this section of the property appears to have been subject to other less than sensitive alterations in the past, such as the application of render to the south facing elevation and changes to the roof. However, I do not consider that this in itself would justify the demolition of the structure as a whole, particularly where it retains what appear to be original features internally and externally, elsewhere.

In light of the above, it is my view that unless clear justification could be provided through evidenced historic analysis, Officers would not be able to support the demolition of original fabric in this location, owing to the historic importance of the building.

Internal alterations

The proposals also seek to undertake changes to the internal layout, some of which appear to be more recent interventions. The removal of unsympathetic (and in some cases what appear to be unsafe) elements raise no objections in principle.

However, part of the importance of a listed building is the legibility of its original pattern of use. I would therefore recommend some form of assessment as to the original planform and how the scheme as submitted would reflect this. You may wish to review an appeal decision at 28 Ribchester Road which considered a number of similar issues, including use of upper floor for additional accommodation. Whilst the Inspector's report dates from 2013, a number of the key policy issues remain relevant (RVBC ref – 3/2012/0478 & Inspectorate Ref – APP/T2350/E/12/2185264/NWF).

Window

Historic England advise that the following should be considered when any restoration is proposed in regard to heritage assets:

- Clearly restore any elements of value decisively (especially where this would outweigh the values of those to be lost);
- Justify the works by providing evidence of the evolution of the place and execute the works in accordance with that evidence;
- Demonstrate that the works respect the previous form of the building;

- Demonstrate that the form of the site as existing is not as a result of an historically significant event; and
- Demonstrate that the maintenance implications of the restoration are sustainable.

The form and shape of the upper floor rear window opening remains in situ internally, having simply been covered by breeze blocks. This provides the ability to reinstate relatively accurately, with the neighbouring opening as a guide. I would suggest a side hung casement frame.

Therefore providing that the window was not originally blocked for any historically important reason, there would be no objection in principle to these works.

Chimney stack

Subject to the accurate reinstatement of the chimney, I do not consider that the proposals would raise undue concerns, accounting for the comments within the Conservation Area Management Guidance.

Residential Amenity

Based on the drawings provided, I do not consider that the proposals would result in a significant or unacceptable loss of amenity for neighbouring residents.

Ecology

As the proposal includes the potential demolition of buildings, a bat survey should be provided to assess any possible impact on protected species or their habitat.

Other Matters:

Due to recent changes in planning legislation the Council must now seek the formal agreement of the applicant (or their agent) to impose pre-commencement conditions, should it be minded to grant planning permission.

Therefore, you may wish to consider providing a greater level of information at the outset for the Council to assess, in order to avoid the need for such conditions. A provisional validation checklist is provided below, however I'm sure you appreciate that requests for further technical information may be made by third party consultees during the application which cannot necessarily be anticipated at this stage.

Conclusion:

For the reasons detailed above, it is considered that the demolition and replacement of the rear 'extension' could not be supported unless clear and convincing justification could be provided.

The remaining elements of the scheme are acceptable in principle, subject to a suitably detailed Heritage Statement, prepared in accordance with paragraph 189 of the Framework.

Submission Requirements:

Should you proceed to submission of formal applications (Planning & LBC), based on the nature of the proposal/site constraints identified above, it is my opinion that the Local Planning Authority would require the following information to accompany such an application:

- Application forms
- Location plan
- Site plan
- Elevations and floor plans (existing and proposed)

- Heritage Statement
- Bat Survey
- Justification Statement (if the rear extension is proposed)
- Any other information you may wish to provide (materials etc)

Please note this aforementioned required information may not be exhaustive and is provided on the basis of the level of information submitted. Failure to provide required information is likely to result in an application being made invalid until such information is received or potentially refused on the basis of insufficient information.

Please also be advised that Lancashire County Council provide a separate, chargeable pre-application service for highway related matters. You should contact the County Council directly to discuss any such issues - <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/business/business-services/pre-planning-application-advice-service/pre-planning-application-highways-advice-service>

The above observations have been provided on the basis of the level of information submitted and the comments contained within this response represent officer opinion only, at the time of writing, without prejudice to the final determination of any application submitted. Should you wish to discuss any of these matters further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Lee Greenwood
Pre-application Advice Officer
lee.greenwood@ribblevalley.gov.uk