

**HERITAGE APPRAISAL TO SUPPORT PLANNING APPLICATION 3/2020/0675  
FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT  
AT RIBBLE VALLEY CARE HOME, SAWLEY**

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This heritage appraisal has been produced to inform the current planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council, for various works at the Ribble Valley Care Home, Sawley (3/2020/0675). It has been written by Stephen Haigh MA, on the instruction of the owner Townfield Care Ltd through its agent Holden Lancashire Ltd, following a site visit on 12 January 2021.
- 1.2 The council's Principal Planning Officer advised the case officer that the site lies "within Sawley Conservation Area and appears to be within the setting of the Spread Eagle Hotel (Grade II) and Sawley Abbey (scheduled monument and Grade I listed)", all of which are designated heritage assets. He advised that information describing the significance of the building should be submitted, as required by NPPF paragraph 189, in order to understand the potential impact of development on the designated heritage assets.

**2 The existing site**

- 2.1 The site lies on the south-east side of Sawley Old Brow, near the north end of Sawley village. It is a care home, set within its own grounds.

**3 Proposed development**

- 3.1 The application is described as: "*Part demolition of bedrooms to rear of building and full demolition of existing conservatory to the main entrance area. Construction of walls under existing canopy at entrance door, erection of new sun room in place of demolished conservatory and construction of new single storey extension to rear of property replacing partly demolished structures and associated parking.*"

**4 Historical background**

- 4.1 The present care home was formerly known as Riverside, probably a private house originally, thought to have been established in the 1950s, according to historic Ordnance Survey maps. Previously, the site appears to have been

farmland, but in the medieval period may have formed part of the precinct of Sawley's Cistercian Abbey<sup>1</sup>.

- 4.2 The main 1950s house is of two storeys for the most part and faces north-west. A number of extensions have been added to its rear and sides, with the largest being a mostly single-storey quadrangle at the south end, built in the late 20th/early 21st century, which provides purpose-built accommodation for elderly care.

## 5 Setting

- 5.1 The site is located at the north end of the village, just beyond Sawley Old Brow's junction with the main street. It forms one of a small group of detached houses here, and borders the Spread Eagle Hotel's car park to the south-west. The building faces the road and river Ribble, although it is set back from and elevated above both, with the car park and front garden intervening. Two private dwellings, Riverside Lodge and Park House, stand to the north-east and are broadly contemporary with the main building, while Spring Cottage and the Cedars are recent additions to the rear part of this cluster of detached houses.
- 5.2 In terms of designated heritage assets, the site as a whole lies entirely within the Sawley Conservation Area, designated in 1971. (The council's Conservation Area Appraisal<sup>2</sup> does not note the site individually, but only refers to the group of 20th century houses within which it stands.) The pasture field immediately south-east of the site forms part of the scheduled monument of Sawley Cistercian abbey and associated earthworks<sup>3</sup>, while the above-ground Sawley Abbey Ruins<sup>4</sup>, grade I listed, lie within the scheduled area, to the south-west of the application site. The Spread Eagle Hotel, grade II listed, stands on the west side of the junction at the end of Sawley Old Brow<sup>5</sup>.

## 6 The present buildings

- 6.1 The main building, the original "Riverside" of the 1950s, is in a mock Tudor style. It has brick walls, and applied timber-framing to parts of the first floor, while the stone slate roof has a number of tall brick chimney stacks. Dressings are of ashlar sandstone, now painted for the most part, and include quoins and chamfered window surrounds; many of the windows have mullions and transoms.

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<sup>1</sup>See Hunt, A et al 2005 *Sawley Abbey, Sawley, Lancashire: A Cistercian monastic precinct & post-medieval landscape*

<sup>2</sup>The Conservation Studio, 2005

<sup>3</sup>National Heritage List, entry 1015492

<sup>4</sup>National Heritage List, entry 1072099

<sup>5</sup>National Heritage List, entry 1072101



The care home, viewed from the west. Main 1950s building at left with sun-room along side elevation. Recent extension to right.

- 6.2 The front of the former house faces north-west towards the garden, and presents a gabled dormer, and a larger gabled cross-wing at the south-west end. The right-hand return has a long single-storey conservatory or sun-room at its foot which is proposed for replacement; the existing sun-room has a dwarf wall of brick on a stone plinth, in keeping with the main building, but the glazing is set within more modern uPVC frames. The sun-room also forms a link to the more recent quadrangular accommodation block.



South-west elevation with sun-room proposed for replacement.

- 6.3 The north-east side of the main building has a hipped roof and contains a former entrance, set between two small flat-roofed projections, and there are various minor additions towards the rear, where a former garage has been linked to and incorporated into the accommodation. These are proposed for alteration to create a new rear accommodation area.



Rear of 1950s building, proposed for new accommodation.

- 6.4 There have been other minor additions at the rear of the main building, and the existing, quadrangular accommodation block occupies what would formerly have been a large back garden.
- 6.5 The later quadrangular block also faces north-west, and its front is in a very similar style to the original house, though the other elevations are of plain brick with a minimum of ornamentation. It is very largely single storey, but a gabled “black and white” wing forms an upper storey. There is a lean-to conservatory below this.

## 7 Statement of significance

- 7.1 The Ribble Valley Care Home is a commercial healthcare establishment, thought to occupy what was originally a private house, first established in the 1950s, with a Tudor revival style. It is believed to have become a care home later in the 20th century, and was adapted and extended on a number of occasions to better fulfil its role, in particular by the addition of a substantial quadrangular extension to the south.
- 7.2 The main building has little architectural merit regardless of its Tudor revival motifs, and is largely alien to the village in form and materials, with one redeeming factor being the stone slate roof. It does not contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area, whose special interest is set out in the 2005 Appraisal, except perhaps because it does not disrupt the “open and dispersed character”, by virtue of the size of its grounds, and degree of separation from other properties.

## 8 Potential impact on heritage assets

- 8.1 The proposed development has two main strands, both of which are of small scale in relation to the site as a whole. They represent minor changes to a building which makes no real contribution to the conservation area, and would not be prominent from viewpoints elsewhere within it, so they would preserve its character and appearance. Their relative scale and locations within the site also mean they would not impinge on the setting of any of the other designated heritage assets identified above, and so no harm to significance would arise.

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19 January 2021