

INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement is submitted in respect of a planning application for the installation of new dormer windows to the front and rear elevations, including a Juliet balcony, at 19 Blackburn Road, Ribchester.

This Statement is required due to 19 Blackburn Road being located within the Ribchester Conservation Area, as designated by Ribble Valley Borough Council in 1973 and updated most recently in 2005. Although the dwelling is not listed, it has been identified as being a building of townscape merit.

Development within a Conservation Area must pay special regard to the character of the area and it is therefore appropriate to review the proposals within this context.

SITE CONTEXT

19 Blackburn Road is situated on the outskirts of the village of Ribchester, approximately 6 miles to the north west of Blackburn.

The site comprises a single large, two-storey dwelling with associated garden, vehicle parking and a detached garage, and the original building is likely to have been constructed as three or more separate weavers cottages, given its overall form and previous designation as Nos. 19 to 21.

The site is accessed from the main road via a private driveway, which connects the property to the wider area via Blackburn Road, Ribchester Road and the A59 Longsight Road.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

This application seeks approval for the installation of new dormer windows to the front and rear elevations, including a Juliet balcony, at 19 Blackburn Road, Ribchester.

As they comprise only minor alterations to an existing building, the proposals are closely visually related to surrounding development. The proposals further reinforce this relationship by building on the style and form of nearby properties.

All other elements of the existing dwelling, including vehicular and pedestrian access, will be retained as part of the proposed development, alongside existing parking arrangements.

HERITAGE STATUS

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraphs 10 & 11).

The following paragraphs are considered to be of particular relevance with regard to heritage.

184: conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life for future generations.

192: In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable use consistent with their conservation;*
- *The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

193: When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.

At the local level, the Ribble Valley Borough Council Adopted Core Strategy (2014) seeks to promote the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings. Proposals affecting the setting of a Conservation Area will be required to conserve and where appropriate enhance its character and appearance and those elements which contribute towards its significance (Policy DME4).

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Character of the Conservation Area

The Council's appraisal of the Ribchester Conservation Area identifies the key features of the area as follows:

- Remains of Roman fort and associated outbuildings of settlement (vicus), including granaries and bath house, much of which is protected by Scheduled Monument status;
- The architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings, 21 of which are listed;
- Two grade I churches: Church of St Wilfred and Church of St Saviour, Stydd;
- Church of St Peter and St Paul (grade II), a 'barn church' and one of the earliest Catholic churches in Lancashire;
- Stydd Almshouses, listed grade II*;
- Narrow, closely developed streets of former handloom weavers' settlement;
- Ensemble of St Wilfrid's Church, Rectory, Museum and Churchgates;
- Handloom weaver's cottages, including two with cellar loomshops, particularly in Church Street and Water Street;
- Good examples of late 19th century terraced houses along Church Street and Blackburn Road;
- River Ribble;
- The prevalent use of local building stone;
- Stydd, a tiny rural hamlet containing two historic churches and 18th century almshouses;
- Open space in front of White Bull;
- Views of River Ribble and surrounding landscape;
- Individual trees and groups of trees.

In contrast, the principal features of the Ribchester Conservation Area identified as having a negative impact are:

- Loss of architectural detail (original windows, doors etc);
- Insensitive alteration of historic buildings spoiling the conservation area's historic character and appearance;
- The open space at the rear of the Black Bull, visible through the gap in the Blackburn Road frontage north of The Black Bull is unkempt and out of keeping with the historic character and appearance of the conservation area.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Paragraph 190 of the NPPF requires applicants to identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets or their setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

The significance of a heritage asset may comprise a number of factors, which are similar to the criteria for listing and include:

- Age and rarity: most buildings built before 1700 which survive in anything like their original condition are listed, as are most built between 1700 and 1840
- Architectural interest: through architectural design, decoration and craftsmanship and also important examples of particular building types and techniques
- Historic interest: encompassing buildings which illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural or military history, or close historical association with nationally-important people or events
- Group value: especially where buildings are part of an important architectural or historic group or are a fine example of planning (such as squares, terraces and model villages)

Taking the above into consideration, the relative significance of the elements of the site can be assessed using the following scale:

- High significance – buildings/features which make an important contribution to the architectural and historic interest and character of the site, through age, rarity, architectural merit or historical association or group value, and whose preservation and enhancement is considered essential
- Medium significance – those making a lesser contribution, but which nevertheless are also considered worthy of preservation or enhancement
- Low significance – those making only a limited contribution to the site overall, although not necessarily detracting from it.

Assets of High Significance

The Ribchester Conservation Area is clearly an asset of high significance and is therefore of considerable importance.

Assets of Medium Significance

The key heritage asset, in the form of the Conservation Area, benefits from statutory designation and is therefore acknowledged as being of high significance.

Although there are also assets of low significance described below, there are no features which could reasonably be regarded as being of medium significance.

Low Significance

Although 19 Blackburn Road is an example of late 18th / early 19th century industrial era housing and shares the typical form of other terraced cottages in the area, it is not a particularly rare or unique building type, hence its ineligibility for listed status.

Its overall significance is therefore low and its identification as a building of townscape merit is derived entirely from its positive contribution to the general streetscape and appearance of the area, rather than any having any specific or individual merit.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The impact upon the Conservation Area will be no more than negligible.

The proposed works will not undermine the basic character of the building, but will be a significant improve the functionality of the property as an efficient dwelling.

The proposed materials have been chosen to be in-keeping with their surroundings so as to be consistent in terms of the appearance of the existing building, as well as the wider area.

As such, the proposals are consistent with national and local planning policy.

CONCLUSION

This Heritage Statement supports a planning application for the installation of new dormer windows to the front and rear elevations, including a Juliet balcony, at 19 Blackburn Road, Ribchester.

The assessment undertaken during the preparation of this statement demonstrates that the alterations have been appropriately designed to take the form of the local vernacular and will sit comfortably within the context of the existing building, and as such will be of no harm to the Conservation Area.

For the reasons outlined in this report it is considered that planning permission should therefore be granted.