

PROPOSED WORKS AT GARDEN COTTAGE

RIBCHESTER, BOROUGH OF RIBBLE VALLEY



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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Garry Miller is a heritage consultant, architectural historian and published author who has spent more than 35 years studying and working with buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as 'scholarship as its best' by *Country Life* (June 2003), and 'well analysed and presented' in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); and was widely cited in the 2006 *Buildings of England* volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings, in particular the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment. His area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and reports on more than 150 buildings or sites are produced annually.

THIS REPORT

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1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed development at Garden Cottage, Ribchester, one of the communities within the borough of Ribble Valley, Lancashire. Garden Cottage belongs to a row of late 18th century weavers' cottages which forms numbers 8-15 on the west side of Church Street. The entire row forms a single Grade II listing and stands within Ribchester Conservation Area. The application property is numbered 9 in the row and consists of the main body of the house along with a short single-storey outrigger to which has been added a late 20th century kitchen/dining room in conservatory style.

Proposals have been submitted to Ribble Valley Borough Council for replacement of the existing kitchen/dining room extension. The heritage issue arising is the impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the listed building, along with its contribution to the conservation area. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify this significance and to assess how it will be affected.

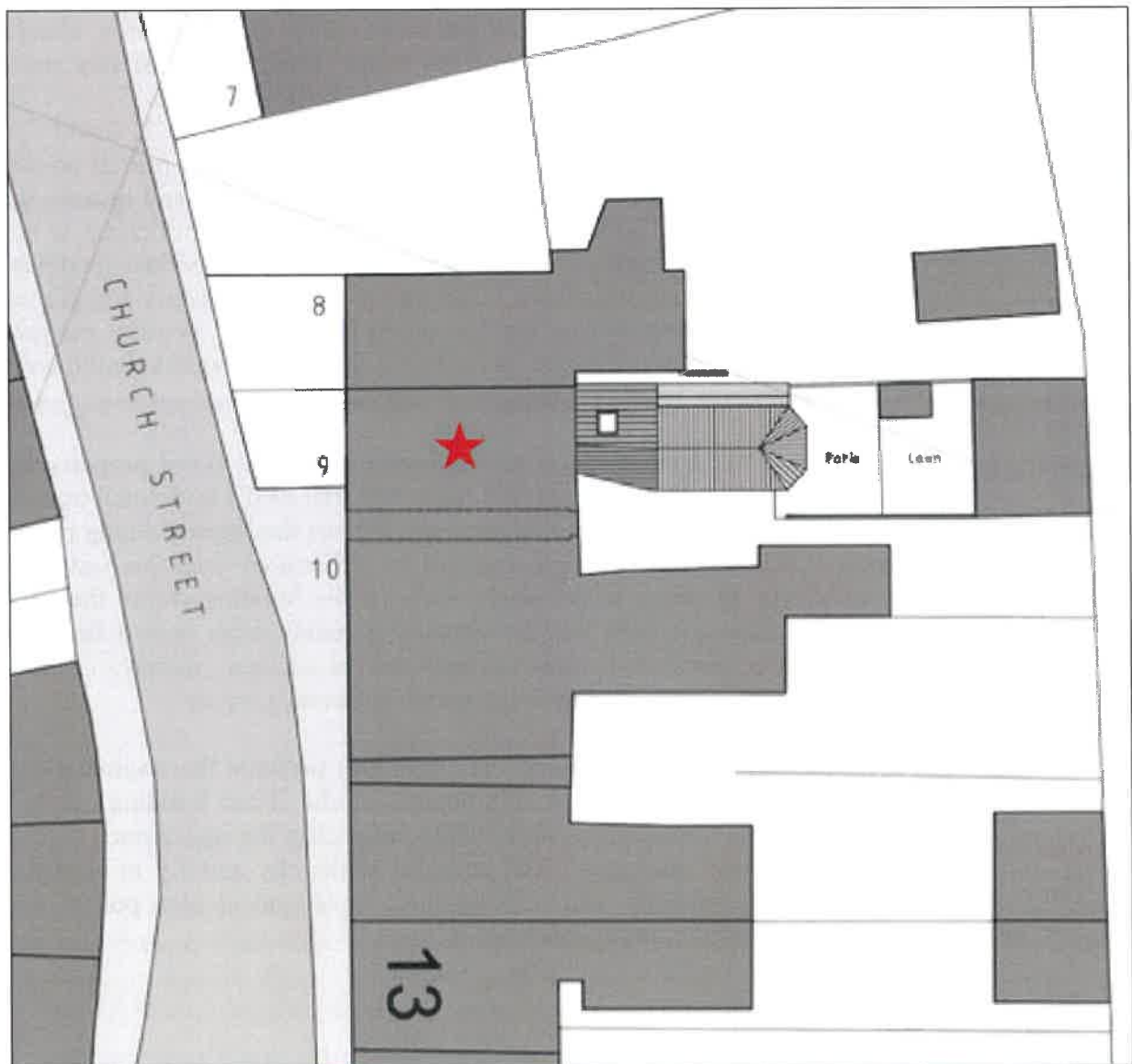
The significance of Garden Cottage essentially derives from its role as an element of the terrace, which is listed for its national special architectural and historic interest as the legacy of a thriving Ribchester cottage industry. This significance is essentially embodied in its street frontage, which displays its own individual qualities and its collective function as part of the row. The rear, which is secondary and glimpsed only in public views, is dominated by the unsympathetic late 20th century extension. This feature is itself of low significance, is defective internally and externally, and detracts from the merits of the listed building and conservation area.

The purpose of the application is to sensitively adapt the listed property to modern living requirements. The proposal will retain the stub of the traditional outrigger, built between 1893 and 1912 on map evidence, and replace the kitchen/dining room with an extension of traditional appearance that will be in harmony with the host building and its surroundings. In the principal public view of the building within the terrace from Church Street, the extension will be virtually invisible, with only a fleeting glimpse through a passage between Garden Cottage and the adjacent property. Seen from the rear, it will present a clear improvement on what currently exists.

For these reasons, it is concluded the proposal will preserve the original elements that embody the special interest and significance of the listed building, along with its contribution to the conservation area, while enhancing the appearance of the modern elements of the rear outrigger. The proposal is thereby entirely in accordance with national planning guidance and relevant local development plan policy, and should therefore be approved without delay.

2: THE SITE

The application property is located in the heart of the village of Ribchester, one of the communities within the borough of Ribble Valley, Lancashire. Garden Cottage belongs to a row of weavers' cottages which forms numbers 8-15 on the west side of Church Street. The property is numbered 9 in the row and is the second house from the south end. It is set back from the street behind a small garden, with a larger garden to the rear which faces onto playing fields. The property consists of the main body of the house along with the stub of a single-storey outrigger, to which has been added a late 20th century kitchen/dining room in conservatory style.



Map 1. The application property



1. *The application property within its terrace, looking north along Church Street*



2. *Rear view of the property from the playing fields to the west*

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Designations

The row at 8-15 Church Street of which Garden Cottage forms part is covered by a single Grade II listing. The property also stands within Ribchester Conservation Area.

3.2 Proposed development

Proposals have been submitted to Ribble Valley Borough Council for replacement of the existing defective kitchen/dining room extension at the rear of Garden Cottage.

3.3 Heritage impact

The heritage issue arising is the impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the listed building, along with its contribution to the conservation area.

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 194 of Chapter 16 (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*) the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised, July 2021) states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the particular significance of the heritage asset, including the contribution made by their setting. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to identify the significance of the application building and its contribution to the conservation area, and to assess how this will be affected by the proposal. In accordance with paragraph 194, the level of detail is considered proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset, and no more than necessary to understand the impact of the proposal. The report is to be read in conjunction with other submitted documentation.

3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

1. A description of the application building (Section 4) and the conservation area (Section 5)

2. A summary of the heritage significance of the application building (Section 6)
3. A summary of the planning policy context in which the application will be determined (Section 7)
4. Evaluation within this context of the impact of the proposal upon the significance of the listed building and its contribution to the conservation area (Section 8).

4: THE LISTED BUILDING

4.1 Overview

One of a terrace of weavers' cottages, principally viewed from Church Street, with a modern extension at the rear largely concealed from sight.

4.2 List description

The National Heritage List for England description of numbers 8-15 Church Street, compiled at the time of designation in 1983, reads:

Part of a row of weavers' houses, late C18th. Squared sandstone with brick stacks and slate roof. 2 storeys with continuous plain frieze and stone gutter brackets. Windows have plain reveals and projecting sills, the doors, to the right, having plain stone surrounds. No. 8, of one bay, has sashed windows and a triangular moulded stone door hood on stone brackets, with a stone plaque over inscribed 'BPB 1795'. No. 9 has a similar door hood, modern windows, and a 2nd 1st floor window over the door. To the right is a tunnel entrance with plain stone surround and semi-circular head with projecting key and imposts. No. 12 has a 2nd, modern, 1st floor window, as does No. 13, which has cement reveals to the ground floor door and window and a tunnel entrance to the right with plain stone surround. No. 14 has cement dressings. No. 15 has plain stone surrounds, possibly of c.1900, with a tunnel entrance to the right with plain stone surround. Nos. 14 and 15, although altered, continue the facade of the row and are listed for group value.

4.3 Further analysis

- a. **Visibility.** The principal contribution of Garden Cottage, in terms of its role within the listed terrace and in the conservation area, is made by its front elevation. Here the principal features are its doorway with pediment-style canopy, its windows, its small, stone-walled front garden and the relationship with the adjoining passage. The rear of the building is largely screened from the adjoining playing fields by a freestanding outbuilding at the end of the garden. Views are therefore limited to glimpses of the first floor, with its whitewashed masonry, and the end of the existing kitchen/dining room.
- b. **The rear extension.** Historic mapping shows that the rear of the building has undergone several phases of alteration over the course of the past century. The OS

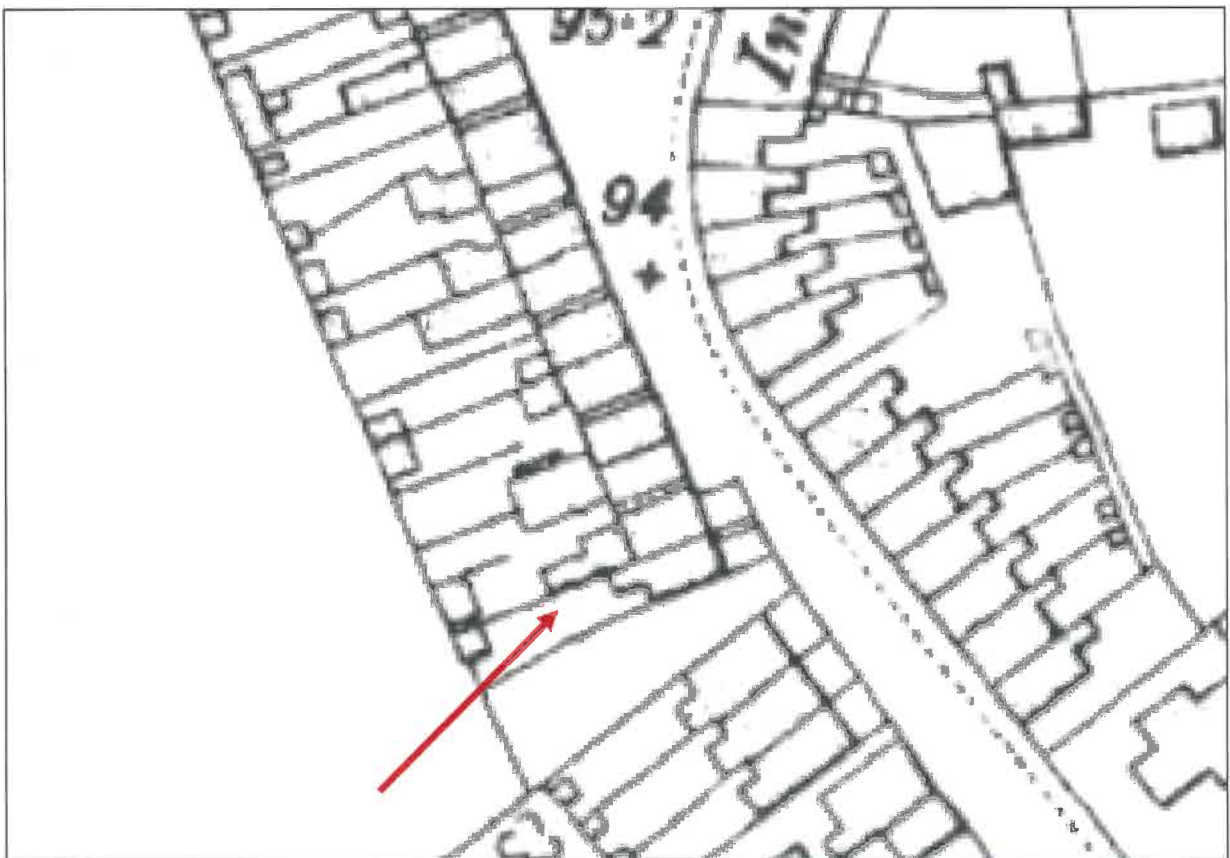
mapping of 1893 (Map 2) records a large, virtually rectangular structure (possibly a workshop?) stood directly behind the main body of the house, occupying almost the entire width of the plot. By 1912 (Map 3) this had been replaced by a smaller and narrower L-shaped outrigger, which still remained in 1970 (Map 4). The present kitchen/dining room has been grafted on to the single-storey stub of the outrigger and replacing the narrower end section shown on the mapping.



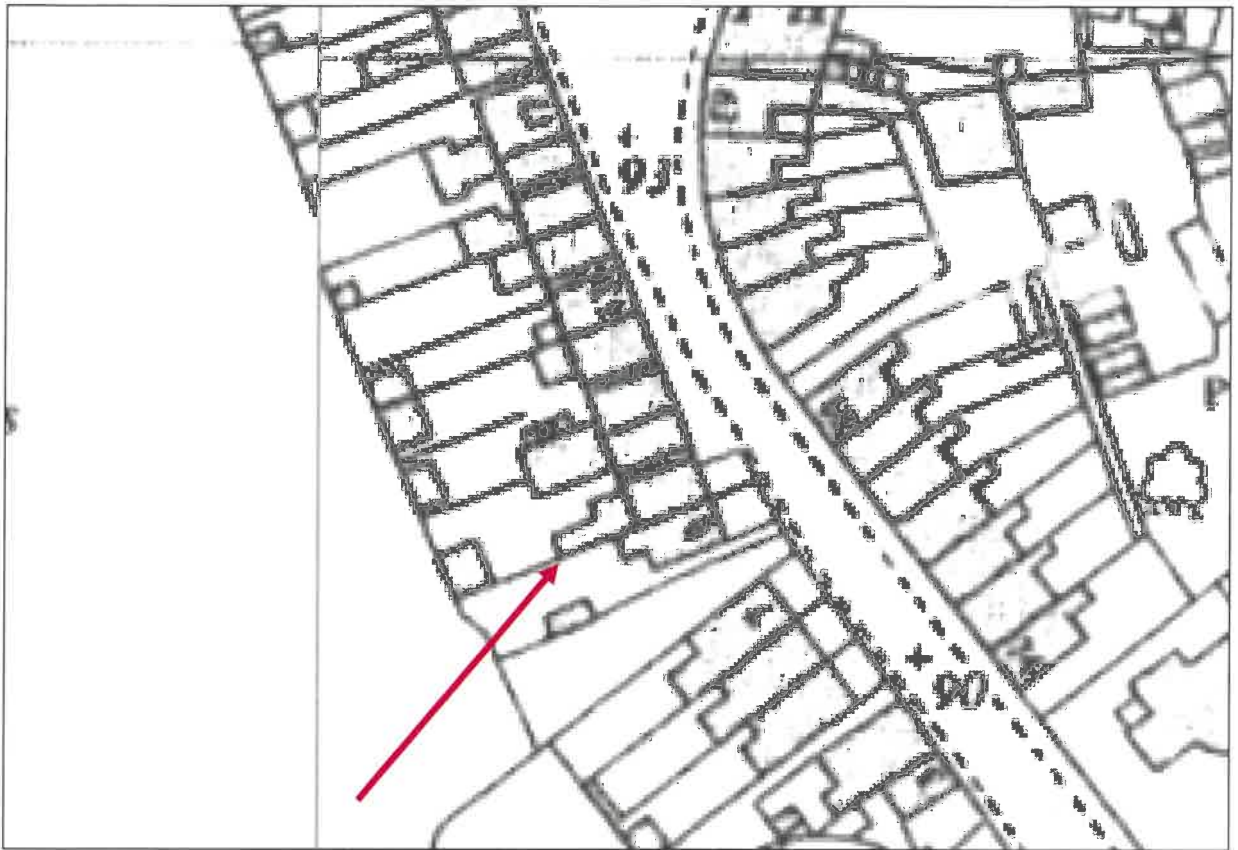
3. Front elevation of the property embodies its principal interest in public views



Map 2. The edition of 1893 records a wide rear outrigger



Map 3. A narrower L-shaped outrigger is shown in 1912



Map 4. The outrigger remained the same in 1970



4. The present kitchen/dining room is in conservatory style



5. Side elevation of the extension seen through the passage from the front

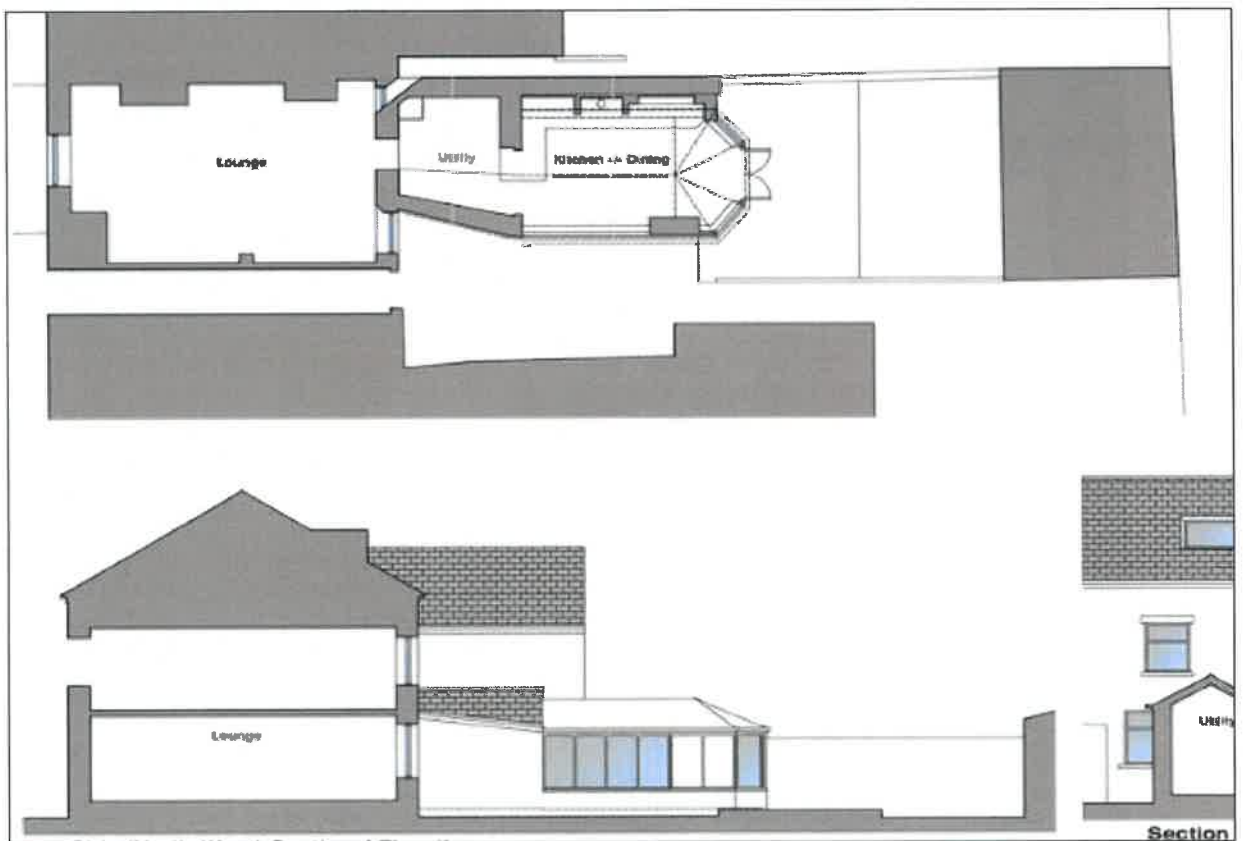


Figure 1. Existing plan and elevation showing the present conservatory

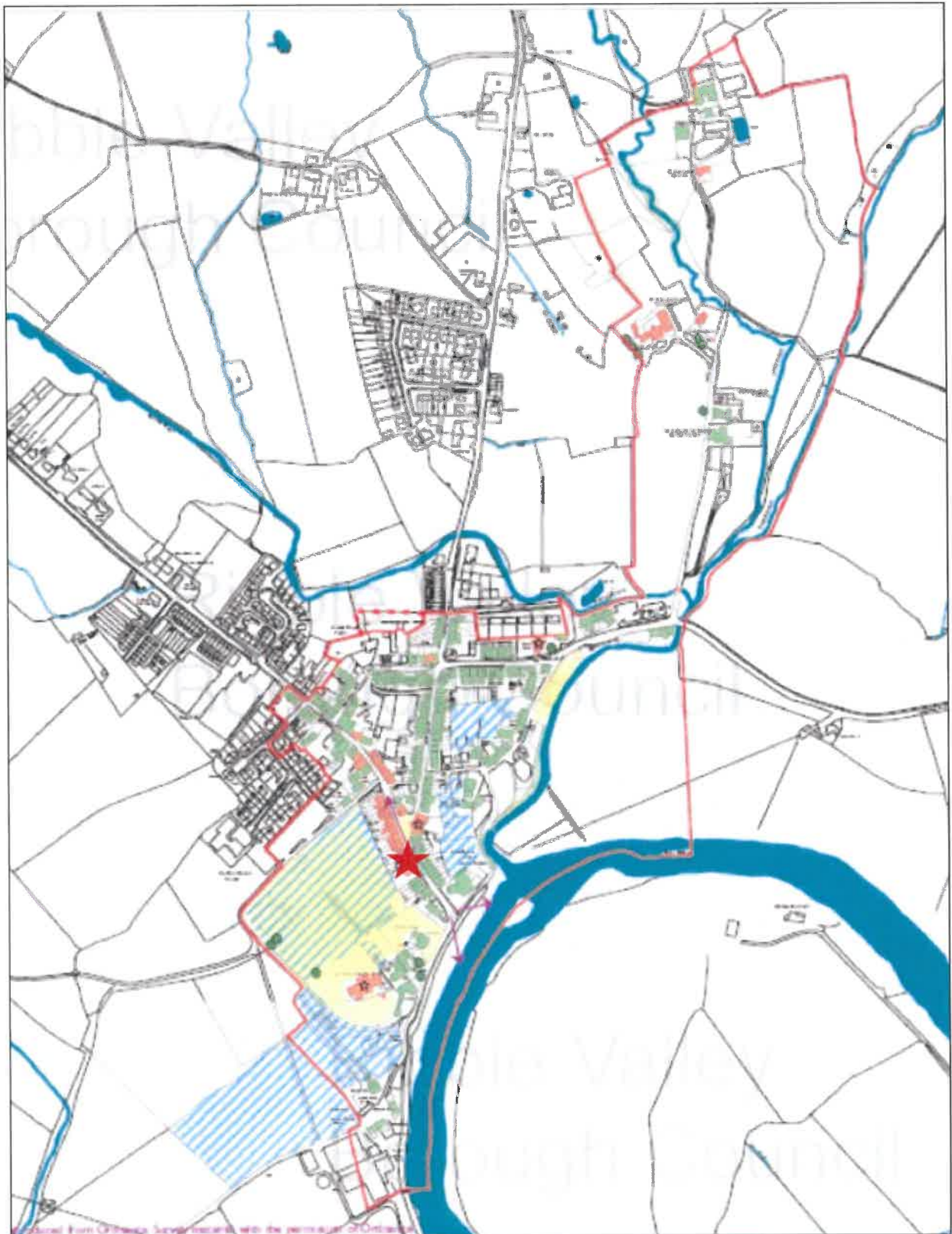
5: THE CONSERVATION AREA

5.1 Overview

Ribchester Conservation Area is extensive, and consists of the village core along with the outlying settlement of Stydd to the northeast. The character appraisal produced for Ribble Valley Borough Council in 2006 (and therefore now somewhat out of date) states Ribchester itself is dominated by rows of weavers' cottages, dating from a late 18th century boom in handloom weaving. A number of 17th or early 18th century houses also survive. The conservation area also includes the remains of the Roman fort and settlement of *Bremetennacum Veteranorum*, founded in AD72, much of which has Scheduled Monument status. There are also 21 listed buildings, including the Grade I churches of St Wilfred at Ribchester and St Saviour at Stydd. The buildings and spaces of the conservation area, and the relationship between them, are therefore the essential components of its character and appearance.

5.2 Role of the application property

As part of the row of weavers' cottages, Garden Cottage makes a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. In terms of public views, this contribution is made principally by its frontage to Church Street, with the rear largely hidden from sight.



Map 5. Location of the application property within the conservation area

6: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE APPLICATION BUILDING

6.1 Rationale

Paragraph 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimize conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Significance is defined in the NPPF Glossary as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

6.2 Summary

The application property forms part of a Grade II listed row that is of special architectural and historic interest to the nation as a row of late 18th century weavers' cottages that are the legacy of a thriving Ribchester cottage industry. The significance of Garden Cottage essentially derives from its role as an element of the listed terrace, and is essentially embodied in its street frontage, which displays its own individual qualities and its collective function as part of the row. These qualities also constitute its positive contribution to the conservation area. The rear, which is only glimpsed in public views, is dominated by the unsympathetic late 20th century conservatory-style extension. This feature is itself is of low significance and detracts from the merits of the listed building and conservation area.

7: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 Statutory duty

Sections 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest. Section 72 (1) meanwhile states that LPAs must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of a conservation area.

7.2 Relevant policies

Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides the guidance on how these statutory duties are to be put into practice. Paragraph 197 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses 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*

Regarding designated heritage assets, paragraph 199 states that ‘*great weight*’ should be given to their conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be; and that significance can be lost through development within its setting.

In the local context, Key Statement EN5 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008-2028, adopted December 16, 2014, states that there will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. This is reinforced by Policy DME4 (*Protecting Heritage Assets*), which also makes a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings.

8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

8.1 Summary of the scheme

The purpose is to adapt the listed property in a sensitive manner to provide improved facilities suitable for present-day living. The proposal will retain the stub of the traditional outrigger (built between 1893 and 1912 on map evidence) and replace the kitchen/dining room with an extension of traditional appearance.

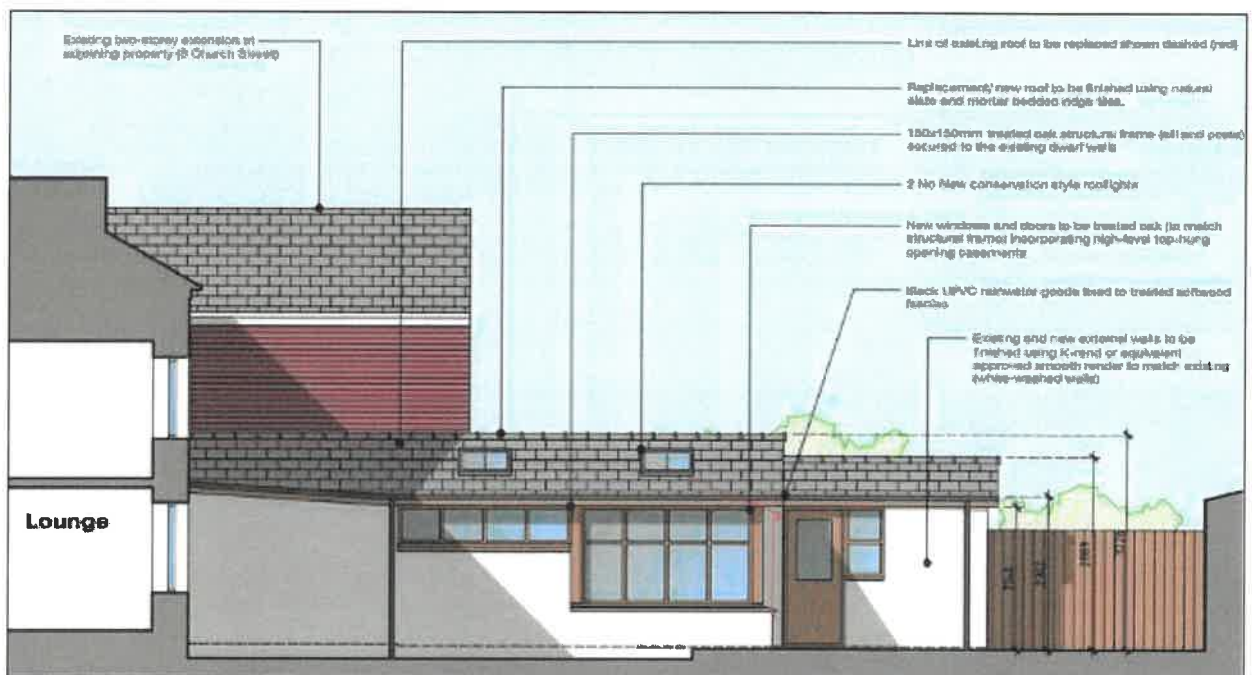


Figure 2. Proposed side elevation (Monks Architectural Design)

8.2 Its effect

The existing conservatory-style extension is out of keeping with the character of the listed building and its contribution to the conservation area. Other submitted documentation demonstrates how it is in disrepair both externally and internally. The proposal will replace this negative element with a structure that is in harmony with the host building and its surroundings. In the principal public view from Church Street, the extension will be virtually unseen, except for a fleeting glimpse through the adjoining

passage. In the view from the playing fields at the rear, it will present a clear improvement on what currently exists.

8.3 Conclusion

For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the proposal will preserve the original elements that embody the special interest and significance of the listed building, along with its contribution to the conservation area, while enhancing the appearance of the rear outrigger. The proposal is thereby entirely in accordance with national planning guidance and relevant local development plan policy, and should therefore be approved without delay.