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**From:** Contact Centre (CRM) <contact@ribblevalley.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 04 February 2025 13:31  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Planning Application Comments - 3/2024/1016 FS-Case-684623990

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**Address:**

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**Planning Application Reference No.:** 3/2024/1016

**Address of Development:** 1 to 7 The Picture House George Street Whalley BB7 9TH

**Comments:** To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to formally object to the planning application submitted by The Ronnan Corporation for the development at 1-7 George Street, Whalley, BB7 9TH. While the application outlines various changes, I firmly believe that several elements of the proposal are inappropriate, not in keeping with local planning policy, and contrary to the best interests of the community and the conservation area in which the development is situated.

**1. Rear Ground Floor Extension and Secure Cycle Storage**

The extension to the rear ground floor, intended to accommodate a secure cycle storage area, introduces a significant change to the existing building's footprint, which raises concern about its scale and impact on the surrounding area. The roller shutter door proposed for this extension is incompatible with the surrounding building aesthetics, especially in a conservation area. Roller shutter doors are not typically found within such contexts and would negatively affect the visual amenity of the area, particularly when viewed from neighbouring properties.

**2. Rear Boundary Wall**

The reinstatement of the rear boundary wall to 0.74m in height, while claimed to match the original footprint, raises significant concerns. The height is still disproportionate to the surrounding environment, and this aspect of the development would cause a further enclosure of the space, impacting both the character of the area and the experience of neighbouring residents. Furthermore, this reinstatement has not been demonstrated as necessary or proportionate in terms of the benefits it purportedly brings.

**3. Staircase Alterations and Lack of Glazing**

The alteration to the rear external staircases is particularly problematic. While the applicant states that the glazing has been omitted for cost and programme reasons, it is important to note that this decision effectively undermines the visual quality of the development and alters the approved design. The semi-enclosed stair will also present a safety risk, and this revision could set a worrying precedent for future alterations that could further degrade the integrity of the scheme. The omission of glazing and the resulting appearance of the stairwell are contrary to the original planning approval,

and the applicant should be required to restore the design to the agreed-upon plans.

#### 4. Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points

The proposal to install only two electric vehicle (EV) charging points, as opposed to the required seven, contravenes Condition 11 of the approved planning application (3/2021/1004). This decision disregards both the sustainability objectives that EV charging infrastructure seeks to promote and the requirements outlined in the original consent. The justification provided about local grid capacity is not substantiated and overlooks the long-term needs of the community. There is ample opportunity to integrate sufficient charging infrastructure, and a failure to meet these requirements undermines the development's commitment to sustainable practices.

#### 5. Replacement of UPVC Windows

While the applicant states that the new UPVC windows represent an improvement over the existing windows, the use of such materials remains highly contentious in conservation areas. The new windows are not compatible with the historic character of the area and undermine the integrity of the original design. The applicants' reference to the use of UPVC in nearby properties does not justify this choice, as it represents a broader trend of erosion of the conservation area's character. The proposal should be revisited with alternatives that are more in keeping with the historical context and architectural style of the building and surrounding area.

#### 6. Removal of Commercial Extraction Equipment

The removal of previously approved commercial extraction equipment is noted, but the lack of clarity regarding potential future use of the site is concerning. While the applicants assure that no remaining unit within the block extracts air externally, the possibility of future occupiers requiring external extraction systems raises questions. Any new commercial use should be subject to a condition ensuring that appropriate odour management and air filtration systems are in place prior to any new tenant occupation.

#### 7. Planter and Overlooking Concerns

The first-floor balcony planter, claimed to prevent overlooking to neighbouring properties, does not offer sufficient protection. The proposed synthetic greenery, while it may reduce direct sightlines, does not mitigate the visual impact of the proposed development on neighbouring properties. Furthermore, the suggestion that no additional screening measures are necessary for the second-floor terrace is questionable. The development is located in close proximity to other residential properties, and more robust screening should be implemented to protect the privacy and amenity of those residents.

#### 8. Wheelie Bin Store

The proposed ground-floor wheelie bin store, while noted to be largely enclosed, remains a concern. The visual impact of waste storage areas in close proximity to residential properties is often understated, and in this instance, the location of the bin store may result in a poor visual amenity for both the immediate environment and the residents within the development. This is a further example of how the applicants have not fully considered the broader impact of the proposal on the site's overall aesthetic and neighbourliness.

#### 9. Cladding and Fire Regulations Compliance

The central cladding to the third-floor dormer fenestration to meet fire regulations is another area of concern. While fire safety is paramount, this design change may introduce an unsightly feature that conflicts with the character of the building. The proposed material and aesthetic of the cladding should be scrutinised carefully to ensure it is both functional and visually appropriate within the context of the conservation area. In addition, any departure from the original approved materials

must be thoroughly justified with detailed evidence.

#### 10. Removal of Solar Panels

The removal of previously approved solar panels is an unacceptable step backward for a development that was intended to demonstrate sustainability and energy efficiency. The solar panels were a vital part of the original design, ensuring the building met modern environmental standards. Their removal, without adequate justification, undermines the sustainability credentials of the development and should be reconsidered.

#### 11. Amended Rooflight Specification

The amended rooflight specification, while claimed to improve the visual quality of the street scene, requires further examination. Rooflights, when not carefully considered, can have a detrimental effect on the overall appearance of a building, particularly in a conservation area. Any changes to the rooflight design should be subject to detailed scrutiny to ensure they align with the overall aesthetic of the building and are not harmful to the visual amenity of the area.

#### 12. External Lighting Scheme

The external lighting scheme, while aimed at enhancing safety and security, must be carefully controlled to avoid light pollution. Excessive or poorly positioned lighting can cause harm to the surrounding environment and detract from the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. A more detailed lighting plan should be submitted to ensure the impact on the area is minimal and that the lighting is in keeping with the character of the location.

#### 13. Impact on Local Wildlife and Bats

Finally, it is essential to note that the building, given its age and location within the conservation area, may provide habitats for local wildlife, including bats. Bats are a protected species under UK law, and any disruption to their habitat must be thoroughly assessed and mitigated. The planning application makes no mention of a bat survey or an environmental impact assessment, which are necessary steps before any development proceeds. I urge the council to ensure that the applicant conducts a comprehensive bat survey and that appropriate mitigation measures are put in place if bat habitats are identified. Failure to address this critical issue could result in legal repercussions and further environmental damage.

In light of the above objections, I strongly urge the council to reject this application. The proposal, as it stands, does not meet the necessary planning policies, nor does it respect the conservation area in which it is situated. The various alterations and additions proposed, from the omission of glazing to the removal of solar panels, represent a significant departure from the original approval and would result in a development that is detrimental to the local area's character and the amenity of neighbouring residents.