

HERITAGE STATEMENT TO SUPPORT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT AND PLANNING APPLICATION AT:

**THE OLD SCHOOL,
NEWTON-IN-BOWLAND,
CLITHEROE,
LANCASHIRE**

1. Introduction

1.1 This heritage statement is produced to support a forthcoming listed building consent and planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council, for works to the bellcote and bell at The Old School, Newton-in-Bowland.

1.2 The statement is produced by the owners and applicants Mr Steven John and Mrs Tracey Boswell, in part and where relevant it relies and references the heritage statement produced in April 2019 by Stephen Haigh MA (a buildings archaeologist with over 20 years professional experience of assessing, investigating and recording historic buildings in the region) used to support earlier applications for works at the address.

1.3 The building is listed at Grade II, under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended, for its special architectural or historic interest, and it lies within the Newton Conservation Area. Both of these are designated heritage assets.

1.4 The proposal comprises restoration of the original school bell then reinstating it into its original location in the existing repaired bellcote. Taken together these works will restore the former appearance of the building and the opinion of this statement is that these works will enhance the significance of the heritage assets concerned, without harm or loss.

2. Location

2.1 The site lies near the eastern edge of the small village of Newton, on the south side of the B6478, leading to Slaidburn (NRG: SD6979550524). It stands very close to the road, faces north-west, and has a surfaced yard to the rear. School House Cottage adjoins the building to the south west.

3. Current use

3.1 The building was dis-established as a school and closed on the 28th August 1967, it was subsequently sold on the 2nd April 1968 and has been in residential use ever since.

4. Planning context

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 Section 16 of the NPPF, “Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment”, sets out the relevant part of national planning policy regarding listed buildings. Paragraph 189 states that: “In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.”

Local policy – RVBC Core Strategy

4.2 The relevant local planning policy is DME4, *Protecting Heritage Assets*.

5. Development proposals

5.1 The applicants have made significant efforts to seek out the original bell and to recover this. The proposal is to carry out only minimal cleaning to this retaining and preserving the naturally aged patina as the final finish. A replica clapper to replace that lost over time will be forged to suit.

5.2 Two new Longridge Fell stonework pieces will be masoned to match and replace fractured pieces in the bellcote, these will accept the installation.

5.3 Installation of the bell will require restoration of the missing elements of the rotational bar and roller bearing used to support and rotate the bell. Fabrication of new roller bearings will be installed onto baseplates and fixed into the new stone; the bell will be secured to a new rotational bar. Specification of the steel and paint colours are included in the application.

5.4 The applicants have been unable to find any definitive evidence of the original bell pull mechanisms. Previous application numbers 3/2024/0335 and 3/2024/0336, approved with conditions, proposed fabrication of an internal bell pull chain which would penetrate the roof space and internal fabric of the building.

5.5 After further and careful reconsideration, including a further site survey with all relevant professionals on the 14th January 2025, the applicants now propose a simpler alternative which is to install a bell pull to the exterior of the property. Advice from RVBC on the 15th November 2024 states that this would mean that the bell pull would be read in concert with the front of the property and would constitute a material change to the external appearance of the property, as a result a new application for planning permission and listed building consent is required.

5.6 This revised proposal is to install a rope bell pull to the exterior of the building. The proposal is to use a classic braid on braid rope, the specification of this is detailed in the application form.

5.7 The bell pull will take a path from the high point to above the door hood, the length of the lever arm will ensure a drop line that does not interfere with any cornices and plinths. The bell pull will then feed through a hoop, and a hoop and shackle to tether it to the building, both hoop(s) and shackle will be 316-grade stainless steel. Securing of the stainless steel hoop and shackle will be carried out by a fully qualified stonemason using hand tools and without damaging the masonry. The hoop and shackle will be fixed within the mortar joints of the stone facade to the setting out dimensions as shown on the drawing. The location of the joints will determine the actual positions of the fixings. Any disturbance of mortar will be minimal and any re-pointing will match the original in terms of material, texture, quality, colour and finish. The stainless steel hoop and shackle are overall small and unobtrusive and not highly visible and so are considered to have little impact on the special interest. In all, the bell pull and proposed fixings are reversible.

5.8 The final part of the bell pull will be a removeable 'Sally' which will be detached and stored within the house and not visible on the exterior of the building. The 'Sally' will be clipped to the bell pull, and the bell pull released from its hooks only on the occasion of the bell being rung.

5.9 The applicants believe that this proposal presents least possible disruption to the overall fabric of the building, and that it provides a low-profile and unobtrusive solution to ringing the bell. This proposal will not harm any part of the interior of the building which is considered an improvement on the earlier approved applications. The applicants believe that the revised proposals propose a manageable solution to installing a simple bell pull and will have the minimum impact on the exterior fabric of the building.

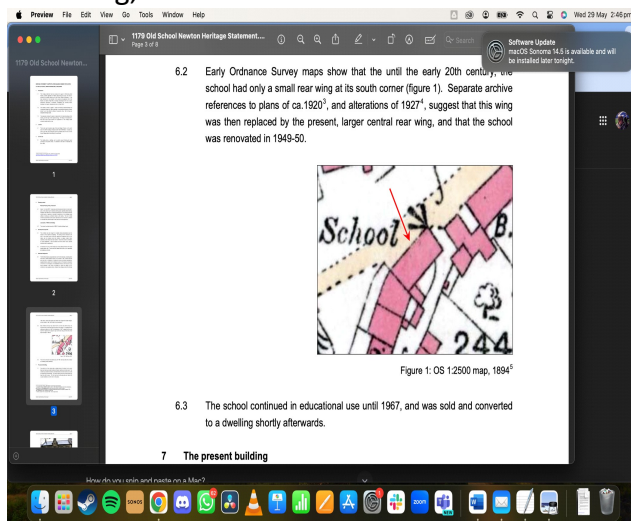
5.10 The work proposed respects and preserves the significant heritage assets of the bell and bellcote; and the maintenance implications of the proposed restoration is considered to be sustainable and will be founded on appropriate routine management and maintenance of the building in accordance with good conservation of its heritage. These restoration works will be undertaken by Calibre Metalwork and Ribble Valley Stonemasonry in strict accordance with their written Statement of Work (submitted with the application).

6. Historical background

6.1 The Old School bears a large date-stone over the front doorway recording that it was built as 'Newton National School', and erected in 1842. National Schools were built with a combination of funding from local and national subscriptions, supplemented by grants from the *National Society for Promoting Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church*, which was set up by senior members of the Church of England, to counter the efforts of non-conformist or non-sectarian schools. Newton had a Quaker school from the late 18th century, which also taught poor children from outside the Quaker religion, but that closed in 1844, "for the want of a schoolmaster".

6.2 Original documentation held at The National Archives (reference ED 103/73/43) describes the site and building specification in 1842, no reference is made to there being a bellcote in place at that time. Historic photographs show the bell in place from ~1920 and it is not unreasonable therefore to conclude that the addition of a school bell took place during the intervening years.

6.3 Early Ordnance Survey maps show that until the early 20th century, the school had only a small rear wing at its south corner (figure 1). Separate archive references to plans circa 1920 and alterations of 1927 suggest that this wing was then replaced by the present, larger central rear wing, and that the school was renovated in 1949-1950.



6.4 In 1952, the Minister for Education approved the plan to close Newton School, the school continued beyond this until 1967, when it was sold and converted into a dwelling the following year.

7. The present building

7.1 The school is in Tudor revival style, a single storey of five bays, the four outer bays each having a two-light window with plain chamfers and hood-mould. The central bay contains the

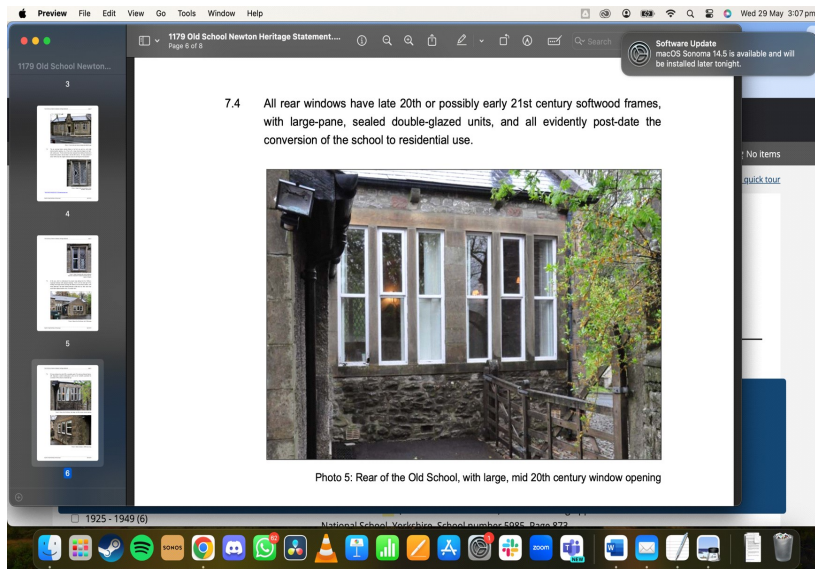
entrance, with date-stone and hood-mould over, as well as a gablet with small bellcote. The quoins project and have furrowed tooling, as does the plinth course. The front wall and north-east gable are faced with coursed sandstone, and the roof is of blue slate.



7.2 Six historic window frames to the front are cast iron, with small diamond-pattern glazing, one of them with a larger diamond-shaped vent light, with central pivot.

7.3 Planning application number 3/2019/0437 granted permission to repair the vent-light, and to replace the two late 20th century softwood frames with leaded lattice pattern glazing with replica diamond pattern cast iron to match the historic ones. This work was completed by Calibre Metalwork in 2019.

7.4 The rear of the building is a roughcast rendered wing dating from the 1920's with large window openings with ashlar quoins and flush mullions. Planning application number 3/2019/0427 granted permission to replace the early 21st century timber openings. This work was completed in 2019.



7.5 In the centre of the façade is a steep gable with a coping and stone bellcote. The bell is no longer in situ having been removed shortly after the building was converted into residential use in 1968. The architectural masonry used to hold the bell in situ remains with only slight evidence of the original metal work remaining, this now rusted and causing fracturing to the stonework as a result.



8. Statement of heritage significance

8.1 The Old School has considerable heritage significance, as a grade II listed, dated, mid 19th century former National School, whose outward appearance within the village and conservation area, as a modestly sized, educational building in Tudor revival style, has been very little altered. It is noted in the conservation area appraisal as one of the most important positive features of the Newton Conservation Area, where it forms an example of “sympathetic modernisation or conversion”.

8.2 The rear elevation of the building has changed considerably since 1842, both by the replacement of an early wing by the present one, in the 1920’s, and the later refenestration of the main building, thought to have been in the mid 20th century.

8.3 The interior has been subdivided during its conversion to residential use and has lost much of its significance, and is not considered to be a relevant consideration for the current proposals.

9. Impact assessment

9.1 The proposed repairs and restoration to the previously removed school bell and reinstatement into its original site in the bellcote will restore these major missing historical and architecturally valuable elements to the former appearance of the building.

9.2 Together these works will sympathetically conserve the character of the building, restoring its special architecture features.

9.3 The restoration and repairs will maintain the buildings value and historic interest as a National School, maintaining its outward appearance and significance in the Newton Conservation Area, and having a positive affect on the listed building's special character.

9.4 A methodology produced by the specialist craftsmen contractors, Calibre Metalwork and Ribble Valley Stonemasonry sets out in detail the works required.