


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	BT	Date:	27/5/25	Manager:	LH	Date:	28/5/25
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Application Ref:	3/2025/0164			 Ribble Valley Borough Council <small>www.ribbonvalley.gov.uk</small>
Date Inspected:	18/4/25	Site Notice:	18/4/25	
Officer:	BT			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				APPROVAL

Development Description:	Planning permission for proposed re-hanging of the school bell in the existing bell cote over front door.
Site Address/Location:	The Old School, Slaidburn Road, Newton, BB7 3DY.

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
Newton Parish Council:	No objections.

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
RVBC Environmental Health:	No objections.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
None.	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

- Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
- Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development
- Key Statement EN2: Landscape
- Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets
- Policy DMG1: General Considerations
- Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations
- Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets
- Policy DMH5: Residential and Curtilage Extensions

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act Section 16, 66 & 72

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

3/2025/0165:

Listed Building Consent for proposed re-hanging of the school bell in the existing bell cote over front door (Ongoing)

3/2024/0335:

Planning permission for proposed re-hanging of the school bell in the existing bell cote over front door (Approved)

3/2024/0336:

Listed Building Consent for proposed re-hanging of the school bell in the existing bell cote over front door (Approved)

3/2021/0025:

Proposed laying of cobbles, flags and gravel to the rear yard (LBC) (Withdrawn)

3/2021/0024:

Proposed laying of cobbles, flags and gravel to the rear yard (PP) (Approved)

3/2019/0810:

Application for the discharge of condition 1 (commencement of development), 2 (permission shall be implemented in accordance with the proposal as amended by letter received on the 8 July 2019), 3 (specifications of proposed replacement windows to be discharged partly) and 5 (details of the extent of front window pane replacement and specifications and samples of proposed new glazing) from planning permission 3/2019/0437 (Approved)

3/2019/0809:

Application for the discharge of condition 1 (commencement of development), 2 (permission shall be implemented in accordance with the proposal as amended by letter received on the 8 July 2019), 3 (specifications of proposed replacement windows to be discharged partly) and 5 (details of the extent of front window pane replacement and specifications and samples of proposed new glazing) from listed building consent 3/2019/0438 (Approved)

3/2019/0733:

Application for the discharge of condition 3 (windows) and 4 (specifications of proposed over door light, door furniture and cobble surfacing) from planning permission 3/2019/0438 (Approved)

3/2019/0732:

Application for the discharge of condition 3 (windows) and 4 (specifications of proposed over door light, door furniture and cobble surfacing) from planning permission 3/2019/0437 (Approved)

3/2019/0438:

Repair and replace diamond pattern cast iron windows to front and restoration of balustrade; replace timber window frames to rear; works to curtilage to replace broken tarmac with cobble sets; replace broken, over-door external light fitting with fully shielded dark sky approved fitting to front; paint front door and fit new door furniture (LBC) (Approved)

3/2019/0437:

Repair and replace diamond pattern cast iron windows to front and restoration of balustrade; replace timber window frames to rear; works to curtilage to replace broken tarmac with cobble sets; replace broken, over-door external light fitting with fully shielded dark sky approved fitting to front; paint front door and fit new door furniture (PP) (Approved)

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:**Site Description and Surrounding Area:**

The application relates to an end terraced residential property in Newton-in-Bowland. The application property lies within the defined settlement boundary of Newton on the Eastern side of the village within the Forest Of Bowland National Landscape. Two storey cottage properties comprising a stone and slate vernacular adjoin to the South-western side of the application property with additional detached residential properties lying directly adjacent to the North-east. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character with the large majority of properties in the village comprising a stone and slate

based vernacular. Open countryside encompasses the village's defined settlement boundary with this forming part of the wider Forest Of Bowland National Landscape.

The application property holds Grade II Listed Building status with the official Historic England listing description for the property reading as follows:

'Former school, 1842. Squared watershot sandstone with slate roof. One storey, 4 bays, with projecting furrowed quoins. The stone window surrounds are chamfered, with chamfered central mullions and hoods. The diagonal iron glazing bars remain, except for the left-hand lights in bays 3 and 4. In the centre of the facade is a steep gable with a coping and a stone bellcote. Below is a door with chamfered stone surround. Above the door and beneath a hood is an inscribed plaque: 'NEWTON NATIONAL SCHOOL ERECTED A.D. 1842'. The left-hand gable has a coping and an octagonal chimney cap.'

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Planning consent is sought for the reinstatement of a former school bell within the property's existing bell cote. The application is an almost identical resubmission of previous planning application 3/2024/0335, albeit with the current application proposing a mechanism for operating the reinstated school bell.

Impact upon Listed Building:

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF states:

'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.'

In addition, Key Statement EN5 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states:

'There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings.'

Furthermore, Policy DME4 of the Core Strategy states:

'Alterations or extensions to Listed Buildings or buildings of local heritage interest, or development proposals on sites within their setting which cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset will not be supported.'

Heritage impact is considered to be the potential level of harm upon the significance of a heritage asset caused by development proposals. The NPPF defines significance as 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest'. Such interest can be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.

Statements Of Heritage Significance, Historic England (2019) defines these as follows:

'Archaeological Interest: There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.'

'Architectural And Artistic Interest: Interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction,

craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture'.

'Historic Interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.'

National Planning guidance requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting in order to allow the LPA to come to a judgment about the level of impact on that significance and therefore on the merits of the proposal.

A Heritage Statement has been provided in support of the application which summarises the significance of The Old School as follows:

'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".'

Accordingly, the above observations indicate that the significance of the application property is largely underpinned by its historic interest (illustrative of historic educational practices) and architectural interest (unaltered Tudor revival design).

The works proposed under this application relate to the reinstatement of a school bell and supporting framework within the property's bell cote.

Having regard to the above, the *Institute Of Historic Building Conservation (2021)* states:

'The reinstatement of documented missing architectural fixtures or features may be appropriate if there is clear and compelling evidence and the work is undertaken accurately.'

Furthermore, Historic England guidance *Making Changes to Heritage Assets (2016)* states:

'If convincing evidence is available it may be appropriate to take opportunities to reinstate missing architectural details, using traditional methods and materials.'

In this instance, it is understood that the applicant has undertaken considerable efforts to source the original school bell which formerly occupied the property's bell cote. In addition, photographs of the property's original school bell have been provided in support of the application and there is no evidence to suggest that the sourced artefact is not authentic. Furthermore, historic photographs show the school bell as being in situ from 1920 onwards until its removal in 1968 following conversion of the property to a residential dwelling. As such, reinstatement of the property's original school bell as proposed is considered to be entirely appropriate in this instance given that the historical origins of this feature can be clearly traced. Furthermore, the reinstatement of this original feature would deliver a minor enhancement to both the historical and architectural significance of the heritage asset.

Having regard to the practicalities of reinstating the original school bell, it is stated that the surviving school bell would be subjected to minimal cleaning prior to being rehung so as to retain its natural patina and this is considered to be acceptable. The two existing sections of stonework within the property's bell cote which currently accommodate the historic rotational bar brackets contain fractures and as such would need to be replaced in order to accommodate the school bell's supporting steelwork. Existing stonework adjoining the defective stonework within the bell cote would first be carefully removed and labelled prior to removal of the defective stonework so as to allow for an accurate

reconstruction of the bell cote. The replacement stone work would then be doweled in to place with stainless steel dowels to ensure minimal impacts to the building's historic fabric, with the replacement and existing stonework subsequently repointed with lime mortar which would allow for maximum breathability. Longridge Sandstone would be utilised for the replacement stonework within the property's bell cote. The stonework sample provided in support of the application indicates that this would be largely in keeping with the vernacular of the property's existing stonework therefore its use within the proposed development is considered to be acceptable. Replacement roller bearings would then be installed onto baseplates which would be fixed into the new sections of stonework, with a new rotational bar fixed into the new roller bearings and with the school bell subsequently being secured to the new rotational bar with a connecting bolt. A lever arm would then be forged onto the front section of the rotational bar in order to accommodate a bell pull rope. The application's supporting information indicates that all of the above items would comprise a mild steel based design detailed in a high quality heritage black paint. The use of steel components detailed in a high quality heritage paint would be wholly respectful to the historic character of the application property. Furthermore, sample photographs of the roller bearings, rotational bar and internal clapper have been provided and these details are considered to be acceptable.

A bell pull rope is to be affixed to the lever arm of the school bell, with the lever arm comprising a modest outwards projection from the property's frontage that would allow the bell pull rope to comfortably clear the building's cornice and plinth features. The bell pull rope would subsequently feed through a hoop, and a hoop and shackle to tether it to the building. The hoops and shackle would be affixed within the mortar joints of the building's principal elevation, with this work being carried out by a fully qualified stonemason using hand tools, and with any re-pointing matching the original in terms of material, texture, quality, colour and finish. As such, installation of the bell pull rope would involve minimal disturbance to the property's historic building fabric. The bell pull rope itself would comprise a classic English braid on braid design of minimal width (6mm), with the pull rope extending for a relatively modest length of just over 3 metres before terminating above the property's front door. Similarly, the hoops and shackle would be small and unobtrusive features comprised of steel which would be in keeping with the new steelwork within the property's bell cote. Furthermore, the bell pull and its proposed fixings would be reversible features and could therefore be removed from the building with relative ease in the future if required. The final part of the bell pull would comprise a removeable 'Sally' which would be clipped to the bell pull, with the bell pull released from its hooks only on the occasion of the bell being rung, and with the Sally otherwise being stored within the property at all other times.

Taking account of all of the above, the proposed development would involve minimal disturbance to the historic fabric of the building and it is considered that the works proposed would provide a low-profile and visually unobtrusive solution for operating the reinstated historic school bell. As such, the above works are considered to be acceptable with respect to the methodologies proposed and the proposed use of materials. Furthermore, it is considered that the restoration of the property's bell cote and reinstatement of the historic school bell would deliver a minor enhancement to the significance of the heritage asset, with no harm identified to the Listed Building from the works proposed. The proposed development would therefore satisfy the requirements of Section 16 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Paragraph 212 of the NPPF and Key Statement EN5 and Policy DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Impact upon Character/appearance of Conservation Area:

The application property is sited within the Newton Conservation Area. With reference to making decisions on applications for development in Conservation Areas, Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

"...special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

This guidance is reiterated in Key Statement EN5 of the Ribble Borough Valley Core Strategy which stipulates that all development proposals should respect and safeguard the character, appearance and significance of all Conservation Areas.

In this instance, the *Newton Conservation Area Appraisal (2005)* identifies the seventeen Listed Buildings within the boundary of the Conservation Area as contributing towards the area's special interest, with The Old School being one such property. In addition, and as referenced in the application's heritage statement, The Old School is specifically referred to in the Conservation Area Appraisal as one of the area's strongpoints by virtue of its largely unaltered historic character.

As previously conveyed, it is considered that the proposed development would in this instance deliver a minor enhancement to the historic and architectural significance of the application property which in turn would be read in the context of the surrounding Conservation Area. Consequently, it is considered that the works proposed to the application property would deliver a minor enhancement to the character and appearance of the Newton Conservation Area.

Accordingly, the proposed development would satisfy the requirements of Key Statement EN5 and Policy DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

The proposed development raises no concerns with respect to impacts upon neighbouring amenity.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

Paragraph 135 (c) of the NPPF states:

'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.'

With respect to development within Areas Of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now known as National Landscapes), Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.'

The above is reiterated within Key Statement EN2 of the Core Strategy:

'The landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials.'

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy provides general design guidance as follows:

'All development must be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing and style...particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character.'

In this instance, the proposed development would involve the reinstatement of an original historic feature that would deliver a minor visual enhancement to the historic frontage of the property. In

addition, the proposed use of locally sourced sandstone and appropriately detailed steelwork within the existing bell cote to facilitate reinstatement of the historic school bell would be in keeping with the vernacular of historic buildings within the locality and as such is considered to be acceptable.

Taking account of the above, it is not considered that the proposed development would be harmful to the historic character of the application property or visual amenities of the immediate area or wider National Landscape. The proposal would therefore satisfy the requirements of Paragraph 135 (c) and 189 of the NPPF and Key Statement EN2 and Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy.

Landscape/Ecology:

The development is exempt from having to achieve the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement as it forms the basis of a householder planning application. No additional ecological constraints were identified in relation to the proposed development.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

The proposed reinstatement of an original historical artefact is considered to be entirely appropriate in this instance and it is considered that this would deliver a minor enhancement to both the historical and architectural significance of the application property and character and appearance of the surrounding Conservation Area.

As such, for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION:	That planning consent be granted subject to the imposition of conditions.
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