


**Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.**

<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Officer:</b>	<b>KH</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>25/09/25</b>	<b>Manager:</b>	<b>LH</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>26/9/25</b>
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<b>Application Ref:</b>	2025/0546			 <b>Ribble Valley Borough Council</b> <a href="http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk">www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</a>
<b>Date Inspected:</b>	14/08/25	<b>Site Notice:</b>	01/09/25	
<b>Officer:</b>	KH			
<b>DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:</b>				<b>APPROVAL</b>

<b>Development Description:</b>	Division of existing 5-bedroom dwelling at the former presbytery to St. Mary's Church to form one 3-bedroom residential dwelling and an additional 1-bedroom residential apartment. Demolition of 2 garages and store outbuilding. Retention of existing ground floor sacristy.
<b>Site Address/Location:</b>	49 Whalley Road, Sabden BB7 9DZ

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Parish/Town Council</b>
No objections.	

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies</b>
<b>LCC Highways:</b>	<p>No objection subject to condition relating to secure cycle storage.</p> <p>The existing access on Whalley Road will be used to provide vehicle access to the car parking at the rear of the buildings, no changes to the access are proposed or are considered necessary.</p> <p>The existing pedestrian access on Whalley Road will be widened to provide two separate pedestrian accessed to the dwellings.</p> <p>There are two garages and an outbuilding to be demolished to the rear of the buildings. These are replaced with three car parking spaces, one parking space for the first floor one bed apartment and two parking spaces for the three-bed dwelling which accords with the parking standards. Secure cycle stores should be provided to support sustainable travel.</p>

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Additional Representations.</b>

**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 EN4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Key Statement EN5 – Heritage Assets

Policy DMG1 – General Considerations  
Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations  
Policy DME3 – Site and Species Protection and Conservation  
Policy DME4 – Protecting Heritage Assets  
Policy DMH3 – Dwellings in the Open Countryside & the AONB

Sabden Conservation Area Appraisal (2005)  
Sabden Conservation Area Management Plan (2005)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act  
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

**Relevant Planning History:**

No history for the presbytery.

**ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:**

**Site Description and Surrounding Area:**

The presbytery is a two storey stone built property located within the settlement boundary of Sabden, within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Sabden Conservation Area.

The site is access via a private driveway from Whalley Road and is sited in an elevated position on the north side of Whalley Road and adjoins the northeast side of St. Mary's Catholic Church.

This application proposed to subdivide the first floor to create a one bed apartment and demolish the existing garage and store to the rear to form three parking spaces.

The property is identified as a 'Building of Townscape Merit' which makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The church is attached to the side of Bank House (application site) which was acquired in 1909 to serve as a presbytery with the ground floor used for worship until funds were raised to build the church adjoining. The present church was built in 1937 with stone from a cotton mill at Lowerhouse, Burnley.

**Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**

Internal and external works to allow the property to be converted into a three-bedroom dwelling and one bedroom apartment. Proposed works includes repairs to the stone and windows with paint removal and new fascia boards and rainwater goods. The window to the southwest elevation will be altered to form a new doorway with a further window in the rear elevation also altered to form a doorway at ground floor to serve the proposed first floor apartment. A new wall opening will also be formed to the south east boundary wall.

**Principle of Development:**

The site lies within the settlement of Sabden which is a Tier 2 Village. As the proposal will result in an additional residential unit this trigger the requirements of Key Statement DS1, Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMH3.

DS1 seeks to direct new housing development towards the principal settlements which include Clitheroe, and the smaller Tier 1 and 2 settlements.

Policy DMG2 applies the strategic principles contained in DS1. The application is for a sub-division of an existing dwelling within the settlement boundary of Sabden which is a Tier two settlement. The Policy requires development within a Tier 2 Settlement to meet at least one of the following considerations:

1. The development should be essential to the local economy or social well-being of the area;
2. The development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agricultural;
3. The development is for local needs housing which meets an identified need and is secured as such;
4. The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area;
5. The development is for small scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated;
6. The development is compatible with the enterprise zone designation.

The supporting statement addresses this policy and states that the development would provide a much-needed means of income for St. Mary's Church so that it can continue to serve as a focal point for religious and social activities within Sabden as well as continuing the vital role it plays in community cohesion and social support.

However no evidence has been provided to support this statement e.g. financial reports or details of social activities as such it has not been demonstrated that this development would be essential to the social well-being of the area. Albeit the likely benefits to supporting this asset within the community are acknowledged and given some weight.

No other criteria within DMG2 is considered relevant therefore strictly the principle of development is not supported by policy DMG2 in terms of its location.

Whilst the site also located within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape compliance with policy DMH3 is not necessary as this proposal would result in a sub-division rather than a conversion.

Policy DMG3 requires proposals to reduce reliance on the private motor vehicle, which supports the overarching ambition to achieve sustainable development.

Being a Tier 2 village, Sabden has limited facilities and is more reliant on the use of private motor vehicles due to its limited public transport provision. As such future occupants of the new unit would likely be car dependent to access day to day services and facilities. However, having regard to the size of the existing dwelling and the potential number of vehicle trips this generates, the proposed subdivision to create two smaller dwellings is not considered to have a material impact on traffic generation. As such no conflict with DMG3 is identified.

#### **Impact upon Character/appearance of Conservations Area:**

No. 49 Whalley Road makes an important contribution to the Sabden Conservation Area.

Proposals within a Conservation Area are required to conserve and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of those elements which contribute towards its significance.

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.

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 includes a brief history of the site taken from 'Taking Stock' website which is a project of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales which provides an architectural and historical assessment of churches in regular use for public worship. The entry for St. Mary's Church also briefly mentions 49 Whalley Road which it describes as a handsome end of terrace mid nineteenth century stone built house with Gothic detail to the entrance and a two-storey bay window.

The significance of the building is derived from being an example of a mid-219<sup>th</sup> century terrace dwelling which was also instrumental in the establishment of a dedicated Roman Catholic church in Sabden. The building was acquired in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to serve as a presbytery and also as the place of worship until the adjoining church was constructed in 1937. The exterior of the building is simple but dignified with gothic windows and door detailing to the front southeast elevation which is of interest. The rear of the building is of lesser interest which has been diminished further by the introduction of modern garages and a conservatory addition. This is combined with the loss of original windows throughout the building and their replacement with modern timber and uPVC windows.

The significance of Sabden Conservation Area is derived from its strong sense of place and local distinctiveness created by varying ages and appearances of its buildings and the use of locally quarried stone. The conservation area is characterised by late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses with a small number of larger detached dwellings for the more affluent mill owners. The buildings are completed by natural features including Sabden Brook and important tree groups particularly at St. Nicholas's church and adjacent to St. Mary's Church.

In terms of justification for the proposed works, the application's Heritage Statement states that "the proposed works to the external elevations are sympathetic and minimally invasive" and would not result in any drastic changes to the appearance, front and rear and will provide a degree of enhancement.

Externally the two doors to the front and rear elevations would be formed from existing window openings and would serve the three-bed dwelling with the original door serving the hallway which would then accommodate a new staircase to the one-bedroom unit and remove the existing W.C. The entrance to the Sacristy from the hallway would be blocked up as would the access from the hallway to the dwelling. At first floor the opening from the landing to the three bedrooms on the eastern side

would be blocked up and a bathroom formed. On the western side the bedroom to the front would become a living/kitchen and a bathroom formed in the landing area.

No other external features would be altered and this together with the removal of the modern garages to the rear (north) would improve the setting.

To the rear gardens and patio areas provide access to the parking areas with 1.8m high boundary fencing erected. This would not be prominent and therefore is acceptable subject to appropriate conditions.

Therefore, this proposal would not result in any harm to the Conservation Area.

Additionally, the creation of two smaller residential units in place of one larger sized underutilised dwellinghouse is considered to help secure optimum uses for the building, which is identified as a Building of Townscape Merit within the Sabden Conservation Appraisal and therefore the development is considered to result in some public benefits in that sense.

As such the proposal accords with Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Key Statement EN5 and Policy DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **Impact Upon Residential Amenity:**

The nearest residential property is no. 47 Whalley Road adjoining to the east. To the west is the adjoining Church and to the rear the church hall. Properties across Whalley Road would remain sufficient distance to not be affected.

No external alterations are proposed to the frontage. To the rear the removal of the garage and creation of the parking spaces would not raise any issues.

Most of the work proposed is internal resulting in limited impact. In terms of external works there would be some limited impact on amenity from changing windows to doorways which would be acceptable.

#### **Visual Amenity/External Appearance:**

No external alterations are proposed to the frontage. To the rear the removal of the garage and creation of the parking spaces would not raise any issues.

As most of the work proposed is internal with no undue impacts on visual/external appearance including on the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. The external work would be acceptable in terms of design and would have limited impact outside of the site.

#### **Highways and Parking:**

LCC Highways have reviewed the information and raise no objection to the proposal subject to a condition requiring secure cycle storage.

The amount of parking proposed at three spaces, two for the 3-bed house and one for the 1 bed apartment. This accords with the required standards.

The addition of a further residential unit would not lead to any greater impact than at present.

#### **Landscape/Ecology:**

An ecology survey has been submitted which concludes that the garages proposed to be demolished have limited potential for bat roosts which is agreed.

As limited external alterations are proposed there would be no undue impact on landscape and ecology arising from the proposal.

The majority of the existing trees, hedges and shrubs to the front south side of the site are to be retained with a small section of hedge to be removed to allow for the construction of the new stepped access to the front south side of the dwelling.

In terms of Biodiversity Net Gain the agent has lodged an exemption on the basis that the site falls below the 'De Minimis threshold as the proposals do not affect any priority habitat and affect less than 25sq.m. of on-site habitat. The exception is accepted. proposed parking spaces are to be located in an area of previously developed land once the garages have been demolished.

This is acceptable and accord with policy.

**Other Matters:**

None

**Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:**

Whilst the development does not strictly meet the requirements of DMG2 in terms of a net gain in housing in this location, it is acknowledged that this would not have a material impact on private motor vehicles accessing the site. Furthermore there are benefits identified including the likelihood of supporting a community asset and the opportunity for investment to a building of Townscape Merit in the conservation area which would help the future of this building when it is currently underutilised.

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

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That planning permission be granted subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.