


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

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| <b>Signed:</b> | <b>Officer:</b> | <b>MC</b> | <b>Date:</b> | <b>14/04/2026</b> | <b>Manager:</b> | <b>LH</b> | <b>Date:</b> | <b>16/4/26</b> |
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| <b>Application Ref:</b>            | 3/2025/0749   |                     |            |  <p>Ribble Valley<br/>Borough Council<br/><a href="http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk">www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</a></p> |
| <b>Date Inspected:</b>             | Previously visited for pre-application enquiry 03/04/2025 | <b>Site Notice:</b> | 06/11/2025 |   |
| <b>Officer:</b>                    | MC  |                     |            |   |
| <b>DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:</b> |   |                     |            | <b>APPROVAL</b>   |

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|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Development Description:</b> | Planning Permission for installation of solar photovoltaic panels on existing roofs across the college. Panels to be located on the South Fronts roofs, West Fronts roof, the Refectory, the Swimming Pool and St Mary's Sports Hall. |
| <b>Site Address/Location:</b>   | Stonyhurst College, Avenue Road, Hurst Green, BB7 9PZ   |

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| <b>CONSULTATIONS:</b> | <b>Parish/Town Council</b> |
| No objection          |                            |

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| <b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>     | <b>Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies</b>   |
| <b>LCC Highways:</b>      | No objection subject to a condition to screen glare from the view of drivers and pedestrians on the adjoining public highway.  |
| <b>Growth Lancashire:</b> | <p>The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the Grade II* South Fronts, the setting of surrounding listed buildings and the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden by way of introducing an alien feature. The LPA should assess the public benefits of the scheme.</p> <p>Growth Lancashire's comments remain the same following a re-consultation on the amended documents which includes reference to the Grade I element.</p>  |
| <b>Historic England:</b>  | <p>Historic England originally raised concerns on heritage grounds and recommended the submission of structural information prior to determination to confirm that the very significant historic roof structures on the South Front and on the south range of the West Front can take the additional loads of the panels plus the associated ballast. In addition, details and the location of electrical distribution equipment, cabling and inverts should be submitted to give assurance that there would be no impact on the historic fabric of the listed buildings.</p> <p>Following the submission of additional information, Historic England raise no objections to the proposal on heritage grounds. The description has been subsequently amended to include reference to the Grade I listed element. However Historic England does not wish to comment specifically on this element.</p> |

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| <b>RVBC Countryside Officer:</b>               | <p>The Countryside Officer notes that there appears to be no bat issues but recommends a condition for all action recommendation details identified.</p> <p>Following further discussions in relation to the potential need for further ecological assessments in relation to glint/glare and nesting birds, the Countryside Officer is satisfied that the development can proceed without any further ecological surveys.</p> |
| <b>RVBC Environmental Health Officer:</b>      | <p>The design of the solar panels and wind deflectors would prevent birds from roosting under them. Also, the glint and glare assessment confirms there are a few receptors which may be impacted for 3 months, for less than an hour each day.</p>  |
| <b>Gardens Trust:</b>                          | <p>The Gardens Trust does not wish to provide comments.</p>  |
| <b>The Victorian Society:</b>                  | <p>The Victorian Society require the Council see that the maintenance of the panels is ensured prior to permission being granted.</p> <p>No further comments have been received following the submission of additional information.</p>  |
| <b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>                          | <b>Additional Representations.</b>   |
| <p>No additional representations received.</p> |  |

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| <p><b>RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:</b></p> <p><b>Relevant Core Strategy Policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy</li> <li>• Key Statement DS2: Sustainable development</li> <li>• Key Statement EN2: Landscape</li> <li>• Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets</li> <li>• Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity</li> <br/> <li>• Policy DMG1: General considerations</li> <li>• Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations</li> <li>• Policy DMG3: Transport And Mobility</li> <li>• Policy DME2: Landscape And Townscape Protection</li> <li>• Policy DME3: Site And Species Protection And Conservation</li> <li>• Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets</li> <li>• Policy DME5: Renewable Energy</li> </ul> <p><b>Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, Section 66 &amp; 72</b></p> <p><b>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</b></p> |
| <p><b>Relevant Planning History:</b></p> <p><b>3/2025/0747</b><br/> <i>Listed Building Consent for installation of solar photovoltaic panels on existing roofs across the college. Panels to be located on the South Fronts roofs, and the Refectory.</i><br/> Pending Consideration</p>   |

**3/2024/0849**

*Listed Building Consent for refurbishment of the WC and shower rooms in the eastern part of the Shireburn Quad and the adjoining service building, to include the removal of existing and insertion of new partition walls.*

Approved with Conditions

**3/2021/1018**

*Listed Building Consent for the interior refurbishment of the ground floor of the north and east ranges of the Shireburn Quad into an improved school health centre. Accommodation will consist of a GP room, a treatment room, waiting area, three isolation rooms, two ward rooms, three staff beds, a staff lounge, staff bathroom and staff kitchen, three stores, sluice, an office room and WC.*

Approved with Conditions

**3/2017/1148**

*Certificate of Lawfulness to repair and replace certain windows in Shireburn Quad*

Approved No Conditions

**3/2014/0736**

*Restoring the opening between Arundell Library and the former Rhetoric Common Room*

Approved with Conditions

**3/2013/0300**

*Application to discharge condition no. 4 (specification of phased works) of planning permission 3/2011/1047P. Phase 5.*

Approved No Conditions

**3/2013/0299**

*Application to discharge condition no. 4 (specification of phased works) of planning permission 3/2011/1047P. Phase 4.*

Approved No Conditions

**3/2013/0298**

*Application to discharge condition no. 4 (specification of phased works) of planning permission 3/2011/1047P. Phase 3.*

Approved No Conditions

**3/2011/1047**

*Proposed essential fire prevention works throughout the college.*

Approved No Conditions

**3/2005/0242**

*Conversion and refurbishment of the ground, first and second floors including "Bridge of Sighs" to provide living accommodation for both staff and boarders, including new sanitary accommodation and associated ancillary areas.*

Approved with Conditions

**3/2000/0031**

*Conversion and refurb of ground, 1st and 2nd floors including 'bridge of sighs' to provide living accommodation for staff and boarders including new sanitary accomm & assoc. ancillary areas*

Approved with Conditions

**3/1997/0484**

*Conversion of the bursary to accommodate the infirmary (listed building consent)*

Approved with Conditions

**3/1991/0441**

*Forming a new window opening and providing a new window to match existing windows in building no 29 (listed building application)*

Approved with Conditions

## **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:**

### **Site Description and Surrounding Area:**

Stonyhurst College was founded on the Stonyhurst Estate in the late C18 and consists of a series of buildings built around a courtyard plan house originating from the late C16. The site comprises a Roman Catholic boarding school consisting of dormitories, libraries, chapels, collection display rooms, classrooms, communal and circulation areas, archives, offices and later additions of sports facilities. The buildings are largely built of sandstone ashlar with extensive stone details in Elizabethan, Jacobean, Baroque and Elizabethan revival style. Many of the buildings are listed, including Grade I, Grade II\* and Grade II.

To the North-West of the site are several C20/C21 additions and additional buildings and this area also facilitates the service areas for the site. The site is set within a 1000 acre semi-rural site with ornamental lakes and gardens alongside sports pitches and parking areas. To the North-East of the site is a separate, substantial C19 building of a plainer style, St Marys Hall the preparatory school, with C20 buildings to the rear.

The site is located within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, located to the north of the village of Hurst Green. The site is also located within the Stonyhurst College Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden. There are a number of Public Rights of Way which run through the site and around the perimeter of the wider college site.

There are a number of listed buildings which form part of the college and that are located within the setting of the listed buildings that form part of this application. These are set out below:

Stonyhurst College itself is made up of the following designated buildings:

*Grade I: Stonyhurst College, Old Quadrangle*

*Grade I: Stonyhurst College, Church of St Peter (RC)*

*Grade II\*: Stonyhurst College, South Front, Boys' Chapel and Shirk*

*Grade II: Stonyhurst College, Old Infirmary and attached passage*

*Grade II: Stonyhurst College, Shireburn Quadrangle, Ambulacrum and former Laboratories*

The following are designated structures within the above Park and Garden and will be assessed on the impact to their setting:

*Grade I: THE GARDEN PAVILIONS AND CONNECTING WALL*

*Grade II: GATE PIERS 50 METRES SOUTH OF OBSERVATORY*

*Grade II: THE OBSERVATORY 100 METRES SOUTH-EAST OF POND*

*Grade II: GARDEN STEPS WALLS AND PIERS 12 METRES SOUTH-WEST OF OBSERVATORY POND*

*Grade II: RETAINING WALL AND STATUES AND OBSERVATORY POND*

*Grade II: GARDEN STEPS WALLS AND PIERS 12 METRES NORTH-EAST OF OBSERVATORY POND*

*Grade II: FORMER FONT 450 METRES NORTH-EAST OF OBSERVATORY POND*

*Grade II: STATUE OF ST JEROME 250 METRES NORTH-WEST OF OBSERVATORY POND*

*Grade II: STATUE OF ST MARY MAGDALENE 250 METRES NORTH OF OBSERVATORY POND*

*Grade II: GATE PIERS OPPOSITE SOUTH FRONT 40 METRES NORTH OF OBSERVATORY POND*

*Grade II: WALL AND GATEWAY DOOR BEGINNING 20 METRES SOUTH-EAST OF CHURCH OF ST PETER AND RUNNING 130 METRES SOUTH-EAST OF CHURCH OF ST PETER*

*Grade II: WALL ON NORTH-EAST SIDE OF PLAYING FIELD RETURNING 70 METRES ON SOUTH-EAST SIDE AND INCLUDING A PAIR OF GATE PIERS*

*Grade II: 2 GATE PIERS AND WALL FROM SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF INFIRMARY RUNNING SOUTH-EAST RETURNING NORTH-EAST IN FRONT OF CHURCH OF ST PETER AND CONTAINING 2 GATEPIERS*

The following Grade II listed buildings are not within the listed park and garden, and will be assessed in relation to impact on their setting due to their proximity:

*To the SW: THE MILL*

*To the NE: ST MARYS HALL*

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

The proposed development is for the introduction of solar PV panels on a number of existing roofs at Stonyhurst College. This includes PV array attached to the roof of the three unlisted buildings (the new refectory (PV8), swimming pool (PV9 and PV10), St Mary's school sports hall (PV11 and PV12) and to the South Fronts (Grade II\* listed) and a small part of the West Fronts (Grade I listed Old Quadrangle) (PVs 107).

The proposal would use a ballasted system and the panels would have a low profile (maximum 350mm in height). Both the rails and panels would have a matte black finish to minimise any visual impact/glare.

#### **Principle of Development:**

The application relates to operational development located on existing college buildings. Having regard to Policy DME5, the principle of installing solar panels are considered acceptable in principle, subject to an assessment of the material planning considerations.

Notwithstanding this, one of the buildings includes a Grade I and Grade II\* listed element and therefore the proposal must also comply with Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, Section 66 & 72 and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **Impact upon Listed Building(s) and Setting:**

In assessing the proposal, regard must be given to the statutory duties imposed on the authority in respect of the preservation and enhancement of such assets. In this respect, at a local level, Key Statement EN5 and Policy DME4 are primarily, but not solely, engaged for the purposes of assessing likely impacts upon designated heritage assets resultant from the proposed development.

Key Statement EN5 states that:

*“There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings. The Historic Environment and its Heritage Assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance for their heritage value; their important contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place; and to wider social, cultural and environmental benefits.*

*This will be achieved through:*

- *Recognising that the best way of ensuring the long term protection of heritage assets is to ensure a viable use that optimises opportunities for sustaining and enhancing its significance.*
- *Keeping Conservation Area Appraisals under review to ensure that any development proposals respect and safeguard the character, appearance and significance of the area.*

- *Considering any development proposals which may impact on a heritage asset or their setting through seeking benefits that conserve and enhance their significance and avoids any substantial harm to the heritage asset.*
- *Requiring all development proposals to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness/sense of place.*
- *The consideration of Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights where the exercise of such rights would harm the historic environment.”*

With Policy DME4 stating, in respect of development within conservation areas or those affecting the listed buildings or their setting, that development will be assessed on the following basis:

*“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. Any proposals involving the demolition or loss of important historic fabric from listed buildings will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist.”*

Policy DME5 relates to renewable energy and states that:

*“Development proposals within or close to the AONB, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, notable habitats and species, local nature reserves, biological heritage sites or designated heritage assets and their setting will not be allowed unless:*

- 1. The proposals cannot be located outside such statutory designated areas*
- 2. It can be demonstrated that the objectives of the designation of the area or site will not be compromised by the development*
- 3. Any adverse environmental impacts as far as practicable have been mitigated”*

**Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:**

*Given the proposal relates to a Grade II Designated Heritage Asset, special regard must also be given to the statutory duties imposed on the authority, pursuant to national legislation, particularly in respect of the preservation and enhancement of such assets.*

*The principle statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended by s.58B (1) of Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023) is to preserve or enhance the special character of heritage assets, including their setting. As such, in determining applications that affect designated heritage assets, the authority must consider the duties contained within the principle Act which states the following;*

**Listed buildings - Section 16 (2) (as amended by s.58B of Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023):**

*In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to a listed building the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the building. Under s.58B (2) this includes preserving or enhancing any feature, quality or characteristic of the asset or setting that contributes to the significance of the asset.*

**National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024):**

*The National planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out further duties in respect of determining proposals that affect heritage assets stating 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation’.*

*The Framework sets out further duties in respect of considering potential impacts upon designated heritage assets with Paragraphs 212 – 221 reading as follows:*

*212: 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.*

*213: Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:*

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

*214: Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

*215: Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*

*216: The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.*

*217: Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.*

*218: Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.*

*219: Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.*

*221: Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.*

## Assessment

### *Impact on Grade II\* listed South Fronts and Grade I Listed Old Quadrangle*

The proposals seek to install solar photovoltaic (PV) panels across various roofs of the college, including the grade II\* South Front and a small portion of the grade I Old Quadrangle on the West Front roof.

There would be 12 blocks of panels proposed to the roofs of the South Front, with the south-western most of these extending to within the listed area of the Grade I Old Quadrangle.

Historic England has provided comments on the scheme and they note that the proposed locations of the PV panels on the listed structures would be on areas of recently re-covered bitumen flat roof. Historic England requested that details and the location of electrical distribution equipment, cabling and inverters are provided to give assurance that there would not be an impact from these on the historic fabric. A structural engineering report was also requested to demonstrate that the very significant historic roof structures on the South Front and on the south range of the West Front can take the additional loads of the panels plus the associated ballast.

The Victorian Society have also raised some concerns in relation to the maintenance of the panels.

As such, updated elevations and roof plans showing the location of the GRP enclosure and cabling have been submitted, as well as loading appraisals for each building that is to have solar panels installed to ensure that the buildings can withstand the weight of the solar panels. The loading appraisals confirm the loadings of the solar panels are acceptable and the proposed solar panels can safely be installed onto the existing roof structure with no strengthening works being required.

Whilst the Victorian Society have not commented further on the additional information, Historic England raise no objection on heritage grounds to the scheme and are satisfied that the historic roofs can take the additional loading.

With regards to the visual impact on the listed buildings, Historic England note that the panels have been positioned in a way that avoids visual impact or harm to the special interest of the listed building. The Heritage and Conservation Officer at Growth Lancashire also considers that upon viewing the FlatFix Fusion Project Plan and Technical Manual, and confirmation from the project architect that the installation of the ballasted system will not penetrate the historic fabric, in terms of potential visual intrusion caused by the installed units, they are satisfied that the PV arrays that are to be set behind the parapets will likely be adequately screened (this includes PV1, PV4, PV5 and parts of PV7).

Previous concerns were raised at the pre-application stage by the Heritage and Conservation Officer in relation to the left and right extremities of the roof that do not have a parapet border and may be visible from across the raised ornamental gardens to the SE and the square section directly behind the Boy's Chapel which is potentially visible when approaching the college from the SW main driveway and across the ground north of the ponds. They note that the Landscape and Visual Assessment provides a comprehensive evaluation on the areas raised above and they are satisfied that the panels PV3 and PV6 would be set back and at a height that will not be visible anywhere from the grounds to the SE. Whilst the panels PV2 would be somewhat exposed and potentially visible when approaching along the main drive from the SW, the Heritage and Conservation Officer accepts that any visibility will be barely discernible due to the distance and then completely out of view at a distance where they may be discernible.

In terms of the potential reflection/glare, they note that the submitted Glint & Glare Assessment considered that there would be no chance of glint/glare impact from the installation on the South Front, PV1-7 to any of the OPs relative to those identified from my site visit, OP1-4). From OP5, which is a viewpoint on an elevated garden area to the west, some impact was considered due to the west facing orientation of the panels. However, within the further review, section 6.2, it is considered that impact will be low given the 'east facing'



panels will coincide with sunrise only. The Heritage and Conservation Officer considers this latter assessment is in error, as OP5 is to the west, and therefore can only view the west facing panels which would be relative to sunset. Nonetheless, they accept that the impact would be low overall.

They conclude that whilst the visual impact has been suitably addressed and will be low to none overall, by virtue of the installation of the 'alien' feature of PV panels to the Grade I listed quadrangle and Grade II\* listed South Front, the harm to its significance is a low level of less than substantial.

Historic England conclude that the location of the solar PV panels would not result in negative visual impacts on the special character of the highly graded listed buildings and therefore support the principle of the installation of PV panels.

#### *Impact on the Registered Park and Garden*

The Gardens Trust have been consulted on the application and they note that the site is a historic designed landscape of national importance which is included by Historic England on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II\*. However, the Gardens Trust do not wish to provide comment on the proposal.

Historic England does not have specific concerns over the proposals to install PV panels on the roofs of the swimming pool, New Refectory or St Mary's Sports Centre. They note that these are all 20<sup>th</sup> century additions to the college complex and are subordinate to the listed buildings. In additions, the panels on the roofs of these buildings would be partially visible from some areas within the grounds and parkland and from the listed buildings, however their low profile means the visual impact would be minimal, and they do not anticipate harm to the setting of the listed buildings or the registered park and garden. Similarly, the Heritage and Conservation Officer also considers that PV8-10 which would be located on buildings of limited architectural impact with the NW 'service area' of the site, would have limited visual impact. In terms of the potential reflection/glare impacts, the Glint and Glare Assessment refer to observation points (Ops) within a 1km zone, of which OP1-5 are within the Registered Park and Garden (RPG), and the rest are beyond the boundary. As such the Heritage and Conservation Officer considers it difficult to determine any potential wider setting impacts within the RPG boundary. Notwithstanding this, as noted in their assessment of the impact on the listed building, overall the impacts from glint and glare are considered to be of a low impact.

Whilst the Heritage and Conservation Officer considers that visual impact has been suitably addressed and would be low to none overall, they consider that by virtue of the installation of the 'alien' feature of PV panels within the Grade II\* listed RPG, the harm to its significance is a low level of less than substantial.

#### *Impact on setting of the listed buildings*

Similar to the above assessment, Historic England do not consider there to be any harm to the setting of the above listed designated heritage assets due to the low profile of PV panels.

The Heritage and Conservation Officer considers that with regards to the proposed solar PV install to the roofs of the Refectory (PV8) and the Gym / Swimming Pool (PV9&10), these buildings are of modern construction, have no historic value and are positioned to the NW (rear) of the college in an area that largely occupies service buildings. As such this area is experienced as a modern area of the college and therefore they do not consider the installation of the solar PV in these locations would have any meaningful impact on the contribution made by the setting of the significance of the listed buildings identified above.

Similarly, St Mary's Sports Hall (PV11&12), is in close proximity to St Mary's Hall whose principal façade is oriented away from the Sports Hall. The visual impact here is likely to be limited due to the tall parapet which separated the two buildings somewhat and the screening provided by the mature tree groups which visually separates the main college site and limits views to the rear of St Mary's Hall from the south. Notwithstanding the above, as the host buildings are experienced in the same context as some of the listed elements of the college and considering the PV panels are largely exposed on low/pitched roofs, they do raise concern with

regards to the potential reflection/glare and how this may impact the setting including views to and from the listed elements of the site.

On reviewing the Glint and Glare Assessment, which considers viewpoints from across the site as well as several from further out, the relative panels PV8 to PV12 are identified with the relative oriented OPs as having, in the worst-case scenario, 'low impact'. This translates to potential glare of between 20 to 40 minutes between either March to September, or November to January, depending on orientation. However, there are also considered mitigating factors that may reduce likelihood of glare impact; the extent to which direct sunlight and glare impacts coincide, the extent to which cloud cover and glare impacts coincide and screening by intervening infrastructure/vegetation.

Taking all the submitted evidence into consideration, the Heritage and Conservation Officer considers that overall impact from panels PV8 to PV12 will be minimal, translating to a negligible level of less than substantial harm to the contribution made by the setting to the significance of the relative listed buildings.

Having regard to the above, there is conflict with Key Statement EN5 and Policies DMG1 and DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy as well as Section 16 of the NPPF.

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

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that, development must:

- 1. Not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area.*
- 2. Provide adequate day lighting and privacy distances.*
- 3. Have regard to public safety and secured by design principles.*
- 4. Consider air quality and mitigate adverse impacts where possible.*

A Glint and Glare assessment has been provided which concludes that with regards to impact on residential dwellings, glare with no impact was predicted for 9 out of 23 modelled receptors and low impact glare was predicted at 8 of the modelled receptors. The model predicted that glare would occur for greater than three months of the year (but for less than 60 minutes per day) at 5 receptors. Following a review of mitigating factors, due to the origin of the glare compared to direct sunlight, the time of day of predicted glare, predicted cloud cover and likely screening by intervening infrastructure and vegetation, it is predicted that the residual impact for receptors OP7 and OP25 – OP28 is likely to be low. The model predicted that glare would occur for greater than three months of the year (and for more than 60 minutes per day) at one receptor. However, following a review of mitigating factors, due to the origin of the glare compared to direct sunlight, the time of day of predicted glare, predicted cloud cover and possible screening by intervening infrastructure and vegetation, it is predicted that the residual impact for receptor OP6 is likely to be low.

As such, it is not considered that the occupiers of adjacent residential properties would be adversely impacted by any glare resulting from the installation of solar PV panels.

As such, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

#### **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”.*

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy provides additional 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.”*

Policy DMG2 also states that:

*“In protecting the designated area of outstanding natural beauty the council will have regard to the economic and social well being of the area. However the most important consideration in the assessment of any development proposals will be the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area avoiding where possible habitat fragmentation. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build. Development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the AONB by virtue of its size, design, use of material, landscaping and siting. The AONB management plan should be considered and will be used by the council in determining planning applications.”*

Policy DME5 states that:

*“The Borough Council will support the development of renewable energy schemes, providing it can be shown that such developments would not cause unacceptable harm to the local environment or local amenity. In assessing proposals, the Borough Council will have particular regard to the following issues:*

- 1. The immediate and wider impact of the proposed development on the landscape, including its visual impact and the cumulative impacts of development.*
- 2. The measures taken to minimise the impact of the proposals on residential amenity*
- 3. The potential benefits the proposals may bring*
- 4. The visual impact of the proposals, including design, colour and scale*
- 5. The degree to which nuisance caused by noise and shadow flicker to nearby residential amenities, agricultural operations, recreational areas or the function of the countryside can be minimised*
- 6. National or local targets for generating energy from renewable sources and for reducing carbon emissions as specified within Policy DMG1*
- 7. The potential impact on biodiversity”*

The site is located within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and therefore further policies are engaged in the determination of the application.

Policy DME5 also states that:

*“Development proposals within or close to the AONB, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, notable habitats and species, local nature reserves, biological heritage sites or designated heritage assets and their setting will not be allowed unless:*

- 1. The proposals cannot be located outside such statutory designated areas*
- 2. It can be demonstrated that the objectives of the designation of the area or site will not be compromised by the development*
- 3. Any adverse environmental impacts as far as practicable have been mitigated”*

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 National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”*

Key Statement EN2 of the Core Strategy provides similar guidance:

*“The landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and character of the Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and conserved and wherever possible enhanced. 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.”*

With regards to the visual impact of the development, this has been partially assessed under the heritage section. The solar panels within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape have been designed and sited so that there would be as minimal impact on wider views of them within National Landscape as possible. Whilst there may be some views of the solar panels on the ancillary buildings from within the site, due to dense tree cover within the boundaries of the college grounds, these would be mostly limited to within the college grounds itself and any views of the solar panels are not considered to be detrimental. They would also be sited on more modern buildings and would therefore not appear as such an ‘alien’ feature on these buildings. It is acknowledged that the main listed building at Stonyhurst College can be seen from a number of viewpoints within the Borough, including some long-range distances. However, as previously noted, the panels are set back from the edges of the building to obscure views and have a low gradient, being set behind the parapets of the building where possible.

With regards to Policy DME5, it is not considered feasible to locate the solar panels outside of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, given that the aim of the installation of solar panels is to provide the college with renewable energy and the college buildings are located within the National Landscape.

The Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan outlines a number of objectives and aims for the National Landscape. These include supporting the conservation, restoration and management of the historic environment and wider cultural landscape.

Taking into account the overall aims and objectives of the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan, due to the specific siting, design and ecological assessments undertaken, overall the scheme is considered compliant with Policy DME5 and is balanced with the benefits of producing a renewable energy source for the historic college.

Having regard to all of the above, it is considered that the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape would be protected and conserved and would not result in any harm to the natural beauty of the area in accordance with Key Statement EN2, Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DME5 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the NPPF.

### **Highways and Parking:**

Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policy DMG3 states that:

*‘All development proposals will be required to provide adequate car parking and servicing space in line with currently approved standards’.*

In addition, Policy DMG1 states that all development must:

*‘1. consider the potential traffic and car parking implications.  
2. ensure safe access can be provided which is suitable to accommodate the scale and type of traffic likely to be generated’.*

The proposal would not result in the loss of any existing parking arrangements as the solar PV panels would be sited on existing roof slopes.

Lancashire County Council acting as the Local Highway Authority have provided comments on the scheme and they note that the panels to be located on the South Fronts roofs, the Refectory, the Swimming Pool and St Mary's Sports Hall at Stonyhurst College would be screened from the nearby roads by vegetation along the site boundary, Avenue Road, Hurst Green as noted in the submitted glint and glare assessment. As such, no objections are raised on highway/pedestrian safety grounds.

The LHA recommend a condition for any source of glare from the solar panels to be effectively screened from the view of drivers and pedestrians on the adjoining public highway and maintained thereafter. This suggested condition is not considered to be precise. In addition, the solar panels would mostly be screened by existing vegetation from 'Knowles Brow' which adjoins the college grounds so glint and glare would be minimised and any impact would be temporary for users of the Public Rights of Ways which run through the site.

As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

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

With regards to ecology, Policy DME3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that development proposals that are unlikely to adversely affect wildlife species protected by law will not be granted planning permission.

The application has been supported by a letter from Ecology Services UK Ltd dated 19 June 2025 which notes that a daytime inspection of the buildings and their surrounds was carried out on 30 May 2025 but not all of the roof coverings could be examined in detail due to the height of the buildings and associated measures required for a safe inspection. However, roof coverings not closely inspected were visible through binoculars and this enabled an assessment to be made in relation to potential external roosting areas for bats. No bats or evidence of bats was found associated with the proposed work areas during the daytime inspection and no further surveys have been recommended as there is insufficient information to support the need for any further investigations. Whilst there are no predicted impacts to roosting bats resulting from the development, if any new lighting is to form part of the proposal, this should be designed to reduce light spill upwards and no light spill is allowed onto any vegetation present within close proximity during and post development.

With regards to nesting birds, the ecology report confirms that a well-known, established kestrel nest site is present within one of the towers on South Fronts (Building 4). Although no kestrel activity or recent signs of nesting was found during the survey, the tower structures have high potential for use by bird species including Kestrels throughout the year. As such, the report recommends a glint and glare assessment is undertaken to ensure potential impacts on nesting birds are addressed.

The agent for the applicant has been in discussions with the Council regarding the need to provide an additional glint and glare assessment for ecology purposes. The applicants ecologist has confirmed that there is no guidance or method on which to assess the impact of glint/glare on nesting birds. They also state that birds will need to be on the wing, facing the glare and static to get a sustained glare effect, it is therefore reasonable to assume that birds will move from any cast of glare, if impacted and any impact will be transitory and limited in effect. They also consider that the stonework of the tower would provide sufficient screening for the birds nesting within and the shallow angle of the PV installation and matt black coated finish means that birds nesting within vegetation at ground level would be unlikely to be exposed to glare and the anti-reflective coating means that the finish would be similar to the existing matt black roof felt.

The Councils Countryside Officer has provided comments on the scheme and can accept the above assessment. They note that it is recommended that if proposed works are not undertaken before April, advice should be sought as to the need for further surveys at that time. However, the applicants ecologist has confirmed that no further surveys or action for bats is required.

No further, specific surveys for nesting birds are required but if the work is undertaken during the nesting season then some further checks and safeguards as previously stated still apply.

Having regard to the above, the proposal is considered compliant with Policy DME3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

With regards to Biodiversity Net-Gain, an exemption statement has been provided which states that the proposed development site does not contain any priority habitats listed under the Government's List of priority habitats and species in England ('Section 41 habitats and species'). The report concludes that the proposal falls within the 'de minimis' exemption as the solar PV panels would be constructed on a sealed surface and thus the development would impact on less than 25sqm of onsite habitat.

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

The proposal is considered to have a neutral impact on the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, on protected species and would not result in harm to highway/pedestrian safety.

With regards to heritage, the NPPF requires that less than substantial harm be weighed against any public benefits and any harm be clearly and convincingly justified. Based on the secured amendments and additional information and having regard to the duty at section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in giving 'great weight' to the conservation of the designated heritage asset and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and positively contributing to local character and distinctiveness, the proposal accords with the relevant Policies Ribble Valley Core Strategy Key Statement and the NPPF.

The proposals would introduce an 'alien' feature to the Grade I and Grade II\* listed buildings which would result in a low level of less than substantial harm. The submitted information has identified that any views of the solar panels would be minimal/negligible and there are environmental benefits to the scheme as the installation of solar PV panels would provide a sustainable and economic energy source. These benefits are given significant weight.

As such, on balance, the environmental benefits of installing solar PV panels and providing a form of renewable energy is considered to outweigh the low level of less than substantial harm identified above and the proposal accords with the relevant Policies Ribble Valley Core Strategy Key Statement and the NPPF.

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| <b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> | That planning permission be granted subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions. |
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