



3rd March 2026

re: Planning Application ref 3/2026/0090
Riverside Lodge, Sawley Old Brow, Sawley, BB7 4LF

Riverside Lodge is situated within the Sawley Conservation Area, and The Bowland Forest Area Of Outstanding National Beauty.

The conservation area appraisal describes Sawley as falling into four distinct areas, the third of these being:

- The road divides at the river, where a large public house with a dining room is located in the angle formed by the road junction. The Eastward road is lined by mainly 20th century dwellings and converted farm buildings. It curves south to ascend Noddle Hill, passing a series of disused quarries, before returning to join the A59.

Riverside Lodge is one of those 20th century dwellings, having been built in the 1950s.

It is not in an isolated part of the village, nor is it set in a cluster of modern houses, as has been suggested.

Laneside Farm, which is noted and pictured in the appraisal as being a building of Townscape Merit is also in this area and very close to the application site. Indeed the 'Private shared drive' shown as being part of the application plot comes out onto Laneside directly opposite it. Also within immediate vicinity are the farmyard cobbles in the yards of Laneside Cottages and Laneside Farm which are shown on the appraisal map as examples of historic paving.

This is a historic setting.

The appraisal contains a list of special characteristics which justified Sawley becoming a conservation area. These included:

- The setting of the village on the banks of the Ribble, whose meanders provide many scenic views from various points in the village.

The appraisal states:

"The open green fields, crossed by footpaths, and the views of the river from various parts of the village, and the backdrop of wooded hills all contribute to the special character of the village. The following views are of particular merit and should be protected"

One of the views listed is "Easterly, Westerly and Northerly views from Sawley Bridge"

These views are marked with arrows on the Appraisal Map. The view eastward from the centre of Sawley Bridge is clearly marked. Riverside Lodge is fully visible, though not dominant in the centre of that view, nestling at the base of Noddle Hill.

Allowing the proposed development would not protect or enhance this view, it would place an anomalous building in the centre of it, drawing the eye away from the beautiful setting.

A further justification for conservation area status was:

- The Ribble Way long distance footpath, which passes through the village and brings visitors to Sawley.

When travelling westward, the route of the Ribble Way brings those walkers and visitors into the village via the entrance to Sawley Hall and onto Sawley Old Brow. Riverside Lodge is one of the first houses they see.

As the route continues along Sawley Old Brow, it runs alongside the bottom of the gardens including that belonging to Riverside Lodge. It then curves right at The Spread Eagle, before taking in the views from Sawley Bridge, and heading left towards Grindleton.

The wide expanse of modern render, and the many large black upvc windows and patio doors , particularly to the first floor, would be very visible from this route and detract from the character of the village.

There is also a very well used public footpath running between Sawley and Bolton by-Bowland the views from which would be negatively affected. (FP033007)

This would be particularly sad as The Conservation Area Appraisal considers the main threat to the conservation area to be

“The continuing loss of original architectural details and use of inappropriate modern materials or details”

I understand that whether a proposed development adheres to the policies in the Ribble Valley Core Strategy is a material consideration in determining planning applications. Key Statement EN2 Landscape is pertinent here.

“The landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding National Beauty will be protected and conserved and, wherever possible, enhanced.

As a principle the council will expect development to be in keeping with the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, features and building materials.”

This development would not satisfy these criteria. There is no property even vaguely similar in style in the vicinity. It would be completely out of character.

In addition Key Statement EN5 requires all development proposals to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness/sense of place.

Within the General Considerations section of the Core Strategy there are other directives.

DMH5 states that Residential and Curtilage extensions must accord with DMG1 and any relevant designations within which the site is located.

DMG1 states that

In determining applications all development must:

- 1 Be of a high standard of building design which consider the 8 “building in context “principles.
- 2 Be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials.
- 3 Consider the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance. Particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationships to surroundings, including impact on landscape character, as well as the effects of development on existing amenities.

In my opinion, the latest planning application for extending , rendering, replacing white windows with anthracite upvc and adding multiple sets of anthracite sliding doors (including one set on the first floor) to Riverside Lodge is not sympathetic to the host dwelling or sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area. The original weathered red brick 1950s house would disappear completely behind a contemporary twenty -first century facade.

The most prominent elevation fronting onto the river would increase by 25 percent, filling the width of the plot and making it double the size of the equivalent elevation of its neighbour. It would be visually intrusive.

It should be noted that there are no twenty-first century houses in Sawley conservation area at all, and that it is unlikely that any will be permitted given the village is a tier 2 village settlement.

In the National Planning Policy Framework, Chapter 16, relates to Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

It starts by discussing what constitutes a heritage asset.

“Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.”

Paragraph 203 instructs that plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.

Among the things which that strategy should take into account are the wider social, cultural economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 208 states

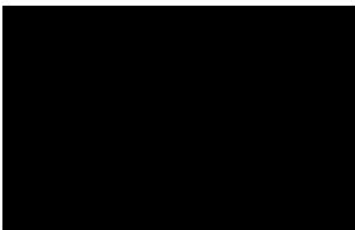
“Local Planning Authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage assets conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”

This brings up the question of the use of specialist conservation advice.

Local Planning Authorities play the central and vital role in conserving England’s Heritage. Through planning, LPAs have statutory responsibility for decisions on how places change and how local heritage resources are conserved and developed.

Weighing up the levels of harm against any benefit accruing from a planning proposal within a conservation area can be quite subjective and challenging.

Ribble Valley Planning have experts in conservation available to them, and I think their expertise would be valuable in this case.

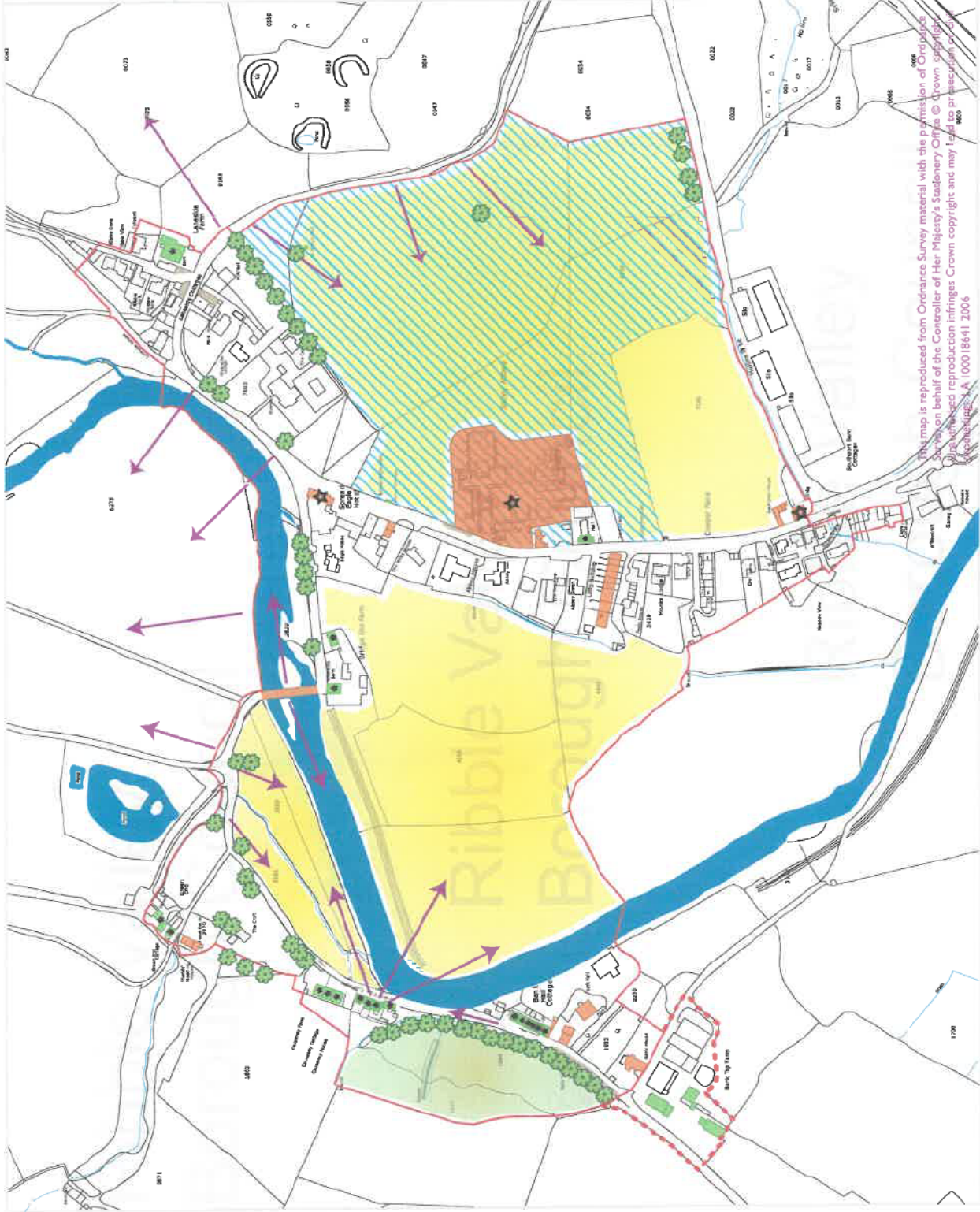


Ribble Valley Borough Council

Sawley Conservation Area

Townscape Appraisal Map

- Conservation area boundary
- Proposed extension to conservation area boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Buildings of Townscape Merit
- Significant open spaces
- Important tree groups
- Historic surfaces
- Important trees
- Proposed Article 4 Direction
- Important views
- Scheduled Monument
- Focal buildings



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