

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Proposed Change of Use from Taxi Office to Children's Indoor Role Play Centre

Unit D
29–33 Berry Lane
Longridge
PR3 3JA

1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to support a planning application for the change of use of an existing commercial premises to a children's indoor role play centre, including ancillary refreshment provision, at Unit D, 29–33 Berry Lane, Longridge.

The purpose of this statement is to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on the historic environment, in particular the Longridge Conservation Area, within which the application site is located.

This assessment has been prepared in accordance with national planning policy contained within the UK Government (NPPF) and relevant policies within the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

2.0 Legislative and Policy Context

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas when determining planning applications.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires that development proposals affecting heritage assets should sustain and enhance their significance and make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Local planning policy within the Ribble Valley Core Strategy similarly seeks to ensure that development proposals conserve the significance of heritage assets and their settings.

3.0 The Longridge Conservation Area

The application site lies within the Longridge Conservation Area, which was designated in recognition of the historic character and architectural quality of the town centre.

The conservation area appraisal identifies Longridge as a historic Lancashire town which developed significantly during the 18th and 19th centuries, with the town centre characterised by stone-built terraces, commercial premises and civic buildings arranged along the principal streets.

Berry Lane forms one of the main commercial streets within the conservation area and is characterised by rows of two and three storey buildings constructed predominantly from local sandstone. These buildings typically sit directly on the pavement edge and contribute to the strong urban character of the town centre.

The conservation area appraisal notes that the significance of the area derives from:

- the survival of historic stone-built terraces
- the concentration of 18th and 19th century buildings
- the historic commercial character of the town centre streets
- the overall coherence of the townscape

The continued active use of buildings within the conservation area plays an important role in maintaining the vitality and character of the historic town centre.

4.0 Description of the Site

The application site comprises an existing commercial unit located on Berry Lane within the centre of Longridge.

The building forms part of the continuous commercial frontage along Berry Lane and contributes to the established town centre streetscape.

The premises are currently used as a taxi office and comprise a ground floor commercial unit with an internal floor area of approximately 85 square metres.

The building is not a listed building but forms part of the wider townscape of the conservation area.



5.0 Description of the Proposed Development

The proposal seeks permission for the change of use of the premises to a children's indoor role play centre designed primarily for children aged 0–7 years.

The development will involve internal alterations to create themed play areas alongside supporting facilities including seating areas for parents, refreshment preparation space and toilet facilities.

The proposal does not involve any alterations to the external appearance of the building. The existing building frontage and overall streetscape will therefore remain unchanged.

6.0 Assessment of Heritage Impact

The significance of the Longridge Conservation Area is derived primarily from the historic townscape formed by the arrangement of traditional stone buildings along the principal streets of the town centre.

The proposed development will not alter the external appearance of the building and will therefore have no physical impact on the architectural character of the streetscape.

As the proposal involves internal alterations only, the historic form, scale and appearance of the building within the street will remain unchanged.

The proposal will therefore preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Furthermore, the continued use of the premises as an active town centre business will contribute positively to the vitality and activity of the historic centre. Active commercial uses help ensure that buildings remain maintained and occupied, which supports the long-term preservation of historic town centres.

The proposal therefore represents a sustainable reuse of an existing building within the conservation area.

7.0 Conclusion

This Heritage Statement has assessed the potential impact of the proposed development on the historic environment. The proposal involves the change of use of an existing commercial premises within the Longridge Conservation Area to a children's indoor role play centre.

As the proposal involves internal alterations only, there will be no change to the external appearance of the building or the surrounding streetscape. The proposal will therefore preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with national and local planning policy.

In addition, the reuse of the premises for a community-oriented leisure facility will contribute positively to the vitality of the historic town centre. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered acceptable in heritage terms.