

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.								
Signed:	Officer:	AR	Date:	13/08/2026	Manager:	KH	Date:	21/08/26

Application Ref:	3/2026/0426			 Ribbles Valley Borough Council www.ribblesvalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	17/07/26	Site Notice:	17/07/26	
Officer:	AR			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				APPROVAL

Development Description:	Proposed 1.5, high 'ball top' fencing to the existing masonry wall boundary, including magnetic locks and audio intercom system.
Site Address/Location:	Ribchester St Wilfrids C of E Primary School Ribchester PR3 3XP

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
Ribchester Parish Council: Consulted on 22/06/26; no response received.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	N/A
LCC Footpaths: Consulted on 22/06/26, no response received.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
One additional representation has been received, stating objections to the proposal. The concerns raised within these letters can be summarised as below: - Proposed railing would be out of keeping with the village character and riverside appearance - No risk assessment, evidence or justification submitted for a fence of this height - Photos submitted as part of the heritage statement do not accurately represent the visual impact of the proposal - Proposal will not make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness/sense of place - Proposal affects the setting of a conservation area and does not enhance the local character - The views of the valley and River Ribble would be negatively impacted - Height of the existing boundary wall is wrong; its height varies from 1m to 1.7m along the riverbank - Average height of an 11-year-old is 144cm; the proposed fencing height would be disproportionate to this	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:	
Ribbles Valley Core Strategy:	
Key Statement DS1:	Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2:	Sustainable Development
Key Statement EN5:	Heritage Assets
Policy DMG1:	General Considerations
Policy DMG2:	Strategic Considerations
Policy DME4:	Protecting Heritage Assets

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

Relevant Planning History:

3/2026/0278 - Replacement of the existing flat roof and replacement of and removal of rooflights to flat roof. Installation of an air source heat pump to the roof at first floor level with acoustic fencing (Approved).

3/2017/0040 – Replacement of single glazed windows to the original building (Approved).

3/2016/0704 - Replacement of single glazed windows to the original building. Replacement of the timber doors and windows to the reception with aluminium, reset area of flooring to remove internal step and replace cladding, fascia and barge boards and box in exposed structural steelwork. Fix new reception sign to exposed steel girder to front of reception (Refused).

3/2011/0615 - Proposed installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) cells on the roofs of Ribchester St Wilfrid's C of E Primary School, aspects South, South West (Approved).

3/2003/0516 – Single storey extension to provide a resources room (Approved).

3/1999/0493 – Construction of a new 50m² covered play area and extension of an existing teaching block to form a new 20m² resource area (Approved).

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site relates to St Wilfrid's C of E Primary School, located within the Tier 2 Settlement of Ribchester. The site is also located within the Ribchester Conservation Area and the Ribchester Roman fort (Roman Bath House remains) lies partially within the site.

The site lies adjacent to the River Ribble, within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and within land at risk of surface water flooding. The site is visible from Public Footpath FP0335059, which runs adjacent to the river.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Consent is sought for a 1.5m high 'ball top' fencing to the existing masonry wall boundary, including replacement gates with remote-controlled magnetic locks and an audio intercom system. The fencing would have a length of 35m along the south-west and a length of 50m along the south-east boundary.

The fence posts are to be fixed into the ground in the internal side of the playground, and the 50x50RHS cast iron posts will be 'dog leg' to allow the panels to sit flush with the wall, with a solid bar welded to the top with No.2 40x10 flat bar horizontal rails with 12mm diameter bar infill set at 112mm centres with ball tops. Furthermore, the two proposed gates would be situated to the south-western elevation and would be built to match on 60 x 40RHS frames, hinged on 100 x 100 RHS posts.

With regard to materiality, the proposed fencing would be cast iron, with a galvanised and polyester powder coating in a RAL colour of 9005 (black).

Prior to the determination of this proposal, amendments were submitted at the request of the planning officer to reduce the proposed fence height to 1 metre, with the boundary treatment not exceeding a maximum height of 2 metres.

Principle of Development:

The proposal relates to the erection of new security ball-top fencing to the existing masonry wall and the introduction of new magnetic locks and an audio intercom system to provide further safeguarding to the land associated with Ribchester St Wilfrid's C of E Primary School. In view of the proposal being functional development in association with an existing school site, the proposed development is acceptable in principle subject to an assessment of the material planning considerations.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance and Heritage Impact:

The application property is situated within the Ribchester Conservation Area. With reference to making decisions on applications for development in a Conservation Area, Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building 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."

Moreover, Key Statement EN5 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy stipulates that all development proposals should respect and safeguard the character, appearance, and significance of all Conservation Areas.

Furthermore, Policy DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that *'proposals within, or affecting views into and out of, or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area will be required to conserve and where appropriate enhance its character and appearance.'*

Policy DME4 also states that *'applications for development that would result in harm to the significance of a scheduled monument or nationally important archaeological sites will not be supported'*.

Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policy DMG1 provides specific guidance in relation to design and states:

'All development must be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style [and] consider the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance. Particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings.'

Policy DME5 also 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 council will require decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy in new developments to meet national standards

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"*

Furthermore, the Ribchester Conservation Area Appraisal states the 'River Ribble' and 'Views of the River Ribble and surrounding area as special interests of the village. This is reinforced by the Ribchester Conservation Area Townscape Appraisal Map, which shows that the south-west elevation of Ribchester St Wilfrid's C of E Primary School, where Church St bends south-west around a corner to become parallel to the River Ribble, is an important view.

The Ribchester Conservation Area Management Guidance also provides guidance on new development comprising boundary treatments, stating:

'Traditionally, most boundaries in the Ribchester Conservation Area are defined by stone walls, of varying heights. Sometimes, soft hedging is located behind the wall to provide greater privacy or vertical iron railings may be set on a low stone wall.

For new development in Ribchester, it is important that local materials and detailing are used and new boundaries following the historic precedent of stone will help development to fit in to its context. Modern alternatives, such as concrete blocks, ranch-style timber fencing, or post-and-rail type fencing are not acceptable. Simple, close-boarded fencing, with timber posts, may be an alternative to stone in certain locations away from the public viewpoint but such fencing should be simply detailed, without any decoration such as a curved top or trellis.'

The main impact of the proposed development is the siting, design and materials used for the proposed fencing. The proposed fencing would sit on top of the existing 1m stone wall boundary treatment on the south-western and south-eastern boundaries, with a maximum height of 2.6m and would therefore be highly visible to the adjoining public realm. Therefore, the planning officer has sought amendments to reduce the overall maximum height of the proposed boundary treatment to 2m to reduce its visual impact and undue harm to the important views of the River Ribble and its landscape.

Nevertheless, the proposal would be read largely in context within the existing St Wilfrid's C of E Primary School and associated buildings and reflects that which is commonly seen along boundaries of school grounds. Furthermore, the proposed fencing materials and design would be in keeping with those featured at the front of properties No.1 and No.2 Church Street.

The proposed gates would be in keeping with the proposed fencing and would also adhere to the Ribchester Conservation Area Management Guidance.

Taking account of the above and given the level of visual permeability inherent to the fencing, it is not considered that its presence would result in any significant detrimental harm upon the character or visual amenities of the area, nor would it result in any harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets.

Accordingly, the proposal does not raise any direct conflicts with the requirements of Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and Key Statement EN5 and Policies DME4 and DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policy DMG1 provides specific guidance in relation to amenity and states that all 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’*

The proposed development due to its proximity to nearby residential receptors is not considered to result in any adverse loss of light, overshadowing, overlooking or overbearing impact. As such, subject to the above, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Highways and Parking:

No direct highway-related issues have been identified with respect to the proposed development. However, a condition has been attached to restrict construction delivery times to outside school drop-off and pick-up times in the interest of highway safety.

Landscape/Ecology:

BNG

The development is exempt from having to achieve the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements as it is subject to the de minimis exemption.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

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.