

Ribble Valley Borough Council

DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT - REFUSAL

Ref: CB

Application No:	3/2014/0780
Development Proposed:	Proposed window at ground floor on the side elevation of 4 Park mews, Gisburn, BB7 4ES.

CONSULTATIONS: Parish/Town Council

Gisburn Parish Council - No objections to this proposal.

CONSULTATIONS: Highway/Water Authority/Other Bodies

Environment Directorate (County Surveyor) - No objections. No observations received.

Environment Agency - No objections subject to certain technical requirements.

CONSULTATIONS: Additional Representations

No representations have been received.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

3/2013/0641 – Discharge condition no.3 (window specification) or planning permission
3/2013/0240. Approved.

3/2013/0240 – Proposed window in side elevation (Resubmission of 3/2012/0970).
Approved with Conditions.

3/2012/0970 - Proposed insertion of two new windows in the gable end wall where no
windows currently exist. Refused.

3/1994/0642 – Conversion of existing barn to 2 no. dwellings, conversion and change of use
of public house to 3 no. dwellings and refurbish existing cottage (listed
building application). Approved with conditions – PD rights removed.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan (DWLP)

Policy G1 – Development Control.

Policy ENV16 – Conservation Areas.

Ribble Valley Core Strategy Submission Version including main modifications.

Key Statement EN5 – Heritage

Policy DMG1 – General Considerations.

Policy DME4 – Protecting Heritage Assets.

Gisburn Conservation Area Appraisal.

Gisburn Conservation Area Management Guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Achieving Sustainable Development.

Section 12 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Legislation

Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

POLICY REASONS FOR REFUSAL:

G1, ENV16, CAA/ EN5, DMG1, DME4 – domestication of traditional rural building, detracting from character and appearance of designated heritage assets.

COMMENTS/ENVIRONMENTAL/AONB/HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES/RECOMMENDATION:

Planning permission is sought for the installation of a ground floor window opening into the gable end wall of 4 Park Mews, Gisburn. The dwelling is situated immediately adjacent to the A59. Historically the building formed part of the New Inn public house. However permission was granted in 1994 for the change of use and conversion of the public house and an associated barn and the refurbishment of an existing cottage to form a total of six dwellings.

The property is located within the Gisburn Conservation Area of Gisburn. The appraisal for Gisburn identified a number of unlisted buildings which it is considered make a *positive* contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and these are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map that accompanies the appraisal. The application property, along with the building to which it forms part, the former New Inn PH, is designated as a Building of Townscape Merit. In addition to this the building group which 4 Park Mews forms part of has been further designated as a 'focal building' of the conservation area. The building to which this property forms part, and the application site itself are designated heritage assets. It should also be noted that the view to the East down the A59, towards the centre of the village, is also designated as an 'important view', within the Gisburn Conservation Area.

The proposed works consist of the insertion of a new ground floor window opening into the South West facing gable end of the property. The new opening will be created at ground floor level adjacent to the existing entrance door and this will serve the living room.

Planning permission has previously been granted for a first floor window opening directly over the existing entrance door which serves an existing bathroom, planning application 3/2013/0240P. This window has been inserted in accordance with the details approved and is narrower in width than the window illustrated on both the existing and proposed elevations drawings submitted with this application.

Application 3/2012/0970 previously sought permission for a first floor window and for a ground floor window in the south west corner of the gable, identical to the proposal before me. This 2012 was refused by the LPA for the following reasons:

The formation of new window openings in the western gable end elevation would, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority result in alterations to a designated heritage asset that would be detrimental to the buildings historic character and the visual amenities of the Conservation Area. This would be contrary to Policies G1 and ENV16 of the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan and Policies DMG1 and DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy Submission Draft.

As discussed above, the property was created by the conversion of the New Inn Public House, this was granted under planning approval 3/1994/0633 where permitted development rights for Part 1, Classes A-H of the GPDO 1988 were removed. At the time this was considered to accord with the emerging Local Plan, which is still in place at the time of determining this application. A key consideration when considering a building for conversion is the alterations required in accommodating modern living. This includes alterations required to window and door openings. The conversion of a building to residential use has to strike a balance between accommodating the residential use whilst still retaining the character of the original building. This character can be eroded if the proposed design is overly domesticated, something which the alteration or creation of new window and door openings can cause.

Therefore in considering the works proposed within this application the primary consideration

is the LPAs statutory duty; Section 72 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas in the exercise of its planning functions.

The Framework identifies that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. It is the environmental role that concentrates on the protection and enhancement of our natural and historic environments.

Section 12 of the NPPF requires LPA's in determining planning applications, to take account of *"the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness"*.

At a local level, Policy ENV16 (Conservation Areas) of the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan explains in the explanatory text that *"the main elements of Council policy are retention and enhancement"*. The policy itself states, *"within conservation areas development will be strictly controlled to ensure that it reflects the character of the area in terms of scale, size, design and materials"*.

Regard has to be taken to the impact the proposed alterations will have upon the character and setting of the heritage assets; namely the Conservation Area and Building of Townscape Merit. In addition to this consideration must be given to the impact the proposed works would have upon the character of the wider group of buildings which historically formed part of the New Inn public house and whether the works would materially detract and harm the character associated with the previous use of the building; potentially resulting in a design which would appear to be overtly domesticated.

The architectural qualities of the conservation area is, amongst other things, *the historic buildings of Gisburn are relatively modest and conservative, but are attractive because of the homogeneity of the stone walls and roofs all built from local stone with boundary walls, front steps and cobbles.*

The existing gable end elevation contains a single door opening with a narrow first floor window above at the south east side of the gable. This door opening was formed as part of the scheme to convert the buildings. The plans submitted at the time of the conversion indicate that relatively few new door or window openings had to be formed within the existing elevations of the building. However a number of new rooflights were inserted into both the front and rear roof elevations.

At present the existing door on the gable elevation is relatively inconspicuous. In contrast, the first floor window recently allowed is more conspicuous; however, the dimensions of this window are smaller than the window being proposed. In addition, these present openings by virtue of their scale and positioning to the far left hand side of the gable elevation leave the right hand side of the gable unadorned respecting the solid to void ratios of this historic gable.

These openings, more so the ground floor door, is obscured from long range views by the neighbouring building, Pimlico House, when viewed from the main road to the West. An existing boundary wall also aides to obscure the presence of the door. The proposed new ground floor window opening would, in my opinion by far more prominent. The ground floor window, due to its positioning would not benefit from the screening that Pimlico House provides to the existing door and would further detract from the solid to void ratios present on this property.

Having considered the submitted details I am of the opinion that the proposed works would materially alter the character and appearance of the gable end wall of 4 Park Mews (formerly

the cottage part of the New Inn PH) which has a modest and conservative appearance, but nevertheless makes an attractive contribution on the approach into the conservation area. This would be to the detriment of the character and setting of the historic environment. Due to the orientation of the building and those that surround it, the gable end elevation is sited within a prominent position within the townscape with it being readily visible from the A59, particularly for all vehicles and pedestrians entering the village from the western end. Whilst the building is addressed as been part of Park Mews it makes a significant contribution to the character and setting of Main Street and its historic association with the former New Inn PH.

One of the strengths identified within the SWOT Analysis contained within the Conservation Area Appraisal for Gisburn is; 'the historic character of the Main Street, which largely preserves its 19th Century appearance, including 14 Listed Buildings and 18 groups of buildings of townscape merit. Similarly the same analysis goes on the state that one of the weaknesses of the Conservation Area is; 'insensitive alterations to the historic buildings, diminishing the conservation area's strong historical and architectural nature.'

The proposed works, including the enlargement of the first floor bathroom window, would be an insensitive modern addition to the building and would therefore be damaging to the historic fabric of the building, a designated heritage asset. The addition of a further new window opening in this prominent gable end elevation would further erode and dilute the historic character of this designated heritage asset and this part of the conservation area detracting from its character and appearance and diluting the significance of the conservation area.

To conclude, significant weight should be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. I do not believe that the gain or benefit that would be derived from the insertion of this ground floor window would outweigh the harm that would be caused to the character and setting of the Conservation Area and the historic environment. The living room at ground floor already benefits from a source of natural light provided by the existing window on the South elevation adjacent to the A59, and there are no public benefits from the proposal outweighing the harm caused. On this basis I therefore consider the proposal conflicts with the requirements of Section 12 within the Framework and local plan policies ENV16 (DWLP) and EN5 and DME4 of the emerging core strategy. It is for the reasons outlined above; I thus recommend that the application be refused.

RECOMMENDATION: That permission be refused.