

Conservation Statement
Proposed Children's Home
118 Ribbler's Lane,
Kirkby, L32 7RB

Introduction

The proposal is to construct a Children's Home on a narrow plot of land located between Ribbler's Lane and Hedgecote, Kirkby (Fig 1).

The site for the proposed development is located within a designated conservation area and as such it is intended that the character, appearance and their relationship of the proposed development will complement the existing dwellings, which have been recognised nationally by being included on the Government's statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

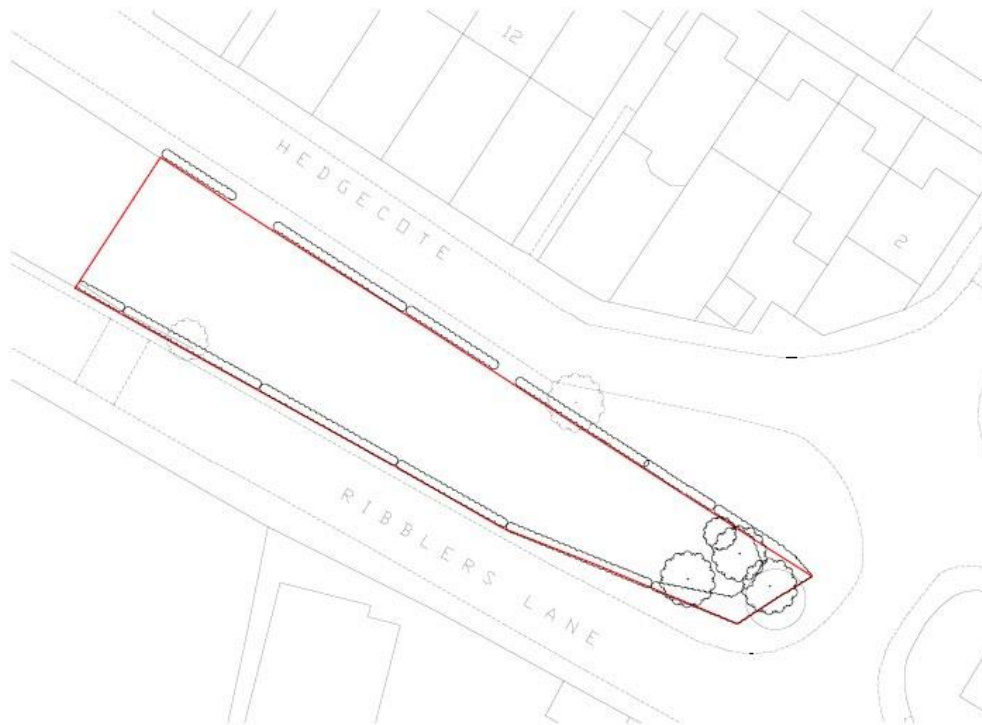


Fig 1 – Site Plan (NTS)

Historic context.

Ribbler's Lane is a linear Conservation Area that was designated in 1984 that runs parallel to the M57 and is considered to have the character of a semi-rural suburb bordered by a narrow strip of green belt and a high-density housing development. (Appendix I)

Whilst Ribbler's Lane is currently included in the Kirkby area, it now bears little relationship to the settlement of medieval times. The small concentration at 'Little Briton' was one of the early centres within the Kirkby Township and lies quite close to the north-eastern edge of the Conservation Area.

The 2005 Conservation Area Appraisal suggests that the significance of Ribbler's Lane is that it was used as a route between Prescott and Sefton, passing through Knowsley and Aintree from the seventeenth century.

On the 1839 Tithe Map for Kirkby there are no buildings are shown along the current Conservation Area section of Ribbler's Lane. However, it is indicated by the Local Planning Authority that this map illustrates small linear plots bordering on Ribbler's Lane, suggesting that building was about to happen or had commenced.

However, by the time the 1845-7 OS Map was published cottages are shown along the south-western side of the lane with the Sefton Arms¹ located opposite.

The area remained predominately rural with meadowland and Willow Bed Plantation stretching towards Knowsley Brook, but after the Second World War the north-eastern side of Ribbler's Lane was bordered by public housing, which was part of the planned movement of population from Liverpool. Further disruption of the rural scene was caused by construction of the M57 motorway on the west side, a short distance away.

Legislation, Principle & Policies.

Under the provisions of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Area) Act 1990 Local Planning Authorities have a general duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of their designated conservation areas.

The Local Planning Authority (LPA) has indicated that the conservation area has not been extended since being designated in 1984 and that an Article 4 Direction to remove certain 'permitted development rights' has not been sought from the Secretary of State.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which replaced PPS5 - Planning for the Historic Environment in March 2012 advocates that in respect of the conserving and enhancing the historic environment 'significance' can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting, and as heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. As such the proposal will be assessed against Paragraphs 129, 131, 132 & 137 of Section 12 of the NPPF 2012.

Therefore, the following 'principles' aim to provide the foundation for a comprehensive framework for the sustainable management of the historic environment:

- The historic environment is a shared resource.
- Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment.
- Understanding the significance of places is vital.
- Significant places should be managed to sustain their values.
- Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent.
- Documenting and learning from decisions is essential

¹ The Sefton Arms Inn no longer functions as a 'watering hole' and has been converted into residential accommodation and is now known as 'Sefton Arms Cottages'.

To understand the significance of this historic asset² it is recognised as a fixed part of the historic environment with a distinctive identity perceived by people that can be considered a place³.

Significance is related to all the cultural and social heritage values that people associate with it. It is considered that these values will tend to grow in strength and complexity over time, as understanding deepens and people's perceptions of a place evolve.

In November 2012 the Metropolitan Borough Council published the 'Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document' which established the strategic framework for the growth and development of Knowsley up to 2028 and beyond; setting out how and where new development and regeneration should take place and will therefore promote, guide and manage the future development within the Borough.

In July 2013, the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy was submitted to the Government for formal consideration with an Examination in Public in November 2013. It is understood that the recent round of Hearing Sessions were adjourned by the Inspector on 21 November 2013 and will be reconvened at a date to be confirmed.

However, within Spatial Strategy CS1 regard is given to a number of adopted Development Plan Policies that have been retained to help assess proposals affecting the historic environment, in particular it is understood that the proposals will be assessed against 'Saved' Policies DQ1 - Design Quality in New Development and DQ5 - Development in Conservation Areas.

Analysis & Significance.

The existing cottages along Ribbler's Lane occupy narrow plots of land. This reflected the building layout, which was common practice in South Lancashire during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth century.

There are five Grade II Listed Buildings in the Ribbler's Lane Conservation Area that form a group of buildings that are roughly of the same date. They are considered to be fine examples of vernacular architecture that retain original features such as boarded doors and casement windows.

The buildings are simple and unpretentious, constructed of either local sandstone or 'field brick', with shallow-pitched roofs of slate and substantial chimneys.

The paired cottages stand close to the road and their gardens are situated at either side, creating a sense of openness, which contributes enormously to the character of the area.

² The 'historic asset' in this particular case is the designated conservation area.

³ The word 'place' is used by English Heritage as a proxy for any part of the historic environment, including under the ground or sea, that people (not least practitioners) perceive as having a distinct identity, although recognising that there is no ideal term to cover everything from a shipwreck to a landscape

The hedges along the lane are fairly mature and contribute significantly to the townscape of the Conservation Area.

Drawing No. A1381 SK 01D indicates that the existing hedge to Ribbler's Lane frontage of the development is largely to be retained and supplemented with an 1800 high fence behind the hedge and within the site. Details of the vehicular access gates are to be subject to further detailed designs and shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to installation.

Along the Hedgecote boundary of the properties it is proposed that the current hedge planting it to be modified/retained as per Drawing No. A1381 SK 01D.

A number of existing trees have been identified and shown on Mulberry TMC drawing no. 118RL/MS/01 dated 27th April 2023 and a tree survey has been prepared to understand the condition of the current landscaping and to establish what the extent of planting can be removed without seriously affecting the mature trees that are to be retained as part of the proposed scheme. These works will be subject to a formal notification of proposed works to trees in conservation areas to the Local Planning Authority⁴

It is proposed that appropriate new tree planting will be introduced as required.

The location and design of the proposed building is shown on drawing nos. A1381 SK 01D, 02C, 03D & 04 have taken a number of references from the vernacular architecture of the area. It is proposed that it be constructed of brick with slate roofs. The style of the windows will also complement the period properties albeit slightly wider in proportion. In order to help maintain the character of the conservation area the windows are to be set back from the front face of the facing material creating a reveal to provide both weather protection and shadow adding interest to the elevation.

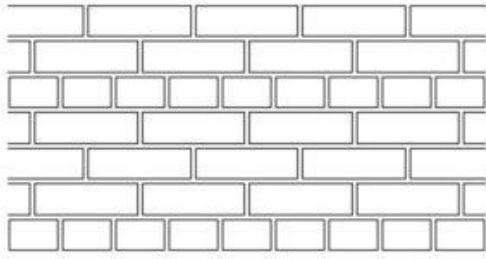
At this stage it is proposed that the new building will not have chimney stacks.

The scale and form of the proposed building reflects that of the neighbouring cottages. It is proposed that the eaves height is to be kept down as low as possible with the roof pitch being steep enough to meet the requirements of using natural slate⁵; similar to the existing cottages. The associated rainwater goods shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works.

All works relating to lead flashing works are to be carried out to the Lead Sheet Association Standards.

⁴ The LPA has six weeks within which they can object to your proposals. This gives the LPA the opportunity to protect trees of amenity value, which may be harmed by the proposed works. A site visit is usually carried out. The LPA can only object formally by making a TPO on the tree(s) concerned. In many cases, where the LPA feel that the works are inappropriate, they may discuss alternative work with you. If you do not receive a decision within six weeks of your notice then you can carry out the works you gave notice for, but no more. If a TPO is made, this will prevent you doing the work without making an application for consent. You will have the right to object to the TPO and the LPA will provide details on how to do this.

⁵ Natural Slate (Welsh, Canadian, Spanish or Chinese - type & colour to be agreed with the LPA) to have a nominal unit size of 12" x 24"



The proposed facing brick is to complement the existing 'field brick'⁶ and will be constructed using a lime based mortar to the ratio of 1:2:8-9 (cement/lime/sand) in English Garden Wall Bond (Fig 2) which has three, five or seven courses of 'stretchers' between rows of 'headers'⁷.

Fig 2 – An example of English Garden Wall Bond

The proposed siting of the building is considered to respect the acknowledged layout of the existing properties within the Conservation Area by the fact that the proposed building will be close to both the front and rear boundaries the amenity space and off street car parking to the building will be to the side, maintaining the openness of the area.

Samples of all materials (including colours and textures) shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval and agreed prior to commencement of any works. This is to ensure that the proposed development will effectively blend into its surrounds mitigating any potential detrimental impact on this part of the designated Conservation Area.

Summary & Conclusions.

The proposed provision of these 8 people Childrens Home will assist in catering for a perceived demand for this type of property in this part of Knowsley.

The proposed development is located within a designated conservation area which has been recognised as the remnant of a 17th century route between Sefton to the north and Prescott to the south of the development site.

The character, appearance and the relationship of the proposed modest development will compliment the existing small scale dwellings, which were recognised as being nationally important and included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest in June 1975.

The property has been designed in a manner that respects the requirements of 'Saved' Policy DQ1 (a), b), (c) & (e) as they respond to the character of the immediate and neighbouring properties within the Conservation Area and the established planting which is to be retained and augmented accordingly.

In terms of the 'Saved' Policy DQ5 (a) & (b) the proposal respects the scale, form, massing, height and materials within the Conservation Area. The proposed site layout adopts the principles of the existing settlement due to the nature of the site and as such is considered not to affect the character and appearance of the overall street scene, ('Saved' Policy DQ5 (c)).

The associated thinning out and upgrading of the existing landscaping within the development site will meet requirements of 'Saved' Policy DQ5 (d) & (f).

⁶ This is term is used in the Ribbler's Lane Conservation Area Appraisal, dated 2005

⁷ The Ribbler's Lane 'field brick' buildings appear to have seven courses between the header rows

The proposal in relation to the provisions of Section 12 of the NPPF is considered to meet the requirements set out in Paragraph 129 in that there will be minimal effect on the overall character of the nearest designated heritage known as Sefton Cottages, Grade II (formerly Sefton Arms).

It is considered that in respect of Paragraph 131 of the NPPF the proposal will enhance the significance of the designated heritage asset by bringing into beneficial use an area of semi managed land that will result in a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraphs 132 & 137 of the NPPF advise that the significance of designated heritage assets can be harmed through alteration, damage or loss. The current application seeks to enhance this narrow plot of land and that the alterations in terms of improving the established landscaping combined with the introduction of a building positioned in a similar way to that of the existing settlement should be regarded as an opportunity to introduce new development with the Ribbler's Lane Conservation Area with minimal affect in order to better reveal its significance whilst preserving those elements that give the area its character and also to meet the requirements of the Local Authority's requirements.



Ribbler's Lane Conservation Area

