Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 October and 17 December 2025, and 11 February 2026

by J M Tweddle BSc (Hons) MSc (Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 October 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/25/3367686
1 - 7 The Picture House, George Street, Whalley

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr S Ronnan of Ronnan Corporation Ltd. against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
- The application Ref is 3/2024/1016.
- The development proposed is described as extension to rear ground floor to include internal secure residents cycle store with roller shutter door; reinstate rear boundary wall to 740mm high; alterations to rear external staircases; UPVC windows to the front and side; UPVC windows and doors to the rear; screening feature to the rear balconies; ground floor bin store; central cladding to front dormer window on the third floor; rooflights; external lighting scheme to rear; 2 electric vehicle charging points.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appellant indicates on the planning application form that the development has been completed. However, my site visits confirmed that the proposed screening to the rear balconies, together with other elements shown on the submitted plans and drawings, had not yet been implemented. In any case, and for the avoidance of doubt, my determination is based on the development as proposed in the submitted plans and drawings.

3. Unusually, three site visits were undertaken for this appeal. A second visit was arranged to take place during the hours of darkness in order to observe the operation and external effects of the external lighting. However, despite prior arrangements having been made, the lighting scheme was not fully operational at the time of that visit. A third visit was therefore necessary and subsequently undertaken. During the final visit, the external lighting scheme was observed in its entirety during the hours of darkness, enabling a full assessment of its effects.

4. The Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) on 17 August 2026. The parties were afforded an opportunity to comment on the implications of the revised Framework for the appeal, and I have taken their representations into account in reaching my decision.

5. I have considered the appellant's late submission[1] concerning the disclosure of additional correspondence by the Council, and the other points raised throughout their appeal submission in relation to the process leading up to the Council's determination. The matters raised relate principally to the handling of the planning application and the completeness of the Council's records, rather than the planning

[1] Submission for the Appellant, dated Saturday 10 October 2026

merits of the development. The adequacy of the Council's record keeping and its administrative handling of information are beyond the scope of this appeal process.

6. Irrespective of any alleged administrative failings, the Council's reasons for refusing planning permission are clearly articulated and the appellant has had a full opportunity to address the matters in dispute. Nothing before me indicates that the appeal cannot be fairly determined on the evidence available. These matters therefore do not alter my conclusions.

Main Issues

7. The main issues in this case are:

   i. the effect of the development on the living conditions of neighbouring residents, with regard to privacy and the potential for light spill;

   ii. whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Whalley Conservation Area; and

   iii. whether the development would preserve the settings of nearby listed buildings.

Reasons

Background

8. The appeal site has an extensive background and planning history. Of relevance to this appeal, planning permission was granted on 8 April 2022 for the conversion, extension and alterations to the upper floors to create seven residential apartments along with rear extensions to ground floor retail unit, demolition of loading bay and rebuilding boundary wall at the rear and associated alterations[2]. Development was subsequently carried out, but not in accordance with the approved plans, drawings and other details forming part of that permission.

9. Furthermore, specifications and samples of proposed external finishes, including window specifications and cross-sections, were reserved by condition for subsequent approval[3]. An application[4] seeking approval of those details was subsequently refused by the Council[5]. Nevertheless, the development was carried out.

10. In order to remedy this, the Council invited the submission of a retrospective application for planning permission. An application was subsequently made[6] to 'regularise' the development that had been carried out without consent, and for further works to accommodate changes to the approved scheme. That application was refused, and the resulting appeal is now before me.

Living conditions

Privacy

11. The rear elevation of the appeal property faces the rear of the residential properties on Church Lane. These comprise a row of two-storey terraced dwellings with private rear yards, garden areas and parking spaces. These areas are separated from the

[2] Planning permission reference 3/2021/1004
[3] Condition Nos. 3 and 4 of planning permission ref. 3/2021/1004
[4] Application ref. 3/2024/0304
[5] Decision Letter/Notice dated 17 September 2024
[6] Application ref. 3/2024/1016

appeal site by a narrow access lane. Consequently, there is a close and direct visual relationship between the appeal property and these neighbouring dwellings.

12. The proposed artificial box hedging at a height of 500mm above the wall enclosing the first-floor terrace would provide an effective visual screen around the perimeter of that area. Having regard to its height and position, it would effectively prevent direct views from the terrace towards the neighbouring dwellings and their associated private spaces. Similarly, the proposed larch cladding to the rear staircase gable would substantially restrict opportunities for overlooking from the staircase itself.

13. However, the cladding would cover only part of the rear-facing gable elevation. As a result, the external landing and balcony area providing access to apartment G would remain exposed. This area occupies an elevated position at third-floor level and affords direct views over the proposed screening measures on the terrace area and into the rear private areas serving Nos. 4-8 Church Lane.

14. Given the close relationship between the properties, occupants using the landing would be able to look directly into areas where neighbouring residents would reasonably expect privacy. Although principally an access landing, its size and configuration are such that it could reasonably be used as a small sitting-out area associated with apartment G. Its use would not therefore be confined to brief movements between the apartment and staircase. Moreover, its elevated third-floor position affords a commanding outlook over neighbouring properties, materially increasing the extent and perception of overlooking.

15. The screening would prevent overlooking from the first-floor terrace and substantially reduce it from the external staircase. However, direct views would remain from the landing serving Apartment G, resulting in a harmful loss of privacy for the occupiers of Nos. 4–8 Church Lane.

Lighting

16. The development incorporates a series of external light fittings serving the external staircase and landing areas within the rear-facing gable, the first-floor terrace area, the external access stairs from ground level, and the external bin store on the ground floor. To limit the potential for light spill, each light unit has been fitted with black light deflector eyelids, and a specification has been provided[7]. During my site visits I observed the lighting in operation and noted that the deflector eyelids had been installed.

17. The appellant relies upon a lighting survey[8] and associated lux readings[9] undertaken in March 2025. However, this cannot reasonably be regarded as a robust lighting assessment. In particular, it was not undertaken in accordance with the methodology in the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note 01/21: The Reduction of Obtrusive Light, which is the relevant standard for assessing effects on neighbouring receptors.

18. Nor does the submitted material establish the qualifications of those responsible or provide technical interpretation of the readings. There is no lux contour plan, modelling of light spill, receptor-based assessment, evaluation against the relevant thresholds, or substantive consideration of beam spread, shielding and directionality.

[7] Blanca-DD IP65 bulkhead light specification
[8] Detailed in the email correspondence from Don Proctor to Kathryn Hughes at 11:09, 11 March 2025
[9] Detailed in the email correspondence from Don Proctor to Kathryn Hughes at 11:12, 11 March 2025

The isolated readings therefore provide no reliable basis for concluding that the lighting would have an acceptable effect on neighbouring occupiers.

19. The absence of a robust lighting assessment is particularly significant given my observations on site. Despite the installation of the deflector eyelids, I observed substantial light spill extending beyond the appeal site and across the rear of the dwellings on Church Lane. The illumination extended well beyond the circulation routes it was intended to serve and was clearly visible throughout neighbouring private yards and garden areas. I also observed light from the appeal site shining into the rear-facing windows of these neighbouring properties. In several locations the lighting significantly altered the subdued night-time character of those private spaces.

20. The proposed artificial box hedging around the first-floor terrace, together with the cladding proposed within the rear gable, would be likely to intercept some of the light emitted from the development and therefore reduce the extent of light spill. However, in the absence of any robust technical assessment of the effectiveness of those measures, there is insufficient evidence to determine the degree of mitigation that would be achieved or whether the resulting lighting environment would be acceptable.

21. The need to provide appropriate lighting for the safe and secure use of the external access routes is acknowledged. However, that functional requirement does not justify illumination extending beyond the areas it is intended to serve. Nor is there substantive evidence to demonstrate that the level of illumination observed is necessary to achieve that purpose.

22. Although motion activated, the lights serve the principal access routes to several apartments and could therefore be triggered repeatedly throughout the hours of darkness. Neighbouring occupiers would consequently experience recurring episodes of light intrusion associated with normal residential activity, rather than occasional or isolated events.

23. While the brightness of the fittings may be adjustable, no secured operating level or robust assessment of their effects at a reduced setting is before me. This possibility therefore provides insufficient assurance that the identified harm could be avoided. The appellant claims that the site had an established commercial lighting baseline and suggests that the present lighting scheme is a reduction in illumination. However, I have no evidence of the claimed commercial lighting baseline before me. Furthermore, the absence of recent complaints in relation to the lighting does not detract from my findings.

24. Taken together, the evidence and my observations demonstrate that the proposed lighting would result in significant light spill beyond the appeal site, illuminating neighbouring private areas and rear-facing windows. This would materially intrude upon the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers on Church Lane.

Living conditions conclusion

25. To conclude on this main issue, the development would be harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring residents, with regard to privacy and the potential for light spill. Consequently, the proposal conflicts with Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008-2028 (the Core Strategy) and the associated provisions of the Framework, which together seek to safeguard residential amenity through the maintenance of acceptable standards of privacy and protection from unacceptable levels of light pollution.

The Whalley Conservation Area

26. The significance of the Whalley Conservation Area (the CA) derives from the historic development of the settlement around the medieval abbey, parish church and principal routes, together with its concentration of ecclesiastical, commercial and domestic historic buildings. Traditional materials and detailing, the historic street pattern, public spaces and important townscape views are also important components of its special interest.

27. The conservation area appraisal[10] recognises the importance of preserving traditional architectural features and materials, noting that the erosion of historic detailing and the introduction of unsympathetic modern alterations can cumulatively diminish the area's special character and appearance.

28. The appeal property occupies a prominent position within the CA on George Street. Constructed in the early 20th century as the former Billington and Whalley Cooperative Society building, it is identified within the conservation area appraisal as both a building of townscape merit and a focal building. Its scale, historic form, architectural character and townscape prominence make a positive and appreciable contribution to the significance of the CA.

The proposal and its effects

29. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. I have assessed the appeal with this important statutory duty in mind.

30. The appeal seeks consent for various external alterations to the building. In refusing permission, the Council's concerns specifically relate to the proposed uPVC windows, the dark grey cladding to the front dormer and rear gables, the rear wall enclosing the terrace and balcony areas, the lighting scheme, and the proposed larch cladding to the rear stairwell. Therefore, my assessment is focused on these elements of the proposal.

Windows

31. Fenestration forms an important element of the architectural composition of the appeal building. This is particularly apparent at first-floor level, where the large and regularly spaced window openings, framed by substantial stone surrounds, contribute to the rhythm and character of the building's principal elevation.

32. The evidence indicates that the previous windows comprised a mix of traditional white timber-framed sliding sash windows and more modern white uPVC-framed double-glazed units. However, the presence of previous modern replacement windows does not mean that the proposed modern units are inevitably acceptable. The relevant consideration is the effect of the proposed windows on the architectural and historic character of the building, and consequently, the significance of the CA.

33. The previous windows generally had relatively slender profiles and simple opening arrangements, allowing the proportions of the openings and their stone surrounds to remain visually dominant. By contrast, the replacement units have substantially

[10] Whalley Conservation Area Appraisal, October 2005, prepared for Ribble Valley Borough Council by the Conservation Studio

bulkier frames and modern opening arrangements. The greater visual weight and complexity of the frames, and their modern opening arrangements, compete with the strong proportions and architectural detailing of the original openings.

34. The replacement windows provide greater consistency across the elevation, and I do not regard either their grey colour or the use of uPVC, in themselves, as harmful. However, they neither reflect the historic multi-pane arrangement evident in historical photographs, which the previous windows sought to replicate, nor provide a simple and recessive contemporary replacement. Their heavier profiles consequently appear conspicuous within the established architectural composition, resulting in incongruous modern interventions that detract from the building's historic character.

35. The appellant has identified other examples of uPVC windows within the CA. However, my concern is not with the use of uPVC itself, but with the bulk, proportions and opening arrangements of the proposed windows and their effect on the architectural character of this prominent building of townscape merit. The examples elsewhere therefore do not alter my findings.

36. The practical benefits of the proposed windows in terms of ventilation and thermal performance are acknowledged. However, there is no substantive evidence to indicate that such benefits could not be achieved through a more sympathetic window design incorporating slimmer frame proportions.

37. Accordingly, the replacement windows detract from the architectural character of the appeal building, diminish its positive contribution to the significance of the CA and cause harm to its character and appearance.

Front dormer and rear gables

38. The front dormer occupies a prominent position at roof level on the principal elevation of the building and is readily apparent in views from George Street. The previously approved scheme showed the dormer as predominantly glazed, whereas the development incorporates a central section of dark grey aluminium cladding between the glazed elements. The appellant explains that this arose from the need to achieve fire-resistant separation between the apartments. However, the Council's Building Control advice indicates that fire-resistant glazing could have provided the necessary separation whilst retaining a fully glazed external appearance.

39. The dormer is a substantial contemporary addition whose scale, form and elevated position already give it a dominant presence above the more finely articulated historic façade. Nevertheless, those characteristics were established by the previous permission and form the context for assessing the proposal.

40. The predominantly glazed treatment previously approved would have provided a comparatively lightweight appearance that would have moderated the dormer's visual mass. By contrast, the solid central panel interrupts the glazing and adds further weight to an already substantial feature, making it appear heavier and more assertive within the principal elevation.

41. Consequently, the dormer appears heavier, more fragmented and more assertive within the principal elevation. The central panel therefore exacerbates the prominence of the dormer and detracts from the architectural composition and detailing of the historic elevation beneath it. Accordingly, whilst the scale, form and contemporary nature of the dormer were established through the previous permission, I find that the

central cladding panel exacerbates its visual effect and detracts from the architectural character of the building.

42. I reach a different conclusion in respect of the rear gables. These are clearly contemporary additions whose general form and appearance were largely envisaged by the previous permission. The dark grey cladding reinforces that contemporary character and provides a clear distinction from the historic building.

43. In this context, the cladding would not appear incongruous or detract from the architectural character of the appeal building. It would therefore not diminish the building's contribution to the significance of the CA.

Rear wall enclosing the terrace and balcony areas

44. The wall enclosing the first-floor terrace introduces a substantial solid element at an elevated level. However, it sits within a rear elevation already characterised by contemporary alterations associated with the building's conversion.

45. The proposed 500mm high artificial box hedging would extend above the terrace wall and break up its otherwise uninterrupted upper edge, reducing its visual solidity. Although artificial, its limited height and close association with the terrace would ensure that it was understood as part of this contemporary element rather than as a prominent feature within the wider townscape.

46. While the precise specification of the hedging has not been provided, its location, extent and height are sufficiently clear to assess its likely effect. Detailed matters concerning its appearance and fixing could be appropriately controlled by condition to ensure a satisfactory finish.

47. Overall, the wall and screening would not appear unduly prominent or discordant. The hedging would moderate the solidity of the enclosure, enabling it to sit comfortably within the contemporary character of this part of the building.

Cladding to the rear stairwell

48. The original permission envisaged a degree of larch cladding to the rear stairwell within the rear-facing gable. However, this was confined to a relatively narrow section of horizontal boarding, flanked by substantial areas of glazing. This gave the gable a comparatively lightweight and open appearance, moderating the visual mass of this substantial contemporary addition.

49. The appeal proposal would materially alter that composition through a much larger expanse of vertically arranged larch cladding. Its scale and solidity would give the stairwell a markedly heavier and more enclosed appearance. Moreover, the vertical emphasis of the boarding would accentuate the height and mass of the gable, creating an assertive and imposing feature on the rear elevation that would sit uneasily with the more refined architectural character of the historic building.

50. Although the cladding would reduce overlooking from the staircase, that benefit does not overcome its harmful visual effect. Its scale, solidity and vertical emphasis would create an overly dominant treatment of the rear stairwell, detracting from the architectural character of the building and diminishing its positive contribution to the significance of the CA.

External lighting

51. Other than the appeal scheme, the area to the rear of the appeal building has very limited artificial lighting. During the hours of darkness, this gives the area an understated and subdued character. This restrained environment allows the traditional built form and close spatial relationship between the rear lane and the historic properties on Church Lane to remain visually dominant, thereby reinforcing the historic character of this part of the CA and contributing positively to the way in which it is experienced after dark.

52. Against this context, the appeal lighting creates a conspicuous concentration of illumination around the rear staircases, landings and terrace areas, extending well beyond the spaces it is intended to serve. Its intensity and elevated position draw attention to the appeal building and emphasise the scale and form of its substantial contemporary rear additions. As a result, the building becomes an unduly assertive presence after dark, at odds with the otherwise restrained night-time character of its surroundings.

53. Although motion activated and fitted with deflector eyelids, the lighting is not adequately contained and would be triggered repeatedly through normal residential use. The proposed screening may intercept some light, but there is insufficient evidence that it would reduce the illumination to an acceptable degree.

54. Consequently, the lighting introduces an intrusive and conspicuous level of illumination into a part of the CA where the limited presence of artificial light reinforces its historic character. It therefore harmfully alters the night-time environment, gives undue prominence to the appeal building and diminishes the character and appearance of this part of the CA.

Conservation Area Conclusion

55. For the reasons set out above, the development fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Whalley Conservation Area. This is contrary to Key Statement EN5 and Policies DMG1 and DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008-2028 which together seek to secure a high standard of building design and to conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including conservation areas.

Setting of nearby listed buildings

56. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. I have considered the appeal in light of this weighty statutory duty.

57. The appeal site occupies a sensitive location in relation to other heritage assets. It is situated within the setting of the Grade II listed cottages on Church Lane and within the wider setting of the Grade I listed Church of St Mary and All Saints.

Nos. 10-13, 14-15, and 16 Church Lane

58. Nos. 10-13, 14-15 and 16 Church Lane are separately designated Grade II listed buildings which together form part of a continuous historic row of cottages. Nos. 10-13 Church Lane comprise four Grade II listed early 19th-century two-storey houses constructed of sandstone rubble with slate roofs. Their significance derives principally from their architectural and historic interest as modest historic dwellings, expressed

through their simple form, traditional materials, stone window and door surrounds and surviving chimneys.

59. Nos. 14 and 15 Church Lane are a Grade II listed mirrored pair, understood to represent an early-to-mid 19th-century alteration of an earlier building. Their traditional sandstone construction, sash windows, stone detailing and surviving evidence of earlier openings contribute to an understanding of their architectural character and historic development. No. 16, also Grade II listed, is an early 19th-century sandstone dwelling whose traditional form and detailing, including its splayed frontage following the alignment of Church Lane, contribute to its architectural and historic interest.

60. Taken together, these buildings also derive significance from their arrangement as a continuous historic row. Their modest scale, traditional form and common palette of materials provide a strong degree of visual and architectural coherence and enable them to be appreciated as a closely related group of historic dwellings.

61. Their settings contribute to that significance by providing the townscape context within which their modest scale, traditional character and relationship with the wider historic group can be appreciated. The appeal building lies to the rear of these listed buildings and, given its scale, proximity and visibility, forms a prominent component of their settings. This relationship is particularly apparent from the nearby public right of way, where the appeal building and the listed buildings are experienced together.

62. For the reasons given above, the larch cladding and external lighting would give the appeal building an unduly assertive presence within these surroundings. Given the close spatial and visual relationship between the buildings, this would detract from the modest scale and traditional character of the listed cottages when experienced within their settings.

63. Consequently, the development would diminish the contribution made by the setting of each of these listed buildings and would thereby cause harm to their respective significance.

Church of St Mary and All Saints

64. The Grade I listed Church of St Mary and All Saints is of considerable architectural and historic significance, derived principally from its medieval origins, surviving historic fabric and detailing, and its longstanding ecclesiastical role within Whalley. Its prominent tower and substantial medieval form also contribute to its importance within the historic townscape.

65. Its setting makes an important contribution to that significance by allowing the church to be appreciated within the historic settlement. Of particular relevance is the important view identified in the conservation area appraisal, and the accompanying map, from George Street towards the church, which takes in the eastern edge of the appeal site. The appeal building is a prominent feature within that view and therefore forms a prominent component of the townscape setting from which the significance of the church is appreciated.

66. As set out above, the bulky proportions and modern opening arrangements of the replacement windows, together with the altered treatment of the front dormer, diminish the architectural integrity of the appeal building. Given its prominence within

this identified view, these alterations also erode the quality of the historic townscape through which the church is experienced, thereby detracting from its setting.

67. The upper parts of the rear gables are also visible from Church Lane and the churchyard, rising prominently above the roofs of the listed cottages. In these views, the external lighting creates a conspicuous focus of illumination that draws undue attention towards the appeal building and competes with the established prominence of the church. This further detracts from the way in which the church is appreciated within its setting.

68. Consequently, the development detracts from important views of the church and diminishes the contribution made by its setting to its significance. The proposal would therefore diminish the significance of this Grade I listed building through harmful development within its setting.

Conclusion - setting of nearby listed buildings

69. To conclude on this issue, the development would fail to preserve the settings of the nearby listed buildings and would harm their significance. It therefore conflicts with Key Statement EN5 and Policies DMG1 and DME4 of the Core Strategy, which seek to protect, conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings.

Heritage Balance

70. In accordance with the Framework, the degree of harm to the significance of each designated heritage asset must be identified. Having regard to the effects identified above and the contribution that the appeal building makes to the CA, the development would cause a moderate to high degree of harm to the significance of the CA. A moderate to high degree of harm would also arise to the significance of the Grade II listed buildings on Church Lane through development within their settings. The effect on the Grade I listed Church of St Mary and All Saints would be more limited, resulting in a modest degree of harm to its significance through development within its setting. None of these effects would amount to substantial harm.

71. Nevertheless, Policy HE6 of the Framework requires substantial weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, with greater weight afforded to assets of greater importance. It also establishes that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset is a matter of considerable importance and weight and should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

72. The appellant points to the continued effective use of the building, retention of seven residential apartments, use of previously developed land, and the site's accessible location in relation to local services, infrastructure and public transport. However, the conversion and residential use of the building are not before me. The appeal concerns only external alterations to an existing converted building and does not itself secure these benefits. They therefore attract very limited weight.

73. Retaining the development in its proposed form would avoid costly remedial works and the associated disruption to residents. However, these are principally private benefits accruing to the appellant and existing occupiers. Nevertheless, avoiding the removal and replacement of the appeal works would reduce material waste and associated resource use, providing some environmental benefit. I afford this limited weight in the heritage balance.

74. Consequently, the public benefits put forward in this case do not tip the balance in favour of the proposal when set against the considerable importance and weight I ascribe to the heritage harm. For this reason, the development would conflict with the Framework in so far as it seeks to ensure that heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Other Matters

75. I am mindful that elements of the development are retrospective. Policy DM8 of the Framework requires substantial weight to be given where the evidence establishes that unauthorised development was intentional. However, this matter has not been raised by either party and, given my findings on the main issues, it is not necessary to reach a conclusion on whether the development was intentional.

76. The previous planning permission represents a legitimate fallback. However, the approved scheme would avoid or materially reduce the harms identified above and would therefore be preferable in planning terms to the development before me. Consequently, the fallback lends no support to the appeal.

77. The appellant suggests that any outstanding concerns could be addressed by planning conditions. However, no specific conditions have been proposed, and none are apparent that would satisfactorily overcome the harms identified. Accordingly, the development could not be made acceptable through the use of planning conditions.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

78. The relevant development plan policies are broadly consistent with the Framework insofar as they seek to secure high-quality development, protect living conditions and conserve the historic environment. I therefore afford them full weight.

79. Policy S3 of the Framework states that decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. As the appeal site lies within a settlement, Policy S4 indicates that permission should be granted unless the benefits would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects when assessed against the Framework's national decision-making policies.

80. The appellant relies on Policy L2 and the benefits associated with making effective use of land and buildings. However, the conversion of the building and provision of seven apartments were established by the previous permission and are not dependent upon the external alterations now before me. The proposal therefore does not itself secure those benefits. Moreover, the Framework's objective of making effective use of land is qualified by the need to safeguard and improve the environment and ensure safe and healthy living conditions. Therefore, given the harms identified, Policy L2 does not provide support for the proposal.

81. The appellant also relies on Policy HE4 of the Framework, referring to the role of the development in securing an appropriate use of the building consistent with its conservation and in avoiding or minimising harm to heritage assets. However, there is no evidence that the continued use of the building depends upon the development before me. Moreover, the proposal does not avoid or minimise the heritage harm identified. Consequently, Policy HE4 provides no support for the development.

82. Against this, the development would harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents through loss of privacy and light spill, contrary to Policies L2(d)(ii) and P3(2)(b) of the Framework. It would also harm the significance of designated heritage

assets. This harm is a matter of considerable importance and weight and is not outweighed by public benefits, resulting in conflict with Policy HE6. Furthermore, the proposal would fail to respond appropriately to its historic context, contrary to the principles set out in Policy DP3(1) of the Framework. Policy DP3(3) is clear that development proposals should be refused where they conflict with these principles. I therefore attach substantial weight to these harms and the resulting policy conflicts.

83. Overall, the benefits of granting planning permission would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects, when assessed against the Framework's national decision-making policies.

84. The development therefore conflicts with the development plan as a whole. There are no material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate that a decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. Accordingly, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J M Tweddle

INSPECTOR