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Architecture + Building Surveying + Town Planning

Ribchester St Wilfrid's C of E Primary School

Heritage Statement

14th October 2026

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.1 Cassidy + Ashton Group Ltd. have been instructed by the School Governors of Ribchester St Wilfrid's C of E Primary School to prepare a Heritage Statement to support a full planning application for the installation of solar panel installation works at Ribchester St Wilfrid's C of E Primary School. The site does not comprise a listed building but does lie within the Ribchester Conservation Area and is situated adjacent to the Ribchester Roman Bath House which is designated as a Scheduled Monument.

1.2 This application relates to St Wilfrid's Primary School, which was built circa 1872 as a National School. The proposals comprise the installation of solar panels to the roof of the school.

DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

1.3 This Statement describes the site and its surroundings before setting out the planning policy context pertaining to heritage matters, under which the application should be considered. This Heritage Statement is required due to the site's location within a Conservation Area and adjacent to a Scheduled Monument.

1.4 Paragraph HE1 of the NPPF states that:

"1. To deliver a positive strategy for the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment, development plans should, at the most appropriate level:

a. Identify the heritage assets within the plan area, including those heritage assets at most risk through neglect, decay or other threats, set out the key issues facing them and identify where these assets can be used to support sustainable development;

b. Be informed by a proportionate heritage assessment."

1.5 Sufficient information will be provided within this statement to wholly address the requirements of the NPPF.

1.6 The conclusion is then reached that the development conforms to the relevant planning policy context, and that there are no reasons relating to heritage which would prevent planning consent from being granted.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

1.7 This Heritage Statement is supported by the following drawings, illustrating the extent of works proposed:

- 13635 – L06 Rev P1 - Location Plan
- 13635 – L07 Rev P1 – Proposed Elevations Existing and Proposed
- 13635 – L08 Rev P1 - Existing Roof Plan
- 13635 – L09 Rev P1 – Proposed Elevations Existing and Proposed
- 13635 – L10 Rev P1 - Proposed Roof Plan

SITE LOCATION

2.1 St Wilfrid's Primary School is located to the east of Church Street in Ribchester, Lancashire. Ribchester lies on the north bank of the River Ribble.



Figure 1. Site Location [Source: Google Earth]

2.2 The surrounding area is predominantly residential, comprising of two-storey terraced houses. To the north of the application site lies the remains of a roman bath house, an archaeological site which is open to the public and is a designated scheduled monument (Figure 2).

2.3 To the south of the school site lies the River Ribble and a public footpath (Figure 3) runs along the southern boundary of the school, between the two.



Figure 2. Ribchester Roman Bath House located to the northeast of the site [Source: C+A]



Figure 3. Side elevation of St Wilfrid's Primary School taken from the riverside [Source: C+A]



Figure 4. Front elevation of St Wilfrid's Primary School taken from the southwest [Source: C+A]

HERITAGE STATUS

Ribchester Conservation Area

2.4 The site falls within the Ribchester Conservation Area and therefore an analysis of the Conservation Area is included within this statement. The area was first designated on 17 July 1973.

2.5 The Ribchester Conservation Area consists of the main village core which comprises a range of properties and open space.

2.6 Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as an:

"Area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

2.7 The Ribble Valley Borough Council – Ribchester Conservation Area Appraisal provides the following description of the areas special architectural and historic interest:

Ribchester Conservation Area consists of the village core centered around a small triangular area, on one side of which is the White Bull Inn, and Stydd, a rural area north-east of the main settlement which contains two churches and 18th century almshouses.

Ribchester village is dominated by rows of handloom weavers' cottages, many of which were built in the late eighteenth century, but some of which were also adapted from existing houses. There is a scattering of older houses in the village, many of which have seventeenth or eighteenth century datestones. There is a small amount of late nineteenth or early twentieth century development on the north side of the village, around Blackburn Road. The area also includes the excavated areas of the Roman baths and granaries, now preserved in an open area of land for display to the public, and the Roman Museum, next to the church.

Stydd is approached via a narrow single track road. After leading first to the Roman Catholic Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, a listed 'barn church' built in 1789, then Stydd Almshouses (1728), the road becomes a rough track that continues to the late 12th century Church of St Saviour.

Summary of special interest

The special interest that justifies designation of the Ribchester Conservation Area derives from the following features:

- *Remains of Roman fort and associated outbuildings of settlement (vicus), including granaries and bath house, much of which is protected by Scheduled Monument status;*

- *The architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings, 21 of which are listed;*
- *Two grade I churches: Church of St Wilfred and Church of St Saviour, Stydd;*
- *Church of St Peter and St Paul (grade II), a 'barn church' and one of the earliest Catholic churches in Lancashire;*
- *Stydd Almshouses, listed grade II*;*
- *Narrow, closely developed streets of former handloom weavers' settlement;*
- *Ensemble of St Wilfrid's Church, Rectory, Museum and Churchgates;*
- *Handloom weaver's cottages, including two with cellar loomshops, particularly in Church Street and Water Street;*
- *Good examples of late 19th century terraced houses along Church Street and Blackburn Road;*
- *River Ribble;*
- *The prevalent use of local building stone;*
- *Stydd, a tiny rural hamlet containing two historic churches and 18th century almshouses;*
- *Open space in front of White Bull;*
- *Views of River Ribble and surrounding landscape;*
- *Individual trees and groups of trees.*

2.8 The school is identified as a building of townscape merit on the associated Townscape Appraisal Map for the Conservation Area, as shown in Figure 5.

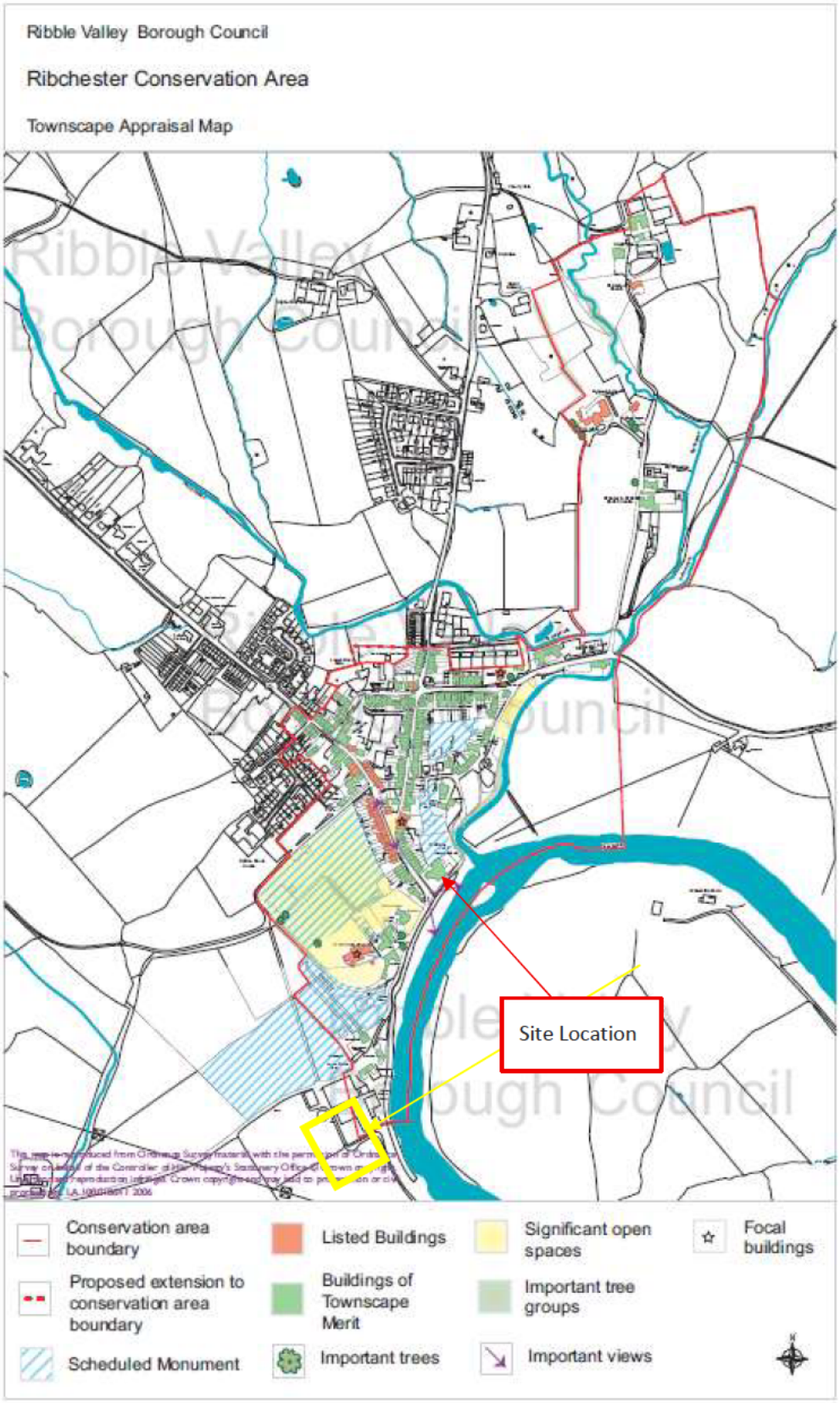


Figure 5. Ribchester Conservation Area [Source: Ribble Valley Borough Council]

Scheduled Monument

2.9 The Ribchester Roman fort (Bremetennnacum) is categorised as a Scheduled Monument under Heritage England with a List Entry Number of 1005110.



Figure 6. Ribchester Roman for Scheduled Monument areas [Source: Historic England]

2.10 The Scheduled Monument extends over five areas within Ribchester including a section located to the north of the application site.

2.11 The area to the north of the school, comprises the remains of the Roman Bath House, which is understood to have been built around 100 AD. It would have primarily been used by Cavalry soldiers and the local Romano-British population, with the baths comprising an essential part of their daily social life.

Listed Buildings

2.12 There are 8 no. Grade II listed buildings situated approximately 70 meters from the application site, comprising properties at 8-15 Church Street. They were first listed on 22nd November 1983. The listing description states the following:

Part of a row of weavers' houses, late C18th. Squared sandstone with brick stacks and slate roof. 2 storeys with continuous plain frieze and stone gutter brackets. Windows have plain reveals and projecting sills, the doors, to the right, having plain stone surrounds. No. 8, of one bay, has sashed windows and a triangular moulded stone door hood on stone brackets, with a stone plaque over inscribed 'BPB 1795'. No. 9 has a similar door hood, modern windows, and a 2nd 1st floor window over the door. To the right is a tunnel entrance with plain stone surround and semi- circular head with projecting key and imposts. No. 12 has a 2nd, modern, 1st floor window, as does No. 13, which has cement reveals to the ground floor door and window and a tunnel entrance to the right with plain stone surround. No. 14 has cement dressings. No. 15 has plain stone surrounds, possibly of c.1900, with a tunnel entrance to the right with plain stone surround. Nos. 14 and 15, although altered, continue the facade of the row and are listed for group value.



Figure 7. Photograph of 8-15 Church Street [Source: C+A]

3.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

3.1 St Wilfrid's Primary School aims to provide a broad, balanced and creative curriculum for children aged 4 – 11. The school has 87 no. pupils and received a 'good' rating in their latest Ofsted report (2023).

3.2 The proposal seeks the installation of solar panels on the roof of the school. The solar panels will decrease the School's reliance on external energy, and therefore on fossil fuels.

3.3 Figures 8 & 9 identify the proposed locations of solar panels the roof. It is expected that the solar panels will generally be obscured on the south elevation and somewhat obstructed on the western elevation.

3.4 The solar panels will be fixed to the roofs on frames, the panels will lie flat upon the roof to reduce visibility. The panels will not be visible from the Roman ruins or from neighbouring land to the North.

3.5 Additional information regarding the proposed works is provided on the accompanying drawings.



Figure 8. Photograph of proposed location of solar panels on the south elevation of the school, demonstrating that the solar panels will be obstructed by the roof construction in the foreground. *[Source: C+A]*



Figure 9. Photograph of proposed location of solar panels from the road on the west elevation of the school. [Source: Google Maps]

4.0 HERITAGE STATUS

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material consideration indicate otherwise.

4.2 The Local Development Framework comprises of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008-2028 (Adopted December 2014). It sets out the strategic planning policy framework to guide development in the borough up to 2028. It also includes development management policies to assist in the determination of individual planning applications.

4.3 Other planning policies and guidance which are material considerations in the discussion of this proposal are:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

4.4 Only policies pertaining to heritage requirements are set out and assessed within this document.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), as revised in August 2026, sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

4.6 Paragraph CC1 of the NPPF states that:

'1. Development plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating climate change and supporting the transition to net zero, in accordance with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008. They should also take a proactive approach to adapting to climate change, taking into account the implications of extreme weather and long-term climate trends including overheating, wildfires, drought, flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes. They should do this by:

a. Proposing development patterns through their spatial strategy and allocations which:

i. Can help contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (which can be informed by an assessment of baseline carbon emissions and the potential effect of development options on future emissions and their mitigation).'

4.7 Chapter 20 encourages the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, with the following paragraphs of the NPPF considered of particular relevance:

4.8 Paragraph HE4 states applications should take account of:

4.9 *'1. Heritage assets, as an irreplaceable resource, should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. To achieve this, development proposals which would affect the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting should: a. Maintain or secure a use consistent with their conservation, taking into account the importance of maintaining the assets, the positive contribution they can make to sustainable communities including local economies, and the positive contribution they can make to local character and distinctiveness; and b. Avoid (or if that is not possible, minimise) harm to the significance of heritage assets, and instead conserve this significance.'*

4.10 Paragraph HE5 emphasises that:

'Development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The relevant historic environment record should be referred to in making this assessment, and appropriate expertise employed where necessary.'

'2. Assessments of the potential effects of development proposals on the significance of heritage assets (including through effects on their setting) should identify whether proposals would be likely to: a. Have a positive effect, which is where the significance of a heritage asset would be enhanced, or better revealed; or b. Have no effect on the significance of a heritage asset.'

'5. Where a development proposal involves, or has the potential to involve, a heritage asset with archaeological interest, an appropriate desk-based assessment should be undertaken and, where necessary, a field evaluation. These should be used to help understand the asset's significance and the potential effect of the proposal on this, which should inform the design, mitigation and implementation of the development. '

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

4.11 The Ribble Valley Core Strategy forms the central document of the Local Development Framework establishing the vision, underlying objectives and key principles that will guide the development of the area to 2028.

4.12 Under policy EN5: Heritage Assets it is outlined that:

There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings. The Historic Environment and its Heritage Assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance for their heritage value; their important contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place; and to wider social, cultural and environmental benefits.

This will be achieved through:

- *Recognising that the best way of ensuring the long term protection of heritage assets is to ensure a viable use that optimises opportunities for sustaining and enhancing its significance.*
- *Keeping Conservation Area Appraisals under review to ensure that any development proposals respect and safeguard the character, appearance and significance of the area.*
- *Considering any development proposals which may impact on a heritage asset or their setting through seeking benefits that conserve and enhance their significance and avoids any substantial harm to the heritage asset.*
- *Requiring all development proposals to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness/sense of place.*
- *The consideration of Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights where the exercise of such rights would harm the historic environment.*

4.13 Policy DME4 (Protecting Heritage Assets) states:

1. Conservation Areas

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 and those elements which contribute towards its significance. This should include considerations as to whether it conserves and enhances the special architectural and historic character of the area as set out in the relevant conservation area appraisal. Development which makes a positive contribution and conserves and enhances the character, appearance and significance of the area in terms of its location, scale, size, design and materials and existing buildings, structures, trees and open spaces will be supported.

In the conservation areas there will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of elements that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

2. Listed Buildings and other Buildings of Significant Heritage Interest

Alterations or extensions to listed buildings or buildings of local heritage interest, or development proposals on sites within their setting which cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset will not be supported.

Any proposals involving the demolition or loss of important historic fabric from listed buildings will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist.

3. *Registered Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and Other Gardens of Significant Heritage Interest*

Proposals which cause harm to or loss of significance to registered parks, gardens or landscapes of special historic interest, or other gardens of significant local heritage interest, including their setting, will not be supported.

4. *Scheduled Monuments and Other Archaeological Remains*

Applications for development that would result in harm to the significance of a scheduled monument or nationally important archaeological sites will not be supported.

Developers will be expected to investigate the significance of non-designated archaeology prior to determination of an application. Where this demonstrates that the significance is equivalent to that of designated assets, proposals which cause harm to the significance of non-designated assets will not be supported.

Where it can be demonstrated that the substantial public benefits of any proposals outweigh the harm to or loss of the above, the council will seek to ensure mitigation of damage through preservation of remains in situ as the preferred solution. Where this is not justified, developers will be required to make adequate provision for excavation and recording of the asset before or during excavation.

Proposals should also give adequate consideration of how the public understanding and appreciation of such sites could be improved.

In line with NPPF, Ribble Valley aims to seek positive improvements in the quality of the historic environment through the following:

a) Monitoring heritage assets at risk; and

i) Supporting development/re-use proposals consistent with their conservation;

ii) Considering use of legal powers (building preservation notices, urgent works notices) to ensure the proper preservation of listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas.

b) Supporting redevelopment proposals which better reveal the significance of heritage assets or their settings.

c) Production of design guidance.

d) Keeping conservation area management guidance under review.

e) Use of legal enforcement powers to address unauthorised works where it is expedient to do so.

f) Assessing the significance and opportunities for enhancement of non-designated heritage assets through the development management process.

5.0 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

5.1 The relevant national and local planning policies pertaining to matters of heritage are set out within the preceding chapter. These policies demonstrate the actions necessary to appropriately assess the significance of a heritage asset and the impact of any development proposals upon them.

5.2 Paragraph HE5 of the NPPF requires applicants to identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets or their setting and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

5.3 The significance of a heritage asset may comprise a number of factors, which are similar to the criteria for listing and including, but not restricted to:

- Age and rarity: most buildings built before 1700 which survive in anything like their original condition are listed, as are most built between 1700 and 1840
- Architectural interest: through architectural design, decoration and craftsmanship and also important examples of particular building types and technique
- Historic interest: encompassing buildings which illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural or military history, or close historical association with nationally-important people or events
- Group value: especially where buildings are part of an important architectural or historic group or are a fine example of planning (such as squares, terraces and model villages)

5.4 Taking such factors into account, the relative significance of the elements of the site can be assessed, using the following scale:

- High significance – buildings/features which make an important contribution to the architectural and historic interest and character of the site, through age, rarity, architectural merit or historical association or group value, and whose preservation and enhancement is considered essential
- Medium significance – those making a lesser contribution, but which nevertheless are also considered worthy of preservation or enhancement
- Low significance – those making only a limited contribution to the site overall, although not necessarily detracting from it.

5.5 Taking the above methodology into account, the proposed site lies within a designated conservation area and is in close vicinity to a Scheduled Monument and Grade II listed buildings. As such, the significance of each will now be considered.

Ribchester Conservation Area

5.6 The Ribchester Conservation Area was originally designated in 1973, and as such it can be considered of high significance, containing a number of features of special architectural and historical interest. The strengths of the Conservation Area are noted within the associated Appraisal report as being; its picturesque nature and historic character and appearance of the core area including substantial Roman remains, the popular visitor attraction of the Ribchester Museum, its location on the Ribble Valley Way surrounded by open countryside and that it is the only large village on the River Ribble. The Conservation Area's Townscape Appraisal map identifies the original building at St Wilfrid's Primary School as a building of townscape merit and as such it is considered to make a positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The rear portion of the building is not marked as such and is considered to be a later addition to the school.

Ribchester Roman Fort

5.7 The Roman Fort sites at Ribchester are designated as scheduled monuments. As such, they are of high significance, with respect to their age and rarity, historic interest and group value. The closest site to the application site is that of the Roman Baths, located directly north of the school and separated by a close boarded timber fenceline.

Listed Buildings

5.8 A number of terraced properties on Church Street are Grade II listed, these are examples of weaver's cottages built in the late 18th Century. These properties are therefore of high significance for their historic interest and group value.

6.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 The NPPF sets out the current heritage policies relevant to guide the determination of developments affecting the historic environment. Paragraph 212 requires great weight to be given to an asset's conservation when considering the impact of a proposed development upon its significance.

Impact on Ribchester Conservation Area

6.2 The works would be entirely contained to the pitched roof element of the existing school building as shown on figure 10.

6.3 The solar panel installation works proposed are necessary to decrease further emissions and increase the overall sustainability of the school.

6.4 The solar panels would be located on the north east pitched roofs. These roofs are largely obscured by the western and southern pitched roofs.



Figure 10. Proposed Positions of solar panel source: C+A)

6.5 Alternative locations would be more visible than the proposed plans. Moreover, positioning the solar panels as proposed prevents alterations to the roof of the original school building, thus maintaining the historical character of original building.

6.6 It is worth noting that solar panels have previously been installed to the hipped roof facing the river, prior to Cassidy and Ashton's involvement with the school. Therefore the introduction of solar panels to a less visible element of the school will not significantly change the aesthetic fabric of the school.

6.7 The position of the solar panels prevents them from being seen from the river due to the change in ground level and the obstruction posed by the southern pitched roofs.

Impact on the Scheduled Monument

6.8 The proposed location of the works is approximately 60m south of the Scheduled Monument comprising a Roman Bath House. When looking towards the school grounds from the Roman Bath House there is an existing timber close boarded fence separating the two. This limits views of the school from the site of the Scheduled Monument. In any event. Only the solar panels would not be viewable from the monument, thus leaving minimal visual impact for those enjoying the ruins.



Figure 11. Photograph looking towards the school grounds from the Roman Bath House, no solar panels will be visible from this angle [Source: C+A]

Impact on the nearby Listed Buildings

6.9 The proposed site is situated approximately 70m from the Grade II listed, weaver's cottages.

6.10 Due to this distance and presence of existing pitched roofs along the front elevation of the school buildings it is not considered that the proposals would have any impact upon the setting of these properties.

National Planning Policy

6.11 Paragraph HE6 of the NPPF states that: *'5. Where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss, or if all of the following apply:*

a. The nature of the heritage asset would otherwise prevent all reasonable uses of the site;

b. No suitable use for the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;

c. Conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is not possible.'

6.12 The scale, design and positioning of the proposed development has sought to be sympathetic, addressing the concerns of the school regarding their efficiency whilst limiting any impact upon the identified heritage assets.

6.13 It is therefore considered that the public benefits of the scheme are significant in supporting the school's continued operations and outweigh any perceived harm to the heritage assets.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 This Heritage Statement supports an application for the installation of solar panels at St Wilfrid's Primary School.

7.2 The assessment undertaken during the preparation of this statement has aligned to the requirements of the NPPF and concludes that given the nature of the works and minor in scale and would support the continued operations of the school, they are appropriate in heritage terms.

7.3 It is therefore considered that the development complies with the relevant national and local planning policies, and for that reason, there are no heritage grounds for full planning consent not to be granted.

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