

Consultation Response from KC Conservation and Design		
2019/91239 The Shears, 201, Halifax Road, Hightown, Liversedge, WF15 6NR		
Demolition of existing public house and erection of four dwellings		
Date Responded: 24/03/21	Responding Officer: Craig McHugh	Responding Ref: The Shears

Summary

The Shears Inn dates from the late 18th century and makes an important contribution to the townscape of Hightown Liversedge. The inn has an important part in the history of the Luddite movement in Yorkshire. It is a non-designated heritage asset and identified in the West Yorkshire Historic Environment Record. The proposed development would result in the complete loss of the building and its replacement with a development that would not respect or enhance the character of the local townscape. It would deliver a minimal additional public benefit of 2 dwellings, compared to alternate proposals to convert the existing building and build one further dwelling on the car park area. Consequently, the proposed development would be contrary to policies LP24 and LP35 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 192 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Conservation and Design advise that the application should be withdrawn by the applicant or refused.

Significance of the heritage assets affected

The Shears makes a positive contribution to the local townscape of Hightown Liversedge. It forms a pinch point with 250 Halifax Road that frames views along the street in either direction. They are an important pairing because the townscape of Halifax Road in the vicinity of The Shears (between Lands Beck Way and Fairfield Court) is quite fragmented and has evolved in a piecemeal fashion. The earliest buildings date from the 17th century (Middle Hall Farm, listed grade II) and the 18th century (The Shears and 260 Halifax Road). Many short terraced rows were added in the 19th century. Then in the 20th century some of those terraces built back-to-back were replaced and infill development occurred. The Shears and no 250 therefore provided continuity with the past and screen from view some of the later development that does not contribute to the character of the street.

The Shears is a non-designated heritage asset with historic significant interest. It is recorded in the West Yorkshire Historic Environment Record. The Shears Inn was originally constructed as a dwelling for William Howlgate, shopkeeper of High Town and his wife Sarah, their initials are recorded on the datestone .H. W.S 1773. William Howlgate died in 1776. By 1803 part of the building was in use as a public house. The history of the Luddite Movement is clearly of national historic interest and The Shears had an important and well-documented part in the history of that movement in Yorkshire and the events of 1812. The interior of the inn has been much altered since that time. However, the plan form of the building as a double-fronted double-pile plan house (two rooms to front, two to back) can still be read and could be restored.

To the front elevation The Shears has a door surround with carved lintel and mullioned windows with carved hood moulds. These are all vernacular building details particularly distinctive to the Pennine areas of Yorkshire and Lancashire. The stone type is not the same as that found elsewhere on the building or on other listed buildings in the local area. It is unclear how old these features are or how they came to be in the building, but they are shown in photographs dating from the mid-20th century.

Impact of the proposals on significance

The proposed development comprises four detached properties on long narrow plots separated by just over 2 metres with parking to the front of the dwellings. They are two-half storeys including attic accommodation with porches to the front and first floor balconies to the rear. They have dual pitched

roofs with eaves parallel to the street. Proposed materials are artificial stone with concrete tile roof, with wood-effect upvc windows and doors and dark grey aluminium bi-fold doors.

The proposed layout is of particular concern as it would weaken the quality of the local townscape by replacing a building providing strong containment to views with a development set back from the road by about 8m and dominated by parked vehicles. Whilst the townscape of Hightown is varied, short terraced rows and detached properties or semi-detached pairs in larger plots are more common. There does not appear to be a local precedent for development of this type.

With regards to the form of the development, front porches are not typical in the immediate vicinity. Nor are first floor balconies. I defer to you on the impact these balconies will have on the amenity of neighbours.

The proposed materials are found within the immediate vicinity, generally on later developments that have weakened the townscape. Natural stone walling and stone or slate roofing are more traditional and would better respect local character. One material should be used for all windows and doors. Aluminium would have a lower environmental impact than upvc and is easier to recycle at the end of its life.

The proposed development would result in the complete loss of The Shears Inn, a non-designated heritage asset and an Asset of Community Value.

Relevant Policies/Guidance

Policy LP24 of the Local Plan requires that proposals should promote good design by ensuring the form, scale, layout and details of all development respects and enhances the character of the townscape, heritage assets and landscape. It also requires that high levels of sustainability are promoted to a degree proportionate to the proposal through the re-use and adaptation of existing buildings, where practicable.

Paragraph 192 of the NPPF requires that:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

As set out above, the proposed development would not respect and enhance the character of the townscape or The Shears Inn. The Shears Inn is also an Asset of Community Value as a public house. If that use is no longer viable, then it would be more sustainable to re-use and adapt the existing building than to demolish it.

Policy LP35 requires that proposals which would remove, harm or undermine the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, or its contribution to the character of a place will be permitted only where benefits of the development outweigh the harm having regard to the scale of the harm and the significance of the heritage asset.

This reflects the wording of paragraph 197 of the NPPF which requires that in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

As set out above the proposals would result in the total loss of the non-designated heritage asset and its contribution to the character of Hightown. The Shears Inn is closely associated with nationally important historic events. With regards to benefits, some form of monument has been offered to the front of the new dwellings, but this would be a poor substitute for the loss of the building.

The applicant has submitted a confidential desktop opinion of Residual Value. This considers two options, the conversion of the existing building to residential use plus construction of one detached dwelling and the construction of four new detached dwellings. It concludes that neither is particularly viable.

Conclusion

Conservation and Design object to the proposed development on heritage and design grounds with particular regards to policies LP24 and LP35 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 192 and 197 of the NPPF. The proposed development would result in the loss of a non-designated heritage asset, an Asset of Community Value and harm to townscape character. Minimal public benefits would arise from the development to weigh against the harm to the loss of the non-designated heritage asset.

Recommendations

The application should be withdrawn by the applicant or refused.

Craig McHugh, IHBC

Senior Conservation and Design Officer

Site visit made to inspect exterior of the building only 6th November 2020 and 3rd March 2021.