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HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

DEMOLITION OF FORMER SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND NUNNERY AND PROPOSED NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

AT

ST MARY OF THE ANGELS CHURCH

NORTH BANK ROAD

BATLEY

WF17 8ES

JULY 2018

CLIENT:

Introduction

This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) has been prepared to support a planning application for the demolition of former school buildings and nunnery at St Mary of the Angels School, off North Bank Road, Batley.

Summary

The application site is located approximately 0.5km to the north-west of Batley town centre. To the north of the site is the main St Mary of the Angels Catholic Church and prysbetery; to the west, situated on the far side of Upton Street, is St Mary's Catholic Primary School; to the south, across North Bank Road, is Batley Cemetery; and to the east are residential properties on Cemetery Road. The area is characterised as predominantly residential, with a number of community and commercial uses nearby.

The application site consists of the former main school building, a former nunnery, and a former school annex. The main school building and nunnery are dilapidated and in a state of serious disrepair, whilst the annex was practically destroyed by fire a number of years ago. The majority of the site has been covered by tarmac and security fencing which has blocked routes into and around the site.

Part of the main school building is attached to the Church of St Mary of the Angels (listed grade II) and it's presbytery. The affected buildings are not included in the listing description of the church, but are considered to be listed through attachment or through being within the curtilage of the listed building. The site is also in the Cross Bank Conservation Area (CBCA).

The proposed scheme consists of the demolition of the former main school building (the former St Mary's Catholic Primary School), the former nunnery on Upton Street, and the fire-damaged former school annex.

The scheme then proposes a residential re-development of the site with 14 new build dwellings served off North Bank Road (there will be no ve-

hicular access from Upton Street to serve the residential development). A new car park to serve the Church is proposed to the north of the site, served from Upton Street (there will be no vehicular access to the car park through the proposed residential development from North Bank Road).

Pre-application discussions

Extensive discussions have been held with the LPA's Conservation and Design Team Leader over several years with regard to the principle of the re-development of this site and, in particular, the proposed demolition of designated heritage assets.

National and local planning policies

National planning policy guidance is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Revised 2018.

Section 16 "Conserving and enhancing the historic environment" paragraph 189 states that –

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance".

Paragraph 189 goes on to state that –

"As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary".

Paragraphs 193 considers any "harm" to the designated heritage asset that may be considered to accrue due to the proposed development –

"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."

"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use"

Para 194 states -

"Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;"

Para 195 states -

"Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and

c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use".

Para 198 states -

"Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred."

Local planning policy guidance is provided by the Kirklees Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which remains the development plan for the area until the adoption of the emerging Kirklees Local Plan.

With regard to designated heritage assets, the only saved policy in the UDP is Policy BE5 which states that -

PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS, INCLUDING EXTENSIONS OR CHANGES OF USE TO EXISTING BUILDINGS, SHOULD RESPECT THE ARCHITECTURAL QUALITIES OF SURROUNDING BUILDINGS AND THEIR MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION, AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE PRESERVATION OR ENHANCEMENT OF THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE AREA.

Heritage Statement

With respect to designated heritage assets, the following information is provided to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

The listing descriptions for the former school building is set out below -

List entry Number: 1183965

Grade: II

Date first listed: 13-Jan-1984

SE 22 SW BATLEY MB CROSS BANK ROAD BATLEY

4/15 Church of St Mary

II

Gothic Revival Church. 1870. Dressed stone. Pitched slate roof. 4-bay buttressed nave with porch to right and apsidal baptistry to left. Transepts. Nave windows are 2-light with stained glass and cusped heads with single quatrefoil over. Each bay has relieving arch. The front of the church is apsidal. The rear elevation, to the road, has central triple group of very tall lights with sexfoil in head. To each side is 2-light similar window with quatrefoil in head. Central doorway with pointed arch and cambered head.

Plain but colourful interior. The apsidal chancel is treated as a blind arcade filled with mosaic, above which are 9 paired 2-light stained glass clerestory windows. Chancel arch with 2 carved figures. Chapels to left and right separated by 2 bay arcade. Later gallery to rear below which is glass screen forming vestibule. Arched braced hammer beam roof.

Historical Background

Batley is recorded in the Domesday Book (1086) as Bateleia, the manor was granted to Ilbert de Lacy after the Norman conquest and there after being passed onto other noble families. Before the Industrial Revolution reached Batley, in the last decade of the 18th century the main employment of the town was farming and weaving. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution in 1796, factories powered by water to drive the machines produced woollen goods and In the 19th century Batley established itself as the centre of the 'Shoddy Trade', the name given to the process of recycling woollen goods which were torn and or cut up to respin the fibres. These fibres were shorter in length compared to virgin wool and as a consequence the uses were limited, for example; carpets, blankets and uniforms. The recycled wool fibres could also be mixed with virgin wool and other organic fibres such as cotton which increased the shoddy fibres length. The area of West Yorkshire which employed this trade was known as the 'Heavy Woollen District' which included Batley. By 1861 there were around thirty shoddy mills in the Batley area. The railway came to Batley in 1848 and this brought increased trade and population.

After the Reformation, Catholicism is reported to have largely disappeared from the area. Its revival followed the introduction of Irish labour by employers in response to a strike by shoddy trade workers in 1832. The local Irish population was quickly established with 300 living around Dewsbury and Batley by 1841. The first Holy Mass since the Reformation was performed by a Father O'Leary of the newly established Parish of St Paulinus in a room at the Cloth Hall in Dewsbury in April 1841. The Irish population and the number of practicing Catholics in Batley grew, fuelled by poverty and later famine in Ireland.

The parish of St Mary of the Angels was established by the Rev Canon James Wells in a small loft in Calico Lane, to the rear of Commercial Street, Batley, in 1853. The school and church were constructed in the late 1860's.

The development of mass education in England

Until 1870 there was no state system for education in England. The Anglican Church was the major provider of free education, which was generally through local voluntary initiatives, with the churches as main providers, although there were also private, endowed or sponsored schools, together with schools attached to chapels and dayschools in the workplaces of enlightened employers.

In 1847 the Catholic Poor School Committee was established, which focused on the promotion of Catholic primary education, with many Catholic schools established in this period to meet the needs of poor Catholic immigrants from Ireland. The Catholic Poor School Committee was followed by the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales in 1850.

The Education Act of 1870 aimed to create school boards, to provide for education where church schools did not already exist. This resulted in a large flurry of school building in the mill towns of the West Riding as Board schools were set up.

The 1902 Education Act created Local Education Authorities. By this time the dual system of educational provision was firmly established, and the Act made LEAs financially responsible for both voluntary and Board school education (though not all school buildings). Under the Education Act of 1944 (The Butler Act), Catholic schools became ‘voluntary aided’ schools. This meant that they became part of the state system of education, whilst retaining their distinctively Catholic ethos.

Church funded schools

In 1847, when the Catholic Poor School Committee was established, access to education for the majority of the population was strictly limited and the education which was provided tended to be based on the teachings and principles of the Anglican Church.

Because the Catholic Church viewed education as vital to the formation and development of the whole person, it put the setting up of Catholic

schools for the Catholic community ahead of building Churches, often using its schools in those early days as the place for worship for the parish. This would appear to be the case at St Mary of the Angels, as the school preceded the church, if only by two years.

The buildings on the site

The School buildings and the Nunnery are not listed in their own right.

The School was built in three phases, the lower roadside section in 1868, followed by the main hall and the larger range of buildings in 1898. The detached school annex was constructed in 1934, as the Senior Boys' Department which later became the Junior School, possibly at the time of the construction of St John Fisher Secondary School, Dewsbury in 1958.

The use of the school buildings reduced following the construction of the adjacent Primary School in 1971. Parts of the buildings were used as an after school club, with the buildings finally becoming redundant approximately 10 years ago.

The Nunnery for the Sisters of the Charity of St Paul Convent dates from 1876, but has been much altered and extended. The nunnery became vacant approximately two years ago.

The C19 School Building

The architect of the building is unknown, but is likely to be the same as that of the church, which was built concurrently and designed by Richard L Adams (d.1883), who was partnered with John Kelly (1840-1904). Adams and Kelly were architects based at Park Row, Leeds, Adams being later appointed as architect to the Leeds School Board in 1873.

The church has additions by Kelly dated 1883, though it is not known if his involvement remained until the school was extended in 1898.

The School is built in pitch faced local sandstone, with ashlar details to quoins, cill bands, copings, and window surrounds. It has gables facing

the road and yard, together with tall windowed gables to each roof pitch. The roofs are Welsh blue slate, with the remains of ventilators (suggesting gas lighting) and small chimney to the original school building. The school is attached to the Church and Presbytery by a pyramidal roofed link to the vestry in the liturgical north east (south) of the church.

The Senior Boys' Department

The detached Senior Boys' Department of 1934 is typical of its time, with a large framed and glazed elevation to the yard and rendered brick walls, scored as stonework. It has been added to in stages to the west, whilst the south wall has been refaced in brickwork, possibly in the1970's. The original building has a Welsh blue slate roof, with a hip to the northern gable, possibly to retain daylight to the earlier school buildings nearby. The extensions have flat roofs.

The interior of the 1934 building has changed significantly, with sub-division of spaces and the addition of a new circulation route and ancillary facilities to the west. The building was badly damaged by fire several years ago.

The Nunnery

The Nunnery dates from 1876, but has been much altered and extended. The exterior is in a typical style for middle class local houses of the period, though economically built, with differing elevations displaying a different quality (and cost) of materials in relation to their prominence. The front elevation to the street is in coursed pitch faced stone with ashlar details; large coursed local stone has been used to the school elevation, with much cheaper brick to the side and rear.

The plan form displays a more complex arrangement more typical of Presbyteries and, possibly an indication of the more communal nature of dwelling and the interaction between domestic and religious use. The roofs are blue slate. The nunnery has been extended and now also dis-

plays patches of render in addition to stonework and brickwork of varying ages.

Site features

The boundary walls and some metal railings (now altered) are retained, though there has been subdivision of the spaces and additional security fencing provided.

All traces of original surfacing and external facilities have been lost under tarmac or self-seeded vegetation.

Change and survival

The nineteenth century school block has survived with little external change since construction and the addition of a later extension. The gables, eaves detailing, ridge tiles, chimneys and the window openings are retained. The elevations retain their original window openings, though with altered fenestration. On the roof, the bases of the former gas vent lanterns are also retained.

The nineteenth century building is in poor condition externally. The roof has lost many slates, whilst the windows are boarded and damaged. Many rainwater goods and flashings are missing.

It is likely that the interior of the 1868 block was altered to provide circulation into the 1898 addition, as the boys entrance was relocated at this time. Since then, the interior of the nineteenth century block has been significantly altered, with the introduction of suspended ceilings and the subdivision of internal spaces, particularly the blocking of the stage and creation of classrooms and stores in the space to the east. It retains some original details within the building, including roof trusses (visible through the collapsed ceiling), together with some covings and joinery.

The building is in a poor condition internally, with water ingress from damaged roofs leading to loss of plaster and finished; buckling of par-

quet floors; dry rot affecting lintels, stairs, floors and joinery; and a general state of decay.

The Senior Boys' Department building has been altered, both internally through sub-division and adaption and through numerous phases of extensions, whilst the externally south wall has been refaced in brickwork, possibly in the 1970's.

Internally the building is in a poor condition, with water ingress leading to damage of many internal finishes, together with concerns about the condition of the structure. A fire has gutted approximately one third of the building, with damage to all surfaces and the collapse of ceilings and floors.

The Nunnery has been much altered and extended. Externally there have been many phases of additions, together with many unsympathetic repairs.

The majority of the wider site has been covered by tarmac, obscuring the earlier site features. Security fencing has also blocked routes into and around the site, changing both its appearance and the nature and hierarchy of the spaces. Since the site was abandoned, the surfaces have been broken up by vegetation, and the extent of this vegetation makes the full extent of the site and its former arrangement difficult to perceive.

Significance

This section assesses the relative significance of the building and its key significance values. 'Conservation Principles' (English Heritage, 2008) sets out a range of heritage values that can be used to establish the significance of a building or place. These include evidential value (the physical aspects of a building that yield evidence about its past); historical value (the extent to which a building is associated with or illustrative of historic events or people); aesthetic value (includes design, visual, landscape and architectural value); and communal value (includes social and commemorative value and local identity). These values may be tangible,

for example, the listed building's grade or they may be intangible, for example, the site's association with a past event or group of people.

Significance is a concept for measuring the cultural value of a place, using judgment to assess the place and its different aspects in a hierarchy. The concept was first developed in Australia by James Semple Kerr, to assist with the management of cultural assets. It has been adopted by the Heritage Lottery Fund and in adapted forms by organisations such as The National Trust and English Heritage. The established levels of significance are:

Exceptional – important at national to international levels, reflected in statutory designations, such as Grade I listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments.

High – important at regional or sometimes a higher level, e.g. Grade II listed buildings

Medium – important at a local level, and possibly at a regional level, for example for group value

Low – of no more than local value

Negative or intrusive features – features which in their present form detract from the value of the site.

Significance of the former school site

The significance of the site lies in its architectural, historic and communal value, both as a school and through its association with the Church.

Aesthetic (architectural) value is predominantly restricted to the external appearance and fabric of the building, as many of the internal spaces and finishes have been altered by alterations, fire and decay. Schools, instigated by both church and school boards, were erected in their hundreds in the Victorian period, and there are many in the West Riding which have similar materials and massing. The Nunnery has greater scarcity value, though it is heavily altered and not architecturally significant.

The site has historic and communal value, in part as a local landmark, but principally as a focus for the Catholic community who attended school on the site, or worship at the church, and for other past pupils and staff. The Church will remain as a point of reference for this memory, whilst the school as a community will also remain. Provided there is a reasonable evidence base, through photographs and possibly archive material, this memory will be preserved.

The nineteenth century school block has been altered internally, whilst its setting has changed. It is not by a major or well known architect, nor is it technologically advanced, nor distinct. It is therefore considered to have Low significance, with evidential, historical, aesthetic, and communal value.

The Nunnery has been much altered, whilst its setting has been altered over time. It is considered to have Low significance, with evidential, historical, aesthetic, and communal value.

The Senior Boys Department on the site is neither particularly distinctive nor innovative. It is therefore considered to have Low significance, with evidential, historical, aesthetic, and communal value.

The site as a whole is in poor condition and is extensively overgrown. The school use has been transferred to an adjacent site, affecting its use and setting. Overall, the site is therefore considered to have Low significance, with evidential, historical, aesthetic, and communal value.

The justification for the proposed works

The buildings are a target for unauthorised access and anti-social behaviour, including arson. The buildings are considered dangerous if accessed, a particular concern adjacent the existing school on its adjacent site.

There is a further concern that the continued deterioration of the buildings (particularly dry rot or the risk of fire) may affect the attached listed Church building and Presbytery. These buildings are also in need of repair and are compromised by the state of the attached buildings.

In order to justify demolition and the re-development of the site, the proposed scheme must be assessed in the context of para 195 of the NPPF. This assessment is therefore set out below using the relevant four criteria.

Para 195 states that the total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset ie its demolition should be refused consent unless it can be demonstrated that the following apply -

1. The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site

The buildings are listed by virtue of being attached to, or within the curtilage of, the Church of St Mary of All Angels, which is listed grade II. They form part of a group which aids understanding and informs of the development of the church, school and community within the town.

However they are much altered and in a condition which does little to further any understanding, whilst their condition and the risks associated with the retention of the attached Old School building (such as the potential for trespass and possibly arson) may be considered to be detrimental to the listed Church.

Due to the high estimated costs associated with the repair and conversion of buildings on the site, it is highly unlikely that these buildings would ever be used again for educational purposes, particularly as there is a more modern junior school adjacent to the site. In addition, the cost of the renovation of all these buildings would appear to prohibit their use for any institutional, non-institutional, or commercial uses (even if there was a demand in the area for such) and the specific nature etc of the buildings also appears to mitigate against their conversion to a residential use, as set out below.

Full details of repair and renovation costs etc can be found in the document submitted to support the application and, from the content of this report, it is contended that it would not be economically or financially viable to convert the buildings to residential or other uses due to the im-

practicalities of internal layouts; the cost of conversion; and the likelihood of low end values.

The conversion of the buildings would be very difficult due to the internal layouts and fenestration etc of the buildings. Whilst the Nunnery could provide a residential use, the internal layout of the main school building and it's long, narrow shape with windows primarily to the southern elevation, makes a practical residential scheme difficult without new elevational treatments and extensive internal re-modelling that would significantly reduce the integrity and significance of the building. Similarly, the Senior Boys Department building is not really capable of conversion due to fire damage and it's inherent unattractiveness as a building for conversion.

The costs of converting the building to a residential use are set out in the supporting document and these show that the costs associated with bringing the buildings back into any productive (ie residential) use would exceed the likely returns to be expected from such conversions.

There are residential market forces within Batley that would mitigate against the conversion of these buildings into small individual dwelling units or flats/apartments. There is a ceiling value to such property prices in the locale that would have to be significantly exceeded (due to the costs of conversion etc), even if a scheme could be designed for the buildings.

The factors above are demonstrated in the type of interest shown by others as part of the marketing of the site. No offers have been received that complied with the condition of sale that the Nunnery and Old School buildings should be retained and refurbished (see below).

2. No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation

The property has been marketed for over 15 months (commencing in April 2017), in order to fully expose it to the market.

The Diocese arranged for the property to be opened up and inspected by their Health and Safety advisor in order that safe visual inspections could be undertaken by prospective purchasers. The property was previously fully boarded up.

A total of 36 parties expressed interest in the property over the 15 month marketing period and each individual party was contacted directly to offer the opportunity to inspect both internally and externally. A total of four parties requested and subsequently viewed the property. All parties inspecting were provided with full PPE in order to adhere to health and safety requirements and were accompanied by the selling agents (Sanderson Weatherall) during their inspection.

Accompanied access was provided for further viewings where requested by individual parties. One particular party inspected the property on four separate occasions. The Diocese have further arranged for the previously boarded up basement (of the old school) to be opened up for access at the specific request of one of the interested parties. This area hadn't previously been considered safe to access.

The conditions of sale were explained fully to all interested parties as detailed below -

- bidders to provide full details of their proposed scheme.

- the purchaser is to construct the access road from North Bank Road (no vehicular access from or down Upton Street, which primarily serves the school).

- the purchaser to demolish the white rendered school building to the rear of the convent (subject to obtaining the necessary consents).

- the purchaser to contract to undertake a refurbishment of the Convent and Old School buildings to an appropriately high standard in accordance with the scheme to be agreed by the vendor.

Best bids were requested to be submitted by 2 May 2018, on which date three bids were received. A further bid was received after the due date.

None of the four bidders agreed / complied with the conditions of sale and / or their offer was subject to the inclusion of further land that is not for sale. In addition, the bids received were at a significantly lower level than would be deemed acceptable by the Diocese.

The conclusion therefore is that any scheme that retains the Nunnery and Old School building is not financially viable and it is surmised that all offers received were made on the basis that these buildings could be demolished.

3. Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible

It is contended that, despite investigations by the applicant, there are no grants or other funds, charities, or public bodies that would provide finance to any project to retain and refurbish the buildings on this site.

4. The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use

The Diocese has provided a comprehensive supporting statement that sets out the public benefits of the proposed scheme, in terms of the impact on their parishioners and the local community. This HIS should be read in conjunction with this statement.

The low significance of the buildings is set out above and therefore it is held that the loss of the limited significance of these buildings is outweighed by the public benefit of bringing this brownfield, urban site back into a productive use. There continues to be a demand for new build dwellings in the area and, visually, a redevelopment of the site will remove an eyesore site, which is likely to only deteriorate further in the future if a scheme cannot be agreed and implemented.

Whilst some matters are reserved s part of this application, it is likely that the scale and appearance of new buildings on the site, plus an appropriate landscaping scheme to be determined at Reserved matters stage, will preserve and enhance the CBCA and will also allow for the

setting of the listed Church to be read more effectively when viewed from the south on North Bank Road, both through gaps created by new buildings and from the west from Upton Street.

Conclusion

Though the three buildings are not included in the listing description of the church, they are nonetheless considered to be designated heritage assets - the main school building through attachment to the church and the Senior Boys Department and nunnery as structures within its curtilage. Whilst these buildings are considered to have far less significance than the church, they do have local significance as heritage assets, in terms of the social history of the larger church and school complex.

The loss of the buildings and the re-development of the site can be considered acceptable in terms of para 195 the NPPF, for the reasons set out above. The proposal involves the demolition of three buildings and whilst the main school building in particular is attractive, though not remarkable, and the nunnery is also of interest (but diluted by past alteration), it is contended that none of the buildings are significant enough to justify their retention, especially when weighed against the public benefits of the proposed scheme.

To mitigate against the loss of historic evidence, it is suggested that the buildings should be recorded to Level 2, as described in Understanding Historic Buildings (English Heritage, 2006). The photographic record should be made following the clearance of vegetation. Consideration could also be given to creating an archive of historic material which could inform of past development, use, and activity on the site. As the site is undesignated, the record may either be deposited in the local HER, if they wish it, or by the Church and school on site.