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Mr David Wordsworth
Kirklees Council
Planning, Investment & Regeneration Service
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Huddersfield
HD1 2JR

Direct Dial: 01904 601982

Our ref: L00962486

18 February 2019

Dear Mr Wordsworth

**Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2015
& T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**FORMER KIRKLEES COLLEGE, NEW NORTH ROAD, HUDDERSFIELD, HD1 5NN
Application Nos 2018/92687 & 2018/92647**

Thank you for your letters of 22 August 2018 regarding the above applications for listed building consent and planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the applications.

Summary

The former Huddersfield Royal Infirmary is a very important complex which charts the development of healthcare provision in Huddersfield from 1831 to the mid twentieth-century. The site has high levels of architectural and social historic value and played a key role in the life of the town for over 100 years. The site also represents a prominent nodal point on the edge of Huddersfield town centre, within the setting of a large number of listed buildings and affecting three conservation areas.

This development offers a once in a generation opportunity to enhance the site and the conservation area, to contribute to the regeneration of the area and safeguard an important part of Huddersfield's heritage.

We support the principle of repurposing the Former Kirklees College Site to secure the repair, enhancement and sustainability of the former infirmary buildings. If complemented by high quality new design this would provide social and environmental gains for the benefit of the local area. However it is with regret that we conclude that the overall approach adopted in the current application does not achieve these aims and it cannot be made supportable without considerable amendments.

Historic England recommends permission is refused, as the proposals would cause serious harm to the listed buildings and the conservation area without bringing forward



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public benefits which would outweigh this harm.

Historic England Advice

Significance of the Affected Heritage Assets

The former Huddersfield Royal Infirmary is a very important complex which charts the development of healthcare provision in Huddersfield from 1831 to the mid twentieth-century. The spatial planning and external architectural treatment of the buildings reflect changes in healthcare practices, technology and architectural fashions. The buildings are very important in the story of the development of Huddersfield.

The remaining hospital buildings also make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Greenhead Park Conservation Area. The conservation area is large but has several slightly different character areas. The area in which the application site is located is characterised by a combination of large institutional buildings; including the former Infirmary as well as a number of nineteenth-century religious and educational buildings, and nineteenth-century houses, many of which are of the larger villa type. The former Infirmary buildings therefore contribute to this character in terms of form, function and use of materials. The pedimented classical elevation of Building F1 and the west facades of buildings F2 and G make a particularly strong contribution to the streetscape within the conservation area and the statue of King Edward VII (Grade II listed) adds to the value of the group.

Impact of the Proposals on the Historic Environment

The loss of the later additions to the Infirmary would be considerably harmful to the significance of the complex. Building F1 has high architectural value but without the remainder of the buildings the identity and story of the site is greatly reduced and this would amount to serious harm to the listed building.

In addition to the physical impact of the proposals, there would be a considerable impact on the setting of the Infirmary, the statue of King Edward VII and some of the surrounding listed buildings, particularly along Portland Street, Fitzwilliam Street and New North Road. The scale and detailing of the proposed new-build elements of the scheme, coupled with the amount of surface parking, would not preserve or enhance the setting of the listed buildings.

Buildings F-H and K also contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Their loss would therefore harm the conservation area. This harm is not mitigated by the proposed replacement buildings since they are out of character with the surrounding area. The proposed residential tower is out of scale and would be harmful to the setting of the listed buildings, the character of the conservation area and the wider area.

Policy Considerations

The development principles outlined in the local plan site allocation for this site (MX



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1906) state that:

“Development proposals will be required to retain and reuse the Grade II former Infirmary buildings. Any new buildings or structures should conserve those elements which contribute to the significance of the Listed Buildings on this site and the character of the Conservation Area.”*

The development as currently submitted fails to meet these principles on a number of counts and primarily in the amount of demolition proposed.

National planning statute imposes legal duties to preserve listed buildings and preserve or enhance conservation areas (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, sections 16, 66 and 72). The scheme fails in these respects. The redevelopment of the site should start from the principle of retaining as many of the significant buildings as possible and new development should aim to enhance the conservation area and setting of the listed buildings.

The government’s policy on development affecting the historic environment is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. It clearly states the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation (paragraph 192). It also states that the significance of heritage assets should be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal (paragraph 190). Policies requiring the creation of well-designed places also highlight the importance of developments being sympathetic to local character and history (paragraph 127) and taking the opportunity to improve the character and quality of an area (paragraph 130).

Historic England Position on the Application

The continuing disuse of the site has a negative impact on the local area and the wider town. We support its redevelopment and would like to see a quality scheme implemented as soon as possible.

The fine classical front of the former Infirmary and the statue of King Edward VII deserve a much better setting than they have now. Redevelopment of the site should deliver a green space as a focus for the scheme, to complement these important historic features and to provide a public amenity for the site and the local community.

The best of the hospital buildings (blocks F1, F2, F3 and G) are attractive features of the conservation area and tell the story of healthcare in the town. They should be retained.

There is scope for new buildings which add to the character of the area, but these should be designed in detail so that their quality can be properly judged. The height of





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existing buildings should be taken as the maximum height for new blocks, so that they do not dominate and detract from the strong positive qualities of the attractive historic buildings on site and in the surrounding conservation areas.

We are concerned that the mix of retail, residential and commercial office space does not seem likely to result in an attractive and sustainable scheme. We understand your authority is seeking additional advice in this respect. The proximity of town centre facilities and the residential character of the surroundings suggest to us that residential use for all or the majority of the site may be best in the long term. The size and strategic location of the site merits concerted action by public agencies to facilitate a successful development. We would be pleased to help secure this through further dialogue.

Recommendation

Historic England recommends permission is refused, as the proposals would cause serious harm to the listed buildings and the conservation area without bringing forward public benefits which would outweigh this harm.

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the applications to meet the requirements of the Kirklees Local Plan and paragraphs 127, 130, 190-196, and 200 of the NPPF.

If your authority is minded to grant consent for the LBC application in its current form, in light of our objection you should treat this letter as a request to notify the Secretary of State of the LBC application, in accordance with the above Direction.

Please contact me if we can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely

Emma Sharpe

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