

Subject: Your ref:2018/62/92647/W – Former Kirklees College complex, New North Road, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire
Date: 03 September 2020 10:40:46

Dear Mr Wordsworth,

Thank you for informing the Georgian Group of an application to redevelop the former Kirklees College complex which includes the buildings of the original Huddersfield Infirmary. Having examined the documentation provided, the Group wishes to forward the following brief advice.

Whilst the Georgian Group welcomes the repair and reuse of the original c1831 former infirmary building we note that Historic England have drawn attention to the positive role that a number of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century former hospital buildings play in enhancing both the quality of the Greenhead Park Conservation Area (F2-H) and the significance of the hospital complex as a whole. We must agree with Historic England that the loss of the later additions highlighted in their letter of the 18 Feb 2019 would cause a considerable degree of harm to the significance of the complex, and to the setting of the retained grade II* listed building. We have no objection to the demolition of the later twentieth century former college buildings at the Castlegate end of the site.

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF stipulates that '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....' The justification for clearing such a large proportion of the site, rather than retaining and reusing the most historically and architecturally significant of the later blocks is not presently as robustly stated as should be expected from such a destructive and controversial scheme.

Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess, and under section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. Paragraph 193 of the NPPF also makes clear that '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.'

The proposed works to the former hospital complex would collectively cause a considerable degree of harm to its significance, and to the character and significance of the surrounding conservation area. Parts of the proposed work including the proposed total demolition of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century hospital ranges are of a particularly controversial nature and have not been adequately justified. We would therefore urge the applicant to withdraw this application until such time as they can address the issues highlighted within this letter. If the applicant is unwilling to do so, then consent should be refused.

Yours Sincerely

James Darwin (Senior Conservation Adviser)

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