

Consultation Response from KC Conservation and Design
2019/90106 Harveys, 11 Towngate Holmfirth, HD9 1HA
Installation of roof windows and glazing to front elevation and formation of open terrace at first floor (within a Conservation Area)
Date Responded: 12.3.19
Responding Officer: Sue Oakley
Responding Ref:

I have considered this proposal for the installation of roof windows and glazing to the front elevation of 11 Towngate along with the formation of an open terrace at first floor level. The chimney identified for removal in the proposal has already been demolished.

11 Towngate is an unlisted building located within the heart of the Holmfirth Conservation Area in a highly visible location within the setting of a number of Grade II listed buildings including Holy Trinity Church on Towngate, 4 Towngate, 8-18 Bunkers Hill and 38-38a Back Lane.

The building is understood to be over 200 years old and due to its age and architectural interest it is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. The construction is simple, with hammer dressed stone walling and blue slate roofs, heavy stone window surrounds and sash windows where these have not been removed. It is a key building within the conservation area and typical of the local vernacular.

The NPPF Chapter 16, paragraph 192 requires the planning authority to 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.

Paragraphs 193 and 196 refer to harm and in this case I consider the proposal to cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the conservation area and the setting of the surrounding listed buildings. Paragraph 197 refers to harm to non-designated heritage assets.

Policy PLP35 of the Kirklees Local Plan states that proposals should retain those elements of the historic environment that contribute to the distinct identity of the Kirklees area and ensure that they are appropriately conserved. Proposals should maintain and reinforce local distinctiveness and conserve the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

I have concerns about the proposal which I consider to be out of keeping with the local vernacular of the conservation area, particularly as it is on the most visible elevation and roof pitch of the building. When viewed from Towngate the listed terrace on Bunkers Hill in particular is highly visible in context with this building.

The removal of historic fabric, including a large area of masonry and a window aperture along with a section of the roof, is irreversible and I consider the insertion of an open terrace, a glass balustrade and extensive roof glazing to be out of character in this location. I do not consider it to sustain and enhance the significance of the heritage assets or to contribute to local distinctiveness.

The design and access statement does not explore the harm identified above, it gives a limited demonstration of the public benefits of the proposal to outweigh the harm and no justification for the need for this intervention.

On the basis of the harm caused and lack of public benefits I am unable to support this proposal.