

Consultation Response from KC Conservation and Design		
2019/91194 Thorpe House, 22, Finthorpe Lane, Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD5 8TU		
Listed Building Consent for demolition of existing outbuildings and erection of two dwellings and erection of extension to existing dwelling		
Date Responded: 05/06/19	Responding Officer: Craig McHugh	Responding Ref: HUD 40/514
Summary Thorpe House dates from the mid-19th century or earlier and has an attractive and extensive landscape setting. The principle of the proposed development is acceptable on heritage grounds although consideration should be given to revising the layout, form and detailing of the proposed semi-detached dwellings. Their scale should be reduced or further justification be provided to support the existing scale. The development would cause less than substantial harm and that harm will need to be balanced with the public benefits of sustaining the present use of Thorpe House and the provision of additional specialist adult mental health accommodation. Significance of the heritage assets affected Thorpe House dates from the mid-19th century or earlier, throughout the 19th century and early twentieth century the property and the landscape around it underwent a series of alterations. Thorpe House is in use as a care home. At right angles and attached to the east of the house is a former Gardener's Cottage now in separate ownership. At right angles and detached to the west is a former Coach House it appears on the 1854 OS map but has been heavily altered for a succession of uses over the last 150 years including a garage and more recently two dwellings. The building should be considered as a curtilage building, it has some architectural value in its stone construction and detailing and has timber roof trusses of some age. Thorpe House faces south and is set on a ridge overlooking parkland which falls steeply towards a wooded stream. Significant re-landscaping was undertaken between 1893 and 1907 to create a new lime tree-lined carriage drive running in an arc from Fleminghouse Lane towards the front of the property with embankments to either side. The carriage drive gradually reveals and frames views of the front of the house. Beyond the former Coach House is an area of garden whose character appears to have changed periodically throughout the last 150 years, at one time access to a quarry further to the south west went through this area. Its position beyond the Coach House suggests this was a garden area of less significance. Today it has a modern character and forms an enclosed garden associated with the converted Coach House. Impact of the proposals on significance The proposed developments is for alterations to the former Coach House to convert it 5 no. semi-independent living units, including and external glazed link and the construction of a pair of semi-detached dwellings in the garden to the west of the Coach House. The former Coach House has little of historic or architectural interest internally, except for the roof trusses and externally the property has been altered considerably such that it is difficult to appreciate its original form and function. The proposed alterations to the Coach House would not cause any additional harm. The proposed semi-detached dwellings would result in the demolition of a modern outbuilding, which is of no significance. The proposed material palette including stone walls, timber windows and doors		

and blue slate roof is welcomed. The layout could be improved with respect to the setting of the listed building by pushing the property further towards the north of the site. The ground floor area of the building is approximately 30% larger than the existing owner's accommodation. We should request further information on the volume of the proposed development relative to the existing buildings including Thorpe House. The concern being that the scale of the proposed houses may challenge Thorpe House, which is the principal building on the site. It is noted that the applicant has specific requirements with regards to supporting the business on site, which requires a ground floor bedroom to each property. However, with regards to the design of the building, this could be improved through a simpler form (i.e. without front and side projections) and the addition of a more apparent front entrance. The proposed development would cause a low level of harm to the setting of Thorpe House, this harm would be less than substantial harm.

Relevant Policies/Guidance

The Local Plan Policy LP 24 requires that the form, scale, layout and details of all development respects and enhances the character of the townscape, heritage assets and landscape. The NPPF paragraph 190 requires that we should avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal (NPPF para.190). It is agreed that the proposed location is the most suitable for the proposed development of the replacement owner's accommodation. We should however seek to improve the design of the proposed development with regards to scale, layout and elevational details in order to minimise the impact of the proposed development upon the setting of Thorpe House.

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 (NPPF para. 194). The application makes a strong case for there being a demand for the type of care accommodation the business is providing and that the owner's need to live on site to support the functioning of the business. The applicant has not set out why the replacement living accommodation needs to be significantly larger than the existing.

We should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation (NPPF para.192(a)). The current business has provided a sustainable use for Thorpe House since 1989, such large residences can be challenging to find new uses for as they are often too big for use as a single dwelling. It is therefore desirable to sustain the present use of the building.

The NPPF requires that 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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use (para.196).

Conclusion

Conservation and Design support the proposed development in principal with regards to paragraph 192(a) of the NPPF but have concerns about the designs of the proposed owner's accommodation on design and heritage grounds particularly with regards to Policy LP 24 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 190 and 194 of the Local Plan.

Recommendations

We should seek to reduce the scale of the proposed replacement owner's accommodation or alternatively the applicant's should provide further justification for the increased size.

We should seek to improved designs for the proposed replacement owner's accommodation with regards to their layout, form and detailing.