

The Shears Inn 201 Halifax Road Hightown Liversedge Kirklees, WF15 6NT.  
Application No. 2019/62/91239/E

I attach our comments on the above application for your information.

7<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Dear Ms Longbottom

**The Shears Inn 201 Halifax Road Hightown Liversedge Kirklees, WF15 6NT. Application No. 2019/62/91239/E**

The above application has been brought to the attention of the Council for British Archaeology (CBA). Based on the information supplied with this application, we offer the following observations and advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

### **Summary**

The CBA **objects** to the proposal to demolish the Shears Inn because it will result in substantial harm to its significance (through demolition) and be contrary to the requirements of paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

### **Significance**

The Shears Inn, built in 1773 (according to a surviving date stone) is a tangible link to an intangible community past represented by its historical association with the introduction of shearing frames into local cloth mills and the rise and fall of the Luddite movement of disaffected shear croppers who were being replaced by the new machines. The Shears Inn, as its name attests was a favourite drinking haunt of croppers in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The upstairs rooms are thought to be where local Spen Valley Luddites met and plotted prior to attacks on local mills including Cartwright's Mill and Rawcliffe Mill in 1812. The events of this year are recorded in Charlotte Bronte's novel 'Shirley'.

Although the Shears Inn was Assessed for Designation by Historic England (formerly English Heritage) in 2009, it failed to reach the threshold for designation as it had been substantially altered both internally and externally. However, in the CBA's view, despite these physical changes, the Shears Inn would qualify as a Locally Listed Heritage Asset if Kirklees Council had such a list on the strength of its communal and historical value. It's association with historical events and individuals is strong. Ludditism is clearly associated with the industrialisation of labour and social and economic changes that resonate Nationally today. Luddite history continues to be taught at school as part of our National social and economic history. The Shears Inn therefore

represents a key heritage asset that helps better reveal the significance of the Spenn Valley and its contribution to the Nation's industrialisation from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

## Comments

It is often the things that are not significant on a national scale that make the biggest contribution to the 'distinctiveness' of a local area and that is what local lists of heritage assets set out to record. In our view the Shears Inn should be afforded the same status as a locally listed or non-designated heritage asset in view of its clear significance both to the local community and Nationally. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises this through paragraph 197 which requires that, *"the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."*

The CBA considers that total demolition of this building and full re-development of the site equates to substantial harm to the significance of the Shears Inn as we have outlined above.

We draw the LPA's attention to Policy 35 of the Kirklees Local Plan Submissions Documents SD1 Draft Local Plan – Strategies and Policies which states (our emphasis):

*"Proposals should **retain those elements of the historic environment which contribute to the distinct identity of the Kirklees area** and ensure they are appropriately conserved, to the extent warranted by their significance, also having regard to the wider benefits of development. Consideration should be given to the need to:... **ensure that proposals maintain and reinforce local distinctiveness and conserve the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets**; and,...**secure a sustainable future for heritage assets at risk and those associated with the local textile industry**, historic farm buildings, places of worship and civic and institutional buildings constructed on the back of the wealth created by the textile industry as **expressions of local civic pride and identity**;..."*

We consider that approval to demolish Shears Inn would fail to meet the requirements of Policy 35. Such a decision will not, *"retain those elements of the historic environment which contribute to the distinct identity of the Kirklees area"* and will not *"ensure that proposals maintain and reinforce local distinctiveness and conserve the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets"* and will not *"secure a sustainable future for heritage assets...associated with the local textile industry"*. We also consider that inclusion of the Shears Inn on the Spenn Fame Trail by the Spenn Valley Civic Society strong evidence of *"local civic pride and identity."*

The CBA is, in principle supportive of proposals that seek to convert or otherwise reuse historic buildings so long as harm to their significance is minimised. Clearly, total demolition of the Shears Inn will not minimise harm. We believe that there is scope for the conversion of the Shears Inn to residential and enough space on site to support one or two new build dwellings to ensure the

viability of the scheme. A fresh application that seeks to achieve this may be more acceptable to both the local community and the LPA. We strongly support such an approach.

## **Recommendation**

The CBA **objects** to this application because it will result in the total demolition of a non-designated heritage asset and lacks “*clear and convincing justification*”. We strongly recommend that the Local Planning Authority **refuse** this application on heritage grounds, because it fails to meet the requirements of paragraph 197 of the NPPF and fails to meet the requirements of Policy 35 of the Kirklees Local Plan. We can see little public benefit in this current scheme that might outweigh the harm to significance and local distinctiveness caused.

I trust these comments are useful to you; please keep the CBA informed of any developments with this case.

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) is the national amenity society concerned with protection of the archaeological interest in heritage assets. Local planning authorities have a duty to notify the CBA of applications for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition, under the procedures set out in, **Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification To Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of state (England) direction 2015**.