

Consultation Response from KC, Conservation and Design
2020/94336 63, Huddersfield Road, Meltham, Holmfirth, HD9 4AF
Demolition of dwelling (within a Conservation Area)
Date Responded: 12.2.21
Responding Officer: Sue Oakley
Responding Ref:

63 Huddersfield Road is a small two-storey end terraced cottage constructed in hammer dressed stone and until recently a stone slate roof. It appears from historic maps to date from the mid-19th century or earlier and is situated on the main road through the Meltham Conservation Area. The other cottages in the terrace are Grade II listed and adjacent to the gable end is an access to a yard and a small group of buildings to the rear.

Due to the age, construction, materials and architectural detailing of 63 Huddersfield Road, along with its prominent location, this cottage is considered to contribute to the character and significance of the Meltham Conservation Area.

Due to the collapse of the roof and the instability of the chimney and gable, the applicant has applied for the demolition of the building. The Design, Access and Heritage Statement states that following demolition, the footprint of the building will be landscaped with a mixture of hardstanding and soft landscaping, with a low-level coursed stonework wall with stone toppings and a set of black low-level railings to match the front boundary of the adjacent properties.

Policy LP35 of the Kirklees Local Plan states that proposals within conservation areas should conserve those elements which contribute to their significance. It goes on to state that proposals which would remove, harm or undermine the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, or its contribution to the character of a place will be permitted only where benefits of the development outweigh the harm having regard to the scale of the harm and the significance of the heritage asset.

The relevant NPPF paragraphs are detailed below:

193. 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

194. 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.

196. 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.

201. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

As the cottage makes a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area, clear and convincing justification needs to be provided for its demolition, with public benefits provided to outweigh the harm.

In this case, there is no evidence that the applicant has considered alternative options for the building such as repairing and rebuilding it, and no structural report has been provided to demonstrate that it is beyond repair.

If the gable and chimney are unstable, I have no objections to the unstable sections being recorded and carefully taken down prior to rebuilding like for like, with any recommendations from a qualified structural engineer, such as internal propping, carried out where necessary.

I would suggest that the applicant explores the option of rebuilding this cottage and creating doorways through to the adjacent cottage at 61 Huddersfield Road, which is in the same ownership, to increase the habitable space within this property. A Listed Building Consent application will be required for any alterations to number 61.

I am unable to support this proposal based on the information provided. However, if it is considered acceptable, Listed Building Consent will be required for works to the wall and roof of the listed building at 61 Huddersfield Road. If the evidence shows that the kneelers were originally part of the listed building these should be reinstated.