

Subject: Grove United Reform Church Cleckheaton Kirklees - Archaeological Comment
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The Grove United Reform Church, Oxford Road, Gomersal, Cleckheaton, BD19 4JY
A built heritage statement has been presented in support of the application. The built heritage statement sets out an assessment of the potential impacts upon the built historic environment arising from proposals for the residential conversion of the Grove Congregational Church and Sunday School. The proposals relate to the adaptive conversion of the premises to provide residential accommodation as the church is no longer used for religious purposes.

The Grove Congregational Church is a Grade II Listed Building (List entry number 1135399) added to the statutory list in 1982. A Built Heritage Statement was produced and submitted in support of the application. The Built Heritage Statement assessed the significance of the building and its surviving fixtures and fittings. The building is generally in good condition although this will deteriorate now it is no longer in use. The Heritage Statement has identified that there are substantial features within the interior of the building that relate to its former use as a church. The ground floor pews and pulpit have been used until recently, but the upper gallery has been separated from the main church space by a suspended ceiling as the congregation declined. The Sunday School retains less of its original features. The exterior is in good condition and retains its original appearance.

The proposed development will preserve the exterior of the building with one door added while the interior will be heavily modified to divide the building up into separate apartments. The proposed changes will therefore preserve the exterior of the building at the loss of the interior.

The Built Heritage Statement makes recommendations regarding works that are proposed to mitigate the impact of the proposed development on the church these works are outlined in section 4.16. These recommendations primarily relate to the preservation and retention of internal features relating to the fabric of the church including internal fixtures and fittings. Should planning consent be granted these conditions should be followed. One recommendation relates to recording the church as it currently survives.

“Prior to works of conversion being undertaken, a building record, including photographic record should be taken.”

The West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service agree that this record is necessary.

Recommended Course of Action

WYAAS recommends that the church should be subject to an archaeological and architectural recording as it stands prior to development. This work can be secured by the inclusion of a suitably worded condition on any grant of planning consent awarded by KMDC.

Recommended Condition

The following condition, in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Circular 11/95, should be

attached to any grant of planning permission awarded:

"No demolition or development to take place within the area indicated until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological and architectural recording. This recording must be carried out by an appropriately qualified and experienced archaeological organisation or consultant, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority."

Or, as an alternative to the above model condition which was first introduced in 1990, the following condition is suggested by Historic England in their Historic Environment Good Practice Advice, Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment, 2015 paragraph 37:

"No demolition/development shall take place/commence until a written scheme of archaeological investigation (WSI) has been [submitted to and] approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no demolition/development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, which shall include the statement of significance and research objectives, and

- The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works
- The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication & dissemination and deposition of resulting material. This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI "

Detail of Archaeological Investigation

Details of the necessary archaeological work, in the form of a specification, will be provided to the developer, on written request, by the WY Archaeology Advisory Service in our capacity as KMDC's advisors on archaeological matters. The WY Archaeology Advisory Service will also be responsible for monitoring the work of the archaeological contractor commissioned by the developer to undertake this work, on behalf of the Planning Authority. From the 1st of April 2011 in accordance with the agreement of the Council Committee that oversees our work the WY Archaeology Advisory Service will charge the developer for these and concomitant services. Please note that the production of a specification may take up to three working weeks from receipt of a written request. It is in the applicant's interest that they be made aware of this likely timescale.

The WY Archaeology Advisory Service can also provide a list of archaeological contractors who may be available to tender for the work. In order to aid the developer to meet the requirements of the above condition I would suggest that it might be helpful to add the following as a note to the planning permission:

We would strongly suggest that the developer is advised that a reasonable period of time for the execution of the necessary archaeological work must be allowed for within the overall site timetable. Any commencement of work on site prior to the approval and implementation of an archaeological specification, and/or any failure to schedule work properly that results in inadequate archaeological recording, should be deemed by the Planning Department to be a breach of the planning condition.

The programme of archaeological works should be secured by placing an appropriate condition on any grant of planning consent awarded by KMDC.

Best regards

Glyn

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