Consultation Response from KC, Conservation & Design

2023/90956 rear of, 1, Sparks Road, Oakes, Huddersfield, HD3 4BX

Erection of 5 dwellings

Date Responded: 2.8.2023
Responding Officer: Sue Brooks
Responding Ref:

The proposal site is on land to the rear of 1 Sparks Road and directly adjacent to the grade II listed early 19th century cottages (3 Oakes Road South) and the two-storey 18th century longhouse type farmhouse at 7 Sparks Road. Slightly further south-west is the Grade II listed 11 Oakes Road, which is visible in context with the proposal site when viewed from Oakes Road South.

The applicant proposes to construct five dwellings on land to the rear (south) of 1 Sparks Road, in the form of three three-storey town houses to the side of the listed farmhouse and a pair of two-storey semi-detached houses in front of the farmhouse. The proposed materials are reconstituted stone, concrete roof tiles, uPVC windows and uPVC doors.

The farmhouse and cottages at 3 Oakes Road South and 7 Sparks Road are typical of vernacular farm buildings within the locality, with low floor to ceiling heights and traditional construction with coursed hammer-dressed stone walling, stone slate roofs and mullioned windows. The front elevation is typical of an 18th century laithe house, with a farmhouse at one end and barn at the other end with a large cart entrance. The rear elevation facing Oakes Road South has slightly lower status than the east facing front elevation and retains traditional detailing including short ranges of mullioned windows and later outshut extensions. This elevation is the most visible from the public highway and therefore any development within its setting must be carefully considered.

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority, when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting.

The proposed three-storey townhouses are located around 2m away from the north gable of the listed farmhouse. This group of substantial dwellings will have a significant impact on its setting as they are overbearing, constructed in modern materials and with contemporary detailing such as Juliet balconies and uPVC windows. No sections have been submitted to show the scale of the development in relation to the surrounding buildings. Although less visible from the public highway, the front elevation of the town houses will also harm the setting of the farmhouse, with a substantial elevation dominating the historic farm building and three large garage doors and canopies highly visible in context with it.

To add to the cumulative harm of the proposed development, the two-storey semi-detached dwellings are located on land directly in front of the farmhouse. Although smaller in scale, they are likely to be taller than the farmhouse and will dominate this historic building, eroding its setting and introducing a fairly blank gable end in reconstituted stone directly in front of the curtilage boundary. The use of modern materials and detailing contributes to this harm.

Chapter 16 of the NPPF requires the applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposal, including any contribution made by their setting (paragraph 194). Paragraph 199 requires great weight to be given to the asset's conservation, and 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 (paragraph 200). In this instance, we would consider the level of harm to be less than substantial, and therefore public benefits need to be sufficient to outweigh this harm.

In addition, Policy LP35 of the KLP requires development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset to preserve or enhance the significance of the asset, and Policy LP24 requires the form, scale, layout and details of all development to respect and enhance the character of the townscape, heritage assets and landscape.

The heritage statement submitted with this application provides no assessment of the significance of the listed buildings and their setting or the impact of the proposed development on this setting. It does not acknowledge that there is harm, and the scale, location, design and materials do not preserve or respect the character of the nearby heritage assets.

Based on the comments above and lack of justification, the Conservation and Design Team strongly objects to this application.