

Consultation Response from KC, Conservation & Design**2023/92490 Former Dowker Works, Dowker Street, Milnsbridge, Huddersfield, HD3 4JX****Erection of 38 dwellings with associated access and landscaping (within a Conservation Area)****Date Responded: 13.10.2023****Responding Officer: Sue Brooks****Responding Ref:**

The proposal site is situated within the Milnsbridge Conservation Area and opposite the Grade II* listed Armitage House directly to the east on Dowker Street, as well as the Grade II listed 8 and 8a Dowker Street adjacent to this.

The site was developed from the mid-19th century onwards, with terraced houses and works buildings, and a Liberal Club on the south-east corner (later a telephone exchange). The 1965 OS map shows that the works building had extended across the entire proposal site and was set close to the site boundaries. Other than the terraces on the northern site boundary which have small front gardens, all other buildings within the site perimeter faced directly onto the streets with none or very little amenity space at the front. This is characteristic of the workers housing and commercial/ industrial buildings within the Milnsbridge Conservation Area.

The proposed site plan shows groups of terraced dwellings set back slightly from the footway, with small gardens providing some separation from the public areas. The front elevations form a linear terrace at the southern end of the site where the development is in context with the Grade II* listed hall. The scale and overall form of the dwellings, with stepped roof lines, reflects the typical form of the terraced dwellings in this area, and we support the principle of two storey dwellings on the Dowker Street and George Street elevations as these would be subservient to Armitage House. We believe that some flexibility in height is possible at the top of Dowker Street where the existing terraced housing is three storeys high.

However, we do not consider the materials and detailing to respect the local townscape character within the conservation area or enhance the setting of the listed building on the east side of Dowker Street, particularly the Grade II* listed hall. As recommended in our pre-application advice, the characteristics and detailing of the surrounding terraces should be used as a reference, with coursed natural stonework for the external walls, ashlar stone door and window surrounds, and traditional window and door configurations without canopies.

Our recommendations are set out below:

- Of particular concern is the proposed use of reconstituted stone on the elevations facing outside the site (George Street, Dowker Street and Armitage Road) where the predominant character is natural stone. We would recommend that natural coursed stone is proposed for these elevations as well as retaining and boundary walls for exposed areas adjacent shared spaces and boundaries. .
- Rather than the proposed windows which have a horizontal emphasis, we would suggest that windows on the front elevations have a vertical emphasis and one over one with a sash type configuration. This would be more typical of the terraced housing within the conservation area and immediate setting. We would also suggest panelled doors which reflect the character of the 19th century terraces.
- Again, to reflect the local character, stone gutter corbels would be more in keeping than the uPVC fascias as specified.

- The most suitable roof covering in this location would be natural blue slate. This would complement the existing roof scape character which can be seen from the surrounding streets and from the hillsides further afield.
- Omit the GRP canopies on elevations facing outside the site.
- Front boundaries face directly onto the footway. We would recommend that properties on Dowker Street are brought up to the footway edge, whilst low natural stone boundary walls (around 1m in height with deep copings and metal pedestrian gates) should be brought up to the red-line boundary of the site for George Street, accounting for the sewer easement across the southern boundary of the site.
- Bin store on George Street – a more discreet solution should be considered.
- PV arrays – the application indicates that these will be located on front and rear roof pitches. We have no concerns about PV panels being located on pitches facing into the site but would prefer them not to be located on outer pitches, unless they are PV slates integrated into the roof covering.
- Air Source Heat Pumps – details, size and locations have not been submitted and should be located on rear elevations.
- Plots 27-28 is particularly concerning as this has a long blank south elevation which will be seen directly in context with the listed hall, and we feel that the layout needs to be more carefully considered to create more interest. To reflect the character of the surrounding terraces and reduce the number of doorways in these elevations, two-storey dwellings may be a more suitable option in this setting. A street scene should also be provided for George Street as this is not represented in the submission pack and we have concerns in respect of its appearance.
- We have some concerns about the proposed front elevations of plots 17-34, which show a disproportionate number of front doors, with limited fenestration.
- We would request clear cross-referencing of house types and their locations on site.

A Heritage Impact Assessment has been submitted within the revised Design and Access Statement. This briefly assesses the impact of the development on the conservation area and Grade II* listed hall. It has referred to Policy LP24 of the Kirklees Local Plan. However, it has not referred to or assessed the application against Section 66 (1) and 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Paragraphs 199, 200 and 206 of the NPPF, and Policy LP35 of the Kirklees Local Plan.

No assessment has been made of the impact of the development on the setting of the Grade II* listed hall or the character of the conservation area.

Conclusion

The Conservation and Design Team accepts the principle of development as this is a previously developed site within an existing settlement and the proposal has the potential to greatly enhance the site. We have some concerns and recommendations, which are outlined above and need to be addressed.

Conditions

If the application is supported, we would recommend the following conditions:

External material samples, including external walling, stone for door and window surrounds, roof slate sample,

Gutter corbel details

Windows and door sections and elevation details

Boundary treatments

PV panel and ASHP details