
DC.Admin@kirklees.gov.uk

Your reference: 2023/92634
Our reference: 192200

27th March 2024

Dear Ellie,

RE: Listed Building Consent for Demolition of buildings and erection of residential development (Listed Building within a Conservation Area).

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society about this application. We **object** to the proposed demolition of the former nunnery and old school extension.

Significance and harm

1898 school extension and 1876 Nunnery form a coherent collection of 19th century religious and educational buildings contributing to the significance of the grade II listed Church of St Mary and character of the Upper Batley Conservation Area.

1898 school extension and 1876 Nunnery form part of the curtilage Church of St Mary. A reminder that curtilage buildings, subject of this application, are to be treated as part of the principal listed building, in this case: Church of St Mary. Historic England states: "The law provides that buildings and other structures that pre-date July 1948 and are within the curtilage of a listed building are to be treated as part of the listed building". The demolition of these heritage assets would cause less than substantial harm to the principal listed building.

Upper Batley Conservation Area is characterised as: "a relatively unspoilt example of mid and late Victorian suburban ideals superimposed on a much earlier rural community and is rare in this part of Kirklees". Both the 1898 school extension and 1876 Nunnery strongly contribute to this unspoilt example of a mid and late Victorian suburban. The demolition of these heritage assets and construction of the proposed would cause less than substantial harm to this conservation area- diluting the special qualities this area was designated for.

Policy

The Kirkless Local Plan Policy LP35 states: 'Development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset (or an archaeological site of national importance) should preserve or enhance the significance of the asset. In cases likely to result in substantial harm or loss, development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposals would bring substantial public benefits that clearly outweigh the harm'

Paragraph NPPF 200 states: "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."

The application fails to preserve or enhance the heritage asset, provide substantial public benefits, or offer a convincing or adequate justification for the scheme and the resulting harm to the designated heritage asset, as required by both Kirkless Local Plan Policy and NPPF.

The public benefits of additional residential units could be achieved by a much less harmful scheme that incorporates the former school buildings and Nunnery, in addition to development within the grounds.

A good example of how similar school buildings can be converted into residential use can be seen at Shipton Street School and former School master's House:
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1096160?section=official-list-entry>

Emphasis also needs to be put on the importance of reusing and recycling buildings such as this as per Historic England guidance <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/news/recycle-buildings-tackleclimate-change/>. The demolition and replacement would be wasteful and generate significantly more carbon emissions compared to its adaptation and reuse.

I would be grateful if you could inform the Victorian Society of your decision in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Conservation Adviser