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COMMONWEALTH  
WAR GRAVES  
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Mr Edward Cheseldine, Planner – Development  
Management,  
Kirklees Council,

29 January 2026

Dear Mr Cheseldine,

**RE: 2025/62/90439/E - Church of the Holy Innocents, Vicarage Road, Dewsbury, WF12 9PD  
- Conversion of existing listed church to 2 dwellings, forming new residents car park,  
external amenity spaces and associated works**

Thank you for your email regarding the above planning application. We are very grateful to have been given the opportunity to comment on this application and that the war graves were identified by the Committee.

As you may know, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) was established in 1917 as the sole authority charged with the care of the graves and the commemoration of those Commonwealth forces who died during the two world wars. The CWGC is responsible for 1.7m commemorations and graves in over 150 countries and territories.

The CWGC is responsible for four war graves at this location, known to us as Thornhill Lees (Holy Innocents) Churchyard:

- Private James Edward Appleyard, died 9 November 1918
- Private Ernest Etherington, died 23 April 1945
- Pioneer John Robb Hartley, died 23 November 1918
- Private Louis Jackson, died 28 January 1916

The CWGC was contacted by the Church Commissioners in October 2025 concerning the planning application. We understand from the planning application that the church and part of the churchyard are to be included in the proposed development, as outlined in red on plan '2025-90439\_+Location+Plan\_1080002'. The Church Commissioners advised that the wider churchyard (outside the area outlined in red) is to remain open and under the care of the Parochial Church Council (PCC), with access to the churchyard reserved for those visiting and tending the graves and memorials.

Our Regional Manager has visited the churchyard and confirmed that the four war graves of Private Appleyard, Private Etherington, Pioneer Hartley and Private Jackson are not located

within the area outlined in red. The war graves are located in the wider churchyard which would remain under the care of the PCC.

In terms of future access to the churchyard, we understand from the Church Commissioners and the planning application that a new pedestrian access gate is proposed next to the main entrance (as shown in plan '2025-90439\_*Grouped+Plans+and+Elevations\_1102381*'). Our Regional Manager has confirmed that the proposed access point would be wide enough for CWGC staff to enter the site with any equipment required to maintain the war graves.

As the war graves are located in the wider churchyard which will remain under the care of the PCC (and as stated above, they are not within the area proposed for development) with access assured for the public and CWGC staff via the new pedestrian entrance, we do not believe that the war graves will be impacted by this planning application.

As such, we do not wish to make any comments on this planning application, however, we are grateful to have been consulted.

If you have any questions about the war graves or the work of the CWGC, please do let us know.

Yours sincerely,

**Commonwealth War Graves Commission Legal Department**