



Full Membership of the
Institute of Historic
Building Conservation



Registered Practitioner
for the Historic
Environment

Urban Design Heritage and Planning

Date: 1 May, 2025
To: Kerri Simpson.
Our Ref: 0027/2025
Your Ref: 2025/62/90655/E

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE DEMOLITION OF THE FORMER PRIORY (THE
BROWN COW) PUBLIC HOUSE, CLECKHEATON, APPLICATION REF:
2025/62/90655/E**

TheUrbanGlow Design & Heritage Ltd were asked by concerned members of the Cleckheaton Community to assess the proposals for the demolition of this historic public house building in our capacity as IHBC registered Heritage Practitioners and as our role as an Urban Design Group Registered Practice.

On inspection of this site, it quickly becomes clear that this building is of tangible historic merit and should, at the very least be considered a Non-Designated Heritage Asset. The Heritage Statement by Pegasus recognises this building as being in existence from at least the mid 18th century. It is however feasible that a significant part of this building may well be earlier and there is reference of a building here being used as a courtroom (similar to the Black Bull in Birstall) in 1673. This would certainly fit the recognised typology of such buildings within the wider Spen Valley area.

Stylistically the building could well have such origins and, although it has seen later additions the core of the structure is still recognizable of a vernacular building of its type. The building therefore appears to be of stone construction with a high-pitched roof and stone mullion windows. Windows are historic sash timber types and the building is highly legible. Despite the interior of this building having seen change, this is not to mean that historic fabric within has been completely destroyed.

As such the National Planning Policy Framework gives protection to such buildings, and these must be taken into account as a material consideration.

TheUrbanGlow Design & Heritage Ltd
Registered Office: Cavendish House, St Andrews Court,
St Andrews Street, Leeds LS3 1JY
VAT Reg: 461 3663 93

Moreover, as you will know, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places great weight upon the significance of designated heritage assets and requires the decision maker to show 'special regard' to the setting and significance of Listed Buildings. In practice this means giving 'great weight' to the historic environment within the balancing exercise being undertaken.

Whitechapel Church is a Grade II Listed Building and sits immediately adjacent to this site. There would seem to be a clear link both historically, aesthetically and communally between the church and this building. Moreover, the church is on the site of a much older chapel likely dating to around 1130AD with the existing building retaining elements of these older structures even though it dates to 1821AD. The chapel is highly sensitive to change within its setting and there is significance in its relatively isolated location where there is still (despite the recent housing development nearby) a sense of isolation and modest scale of development. The former public house therefore represents a tangible reminder and important element of historic townscape to a building that predates the present church and is the only remaining piece of evidence from the historic churches that stood upon this site.

Not only therefore is there extremely strong communal significance between these two buildings, not least through its likely use as a courtroom and as a place of congregation after services, but aesthetically too the vernacular forms of the older part of this building are quintessentially related to the church's history and they clearly contribute in a positive manner to the setting and therefore the significance of the church itself. As such the complete removal of this building would cause notable harm to the narrative and immediate setting of the Listed Building.

This is not the only thing to consider however, the proposed building is of an excessive scale and poor overall design. Despite its gable forms and stone façade, the building is clearly of a generic design with a very poor solid/void relationship and a siting, mass and scale that would make it appear highly dominant from the church and its respective churchyard. Instead of a modest scaled vernacular building that tells the history of this area, instead this site would be developed with a large footprint building that is completely at odds with the local area. Although the Design and Access Statement appears to suggest this building is contextual, there is no proper analysis of the context of this site and the Statement has clearly been written to justify a design that has already been determined rather than informing the design from the outset. Indeed, the mention of Linthwaite in the D&A illustrates clearly that the applicants have not paid due regard to the special historic nature of this site.

Ultimately, this proposal is a clear overdevelopment of this site with a building that is both excessive and of a highly generalised design that pays no respect to the historic context of this area nor to the

Listed Building itself. It therefore cannot comply with either Local Planning Policy, the Framework or the Statutory Act and it clearly results in serious Less than Substantial Harm to the Listed Building and Substantial Harm to the Non-Designated Heritage Asset itself.

Although the proposed use is a Public Benefit there has been no evidence of proposed alternatives on this site that could achieve a better building design or minimize harm to the Listed Building. Indeed, through our initial assessment we would advance the case that the older core of the historic pub could be retained as part of this development with new ranges of buildings being constructed alongside, adjoining and to the rear. This would be the correct approach to develop this site and it would not only meet the relevant heritage and design policies applicable here, but it would also help to minimize the waste of losing a building from the 17th century and avoid the conflict with both local and national Climate Change mitigation and adaption policies.

Ultimately, to lose a building that potentially dates from the 1670's would be disaster for an area that is already seeing much loss and mismanagement of its rich heritage. However, there are certainly ways to develop this site for the end users need that minimises the harm that we have identified to the historic environment and that retains the important element of this vernacular building. Until such options have been explored, we advance the case that there are no Public Benefits that would outweigh the serious harm to the historic environment.

We therefore strongly support those members of the community who feel so passionately about this proposal, and we suggest that this application is refused and an alternative option that protects this important historic range is pursued.

Yours Sincerely

TheUrbanGlow Design & Heritage Ltd
Registered Office: Cavendish House, St Andrews Court,
St Andrews Street, Leeds LS3 1JY
VAT Reg: 461 3663 93