

# Planning Statement

**Former Methodist Church, Slaithwaite**

**On behalf of Noord Developments Limited**

Date: May 2025 | Pegasus Ref: P25-0766

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## Document Management.

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Noord Developments Limited (hereby referred to as the 'Applicant'), in support of a detailed planning application submitted to Kirklees Council (the Council) for the partial demolition and change of use of a Former Methodist Church in Slaithwaite (hereby referred to as the 'Site'). The description of development is:

***Partial Demolition and Change of Use of a former Methodist Church, Slaithwaite (Use Class F1(f)) to 7no. residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with ancillary landscape and external works***

- 1.2. This planning Statement has been submitted alongside the following documents and should be read in conjunction with these:

- Location plan (AL(O5)001 P1);
- Existing Drawings (inc. floor, roof, elevation and demolition plans);
- Proposed Drawings (inc. floor, roof, elevation and section plans);
- Design and Access Statement (Ref: P1, May 2025);
- Heritage Statement (Ref: P1, May 2025);
- Site Accessibility Audit (Ref: J000596–SR01, dated March 2025);
- Preliminary Ecology Appraisal and Roost Assessment (Ref: Dated March 2025); and
- Noise Assessment (Ref: O105251, Issued 21/05/2025).

- 1.3. This document reviews the planning background and outlines the overall planning justification for the proposed development.

- 1.4. This Statement follows the below structure:

- **Section 2 – Site and Surrounding Area:** This section describes the Site in terms of form and function. It also summarises the nature of the surrounding area.
- **Section 3 – Proposed Development:** This section provides a brief summary of the proposals.
- **Section 4 – Planning Policy Context:** This section sets out the relevant background to this Site and the surrounding area, including a summary of the relevant planning policy context.
- **Section 5 – Planning Assessment:** This section sets out the planning justification for the proposal having regard to the development plan, national planning policy and guidance as well as other relevant material considerations.

- 1.5. This Statement ends with a **Summary and Conclusions at Section 6.**



## Pre-Application Engagement

- 1.6. The Applicant sought pre-application advice from the Council in April 2025 for the description of works as set out above (pre-application reference: 2025/20368). This sought an assessment from the Council in relation to the overall principle of residential development on the Site and to ascertain feedback from the Authority on the suitability of the proposal considering the omission of parking, the location of development within a Conservation Area and addressing other design and heritage matters alongside general development management considerations.
- 1.7. As part of the Council's pre-application enquiry process, a meeting was held online on the 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2025 between the Applicant, the delegated Planning Officer, the appointed Architect, the Conservation Area Officer and a Planning Consultant from Pegasus Group. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss this application, resolve any outstanding issues that the Authority may have had with the pre-application proposal and agree the scope of documents required to ensure that, should a full planning application be submitted to the Authority, it would be validated accordingly.
- 1.8. Following the pre-application meeting, the Local Planning Authority confirmed that the principle of development could be supported, subject to the submission of a statement demonstrating how the proposals align with Policy LP48 of the Local Development Plan. This Statement addresses that requirement and, in doing so, effectively establishes the principle of development.
- 1.9. The Authority also confirmed that, in relation to other technical matters, including design, residential amenity of neighbouring / future occupiers, access and highway safety, ecology, drainage, land quality and impact upon trees are considered to be matters that, whilst requiring attention to ensure they are suitable, can be undertaken in a manner which ensures a suitable redevelopment of the site can take place.
- 1.10. In response to pre-application feedback from the Authority, the scheme has been revised accordingly with the following changes made:
  - Additional transoms added to the Sunday School windows to replicate the existing arrangement;
  - Photovoltaic panels added to the roof; and
  - Ground floor courtyard window now has a raised cill.
- 1.11. By incorporating these changes, the Applicant has demonstrated effective engagement with the Authority and has taken proactive steps to ensure the submission of a policy-compliant and suitable proposal.

## 2. Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1. The site is located within Slaithwaite, a small town within the Metropolitan Borough of Kirklees, in West Yorkshire. It lies in the Colne Valley and is bisected by the River Colne and the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.
- 2.2. The former Methodist Church contained within the Site is currently vacant and is located between Carr Lane to the south and Station Road to the north. Further north of the Site lies the railway line followed by residential dwellings. To the east, south and west of the Site, the area is of mixed-use with a broad range of Use Classes present however, it should be noted that on Carr Lane itself, there are numerous residential dwellings. Thus, it is considered that the proposal aligns broadly with the prevailing character of the wider environment.
- 2.3. Slaithwaite offers convenient access to a range of local amenities, including primary schools, shopping facilities, pharmacies, public houses, restaurants, and takeaways. The site is well-served by public transport enhancing its connectivity to surrounding areas. The Site Accessibility Audit (Ref: J000596-SR01) that has been submitted alongside this application confirms the above conclusion.
- 2.4. A westbound bus stop is located directly opposite the site, while the eastbound bus stop lies approximately 40 metres to the east. These stops are served by bus routes 382, 389, 395, providing regular connections to Huddersfield Bus Station and Wilberlee via Cowlersley and Linthwaite. Services operate hourly from Monday to Saturday, with a reduced two-hourly service on Sundays. Additionally, the 395 route offers an alternative link to Huddersfield with a two-hourly daytime service from Monday to Saturday. Further transport links are available on New Street, approximately 70 metres south of the Site, offering additional services to destinations such as Marsden and Blackmoorfoot, amongst other locations.
- 2.5. In addition, Slaithwaite railway station is approximately 270 metres from the northern boundary of the site. It offers half-hourly services between Manchester Piccadilly and Huddersfield during weekday peak periods and hourly services during off-peak times and evenings until 22:30. The journey time to Huddersfield is 5 minutes, and to Manchester Piccadilly is 35 minutes. Trains from Huddersfield continue to York via Leeds, with a direct journey from Slaithwaite to York taking approximately over one hour.
- 2.6. Having access to a variety of local amenities and being served by frequent and various public transport links, the development site is considered to be in a sustainable location. This conclusion has been echoed by the Authority's Highways Development Management Team as stated within the pre-application response provided by the Authority.
- 2.7. The site does not contain any statutory heritage assets but does lie within the Slaithwaite Conservation Area which does contain various statutory historic assets. The closest of which is 46 Carr Lane a Grade II Listed Building which is approximately 50 metres to the south west of the Site.

### Planning History

- 2.8. When viewing the planning history of the Site via Kirklees Council's online planning register, it was found that the Site has not been subject to any relevant planning history which is material to the development subject to this planning application.

### 3. Proposed Development

- 3.1. The proposed development is described in detail within the submitted Design and Access Statement which accompanies this planning application submission. Nevertheless, we rehearse the key elements of the proposals below for completeness.

#### Overview of the Proposals

- 3.2. A full planning application is being submitted to the Local Planning Authority for the following works:

*'Partial Demolition and Change of Use of a former Methodist Church, Slaithwaite (Use Class F1(f)) to 7no. residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with ancillary landscape and external works'*

- 3.3. The proposals for the 7no. residential dwellings include 6no. two-bedroom apartments and 1no. two-bedroom townhouse.

#### Design and Layout

- 3.4. The proposal seeks to convert the currently vacant building into 7no. residential dwellings suitable for modern day living. It is noted that the partial demolition works also form part of the proposals, however, the majority of the existing structure is to be maintained. Efforts will be made to reuse the materials from the demolition works, where feasible (e.g. stonework for new walls). The proposed demolition will also improve the amenity of prospective residents by increasing the amount of sunlight that would be received.
- 3.5. The proposal details a series of sensitive modifications across the basement, ground, first and second floors of the site. In the basement, provision is made for seven secure cycle storage spaces, ensuring safe and convenient facilities for future residents. At the ground floor level, there will be a dedicated refuse storage area and will be situated towards the southern side of the principal elevation. This floor will also accommodate three new residential units (including the two-bedroom townhouse): two within the existing Church structure, and a third within the adjoining eastern wing, previously used as a Sunday School. The third unit will extend into the first floor, which will also house two additional dwellings developed within the original Church Building. An additional two dwellings are located on the second floor, which are again within the original Church Building.
- 3.6. The scheme is to provide no parking, an element of the proposal which is discussed in greater depth below and therefore, no provision for vehicular access is being made. Accordingly, access for prospective residents will use the existing features on site.
- 3.7. As part of the proposal, a limited section to the rear of the Sunday School Extension c. 1924 is to be demolished. This section is considered to be an unsympathetic extension and its loss cannot be viewed from the front elevation. The limited demolition works will be carried out in a sensitive manner with materials such as stone to be reused where possible and new materials that are incorporated to be sympathetic to the original church.



- 3.8. For further detailed information pertaining to the design and layout of the proposal, please refer to the Design and Access Statement and the relevant drawings which have been submitted alongside this statement in support of this planning application.

## 4. Planning Policy Background

- 4.1. Section 36(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 outlines that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The adopted Development Plan for the Site comprises the Kirklees Local Plan Strategy and Policies document (Adopted 27 February 2019) as well as the Kirklees Local Plan Allocations and Designation (Adopted 27 February 2019). In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was recently revised in December 2024 is a material consideration in planning decisions and is to be read alongside the Local Plan. Additional material considerations include relevant Supplementary Planning Documents and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and have been discussed in this planning statement where appropriate.

### **Kirklees Local Plan Strategy and Policies (2019)**

- 4.2. It is noted that Kirklees Local Authority are beginning the process of preparing a new Local Plan. The Local Planning Authority have since launched their Early Engagement for this new Local Plan which ran from November 2024 to February 2025. Whilst the emerging Local Plan is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, it currently carries limited weight due to its early stage of development. Additionally, it is noted that within their pre-application response, the Authority does not discuss the emerging new Local Plan nor do they mention it being a material consideration.
- 4.3. The Site does not benefit from any formal policy designations, as confirmed by the Kirklees Policies Map. Therefore, a review of the adopted Local Plan has been undertaken to assess the suitability of the proposed development. The following policies are considered relevant to the proposal:
- 4.4. **Policy LP1 Presumption in Favour of sustainable development** – This policy is aligned with paragraph 11 of the NPPF where it is stated the council will work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.
- 4.5. **Policy LP2 Place Shaping** – All development proposals should seek to build on the strengths, opportunities and help to address any challenges identified in the Local Plan so as to protect and enhance the qualities which contribute to the character of places.
- 4.6. **Policy LP3 Location of new development** – Emphasises the importance of location of new developments. Developments will be permitted where it supports the delivery of housing and employment growth in a sustainable way.
- 4.7. **Policy LP7 Efficient and effective use of land and buildings** – To ensure the best use of land and buildings proposals should encourage the reuse or adaptation of vacant or underused properties and encourage the efficient use of previously developed land in sustainable locations provided it is not of high environmental value.
- 4.8. **Policy LP11 Housing Mix and Affordable Housing** – All proposals for housing, will be of high quality and design and contribute to creating a mixed and balanced communities in line with the latest housing need. All proposals for housing must aim to provide a mix of housing

suitable for different household types. Considering the annual shortfall in affordable homes, the council will negotiate the inclusion of affordable homes in planning applications for housing developments of 10 or more homes.

- 4.9. **Policy LP21 Highways and Access** – Proposals shall demonstrate that they can accommodate sustainable transport modes and can be accessed effectively and safely by all users. Proposals shall demonstrate adequate information and mitigation measures to avoid detrimental impacts on highway safety and the local highway network.
- 4.10. **Policy LP22 Parking** – Private non-residential parking is discouraged unless operationally essential with residential parking supported where it enhances town centre living. New developments must consider public transport access, site location, car ownership levels and development type. Proposals should include well-designed, secure parking for cars, cycles, and disabled users, making the best use of space while supporting sustainable travel.
- 4.11. **Policy LP24 Design** – Good design should be at the core of all proposals in the district and should be considered at the outset of the development process. Proposals should promote good design by ensuring the form, scale layout and details of all development respects and enhances the character of the townscape, heritage assets and landscape. This includes the reuse and adaptation of existing buildings;
- 4.12. **Policy LP28 Drainage** – Developments must incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage surface water sustainably. Greenfield sites must not exceed natural run-off rates, while brownfield sites must reduce run-off by at least 30% where existing connections exist. SuDS should protect or improve water quality, integrate with green infrastructure, and avoid reliance on pumping. Designs must account for long-term maintenance, exceedance events, and local conditions such as flood risk or drainage constraints. Development is only permitted where adequate water supply and waste water infrastructure is available or planned.
- 4.13. **Policy LP30 Biodiversity and Geodiversity** – The council will seek to protect and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of Kirklees, including the range of international, national and locally designated wildlife and geological sites.
- 4.14. **LP35 Historic Environment** – Development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset should reserve or enhance the significance of the asset. This emphasises the need to conserve elements of historical significance, especially within Conservation areas. This policy also encourages the sustainable use of heritage assets, including places of worship.
- 4.15. **LP48 – Community facilities and services** – Community facilities should be easy to reach by walking, cycling, or public transport ideally in town, district, or local centres. Developments that protect or improve these spaces are encouraged, especially when integrated into flexible, mixed-use buildings. Losing valued facilities is only acceptable if they are no longer required, viable, or are replaced with accessible, high-quality alternatives.
- 4.16. **LP52 Protection and improvement of environmental quality** – Proposals that may cause pollution such as noise, vibration, light, dust, odour, shadow flicker, chemicals or soil contamination must be supported by evidence showing that potential impacts have been assessed and mitigated against. This must be in place to ensure they do not harm people’s quality of life or well-being or cause environmental damage.

## National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.17. The latest National Planning Policy Framework was published in December 2024 and sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a Framework within which locally prepared plans can provide for housing and other development in a sustainable manner.
- 4.18. The introduction to the NPPF reiterates that application for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise; that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions; and that the Framework should be read as a whole.

## Achieving sustainable development

- 4.19. The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement or sustainable development. Paragraph 8 states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are independent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These objectives are:
- an economic objective;
  - a social objective; and
  - an environmental objective
- 4.20. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF provides the presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. Paragraph 12 states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory states of the development plan as the starting point for decision-taking.

## Decision Making

- 4.21. The NPPF states at Paragraph 39 that planning should be a creative exercise rather than being focused on scrutiny, stating that:

***“Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permissions in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.”***

## Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

- 4.22. Paragraph 61 sets out the support for the Government’s objective to significantly boost the supply of homes and that land with planning permission is developed without delay.
- 4.23. The framework also outlines maintaining supply and delivery where paragraph 78 where local planning authorities should seek to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing

against their local housing need. Where an authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies.

### **Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities**

4.24. Paragraph 96 of the NPPF outlines that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- Promote social interaction;
- Are safe and accessible; and
- Enable and support healthy lifestyles

### **Promoting Sustainable Transport**

4.25. Section 9 of the NPPF addresses sustainable transport. Paragraph 109 states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals. This should involve:

- Making transport considerations an important part of early engagement with local communities;
- Ensuring patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of the schemes;
- Understanding and addressing potential impacts of development on transport networks;
- Realising opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure;
- Identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use; and
- Identifying, assessing and taking into account the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure.

### **Making effective use of land and achieving well-designed places**

4.26. Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses. There should also be a clear strategy to make as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land. This is balanced with paragraph 131 of the NPPF which emphasises the need to create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

### **Meeting the challenges of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change**

4.27. Paragraph 161 of the NPPF states that the planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts. Paragraph 170 also says development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided and this is further built on in

Paragraph 181 when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

### **Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment**

- 4.28. Paragraph 187 of the NPPF highlights that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising its impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

### **Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment**

- 4.29. Paragraph 202 and 203 of the NPPF emphasise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Planning policies should promote a positive strategy for their conservation, recognising their contribution to local character, cultural value and sustainable development.

### **Other Material Considerations**

- 4.30. The Kirklees Housebuilders Design Guide SPD was used as additional material information when considering the proposed development.

## 5. Planning Assessment

### Principle of Development

- 5.1. The proposed development for the partial demolition and Change of Use of a former Methodist Church, Slaithwaite (Use Class F1(f)) to 7 no. residential dwellings (Use Class C3) including ancillary landscape and external works. The proposal seeks to convert the currently vacant property into 7 no. residential dwellings. The Site for the development lacks any formal Planning Policy allocation and whilst not listed, is located within the Slaithwaite Conservation Area, characterised by West Yorkshire vernacular, large stone mill buildings, and stone terraces.
- 5.2. Following a pre-application process with Kirklees Council the below policies have been deemed particularly pertinent for the proposed development. Policies LP1 and Chapter 2 of the NPPF refer to achieving sustainable development. The proposed development makes effective use of previously developed land, supports building a healthy and vibrant community and is in a sustainable location due to its access to a variety of local amenities and being served by frequent and various public transport links. The sustainable location of the development is also in line with Policy LP3 of the Local Plan which seeks to support the development of housing in a sustainable way. The redevelopment proposal aligns with Policies LP7 'Efficient and Effective Use of land and Buildings' LP24 'Design' and LP35 'Historic Environment,' focusing on the reuse and adaptation of existing buildings while maintaining the area's characteristics and conserving elements that are considered to be of historical importance. The repurposing of this currently vacant unit is further supported by Chapters 12 and 16 of the NPPF, particularly Paragraph 210 of the NPPF.
- 5.3. Furthermore, the proposal aligns with Chapter 11 of the NPPF, which focuses on making effective use of land. Specifically, the proposed Change of Use relates to previously developed (brownfield) land, which is directly supported by the guidance set out in Paragraphs 124 and 125 of the NPPF. Paragraph 125(c) emphasises that planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for the provision of housing. Accordingly, the proposed development is afforded substantial weight, as it seeks to deliver new dwellings within an existing settlement boundary, consistent with national planning policy objectives.
- 5.4. Policy LP11 of the KLP requires all proposals for housing to be of high quality and design and help to contribute to mixed and balanced communities. The proposed development would assist in both regards adding additional housing in a sustainable location that is already characterised by urban development is deemed to be acceptable in principle.
- 5.5. Furthermore, as of 2023 the five-year housing land supply position for Kirklees shows 3.96 years supply of housing land, and the 2022 Housing Delivery Test (HDT) measurement (published December 2023) showed Kirklees had achieved a 67% measurement against the required level of housing delivery over a rolling 3-year period with 75% being the pass threshold. Both of these assessments shows the need for more housing being brought forward in Kirklees.
- 5.6. As demonstrated above, there is a clearly identified need for housing in this area. The Local Planning Authority has confirmed that it is currently unable to meet its five-year housing land supply requirement. In addition, the site is recognised as previously developed (brownfield) land, which is supported in principle for redevelopment under both local and

national policy frameworks. For these reasons, the proposal carries substantial weight, reflecting its alignment with the Local Plan, the NPPF, and the demonstrable need for housing growth in this location.

- 5.7. However, as part of the pre-application process, the Authority confirmed that the proposal would also result in the loss of a community asset namely, the former Methodist Church. Accordingly, the Authority has asked that a Statement be prepared on how the loss of the community facility is Policy compliant with respect to Policy LP48 of the Local Plan. This Statement is provided below.

### **Policy LP48 – Community Facilities and Services**

- 5.8. Policy LP48 of the Kirklees Local Plan seeks to protect valued community facilities and ensure their provision in accessible locations that reduce the need to travel or can be easily accessed by walking, cycling, or public transport. Where the loss of a community facility is proposed, the policy requires that it be demonstrated that one of the following is complied with:

- There is no longer a need for the facility; or
- The current use is no longer viable; or
- Suitable alternative facilities exist within the locality.

- 5.9. Paragraph 98 of the National Planning Policy Framework identifies community facilities as including local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open spaces, cultural buildings, public houses, and places of worship. The former Methodist Church qualifies as a community facility under this definition, specifically as a place of worship and a potential meeting place.

- 5.10. The proposed development includes the change of use of the former Methodist Church, which constitutes the loss of a community facility. However, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy LP48 for the following reasons:

- **Viability:** The building has been vacant and unused for over 12 months, indicating that its current use as a place of worship is no longer viable. No viable proposals have come forward for its reuse in this capacity. Additionally, it is noted that the property was sold in December 2024 by the Trustees of the Methodist Church, following a significant decline in congregation numbers. At the time of the sale, no steps were taken by the previous landlords to identify or secure an alternative site for the displaced congregation, nor was a new place of worship established. Furthermore, the current landowner has expressed no intention to restore or repurpose the building for religious or community use; and
- **Alternative Provision:** The local area is well-served by a diverse range of community facilities that address educational, cultural, and civic needs. Directly opposite the site on Cross Street is Slaithwaite Library, located within Slaithwaite Town Hall, offering valuable community and learning resources. Adjacent to the library on New Street is the Colne Valley Leisure Centre, which provides comprehensive fitness and sports amenities. Slaithwaite Community Centre on Bank Gate supports local groups, meetings, and events, while The Civic Hall on New Street, operated by the Civic Hall Trust, offers further space for public gatherings and community activities.

Additionally, the Council-run Watershed facility provides flexible hireable space for workshops, meetings, and events. Beyond these core community assets, the area also benefits from a range of recreational and social facilities, including a public house, restaurants, a gym, and the nearby Slaithwaite Spa Park, which offers accessible and attractive open space for leisure and informal recreation. Collectively, these amenities ensure the community's ongoing needs are comprehensively met; and

- The existing unit has remained vacant for a significant period, with no evidence of ongoing demand for its continued use as a place of worship or community facility. As outlined above, multiple alternative community assets are located nearby, adequately serving local needs. To date, no expressions of interest have been received from local groups or faith-based organisations regarding the retention or reuse of the building for its original purpose. Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, no such representations have been made to the Local Planning Authority. Additionally, it is noted that Kirklees Council have published a list of Assets of Community Value<sup>1</sup>. Upon review of this register, the site associated with this application, Slaithwaite Methodist Church, is not listed as an Asset of Community Value. In contrast, the nearby Colne Valley Leisure Centre, as previously discussed, is formally designated as an Asset of Community Value. The presence of this recognised community facility in close proximity reinforces the view that the proposed development can be appropriately supported, as community needs continue to be met within the local area.

5.11. In view of the above, the proposed development satisfies the criteria set out in Policy LP48. The loss of the community facility is justified on the grounds of lack of viability, the presence of alternative provision within the local area and an absence of need.

5.12. Accordingly, the proposed change of use is considered to be in full accordance with the Local Plan, and particularly Policy LP48. The principle of development is therefore considered to be fully established.

### **Other Environmental and Technical Matters**

5.13. It is acknowledged that there are also a number of environmental and technical matters that need to be considered and addressed to ensure that the proposal is acceptable in planning terms. It is considered that the policy requirements appropriate to these matters can be effectively responded to through the preparation of a comprehensive planning application submission. These considerations include:

- Affordable Housing;
- Layout and Design;
- Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS);

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<sup>1</sup> List of Assets of Community Value (Kirklees Council) – <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/community-assets/pdf/register-assets-of-community-value.pdf>

- Highways, Transport and Parking;
- Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG);
- Noise; and
- Historic Assets and Conservation Area.

### **Affordable Housing**

- 5.14. The contents of Policies LP24 and LP11, addressing accessible and affordable housing, have been considered. Policy LP24 suggests that dwellings should accommodate various users, including older and disabled individuals, where appropriate. Policy LP11 emphasises housing mix and affordability. The contents of Planning Policy LP11 are reflected in Paragraph 65 of the NPPF.
- 5.15. The number of units proposed at 7no. residential dwellings falls below the affordable housing contribution threshold outlined in Policy LP24.
- 5.16. Accordingly, the proposal will not provide any affordable housing and is considered not to be contrary to Local Planning Policy.

### **Layout and Design**

- 5.17. Policy LP24 of the KLP highlights the importance of good design throughout the development process. As outlined in the submitted Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement, the proposed development seeks to preserve key West Yorkshire features, such as large stone mill buildings and stone terraces, that define the area's character.
- 5.18. The proposals retain the original external structure, reuse demolition materials where appropriate, and incorporate materials to reflect the local character. This approach aligns with Principle 13 of the 'Kirklees Housebuilders Design Guide SPD', as well as policies LP24 and LP35 of the KLP and chapters 12 and 16 of the NPPF. Overall, the design and layout are considered consistent with the Local Plan.
- 5.19. In support of this application and to demonstrate compliance with relevant Local Plan policies, a series of drawings and a Design and Access Statement have been submitted alongside this Planning Statement. These documents illustrate the proposed works and detail how the development has been sensitively designed to respect both the character of the original church and the surrounding area. For further information, refer to the submitted drawings and Design and Access Statement.

### **Nationally Described Space Standards**

- 5.20. The Nationally Described Space Standards is not formally adopted in the current Kirklees Local Plan but is recognised as best practice in the Kirklees Housebuilder Design Guide SPD. This guide aims to define good residential design, enhance housing quality, and support the Local Plan Vision. Details of space provided can be found in the submitted Design Assessment/Heritage Statement.

- 5.21. All units proposed exceed the relevant Nationally Described Space Standards and as such, it is considered that the proposal is appropriate with respect to the NDSS.

### **Highways, Transport and Parking**

- 5.22. The Highways Design Guide SPD confirms that there are no published parking standards for residential development in Kirklees. Due to the limited size of the proposal and existing infrastructure restrictions, no parking is proposed for this application. In addition, the 'Site Accessibility Audit' (Ref: J000596-SR01) submitted alongside this statement in support of this application highlights accessibility to local facilities by walking and cycling, including primary schools, medical surgeries, and shopping facilities.
- 5.23. National Planning Guidance notes that cycling can substitute for short car trips. A 5KM cycle journey from the site covers all of Slaithwaite. Public transport access is also key, with bus stops on Carr Lane with the westbound bus stop being directly opposite the application site and the eastbound 40m east. Slaithwaite railway station is approximately 270m from the site's northern boundary. The proposed development is therefore in a sustainable location and, therefore, the 'no-car parking' approach to the proposed development is considered acceptable. The provision of safe and secure cycle parking for prospective residents provided in the basement supports this conclusion.
- 5.24. The proposal does not include on-site parking. However, during the pre-application stage, feedback from the Council and KC Highways Development Management confirmed that the site is within practical walking and cycling distance of local bus and rail services, as well as a range of shops and community facilities. On-street parking is available on Carr Lane to the front of the Site and Station Road to the rear of the site. Given the site's sustainable location, the omission of parking is considered acceptable as confirmed by the Local Authority in their pre-application response.
- 5.25. Additionally, a dedicated refuse storage area will be provided at ground floor level. Refuse collection will mimic that of the current residents in the area as Pegasus Group deem that the provision of a permanent refuse collection point could have an adverse impact on the external features of the property, most likely requiring the partial removal of decorative railings and stone wall that the Application seeks to retain as a feature.
- 5.26. In light of these factors, the proposal is considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain**

- 5.27. Pegasus Group considers the proposed development to fall within the *de minimis* exemption under the Environment Act 2021. The site lacks sufficient ecological value to trigger the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) threshold. Specifically, this exemption applies to development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 square metres (e.g. 5m x 5m) of non-priority onsite habitat (such as modified grassland) or 5m for non-priority onsite linear habitats (such as native hedgerows)
- 5.28. According to Planning Practice Guidance, this exemption applies to developments involving a change of use where there is minimal or no impact on existing habitats. This view has also reflected by the Local Planning Authority in their pre-application response.

- 5.29. Given the limited ecological features present, the nature of the proposal and the lack of onsite ecological features which falls below the 25 square metre de minimis threshold noted above, a 10% BNG uplift is not deemed necessary. Moreover, ecological assessments carried out to date indicate that the scheme does not present any significant ecological constraints that cannot be appropriately managed through a well-prepared planning application.
- 5.30. A Preliminary Ecology Appraisal and Roost Assessment is submitted alongside the planning application which demonstrates the low potential of the building for roosting bats.
- 5.31. In light of these factors, the proposal is considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Noise**

- 5.32. A Noise Impact Assessment (Ref: 0105251) was conducted by Peak Acoustics on behalf of Noord Developments Limited to accompany the submission of a full planning application.
- 5.33. The assessment examined noise and vibration impacts related to the development of seven residential apartments, based on environmental monitoring carried out from 14<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025. Primary noise sources included road and rail traffic.
- 5.34. A glazing and ventilation strategy has been proposed to ensure that internal conditions in habitable rooms meet the design criteria set out in BS8233:2014. An assessment of external amenity areas confirmed compliance with the 'acceptable' noise guidelines of BS8233. The vibration assessment indicated a low likelihood of adverse impact, with no mitigation required.
- 5.35. Overall, the assessments stipulates that the proposed development is expected to meet relevant noise and vibration standards, ensuring a suitable residential environment for future occupants. For more information, please review the submitted Noise Impact Assessment (Ref: 0105251).
- 5.36. Accordingly, it is considered that, the proposal is acceptable and in full accordance with the relevant provisions of the Local Plan pertaining to noise.

### **Historic Environment and Conservation Area**

- 5.37. Although, the site itself is not formally listed, it lies within the Slaithwaite Conservation Area. While there is no published Character Appraisal from the Local Authority for this area, it is reasonable to regard the Church as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 5.38. Under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, there is a statutory duty to give special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. In line with this, Policy LP35 of the Kirklees Local Plan addresses the historic environment. It states that development proposals which would result in the loss of, or harm to, the significance of a non designated heritage assets or its contribution to local character and will only be supported where the benefits of the scheme clearly outweigh, the harm. The Policy also emphasises the importance of conserving elements of the historic environment that contribute to the unique identity of Kirklees, this is proportionate to their significance and considers the broader benefits of development.



- 5.39. The current proposal retains the existing church external appearance as much as possible, whilst also introducing a beneficial new use. Efforts made to retain existing on site feature were welcomed by the Council during the pre-application process. However, as noted above, the scheme includes the partial demolition of the unsympathetic extension namely, the rear of the Sunday School Extension c. 1924.
- 5.40. The majority of changes are internal, with only minimal external alterations planned. This approach ensures that the development respects the character and appearance of the existing structure and does not negatively impact the Conservation Area's integrity. For more information concerning the proposal on the historic environment and the conservation area, please review the documents that have been submitted to the Authority in support of this application namely, the Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement.
- 5.41. Given the sensitive design and the preservation of key architectural features, the proposal aligns with the aims of Policy LP35. It also complies with the principles set out in Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, supporting the view that the development is appropriate and respectful of its historic context.

## 6. Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1. This Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Noord Developments Limited in support of a detailed planning application to Kirklees Council for the following development:

*'Partial Demolition and Change of Use of a former Methodist Church, Slaithwaite (Use Class F1(f)) to 7no. residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with ancillary landscape and external works'*

- 6.2. This Statement demonstrates that the principle of development on the site is acceptable and aligns with both the Kirklees Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. The site's sustainable location, the reuse of a vacant building, and the contribution to local housing supply all support the proposal and are all in compliance with relevant planning policy. Additionally, due to the scale of the scheme, there is no requirement to provide affordable housing.
- 6.3. The proposal has been carefully designed to respect the character of the area and preserve the integrity of the nearby conservation area. The loss of the former facility is also considered acceptable, given the availability of alternative provisions in the area and the lack of viability for its previous use which was specifically a place of worship.
- 6.4. This Planning Statement alongside the accompanying technical documents demonstrates that there would be no unacceptable impacts from the proposed development which would prevent planning permission from being granted.
- 6.5. The NPPF is unequivocal that planning consent should be granted swiftly where development proposals comply with the development plan and represent sustainable development (paragraph 11). It is evident that the proposals comply with the development plan when taking into account relevant material considerations. As this is the case, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted without delay.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)  
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

# Expertly Done.

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