

11 August 2025

John Holmes  
Kirklees Metropolitan Council  
Planning Services  
Huddersfield  
HD1 9EL

Dear John,

**Planning Application Reference 2025/91506: Partial demolition and change of use of a former church (Class F1(f)) to 7 dwellings (Class C3) with ancillary landscape and external works at the former Slaithwaite Methodist Church, Station Road, Slaithwaite, Huddersfield, HD7 5AW**

Further to receipt of comments provided by the Conservation Team to the above planning application dated 14 July 2025, this letter provides a response to the comments received in the hope that the planning application can proceed to a positive determination based upon the designs as currently submitted.

It was requested that a meeting takes place with yourself and the Conservation Team to positively and proactively discuss the content of the comments in the hope of reaching a prompt resolution to the design as submitted. As a meeting is not possible, this letter addresses the comments received.

By way of context, it is important to note that the proposed development involves bringing back into use an existing non-listed building in a Conservation Area, the principle of which should be supported. Paragraph 210 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that:

*'In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'*

It is considered that the proposed development meets the above requirements and should be supported by the Local Planning Authority.

This response addresses the key points raised by the Conservation Team as follows:

- Window Design;
- Lowering of Window Sills;
- Photovoltaic (PV) Panels;
- Photographic Schedule;

- Front Gate and Railings;
- Ventilation Strategy; and
- Heritage and Viability Balance.

#### *Window Design*

The Conservation Team note that 'the loss of the original windows is unfortunate.' However, there is no evidence to suggest that the existing plastic windows are original to the existing building and / or that the design of the windows match what was originally in the building. As per our records, there is no clear or verifiable evidence of the original window design. It is therefore unreasonable to require replication of a feature for which no reliable documentation exists.

The inclusion of a spandrel is necessitated by the introduction of a new internal floor level. Incorporating a decorative window above the spandrel would result in an incongruous and visually awkward appearance. The proposed anthracite window design offers a material and colour palette more aligned with the architectural vernacular of the area than the existing white uPVC windows, thereby enhancing the building's aesthetic coherence within the Conservation Area.

The proposed windows are consistent with other window designs found within the Conservation Area, such as those installed at Globe Mill.

#### *Lowering of Windowsills*

The Conservation Team's comments regarding sill height in the right-hand apartments are incorrect. Each unit contains a single window serving the main living space. Due to the attached adjacent property, obstructing potential side elevation windows, this front window is the only source of natural light and outlook. A window is provided within the kitchen area, however, this does not serve the main living space. A sill height of 1.5 metres would risk providing an appropriate level of residential amenity. Furthermore, by lowering sills to the front elevation only would risk creating visual disharmony and would look incongruous by not also having sill heights of 1.5 metres on the side elevation. As part of the sensitive design approach, the scheme also retains the original arched window form. The proposed amendments to the windows constitutes a minimal intervention in the existing fabric to provide an appropriate level of residential amenity and to bring the building to viable use consistent with the heritage value of the building.

#### *Photovoltaic (PV) Panels*

The installation of PV panels is required to meet forthcoming EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) standards. The proposed design has limited their placement to the roof elevation that receives the most sunlight, in accordance with energy efficiency principles.

The building has a simple pitched roof with no hidden areas suitable for PV installation. The Applicant is committed to retaining and restoring the original slate roof tiles where possible, and as such, the use of PV tiles (which would require wholesale replacement of original material) is not considered appropriate for the proposed development.

*Photographic Schedule*

The Applicant questions why photographic recording of the building is required for an unlisted building in the Conservation Area whereby internal works can take place without the need for any planning permission. Nevertheless, should the Planning Officer consider that the requirement for photographic recording meets the tests of planning conditions then this will be accepted by the Applicant.

*Front Gate and Railings*

We confirm that only minor alterations will occur in this area, and that existing front railings and gates will be retained wherever possible, in recognition of their contribution to the building's character.

*Ventilation Strategy*

We accept the recommendation to route ventilation systems to the roof where possible and will incorporate this into the final design strategy.

*Overarching Heritage and Viability Considerations*

It is considered that the proposed development wholly accords with the principles of Paragraph 210 of the NPPF by bringing a vacant unlisted building in a Conservation Area back into viable use through sensitive design. Although the requests for changes to window design, sill height, and PV panels have been considered by the Applicant, it is considered that the design approach as presented, and evidenced above, demonstrates a suitable approach to the sensitive design of the proposed development. Overall, the interventions proposed are minimal, well-considered, and necessary to support both the building's conservation and its successful future viable use.

**Conclusion**

In summary, this response has addressed each of the points raised by the Local Planning Authority in a constructive and transparent manner. The Applicant remains committed to delivering a sensitive and high-quality redevelopment that respects the historical significance of the former Methodist Church while meeting modern standards of residential amenity, energy efficiency, and design integrity.

We trust that the clarifications and justifications provided in this letter demonstrate that the proposed interventions strike an appropriate and proportionate balance between heritage conservation and practical viability. We respectfully request that the Local Planning Authority gives due consideration to the information presented herein as part of its ongoing assessment of the application.

Should any further clarification or engagement be required, we would be pleased to provide additional detail or attend a meeting to discuss the proposals further.

Yours faithfully,

Jonathan Hobbs  
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