

**Consultation Response from KC,
Conservation & Design**

2025/92140 The Old Dewsbury Library, Wellington Road, Dewsbury, WF13 1HN

Listed Building Consent for alterations to former library to form 14 apartments with associated internal and external works (within a Conservation Area)

Date Responded:25-3-26

Responding Officer:SC

Responding Ref:

The building is Grade II listed and within the Conservation Area but has been vacant and derelict for a long time so a new viable use would be welcomed. Pre-application advice was offered in May 2025 and it appears that the current proposals generally follow the advice offered subject to further details.

It is recommended that the building should be made wind and watertight in the short term to prevent any further deterioration. It should be secured against potential vandalism or arson attempts, and allow for sufficient ventilation to prevent damp problems exacerbating the current condition of the building.

The building is listed on the outside and the inside. There are a number of important features that should be retained and repaired to ensure that the character and appearance will be retained.

An archaeological recording condition is recommended, which could include archive photography. WYAAS should be consulted to arrange for a Written Scheme of Investigation for the specification.

Exterior

The submitted proposed elevations appear to retain the existing openings, but clarification is needed for the location of new openings referred to in the Design Pack Rev C – P.18 – 1 new window at first floor side elevation (southwest) and 4 new windows to ground floor rear (southeast). It is not clear if these have been shown on plans.

Roof – repairs should use matching materials ie natural slate, stone copings etc. Retain octagonal cupola.

Glazed lanterns – there are 2 large, ornate glazed lanterns which are unusual and very attractive features which should be retained/repaired/rebuilt ideally. Details should be submitted of how this would be undertaken.

If demolition eg of the lanterns is proposed, it is expected that there should be notification to Historic England and the National Amenity Societies for demolition of all or a substantial part of the interior of the principal building defined as “a proposal to demolish any principal internal element of the structure including any staircase, load-bearing wall, floor structure or roof structure is treated as a proposal for the demolition of a substantial part of the interior.”

[Handling heritage applications Direction 2021](#)

Walls – use an appropriate lime mortar, not strap or ribbon pointing. The Restoration Statement at P.27 of the Statement refers to use of lime mortar.

The document also refers to stone repair mortar to repair capping stones and other associated stonework. A schedule of works and methods will be required by condition.

Retain stone architectural features.

Rainwater goods – metal of sections to match existing.

Windows – try to retain original timber windows on the front elevation and repair where possible and consider secondary glazing. There are a number of ornate details which would be hard to replicate. If it is considered they are beyond repair then provide evidence for this and propose new to match existing as closely as possible, slimline timber double glazing could be considered.

Some typical window details have been submitted, and further details can be requested by condition.

Gates – retain and repair.

Door – retain and repair.

Interior

The library demonstrates evidence of a richly decorated interior so it would be welcomed if original features could be retained. Ideally it would be preferred if the large open spaces could be retained

without subdivision into flats. However, the planning history has shown that a variety of different uses have been undertaken at the building and unfortunately it has been empty for a while and is deteriorating. So therefore, if it is demonstrated that other uses that would leave the space undivided are not viable, then subdivision to flats would be accepted in order to secure a long term use for the building. However, there is an opportunity to retain some of those important internal spaces in communal areas such as the Entrance Hall and the proposed small Reading Room.

1. Entrance hall – it is understood that the entrance hall could be retained as a full height space. The repair of the glazed lantern would be welcomed to match existing. It is unclear if the glazed lantern would be retained and repaired and this needs clarification. The following features should be retained;

Mosaic floor

Timber panelling

Picture rails/dado rails/cornices/skirting boards

Glazed tiles

Further information and clarification is needed to check which items can be retained.

The Structural Report indicates the level of damp in the building and recommends stripping out internal fabric to assess the structure. The level of strip out required needs to be clearly indicated. Demolition and soft strip methodologies and protection measures for significant items should be submitted through conditions.

The Concept proposals on P.18 refer to use of vapour permeable fibre insulation, further details will be needed by condition.

The Restoration Statement at P. 27 refers to lime plaster proposed, further details would be submitted by condition.

2. Bedrooms – there has already been a large mezzanine floor inserted which subdivides the space horizontally but not vertically. Some interesting features remain in the largest spaces including timber panelling and glazed tiles. These features should be retained and re-used in some of the apartments where possible or re-used in communal spaces.

Careful design will be needed to deal with the floor at the junction of the windows. The details at P. 28 indicate that the floor can be disguised by a timber transom detail.

3. Other internal features – original fireplaces and timber panelling and original staircases should be retained and reused where possible. Clarification to be provided.
4. Reading room and mural – the submitted plans indicate that this is retained in the reading room as suggested, including some of the moulded plaster ceiling decoration, even if it is in a smaller sized room than existing. Further clarification will be needed for any suspended ceiling proposals, or can the existing ceiling remain exposed?
5. The other glazed lantern is a magnificent feature and it would be preferred if it could be retained and repaired, for possible use in communal or stairs/circulation space. Alternative proposals would need to be demonstrated with a justification.

The proposed bike store and bin store at the rear appear to be sited appropriately.

In conclusion, the listed building retains many original features but is in poor condition. It is in a very accessible location and conversion to apartments would be a new viable use. Proposals that respect the heritage significance should be recommended approval subject to conditions. In accordance with the NPPF Para 215 the subdivision for apartments would represent less than substantial harm that could be outweighed by the public benefit of obtaining the optimum viable use for this derelict building.

There are extra details required regarding the internal works which will need to be assessed to try to achieve a balance between retaining significant fabric and achieving a viable use before further deterioration occurs in accordance with LP24 and LP35

Recommended conditions;

1. Detailed schedule of demolition and soft strip to be submitted.
2. Methods for protection and repairs of significant items to be submitted including glazed lanterns, entrance hall tiling, mosaic, flooring, timber decorative items, reading room mural and ceiling.
3. External stone repairs methods to be submitted.
4. Details of external windows, methods of opening (with concealed trickle vents) and doors to be submitted. Elevations at 1:20 and sections at 1:5 to be submitted.
5. Methods of treatment to walls including sound insulation, fire protection to be submitted.
6. Methods and details of new external features for ventilation, extraction, flues, alarms etc to be submitted.
7. Lime mortar pointing.
8. Cast iron or cast aluminium rain water goods finished in black.
9. External metal gates to be retained and repaired.
10. Front doors to be retained and repaired.