

Address: The Old Dewsbury Library, Wellington Road, Dewsbury, WF13 1HN

Application Ref: 2025/65/92140/E

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

Statutory Remit: Historic Buildings & Places (HB&P) is a consultee for Listed Building Consent applications, as per the Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification to Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of State (England) Direction 2021. We are concerned with historic assets of all types and all ages, including conservation areas and undesignated heritage.

Comments: Thank you for notifying HB&P of the above application for listed building consent.

There is no objection to the principle of the change of use and HB&P recognise that a degree of alteration is needed to facilitate a new and viable use. We were not privy to the information provided during the pre-app process noted in the statement, however, HB&P are concerned that the information submitted does not adequately assess the wealth of original features and spaces that remain internally, nor how they will be affected/ retained/ reused by the proposal. Most of the photos provided come from the 28 days later urban explore website, raising further concern that the original fittings have not been properly assessed or considered.

<https://www.28dayslater.co.uk/threads/dewsbury-library-april-2019.148325/>

HB&P recommend that an updated heritage assessment, in accordance with the NPPFD requirements set out in para 207, is provided and that the plans are updated to note the historic features of interest and how they are to be retained or altered.

Regarding the design:

- Given the various changes to the floor levels and styles of ceiling (domed, barrel vaulted, etc.) section plans are essential to show the impact of the alterations.
- While the horizontal subdivision of the front reading room is acceptable, and we note the floor plate meeting the new horizontal transom, the first-floor apartments need to be reordered and designed so that they do not intersect the top half of the arched windows at the mullions. This spoils the integrity of these feature windows both internally and externally. The apartment partitions should fit the existing ceiling trusses.
- It is assumed the wall tiling and dado panels will be retained, restored and refitted. Likewise, the front northern rooms with the fireplace. This needs to be

secured at this stage as the wording in the document is too vague for a listed building application.

- The rear domed room with the top lit roof lantern is one of the principal spaces within the library. The plans suggest the room is to be horizontally subdivided with a false ceiling to separate the dome from the proposed flat. The plans and photos do not show any existing windows and details of these are needed. HB&P do object to the false ceiling as this alters the proportions and experience of this space. More creativity in the design is needed to respect and celebrate the architecture, rather than fight it, as the full height dome would make a wonderful open plan mezzanine living space.
- Where and how is the mural noted in the listing being moved to?
- The long room to the rear range as a shallow barrel-vaulted ceiling. How are the room partitions to interact with the curved ceiling? The room divisions should correspond with the existing sectional pattern of the ceiling. The stained glass in this room must also be retained in situ.
- Details of the cupola and lantern restorations are needed.
- What environmental, acoustic, and fire separation measures are required?
- Will service runs for the myriad of kitchens and bathrooms affect any other remaining historic features?

With more consideration to retaining and celebrating the historic features of interest within the former library, the proposal has the potential to be a good conversion, but at this stage it falls short and we therefore recommend withdrawal to allow for the preparation of an appropriate heritage assessment and amended plans.

Policy: Chapter 16 of the NPPF (2023), particularly paragraph 205, that states: ‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance’.

Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that, in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Recommendation: Withdrawal and submission of amended plans to address the above conservation and design concerns.

Regards

Ross Anthony

Case Work



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Historic Buildings & Places is the working name of the Ancient Monuments Society, a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation in England and Wales (no. 1210157). It is one of the National Amenity Societies and a consultee on Listed Building Consent applications as per the ***Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification to Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of State (England) Direction 2021***. We are concerned with historic assets of all types and all ages, including planning applications affecting historic buildings in conservation areas and undesignated heritage.