



Ms Nina Sayers
Planning Department
Kirklees Council
Via email

24 September 2025

DC.Admin@kirklees.gov.uk

Dear Ms Sayers

RE: 2025/92388 (JCNAS 209837) | Red House Museum, 281 Oxford Road, Gomersal, BD19 4JP (Grade II*, c.1660, with C18, C19 and C20 alterations). Application for subdivision into two residential units and conversion of barn and coach house into third residential unit.

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this application. Having considered the proposal carefully, we **raise serious concerns** to these plans in their current form.

Built c.1660, with later alterations in the C18th, C19th and early C20th, The Red House Museum is a Grade II*-listed building meaning that it is recognised for its particularly high national significance and special interest. The building has undergone a variety of historic internal and external alterations but retains many of its historic features. The building has had several notable visitors in its long history, including *John* and *Charles Wesley*, the famous Methodist preachers who travelled the country in the C18th, sharing their interpretation of non-conformist Christianity with much success. Later, and arguably more famous, was the visitor *Charlotte Brontë*, who used Red House and the contemporary mercantile *Taylor* family as inspiration for *The Yorkes at Briarmains* (as well as a local Moravian minister) in her book, *Shirley* (1849).

This application seeks permission to revert the hall back into residential use from its previous use as a museum which ceased in 2016, forming two properties. The barn and coach house is also proposed to be converted into a dwelling, creating a total of three residential dwellings on site. These works will involve internal and external alterations, over which The Victorian Society has some concerns.

**Campaigning for
Victorian & Edwardian
Built Heritage**

The Victorian Society

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Division of House

The Society is concerned that the division of the house into two separate dwellings will cause harm to the historic planform of the building. Historically, this has been one property and the lived experience of this building reflects this use. To close off hallways, rooms and doorways would disrupt the flow of the building, change access routes and alter how the building is understood as an historic asset. We recognise that the change of use from museum to residential is a reasonable proposal for this building. However, we remain concerned that the splitting of the property will have a negative effect the significance of the Grade II* listing.

The subdivision of space is also a cause for concern for the Society, and we question the need for the creation of lobbies and hallways where not already present. The core of the building dates to before the corridor was a common feature in domestic architecture, and the ground floor planform reflects this historic aspect. It would appear little change has occurred in this space in regard to plan form. The first floor would appear to be historically altered in the C19th and has a corridor, thus further subdivision here is less harmful and limited to the creation of bathrooms. Any change here must be very carefully justified.

Assessment in the Heritage Statement

Secondly, we are concerned that an adequate level of impact assessment has not been performed for a Grade II* building. The National Planning Policy Framework highlights the need for '*clear and convincing justification*' as well as heritage impact assessments that are '*proportional to the assets' importance*' (2024, paras. 207, 212-215).

As discussed, the Red House Museum retains a historic planform, the phases of which have not been adequately assessed by the application. It would be useful to know what date the historic material in the house is, and how this significance will be affected by the proposals.

While we do not object to the principle of converting the barn and coach house into residential accommodation, we are concerned that they have not been treated as curtilage to the property and therefore lack the detail the alterations would require. We again request a deeper exploration of the impacts these proposals would have on the fabric, setting and relationship between the barn/coach house and main house.

In conclusion, the proposed works are reasonable in principle but are lacking in detailed assessment with the full impacts of the works not completely understood. We request more information, and more detailed justification for the subdivision of planform in the main house. We accept the works in principle but are concerned that the NPPF (2024) has not been adequately fulfilled and the works unjustified.

I would be grateful if you could inform us of your decision in due course.

Yours sincerely

Thomas Ollivier
Northern Conservation Adviser