



Heritage Impact Assessment

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Heritage Impact Statement

In support of a Householder Planning Application

Site Address: Toy Barn, 71a Main Gate, Hepworth, HD9 1TJ

Proposal: Creation of larger window openings on the rear elevation and replacement of existing windows.

Introduction

This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared to accompany a householder planning application for proposed works at Toy Barn, 71a Main Gate, Hepworth. The property is located within the Hepworth Conservation Area. In the absence of a published Conservation Area Appraisal for Hepworth, this statement assesses the significance of the site using the official conservation area map provided by Kirklees Council and evaluates the potential impact of the proposed development on the historic environment, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local planning guidance.

Site Location and Context

- Toy Barn is a residential dwelling situated on Main Gate in Hepworth. The property is constructed of natural stone, which contributes positively to the traditional material palette of the surrounding area.
- The property currently features wood-effect UPVC window frames.
- The site falls within the boundaries of the Hepworth Conservation Area, as detailed on the Kirklees Planning Mapping system.
- The proposed works are confined to the rear elevation of the property. Due to the orientation and local topography, this elevation is not visible from the main road (Main Gate) or from adjacent public vantage points.

Proposed Development

The applicant seeks to enhance the living environment of the dwelling through the following exterior alterations:

- Creating larger window openings on the rear elevation to maximise natural daylight and to take full advantage of the views across the open countryside.
- Replace the existing, wood-effect UPVC frames with high-quality, new windows and doors.
- The new window into the kitchen dining space will be a large picture window in natural oak, the new living room / snug will have a slim frame aluminium sliding door and the office window on the first floor will copy the style of the other existing windows.

Assessment of Heritage Significance

Because Kirklees Council has not published a specific Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Hepworth, the assessment of significance relies on the general character observable from the settlement pattern and the official boundary map.

Hepworth is a traditional rural settlement. Its significance is largely derived from its historic street patterns such as Main Gate and Town Gate and the pervasive use of local natural stone, which provides a cohesive architectural language across the village. Toy Barn contributes to this character primarily through its traditional stone construction. However, its current window arrangement to the rear elevation offers no historic or architectural merit.

Heritage Impact Assessment

The proposed development has been assessed against the requirement to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area as follows:

- The alterations are strictly confined to the rear elevation. Because the works will not be visible from the public highway or adjacent properties, there will be zero negative impact on the principal street scene or the public's appreciation of the Hepworth Conservation Area.
- The removal of the existing small windows and doors with large openings will provide a contemporary solution whilst maximising the natural light into the rooms and views out to the countryside.
- The enlargement of the window openings alters the solid-to-void ratio of the rear elevation. However, because this is a private, rear-facing facade overlooking open countryside, this modern architectural intervention will not harm the historic legibility of the conservation area. It represents a high-quality, sustainable upgrade that ensures the property remains viable and comfortable for modern family living.

Conclusion

The proposed works at Toy Barn represent a carefully considered, design-led approach to improving the property's energy efficiency and residential amenity.

By providing a contemporary solution, focused on the rear elevation this will improve the quality of the natural light within the dwellings and makes best use of the stunning distant views. Furthermore, the positioning of the larger openings on the concealed rear elevation ensures that the historic character, appearance, and significance of the Hepworth Conservation Area are fully preserved.

The proposal aligns with the principles of the NPPF and local Kirklees Council design guidance regarding heritage assets. As the development causes no harm to the designated heritage asset, we respectfully request that the local planning authority view this application favourably.

