

Address:

About the application

Application number: 2020/94203	
What is the application for?:	Outline application for demolition of dwelling and associated outbuildings and t
Address of the site or building:	Clough House, 236, Leeds Road, Birstall, Batley, WF17 0HW
Postcode:	YO26 8EW

User comments

Type of comment: An objection
<p>I object to the demolition of Clough House and the current proposed development as follows:</p> <p>Heritage and Conservation:</p> <p>It is understood that Clough House is shown on the first edition ordnance survey map of 1850, however a British newspaper archive dated 1842 states that Clough House was in fact present some 50 years earlier (than this article was written), which confirms the accuracy of the date stone on the house of 1799 and validates that the house is therefore late 18th century.</p> <p>John Gott esq. (often referred to as Jacky Gott) was likely the first owner of Clough House and had a very significant standing in the community. He is also referred to in the aforementioned article as “ 'Lord of the Manor' and regarded as such by the inhabitants. Possessing a good competency, he bore himself as become a gentleman ”). Furthermore, the article states that he owned most of the Birstall village and had the “ shooting over the Earl of Wilton's estate beyond Batley Hall to Howden Clough, Rod Wood, below Mr Scholey's farm, Still House being the chief cover, where he had his shooting box. ”</p> <p>John Gott died in 1840, was buried at Birstall Parish Church, and a brass plate on a step in the chancel on the north side, has the following inscription “ near this spot lie the remains of John Gott, of Clough House, in this parish who died 29th March 1840 ” (confirmation of his significant standing in the community).</p> <p>Of further significance, reference to Clough House is referred to in a book entitled 'History of Birstall' by Malcolm Clegg which states “ Clough House, stable, barn, mistal, garden, shrubberies, yard, carriage road and lawn in front. Owned and occupied by John Gott, variously described in documents and directories as gentleman or distiller. This man, who died in spring 1840, is perhaps the nearest thing to a squire. He owns much of the nearby land and most of the surrounding cottages and houses, including the White Horse.... ” “ In 1882 James Willans recalled that Howden Clough folk regarding Gott as like the lord of the manor and he bore himself as became a</p>

gentleman. Familiarly known as Jackie Gott, he lived as a country gentleman, having the shooting rights over Lord Wiltons estate beyond Batley Hall to Howden Clough, Still House being the chief cover, where he had his shooting box. His only child, Sarah, married Dewsbury solicitor, Elliott Garrett. Their daughter, Eliza, who became Mrs Jackson, inherited the property and at Christmas, 1882, she entertained all her tenants to dinner at the White Horse, quite a squire-like thing to do.... ” “ In 1916 a Huddersfield alderman who had spent a few years of his childhood in Birstall told a couple of lurid tales about Clough House.... ”

Of relevance, Birstall also has historical connections through the Bronte's and Joseph Priestley (discoverer of oxygen), and has lost many historic houses in the past. Clough House is a prominent local feature of the village, especially in Howden Clough and many local residents (including those who have submitted objections to date) have stated they would like the house to be saved from demolition and restored to its former glory. The barn/coach house at the rear and the walled garden are also features of the house and should be saved.

It has been said that some interior panelling in the house was brought from Howley Hall in Batley (a 16th century Elizabethan country house, the ruins of which are a scheduled monument). However to date any specific records of this have not yet been found (the pandemic has made it difficult to visit and perform research at local archive buildings).

In summary it is believed there is sufficient evidence to warrant that Clough House is of historical importance and to the village of Birstall.

Without prejudice, I therefore personally strongly disagree with a 'Conservation/ Heritage Assessment' report submitted with the planning application to demolish Clough House and build on the land. In particular, where the report supports the demolition of Clough House stating that the house has “ no historical connections, of great interest, ”

The aforementioned, together with the building's architectural quality, local connections to the Gotts and contribution to local Sense of Place and distinctiveness, reinforces the importance that this building should not be destroyed. If Heritage England do not make Clough House a Listed building, then at the very least, I believe Kirklees should make this building a designated asset. Links to the aforementioned newspaper article can be provided on request.

Without prejudice, one cannot help but wonder whether the interior of the house has already been stripped out in order to decrease the likelihood of the house being made Listed (or made a Designated Asset by Kirklees), thus allowing the fruition of plans to demolish the house and attain a greater profit from this current planning application to build 30 houses.

Infrastructure:

Of great concern (to myself and many local residents) is the effects x30 new houses would have on the local infrastructure, ie traffic, site access points, schools, doctors, dentists etc. There has already been significant development nearby recently - not

dentists, etc. There has already been significant development nearby recently - not least White Horse Gardens and more recently on Moat Hill Farm Drive - leading to an increased burden.

To mitigate this, I wish to highlight/suggest that, should Clough House be saved, application for fewer houses on the site would likely be requested thus having a lesser effect on the local infrastructure?

Affordable housing:

I have noticed a significant increase in house prices in the local area and the difficulty for first time buyers to get on the housing ladder. Could the affordability be considered should this scheme go ahead?