

King James School, Almondbury:

2021/93535: Discharge of condition 9 (materials) of previous permission

is disappointed and concerned that Kirklees' own developer DPP Planning is looking to discharge a planning condition on King James School requiring 'natural stone facing' by the use of reconstituted stone.

Not only does the proposed building lie within the curtilage of the Grade 2 listed school but it sits within Almondbury Conservation Area, one of the most historic and architecturally significant conservation areas within West Yorkshire.

Kirklees Council's has a clear policy, regarding the use of natural coursed York stone in such areas. Indeed, the Council's own Conservation Area assessments state:

'An area, with conservation area status, imposes a duty on Kirklees Council to preserve and enhance the quality and character of a conservation area.'

It is a known fact that a facing of artificial stone, over a period of time, does not retain the quality nor patina of natural stone, the latter having a distinctive quality and a proud pedigree of being quarried locally.

If Kirklees were to accept the requested variation, this would:

- Circumvent its own planning condition (determined after due consideration, as a requirement of approval)
- Set an unwelcome and worrying precedent for other developers to follow
- Effectively establishing a policy which would lead to a 'race to the bottom' on the quality of construction in conservation areas.

Kirklees Council has a duty to set high standards, particularly in regard to its own developments, which support adherence to the use of quality, design and materials in a conservation area.

In conclusion, the application should be refused and the original condition reaffirmed.