

# Comments for Planning Application 18/02242/LBC

## Application Summary

Application Number: 18/02242/LBC

Address: Lord Deramores Primary School School Lane Heslington York YO10 5EE

Proposal: Conversion of former primary school into 2no. residential dwellings with associated alterations.

Case Officer: Neil Massey

## Customer Details

Name: Dr David Fraser

Address: Fairfax House, 27 Castlegate, York YO1 9RN

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Consultee response

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: York Civic Trust considered this application at its Planning Committee meeting on 8 November 2018.

Lord Deramore's Primary School is a Gothic-style building dating to 1856. The original scheme included (from left to right): a large schoolroom; a lobby; a small square classroom; then the 'Master's House' in the remaining right-hand side of the building, starting from and including the room with the bay window. A subsequent rear classroom extension by renowned York architect Walter Brierley was added in c.1905-8, further enhancing the historic and aesthetic significance of the site. The school stands as a good example of local philanthropy in advance of compulsory primary education that came about with the 1870 Education Act. Lord Deramore's Primary School has consequently been nationally recognised as a Grade II Listed Building.

York Civic Trust does not object in principle to the conversion of the former Lord Deramore's School buildings into 2no. residential dwellings. The Trust recognises that a successful residential conversion scheme would help sustain the significance of the heritage asset and put it to viable use consistent with its conservation (NPPF para.192a). The Trust does however object to this application in its current form due to three reasons:

1. Potential use of inappropriate materials
2. A lack of detail for materials to be used and treatment of the conversion
3. Loss of historic fabric.

## 1. Inappropriate materials:

The remaining Lord Deramore's Primary School building retains many of external historic architectural features, despite having been used and expanded as a primary school during the C20. However, some aspects of the building have been lessened during the C20 through the replacement of stone casement windows and timber doors (dating from the original 1856 and Brierley 1908 extension phases) with inappropriate and unattractive uPVC windows and doors.

The Trust considers the proposed replacement of these uPVC windows with what appear to be new uPVC windows is a missed opportunity; more attractive and befitting stone casement windows might well be reinstated.

Consultation of Walter Brierley's architectural drawings of the school in 1905 and 1908, as part of the Atkinson-Brierley architectural records at the Borthwick Institute for Archives, show the original form and treatment of such windows and doors. This is especially helpful for the proposed pair of replacement windows of the upper storey windows in the rear gable. The Brierley plans show an attractive, wide, four-by-two-light stone casement window with stone surround and lintel under a raised segmented brick arch. Such an attractive window is considerably more attractive and appropriate than the two rectangular uPVC windows proposed for the gable in this application. The Trust would welcome the opportunity to help refer the applicant to Brierley's historic plans.

[Incidentally, the Brierley drawings also show there to have originally been a trefoil stone detail on the rear gable. The proposed removal of the C20 boiler's chimney might reveal this to still be in situ, or at the very least present the opportunity to reinstate such an attractive detail; we would welcome either.]

However, the proposals go further than like-for-like replacements using modern windows. New window openings are to be created for what appear to be uPVC window frames. This includes: a new window opening in the south-east side elevation, a small new window aligned to a brick buttress in the upper floor on the north-west side elevation, and a ground floor window to the rear of the Brierley extension. These new openings contradict the claim in the Design & Access Statement that 'No new openings are deemed necessary' (p.4).

## 2. Lack of details for materials to be used and the treatment of the conversion:

The proposed application suffers from a lack of clarity over the materials to be used and treatment of the conversion. What form and materials will be used for new windows and doors is a leading example of such lack of clarity. In addition, there is concern over the viability of the 'roof conversion' above the Brierley classroom. Brierley's section plan for his classroom extension shows the use of timber king post and struts. However, this application's proposed section drawing

for this space omits these timber supports. Are they to be removed, and alternative structural engineering methods used to support the roof, and if so, in what way?

### 3. Loss of historic fabric and features:

The insertion of a staircase in the rear Brierley classroom will require the loss of what was an original 1856 external window (used as an internal window following the 1908 Brierley extension).

The conversion of the old Master's House section of the building into a residential unit shows the removal of an original chimneybreast in the room with the bay window. Will this also require the loss of historic fabric, such as hearth and mantelpiece?

Ultimately, the application suffers from a lack of detailing for remaining internal historic features, including a lack of visual images. It is not suffice to simply state: 'Once current building works have been completed and approved and protection measures put in place. [sic] Then a full assessment of the empty building can be undertaken and opportunity to correct historic mistakes appreciated' (Heritage Statement 2.4). The NPPF states 'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary' (para.189). The Trust considers this application fails to draw on appropriate expertise for the conservation of a listed building. Consequently, it is impossible to adequately identify and assess the particular significance that may be affected by the proposal (NPPF para.190).

In conclusion, York Civic Trust does not object in principle to the conversion of this former school building into residential dwellings. The Trust does however object to this application in its current form due to the use of inappropriate materials, a lack of detail of the treatment of parts of the proposal, and potential loss of historic fabric. Ultimately, further information by conservation professionals, including an analysis of retained historic fabric and features (ideally with images), is required before a considered assessment of this application's impact on the significance of this important historic and aesthetic building can be made.