

A-Frame Building, Stonyhurst College

Heritage Statement

Change of use from a residential dwelling to 5 no. self-contained units for use by Gap Year students

On behalf of **Stonyhurst College**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cassidy + Ashton has been instructed to prepare a Heritage Statement in support of a full planning application for the change of use of the A-Frame Building at Stonyhurst College from C3 residential dwelling to 5 no. self-contained residential units for use by Gap Year students to the college. The application proposes only minor building works and therefore this statement predominantly concerns an overview of the historic context of the property and wider site.
- 1.2 In order to satisfy the requirements of planning policy, the application is accompanied by:
- Application form and certificates
 - Full plans and elevations
 - Heritage Statement
- 1.3 This statement is required due to the A-Frame Building being located on the boundary of a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden. The wider Stonyhurst site also contains a number of Grade I, II and II* listed buildings, although the application building itself is not listed.
- 1.4 Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting. This heritage assessment has been prepared to evaluate the significance of the Registered Park and Garden and the potential impact of the proposal upon this significance.
- 1.5 The following approach was undertaken to produce the heritage assessment:
- Desktop study of existing literature including detailed listing prepared by Historic England and associated documents;
 - Site visit to review the context in respect of the existing condition of the building;
 - Assessment of the results of the first two stages to establish the significance of the site, its heritage assets; and
 - Assessment of the impact of the proposed development upon the identified assets.

Planning History

- 2.6 Whilst numerous planning and listed building consent applications have been submitted and approved in respect of the school, no specific history was found for the A-Frame Building.

Registered Park and Garden

- 2.7 The gardens and parkland have late 17th century origins, including a well preserved formal garden which dates from c.1700 and an avenue and water features of a similar date.
- 2.8 The c. 75ha site is situated on land which slopes gently southwards.
- 2.9 No reference is made within the listing to the A-Frame building, which is located directly adjacent to the north-eastern boundary of the Park and Garden.
- 2.10 The area in which the application building is sited is primarily made up of woodland which separates Stonyhurst College from St Mary's Hall.

3.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application simply seeks consent for the change of use of this standalone dwelling (C3) to 5 no. self-contained units for Gap Year students to use in association with the College.
- 3.2 Currently the building is vacant and it is considered that the proposed change of use will allow it to be continually utilised by the College. Conversion of the building will allow Gap Year students to have their own independent accommodation on site
- 3.3 Due to its proposed use, ancillary to the overall educational use of the site, it is considered that the change of use of this building is entirely appropriate.
- 3.4 To enable the conversion of the building, a number of internal works will be undertaken to divide up the existing rooms. Partition walls will be introduced to provide 5 no. self-contained units with lounge / bedroom / kitchen areas and separate bathrooms.
- 3.5 Externally, 2 no. new rooflights will be introduced to the rear elevation. An additional door will be introduced to one of the side elevations at ground level to provide independent access to one of the bedsits. This will result in each of the three bedsits on the ground floor having direct external access.

4.0 HERITAGE STATUS

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England.

4.2 The NPPF introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development [para. 14], whereby proposed developments which correctly balance the requirements of economic, social and environmental issues should be granted planning permission unless there are strong reasons that permission should not be granted.

4.3 With regards to heritage issues the following extracts are of particular relevance:

17: [Core planning principles] conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life for future generations.

131: In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable use consistent with their conservation;*
- *The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

132: When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.

134: Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

137: Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the

setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

- 4.4 The Ribble Valley Core Strategy was adopted in December 2014 and therefore takes into account the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework. It can be regarded as containing relevant and up to date policies in the consideration of this planning application. The key policies can be summarised as:

Policy DS1 seeks to concentrate the majority, but not all, of development in the larger settlements.

Policy DS2 introduces the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Policy EN5 which sets out a presumption in favour of the conservation of and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings. One way in which the Council notes that this can be achieved is through recognising that the best way of ensuring the long-term protection of heritage assets is through viable use that optimises opportunities for sustaining and enhancing its significance.

Policy DME4 states that proposals which cause harm to or loss of significance to registered parks, gardens or landscapes of special historic interest or other gardens of significant local heritage interest, including their setting, will not be supported.

Policy DMG1 sets out the general considerations for determining planning applications including assessing design, access considerations, impacts upon amenity and the environment.

- 4.5 The application sits comfortably within this local and national policy context. As an existing property, it must be dealt with as it stands. Its conversion, to a use in keeping with the wider School site, is considered acceptable in principle. As there are only minor external works proposed, it is set out that the development would not have a detrimental impact upon the significance of the Registered Park and Garden or any of the Listed Buildings on site.

5.0 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

5.1 Para. 129 of the NPPF requires applicants to identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets or their setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

5.2 The significance of a heritage asset may comprise a number of factors, which are similar to the criteria for listing, including, but not restricted to:

- Age and rarity: most buildings built before 1700 which survive in anything like their original condition are listed, as are most built between 1700 and 1840
- Architectural interest: through architectural design, decoration and craftsmanship and also important examples of particular building types and techniques
- Historic interest: encompassing buildings which illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural or military history, or close historical association with nationally-important people or events
- Group value: especially where buildings are part of an important architectural or historic group or are a fine example of planning (such as squares, terraces and model villages)

5.3 Taking such factors into account, the relative significance of the elements of the site can be assessed, using the following scale:

- High significance – buildings/features which make an important contribution to the architectural and historic interest and character of the site, through age, rarity, architectural merit or historical association or group value, and whose preservation and enhancement is considered essential
- Medium significance – those making a lesser contribution, but which nevertheless are also considered worthy of preservation or enhancement
- Low significance – those making only a limited contribution to the site overall, although not necessarily detracting from it.

5.4 Stonyhurst College Estate and its surrounds are assets of high significance with national importance. The wider site is covered by a Grade II* Registered Parks and Garden designation. A number of structures across the site are also listed.

- 5.5 The A-Frame Building itself is considered to be of low significance as it is an existing structure, located outside of the Park and Garden boundary. The building is considered to have been constructed c. 1980s and as such is a later addition to the school site which is of no historic or architectural value.
- 5.6 The interior of the A-Frame Building is also considered to be of low significance. The building is not, in itself, listed and it has been used most recently as a self-contained dwelling.

6.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The principle aim of the proposed development is to convert the A-Frame building from a dwelling to 5 no. self-contained residential units for use by Gap Year students in association with the College.
- 6.2 Only minor works are proposed to facilitate this change of use. Additional partition walls will be introduced to the internal layout of the building to split the floors into the necessary self-contained units. The introduction of 2 no. rooflights and a door is proposed externally to accommodate the conversion.
- 6.3 The property has most recently been in use as a stand-alone dwelling although it is now vacant and is located directly outside of the Registered Park and Garden.
- 6.4 It is considered that the proposed development will have no material impact upon the Estate other than converting an existing, non-listed building to an appropriate use. The proposed use will be in keeping with the rest of the site. It is considered that as only minor works are proposed these would not have an impact upon the setting and character of the Registered Park and Garden nor any of the Listed Buildings.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The application proposes the conversion of the building from one stand-alone dwelling to 5 no. units for use by Gap Year students in association with the wider College site.
- 7.2 The proposed use accords with planning policy and will ensure the long-term appropriate use of this building.
- 7.3 It is therefore considered that there are no reasons why planning permission cannot be granted.

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