

Henry Pankhurst,
Harrogate Civic Society,
38, St. Clements Road,
Harrogate,
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10th July 2018

Planning & Development,
For the attention of Naomi Waddington,
Harrogate Borough Council,
P.O. Box 787,
Harrogate.

Dear Madam,

Planning application 18/02364/FUL 6.79.5881.B.FUL
4, Belford road, Harrogate

Thank you for your consultation on the above application for demolition of the building and erection of a block of 4 apartments.

We responded to application 17/04509/FUL in our letter of 15th December 2017. This was a very similar application, which was withdrawn. The conservation officer also responded to this application saying that the existing building has historic and architectural value and as such contributes positively to the conservation area. She considered that the new building constituted over-development of the site for several reasons.

Our opinion was the same. The current application is only slightly different. The existing building which has considerable historic interest would still be totally demolished and replaced by an over intensive replacement – obviously with no history. Our response must therefore be much as for the withdrawn application.

The existing building was the first cottage hospital in Harrogate, later becoming the Masonic Hall and the home of the Home Guard. The building also has value as part of the conservation area because of its proximity to the handsome and historic buildings of St. Peter's school and Rogers' Almshouses. The Rogers Almshouses are Listed Grade II. St. Peters School and Albert House Nos 1-4 Belford Place are designated buildings of local interest and merit in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal. The effect on the setting of the Listed Building, Rogers Almshouse, must be considered. The grouping of the

buildings mentioned here, along with No.4. Belford Road, should be taken into account when considering the conservation area and its preservation.

The building may well be considered to be in a poor state of repair but is it so bad as to be a reason to demolish? Even if there are some unstable elements, we suggest that this should not condemn the building, and possible solutions to ensure retention should be looked at. It would be far preferable to restore and re-use the building so that it could make an even more positive contribution to the conservation area. We would hope that the owner would keep the building safe and at least maintained to a degree that did not allow it to deteriorate and cause even more expense later, if it is to be kept.

The proposed block of 4 flats would not make a positive contribution to the conservation area. We do however acknowledge that, although the proposal remains much as before in principle, some of the design detail has been improved. The set-back of the top floor a little would help relieve the perceived bulk of the building. The design of the fenestration is much improved. These changes are not sufficient to make the scheme acceptable. The car parking on the corner looks hazardous. The basic bulk of the building remains much the same.

The existing building should be renovated and converted. Due to its location in the conservation area and being within the setting of the Listed Rogers Almshouses and its locally important history, demolition is unacceptable. The proposed new building would be a negative feature in the conservation area. The application should be refused.

Thank you again for your attention.

Yours faithfully,

Henry Pankhurst
Chairman
Harrogate Civic Society