

71319 – St John Shuttleworth, Whalley Road, Ramsbottom.

Retention of installed flue on North elevation.

The application site is not within a conservation area but is considered to be a Non Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA). The former church meets the assessment criteria for heritage assets with local significance with regard to age and condition and historic and architectural interest.

The church in part dates from the early 19th century when it was converted into a church in the early English style constructed from local stone with a slate roof. It is because of its local communal associations and its architectural aesthetic of the early English style the church possesses local heritage significance.

The church has already undergone significant external alterations to convert it to a residential use. The alterations to the roof and window openings do cause a loss of architectural aesthetic but this was deemed acceptable in bringing a vacant deteriorating heritage asset back into a viable sustainable use.

The proposal is for the retention of a stainless steel flue approximately 150mm in diameter installed externally to the north gable end of the church.

Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The retention of the flue will directly affect the NDHA. It would represent a contemporising and utilitarian feature on a 19th century stone church already significantly altered representing an incongruous feature on the building. It would cause harm to the architectural aesthetic of the building leading to a loss significance. As such the retention of the flue and its cumulative impact would diminish the local heritage value of the church.

The flue should be routed internally to exit through the external roof slope at the rear of the building to minimise its visual impact. It is understood the flue serves a solid fuel fire and as such this fire could in theory could be located anywhere within the internal footprint of the building. The flue could exit roof at the same location as the removed chimney stack in the area of the former vestry which would not interfere with the mezzanine level.

As currently installed the flue would cause a loss of significance for the reasons given and on balance would not be acceptable within the terms of paragraph 216 of the NPPF. The retention of the flue would not meet the aims of Policy JP – P1 and JP – P2 of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Joint Plan or comply with adopted policy EN1/2 – Townscape and Built Design.