

FORMER ENGINEERING WORKS AT NEW STREET

SHAWCLOUGH, METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF ROCHDALE



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

GARRY MILLER
Heritage Consultancy

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MARCH 2025

GARRY MILLER

Heritage Consultancy

Crosby House, 412 Prescott Road, Eccleston Hill, St Helens, Lancashire WA10 3BT

Telephone: 01744 739675

garrymillerhbc@gmail.com

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GARRY MILLER HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is a heritage consultant, architectural historian and published author who has spent more than 40 years studying and working with buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as ‘scholarship as its best’ by *Country Life* (June 2003), and ‘well analysed and presented’ in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); and was widely cited in the 2006 *Buildings of England* volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings, in particular the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment. His area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and reports on more than 150 buildings or sites are produced annually.

THIS REPORT

Date of issue: March 2025

Purpose: for planning submission

Text: Garry Miller

Site survey: Peter Miller

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1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed redevelopment at former industrial premises at New Street, Shawclough, in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The property is a disused industrial building latterly used as an engineering works. It is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

An application has been submitted to Rochdale MBC for alterations to fenestration at the application building, including new window openings. The heritage consideration arising is its potential impact upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the application building. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify this significance and how the proposal affects it.

The application property is significant in the local context only as the shell of a former industrial building of probably late 19th/early 20th century date, but which may incorporate some walling remaining from the Shawclough Iron Foundry that occupied the site in the early 19th century. This significance is essentially embodied in the external appearance of the building, in particular its public elevations to New Street and Sweet Briar Lane. The rear elevation, not publicly visible, has been altered and is of lower importance. In addition to its intrinsic interest, the building also has group value with at adjoining weavers' cottages to the west as the built legacy of the industrial community that existed at Shawclough is the 19th century.

The proposal involves reinstatement of openings that were blocked with the addition of mid-20th century steel-framed extensions to the rear of the building. A small number of additional windows also are proposed in locations which would benefit from natural light, such as an existing mezzanine floor and an area proposed for a new mezzanine installation, along with of rooflights to the front and rear. The new openings will match the proportions and materials of those already existing.

The proposal will ensure the long-term sustainability of the building and the reinstatement of the original windows will enhance its appearance. The proposed new openings are in accordance with its character and appearance, which will be preserved. The property's local architectural and historic interest as a former industrial building will accordingly be sustained. The proposal is thereby entirely compliant with national guidance and local policy, and therefore merits favourable consideration.

2: THE SITE

The application site is located in the Shawclough residential district in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. It is situated on the north side of New Street, at its junction with Sweet Briar Lane, and is a disused industrial building, latterly used as an engineering works.



Map 1. Location of the application building



1. The application property



2. Wider view of the building from the New Street/Sweet Briar Lane junction

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Proposed development

An application has been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for alterations to fenestration at the application building, including new window openings.

3.2 Designation

The property is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset by Rochdale MBC.

3.3 Heritage impact

The heritage consideration arising from the proposal is its potential impact upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the application building.

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 207 of Chapter 16 (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*) the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised, December 2024) states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the particular significance of the heritage asset. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to identify the significance of the application building, and to assess how this will be affected by the proposal.

In accordance with paragraph 207, the level of detail is considered proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset, and no more than necessary to understand the impact of the proposal.

The report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation submitted in support of the application, and supersedes any previously-submitted heritage assessment.

3.5 Report structure

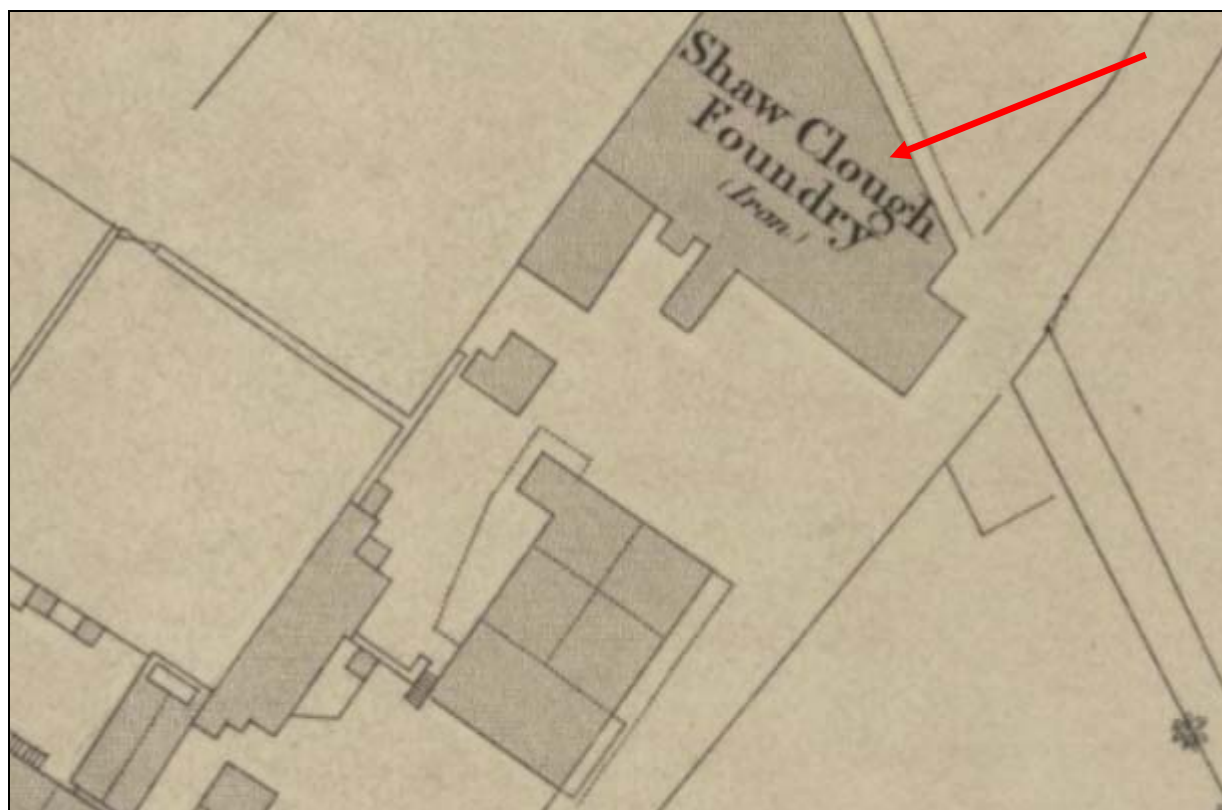
This is as follows:

1. A description of the application building that is proportionate to the nature of the application (Section 4)
2. A summary of its heritage significance (Section 5)
3. A summary of the planning policy context in which the application will be determined (Section 6)
4. Evaluation within this context of the proposal's impact upon the significance of the application building (Section 7).

4: THE APPLICATION PROPERTY

4.1 Historical summary

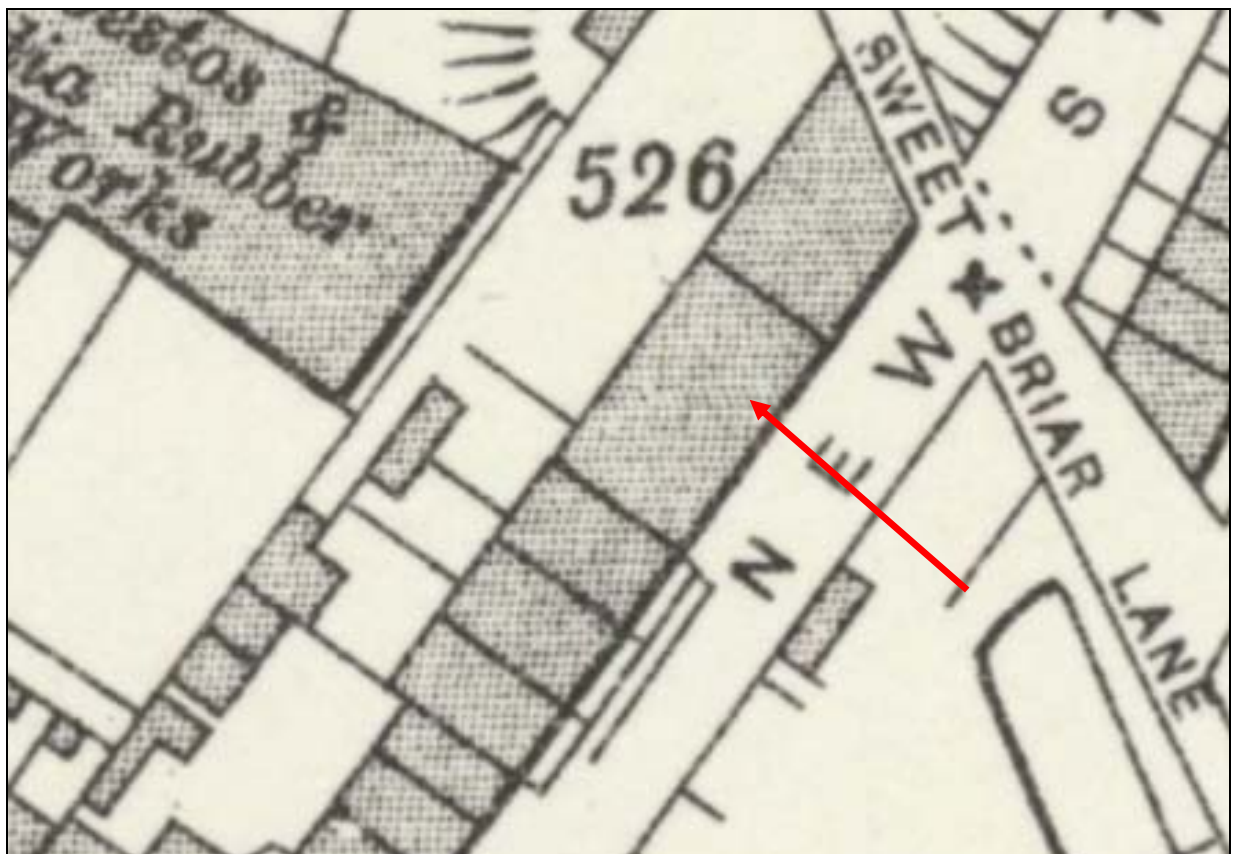
The date of the property is unclear, but is probably late 19th or early 20th century, replacing an earlier building shown on the town plan of 1848 (Map 2, below). This earlier building is identified as the Shawclough Iron Foundry and occupied the northeastern end of the site by Sweet Briar Lane. By 1890 (Map 3), it had been extended to the southeast to join a row of weavers cottages, but the foundry was by this time disused. By 1908 (Map 4) the former foundry appears to have been rebuilt or truncated, now appearing as a subdivided range of rectangular footprint. The first of the adjoining cottages was probably incorporated into the building at this time or soon after. The premises most recently functioned as an engineering works.



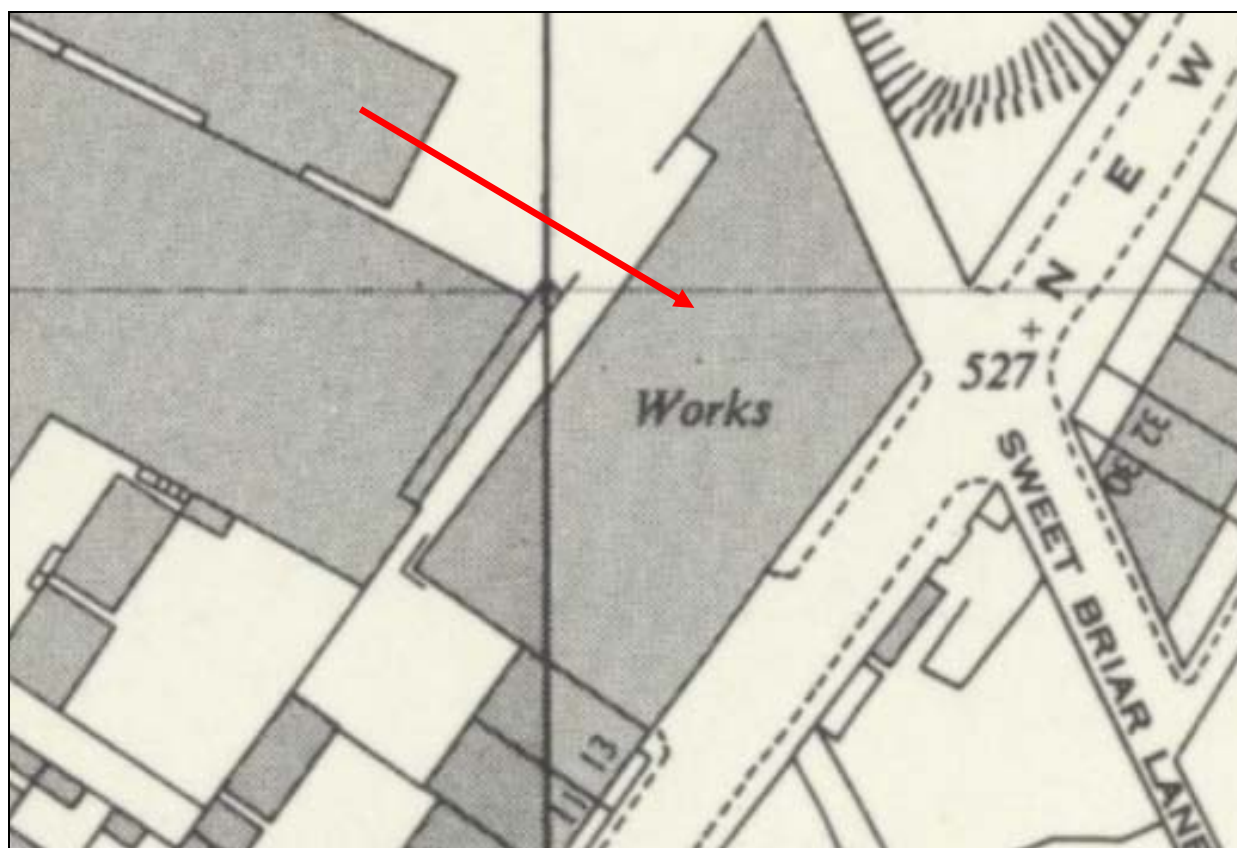
Map 2. The foundry depicted by the 1848 town plan



Map 3. The 1890 25-inch OS map shows the foundry had been extended but was now disused



Map 4. The edition of 1908 suggests the building had been rebuilt or truncated



Map 5. The building is referred to simply as works on the OS 1:250 edition of 1958-1959, where extensions at the rear are now shown

4.2 Description

The property is a plain, functional industrial building whose date is probably late 19th or early 20th century as suggested by the map sequence. It consists principally of a two storey main range of five bays, with a lower single-storey element of two bays to its right. The altered former cottage to its left, latterly part of the works, received consent for conversion back to a dwelling in November 2024 (reference24/00398/FUL). The front elevation contains a doorway, left of which is a blocked former loading bay entrance; all windows are modern replacements. The single-storey element has evidence of a further blocked loading door, replaced by a window. The north elevation is blind, its masonry possibly incorporating fabric of the original foundry that occupied this part of the site. Behind the northern part of the wall is a derelict early/mid-20th century shed. The rear elevation was latterly obscured by steel-framed additions probably of the mid-20th century, and has had original openings on the ground floor blocked. The building is essentially a shell, with the interior altered and a mezzanine floor added.



3. Front elevation: blocked loading bay door to left of entrance



4. Evidence of another blocked loading door on right of the single-storey element



5. The elevation to Sweet Briar Lane is blind



6. Derelict shed behind the Sweet Briar Lane elevation

5: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE APPLICATION PROPERTY

5.1 Rationale

Paragraph 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Significance is defined in the NPPF Glossary as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

5.2 Summary

The application property is significant in the local context only as the shell of a former industrial building of probably late 19th/early 20th century date, but which may incorporate some walling remaining from the Shawclough Iron Foundry that occupied the site in the early 19th century. This significance is essentially embodied in the external appearance of the building, in particular its public elevations to New Street and Sweet Briar Lane. The rear elevation, not publicly visible, has been altered and is of lower importance. In addition to its intrinsic interest, the building also has group value with at adjoining weavers' cottages to the west as the built legacy of the industrial community that existed at Shawclough is the 19th century.

6: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides the guidance on how applications affecting the historic environment are to be determined. Paragraph 210 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses 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*

Regarding non-designated heritage assets, paragraph 216 applies:

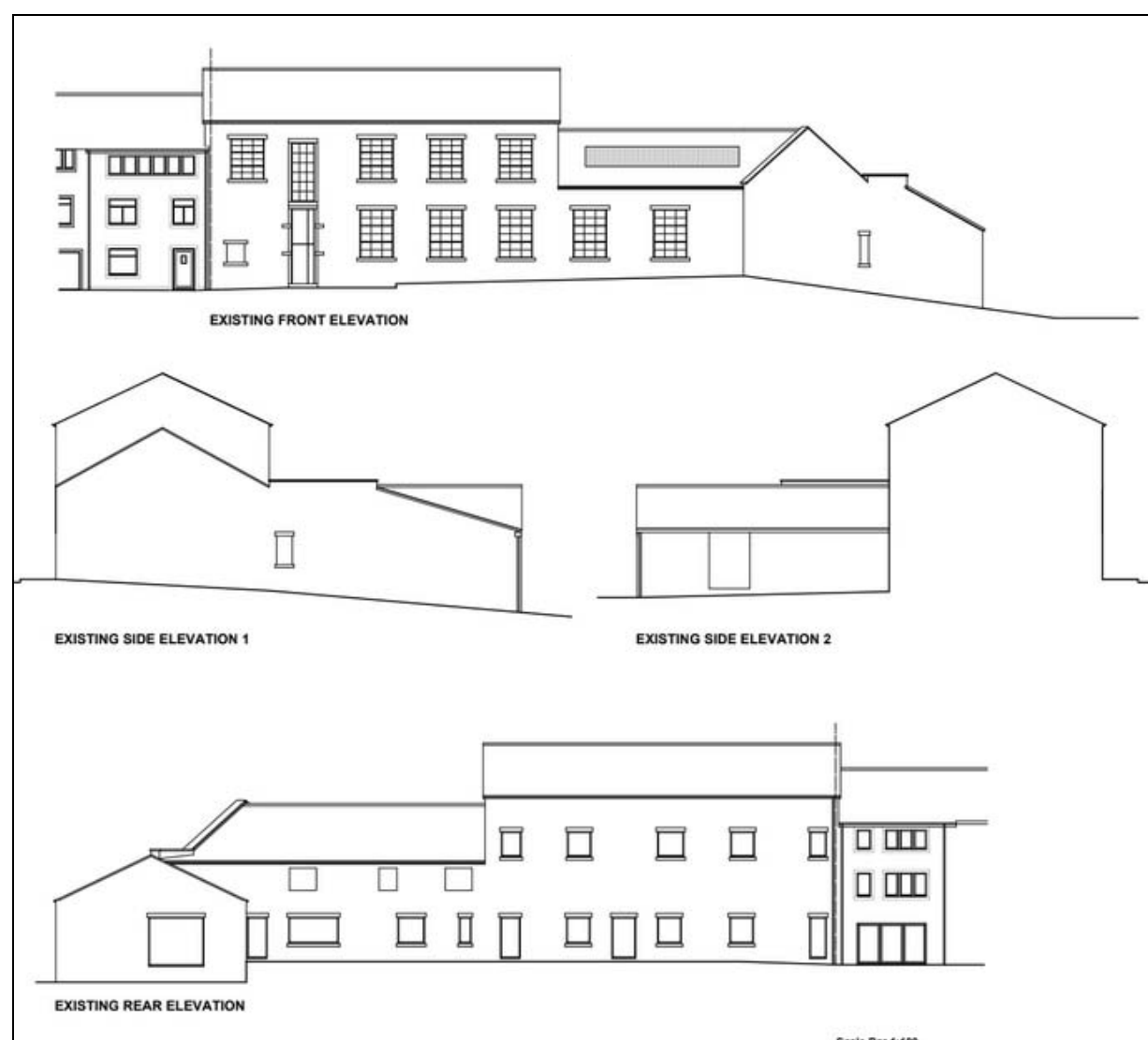
The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Locally, Policy P2a (Protecting and Enhancing Character, Landscape and Heritage) of the Rochdale Core Strategy, formally adopted on October 19, 2016, states that key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, will be conserved, enhanced and promoted, including consideration of their wider settings.

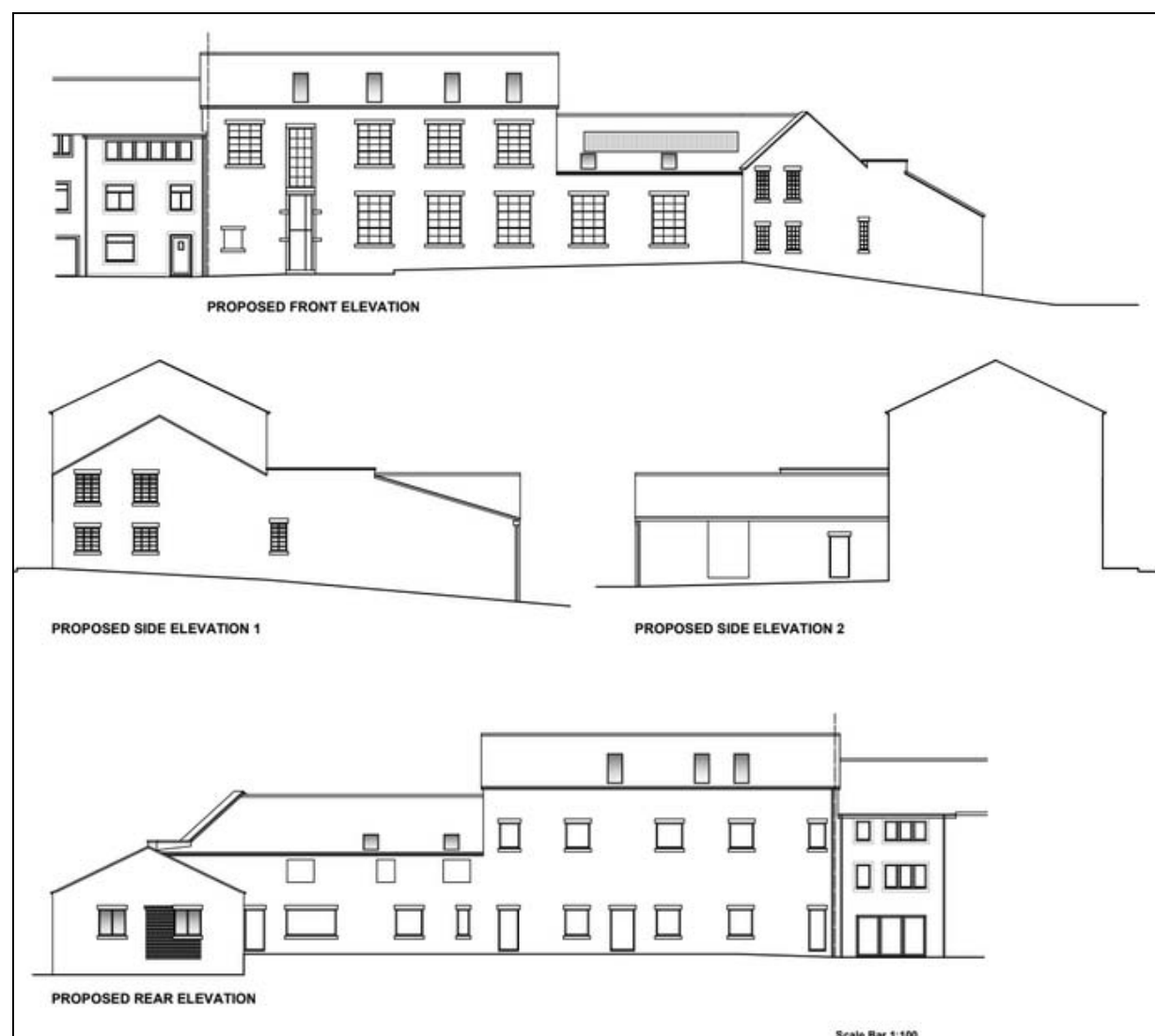
7: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

7.1 Summary of the scheme

The proposal primarily involves reinstatement of the openings that were blocked with the addition of the steel-framed extensions to the rear of the building, as shown on the submitted drawings. A small number of additional windows are also proposed in locations which would benefit from natural light, such as the existing mezzanine floor and an area proposed for a new mezzanine installation, along with rooflights to the front and rear. The new openings will match the proportions and materials of those already existing.



9. Elevations as existing



10. Elevations as proposed

7.2 Concluding statement

The proposal will ensure the long-term sustainability of the building and the reinstatement of the original windows will enhance its appearance. The proposed new openings are in accordance with its character and appearance, which will be preserved. The property's local architectural and historic interest as a former industrial building will accordingly be sustained. The proposal is thereby entirely compliant with national guidance and local policy and therefore merits favourable consideration.