

PROPOSED CONVERSION AT 104A-104B DURHAM STREET

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF ROCHDALE



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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JANUARY 2025

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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: January 2025

Purpose: for planning submission

Text: Garry Miller

Site survey: Peter Miller

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1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed works at numbers 104A-104B Durham Street, Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The building is a former Primitive Methodist Chapel and Sunday School, now used as commercial premises. It is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

An application has been submitted to Rochdale MBC for conversion of the property to apartments. The heritage consideration arising is the 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 Primitive Methodist movement emerged in the early 19th century and was founded upon a simpler form of worship than that of Wesleyan Methodists. The Durham Street property was built to replace earlier premises in Crawford Street. Its foundation stone was laid on April 16, 1875 and the building opened in November that year at a cost of £1,588. The original intention was to build a separate chapel, but the cost was prohibitive and the first floor was converted instead.

The significance of the property derives from its architectural and historic interest in the local context (i.e. to Rochdale) as an example of a combined Primitive Methodist Chapel and Sunday School, built in a typically plain manner in 1875 with early 20th century extensions. This significance primarily resides in the external envelope of the building, given extensive interior alteration carried out during its later conversion to commercial premises. The interest of the building is enhanced by its setting within a 19th century streetscene of mills and terraced housing, which is the legacy of the working community that it was built to serve.

The proposal will deliver a sustainable, active use for the application building and thereby secure its future. The exterior will undergo comparatively little alteration and will receive significant improvements in the form of new lime-based render and new windows of small-pane type, which are more in keeping than the present glazing pattern. Changes are principally the addition of dormers and rooflights to light the apartments to be created on an existing first floor mezzanine, which, considered in the wider picture, represent a modest alteration that will not detrimentally affect the appearance and character of the building. The interior will inevitably undergo greater change to secure the conversion but, as documented in this report, it has already experienced significant alteration during the change to commercial use, with the result that few historical features now remain. The impact of these internal alterations is therefore considerably limited.

As the application building is a non-designated heritage asset, national planning guidance requires simply a balanced planning judgement on the proposal, as opposed to those affecting designated assets, in which there is a requirement to at least preserve their significance. In making this balanced judgment, the present proposal should be considered favourable as it puts the property to sustainable use, secures its future and delivers notable external enhancements. These considerations should in

the final planning balance be viewed as outweighing the changes which the building will experience, changes which are primarily internal and therefore restricted in their effect.

The application thus merits positive determination without delay.

2: THE SITE

The application property is located amid an urban area around one mile southeast of Rochdale town centre, Greater Manchester. The building is a former Primitive Methodist Chapel and Sunday School, now used as commercial premises. It stands prominently on Durham Street at its junction with Hereford Street, amid a streetscene dominated by former mills and terraced housing that is the legacy of Rochdale's textile heyday and the working community that the building was built to serve.



Map 1. Location of the application building



1. The application property



2: The building viewed from the west, beyond terraced properties on Durham Street

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Proposed development

An application has been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for conversion of the application property to apartments.

3.2 Designation

The property is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

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 affected. 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.

This report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation submitted in support of the application.

3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

1. A concise, proportionate description of the application building (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

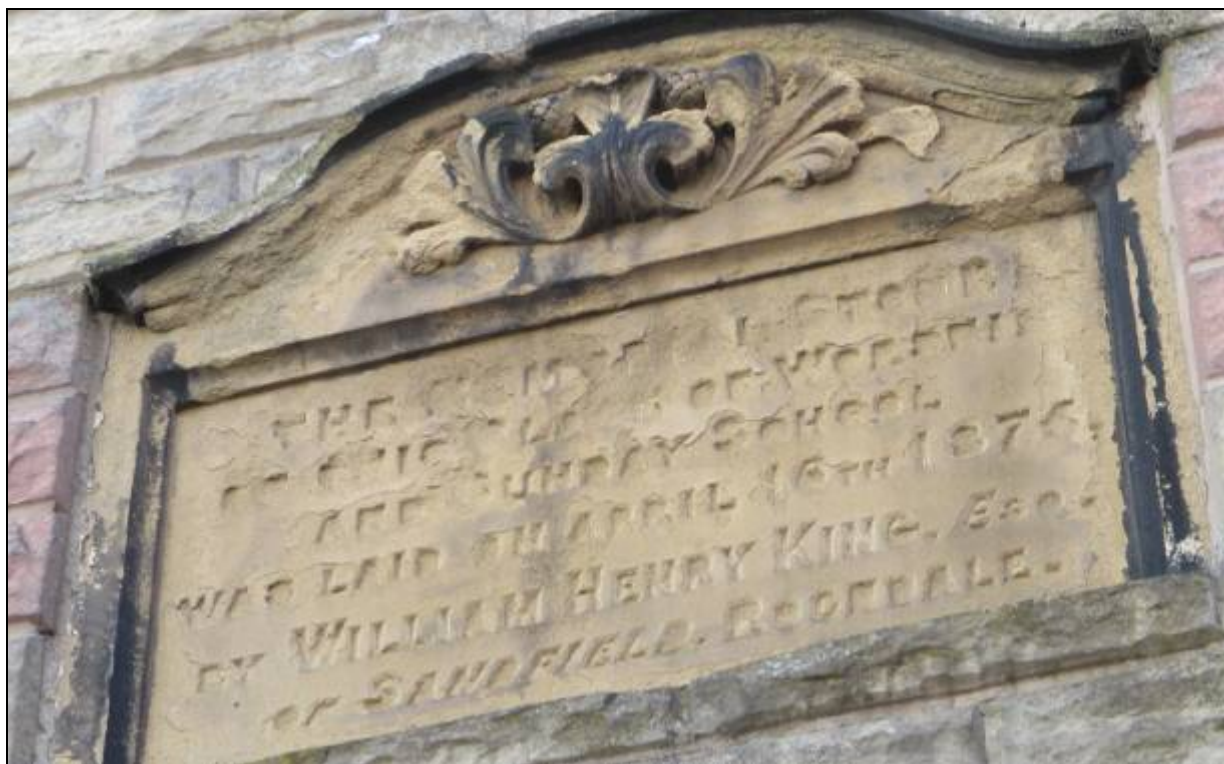
4.1 Overview

Altered former Primitive Methodist Chapel and Sunday School of 1875.

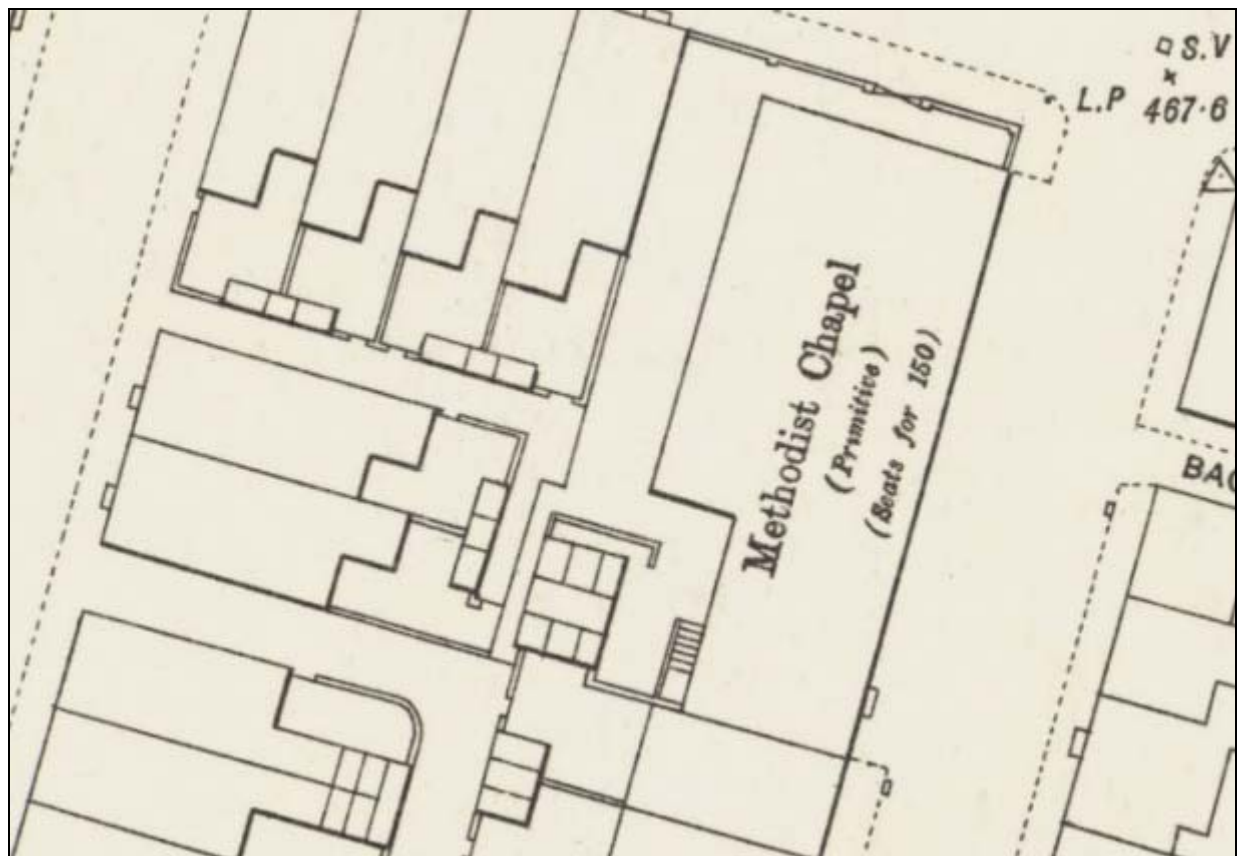
4.2 Historical summary

The Primitive Methodist movement emerged in the early 19th century and was built upon a simpler form of worship than that of Wesleyan Methodists. The Durham Street property was built as a combined Chapel and Sunday School, replacing an earlier property in Crawford Street (1). The foundation stone was laid on April 16, 1875 by William Henry King, from a local cotton manufacturing family, and the building opened in November that year at a cost of £1,588. It housed a school on the ground floor and a chapel on the first floor. The original intention was to build a separate chapel, but the cost was prohibitive and the first floor was converted instead. The 1890 town plan (Map 2, following page) states the building had seats for 150, but a 1940 survey records 350 seats, with the building containing one hall and 15 other room. It was still used as a chapel in the late 1950s (Map 3).

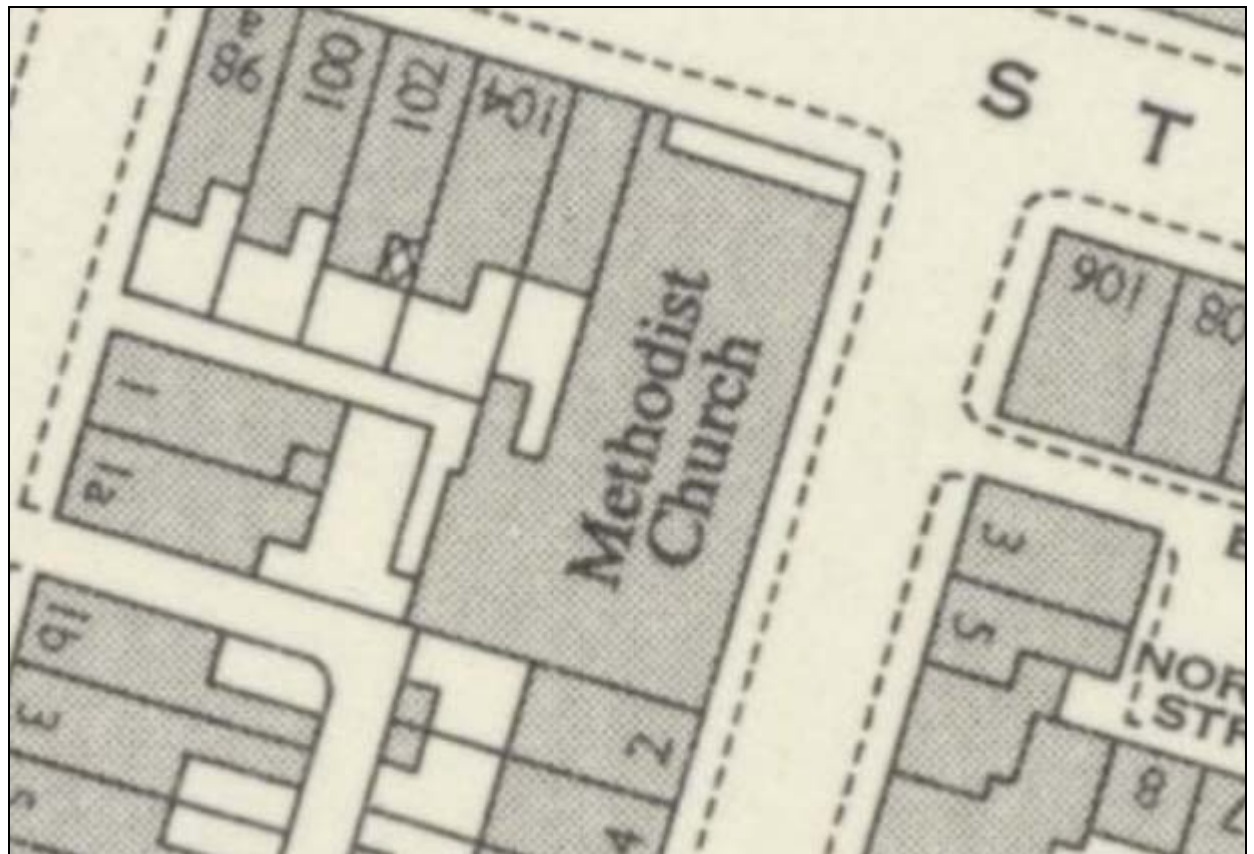
- (1) Summary taken from <https://www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk/content/chapels/lancashire/m-r/rochdale-durham-street-primitive-methodist-chapel>



3. Foundation stone over entrance, dated April 16, 1875



Map 2. The building as depicted by the 50-inch town plan of 1890



Map 3. The OS edition of 1957 records it was still used as a chapel

4.3 *Present appearance*

- a. Exterior.** As is typical of Primitive Methodist chapels, the building has a plain, appearance with little in the way of embellishment. It is essentially a large two-storeyed block, built end-on to Durham Street, with a low two-storey extension to the right side. Originally of brick, it is now all rendered apart from the ground floor of the front elevation, which appears to have been clad in stone in the late 20th century along with the two-storey extension. This front elevation has a round-arched entrance with modern fanlight and two narrow, non-original windows alongside and the foundation stone (presumably reset) above. The first floor has a large tripartite window with round-headed lights within an arch containing a band reading PRIMITIVE METHODIST SCHOOL. On either side are two narrow round-headed windows. These, and all other openings, have modern framing, replacing what would originally have been small-pane glazing. The side elevation to Hereford Street has segment-headed ground floor windows, with that at the left end enlarged and converted to a doorway, along with round-arched first floor windows. The west elevation, which can be seen at mid-distance from Derby Street, has similar first floor windows above a single-storey lean-to extension that sits behind the two-storey extension to the front. Both these extensions appear to be early 20th century, as they are missing on the 1890 map.
- b. Interior.** Little remains to suggest its original use. The ground floor, originally the school and therefore probably subdivided (as suggested by the 15 rooms referred to in 1940) has been opened up and is now used as warehouse space, apart from an office, lobby and store. Two rows of steel columns supporting the floor above remain in place. Flanking the entrance are twin staircases to the first floor chapel, the left one now closed off but the right retaining its original staircase. The first floor is also warehouse space, but with a mezzanine inserted probably in the late 20th century when the building was converted to commercial use. Further offices and stores are contained in the attached two-storey front extension, with no features of note.



4. The original school building of 1875 and early 20th century two-storey extension on right



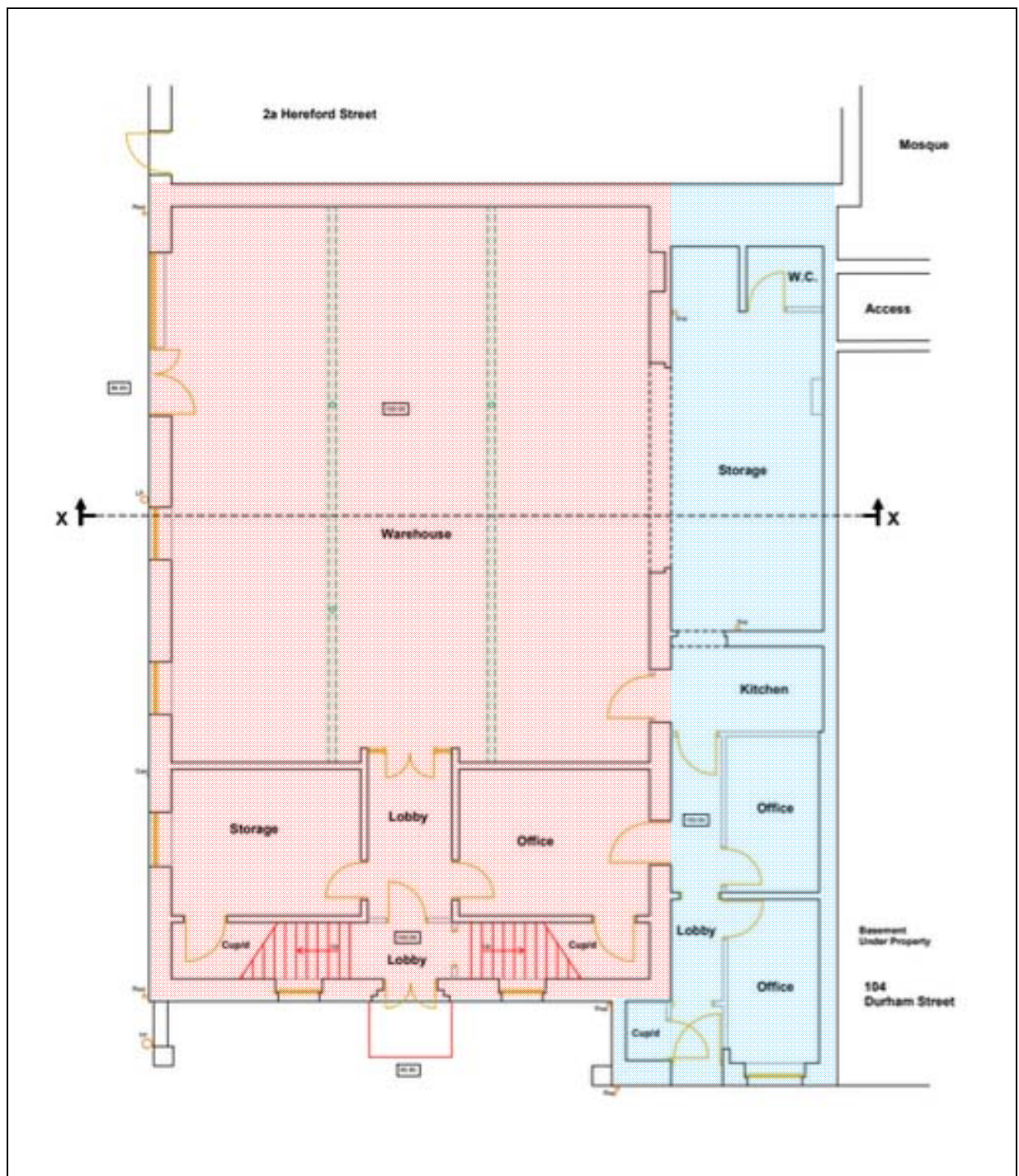
5. Tripartite window that lit the former first floor chapel



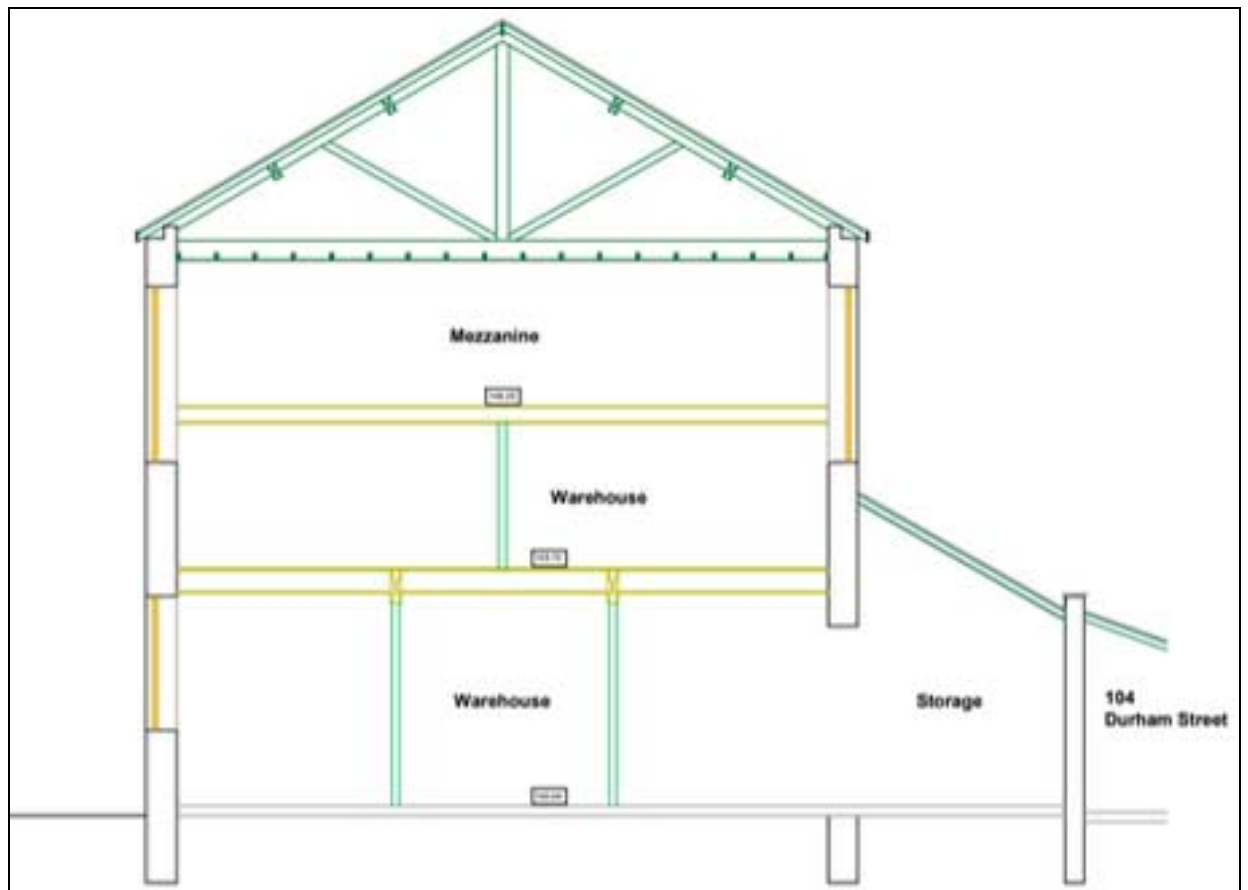
6. Side elevation to Hereford Street



7. West side elevation, viewed from Derby Street



8. Ground floor plan, with the original 1875 chapel shaded red and early 20th century extensions blue



9. Section showing mezzanine inserted on first floor



10. Ground floor is now mostly warehouse space



11. One of the remaining steel columns



12. Entrance lobby and staircase



13. Staircase remaining on first floor



14. First floor and mezzanine

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 significance of the property derives from its architectural and historic interest in the local context (i.e. to Rochdale) as an example of a combined Primitive Methodist Chapel and Sunday School, built in a typically plain manner in 1875 with early 20th century extensions. This significance primarily resides in the external envelope of the building, given the extensive interior alteration carried out during its later conversion to commercial premises. The interest of the building is enhanced by its setting within a 19th century streetscene of mills and terraced housing, which is the legacy of the working community the property was built to serve.

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*

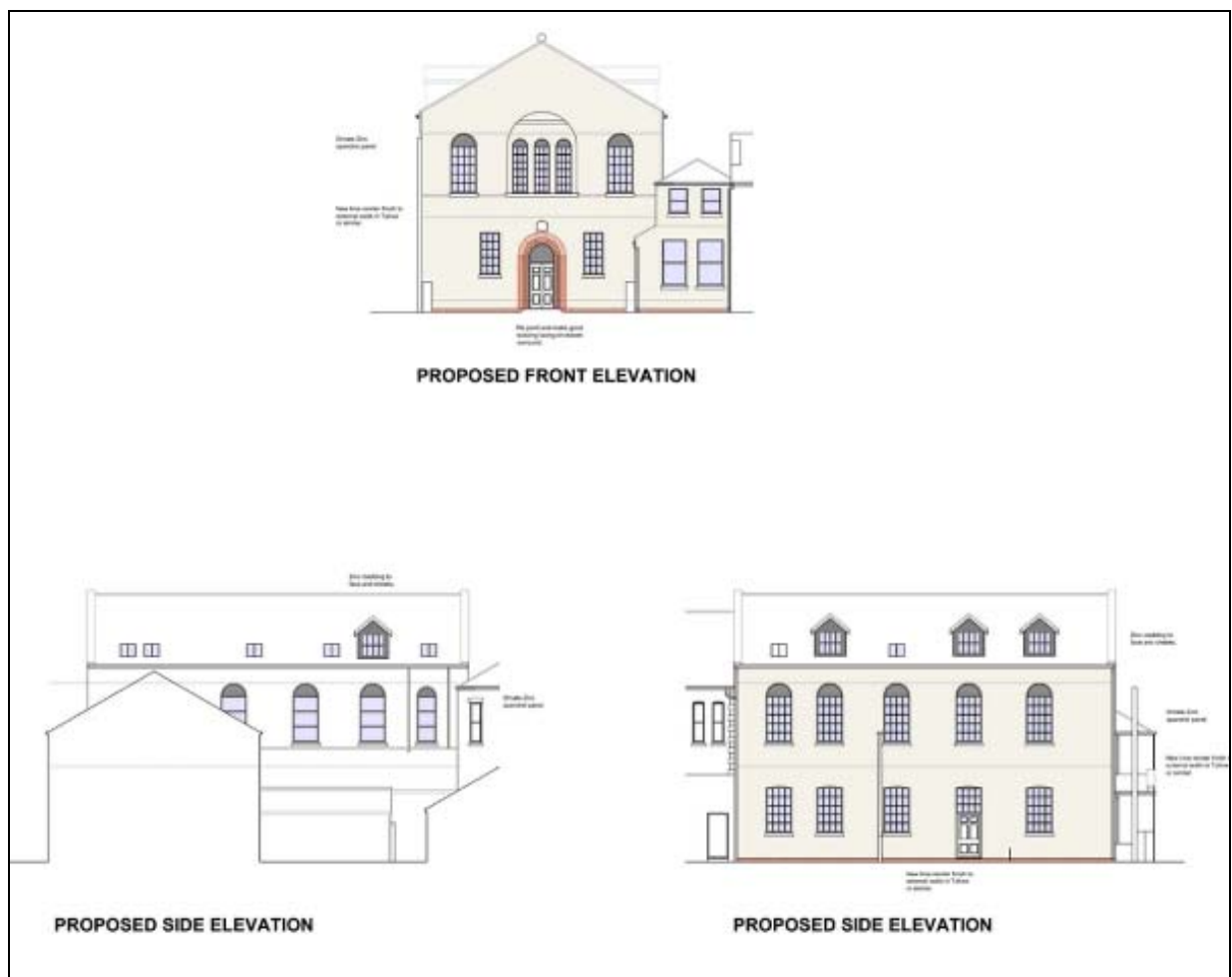
In the case of non-designated heritage assets, paragraph 216 requires simply a balanced planning judgment that weighs any harm or loss against the significance of the application property.

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 application seeks consent for conversion of the building to ten apartments, along with associated external and internal alterations, as fully detailed on the submitted drawings.



15. Proposed external elevations

7.2 Its effect

The proposal will deliver a sustainable, active use for the application building and thereby secure its future. As established in this report, its significance resides primarily in the building's external envelope. This will undergo comparatively little alteration and will receive significant improvements in the form of new lime-based render and new windows of small-pane type, which are more in keeping than the present glazing pattern. Changes are principally the addition of dormers and rooflights to light the apartments to be created on the mezzanine, which, considered in the wider picture, represent a modest alteration that will not detrimentally affect the appearance and character of the building. The interior will inevitably undergo greater change to secure the conversion but, as documented in this report, it has already experienced significant alteration during the building's change to commercial use, with the result that few historical features now remain. The impact of these internal changes is therefore considerably limited.

7.3 Concluding statement

As the application building is a non-designated heritage asset, national planning guidance requires simply a balanced planning judgement on the proposal, as opposed to those affecting designated assets, in which there is a requirement to at least preserve their significance. In making this balanced judgment, the present proposal should be considered favourable as it puts the property to sustainable use, secures its future and delivers notable external enhancements. These considerations should in the final planning balance be viewed as outweighing the changes which the building will experience, changes which are primarily internal and therefore restricted in their effect.

The application thus merits positive determination without delay.