

Conservation & Design Team

Economy and Place

Consultation Response on behalf of the Head of Planning Services

Application: 25/00102/FUL

Date Received: 30 June 2025

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PROPOSAL:

Change of use of second, third and attic floors of mill to a Pool/Snooker Hall with associated bar/cafe facilities together with erection of external stair to third floor and flue

CONSULTATION REPORT:

The application relates to Waljan Mill, previously known as Hanging Road Mill. The mill is considered to be of local historic significance both for being only the second cotton mill to be built in Rochdale at the start of the 19th Century and as a result of its association with the Bright family. Archive material suggests that Jacob Bright, the father of Rochdale's first mayor (also Jacob) worked for a number of years as a bookkeeper at the mill. The Bright family ran seven mills in the Rochdale area at the height of their business empire, with Jacob Bright's son, John, the renowned local liberal statesman, being one of the principals of the firm operating the mill which became known as John Bright and Sons in 1839.

The application proposal is supported in principle from a historic environment conservation perspective as it would ensure a viable use of the building, thus ensuring its long term preservation. Concern is raised, however, regarding the materiality of the proposed fire escape staircase and extraction flue as these would be dominant features on the prominent building façades, notably the northern façade which is subject to an open aspect. The proposed external staircase would also represent a security risk and offer the potential for anti-social behaviour to take place; as such it would need to be designed and gated in a way to provide only emergency egress. Subject to design amendments to address the above concerns and reduce the visual dominance of the external staircase, the level of visual harm could be reduced to an acceptable level. Paint colouring details can be secured through condition, although for the avoidance of doubt black RAL 9005 would be the most appropriate colour choice within the context. Similar attention should also be given to the colour treatment of the proposed extraction flue. Consideration should also be given at this stage to any requirement for additional window security grilles.

No reference is made within the application to any potential changes to windows and doors. Full details of external doors to serve the fire escape staircase should be secured through condition of full details provided within the application. Given the relationship between the building and neighbouring residential properties, there would be a clear unacceptable loss of privacy for surrounding occupiers without an obscuration scheme for the windows. It is crucial that these details are included within the application

and secured by the necessary conditions. A separate application for Advertisement Consent is likely to be required for any required signage.

The application includes insufficient detail to assess the potential for harm to historic fabric within the building as a result of the proposed conversion, with the notable absence of an internal photographic survey. Given the significance of the building, a photographic survey should be provided and the interior of the building should be assessed on site to identify any notable features of historic significance and ensure against any undue loss of historic fabric.

It would be expected that as part of any conversion works, any required repairs and maintenance of the exterior of the building are undertaken in accordance with Historic England's suite of technical guidance - [Technical Guidance | Historic England](#).

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION:

Further information is required to inform an assessment of the internal historic fabric of the building, along with design changes to the proposed external installations.