



Heritage Impact Assessment

Waljan Mill

Toad Lane

Spotland

OL12 0NU

Introduction

This statement is intended to inform planning application 25/00102/FUL, 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.

It is being produced at the request of the Council's heritage section who have commented as follows: -

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 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.

This report seeks to address these issues

Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides up to date policy; it states:

207. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

215. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The Local Planning Authority have identified the building to be *of local historic significance*. It is not a listed building nor within a Conservation Area, nevertheless policy requires a heritage impact assessment proportionate to the assets importance.

The Proposal

The proposal involves the change of use of the top three floors of the mill to a pool/snooker club with associated facilities. Existing and proposed plans have been submitted with the application.

Heritage Impact Assessment

Significance

The LPA have indicated the following: -

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.

We have not carried out further research as the above represent a reasonable assessment.

Impact

It is our intention to assess four elements of the building and indicate how any proposed changes impact on those elements. The four elements are: -

1. External
2. Second floor
3. Third floor
4. Attic floor

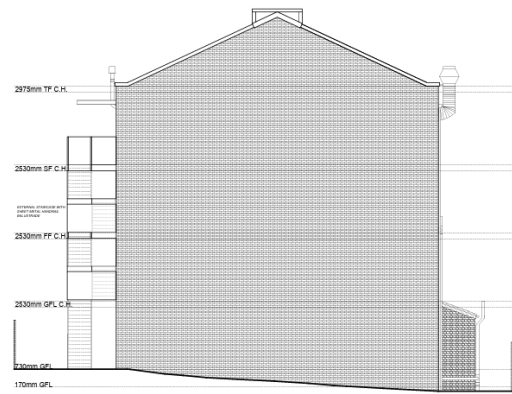
We will provide pictures as necessary (as requested).

External





PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION
1:100 @ A1



PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION
1:100 @ A1



Unfortunately access could not be gained to the rear to take a picture (but no alterations are proposed)

Comments on external changes

The rear and front elevations remain unchanged

Proposed side elevation A introduces a flue to serve the proposed kitchen. This is taken through an existing widow opening with no impact on historic fabric.

All windows on the upper floors are Upvc. The only work necessary to these is to do some minor spot repairs.

The windows on the upper floors on elevation B are obscured.

There are some wooden windows on the stairwell (front elevation) these will not be altered.

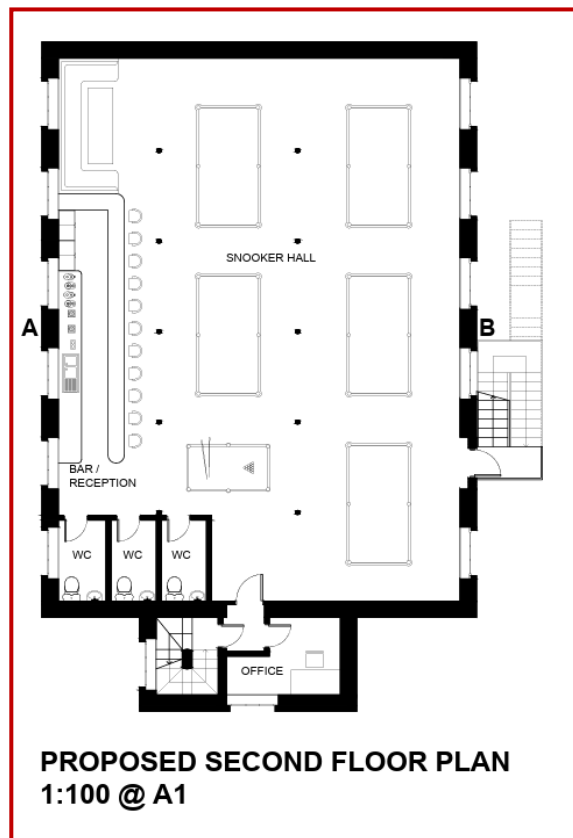
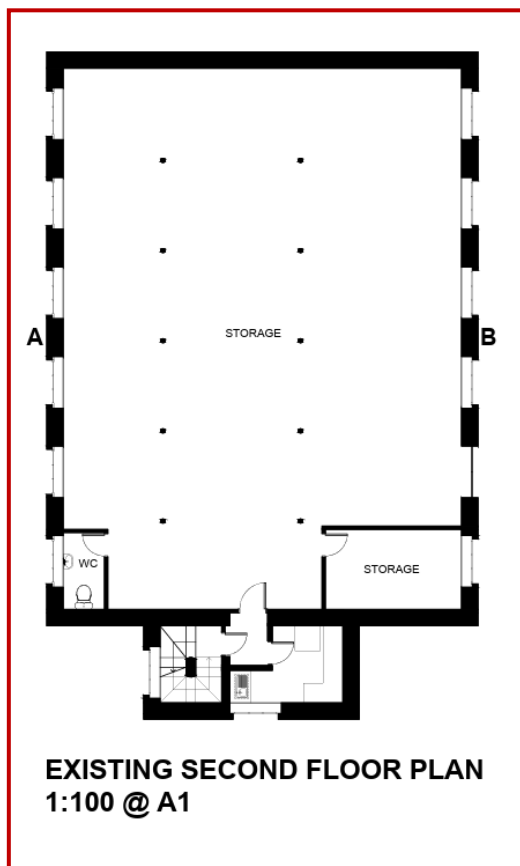
Proposed side elevation B introduces a new fire escape. This is necessary as the stairs to the upper floors are narrow and spiral and not suitable for emergency exit. This does introduce a necessary but alien feature (fire escapes not being particularly thought about in mills of this age; however, it is not unusual for modern uses in old mills to require additional fire escapes. The only mitigation can be in the design of the stairs with a slight an open touch, allowing the external fabric of the building to be seen through them. In this case the fire escape location does take advantage of existing loading door openings, no new openings are required.

As the proposed uses are on the upper floors, no new security grills are required.

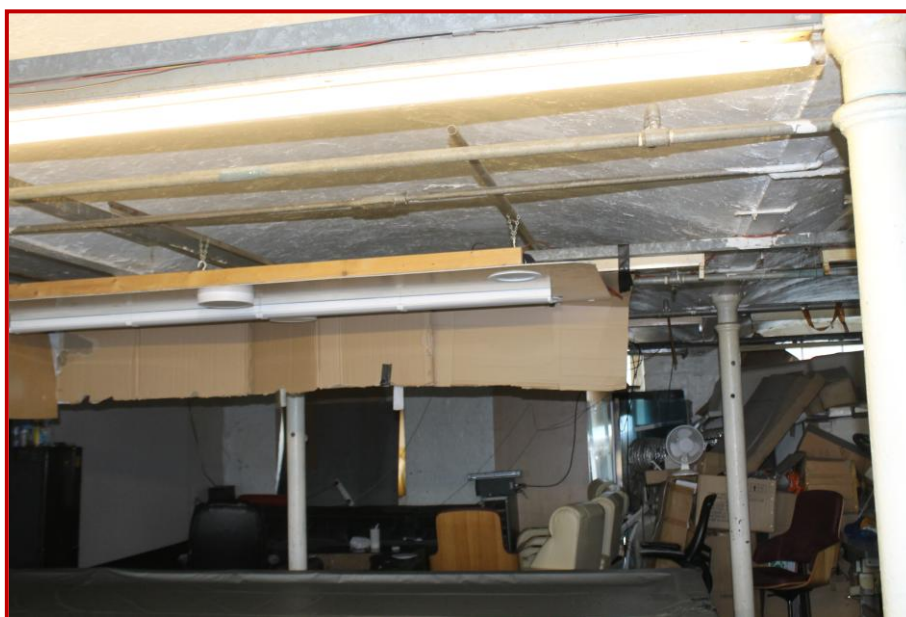


This picture (Globe Mills, Slaithwaite, Huddersfield, listed building and in conservation area) shows what can be done to create an acceptable fire escape.

Second Floor



The second floor is to be used as a snooker hall. The bar area and additional toilets will be created. The WCs will require stud walling, and the bar will be free standing. There will be some minor damage to walls with screw fixings. The use and layout respects the existing iron column and beam construction leaving them untouched.



The ceilings on this floor (and the third) are vaulted brick. However, they have all been heavily rendered, which, in places is falling off.

It is intended that any loose rendering is made safe and left showing brick.



Vaulted ceiling and column details, both floors have the same detailing.

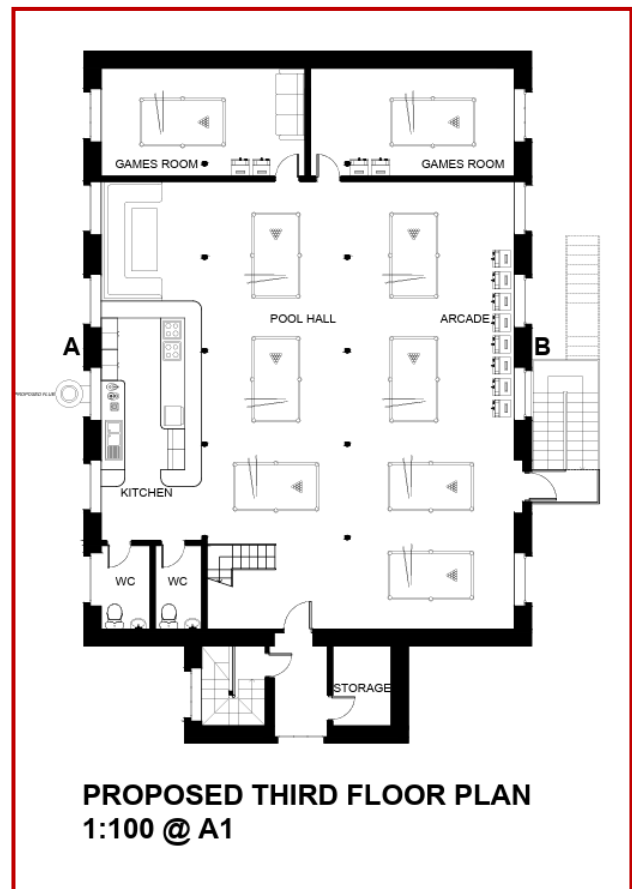
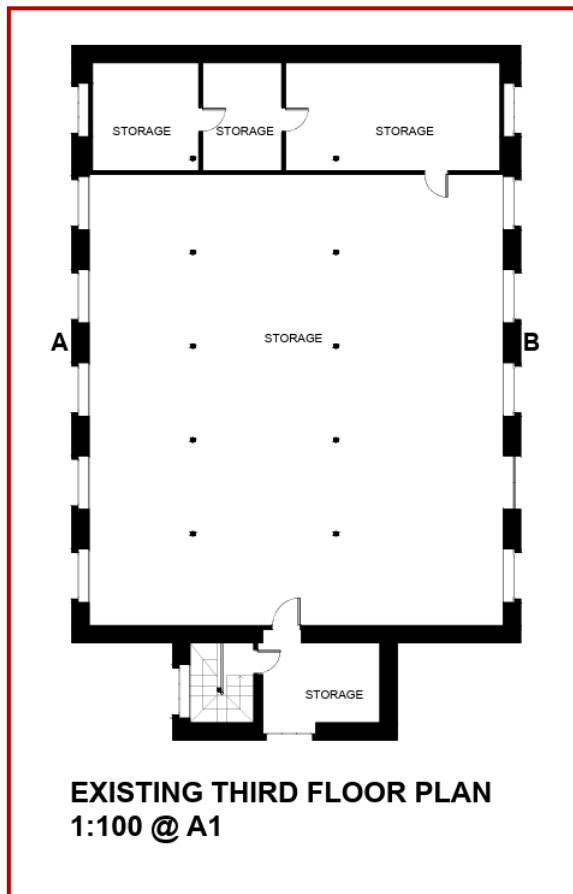




Flooring to both floors is the same, the old tiles remain in some areas but have been repaired and sealed in any areas. It is intended to clean and leave the floors (no repairs). They will then be covered with a heavy underlay and carpet/vinyl.



Third Floor



The third floor is to be used as a pool hall. A kitchen area will be created as well as two private games rooms and toilets. T

There is an existing storage area that will be removed (stud walls shown adjacent). These will be removed and a new area for two pool tables (in the same location) created

The floors and ceilings on the third floor are in the same state as the second and will be treated in the same way.

Also, on the third floor there is a modern hoist.

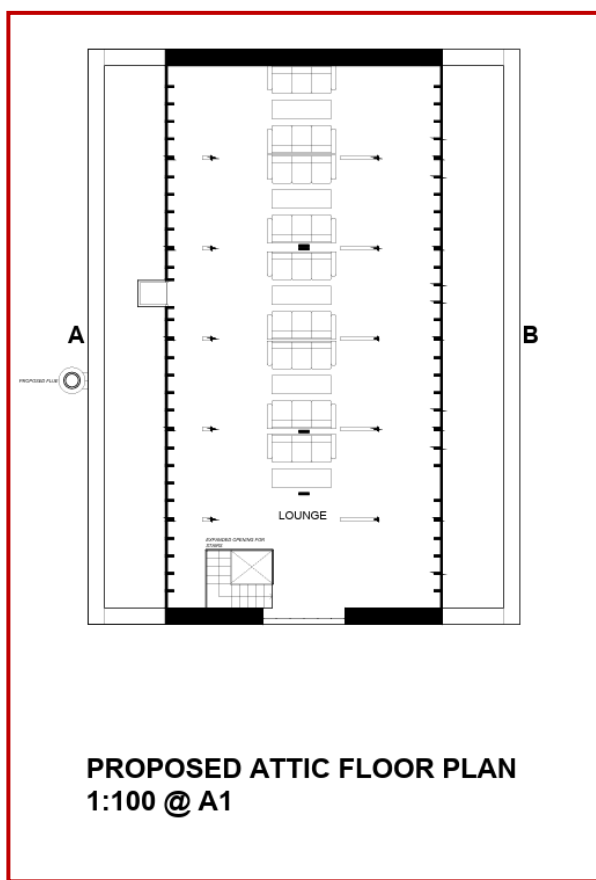
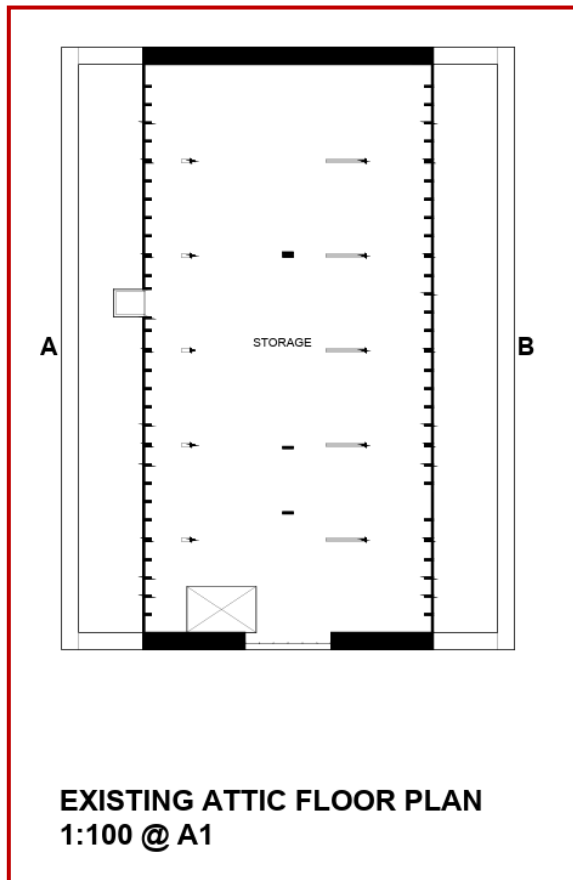


The supporting beams for this will be removed, this can be done with no damage or major repairs required. The beam through the door can be unbolted and removed.



A new stair will be erected to gain access to the attic. It will be located where the ladder is in this picture. There is an existing opening into the attic. This will have to be widened to accommodate the stair (estimated additional opening is less than a metre more than existing).

Attic Floor



The attic level has an existing floor but no insulation or boarding to the underside of the roof.



The attic is dry, and the roof has clearly been repaired relatively recently. The roof felt is modern and there has been spot repairs/replacements to purlins and beams.

There will be no interventions to the existing roof structure. Stud walls will be required along with insulation, none of which should damage existing historic fabric.

General Notes



Access to the building to see all features was not easy (the areas are still in use and full).

The condition of the building was generally good with no water ingress or significant damage.

However it has not been maintained with regard to painting/minor repairs as the current use is only storage.



Lighting and other services are currently suspended from the ceilings. It would be easiest and less damaging to continue with this system of conduits etc.

Conclusions

The level of information within this report is based on The NPPF requirement to provide detail that *should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.*

We note the heritage section comments and the positive approach: -

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..

We also note the concern over the impact of the fire escape and flue. We agree that they would be a significant feature, but they are necessary. In the case of the flue to serve the necessary kitchen facilities (all modern snooker halls operate with snacks etc. available and a flue is necessary to ventilate the cooking facilities). In support of this we note that the flue exits through a modern window pane and not through historic fabric.

The use could not operate without a fire escape (indeed no use open to the public could occupy these floors without such an escape). The use of the existing doors is noted and fire escapes have been erected on most mills that have been brought back into public use, they are a necessary safety feature.

The mill is in reasonable condition, dry and free from major damage. The necessary internal works to facilitate the new use are all minor with very little impact on the historic fabric. Importantly the proposed uses open nature allows important features such as the internal columns to remain visible. The proposed use will ensure that the mill remains in good repair.

It is our conclusion that the physical changes proposed are less than significant and are outweighed by the public benefit of securing the long-term use and maintenance of the building.

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