

NCstudio

Deuce Padel Club Heritage Statement

Mitchell Hey Mills, College Road, Rochdale OL12 6AE

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on interiors, brand and architecture

This document supports the full planning application for the change of use of an existing industrial warehouse at Mitchell Hey, Rochdale, from Class B2 (general industrial) to Class E(d) (indoor sport and recreation), to create a new dedicated Padel sports facility. The building, currently a vacant and underutilised warehouse, presents an opportunity to bring meaningful new life to a prominent site within an established commercial area.

The proposal aims to re-purpose the space in a sustainable and efficient way, retaining the building's core structure while making sensitive internal adaptations to accommodate nine high-quality indoor Padel courts and associated customer facilities. The scheme has been carefully designed to provide a welcoming, inclusive, and vibrant environment that promotes health, well-being and social interaction.

This facility will make a valuable contribution to the local area, supporting Rochdale's aspirations for active lifestyles and community-led regeneration. It represents a significant investment in the borough's sporting infrastructure and will attract users from across the region while strengthening the long-term use of the site.

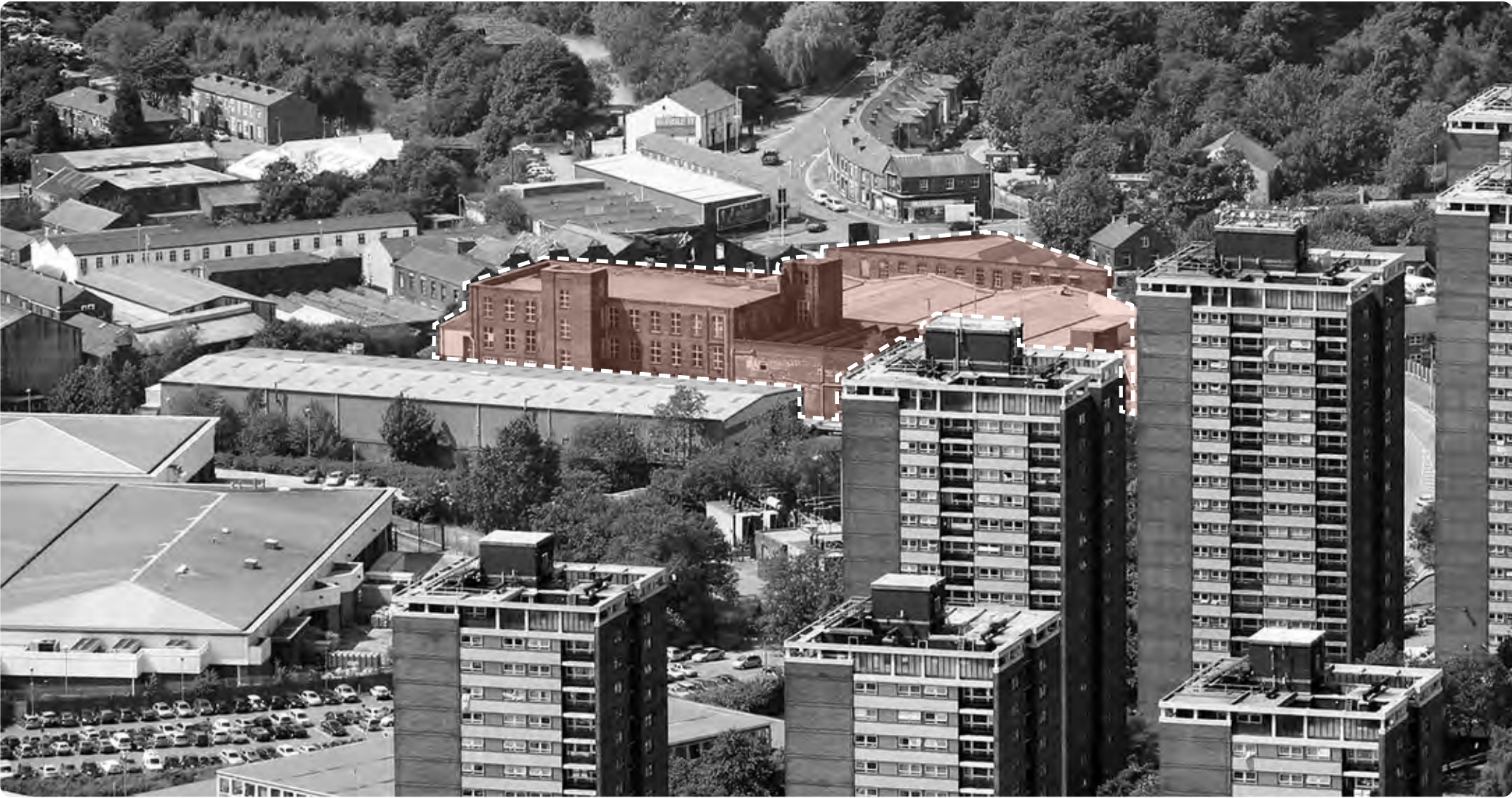


Fig. 01 Photograph by Jonathan Webb

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Document Control

Project:	Deuce Padel Club
Document Title:	Heritage Statement
Date:	18 06 2025
Revision:	A
Author:	Will Wilkinson, Associate Director at NCstudio
Relating Documents:	National Planning Policy Framework (2024 updates) Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments, Historic England (2017) Understanding Place: Character and Context in Local Planning, Historic England (2011) Dark Satanic Mills? The Archaeology of the World’s First Industrial City, Nevell (2010) The History of Rochdale Pioneers, Holyoake (1900) Growth, Profits and Technological Choice: The Case of the Lancashire Cotton Textile Industry, 1880 - 1914. Journal of Industrial History p54-72 (2000) A Short History of the Textile Industry in Rochdale, Whitworth (2009)

Introduction | National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF establishes a clear and balanced approach to managing change to heritage assets. It emphasises that when considering development proposals, great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, with even greater emphasis placed on assets of higher significance. Any harm to the significance of a heritage asset must be justified with clear and convincing reasoning, and in the case of substantial harm, it should only be permitted in exceptional or wholly exceptional circumstances, depending on the asset's status.

Where proposals would result in less than substantial harm, this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme, including securing the asset's optimum viable use. For non-designated heritage assets, the NPPF requires a balanced judgement, having regard to the asset's level of significance and the scale of potential harm or loss. The overall framework supports sensitive, sustainable development that respects the historic environment while enabling places to evolve and meet modern needs.

Area | Rochdale fabric

The site is located within an area shaped significantly by Rochdale's industrial expansion during the 18th and 19th centuries. The River Spodden, which runs to the North West of the site, was a driving force in the early development of local industry, with documented activity dating back as far as the 1600s. By the 1830s, the Spodden Valley had become a well-established hub of textile production, containing at least five fulling mills and several cotton mills, initially harnessing the river's energy to support manufacturing processes.

The complex originally formed part of a broader industrial community, including mill buildings and adjacent worker housing, much of which is visible in historic aerial photographs from the mid-20th century.

These mills represent a tangible link to Rochdale's textile heritage, reflecting both the scale of industrial ambition during the Victorian period and the cooperative movement that flourished in the town. Aerial imagery dated 2 May 1953, accessed from Historic England's RAF Aerial Photograph Collection, clearly illustrates the historic extent of the mill complex and its integration into the wider industrial landscape.

Today, the site has been substantially altered; the secondary mill building to the eastern side has been fully demolished and replaced with a lightweight industrial warehouse, significantly reducing the footprint and architectural completeness of the original mill group.



Fig. 02 Photograph by <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

Heritage | The Building

Mitchell Hey Mills is an example of industrial heritage that reflects the region's historical and architectural importance. The mill's historical significance is tied to its role in the emergence of Manchester as the world's first industrial city, but has been severely altered over the years. The transformation of industrial buildings such as Mitchell Hey Mills can infuse new life into these structures, whilst preserving the historical significance.

A 19th-century cotton mill, located to the north of Rochdale town centre, Mitchell Hey Mills was constructed for the local Co-operative Society in 1854, reinforcing its historical significance within Rochdale's industrial and social heritage. Evidence of a former building, Spodden Mill, is found on maps dating back to the 1840s, with the cotton mill building replacing this by 1890.

The complex originally comprised of two spinning mills. Building 01 is a four-storey brick structure, whilst Mill No.2 is a two-storey structure, also constructed in brick. The roof across the main warehouse space collapsed around 1980, when this was replaced with new castellated steel structure and roof with integrated skylights.

An early 20th-century two-storey office block, added to Mill No.2 is the only notable surviving auxiliary structure. No other original power features or ancillary buildings remain on the site.

Note: Original mill complex highlighted, including secondary and auxiliary buildings.



Fig. 03 Photograph accessed via Rochdale Living Memories Facebook

Mapping | Development

The historical mapping of Mitchell Hey from 1848 to the present day illustrates a clear trajectory from rural periphery to industrial heartland and eventually to modern commercial adaptation. In 1848, the site is largely undeveloped, characterised by woodland, scattered field boundaries, and early mill activity concentrated around the River Spodden and Spodden Bridge. By 1892, Mitchell Hey Mills emerges as a defined industrial site with substantial built form, coinciding with the rise of nearby mills and the formalisation of road networks, marking Rochdale’s rapid textile expansion. By 1930, the area is fully industrialised, with dense mill infrastructure, tramways, and terraced housing reflecting its peak as a production hub and working-class neighbourhood. In the modern aerial view, much of the original mill complex has been cleared or re-purposed into lightweight warehouse structures, surface parking, and low-rise commercial units, demonstrating a reduction in architectural density and a shift from production to service-led land use, though the footprint remains legible in the street layout and block patterns.

- A 1848
- B 1892
- C 1930
- D 2025

Fig. 04 - 07 All maps accessed via maps.nls.co.uk
Red line denotes Planning Application boundary



Owners | Co Operative Society

The Rochdale Co-operative Manufacturing Society was established as a co-operative in 1854 and were the original occupiers of the building, attempting to extend co-operative ethics to manufacturing. All employees were shareholders of the society and surpluses were paid as a bonus to labour.

Eventually, contradictions in co-operative principles meant that the prominent experiments were short-lived. Thus few workers owned shares in their own companies for long. Anecdotally, the engines were named "Co-Operation" and "Perseverance" and were later renamed "Joint-Stock" and "Greed", reflecting the deep tensions in the co-operative values. This powerfully illustrates the ideological investment in the built environment.

At Mitchell Hey, the co-operative principles began to decline in the 1860s. As is common with many co-operative organizations, scale and industrial democracy acted in contradiction. By the 1870s, the co-operative structure had largely shifted towards a more conventional limited-liability business model, mirroring other regional movements in textile industrial relations.

When the Co-Op Manufacturing Society went into liquidation it was taken over by Roger Shackleton and Son.

Reviewing the significance of the remaining architectural ensemble and features of the original mill building, the key takeaways are the strong pioneering social values that led to the creation of the building.

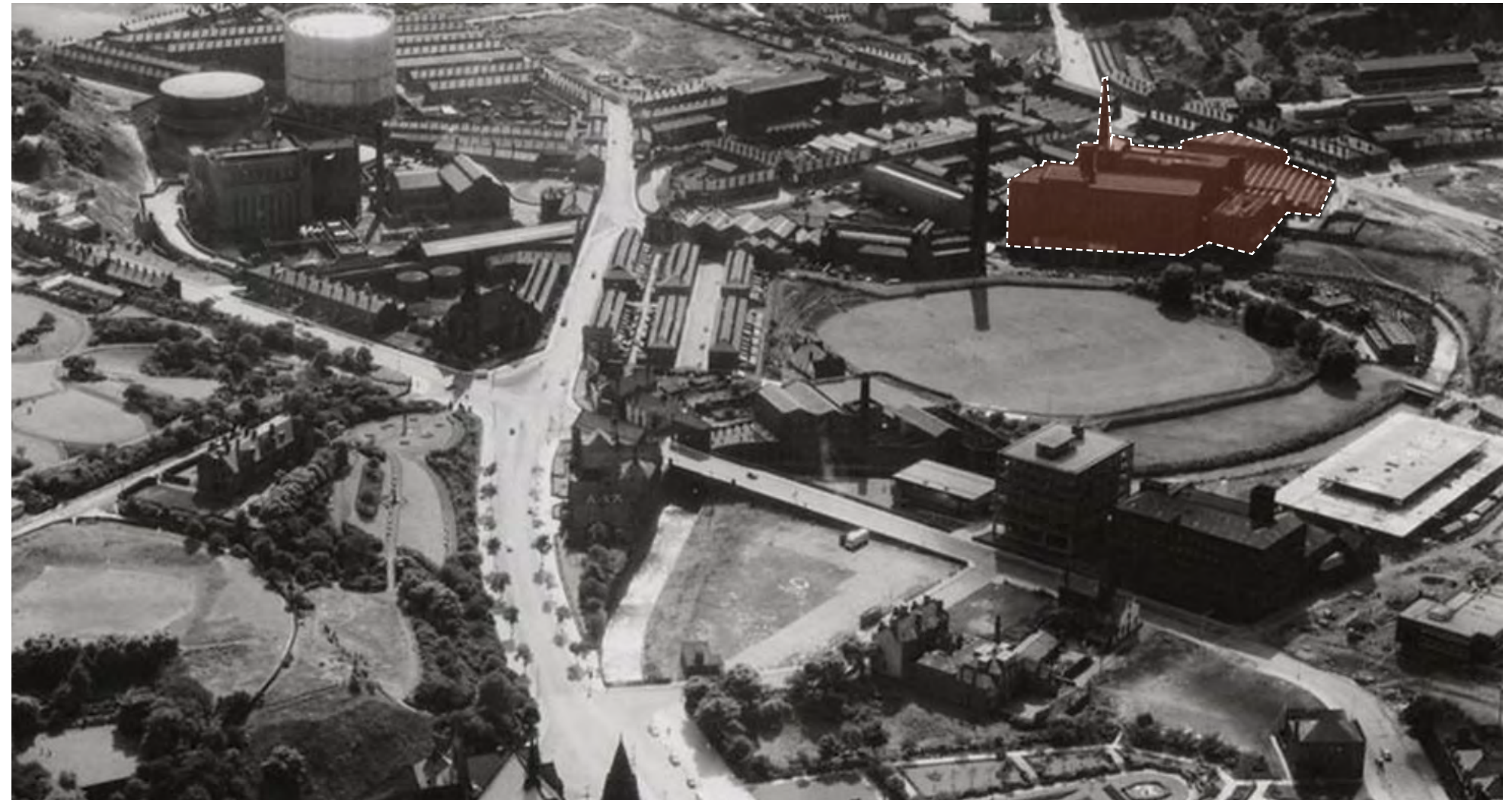


Fig. 08 Photograph from Robert Wade

Fig. 09 Image accessed via ebay.co.uk

Fig. 10 Image accessed via ebay.co.uk

Building | Current Fabric

The current condition of Mitchell Hey Mills, as illustrated in the images, reflects a building that has undergone significant internal adaptation but retains several important cues to its industrial heritage.

The top left image shows the expansive open-plan warehouse with exposed steel portal frames, and modern industrial roofing with skylights. This structure is a post-1980s intervention, likely replacing the original mill roof following collapse.

The external view (top right) displays a flat-roofed, rendered dark grey elevation with little ornamentation, revealing the modern lightweight cladding used in later redevelopment phases.

The rear alleyway retains elements of the original mill wall in painted brick includes the survival of openings that provide rare authentic remnants of functional mill infrastructure, connecting the site visually and materially to its 19th-century past.

The internal corridor image reflects utilitarian subdivision common in late 20th-century industrial reuse schemes.



Fig. 11 - 14 Photographs by NCstudio

Significance | Heritage

Heritage Value	Description	Relevance	Impact
Evidential	The physical remains that provide direct evidence of past human activity.	The original four storey mill and surviving masonry provide insight into Victorian industrial construction and co-operative architecture.	Neutral to positive Proposals affect later warehouse areas with limited evidential value. No historic fabric is removed.
Historical	The asset’s association with past events, movements, or people.	Some historical value as one of the early co-operative manufacturing experiments (Rochdale Co-operative Manufacturing Society, est. 1854).	Preserved The historical narrative is acknowledged and enhanced through adaptive reuse, with heritage interpretation possible.
Aesthetic	Design, materials, craftsmanship, or artistic qualities.	Surviving parts of the original mill (outside the scheme) retain proportions, windows, and robust mill construction typical of the period.	Unaffected The proposals are confined to significantly altered areas; the few key architectural features remain untouched.
Communal	The meanings or values a place holds for people or communities.	Historically a symbol of collective ownership and industrial ambition; currently underused and disconnected from community activity.	Enhanced The proposal introduces an inclusive, health-based use that reinstates social value and community relevance.

Summary

Mitchell Hey Mills holds moderate significance as a non-designated heritage asset with local historical and communal value, and limited remaining architectural integrity in the proposed development zone. The intervention avoids areas of highest significance and introduces a reversible, beneficial reuse that aligns with heritage conservation principles.

Proposals | Justification

In light of the above assessment of significance, the following section sets out how the proposals respond to the heritage value of the site.

The proposed adaptation of part of the Mitchell Hey Mills complex from general industrial use (Class B2) to indoor sport and recreation (Class E[d]) represents a measured and heritage-sensitive response to both the condition of the building and its evolving context.

The area identified for redevelopment occupies a portion of the site that has already undergone substantial modern alteration, including the loss of the original mill roof and the introduction of lightweight cladding and steel portal frames. These changes have significantly reduced the evidential and architectural significance of this specific part of the building.

Crucially, the light-touch proposals are confined to the later warehouse areas and do not affect the more architecturally significant elements of the original spinning mill block, which lie outside the development boundary. This ensures the preservation of the most historically valuable components of the site, while introducing padel courts; a low-impact, reversible intervention within an underused and already altered structure.



Fig. 15 - 16 Artistic visualisations by NCstudio

Summary | A positive future

The proposal relates to a non-designated heritage asset and does not affect any listed buildings, conservation areas or scheduled monuments. In line with Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the application acknowledges the historical significance of the former Mitchell Hey Mill as a 19th-century industrial structure, but considers the scale of proposed change to be minimal and entirely reversible. No further loss of historic fabric is proposed, and the building's distinctive architectural masonry form and setting will be retained.

The internal reconfiguration and external signage do not constitute substantial harm to the building's character or appearance. Instead, the development represents a sensitive and sustainable re-use that actively prevents further vacancy and deterioration.

In accordance with Paragraph 215 of the NPPF, any minor harm is clearly outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme, including local job creation, improved access to health and recreational facilities, and the ongoing stewardship of an underutilised historic structure. The proposal represents the optimum viable use for this part of the building and delivers long-term community value while preserving the building's historic identity.

The mill once played a central role in the town's industrial fabric, not just as a place of production, but as a symbol of Rochdale's pioneering co-operative values. By transforming the space into an inclusive, health-focused padel facility, the project rekindles the mill's original social purpose, creating a new hub of collaboration, well-being and opportunity for Rochdale residents today.

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Thank you
It's been our pleasure

Please do not hesitate to get
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