

## HERITAGE & CONSERVATION CONSULTATION RESPONSE

|                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Heritage, Conservation &amp; Design Team Officer</b> | Catherine Fenghour                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Date</b>                                             | 23 July 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Application Reference</b>                            | 24/01159/FUL and 24/01160/LBC                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Address</b>                                          | Reed Hotel, Reed Hill, Rochdale OL16 1DF                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Proposal</b>                                         | Change of use from Public House (sui generis) to 10no. Apartments (C3) including alterations to fenestration on all elevations, removal of external staircase, erection of single storey rear extension on west elevation to reveal light wells |

### Heritage Assets Impacted

|                                       |                                     |                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Designated Heritage Assets</b>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reed hotel (grade II)</li><li>- Town Centre Conservation Area</li><li>- Toad Lane Conservation Area</li></ul> |
| <b>Non-Designated Heritage Assets</b> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                                                                                                                                                       |

### Summary

While a residential conversion scheme could be supported in heritage terms, there are significant concerns with the current proposal. Further information is required in relation to aspects of the proposal. The extent of alteration and loss of historic fabric is also of concern.

### Assessment

#### *Site description and significance*

The Reed Hotel is a handsome three storey on Reed Hill in Rochdale. Constructed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, it has operated as a hotel for much of its history. While it is not clear whether it was purpose built as a hotel or a house, it was certainly in use as a hotel by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Red brick, with stone quoins, lintels and sills, externally, the building retains its historic character. Internally, there have been some alterations, however historic elements remain, including joinery, cornicing, and staircases. At ground floor level, while painted, good quality joinery and decorative

features survive. The building is of architectural and historic interest and is listed at grade II. It makes an important positive contribution to the streetscene and is of group value with other listed buildings within the nearby Toad Lane Conservation Area.

#### *Relevant legislation and Policy*

For proposals affecting listed buildings, sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) ACT 1990 apply. These sections require the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

NPPF paragraph 213 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 215 states that 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.

PfE policy JP-P2 and Rochdale CS policy P2 also apply. Policy P2 seeks to conserve, enhance and promote key heritage assets, which includes listed buildings.

#### *Assessment of proposals*

##### **General comments**

The heritage statement includes little in the way of description of the site or its history and development. It would be helpful for more information to be provided about the building and how its use has evolved over time, and the implications that this has had for the historic fabric. The updated statement refers to plans and historic photos, but these do not appear to be included?

The heritage statement should also include a significance plan.

A room schedule is also required – this should include photos. It should set out what original/historic features survive in each room and whether they are proposed to be retained. There is a lot of surviving historic joinery, particularly at ground floor level and cornice detailing, as well as sashes and architraves on the upper floors. Original or historic features should be retained wherever possible.

As it stands, there is insufficient information provided. The extent of loss and the impact cannot be properly understood. Nevertheless, the extent of alteration and demolition, particularly at ground floor level is of concern.

A structural report is required, as the proposals include the removal of original/historic walls which are presumably loadbearing, as well as areas of excavation. This should be carried out by a CARE accredited structural engineer.

Demolition plans – these should be provided for the floors and elevations, so that the extent of demolition can be properly assessed.

### **Principle of development**

The conversion of the building into residential apartments would inevitably result in some harm to the significance of the building. While its origins are not entirely clear, the building has been a hotel/bar for much of its existence. The proposed residential use would require an altered plan form and the loss of some historic fabric associated with its former use.

That being said, the building has been vacant for some time and apartments would provide a viable use, which would secure its long-term future. A sensitively designed scheme, which works with the historic plan form and minimises the loss of fabric, is likely to be supported in heritage terms.

### **Basement**

The proposed works appear to include the removal of some original walls. Having a plan showing the likely age of walls would assist. In original walls, new openings should be avoided where possible and nibs should be retained so that the original layout is still legible.

The basement has signs of damp, which is typical for a subterranean space. Full details are required prior to determination of how the basement would be made habitable and the proposed waterproofing system. These systems are invasive and may not be appropriate for listed buildings. In all cases, very careful detailing is required to ensure that moisture penetration does not occur.

Method statement required for the reopening of the lightwells, as the plan only covers the new lightwell. Have any investigative works to establish whether any of the historic fabric survives below the modern paving?

We also need to understand the implications of excavation works for the existing below ground structure to reach the proposed meter room.

### **Ground floor**

As with the basement, there are substantial areas of demolition proposed. Some of these would appear to be original or historic walls. A plan is required, with the age of walls indicated. Furthermore, the ground floor includes areas of panelling and joinery, which appear historic although unfortunately painted.

The scheme should be revised, so that the apartments use existing original walls and historic features are retained as far as possible. The external wall shown to be demolished as part of the single storey infill extension, should be retained. Sections should be provided for the infill extension. This may require a reduction in the total number of apartments.

### **First floor**

Details of the likely age of walls and a schedule of surviving features is required, as above. As above, original/historic walls should be used as far as possible, with new openings kept to a minimum. The subdivision of rooms should also be kept to a minimum and where proposed, should not intersect with key features such as chimney breasts.

There are no objections to the works to convert the existing door into a window, subject to appropriate details, as this alteration was likely carried out when the external staircase was installed.

### **Second floor**

Comments in relation to walls and demolition as per previous floors. Existing walls should be used as far as possible.

A window schedule will be required by condition. This should include details of all existing and new windows and a schedule for their repair or replacement. Existing timber framed windows should be retained, where they are of an appropriate design for the age of the property. Later windows which are not of an appropriate design or material should be replaced with appropriate timber units.

Blind windows – some of these windows appear to have been blocked later, while others, such as the central first floor window appear to have been blind as part of the original design. This needs to be confirmed on the plans. Where dummy windows were an integral part of the design, opening them up is likely to result in harm through the loss of historic fabric and alterations to the original architectural design of the building. This harm would need to be robustly justified.

An indicative door schedule should also be provided. Original or historic doors should be repaired and retained. Details of new or replacement doors should be conditioned.

Repair schedule – as noted above an indicative room schedule is required up front. Full details of repairs, finishes and fixtures will be required, although this can be dealt with by condition, if the issues raised are addressed.

### **Outside**

A cross section as well as existing sections are required for the proposed excavation works along the south elevation. The structural implications of these excavation works need to be understood, as well as the extent of building/rebuilding needed to the cellar wall in this location.

The use of pre-cast concrete for the steps would not be appropriate

On site it was mentioned that car parking is no longer proposed. A hard and soft landscaping scheme for the site is required. This should also include details of boundary treatments.

### **Conclusions**

As it stands, further details are needed, so that the proposals can be properly assessed. Once this additional information has been provided, there may be further concerns/comments on the proposals.

Nevertheless, the extent of alterations and demolitions are of concern, as they would undermine the legibility of the plan form and result in the loss of significant amounts of historic fabric to the detriment of its character and historic features. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. This harm has not been adequately justified.

There are undoubtedly public benefits in bringing this vacant building back into use. However, it has not been shown that the current proposal is the only means of achieving this – i.e. would a less intrusive scheme also be able to achieve the same result?

**Re-consultation**

Yes – on submission of revised/additional information.