

HERITAGE STATEMENT AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Proposed partial demolitions, extensions and alterations

Former Nutters Restaurant (Wolstenholme Hall)
Edenfield Road
Rochdale
OL12 7TT

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June 2023



1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This assessment has been carried out in order to determine the impact of proposed demolition and alteration works to a non-designated heritage asset. The appraisal is concerned with the process of conserving the special architectural and historic interest of the building including its setting.
- 1.2 This appraisal has been conducted in accordance with the general guidelines set out in British Standard 7913:2013 'Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings' and Historic England publications 'Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning' notes GPA1 'The Historic Environment in Local Plans, GPA2 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' and GPA3 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' (Second Edition).
- 1.3 Significance has been assessed in accordance with guidance as set out in Historic England Advice Note 12 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets' and the former English Heritage document entitled 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance'
- 1.4 The author Daniel Waugh has over 30 years' experience working with historic buildings. He studied a Master of Science Degree in Architectural Conservation at the University of Central Lancashire and still has an active role in promoting the course. He is a member of the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists and a supporter member of the Institute for Historic Building Conservation in addition to being a member of The Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain.
- 1.5 A visual inspection of the property was carried out in March 2022. Background research was conducted with reference to the Rochdale interactive planning service, Historic Environment Record, historic mapping databases, archived material, and through discussions held with the applicant. The assessment of the proposals will be conducted with reference to a range of texts, particularly the Historic England good practise guides and local authority's appraisal of the building.
- 1.6 The following documents and drawings have been assessed in preparation of this report:

Jonathan Davidson Architects

Project no. 366

Doc Ref	Rev	Title
PD1001	A4	Site Location Plan
PD1002	A1	Existing Site Plan
PD1003	A2	Existing Basement Plan
PD1004	A3	Existing Ground Floor Plan
PD1005	A3	Existing First Floor Plan
PD1006	A2	Existing Second Floor Plan
PD1007	A1	Existing Roof Plan
PD1008	A2	Existing Elevations

PD1009	A1	Existing Terrace Plan and Elevations
PD2001	A4	Proposed Context Plan
PD2002	A6	Proposed Site Plan
PD2003	A3	Proposed Basement Plan
PD2004	A5	Proposed Ground Floor Plan
PD2005	A4	Proposed First Floor Plan
PD2006	A4	Proposed Second Floor Plan
PD2007	A4	Proposed Roof Plan
PD2008	A5	Proposed Elevations
PD2009	A3	Proposed Sections
PD6001	A2	Design & Access Statement

2.0 RELEVANT POLICY CONSIDERATION

2.1 NATIONAL POLICY

- 2.1.1 Policy at national level comprises the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF). In respect of information requirements, paragraph 194 sets out that:

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.

- 2.1.2 With respect to non-designated heritage assets, paragraph 203 sets out that:

In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

2.2 LOCAL POLICY

- 2.2.1 The Development Plan applicable to the site includes the policies as set out in the Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy, which was adopted by Rochdale Borough Council in 2016. With respect to the historic environment, policy P2 'Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage' sets out that:

We will protect the borough's heritage by:

- a. *Conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and nonstatutory, including consideration of their wider settings. Key heritage assets of the borough include:

 - i. *Four outstanding conservation areas: Central Rochdale, Middleton and Littleborough town centres and Rock Nook / Summit;*
 - ii. *Other designated assets such as listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and scheduled ancient monuments;*
 - iii. *The heritage of the Co-operative movement, the Rochdale Pioneers and the Labour movement;**

- iv. *The Edgar Wood and J. H. Sellers cultural heritage;*
- v. *The heritage of the seventeenth and eighteenth century vernacular tradition; and*
- vi. *The engineering heritage, including mills, canals and railways.*
- b. *Conserving, enhancing and utilising other non-statutory heritage assets of local interest, be they buildings, parks, gardens or archaeological sites, including promoting their sensitive restoration;*
- c. *Using heritage assets positively and intelligently to strengthen identity and image and support the visitor economy, particularly in development and regeneration schemes; and*
- d. *Prioritising the conservation of heritage assets at risk from decay, giving special attention to designated heritage assets in this regard.*

2.2.2 Rochdale Borough Council hold a record of non-designated heritage assets. Such assets are defined by them as:

places we've identified as having some significance to the local heritage.

They make important contributions to the local distinctiveness, settlement formation, traditional character or history of the borough but don't meet the criteria for listed buildings. Non-designated heritage assets can be buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and landscapes.

The criteria for identifying non-designated heritage considers:

<i>Architectural significance</i>	<i>sites which demonstrate local architectural style and character or are associated with a local architect, designer or engineer of importance.</i>
<i>Historical significance</i>	<i>sites associated with a local historical event, that have importance as a community asset, are associated with local famous or notable people or appear on the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey Map.</i>
<i>Positive contribution</i>	<i>such as a landmark or as part of a key view.</i>
<i>Designed landscape</i>	<i>asset is a component of a designed landscape.</i>

Paragraph 9.16 of policy P1 states *'assets which are the subject of local designations should be conserved with respect to their external appearance, character and setting'.*

3.0 LOCATION AND SITE INFORMATION

- 3.1 The former Nutters Restaurant, originally known as Wolstenholme Hall (the building) is a Victorian Neo Gothic manor house situated at national grid reference SD 84818 15063. The building has an approximate footprint of 970m² (10,400ft²) and occupies a plot of approximately 2.7 ha (6.7 acres).
- 3.2 The building lies along the norther side of Edenfield Road (A680) approximately 4km north-west of Rochdale Town Centre.
- 3.3 The building is not statutorily listed (designated heritage asset) but has been included on Rochdale Borough Council's list of non-designated heritage assets as it is deemed to meet the criteria as set out in paragraph 1.5.



Figure 1. Site Location Plan (not to scale)

4.0 HISTORIC BACKGROUND AND INTERPRETATION

- 4.1 Wolstenholme Hall is acknowledged as being originally built in 1850 although historic mapping from that period appears to indicate a substantial building in a different location, with a footprint that does not correlate with the arrangement of the building that appears on later mapping and the building that stands today.



Figure 2. Ordnance Survey map of 1850. Note the footprint of the hall and its proximity to the neighbouring linear farm building



Figure 3. Ordnance Survey map of 1894 indicates the building that stands today.

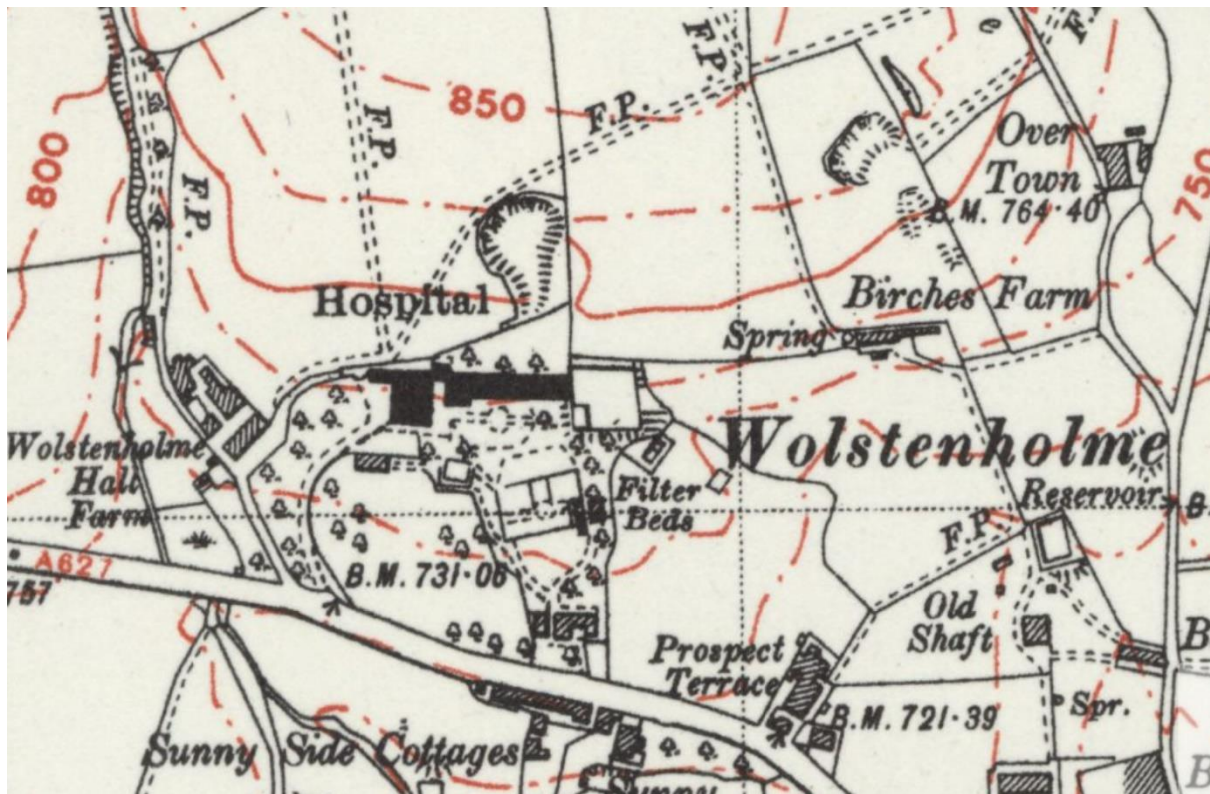


Figure 4. Ordnance Survey map of 1946 showing some extensions and ancillary structures and an east wing to the Hospital, later demolished.



Figure 5. Historic image of the building from the east with the now demolished wing.

- 4.2 The current building is clearly a later structure than the original hall. Local accounts state that prominent local architect Richard Knill Freeman worked on the house for the occupant at the time Harold Shawcross. Given that Freeman was known for his work in the Gothic Revival style, it could be that the building is his design. This requires further research not considered necessary for the purpose of this document.
- 4.3 Harold Shawcross was a member of Rochdale Town Council and an influential member of the National Housing Reform Council which became the National Housing and Town Planning Council which formed the Housing, Town Planning Etc Act of 1909, Britain's first town planning act.
- 4.4 The Hospital Record Database held at the National Archives states that the building was in use as a Sanatorium from 1929 to circa 1943 thereafter becoming a Pulmonary Hospital until 1957. Local accounts indicate that the building was also used as a temporary TB Sanctuary prior to this.
- 4.5 During the latter part of the C20th following the hospital closure, the building became a popular nightclub, then after being vacant for a period it became a Public House until 2003 when it was bought by local Restaurateur Rodney Nutter. Nutters Restaurant was closed in October 2021.
- 4.6 The building has received significant alterations and extensions. A search of the recent planning history yields the following relevant results:

REF	DESCRIPTION	DATE	DECISION
05/D44916	Erection of porch and single storey extension to existing restaurant.	04-2005	Approved
05/D45272	Single storey rear extension to restaurant.	06-2005	Approved



Figure 6. Image of the east facing elevation. The modern extensions clearly designed with an intention of replicating the architecture of the building.



Figure 7. Image of the principal south facing elevation. The modern extensions project forward of the host building.



Figure 8. Image of the side east facing elevation. Again, the modern extensions dominate the setting. Note the canopy to the side entrance.

5.0 HISTORIC INTEREST AND HERITAGE VALUES

- 5.1 In assessing proposed changes to the building, an appraisal of the significance of the elements due to change has been carried out. This process relates to the assessment of a range of

heritage values as outlined by Historic England; formerly English Heritage in the 2008 guidance document which have been revised for the 2017 draft document.

These values are distilled under the following headings: Historic Interest (including Communal Interest), Archaeological Interest (formerly Evidential Value) and Architectural and Artistic Interest (formerly Aesthetic Value). The purpose of assessing these values is to enable an assessment of the site's significance - whether physically manifest (e.g. architectural features) or in some other less tangible form (e.g. historical associations) - so as to enhance the objective appraisal of proposals for the change to the building.

In essence this follows the approach generally advocated by Historic England, whereby necessary change in the historic environment is intelligently managed. A brief summary of the heritage values associated with the site, and more specifically those parts due to change under the proposals being considered, is given below, together with an indication on how these values contribute to the appraisal of significance

5.2 Historic Interest (Historic / Communal Value)

5.2.1 Historic England consider that historical interest “*can illustrate the story of past events, people and aspects of life*” (EH.2017.s28). This is generally regarded as either Illustrative whereby the building or element can be perceived to represent a period in history, Associative where a connection with an event or person can contribute to the historic significance of a site or Communal; where it may invoke emotion or contribute to an individual's or community's sense of place or where a place can be a form of catalyst for memories associated with it or.

5.2.2 The building holds some historic (age) and illustrative value in local context but its most significant historic interest lies in its association with prominent members of the local and wider community and its communal value as a substantial and widely regarded local building and landmark.

5.3 Archaeological Interest (Evidential Value)

5.3.1 Described by Historic England as “*evidence of past human activity*” (EH.2017.s38), archaeological interest is derived from one's ability to interpret the history and historic evolution of an asset through visible and tangible features whether superficially evident or that could be revealed through investigation.

5.3.2 The building has received significant intervention in terms of extensions and internal alterations, the latter comprising of the removal of substantial sections of internal walling primarily at ground floor level.

5.4 Architectural and Artistic Interest (Aesthetic Value)

5.4.1 Architectural and Artistic Interest according to Historic England “*derives from a contemporary appreciation of the asset's aesthetics*” (EH.2017.s42) and relates to sensory and intellectual stimulation and may be derived from detailed design produced by an architect or designer, or from direct creation by a craftsman or sculptor.

- 5.4.2 The building is a good example of revival architecture and certainly one of the more prominent buildings within the area. The character, style and detailing of the building still stand out as prominent architectural features despite the invasive extensions which range from low quality utilitarian to the rear, to pastiche to the principal and side elevations. Certainly the gabled extensions which project forward of the principal elevation do the building no favours.

6.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 6.1 Having assessed the heritage values associated with the building, it is possible to take a more informed approach to the assessment its significance. This is usually done by attributing levels of significance to the various aspects/parts of a building or site whereby, for example, more modern or unsympathetic additions to a historic building are deemed of less significance than, say, original features.
- 6.2 In attributing levels of significance to the asset as a whole or elements of the asset, levels of significance are graded as follows:

EXCEPTIONAL *This would correspond to an individual Grade I or II* Listed Building or an element which is intact, has a special interest, and makes an important contribution to the wider significance of the building.*

HIGH *A designated heritage asset which has significance at national level, such as Grade II listed buildings or an element which is relatively intact, has a special interest and makes an important contribution to the wider significance of the building.*

MEDIUM *A non-designated heritage asset such as a Locally Listed Building which is considered to be important at a local to regional level or an element which has been altered, has less special interest, and its contribution to the wider significance of the site is less important. May include less significant parts of statutorily Listed Buildings.*

LOW *A non-designated asset important at a local level such as a building which makes a positive contribution to a Conservation Area (key building) or an element which has been significantly altered, has a low level of integrity, the special interest has been lost and it makes little contribution to the wider significance of the site.*

NEUTRAL *An element which is considered to be historically unimportant but does not have a harmful impact on a heritage asset. This may include insignificant interventions to designated and non-designated heritage assets and buildings that do not make a positive contribution to a Conservation Area.*

INTRUSIVE *An element which is considered to be historically unimportant and has a harmful impact on a heritage asset.*

- 6.3 The building's overall significance falls within the medium category with later changes ranging from low in value to neutral or intrusive when it comes to the loss of historic fabric or dominant and inappropriate extensions and alterations.
- 6.4 The building stands as a prominent and distinctive local landmark, proposals which serve to secure its medium to long term future and viability whilst protecting and where possible further revealing its architectural interest should be given favourable consideration.

7.0 PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

- 7.1 The restaurant closed in 2021 and the building has since come under new ownership and that of another highly regarded and experienced restaurant operator who intends to invest significantly in the building with the intention of enhancing its viability.
- 7.2 To that end, the proposals broadly comprise the demolition of large sections of the existing modern extensions primarily to the principal and west side elevations (refer to drawing 1004/A3) and the construction of new ground, ground and first and first floor extensions to the principal elevation, west side and rear north elevations.

Externally, the proposals also include some works to the terraces and car parking areas with supplementary landscaping. Internally there are substantial alteration and refurbishment works proposed with some rearrangement of rooms etc and the formation of a large function room at first floor level. The proposals unashamedly seek to maximise the commercial potential of the building.

- 7.3 The proposals have been separated for assessment purposes as follows:
1. Demolitions
 2. Extensions and alterations
 3. Landscaping and external works
 4. Internal alterations

8.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 To follow is a detailed critical analysis of the proposed changes. The purpose of this analysis is to manage the change using methodology as advocated by Historic England (2008) and is categorised as follows:

Proposal: Brief description of the proposal together with an assessment to establish whether there is enough information to comprehensively understand the impact of the proposals on the character and historic significance of the building

Impact: Consideration of the effects of the proposal on authenticity and integrity of the heritage values attributed to the building.

Reversibility: Whilst the quality of the architecture and intended specification of materials is intended to last the test of time, this is not always a given. Should the proposal not perform as expected, consideration is given to the ease of reversibility so as not to prejudice alternative future solutions.

Mitigation: Consideration of the necessity mitigate the impact of loss of any element of historic significance resulting from the proposals.

Compensation: Consideration of any consequential conservation-based benefits resulting from the proposal.

8.2 Demolitions

8.2.1 The demolition works comprise removal of the entire modern extension comprising the Dining Area to the principal elevation and the modern Lobby to the west side of the building. The submitted plans adequately demonstrate the scope of these proposals.

8.2.2 The demolition works appear limited to the modern extensions which conceal the original building line and significant architectural features. The impact of the proposals is entirely positive where the loss of these modern extensions will reveal original external features and facades.

8.2.3 Care should be taken together with steps to ensure the nature of the works is fully understood in order to limit the damage caused when removing the extensions.

8.3 Extensions and Alterations

8.3.1 The proposals comprise a substantial extension to the principal elevation broadly in place of the current extension. This extension is annotated as being a 'glazed single storey winter garden extension' and has a balcony over with glass restraint panels. The drawings suggest that this extension will afford visibility through to the original building line allowing appreciation of both the architectural features and historic plan form and is a significant improvement over the current extension.

8.3.2 To the west elevation, a small extension at ground floor extends to a large extension at first floor in order to facilitate the provision of a feature staircase leading to the new Function Room. Notably, this extension covers the existing windows at first floor level. The architect has sought to mitigate the impact of this by apparently retaining the existing surrounds and mullions which will form the link through to the Function Room and propose to re-use the windows on the façade of the extension at first floor level.

8.3.3 To the rear north elevation, a new service staircase is proposed between ground and first floor level, which includes a small first floor extension to accommodate the stair half-landing. This elevation is very much utilitarian in nature and the architect has used this to conceal the 'back of house' features.

- 8.3.4 The extensions are undoubtedly large with the clear intent of providing large areas of public space, improving access to allow customers to use larger areas of the building and improving back of house areas. In contrast to the extensions they replace, the proposals meet the principles of conservation in terms of honesty, subservience, and aspiring to be of a quality of design and execution which can be appreciated now and in the future.
- 8.3.5 The proposals include other alterations to the exterior of the building which can be summarised as follows:
1. Full glazing to gable and glazing to side of existing pitched roof single storey extension to the Function Room. This is an existing low-quality extension which is very much pastiche in nature (refer to Figures 6 and 7). The proposals clearly seek to re-design this extension and provide it with a more honest, modern and lightweight appearance, which is a considerable improvement.
 2. Metal cladding and glass doors to side east entrance. The existing side entrance has a low quality modern yet dated projecting canopy, again these proposals seek to replace this with a more appropriate contemporary feature more aligned to the principles of modern conservation.
- 8.3.6 The proposals clearly impact on the architectural interest and the setting of the building in a different way to the previous extensions. Setting is defined within the National Planning Policy Framework as *'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral'*.
- 8.3.7 The proposals are not considered to be causative of harm in terms of impact on the building's architectural interest and its setting is preserved and merely changed by the proposals.

8.4 Landscaping and External Works

- 8.4.1 The proposals comprise extensions to the terracing in order to accommodate the new extension and provide external hardstanding to the front of the building. The existing car park to the east is to be rearranged in what appears to be a more linear arrangement and there is to be a new car park formed to the south east paddock which is located in the same area as a previous overflow car park.
- 8.4.2 Due to previous alterations, the proposals do not appear to impact on any elements of historic significance. Previous works to the terraces and external steps appear to have been fairly utilitarian in nature and visually disjointed whereas the proposals open the front of the building up and will serve to improve its setting when viewed from the public realm and the access road.
- 8.4.3 The proposed new car park lies on an existing lawned area formerly used for filter beds and ancillary garden structures and was previously used for parking. The proposals do not impact on any elements of heritage value or the setting of the building.

8.5 Internal Alterations

- 8.5.1 The internal alteration works are extensive and invasive with substantial room rearrangement at ground floor level and the removal of historic internal walls at first floor level.
- 8.5.2 Acknowledging that the building is a non-designated heritage asset where its value is primarily limited to its presence in the community and its architectural interest, proposals which involve internal alterations with the purpose of providing the building with a commercially viable future and thus contributing to its ongoing presence and maintaining its architectural interest, can not legitimately be considered harmful on balance.

9.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The building formerly known as Nutters Restaurant and originally known as Wolstenholme Hall is an original mid to late C19th manor house in the Gothic Revival style.
- 9.2 The building has served a number of uses over the years and received significant modern intervention in the form of internal and external alterations and extensions which have been harmful in nature. Nonetheless it retains its historic character and architectural interest and has been identified by Rochdale Borough Council as a non-designated heritage asset due to its architectural and historic significance at local level.
- 9.3 The building operated as a successful restaurant until late 2021 when it was closed down. It now has a new owner/operator who is a successful restaurateur in their own right. Their intentions are to invest significantly in the building in order for it to meet their operational aspirations and maximise its future viability.
- 9.4 The proposals comprise demolitions, alterations and extensions which will significantly alter the external appearance of the building and therefore have the potential to impact on its historic and architectural significance. This document has been prepared in order to assess the impact of the proposals.
- 9.5 The proposals are consistent with the objectives as set out in local planning policy in terms of demonstrably preserving and enhancing the special architectural, artistic, historic and archaeological significance of a non-designated heritage asset.
- 9.6 Whilst this document contends that the proposals are not causative of harm to the building's significance, it is acknowledged to be a subjective opinion and, on that basis, it is further contended that any perceived harm is decisively outweighed by the benefits of the proposals when considering their contribution to the building's ongoing viability and importance as a local heritage asset.
- 9.7 The proposals are also consistent with the objectives set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (CLG, 2019. S16 Para 185) specifically:
 - a. the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

- b. the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- c. the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- d. opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

9.8 It is therefore recommended that the application is permitted subject to conditions set out in accordance with Paragraph 57 of the National Planning Policy Framework ensuring that they are:

- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- b) directly related to the development; and
- c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

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