

PROPOSED CONVERSION AT 188-190 SPOTLAND ROAD

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF ROCHDALE



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

GARRY MILLER
Heritage Consultancy

PROPOSED CONVERSION AT 188-190 SPOTLAND ROAD

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF ROCHDALE

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

JANUARY 2025

GARRY MILLER

Heritage Consultancy

Crosby House, 412 Prescott Road, Eccleston Hill, St Helens, Lancashire WA10 3BT

Telephone: 01744 739675

garrymillerhbc@gmail.com

© Garry Miller 2025

GARRY MILLER HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is a heritage consultant, architectural historian and published author who has spent more than 40 years studying and working with buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as ‘scholarship as its best’ by *Country Life* (June 2003), and ‘well analysed and presented’ in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); and was widely cited in the 2006 *Buildings of England* volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings, in particular the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment. His area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and reports on more than 150 buildings or sites are produced annually.

THIS REPORT

Date of issue: January 2025

Purpose: for planning submission

Text: Garry Miller

Site survey: Peter Miller

CONTENTS

1: Executive Summary	5
2: The Site	6
3: The Proposal/Scope of this Report	8
4: The Conservation Area	10
5: The Application Property	13
6: Summary of Significance	18
7: Planning Policy Context	19
8: Impact of the Proposal	20

1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed works at numbers 188-190 Spotland Road, Spotland, in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The premises were formerly the Carter's Rest public house, which closed many years ago, but were built around 1800 as part of a trio of weaver's cottages. The building is now vacant.

The property stands within Spotland Bridge Conservation Area and is itself considered to be a non-designated heritage asset by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

Proposals have been submitted to Rochdale MBC for conversion of the property to seven self-contained flats. The principal consideration arising is the impact upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the conservation area as the designated heritage asset; the impact upon the application building, as it is non-designated, is the secondary matter. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify this significance and how the proposal affects it.

The significance of Spotland Bridge conservation area derives from its character and appearance as a textile producing district that symbolises the industry's evolution from the 18th to the 20th centuries and whose core is dominated by giant mills surrounded by ancillary industrial buildings and the terraced housing of the working population. This significance is therefore embodied in the buildings of this period and their relationship to each other within the area's roads, streets and spaces.

The significance of the former Carter's Arms derives from its architectural and historic interest in the local context (i.e. to Rochdale) as a pair of former weavers' cottages of around 1800 that were converted to a public house probably in the late 19th century. It is testimony to the cottage origins of the cotton industry in Rochdale, and how the building was put to a new use when the industry became entirely factory-based. Given alteration and dereliction of the interior, this significance is embodied essentially in the building's external envelope, which also represents its contribution to the conservation area. This is however placed at risk by its long disuse and consequent deterioration.

The proposal will deliver a sustainable, active use for the application building and thereby secure its future. Externally, no extensions or major alterations are necessary to achieve the proposal, and the building's appearance will be enhanced by restoration works and also by reinstatement of the original weavers' windows. Small conservation rooflights will be introduced on the rear elevation, which represents a minor, innocuous change. The interior will inevitably undergo greater change to secure the conversion, but given its alteration and present derelict state, and the fact that it does not contribute to the conservation area as it is not seen publicly, the works cannot be regarded as harmful.

It is therefore concluded the proposal will have a positive effect upon the conservation area and the application building. The significance of both will be enhanced and hence the proposal merits approval without delay.

2: THE SITE

The application property is located amid an urban area around one mile northwest of Rochdale town centre, Greater Manchester. It comprises numbers 188-190 Spotland Road, which were formerly the Carter's Rest public house. The licensed premises closed many years ago and the building is now vacant. The property belongs to a what was originally a row of three weavers' cottages located immediately west of the junction with Silver Street.



Map 1. Location of the application building



1. The application property (indicated) is part of trio of former weaver's cottages, and was converted to a pub at a later date



2: The building viewed from the rear on Silver Street

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Proposed development

Proposals have been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for conversion of the application property to flats.

3.2 Designation

The property stands within Spotland Fold Conservation Area and is also considered to be a non-designated heritage asset by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

3.3 Heritage impact

The principal consideration arising is the impact upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the conservation area as the designated heritage asset; the impact upon the application building, as it is non-designated, is the secondary matter.

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 207 of Chapter 16 (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*) the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised, December 2024) states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the particular significance of the heritage asset affected. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to identify the significance of the conservation area and the contribution made by the application building, and to assess how this will be affected by the proposal.

In accordance with paragraph 207, the level of detail is considered proportionate to the importance of the heritage assets and no more than necessary to understand the impact of the proposal.

This report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation submitted in support of the application.

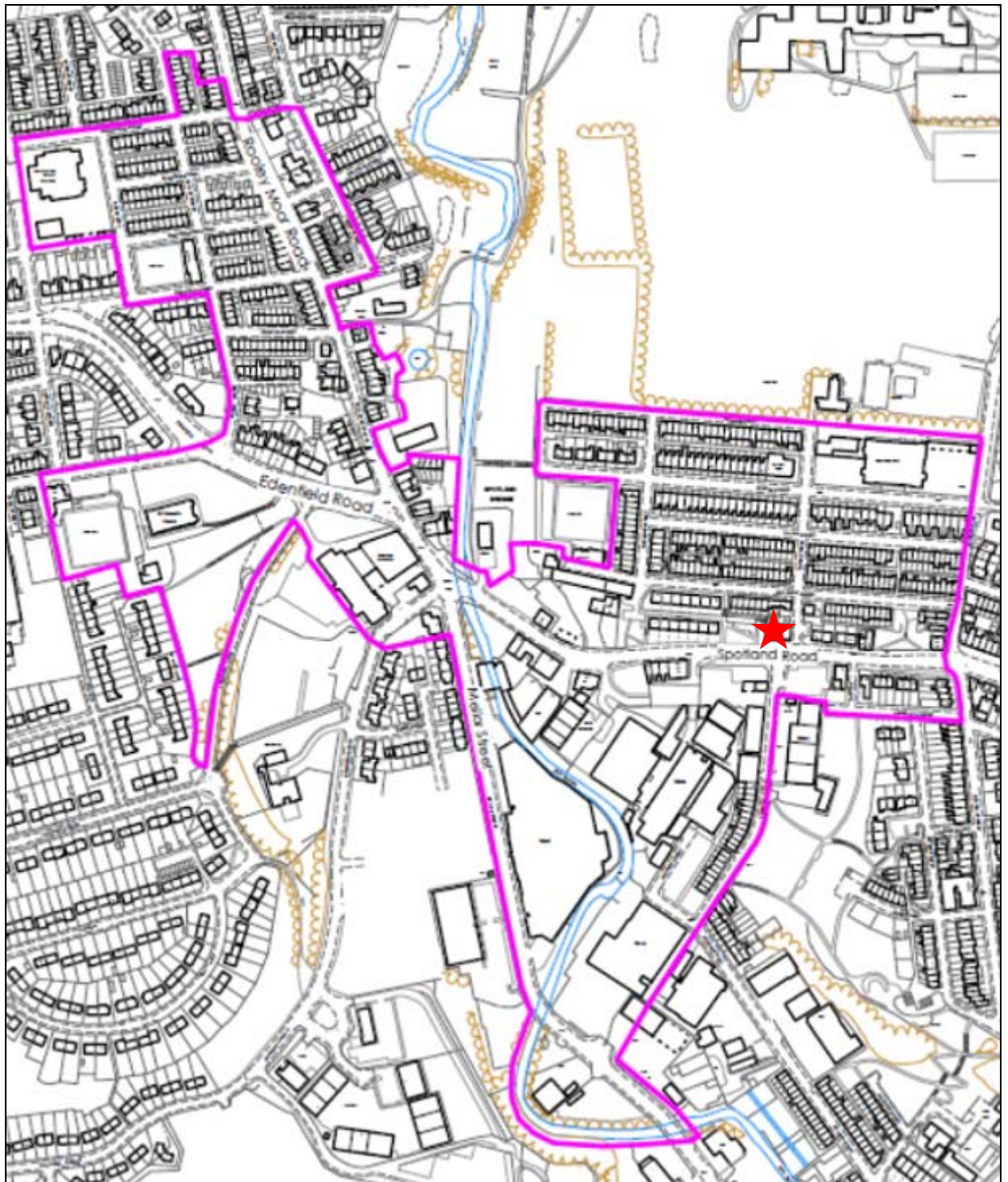
3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

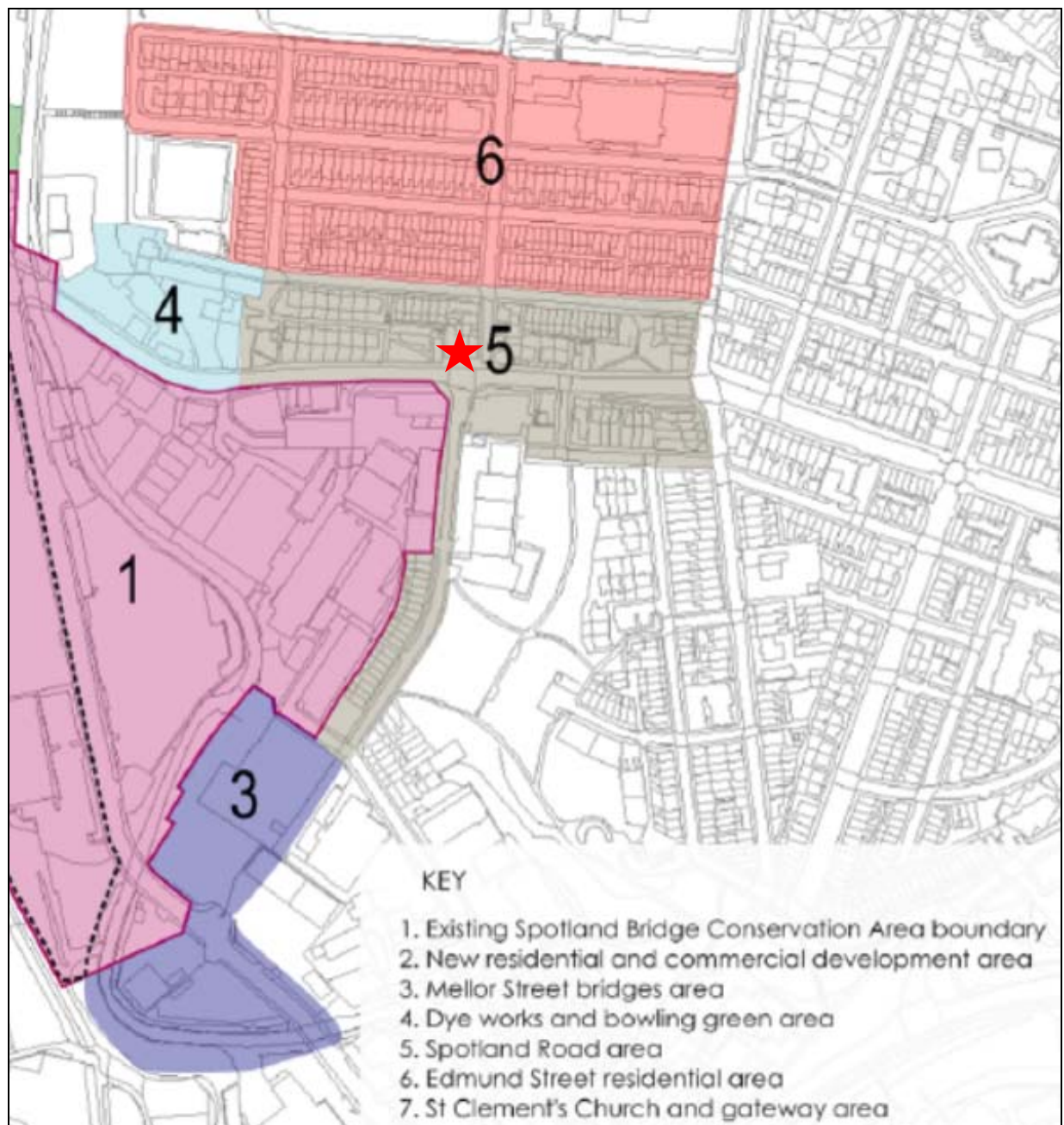
1. A concise, proportionate description of the conservation area (Section 4) and the contribution made by the application building (Section 5)
2. A summary of their heritage significance (Section 6)
3. A summary of the planning policy context in which the application will be determined (Section 7)
4. Evaluation within this context of the proposal's impact upon the significance of the heritage assets (Section 8).

4: THE CONSERVATION AREA

Spotland Bridge Conservation Area covers a large irregular area, essentially following the line of Spotland Road along with Rooley Moor Road, Edenfield Road and Mellor Street. It was first designated in 2007 and extended in 2013. Its special interest is that of a grouping of textile mills and ancillary buildings that form what has been described as a '*remarkable townscape*' representing the evolution of the local cotton industry from modest Georgian beginnings to its Edwardian zenith. At the core of the conservation area is an impressive group formed by the listed Spotland Bridge New Mill and Spotland New Mill, which dominate the surrounding streetscene. The application property lies on the eastern edge of the conservation area, amid a residential district characterised by 19th century terraced housing.



Map 2. Conservation area boundary map, with the application property indicated



Map 3. Location of the property within the Spotland Road zone of the conservation area

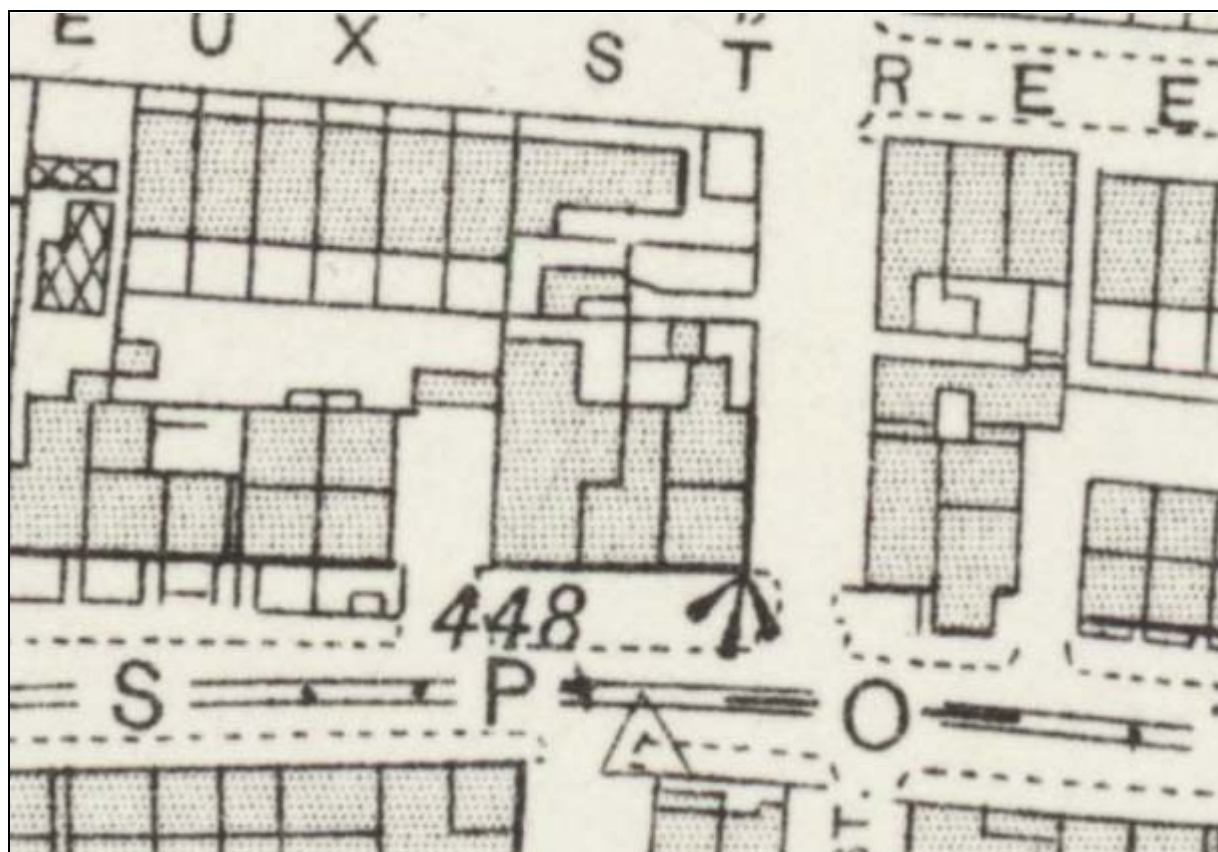
5: THE APPLICATION PROPERTY

5.1 Historical background

The property forms part of an altered row of what were originally three weavers' cottages. Blocked long mullioned windows on the topmost floor testify to their original use. The date is probably around 1800, hence they belong to the era when cotton still retained its cottage industry origins. The two cottages were probably converted to a pub in the later 19th century, by which time the factory system had completely taken over. It is understood the Carter's Arms closed its doors more than two decades ago.



3. The blocked mullioned windows on the upper floor denote the building's origins as weavers' cottages



Map 4. The application building as depicted by the 25-inch OS map of 1908

5.2 Description

The property comprises the left (number 190) and middle (188) cottage of the trio, the third (186) being used as takeaway premises. While 188 retains its cottage appearance, number 190 underwent much alteration when converted to a public house. The entrance has an ornate doorcase which formerly bore the name of the pub, with a large three-light window to its left. A tall two-light window has been inserted on the first floor, while a small narrow window over the entrance may be more recent. Ground floor windows in both properties are boarded and all other visible frames are modern; the ground floor window of 188 has also been enlarged. The side elevation of 190 is rendered with four ground floor windows and three above, most of them narrow and appearing to be later insertions. At its rear is a two-storey outrigger, also rendered and probably dating from the pub conversion. The remainder of the rear of both properties is of brick with altered windows and faces a derelict yard. The interior is also derelict throughout.

5.3 Contribution to the conservation area

In its present state, the property does not contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Rochdale MBC's 2013 report produced on extensions to the conservation area appears to incorrectly identify the building (Page 7) as number 170; it states that as a weaver's cottage that became a public house it is a significant asset, but is at risk 'through neglect' and detracts from the area.



4. The contrasting appearance of 190 (left) and 188



5. Doorcase of 190 suggests a late 19th century date for the conversion to a pub



6. Side elevation of 190 is rendered with inserted narrow windows



7. Rear of the properties, showing outrigger behind 190



8. Interior of 190, looking to front



9. Interior of 188, also looking to front

6: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

6.1 Rationale

Paragraph 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Significance is defined in the NPPF Glossary as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

6.2 The conservation area

The significance of Spotland Bridge conservation area derives from its character and appearance as a textile producing district that symbolises the industry's evolution from the 18th to the 20th centuries and whose core is dominated by giant mills surrounded by ancillary industrial buildings and the terraced housing of the working population. This significance is therefore embodied in the buildings that belong to this period and their relationship to each other within the area's roads, streets and spaces.

6.3 The application property

The significance of the former Carter's Arms derives from its architectural and historic interest in the local context (i.e. to Rochdale) as a pair of former weavers' cottages of around 1800 that were converted to a public house probably in the late 19th century. It is testimony to the cottage origins of the cotton industry in Rochdale, and how the building was put to a new use when the industry became entirely factory-based. Given alteration and dereliction of the interior, this significance is embodied essentially in the building's external envelope, which also represents its contribution to the conservation area. This is however placed at risk by its long disuse and consequent deterioration.

7: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 Statutory duty

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of a conservation area.

7.2 Relevant policies

Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides the guidance on how the statutory duty is to be put into practice. Paragraph 210 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation*
- *The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, and*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*

Regarding designated heritage assets, paragraph 212 states that ‘*great weight*’ should be given to their conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be; and that significance can be lost through development within its setting. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

In the case of non-designated heritage assets, paragraph 216 requires simply a balanced planning judgment that weighs any harm or loss against the significance of the application property.

Locally, Policy P2a (Protecting and Enhancing Character, Landscape and Heritage) of the Rochdale Core Strategy, formally adopted on October 19, 2016, states that key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, will be conserved, enhanced and promoted, including consideration of their wider settings.

8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

8.1 Summary of the scheme

The application seeks consent for conversion of the building to seven self-contained flats along with associated external and internal alterations, as fully detailed on the submitted drawings.



15. Proposed front elevations

8.2 Its effect

The proposal will deliver a sustainable, active use for the application building and thereby secure its future. As established in this report, its significance and contribution to the conservation area resides in the building's external envelope. No extensions or major alterations to this are necessary to achieve the proposal, and the building's appearance will be enhanced by restoration works and also by reinstatement of the original weavers' windows. Small conservation rooflights will be introduced on the rear elevation, which represents a minor, innocuous change. The interior will

inevitably undergo greater change to secure the conversion, but given its alteration and present derelict state, and the fact that it does not contribute to the conservation area as it is not seen publicly, these works cannot be regarded as harmful.

8.3 Concluding statement

For the reasons given above, it is concluded the proposal will have a positive effect upon the conservation area and the application building. The significance of both will be enhanced, and the proposal therefore merits approval without delay.