

STUDIO OL3

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Design & Access Statement and Heritage Impact Statement

Site address:
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PROPOSED COMMERCIAL SPACE AND FIRST FLOOR CONVERSION TO APARTMENT

Description of Work

The proposal includes the full refurbishment of the existing building to provide a commercial space on the ground floor level which will accommodate a flood defence warning hub, as well as the proposed internal works to the first floor space will be used as a new apartment space. The proposed refurbishment includes for structural repairs to the existing structure, replacement of the existing doors and windows with new casements, style to compliment the existing building character, as well as internal works to improve the spaces and make it suitable for the proposed use.

Use

The site is currently vacant but has previously but the last known use for plot 4 was a domestic property, with plot 6 last being used as an architect's practise.

Amount of Development

The proposed development includes for the knocking through from Plots 4 through to Plot 6 in order to create one building, with the Ground floor space being allocated for the commercial space to house the flood defence warning hub, and the first floor space providing a private apartment space, both with separate entrances.

The development will also include for the full refurbishment and repair works as stated above to bring the building up to current standards and improve the aesthetics.

The existing basement levels of each plot will also be refurbished to create new storage spaces for the flood defence warning hub.

The external area to the rear of the property will also be receiving a new raised decked area to provide an external terrace with a metal structure balustrade.

Layout

The ground floor of the development includes for an entrance from the existing Plot 6 entrance door directly into new open space which will provide a commercial space for the Flood defence warning hub, with a soft seating area to the front of the entrance area and desk space to the rear of the plot.

Access into the ground floor space of the existing plot 4 will be provided by the new large opening being created between the two existing plots by removing the existing party wall structure and installing new structural support elements which will be specified by a structural engineer.

The ground floor commercial space within the existing plot 4 will include more communal space for desks and seating, along with a new DDA compliant accessible WC to the front of the building, and a new tea point to the rear of the plot which will be installed into the existing single storey kitchen area.

A new external communal space will be provided with the installation of the new raised decking area which can be accessed both directly from the tea point area via an external door, as well as externally from new external steps which will lead down to the existing street level.

The existing basement levels will be retained as storage spaces and be refurbished to create a safer and more useable space, with the storage area underneath plot 6 being accessed via a replacement external floor door from the access path down from the street

level and the basement level underneath plot 4 being accessed via a refurbished internal staircase from the ground floor commercial space opposite the new tea point.

The existing access door to Plot 4 will be allocated to providing a separate ground floor access to a new staircase leading up to the first floor level containing the new apartment. The new first floor space has the staircase leading directly into the open space, with the stairs landing in the living space to the rear of the plot and the kitchen/dining space sitting in the front section of the plot, with a small storage cupboard sitting directly over the staircase next to the kitchen area.

The new first floor space sitting directly over the existing plot 6 space will include a new bedroom space accessible from the living room area, with a storage space accessed directly off the bedroom towards the front of the plot, as well as a new bathroom space which can be accessed from both the bedroom space and the shared dining space.

Scale

The overall scale of the proposal will be staying the same as no extensions are included within the proposed application.

The existing basement has two internal spaces with areas of 52 m² / 559 ft², with a low ceiling height of under 2m.

The new commercial space being created on the ground floor level has an area of 51 m² / 549 ft² with an average ceiling height of 2.4m. The area contains the large open space being approx. 6.9m x 7.7m, with a Disabled WC being 2.7m x 1.5m, and the single storey rear section of the ground floor which contains the tea point area, which is 2.2m x 1.9m. The remaining area of the Ground floor is allocated for the entrance hallway for the First Floor access staircase at 4m x 1m.

The first floor space consists of the open kitchen living space approx. 4.9m wide by 6.9m long, with direct access 3.7m x 4.2m and a bathroom accessed from both spaces, with dimensions 2.4m by 2.6m.

The external terrace area has an area of 17m² / 183ft², with dimensions of 7.4m long by 2.5m deep, and sits approx. 1.3m above the external ground level with a balustrade sitting 1.1m above the finished terrace level.

Landscaping

The only external works will be the new raised terrace area to the rear of the property, which will have a composite decking finish, including external access steps with matching finish to the decked area and a new 1.1m high balustrade to the terrace perimeter and edges of steps to provide fall protection.

The exposed external sides underneath the raised decking will be closed off using galvanised mesh panels in between steel posts.

Appearance

The appearance of the proposal has been carefully considered to ensure that the proposal fits in with the existing structure as well as the surrounding buildings.

The local vernacular style is mostly stone built domestic dwellings with grey slate roofs, and stone detailing around windows, doors and corbels.

The main external works include for repairs and refurbishment works to the existing façade to bring the property back to a more structurally sound and aesthetically pleasing structure.

Repairs to the façade and external envelope include the cracks to the existing façade being infilled using new cementitious grout beading, stone cornice guttering to be repaired and re-lined, all roof tiles to be replaced with new concrete tiles to match existing, existing damaged rainwater goods to be replaced with new cast aluminium rainwater pipes and Ogee style guttering, as well as all existing timber doors and windows which are in a state of disrepair to be replaced with new heritage style uPVC windows which will also have better performance ratings for the end users. The doors and windows will also have a Sage Smooth finish to tie in with the heritage look and feel of the existing building.

Access

Existing access into the site is directly off the junction of Todmorden road and Halifax Road. The existing pedestrian accesses into the internal spaces will be retained, with access into the new communal space and basement storage area being provided from Halifax Road, as well as providing access to the rear of the property and new raised decking terrace area which also links to the rear access door into the tea station within the single storey section.

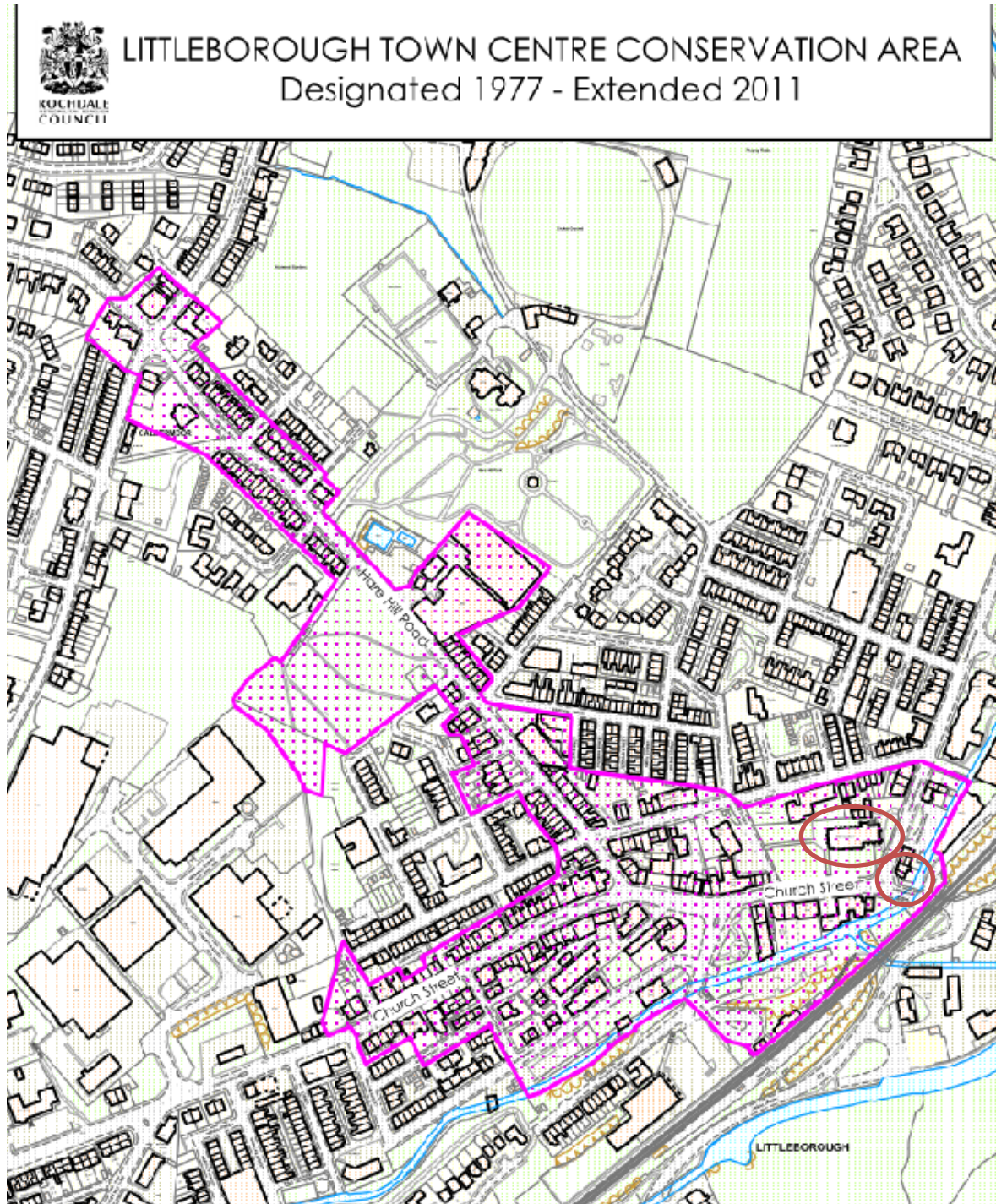
There is no vehicle parking attached to the site, however there are extremely close amenities and public transport options, with a local Co-Op across the road approx. 4 minute walk away, along with a bus stop a 2 minute walk along Halifax Road and Littleborough train station approx. 4 minute walk away which provide direct links into Rochdale town centre as well as Manchester city centre at a travel time of 26 minutes.



Proposed Google Earth Screenshot Indicating Location of Site

Heritage Impact

The properties at 4 and 6 Todmorden Road are not listed but do fall within the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area and are adjacent to the Grade 2 listed Holy Trinity Church.



- 5. Statement of Significance
- 5.1 Introduction - Understanding Heritage Significance

5.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) requires that:

200. 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....

201. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

5.1.2 The Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) defines "Significance" (for heritage policy):

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.

5.1.3 In assessing the heritage significance of numbers 4 and 6 Todmorden Road and there setting, regard has been had to the special heritage interest of the building, as required by the NPPF, and the heritage values, as defined in Historic England's Conservation Principles (2008), which asserts that a tangible heritage asset can have the following four values:

Evidential value - the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

Historical value - the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

Aesthetic value - the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

Communal value - the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

5.1.4 Conservation Principles also clarifies that:

The significance of a place embraces all the diverse cultural and natural heritage values that people associate with it, or which prompt them to respond to it. These values tend to grow in strength and complexity over time, as understanding deepens and people's perceptions of a place evolve.

In order to identify the significance of a place, it is necessary first to understand its fabric, and how and why it has changed over time; and then to consider:

- who values the place, and why they do so
- how those values relate to its fabric
- their relative importance
- whether associated objects contribute to them

- the contribution made by the setting and context of the place
- how the place compares with others sharing similar values.

Understanding and articulating the values and significance of a place is necessary to inform decisions about its future. The degree of significance determines what, if any, protection, including statutory designation, is appropriate under law and policy.

5.1.5 Conservation Principles goes on to state that:

4.1 Change in the historic environment is inevitable, caused by natural processes, the wear and tear of use, and people's responses to social, economic and technological change.

4.2 Conservation is the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations.

4.3 Conservation is achieved by all concerned with a significant place sharing an understanding of its significance, and using that understanding to:

judge how its heritage values are vulnerable to change take the actions and impose the constraints necessary to sustain, reveal and reinforce those values

mediate between conservation options, if action to sustain one heritage value could conflict with action to sustain another ensure that the place retains its authenticity – those attributes and elements which most truthfully reflect and embody the heritage values attached to it.

4.4 Action taken to counter harmful effects of natural change, or to minimise the risk of disaster, should be timely, proportionate to the severity and likelihood of identified consequences, and sustainable.

4.5 Intervention may be justified if it increases understanding of the past, reveals or reinforces particular heritage values of a place, or is necessary to sustain those values for present and future generations, so long as any resulting harm is decisively outweighed by the benefits.

4.6 New work should aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued both now and in the future. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but should respect the significance of a place in its setting.

5.1.6 In Historic England's Informed Conservation, Kate Clark advises that:

Significance lies at the heart of every conservation action, which for the historic environment means the recognition of a public value in what may well be private property. Historic buildings and their landscapes are significant for many different cultural reasons: for their architecture, for their archaeological significance, for their aesthetic qualities, for their association with people and memories, beliefs and events or simply because they are old. They can tell us about technology, innovation, conflicts and triumphs. Their interest may lie in the materials used or in the decorative finishes, in the grouping of landscape, building and place. That significance may be personal, local, regional, national or international; it may be academic, economic or social...

5.1.7 Important considerations in assessing significance are authenticity and integrity. These are defined as:

Authenticity is a measure of truthfulness. Understanding of the concept of authenticity is guided by ICOMOS's Nara Document on Authenticity (1994)

Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of cultural heritage and its attributes

5.1.8 Historic England has recently issued an advice note Statements of Heritage Significance (October 2019) which explores the assessment of significance of heritage assets as part of a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance precedes designing the proposal. This Heritage Statement incorporates the advice in the advice note.

The Advice Note recommends:

For each heritage asset, describe the various interests:

Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architectural and artistic interest

These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved.

More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of

the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types.

Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

Historic Interest

An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

Having described the various interests, assess the level of the general significance of the heritage asset and the particular contribution to that significance of any features which would be affected by the proposal, or of its setting if it, too, is affected by the proposal.

Again in the development of proposals and during works, more information may become available which increases the understanding of the heritage asset, and of its significance. The opportunity may usefully be taken to re-appraise significance in such cases.

The applicant can assist the LPA's decision-making by setting out a clear and succinct explanation of the impact of the proposal on significance and how negative impact on significance has been avoided, by continuing to follow the staged approach, as shown below.

5.2 Levels of Significance

5.2.1 There is no definitive grading system or methodology for assessing the levels of significance or values of heritage assets but the most reliable methodologies have clearly defined criteria for grading, based upon the designations and other values of the heritage assets.

5.2.2 This report uses the levels of significance and their criteria (Appendix 2) which are recommended in Volume 11 Section 3 Part 2 (Cultural Heritage) of Highways England's Design Manual for Roads and Bridges 22016 (DMRB). Although the DMRB has been withdrawn by the government, the levels of significance and their criteria remain valid. The DMRB recommends that heritage assets should be assessed into one of five categories, based upon specified criteria. The categories are:

- Very High;
- High;
- Medium;
- Low;
- Negligible.

Using the criteria in the DMRB, 4 and 6 Todmorden Road have allow / negligible of Heritage Significance

5.3 Statement of Significance of 4 and 6 Todmorden Road

The properties at 4 and 6 Todmorden Road are not listed but do fall within the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area and are adjacent to the Grade 2 listed Holy Trinity Church.

They are constructed of local stone which can still be seen in outcrops around the site, and so it appears rooted in its locality. It thus has some local distinctiveness within the Littleborough area.

The buildings have been somewhat altered, with the loss of the original windows and doors to number 4, along with significant loss of original features internally. The properties have a mid /late 20th century look and feel internally currently and are in a very poor state of repair.

Neighbouring dwellings have been modernised over the years with changes to roof coverings, windows, doors and rainwater goods.

The site has no known archaeological interest.

4 and 6 Todmorden Road have allow / negligible Level of Heritage Significance

6. Relevant Heritage Policies and Guidance

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

6.1.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

6.1.2 Three over-arching objectives of the planning system for achieving sustainable development set out at Para 8, are:

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future

generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

6.1.3 In Section 1. Achieving well-designed and beautiful places it states:

131. The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

6.1.4 In Section 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment it states:

195. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

205. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

206. 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. Substantial harm to or loss of:

a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;...

208. 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.

6.1.5 The NPPF defines "Designated Heritage Assets":

A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

It defines "Setting of a heritage asset":

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.

It defines “Significance (for heritage policy)”:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The 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 Historic England Advice

6.3.1 Historic England is the national advisory body for issues affecting the historic environment. It issues much guidance to assist local planning authorities in making decisions at a local level. The most relevant are:

6.3.2 Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment

The generic over-arching guidance document is its Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment (2008). It states:

4.1 Change in the historic environment is inevitable, caused by natural processes, the wear and tear of use, and people’s responses to social, economic and technological change.

4.2 Conservation is the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations.

138. New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if:

- a. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place;
- b. the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;
- c. the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;
- d. the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future.

143 There are no simple rules for achieving quality of design in new work, although a clear and coherent relationship of all the parts to the whole, as well as to the setting into which the new work is introduced, is essential. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but will normally involve respecting the values established through an assessment of the significance of the place.

144 Quality is enduring, even though taste and fashion may change. The eye appreciates the aesthetic qualities of a place such as its scale, composition, silhouette, and proportions, and tells us whether the intervention fits comfortably in its context. Achieving quality always depends on the skill of the designer. The choice of appropriate materials, and the craftsmanship applied to their use, is particularly crucial to both durability and to maintaining the specific character of places.

6.3.4 Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets

Historic England's Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets recommends a staged approach would usually embrace the following stages, informed by the scope of the proposal:

1. Understand the form, materials and history of the affected heritage asset(s), and/ or the nature and extent of archaeological deposits
2. Understand the significance of the asset(s)

These two stages fulfil the requirement in paragraph 189 of the NPPF and are undertaken by the applicant.

3. Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance

This stage fulfils the requirement in paragraph 190 of the NPPF and is undertaken by the LPA. However, the applicant needs to be aware of impacts so that the analysis of significance submitted to the LPA, under paragraph 189, is sufficient in its level of detail.

4. Avoid, minimise and mitigate negative impact, in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF
5. Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance

6.3.5 Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning:

Historic England's Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: states:

Development proposals that affect the historic environment are much more likely to gain the necessary permissions and create successful places if they are designed with the knowledge and understanding of the significance of the heritage assets they may affect. The first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and, if relevant, the contribution of its setting to its significance. The significance of a heritage asset is the sum of its archaeological, architectural, historic, and artistic interest.

6.3.6 Making Changes to Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 2

This advice note begins:

1. The purpose of this Historic England Advice note is to provide information on repair, restoration, addition and alteration works to heritage assets to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in

implementing historic environment legislation, the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). In addition to these documents, this advice should be read in conjunction with the relevant Good Practice Advice and Historic England advice notes. Alternative approaches may be equally acceptable, provided they are demonstrably compliant with legislation and national policy objectives.

Conclusion

The proposed refurbishment works will bring the buildings back into useful life and give them a new economical input into the local community. It brings in policies of the NPPF of economic value, in that these buildings are unoccupied and have been for some time so these works will bring them back to life. Social benefits in the GF use a flood community hub open to the wider community of Littleborough and further field to teach on flood defence and how to implement these measures and give a meeting space. Environmental give the refurbishment is proposed to enhance the properties and improve insulation levels and target being net zero carbon with the upgrades.

The refurbishments are proposed to be in keeping with the area and utilise heritage style upgrades matching / bettering those within proximity.

With the properties not being listed and the heritage impact being low / negligible significance, we feel the benefits from the upgrade works far out way any impact to the conservation area.