

Heritage Statement

In Support of Planning Application for
122–124 Bury New Road, Heywood, OL10 4RG

Proposal: Change of use from Public House (Sui Generis) to 2 no. shop units (Class E) at ground floor and 2 no. self-contained flats (Class C3) at first floor

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the change of use of the building at 122–124 Bury New Road, Heywood. The property, historically operating as the “Hark to Towler” public house, is recognised as a non-designated heritage asset owing to its late 19th-century origins and contribution to the local townscape.
- 1.2 The purpose of this statement is to assess the building’s heritage significance, consider the potential impact of the proposed development, and demonstrate compliance with the relevant national and local planning policies, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) and Rochdale’s adopted planning policy framework.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023)

- 2.1.1 Paragraph 207 requires local planning authorities to consider the significance of any heritage asset affected by a proposal, including non-designated assets.
- 2.1.2 Paragraph 216 confirms that the effect of development on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account, with a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm and the asset’s overall significance.

2.2 Local Planning Policy

- 2.2.1.1 Rochdale Borough Council does not operate a formal list of non-designated heritage assets, but Core Strategy policies P2 (Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage) and P3 (Improving design of new development), together with the Council’s Heritage SPD, support the conservation of locally significant buildings.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1 The building first appears on the 1893 Ordnance Survey Map, confirming its late 19th-century origin. Constructed as a public house, it historically served as a community hub, providing a place of social gathering and contributing to the vitality of the Summit Local Centre.
- 3.2 Architecturally, the property displays features typical of modest Victorian vernacular design. These include symmetrical elevations, timber sash windows at the first floor, painted rendered walls, and restrained decorative detailing. Although relatively simple, these features contribute positively to the local townscape, especially along Bury New Road, where the building's scale, proportions, and frontage complement the mixed commercial and residential setting of the Summit Local Centre.
- 3.3 In heritage terms, the building is significant as a surviving example of a late Victorian public house of modest scale, which continues to make a positive contribution to the character and historic identity of Heywood.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The application proposes the sensitive adaptation of the building to secure its long-term reuse. At ground floor, the former public house will be converted into two shop units falling within Class E, each with independent access from Bury New Road. This will ensure an active frontage and maintain the commercial role of the building within the local centre. At first floor, the building will be converted into two self-contained flats: a two-bedroom unit suitable for up to three people and a one-bedroom unit for single occupancy. Access to the flats will be from the rear of the building, ensuring a clear separation from the commercial uses below.
- 4.2 Externally, alterations will be minimal. Works include the removal of the existing signage and installation of new signage in the form of modest built-up letters in a traditional style, the repair and repainting of rendered elevations to match existing finishes, and the retention and repair of timber sash windows, with like-for-like replacements where necessary. Bin and cycle storage will be provided to the rear in a discreet location. Importantly, no upward extension, demolition, or alteration to the roofline is proposed.

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE HERITAGE IMPACT

- 5.1 The proposals have been developed with sensitivity to the building's heritage significance. The principal architectural features, including the symmetrical façade and timber sash windows, will be retained and enhanced through repair. The rendered elevations will be refreshed, ensuring the property is well maintained and presented positively within the streetscape. The new signage will be traditional in approach and proportionate in scale, ensuring it does not detract from the building's character.

- 5.2 Internally, the conversion works required to deliver the new residential units will have no adverse impact on the external character or heritage value of the building. The scheme does not introduce major structural alterations or remove key historic fabric. By maintaining the building's form, elevational treatment, and active commercial frontage, the proposals ensure the building continues to make a positive contribution to the Summit Local Centre.
- 5.3 The reuse of the building also represents an important conservation outcome. Vacant heritage assets are at risk of deterioration, and the proposals provide a viable and sustainable new use that will ensure the building's long-term future. On this basis, the impact of the proposals is assessed as neutral to positive, with no harm caused to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The property at 122–124 Bury New Road is a non-designated heritage asset of local value, notable for its modest Victorian character and its historic use as a public house. The proposed scheme has been carefully designed to respect this significance. External alterations are minimal and sympathetic, while internal changes deliver a viable reuse without impacting the building's heritage contribution.
- 6.2 The proposals are fully consistent with paragraphs 207 and 216 of the NPPF (2023), as well as Core Strategy Policies P2 and P3. They recognise the significance of the asset, avoid harm, and secure its long-term preservation through active use. The balance of judgement required by the NPPF therefore weighs clearly in favour of approval.
- 6.3 In heritage terms, the scheme represents a positive and sustainable outcome, ensuring the continued presence of this locally significant building within the townscape of Heywood. On this basis, the proposals should be considered wholly acceptable and supported by Rochdale Borough Council.