



GMAAS
Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service
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Rachel Carney
Principal Planning Officer (Growth)
Rochdale Borough Council
Number One Riverside
Smith Street
Rochdale OL16 1XU

Date: 23rd June 2025

Dear Rachel

Application 25/00519/FUL - Application for enabling works comprising site clearance, site remediation, archaeological investigations, temporary means of access(es) and temporary means of enclosure, installation of utility and drainage infrastructure and associated works in order to prepare the site for redevelopment - Hopwood Hall College, Rochdale Campus, St Mary's Gate, Rochdale OL12 6RY

Thank you for consulting GMAAS regarding the above planning application.

The application site does not contain any designated heritage assets and does not lie within a conservation area, although it is of archaeological interest. The site is associated with the early industrial development of Rochdale and may have contained a dyeworks by the mid-18th century, whilst newspaper articles dating to 1799 refer to a dye works, a fulling mill and associated buildings known as Town Mill. This large mill complex appears to have been water-powered, as indicated by the presence of a weir and headrace depicted on mid-19th-century mapping, which also shows that a steam-powered factory known as Holland Street Mill and several blocks of back-to-back workers' houses had been established in the eastern part of the application site. Any below-ground remains of these former buildings that survive intact are likely to be of archaeological interest.

The application is supported by an archaeological desk-based assessment prepared by Civic Heritage in March 2025, which describes the historical development of the application site, supported by key historic map extracts. Following consultation with GMAAS, it utilises GM Historic Environment Record data and 'grey literature' reports on relevant pieces of archaeological investigation and key publications. The report is a comprehensive and useful document that allows a clear understanding of the potential archaeological interests and an appropriate strategy to mitigate the harm of development on archaeological interests, in accordance with Policy 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The desk-based assessment concludes that the application site has high potential to contain archaeological remains of interest and warrants further archaeological investigation. GMAAS agrees with this conclusion and recommends that the site is subject to intrusive archaeological investigation in advance of development which, in the first instance, should comprise an initial phase of evaluation to establish the presence or absence of buried archaeological remains and, if present, their extent and significance.



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Should significant archaeological remains be encountered during the initial evaluation, further excavation may be required to offset the harm of the development to the buried archaeological resource, in line with the guidance provided by the National Planning Policy Framework. GMAAS accepts that any archaeological remains that do exist are not going to be of national, but of regional or local significance. As such, GMAAS would be content to see the archaeological investigation secured through a condition worded as follows:

'No development works shall take place until the applicant or their agents or their successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a Project Design that has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Project Design shall cover the following:

1. A phased programme and methodology to include:

- a) an archaeological evaluation;***
- b) pending the results of the above, a targeted open-area excavation carried out in accordance with an updated Project Design.***

2. A programme for post-investigation assessment to include:

- a) analysis of the site investigation records and finds;***
- b) production of a final report on the significance of the heritage interest recorded.***

3. Deposition of the final report with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record.

4. Dissemination of the results of the site investigation commensurate with their significance.

5. Provision for archive deposition of the report, finds and records of the site investigation.

6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved Project Design.

Reason: In accordance with NPPF Policy 218: To record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.'

The work should be carried out by an appropriately qualified contractor, funded by the applicant. GMAAS will be pleased to review the Project Design and monitor the implementation and progress of the archaeological works on behalf of Rochdale Borough Council.

Yours sincerely



Ian Miller BA FSA

Heritage Management Director

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