

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE AT THE ROYDS ARMS

ROCHDALE, GREATER MANCHESTER

ADDITIONAL HERITAGE STATEMENT

NOVEMBER 2024

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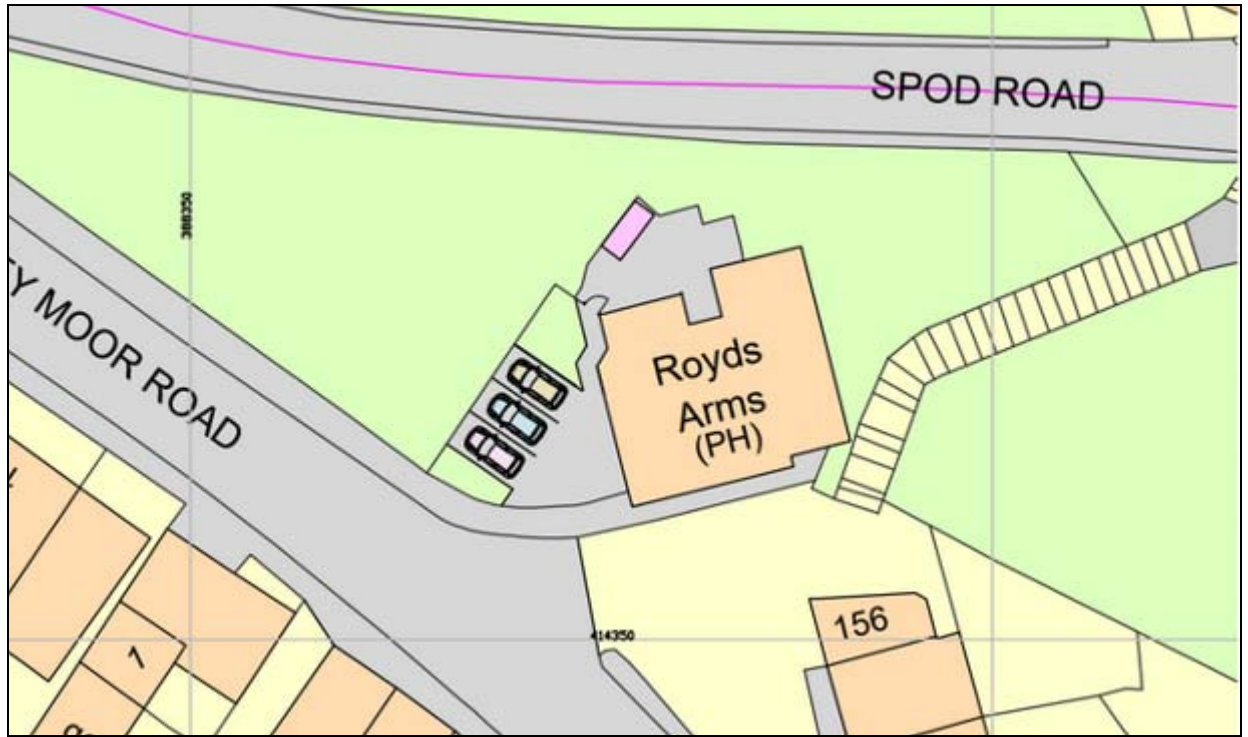
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1. The site

The Royds Arms is a former public house which is located on the eastern edge of Rooley Moor Road, Rochdale, OL12 7DQ. The property is vacant and in a derelict state.



Location of the application property

2. The proposal

The application seeks permission for the change of use of the former public house (sui generis) to create 6 self-contained residential apartments (Class C3). The application property, once converted, will provide the following accommodation:

Ground Floor: 3no. 1-bedroom Apartments

First Floor: 2no. 1-bedroom Apartments

Second Floor: 1no. 1 Bedroom Apartment

The application is supported by a detailed Planning and Heritage Statement produced by Garry Miller Heritage Consultancy in August 2024.

3. Designation/heritage impact

The application property stands within Spotland Fold Conservation Area. The building itself is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset by Rochdale MBC. The conservation area also contains the Grade II listed Spotland Methodist Church, but owing to separation distance and the nature of the proposal, it is considered its setting is unaffected.

The principal heritage consideration arising is the impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the conservation area, but in respect of any external works only as the interior of the property does not contribute to the conservation area. The impact upon the non-designated building is a secondary matter.

4. Significance of the heritage assets/impact of the proposal

This was described as follows in the August 2024 Heritage Assessment:

- ***The conservation area***

The significance of Spotland Fold conservation area derives from its character and appearance as a nucleus of cottages of 19th century date, clustered around a curve in Rooley Moor Road. It also contains the Spotland Methodist Church of 1896, which is the area's only listed building and a prominent landmark amid a community of otherwise small-scale properties.

- ***The application property***

In relative terms, as a non-designated building the significance of the application property is low. Owing to extensive alteration, this significance now derives primarily from its historical interest as a 19th century inn serving a moorland textile community, with its architectural interest limited to the contribution its external envelope makes to the surrounding conservation area streetscene.

The proposal/s impact was summarised thus:

It has been demonstrated in this report that the significance of the building in architectural terms is secondary, and resides in how the external envelope contributes to the streetscene of the conservation area. This contribution is principally made by the front and west side elevations, which are prominent in the public views along Rooley Moor Road that establish the character and appearance of the conservation area. The front elevation will remain largely unaltered under the proposal, the principal change being raising of the roof by one metre to accommodate the rooms within the roofspace. A further minor alteration is a window in the doorway to extension on the east side of the building. The west elevation is remains the same, as does the east elevation. The principal change is at the rear where a roof dormer is being introduced to light the roofspace rooms, along with a further storey above an existing single-storey later

outrigger. From the main public viewpoints, these additions will not be seen to dominate the original building and hence its positive visual contribution to the conservation area will be sustained.

5. Purpose of this report

Rochdale's conservation officer has raised objections to the proposal, considering they represented less than substantial harm to the conservation area and non-designated building. The concerns related to an increase in roof height, addition of a rear box dormer, a proposed first floor rear extension and the addition of UPVC windows. The planning officer dealing with the application has stated they are in agreement with those concerns.

The purpose of this statement is to respond to the objections, and to demonstrate how the proposal has subsequently been redesigned in order to address the principal issues that have been raised.

6. Conservation comments/response

The conservation officer's objection is dated October 21, 2024, and is reproduced below in italics, with my response in bold type. The response begins by summarising the proposal and the findings of the Heritage Assessment. It then continues:

The heritage statement concludes that these alterations have compromised the architectural interest of the building and that its interest now predominately lies in its historical role and relationship with the surrounding former textile workers' cottages.

It is agreed that the changes to the 20 th century changes to the building have resulted in the loss of some of its architectural interest. However, it is not agreed that it is no longer of architectural interest. The building's simple, function appearance and symmetrical frontage still exist, and it still clearly reads as an early 19 th century public house, built in the local vernacular style, using materials from the locality (albeit with the loss of the stone flag roof). It is considered that the building is a positive contributor to the significance, character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

It has never been suggested that the building has no architectural interest.

What has been stated is that owing to alteration, the building's significance resides more in its historical role than its architectural qualities, with the latter residing primarily in the external envelope.

The building was originally constructed as a public house and has been used for these purposes throughout its history. This use contributes to the character of the Conservation Area and the legibility of the historic settlement, with the inn sitting alongside former workers' housing. The change of use of this historic pub would

inevitably result in some loss of historic fabric and legibility of the building as a former pub. There would also be some harm to the character of the Conservation Area through the loss of this feature. Overall, the level of harm to significance stemming from the change of to the identified designated and non-designated heritage assets would be less than substantial.

The above response suggests that the change of use would be, to a degree, harmful. However it is the present disuse of the building – now approaching two years – which in fact is harmful, as it places the building and its contribution to the conservation area in a state of uncertainty and potential risk owing to deterioration of its fabric along with its vulnerability to vandalism. Several break-ins have in fact occurred at the property since the application was lodged.

The proposed change of use will consequently have a positive effect as it will secure the future of the building by means of an alternative, viable and active use.

There is also a suggestion in the response that the proposal will result in loss of identity of the building as a public house. At present, if one ignores the signage, there is actually very little to identify the building as a public house, as it has a functional, and overtly domestic appearance typical of its date and modest status. (It may indeed have originated as a domestic property before being converted to an inn at a later date.)

When the signage is removed, its former role will of course always be identifiable through maps and other documents including the conservation area character summary proposed by Rochdale MBC. However to avoid any doubt or confusion, the applicant is willing to erect a commemorative plaque on the site and to name the property *Royds Arms Apartments*, as a means of celebrating and promoting its history.

The proposal also a number of changes and extension. These include the raising of the existing roofline and the construction of a rear box dormer window. The overall height increase should be confirmed as this is not clear from the plans. Nevertheless I have significant concerns about this element of the works, and in particular the proposals to install a large box dormer window on the rear. The increase in height would distort the original proportions of the property. The proposed dormer window would be a large and bulky structure, which would relate poorly to the proportions and form of the host property and would be readily viewable from public viewpoints. It is considered that the proposed changes to the roof would result in less than substantial harm to both the significance

The scheme also includes a first floor rear extension over a later projection. Given that this is a later addition, this element of the proposal is likely to have a neutral impact on significance, subject to appropriate detailing.

First of all, it needs to be understood that the six apartments that are proposed are imperative to the viability of the scheme. The design must therefore work within these parameters, otherwise the proposal cannot go

ahead, with the consequence that the building will remain vacant and therefore at risk of deterioration and vandalism.

However the applicant has acknowledged the concerns of the conservation officer and in a substantial gesture of compromise has modified the scheme to address the major issues that have been raised. The following changes have been made to the design:

- Removal of the rear box dormer. The existing form of the roof will therefore be preserved
- Redesign of the proposed rear extension to introduce a gabled (instead of single pitch) roof and stone instead of brick walling. This design approach is more appropriate as it respects and reflects the traditional character of the original building
- Timber instead of UPVC windows (see following page)

As regards the raising of the roofline, this is by one metre and at ridge height only, with the eaves level remaining unchanged. This increase is vital in order to provide greater headroom and in turn create the six apartments that are crucial to the scheme's viability, especially since the box dormer has now been removed from the scheme. The applicant therefore stresses that without the increase in roof height the scheme cannot proceed.

Given the fact that the applicant has altered the design to address the other major concerns, a reasonable and acceptable compromise has been put forward which ought to outweigh any remaining issues over the increase in ridge height.



Elevations as now proposed

Alterations to windows and doors are also proposed as well as the relaying of the roof, using existing slate. The 1960s photo indicates that the windows are not original and with this in mind their replacement can be accepted. However, the use of black UPVC in this location within the Conservation Area would not be appropriate and would detract from the external appearance of the building. This should be amended on the plans. New windows and doors should be fabricated timber, with large scale details required by condition. Rainwater goods should either be timber or cast metal, with details required by condition. Samples of new materials, provided on site should also be required by condition.

As noted above, the applicant is now proposing to use timber, painted white, for the new windows which will have an entirely positive effect. The framing pattern, with fewer panes, is also more appropriate than what currently exists, as it matches that shown in the 1960s photograph.

Conditions relating to rainwater goods and materials are considered acceptable.

As it stands, I am not able to support the application as it would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets, for the reasons as set out above. It is not considered that this harm has been adequately justified or mitigated. This identified harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, contrary to section 72 of the 1990 Act. This carries great weight in the planning balance.

Given the above modifications, the proposal should no longer be seen as harmful but instead as a positive initiative that will return the building to sustainable use, secure its future and preserve (and in the case of the windows, enhance) its character and significance.

7. Summary

The applicant has taken positive steps to address the concerns raised by the conservation officer and has significantly reduced the amount of change that the building will experience. The proposal as now submitted will secure its future, celebrate its historic use and essentially preserve the building's local architectural and historic significance.

In the final planning balance the scheme should therefore be considered favourable and approval awarded without further delay.