

Ms Catherine Fenghour
Planning Department
Rochdale Borough Council
Via email

14 January 2026

Development.management@rochdale.gov.uk

Dear Ms Fanghour

RE: 25/01089/LBC (JCNAS 213587) | All Saints Church, Foxholes Road, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL12 0EF (Grade II, by *J. Medland Taylor*, Stained Glass by *William Wailes* 1865-1866). Application for conversion into a dwelling.

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this application. This case was taken to the Society's Buildings Committee (a group of architects, historians and heritage professionals) who discussed All Saints Church at their January meeting. Having considered the proposal carefully, we **object** to these plans in their current form.

Built in 1865-1866, All Saints is described in its Historic England listing as one of *Medland Taylor's* plainer churches 'but not without interest'. Pevsner also describes this church as having 'roguish' detail and, perhaps slightly cruelly, 'dumpy arcade columns'. In either case, this church is recognised for being a good example of *Medland Taylor's* more restrained work, and as such is Grade II-listed for its national significance and special interest.

The application seeks permission for the conversion of the former church into a six-bedroom dwelling with associated interior and exterior alterations. The Victorian Society accepts the adaptation of historic listed buildings so long as the alterations are carefully considered to minimise harm to the building's national significance. We raise serious concerns to this application due to its conflicting information and lack of design detail.

Conflicting Information

The Society raises serious concerns at the level of conflicting information provided within this application. It is not clear in what condition the Organ pipes are in, being described as removed but then present in photographic evidence in situ within the same document. The organ is also proposed to be removed by the Heritage Statement, but is to remain in situ according to the plans and Design and Access Statement.

**Campaigning for
Victorian & Edwardian
Built Heritage**

The Victorian Society

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Equally unclear is the future of the Pulpit and Font, which the Heritage Statement appears to suggest may be relocated, but the Design and Access statement suggests will remain in situ. This level of conflicting information does not fulfil the National Planning Policy Framework (2024, paras. 212-215) which highlights the crucial need for '*clear and convincing justification*'.

The Victorian Society urges your Authority to refuse this application on this basis alone, and request amendments to ensure that this application accurately reflects the works that are proposed. Only then can a complete and accurate heritage impact assessment be made of the works, allowing the full extent of harm and impact to be understood and mitigated.

Need for more Detail

There is a strong and clear need for more detailed information to be supplied in this application. There is exceedingly little information given on how the building is proposed to be heated, how pipes and electricity is to be supplied to the bedrooms/bathrooms proposed, and how ventilation in these spaces is to be achieved.

We also raise concerns to the preservation of the tiled floor, which would appear to be original. There is very little information as to the future of the tiled floor, but we highlight that this is an essential part of the building's national significance and historic character, and that both the interior and exterior of the building are protected by the building's listed status.

This is extended to the altarpiece, which receives very little attention. The Society wish to know if this is to remain in situ, or to be removed along with the altar itself.

We urge your Authority to request more information on these matters. We understand that efforts have been made to ensure that the changes to the church are reversible, and this ethos is welcomed by the Society. However, there are serious areas which remain lacking in this application, and we cannot accept these plans as they stand.

As a Society, we urge your Authority to condition any approval to applications for this building to ensure that repair works to the church fabric are carried out first before any building works begin; a Conservation Management Plan and a condition survey may be beneficial in any subsequent application for this purpose.

Conclusion

The Victorian Society is deeply concerned that this application has not fulfilled the necessary requirements set out by the National Planning Policy Framework and as it stands, runs the risk of harming this building's national significance. We highlight that we welcome the principle of

reuse for this building, but have concerns over the details of the proposal. We urge your Authority to refuse this application and ensure that any future applications fully address the '*clear and convincing justification*' that is so central to the NPPF and work to mitigate the harm presented to this listed building.

If you could inform us of your decision in due course, I would be very grateful.

Yours sincerely

Thomas Ollivier
Northern Conservation Adviser