

HERITAGE & CONSERVATION CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Application Details

Heritage, Conservation & Design team officer

Catherine Fenghour

Date

19 January 2026

Application reference

25/00851/VRCON

Address

Norwich Mill, Norwich Street, Rochdale, OL11 1LJ

Proposal

Application to vary condition 2 (plans) and 10 (columns method statement- removed wording - retained iron columns), of listed building consent 19/00042/LBC

Affected Heritage Assets

Designated heritage assets

- Norwich Mills (grade II)

Non-designated heritage assets

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Summary

Assessment

Norwich Street Mill, a former cotton spinning and weaving mill, is a grade II listed mill complex dating from 1860. the significance of the mill is contributed to by the collection of remaining buildings, which provide evidence of the town's industry during the 19th century. The buildings also retain historic and original architectural features. Part of the site was damaged in a fire, which affected the former weavers shed, a warehouse facing onto the Canal, a workshop and engine house. the buildings were badly damaged by the fire leaving only the external walls.

Planning permission and listed building consent were granted in 2021 for the restoration of elements of the buildings, including the canal front warehouse and the external walls of the weavers shed. A zinc clad structure was proposed to be built within the existing walls.

A non-material amendment application has been made to the planning permission, along with an application to vary the plans condition on the approved listed building consent. The main changes are as follows:

- Cast iron column feature omitted
- Change from VMZinc to Kingspan cladding
- Introduction of ramps
- Changes to entrance doors
- New windows within the existing brick wall (relocated from the cladding above)

Omission of cast iron column feature

The supporting statement explains that the cast iron columns could not be salvaged, as they were too badly damaged by the fire. The report explains that they were assessed during the strip out of the building. Please can this assessment be provided.

The loss of the cast iron columns has resulted in further loss of historic fabric. While the proposed feature would have been a new creation, it would have provided a reference to the former sawtooth structure of the weaving sheds, making clear the original use of the buildings. The loss of this feature would also result in the loss of this link to the site's history. To partially mitigate this, the proposal should be revised so that the site's history continues to be legible in the new design.

Change of materials from VMZinc to Kingspan

The approved scheme proposed a high-quality metal finish, which was appropriate to this historic industrial building. The revisions show a composite cladding material proposed, which lacks the patination and crisp detailing of the originally proposed standing seam zinc. The result of this change would be to downgrade the quality of the approved scheme. This change is not supported. The applicant has stated that the originally proposed zinc would make the scheme unviable. However, no evidence has been provided to demonstrate this. The comments in relation to energy efficiency are noted. However, it is assumed that it would be possible to improve the thermal efficiency of the building in a more sympathetic manner.

New Access ramps

There are no objections to the principle of access ramps. However, large scale details are required of the ramps and railings, to ensure that they are of an acceptable design.

Changes to entrance doors

Further details of the proposed doors are required to ensure that these features are acceptable. The previous doors were shown to be recessed and larger, giving them more of a feature presence on this elevation. Work is required on the revised doors to ensure a high-quality entrance, appropriate to the listed building.

New windows

The proposed windows along the Durham Street elevation are now shown to be within the historic brickwork rather than the cladding, resulting in the further loss of historic fabric. Additionally, the number of windows and their proportions has not been justified.

Demolition of outbuilding

The plans refer to an outbuilding being demolished, but this is not clear from the plans and needs clarification.

Conclusions

It is considered that the proposed plans materially alter the approved scheme and would result in a greater degree of harm than that previously approved.

Re-consultation

Yes – on resubmission.