

HERITAGE & CONSERVATION CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Application Details

Heritage, Conservation & Design team officer

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Date

05 February 2026

Application reference

25/00897/FUL

Address

Mccormick Europe Ltd, Whitelees Road, Littleborough, OL15 8BZ

Proposal

Demolition of existing outbuilding and replacement with single storey extension to main building together with extension of the existing retaining wall and car park alterations

Affected Heritage Assets

Designated heritage assets

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Non-designated heritage assets

- Smithy Field (140 and 142 Whitelees Road and 3 Smithyfield)
- 140 to 162 Whitelees (evens)

Summary

Further information needed

Assessment

Site description and significance

The application site is an industrial unit located on an industrial estate in Littleborough. The unit backs onto Whitelees Road but sits at a lower level. There are mature hedgerows along the Whitelees Road boundary of the site.

To the north of the site lies a pair of semi-detached houses and beyond that a run of terraced properties. Both the semi-detached properties and the terrace are shown on the first edition OS

map from circa 1850. The pair of semi-detached properties were historically known as Smithy Field and are recorded on the Historic Environment Record for Greater Manchester. The houses appear to have originally been built as four back-to-back houses, with domestic workshops on the upper floors, likely used for weaving. Evidence of the workshops remains in the distinctive runs of windows on the upper floors. The houses are constructed in the local coursed stone and have stone surrounds to windows and doors, as well as stone mullions, although some of the windows have now been filled in. The houses are of architectural and historic interest, owing to their age, the survival of architectural features and their original purpose as domestic workshops, and are on the Council's list of non-designated heritage assets.

The terraced houses to the north also pre-date 1850 and are constructed of coursed stone, with stone slate roofs. While all two storeys, they appear to have been built at different times, based on the changes in heights and windows, some of which are mullioned, suggesting the upper floors would have been used as workshops, while others have larger windows with decorative stone surrounds. The houses have all undergone alterations, including the addition of front porches and replacement windows. Despite these changes, the cottages are of some interest as local vernacular cottages, potentially built to house local mill workers. Given their early date, they meet the local criteria for assessment as a non-designated heritage asset.

Relevant legislation and planning policy

NPPF paragraph 207 states that applicants should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should be consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

The impact of a development on a non-designated heritage asset is a material planning consideration (NPPF paragraph 216). A balanced judgement should be had having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset. At a local level PfE policy JP-P2 and Rochdale CS policy P2 also apply.

Assessment of proposals

The proposal is for the construction of an extension to the existing depot, on an area currently used as a delivery area. The extension would continue the ridgeline of the adjacent section of the building and would use a standing seam cladding to match.

A heritage statement has been provided. However, this does not mention the non-designated heritage assets, adjacent to the site. It should be updated to include an assessment of these assets to comply with the minimum requirements of NPPF paragraph 207. The proposed extension would bring the building closer to the identified non-designated heritage assets, particularly those at Smithy Field and could have an impact on their setting.

It is acknowledged that these houses are already seen in the context of the depot building and there is mature landscaping along Whitelees Road and a change in levels, which would also help to reduce the extension's visibility in public views from Whitelees Road. Nevertheless, so that the visual impacts of the proposal can be properly assessed, a proposed north-south section should be

provided, along with a streetscene elevation showing the houses at Smithy Field in relation to the new extension.

Conclusions

Further information needed.

Re-consultation