

HERITAGE & CONSERVATION CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Application Details

Heritage, Conservation & Design team officer

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Date

27 April 2026

Application reference

PL/2026/0249

Address

Ox and Plough, New Road, Littleborough, OL15 8NL

Proposal

Change of use from public house (sui generis) to 4 self-contained flats (use class E) including alterations to fenestration and the erection of a bin store

Affected Heritage Assets

Designated heritage assets

- Dearnley Old Hall (grade II*)

Non-designated heritage assets

- Ox and Plough Inn

Summary

Subject to amendments, there are no objections.

Assessment

Site description and significance

The application site is a pub located on New Road in Littleborough. The building is shown on the first edition OS map from the mid-19th century. It has a red brick facade with stone detailing around the windows, a stone architrave around the main entrance and stone banding at sill and lintel level at both ground and first floors. The western flank elevation is built of stone, while the eastern elevation is red brick laid in a stretcher bond, indicating that this was rebuilt or refaced at a later date. The building is of some architectural and historic interest, noting its surviving features, early

date and communal value as a public house. It has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset.

To the rear of the site is Dearnley Old Hall. The exterior of this grade II* listed building dates from the early to mid-17th century but internally there is evidence of an older medieval open hall structure. Surviving elements of the Open Hall include two substantial kingpost roof trusses and an arched screen separating the hall from the rooms in the upper end. The older medieval element was likely clad in stone in the 17th century. Dearnley Old Hall is a rare survivor of a medieval open hall structure and is highly significant. It is also a fine example of the Pennines vernacular and retains many features dating from the 17th century, including hoodmoulds and mullioned windows. The pub sits in the immediate setting of this highly significant listed building.

Relevant legislation and planning policy

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that *“in considering whether to grant planning permission [...] for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority [...] shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”*

National Planning Policy Framework Chapter 16 deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraphs 212 to 215 set out how proposals affecting designated heritage assets should be assessed. Paragraph 216 confirms that the impact of a development on a non-designated heritage asset is a material planning consideration. 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, Places for Everyone (PfE) policy JP-P2 and Rochdale Core Strategy policy P2 deal with protecting and enhancing the borough's historic environment.

Assessment of proposals

The proposal seeks to convert the public house into four flats. The works are largely internal, apart from replacement windows and the installation of a larger window at ground floor level along the flank elevation. It is understood that the pub closed in mid-2025 and has been closed since then.

There would be some minor harm associated with the proposed change of use away from a pub. However, apartments would provide a use which would secure its long-term future.

Details of the windows should be required by condition. Windows should either be fabricated in timber or aluminium, rather than the UPVC currently proposed, particularly on the front elevation. With UPVC, the introduction of side opening casements into the existing narrow openings would result in windows which are dominated by the frame rather than the glass. Using aluminium or timber for the windows would enable more slender frames, which would help to mitigate this.

The works to the window on the flank elevation are minor in nature and subject to making good and the use of stone for the cills, would have a neutral impact on significance.

It is noted that the floor plans show the chimney breasts to be removed, but that the external chimneys would be retained. The retention of the chimneys is welcomed. Confirmation should be sought from the applicant that the chimneys will remain structural sound with the removal of the chimney breasts from the lower floors.

Conclusions

Subject to confirmation regarding the chimneys and amendments to the materials used for the windows, it is considered that the minor heritage harm from the change of use would be outweighed by the benefits of providing a future use for this building.

Given the minor nature of the external works, it is considered that the proposal would not harm the setting of Dearnley Old Hall. It would preserve its setting and significance.

Re-consultation

Yes