

HERITAGE & CONSERVATION CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Application Details

Heritage, Conservation & Design team officer

Catherine Fenghour

Date

8 June 2026

Application reference

PL/2026/0275

Address

24A Baron Street, Rochdale, OL16 1SJ

Proposal

Change of use from storage units to 7 self-contained apartments together with bin storage area and cycle storage. The installation of metal access-controlled gates and alterations to fenestration on all elevations

Affected Heritage Assets

Designated heritage assets

- 24 Baron Street (grade II)
- Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area

Non-designated heritage assets

- 24a to 28 Baron Street
- Cask and Feather Public House

Summary

With amendment, it is likely that this application could be supported.

Assessment

Site description and significance

The application site comprises a group of buildings located on Baron Street within the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area. The building was previously used as a stables and forge by the Rochdale Horsehoeing Cooperative Society and developed in its present form in the second half of the 19th century, although may include older elements.

The buildings are red brick and built around an internal courtyard, with a main two/three storey block and two, two storey side wings. Above the Baron Street entrance, there is a horse's head. on the Courtyard entrance there is a bull over the entrance. The central block is the most decorative, with brick detailing around the windows and under the eaves on the central pediment. The buildings are an important survivor of a building linked to the cooperative movement.

The surrounding area is dominated by other historic commercial and industrial building, including the adjoining 24 Baron Street, which is listed at grade II. Built in the early 19th century, it is a rare survivor of a combined industrial and domestic premises. There is a small house facing onto Baron Street with a workshop to the rear. The house is constructed of red brick, with stone detailing to windows and doors. The list description notes that the building is a typical example of the incremental development and expansion of artisan industry in the early 19th century. As a rare survivor, it is of special architectural and historic interest. It also holds group value, with the surrounding buildings, including the application site. The list description notes that this group is the best surviving example of small-scale industry in Rochdale.

These buildings make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, providing evidence of its historic development and the industry which was once commonplace.

Relevant legislation and planning policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 66(1) - *"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 (NPPF 2025)

Chapter 16 deals with preserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraphs 207 to 215 set out how proposals affecting designated heritage assets should be assessed. Paragraph 216 confirms that the impact of a development on the setting of 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.

Places for Everyone (PfE)

Policy JP-P2 deals with heritage and seeks to conserve, sustain and enhance the region's historic environment, including Rochdale. this policy confirms that proposals affecting heritage assets will be determined in accordance with national policy.

Rochdale Core Strategy (CS)

Policy P2 seeks to conserve, enhance and promote the borough's key heritage assets. This includes listed buildings, conservation areas and assets linked to the borough's industrial history.

Assessment of proposals

The proposal is for the conversion of the buildings into apartments. It appears to currently be in use for informal storage with some residential accommodation above, although there is no planning history for this.

There are no heritage objections to residential use in this location, noting that the building is in relatively poor condition and not fully occupied. A residential use would provide a long-term use for the building and would help to ensure its ongoing maintenance.

The removal of the rollershutters is welcomed. However, further work is needed on the windows and other openings, both in terms of their design and position.

On the northwest elevation, the existing window should be retained and the new door inserted within the existing opening which extends to ground floor. Elsewhere new openings should be kept to a minimum and should reuse existing openings. New openings should be positioned to ensure that they do not cut through existing historic detailing, including cills and lintels.

Windows should be fabricated in either timber or aluminium and should be of a design appropriate to the age and historic use of the buildings. Cills and lintels of new windows should look to match the existing. These details should be required by condition.

The plans show that the brickwork is to be reinstated in places to match the existing. Samples of new brickwork should be required by condition.

Details of new doors should be required by condition. As with the windows, these should be of a design suitable to the age and historic use of the building. The doors should be fabricated of timber. Details of new doors should be required by condition.

Details of new gates should also be required by condition. The gates as shown on the plans appear overly utilitarian. It was noted that decorative gates were present on site – could these be reused?

A schedule of external repairs should be required by condition. This should include details such as brick and stone cleaning, repairs of features of special interest, including the bull and horses head over the entrances. On site the applicant queried whether it would be possible to render the building. This would require planning permission and would not be supported, as render would obscure many of the brick and stone detailing.

Details of hard and soft landscaping should be required by condition. The existing cobbles and York stones should be retained wherever possible.

Conclusions

There are no objections to the principle of the proposed use. However, changes are needed to the openings to ensure that the proposals are sympathetic to the character of the non-designated heritage asset and preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Re-consultation

Yes