

Heritage Statement

2-4 BETHEL STREET | HEYWOOD |
OL10 1HU

PROJECT NO: RA26114
DATE: 09-08-2026
REVISION NO: -



RADNOR
ARCHITECTURE
PLANNING & DESIGN

1. INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application at 2–4 Bethel Street, Heywood. It assesses the significance of the building and the likely effect of the proposed works upon that significance. The assessment is proportionate to the local significance of the asset and should be read alongside the existing and proposed drawings.

The proposal would refurbish and convert the vacant two-storey building to four one-bedroom apartments. Two additional levels are proposed: a full second floor and a third floor contained within a new mansard roof. The scheme also includes external alterations, new windows, internal cycle storage and refuse storage on the existing side land.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT ACCOMMODATE

The building stands on the north-west side of Bethel Street, immediately behind the commercial frontage to Market Street in central Heywood. It forms part of a tightly developed urban block containing commercial, community and residential uses. Building forms, ages, heights and materials vary, although development generally maintains a strong street edge.

The site is highly visible when approaching along Bethel Street. The vacant land opposite has planning permission for a four-storey apartment building. That permission is relevant to the evolving townscape and building-height context, but it is not relied upon as a direct heritage precedent for this site.

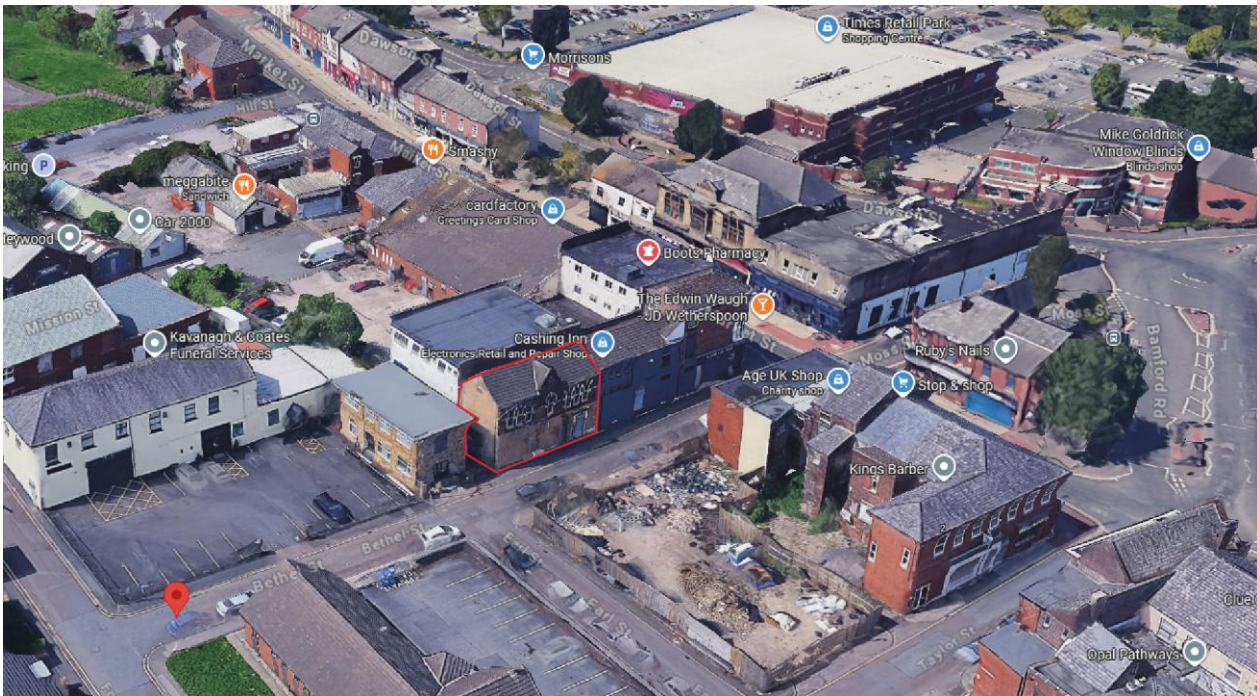


Figure 1: Angled aerial context, with 2–4 Bethel Street outlined in orange.

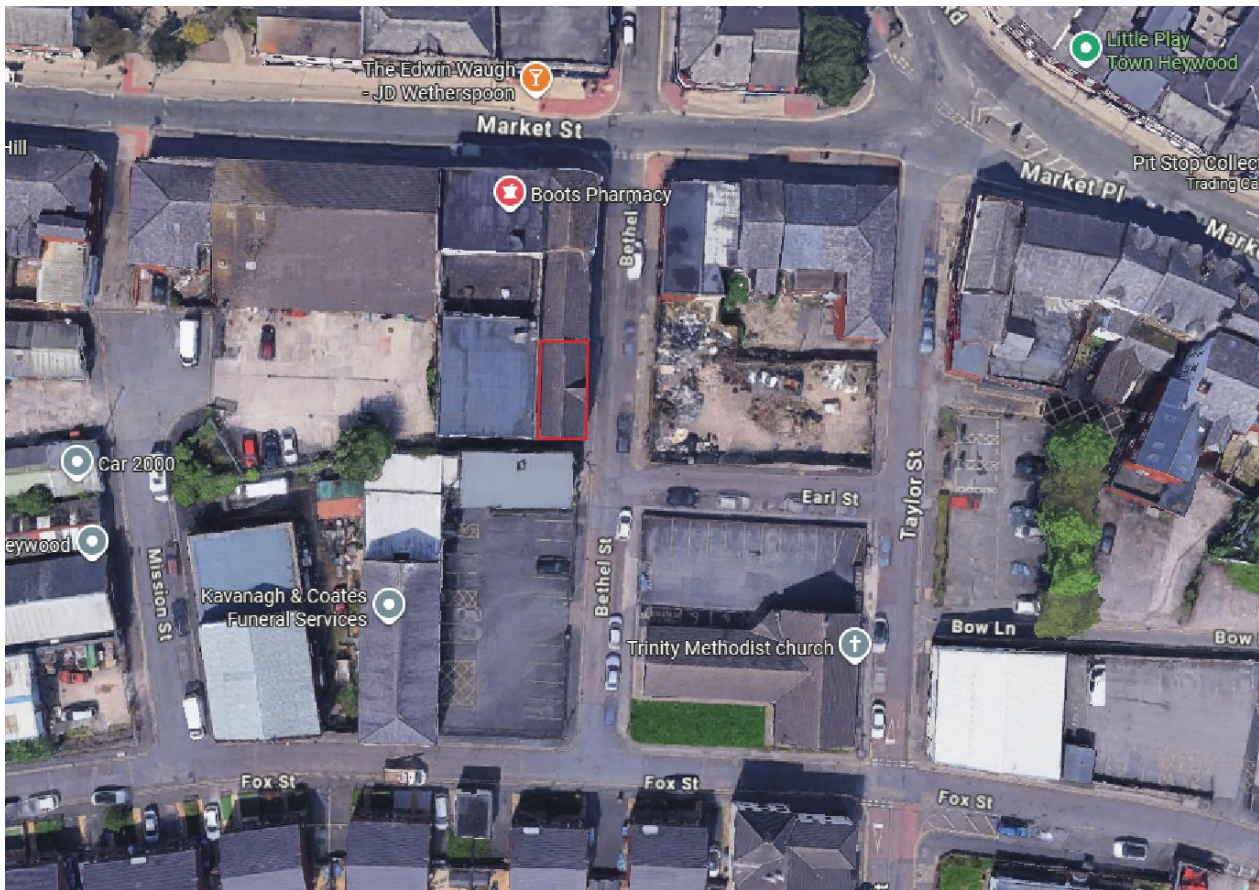


Figure 2: Top-down site context, with the application building outlined in red.

3. HERITAGE STATUS

Rochdale Borough Council has confirmed that the host property and the attached neighbouring building are non-designated heritage assets. Neither building is statutorily listed. Their local architectural, historic and townscape interest is nevertheless a material planning consideration.

The assessment has not identified the site as lying within a conservation area. The heritage assessment therefore considers the significance of 2–4 Bethel Street, the significance of the attached neighbouring asset, the relationship between the two buildings and their contribution to the Bethel Street townscape.

4. DESCRIPTION AND HISTORIC INTEREST

The exact construction date and original use have not been confirmed through documentary research. The client understands that the ground floor was previously occupied by shops, with office accommodation above. This would be consistent with the building's town-centre location and mixed-use surroundings, although the former use has not been independently verified. The architectural treatment of the upper frontage, including pointed and segmental arches, contrasting dressings and the central gable, reflects the building's local architectural and historic interest.

The Bethel Street elevation is the principal elevation. Its upper level is faced in red brick and contains tall, vertically proportioned window openings with decorative heads and pale dressings. A central

gable and pointed-arched opening create emphasis within the composition. The ground floor is now predominantly blank and rendered, although an ornate entrance surround survives toward the southern end.

The building is vacant and in poor condition. The photographs show weathered and failed finishes, staining, vegetation growth, cracking, deterioration around openings and local loss of detail. The blank ground-floor frontage and overall condition weaken the building's present contribution to the street, while the surviving upper-frontage composition retains visible character.

The attached neighbouring building continues the established frontage to the north-east. It has a simpler, dark-rendered street elevation and appears to have undergone substantial external alteration, although its traditional proportions, frontage position and physical relationship with the host building remain legible. The two assets are experienced together in views along Bethel Street and collectively contribute to the continuity of the historic street edge.



Figure 3: Existing Bethel Street elevation, with the attached neighbouring asset visible to the right.



Figure 4: Attached neighbouring non-designated heritage asset, and its relationship with 2–4 Bethel Street.

5. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 Architectural interest

The building's principal architectural interest lies in the rhythm and vertical proportions of the upper-floor openings, the red-brick façade, contrasting decorative dressings, central gable and surviving entrance surround. Together these features give the building a recognisable identity despite its condition and later alteration. The largely blank and heavily weathered ground floor makes a limited positive contribution in its present form.

5.2 Historic and townscape interest

The host building and attached neighbouring asset contribute to an understanding of the historic development of this part of central Heywood. Their established footprints, frontage positions and traditional proportions help define the western side of Bethel Street. Together they provide a visual reminder of an earlier phase of development within a mixed and changing town-centre setting.

5.3 Setting

The setting of the two assets is urban and functional rather than formal. Their significance is experienced principally from Bethel Street and in oblique views along the frontage. Their attached

relationship and common street alignment form part of that setting. Nearby commercial buildings, surface parking, modern alterations and the vacant site opposite create a varied context; the relationship of the assets to one another and to the street edge is more important than any wider designed setting.

5.4 Summary

The host building and its attached neighbour are of local, rather than national, heritage significance. The significance of 2–4 Bethel Street is concentrated in the surviving character of its principal elevation, its historic fabric and its contribution to the established frontage. The neighbouring asset derives local interest principally from its historic presence, traditional proportions and contribution to the continuity of the street, although later external alterations have reduced the legibility of earlier detailing. The vacant and deteriorating condition of the host building places its significance at risk and currently limits the contribution made by the pair.

6. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposals retain and adapt the existing building within its established footprint. Four self-contained one-bedroom apartments would be provided, one at each level. A new full second floor would be added above the retained building and the uppermost apartment would sit within a mansard roof, reducing the visual prominence of the top level.

The new frontage uses vertically proportioned windows, aligned openings, horizontal string courses, a clearly defined entrance and a restrained material palette. The approach is intended to respond to the proportions and rhythm of the existing building without attempting a false historic replica. New side windows would improve daylight and outlook. Secure cycle storage would be provided internally beneath the ground-floor stair, with bins kept on the existing side land.

7. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Retention and viable use

The proposal would retain the building in active use rather than allow continued vacancy and decline. Residential conversion provides a viable long-term function and supports repair, maintenance and renewed occupation. This is a substantial heritage and regeneration benefit because it secures the continued presence of the asset on Bethel Street.

7.2 Scale, form and appearance

The two additional levels would alter the building's silhouette and increase its scale. The mansard treatment contains the uppermost floor within the roof form, helping the addition read as a composed top to the building. The retained footprint and frontage alignment preserve its established relationship with Bethel Street, while the vertically proportioned openings and ordered bay rhythm respond to the character of the existing elevation.

The proposals would also rework the present upper frontage and roof form, including the central gable and elements of surviving decorative treatment. These features contribute to local

architectural interest, so their alteration represents a degree of adverse effect on that part of the asset's significance. The effect should, however, be considered alongside the poor condition of the building, the retention of the asset as a whole, the coherent replacement elevation and the practical need to establish a viable use capable of funding its repair and future upkeep.

7.3 Townscape and setting

The increased height would be noticeable and would create a greater height difference between the host building and its attached neighbour. However, the proposal would not physically alter the neighbouring asset. The established building line, attached relationship and ability to understand both buildings as part of the historic Bethel Street frontage would remain. The mansard form reduces the prominence of the uppermost level, while the varied surrounding townscape and evolving four-storey context provide capacity for a carefully composed increase in height.

A repaired and occupied host building would strengthen the street edge and replace the present appearance of vacancy and deterioration. This would improve the immediate setting of the attached neighbouring asset and the quality and activity of this part of Bethel Street.

8. PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires an applicant to describe the significance of affected heritage assets in a manner proportionate to their importance. This statement fulfils that requirement by identifying the building's local architectural, historic and townscape interest and assessing the parts most likely to be affected.

For non-designated heritage assets, paragraph 216 requires a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the assets. The proposed upward extension and frontage alterations introduce material change to the host building, including change to features that contribute to its local interest. The neighbouring asset would not be physically altered, and its relationship with the established street frontage would remain legible. Against the identified change, the scheme retains the host building, arrests deterioration, secures a viable use, provides four homes in an accessible location and improves the street scene and the neighbouring asset's immediate setting. Subject to careful control of materials and details, those benefits weigh strongly in favour of the proposal.

The approach is also consistent with Rochdale Core Strategy Policies P2 and P3, which seek to protect local character and heritage while securing high-quality design and the sensitive restoration and reuse of locally important buildings.

9. CONCLUSION

Rochdale Borough Council has confirmed that 2–4 Bethel Street and the attached neighbouring building are non-designated heritage assets; neither is statutorily listed. Their local significance derives from their historic presence, traditional frontage relationship and contribution to Bethel

Street, with the host building retaining additional interest in the character and detailing of its principal elevation.

The development would materially change the host building through the addition of two levels and the reworking of the elevation. The design responds through an ordered composition, vertical window proportions and a mansard upper floor, while retaining the building, its footprint and its relationship with the attached neighbour. The proposal would not physically alter the neighbouring asset or prevent it being understood as part of the historic frontage.

Most importantly, the scheme would bring a long-vacant and deteriorating asset back into viable use, secure its future maintenance and improve the immediate setting of its attached neighbour. On balance, and subject to appropriate control of materials, details and retained fabric, the public benefits of securing the asset, providing four homes and improving the street scene outweigh the limited adverse effect arising from alteration to parts of the host building's local architectural interest.