

Application No: 17/1431M

Location: ALBION MILL, LONDON ROAD, MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for the conversion of former mill to provide 30 residential flats, including rear external staircase, lift and walkways with associated infrastructure.

Applicant: Mr Rafiq

Expiry Date: 20-Jan-2023

**SUMMARY:**

This Listed Building Consent seeks approval to convert and extend Albion Mill, a 5-storey, Grade II Listed former Mill building, to form 30 residential flats.

Our historic environment is a finite resource and an integral part of the unique character and distinctiveness of Cheshire East. Key assets include Macclesfield's silk and industrial heritage.

To aid viability of the scheme, this application includes an extension and pedestrian access to each flat located on the outside to the rear of the building. Some of the rear windows will be opened up to form doors, additionally there are a number of new windows to be inserted at the rear of the property

Whilst the new pedestrian access arrangements and insertions are not ideal, these necessary changes are contained to the rear of the Mill and are not extensive. The Council's Conservation Officer has confirmed these represent less than substantial harm. There would be limited changes in the character of the building in the context of the front elevations and main facade of the Mill.

Overall, it is considered that this scheme is viewed in a very positive light as the proposal will secure the future of the building. The proposal includes repairs and enhances a building of architectural and historic importance. Furthermore, it is accepted that the proposed change of use would preserve Albion Mill and its character, and would not detract from the setting of the Mill.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

APPROVE subject to Conditions.

## **REASON FOR REPORT:**

The application relates to a '*residential developments of 20-199 dwellings*' and under the Council's '*Terms and References and Delegation of Function*' it is therefore required to be determined by the Northern Planning Committee.

## **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT:**

The building is Grade II Listed and was originally built as a Silk Mill in 1843.

Albion Mill is constructed with red brick on rubble stone basement with sandstone dressings and slate roof. The Mill is four storeys on a basement.

The Mill has 15 bays, the central 5 bays slightly advanced, with giant pilasters marking the angles. The basement has fifteen C20 windows in original openings with timber lintels. Above, each floor has 15 four-pane metal windows in original openings with stone sills and lintels. The Mill has timber eaves brackets, with a hipped roof. The stone parapet to central bays with raised pointed panel inscribed 'Albion Mill 1843'.

The rear elevation had projecting stair towers at each end, and central projecting privy tower, with three similar bays to south elevation, with a 6-storey, 4-bay wing to east. This wing has similar, slightly smaller windows to each floor and segmental voussoir archway through the building to lower right. Stair towers form the end of small cross wing beyond, with stone architrave to entrance at base of stairs. The internal structure has cast-iron columns carrying timber beams, with timber roof.

The building has been vacant for some 18 years or more and is in a very poor state of repair.

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL:**

Listed Building Consent (LBC) is sought to convert the Mill into 30 2-bedroom flats.

In order to maximise the number of flats, pedestrian access to each unit will be provided externally through the addition of external staircases and walkways provided at each level, but all to the rear of the building.

Few external alterations to the front and sides of the Mill are proposed, with all of the existing window and door openings remaining. Replacement aluminium window frames and doors are proposed. The scheme will result in the opening up of some of the rear windows to form doors and additionally, there are a number of new windows to be inserted at the rear of the Mill.

Parking will be contained within the site, within the rear enclosure and within the basement area. A bin store and cycle storage area is proposed, located at the front access area. A total of 33 parking spaces are proposed.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

Listed Building Consent was granted on the site in September 2004 for the change of use of the Mill to form 16 large three-bedroomed flats with the ground floor retained as B1 office accommodation, and with 20 car parking spaces, under reference 03/3002P.

Following discharging of the relevant Conditions, in 2008 work began on the Mill to undertake demolition to the rear building and the outriggers and some work to the roof.

The work was halted in 2009 as that scheme was proven to be no longer viable.

## **POLICIES:**

### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)**

SE7 The Historic Environment.

### **Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD):**

HER1 Heritage assets

HER2 Heritage at risk

HER4 Listed buildings

## **Other Material Considerations:**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Framework (NPPG)

## **CONSULTATIONS:**

### Macclesfield Civic Society:

Support the application. Macclesfield Civic Society has confirmed they welcome this proposal to find a viable and sustainable use for this prominent (*indeed landmark*) building on the main approach to the town along the A523.

### Macclesfield Town Council:

No comments received at time of report preparation.

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL:**

This application seeks determination of whether works to a Listed Building would be acceptable. The principle of the proposed development is considered under the corresponding full planning application.

The property is Grade II List, and as such in considering whether to grant Listed Building Consent for any works, the Council must 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 as per the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Policy SE7 of the CELPS states that, the Council will support development proposals that do not cause harm to, or which better reveal the significance of heritage assets and will seek to avoid or minimise conflict between the conservation of a heritage asset and any aspect of a

development proposal. A vital part of this assessment is considering the level of harm in relation to the public benefits that may be gained by the proposal.

SADPD Policy HER2 relates to heritage at risk and states that:

*“New development should identify specific opportunities where heritage assets have been identified as being at risk and make provision to secure their future through repair and/or re-use.”*

It continues to state that: -

*“Applications for the positive reuse of heritage assets will be supported.”*

SADPD Policy HER4 deals with listed buildings and states that:

*“When considering development proposals or works affecting a listed building, including alterations, extensions and changes of use, in line with its statutory duty, the council will have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.”*

Our historic environment is a finite resource and an integral part of the unique character and distinctiveness of Cheshire East. Key assets include Macclesfield's silk and industrial heritage.

Paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that heritage assets *‘...are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.’*

Consequently, it is important to the long-term wellbeing of the Borough that there is positive stewardship of its built heritage and that its conservation and management are key priorities in the future place-shaping in Cheshire East.

#### Significance:

Albion Mill is a Grade II Listed Building. Originally built as a Silk Mill for *Thomas Heapy*, it dates back to 1843, with later alterations. Planning Application 17/0499M accompanies this consent.

The contributing elements to significance of the heritage asset are its history as a Silk Mill and its front facade onto London Road.

#### Impact of Proposals on Heritage Asset:

The Mill has previously received permission for residential conversion, albeit for a smaller number of units. This application seeks to increase the number of units to make the scheme viable.

This is achieved by adding an extension and having pedestrian access to each flat located on the outside of the building. Some of the rear windows will be opened up to form doors, and additionally there are a number of new windows to be inserted at the rear of the property.

Whilst the new pedestrian access arrangements and insertions are not ideal, these necessary changes are contained to the rear of the Mill and are not extensive. The Council's Conservation Officer has confirmed these represent less than substantial harm. There would be limited changes in the character of the building in the context of the front elevations and main facade of the Mill.

Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that *'where the development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed building including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'*

Overall, it is considered that this scheme is viewed in a very positive light, as it repairs and enhances a building of architectural and historic importance. Furthermore, it is accepted that the proposed change of use would preserve Albion Mill and its character and would not detract from the setting of the Mill.

Subject to Conditions to ensure the details of the roof lights, new windows and doors, rainwater goods, brickwork and any external vents would further preserve the character of the building, it is deemed that this less than substantial harm is outweighed by the public benefits of securing the future of the mill.

The scheme is therefore deemed to comply with CELPS Policy SE7 and SADPD Policies HER1, HER2 and HER4.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION**

For these reasons, the proposals are considered to accord with the relevant requirements of Local and National Planning Policies, and the application is therefore recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

### **APPROVE subject to following conditions;**

1. Commencement of development (3 years);
2. Development in accord with approved plans;
3. Details of new materials (extension) to be submitted;
4. Materials to match existing (Mill conversion);
5. Rainwater goods (cast iron);
6. Specification of window and door design / style (@1:20);
7. Roof lights set flush;
8. Submission of the details (@1:20) of the external access arrangements (staircase and walkways);
9. Protection of features (no new vents in external faces); and
10. Submission of a scheme of Mechanical Ventilation (pre-commencement).

*In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intent and without changing the substance of its decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair (or in their*

*absence the Vice Chair) to correct any technical slip or omission in the resolution, before issue of the decision notice.*

