

Application No: 09/2859M

Location: BROWN STREET MILL, BROWN STREET, MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE, SK11 6SA

Proposal: CONSERVATION & CONVERSION OF GRADE 2 LISTED FORMER SILK MILL TO 16 NEW APARTMENTS

For MR. QUINN, SILK MILL MANSIONS LTD

Registered 14-Sep-2009

Policy Item Yes

Grid Reference 391452 373124

Date Report Prepared: 02.10.09

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions and receipt of any further representations.

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Impact on the Grade 2 Listed Building;
- Design;
- Impact upon highway safety;
- Impact upon residential amenity

REASON FOR REPORT

This item is before the Northern Area Planning Committee due to the number of dwellings proposed.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The site is located on the corner of Brown Street and Statham Street. The locality is a relatively quiet residential area surrounded largely by terraced houses. The site is occupied by Brown Street Mill, which is a grade II listed former silk mill which was built in the 1820's. The building has four storeys and is brick built with a pitched slate roof.

The site has been vacant for approximately 20 years where it has continued to fall further into disrepair. The building has been through several different owners within this time, and was resold in August. The previous but one owner removed the floors, which is why a scaffold was initially erected to ensure that the building would not cause a danger for residents. Over the years understandably, residents have become more concerned at the lack of activity at the site and more concerned about the potential dangers of a building which was falling into an ever increasing state of disrepair.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning consent to convert the former mill into sixteen flats. Each unit would comprise a living/kitchen room, with two bedrooms and a bathroom. The building has been designed to minimise the impact on the dwellings in the vicinity as far as practically possible given the constraints of a listed building. None of the windows would

satisfy front to front, or rear to rear distances as contained within the local plan. However, the pattern of development would generally be commensurate with that of the area.

There would be no off street parking provided with the development. Access would be provided to the rear of the mill, via a corridor on the ground floor from both Brown Street and Statham Street, and via a right of way, which runs to the rear of 1-7 John Street. Each unit would have access to a storage area in the basement, along with cycle parking.

It is considered that the conservation and retention of the external facades to Brown Street and Statham Street are of primary importance. These are the public faces of the building and are significant both historically and contextually, as the former industrial building sits within residential terraced streets from where its workforce would have lived.

Externally, it is proposed to retain as much of the original brickwork as possible, re-pointing as necessary. To retain the historic fabric it will be necessary to stabilise the building by inserting a new steel frame and new concrete floors. This system will allow the building to be stabilized structurally without the need to rebuild the brick façade, which would have resulted in the loss of character. The proposed structural system will allow the 'lean' to be retained and made safe.

Other alterations include the replacement of the windows and cills (where necessary). It is proposed to protect and strip back the roof to enable splice repairs and renewal of rot affected roof timbers. It is anticipated that a good quantity of the slate can be re-used. Any additional slates which are required are proposed to be second hand to match the existing. These would be laid to the rear to minimise the impact of the alteration on the public face of the building. Rainwater goods will be repaired where possible using traditional techniques, although replacement cast iron gutters and downpipes will be used where necessary.

At the rear it is proposed to insert a new glass and timber circulation core, which would contain a new lift and staircase. New deck access balconies with minimal glazed handrails will be added along the rear façade. The new staircase and lift arrangement and steel substructure have been designed to be self supporting to minimise the intervention into the historic brickwork. The engineers consider this solution to be the most appropriate following evaluation of the previous schemes circulation routes, and is considered to be the most rational and efficient solution.

RELEVANT HISTORY

59819P Demolition of listed buildings. Refused 09.10.89.

68060P & 68061P - Conversion of mill into ten flats. Planning permission and Listed Building Consent – Approved 15.11.91

96/1472P & 96/1473P - Conversion of mill into ten flats. Planning permission and Listed Building Consent granted 25.09.96

01/0029P & 01/0030P - Conversion of mill into fourteen flats. Applications for planning permission and Listed Building Consent - withdrawn ??.03.01

01/1009P & 01/1010P - Conversion of mill into fourteen apartments. Applications for planning permission and Listed Building Consent approved 06.06.01

03/2954P Conversion of mill into 16 No. flats and 10 car parking spaces, Listed Building Consent approved 17.12.03

03/2948P Conversion of mill into 16 No. flats and 10 car parking spaces Planning permission refused 11.02.04

04/0933P Conversion of existing redundant mill to 16 No. apartments, including 3 no duplex apartments and 9 no car park spaces - approved with conditions 23.06.04

POLICIES

Regional Spatial Strategy

DP1, DP5, DP6, DP7, EM1

Local Plan Policy

NE11, BE1, BE18, H1-H3, H13, DC1-DC6, DC8

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways: Comments are awaited

Environmental Health: The Environmental Health Officer raises no objections to this application. The Contaminated Land Officer notes that the application is for new residential properties which are a sensitive end use and could be affected by any contamination present. The Preliminary Risk Assessment submitted in support of the planning application identifies the likely presence of contamination and recommends an intrusive investigation be carried out, and a phase 2 investigation is required, the results of which will also need to be submitted. If contaminants are found, then a remediation statement will be required, followed by a site Completion Report, which details the conclusions and actions taken at each stage.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Three letters have been received from residents in the local area. Full copies of all correspondence are available to view on the application file. The positive comments relate to the fact that something is at last being done to this eyesore building. Concern is expressed with regard to the lack of parking, which will make an existing bad situation worse. One of the residents is concerned that the development will destroy his privacy as the flats will overlook his property. In addition, residents of the new developments cars may block existing residents' drives.

A letter has been received from Councillor Broadhurst, who comments that one concern he has with this development is the overall residential parking within the area. This development will potentially add to those concerns therefore, existing residents parking needs should be considered, discussed and be incorporated within any proposed parking schemes.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The following documents were submitted with the application: -

- A Heritage, Design and Access Statement
- A Structural Report (including methodology)
- A Parking and Transport Survey
- A Bat Survey Report
- An Environmental Desk top study

These documents are available for Member's information on the application file.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The main issues to consider in determining this application are:

- The differences between this proposal and previously approved schemes for this building.
- Design and impact on the character and appearance of the area, including the street-scene.
- The impact on a Grade II Listed Building.
- Impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.
- Highways safety/parking.
- Nature conservation.
- The desirability of maximising the use of previously developed land.

Policy

The site lies within a Predominantly Residential Area on the adopted Macclesfield Borough Local Plan where residential uses are acceptable in principle. The application needs to be assessed against Local Plan Policy BE1 (Design Guidance), BE18 (Listed Buildings), H2, (Environmental Quality in Housing Developments), H13 (Protecting Residential Areas), and Development Control Policies DC1, DC3, and DC38, which relate to the standard of design, amenity and space standards. Policy DC6 relates to circulation and access.

A report on the supply of housing has been approved by the Environment Policy Development Committee and the Cabinet of MBC, which effectively replaced the former SPG on Restricting the Supply of Housing with the new guidance “PPS3 Housing and Saved Policies Advice Note”. The Advice Note is based on a list of 5 criteria outlined in PPS3 which planning authorities should have regard to when deciding planning applications for new housing and on the Council’s saved policies and other guidance in PPS3. In summary, the Advice Note states that planning applications for new housing should meet the following criteria: -

1. Ensuring the proposed development is in line with planning for housing objectives, reflecting the need and demand for housing in the area and does not undermine wider policy objectives (does the application accord with the housing objectives of the Borough and wider policy objectives e.g. affordable housing and urban regeneration)
2. Ensuring developments achieve a good mix of housing reflecting the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular, families and older people (does the application meet the housing needs of the area and/or provide affordable housing)
3. The suitability of a site for housing, including its environmental sustainability (is the site in a suitable and sustainable location, is it previously developed land, what constraints exist)
4. Using land effectively and efficiently (is the density at least 30 dwellings per hectare)
5. Achieving high quality housing (is the site accessible to public transport and services, is the development well laid out, safe, accessible and user friendly, is there adequate open space and/or access to recreational open space, does the design complement/improve the character of the area, is the car parking well designed and integrated, does the development enhance biodiversity)

In this case it is considered that the proposal broadly complies with the five listed criteria. The site is considered to be in a suitable and sustainable location. It is a previously

developed site, within an area surrounded by housing, which is within walking distance of public transport links and to services. Although the proposal would not be affordable housing offered through a housing association, the accommodation to be provided would fall at the lower section of the market. The scheme achieves high quality housing in a town centre location

Highways

Although formal comments are yet to be received from the Highways Engineer, it is understood that no objections will be raised to the scheme. Although the Highways Engineer is disappointed by the lack of parking for this development, it is accepted that there are many special circumstances which allow for this view. These include the fact that this is a Listed Building, the long term dereliction of the site, and that the site has an existing planning use which would result in a different level of parking in the area. In addition, it is noted that the parking survey demonstrates that parking spaces are available within the wider area.

It is noted that parking was a consideration of the scheme approved in 2004, and although it was noted that Brown Street filled up in the evenings (7pm onwards) there was parking available within the peripheral streets to accommodate more cars. The scaffolding which was erected approximately 6 years ago, has been taking up space where approximately 5 cars could park. Therefore, once the scaffold is removed, the apparent additional difference between that parking previously considered to be acceptable and that parking which needs to be found would realistically be 4 spaces.

Design

This building has seen numerous previous applications for conversion, and has received previous planning approvals, the latest which has recently expired. The applicant entered into pre-application discussions with the Conservation Officer and the advice given has been taken on board.

The proposal to convert this former silk mill into 16 apartments is challenging particularly as the structural integrity of the building is in need of some support. The scheme proposed will secure not only the physical structure by the insertion of a steel frame, but will give new life to this building. As such the Conservation Officer views this as a welcome step forward in the history of this building. In addition, the Conservation Officer is satisfied with the engineering approach being taken in stabilising the structure and the methodology proposed to retain the historic fabric.

It is considered that the proposal would result in an improvement to the external appearance of the building; the inclusion of a galley, lift and staircase to the rear is not without precedence, as the original cast iron fire escape is still situated on this elevation. It is therefore considered that the proposed additions would not result in any harm to the character or appearance of the listed building.

The introduction of large opening lights to all the windows is a departure from the very small opening lights which are currently in place. This departure is to accommodate the need for extra ventilation which is required for the domestic conversion. With careful design this modification to the fenestration will still portray an industrial mill building.

The Conservation Officer is pleased that the previous car parking provision (approved under application 04/0933P) in the basement, (which was later found to be unworkable) has been removed from this scheme, as this will result in the retention of more historic fabric, and allow the building to be expressed more appropriately.

Externally, the brickwork is in a fair condition given the overall state of deterioration of the building as a whole. Some areas of the brickwork have been re-pointed, possibly as part of a previous development attempt. There is also a significant lean to the brick facades of the building along Statham Street and the rear façade parallel to Statham Street. In addition, some cracking has been observed in the Statham Street elevation, possibly due to settlement and the condition of the lean.

The Council's Structural Engineer (from the Building Control Department) has confirmed that the updated Structural Defects report on the mill from the applicants' structural engineer is acceptable. The concept for construction adopts a principle of adopting a new inner steel frame, which will serve as the main supporting element. The existing external brickwork will therefore be used as a facial cladding element.

Amenity

The proposed access to the apartments for this scheme is from decked walkways to the rear. In addition, a new staircase is proposed at the rear with a lift. It is not considered that the staircase and lift would be obtrusive in design terms to neighbouring properties at the rear. Although the proposed scheme will inevitably result in some rear facing windows to habitable rooms within the mill, it is considered that overall the solution is on balance an improvement over that approved under the 2004 scheme. The previously approved scheme granted 9 no. windows serving habitable rooms on each of the first, second and third floors, whereas the proposed development would result in only 3 no. windows overlooking the rear yard area as the circulation core does conceal a number of windows that otherwise would overlook the adjacent gardens. The choice of a primarily timber structure assists in minimising overlooking from the circulation core. The previously approved scheme also included a ramp down to basement parking. This has now been removed from the scheme as the ramp would not have been feasible in design terms. This will improve the relationship with the gardens that back onto the courtyard at the rear of the mill, which would have possibly caused a noise nuisance.

Housing

The applicant has submitted a PPS3 Housing and Self Assessment Checklist. Having regard to the applicant's self assessment, in this case it is considered that the proposal broadly complies with the five listed criteria. The site is considered to be in a suitable and sustainable location. It is a previously developed site, within a predominantly residential area, which is within walking distance of public transport links and to services.

Ecology

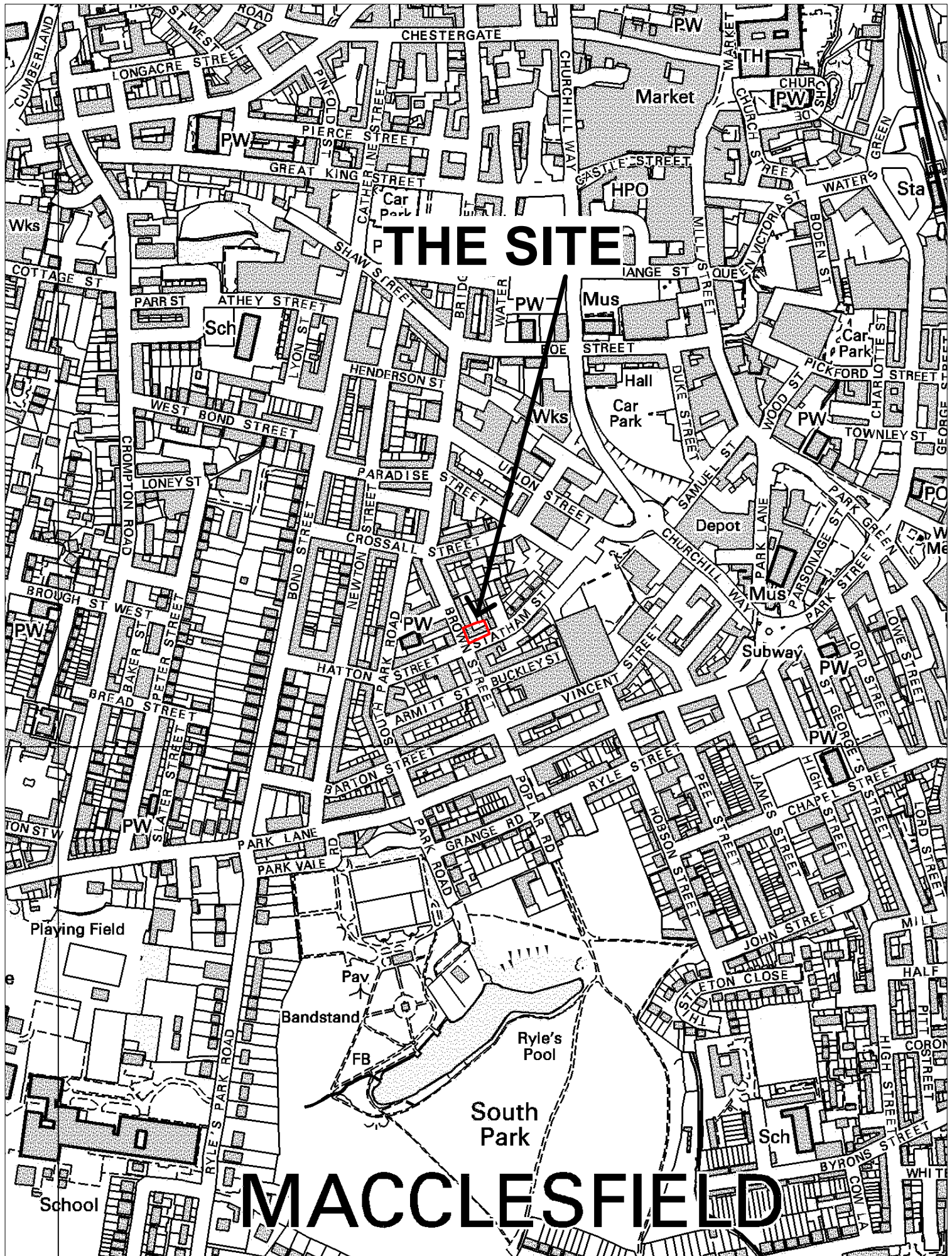
The Nature Conservation Officer has commented that the only potential ecological issue associated with this proposed development relates to the potential presence of roosting bats. A bat survey has been undertaken and submitted and no evidence of bats was recorded. Considering the lack of suitable foraging habitat in the vicinity of the mill building and the abundance of alternative possible more appealing roosting opportunities offered by the surrounding buildings, the Nature Conservation Officer advises that the Council has enough information to be satisfied that the proposed development is unlikely to have an impact upon protected species.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

In conclusion, it is noted that a number of previous schemes have been granted planning permission and Listed Building Consent for residential reuse. The comments of the neighbours are noted and have been considered in the report above. The applicants'

agent has provided financial information which covers the projected expenditure and projected apartment sale prices for the development. Although these figures will provide a scheme which is deliverable the scheme would become financially uneconomic should contributions be necessary towards affordable housing, public open space or highways improvements. Although this is unfortunate, it is considered that this necessary to secure the retention of the Grade II Listed Building. Although the scheme would result in no car parking provision, it is considered in this instance that this is on balance acceptable and the site is in a sustainable location.

It is considered that the development of the mill needs to happen as quickly as possible to ensure that the visual impact of the building and its environmental issues are addressed, and to improve the living environment to residents who live in the direct vicinity of the mill. A recommendation of approval is therefore made.



09/2859M & 09/2862M BROWN STREET MILL, BROWN STREET, MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE, SK11 6SA

NGR: 391,450m - 373,120m

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Application for **Full Planning**

RECOMMENDATION : Approve subject to following conditions

1. A03FP - Commencement of development (3 years)
2. A01AP - Development in accord with approved plans
3. A06EX - Materials as application
4. A08EX - Submission of specified materials
5. A09EX - Rainwater goods
6. A11EX - Details to be approved - window design
7. A14EX - Specification of bonding of brickwork
8. A20EX - Submission of details of windows
9. A21EX - Roof lights set flush
10. A22EX - Roofing material
11. Mortar mix
12. Method statement
13. Doors and windows