

Application No: 17/1431M

Location: ALBION MILL, LONDON ROAD, MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for conversion of former mill to provide 34 residential flats, including two storey rear extension and rear external staircase and walkways with associated infrastructure.

Applicant: Mr Rafiq

Expiry Date: 13-Mar-2020

SUMMARY:

This Listed Building Consent seeks approval to convert and extend Albion Mill, a 5-storey, Grade II Listed former Mill building, to form 34 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 consent includes an extension and pedestrian access to each flat located on the outside to the rear of the building. In addition, 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 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, 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 mark 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 6-storey, 4-bay wing to east. This wing has similar, slightly smaller windows to each floor and segmental voussoired archway through the building to lower right. Stair tower forms 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 34, 2-bed flats. The scheme also includes a 4-storey side extension at the rear to house 4 of the 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 32 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 no longer viable.

POLICIES

By virtue of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the application should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For the purposes of considering the current proposals, the development plan consists of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS) and saved policies Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (MBLP).

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

CELPS was adopted in July 2017 and sets out policies to guide development across the borough over the plan period to 2030. The relevant policies of the CELPS are summarised below:

SE7 The Historic Environment.

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan saved policies (MBLP):

Following the adoption of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, a number of policies of the MBLP have been saved. The relevant saved policies are summarised below:

- | | |
|-------|--|
| BE 15 | Repair or enhancement (listed buildings); |
| BE 17 | Demolition of listed buildings; |
| BE 18 | Alteration extensions and partial demolition (listed buildings); |
| BE 19 | Change if use of buildings; |

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Framework (NPPG)

CONSULTATIONS

Macclesfield Civic Trust:

Support the application. Macclesfield Civic Trust 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.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Determination Framework:

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 and as such in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the Council 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 as per the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Policy Framework:

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.

Saved Policy BE15 states that the repair and enhancement of buildings of architectural and historic importance (listed buildings) will be encouraged. Development in accordance with the development plan which secures such improvements will normally be permitted.

Saved Policy BE19 states that the change of use of buildings of special architectural or historic interest (listed buildings) may be permitted providing the following criteria are met:

1. The buildings would be preserved;
2. The proposed change of use and conversion work would preserve the character of the building;
3. The proposed use would not detract from the setting of the building; The proposed development complies with the terms of other local plan policies; and
4. The use would not lead to a demand for large scale extensions or for additional buildings in the grounds.

Impact upon the Grade II Listed Building and its setting:

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 183 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 well-being 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.

Albion Mill is a Grade II Listed Building. Original built as a Silk Mill for *Thomas Heapy*, it dates back from 1843, with later alterations. Listed Building Consent 17/1431M accompanies this application.

The Mill has previously received permission for residential conversion, albeit 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. In addition, 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.

Paragraph 196 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, 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.

The scheme is therefore deemed to comply with Policies BE15, BE17, BE18 and BE19 of MBLP

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 policy, 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)
10. Submission of a scheme of Mechanical Ventilation (pre-commencement)

In order to give proper effect to the Northern Planning 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.

