

Block B, MSV, Cambridge Street, Manchester

Statement of Heritage Significance



On behalf of

Centurion Student Services (UK) Ltd

trading as Dwell Student Living

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This submission comprises an application for Listed Building Consent for internal alterations / reconfiguration of existing, student accommodation, to create 'studio' bedrooms, including en-suite bathrooms, with new mechanical ventilation systems over 7 floors within the north west corner of Chorlton Old Mill, MSV Block B, 84 Cambridge Street, Manchester. It lies on the corner of Hulme St and Cambridge St.
- 1.2 This Heritage Statement sets out the justification for a Listed Building Consent application, including the appropriate contextual information, an appraisal of the significance of the building, as well as the method for dealing with the appropriate impact assessment of the proposed changes to the internal layout of the student accommodation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Chorlton Old Mill is a significant heritage asset within Manchester Town Centre. In 1993 the building was converted from a traditional mill to student accommodation. Over this period the needs of students have changed and the current layout which comprises 14 No cluster units over 7 floors is now deemed unsuitable.
- 2.2 This proposal allows for stripping out of the existing cluster units to provide modern facilities with en-suite facilities for privacy and acceptable space standards, which will allow the accommodation to remain viable and acceptable to an ever more discerning and competitive marketplace for student accommodation.

These proposals are indicated on drawing SK04 within the Appendix. This drawing illustrates a typical floor showing existing and proposed. The proposals allow for a reduction in student numbers from 63 to 42 but with far superior accommodation.

3. THE HERITAGE ASSET

- 3.1 Chorlton Old Mill does not fall within a designated Conservation Area but is a recognised heritage asset and was first listed in 1988.

The earliest recorded mill on the site (Chorlton Twist Company) was developed by Robert Owen who sold the mill in 1809. A series of alterations were made and extensions added to the mill, with the C19 owners developing the adjacent mill (Chorlton New Mill), with the Chorlton Old Mill then forming a group of mills – with Chorlton Old Mill being the only surviving building and which was partially rebuilt in early C19 including a cast-iron roof structure which is considered to be unusual.

3.2 Listing Description.

Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry: 1197775

Date first listed: 11th March 1988

Date of the most recent amendment: 6th June 1994

Statutory Address: CHORLTON OLD MILL, CAMBRIDGE STREET, MANCHESTER.

Cotton spinning mill, converted to accommodation in 1993. The earliest mill on the site was built in 1795, considerably extended c1810, and then largely rebuilt in 1866. Brick with slate roof (missing at time of inspection). Single range of formerly U-plan mill survives: six storeys over basement, 14x8 bays, each with rectangular window with flat arched head. Panelled corner pilasters. Former shallow wings to each side to rear. Interior construction is cast-iron columns and beams carrying transverse brick arches (some columns encased in steel), and with three bays of cast iron arch-braced roof trusses. Later C19 rebuilding involved re-use of some at least of the structural iron-work, it is likely that the roof structure dates in its entirety to the 1860's. (1)

Listing NGR: SJ8396597285



- 3.3 It is noted that the building is a Grade II listed heritage asset and the understanding of the significance of the asset is important, such that any proposals that affect the asset should be carefully considered. The building clearly has the characteristics that are typical of a mill building of this age and design, including the robustness of the exterior, open plan floor plates, brick vaulted ceilings, cast iron columns and feature roof trusses – which are unusual.

4 PROPOSALS AND CONSERVATION STRATEGY

- 4.1 As previously noted the principle of this proposal can be seen on the attached drawing.
- 4.2 As described previously, the building is a former historic mill building that was converted to student accommodation in the mid 1990's. The building was sub-divided into cluster blocks of student bedrooms with shared kitchens and bathrooms utilizing plaster board dry lining construction for walls and ceilings, with many of the cast iron columns and the arched vaulted ceilings being enclosed and not visible to users of the building.
- 4.3 When the work was carried out in the early 1990s the existing brickwork and vaulted ceilings were concealed- see photo below.



- 4.4 The Design Team and owner are sensitive to the quality and value of the architectural features present in the Chorlton Old Mill, including cast iron columns and cast-iron arch-braced roof trusses and vaulted brick arches. It is proposed to conserve these original architectural features in their entirety (and as noted in the Listing) with minimal, if any, works affecting the listed elements. The proposed lightweight, plasterboard partitions (forming separating walls between rooms and corridors) will replace existing partitions, with the existing internal brick wall faces, vaulted brick arches, left exposed wherever possible. The cast iron columns and the cast iron arch-braced roof trusses will be left exposed wherever possible with the application of fire-retardant intumescent paint where required under Building Regulations. The proposed works will not involve any alterations to the exterior of the building, including any works to the roof and existing openings within the floors and roofs (for the installation of services etc) will be utilised.
- 4.5 It is also noted that when dealing with planning applications affecting listed buildings, 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'*. As will be seen these proposals seek to enhance the existing building in that the new accommodation will help to ensure its sustainability long term.

5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 Assessment of Assets

- 5.1.1 Chorlton Old Mill is a fine heritage asset but was significantly remodelled in 1993 with complete change of use to student accommodation. More recently there have been Council approvals (126521/LO/2020) for updating and remodelling other areas of the mill.
- 5.1.2 The main heritage value of this fine building now lies, we would suggest, in its overall form and construction which is articulated in the listing description which identifies its general form and layout and particular use of cast iron columns with beams carrying transverse brickwork arches and fine iron arched braced roof trusses.

5.2 Proposals and Justification for the Development

- 5.2.1 This section addresses the justification for the scope of the overall development using a recognised set of assessment criteria. These proposals are supplementary to the above impact assessment and seek to provide the necessary background and policy justification to support the application proposals.

5.2.2 Proposals

These proposals allow for the complete removal of the existing student cluster blocks over 7 floors, which are all formed with lightweight partitions and dry-lining and the formation of individual student bedrooms and living accommodation with en-suite facility. As previously noted there will be a reduction in student numbers from 63 to 42.

Fabric affected and significance – The main impact on the existing building is the removal of all the lightweight partitions and facilities which form the student cluster units, albeit these were formed in 1993 some 5 years after the building was listed.

Potential impact –

External – The intention is to retain all existing windows with no alterations to the external appearance i.e. zero external impact.

Internal – The internal remodelling is proposed in such a way to enhance rather than have a negative impact on the building given that the existing historic features, the columns, internal wall faces and brick vaulted arches will now be visible instead of concealed behind dry lining and suspended ceilings which is a public/user benefit.

Mitigation – The proposals shown are an enhancement.

5.2.3 Justification

1. What is the need for the development?

- To provide enhanced student accommodation from the old model of cluster units to individual bed / living accommodation with en-suites.

2. Can the development needs be met in a different way?

Not easily (within this existing building) as the new and improved living accommodation demands more space per unit and the design is restricted having to utilise existing window patterns and fenestration.

3. What are the benefits of the new work?

- To encourage students both national and international to recognise Manchester as a progressive University City which offers high quality student living.
- These proposals whilst providing superior accommodation do not have a negative impact on the listed heritage asset.

4. Will the benefits outweigh any harm?

Yes, in that the existing accommodation has become run down and modernisation is required. Whilst it is recognised there will be a reduction in numbers, there will be an enhanced student-living experience.

5. Can you avoid (mitigate) any minor impacts on the heritage?

No, minor impacts are, at this stage, envisaged.

6. Is the scale, design, materials proposed for any new works appropriate?

Absolutely in that the existing structure will not be affected, lightweight partitions will be used to form the units and the existing fenestration remains unaltered. Added to this the existing structure both vaulted ceilings and external walls will be revealed.

7. Is any new work in the least damaging place?

The proposals show that the new work lies within the footprint of the existing building and has no damaging impact.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Heritage Statement concludes that the retention of the Grade II listed building is of paramount importance, informed by a clear expression of the historical and architectural significance of the building and its presence in the wider setting of industrial mills in Cambridge Street.
- 6.2 It is fully acknowledged that the conservation of the listed building involves the retention of its key architectural and historical features (the cast iron columns and roof trusses and vaulted brick arched ceilings) and that any proposals to change the layout or convert the building in any way, must consider the conservation of those features (that make the building special), to ensure that the proposed changes to the building do not harm these key features in any way.
- 6.3 In considering the proposals the impact on the heritage asset was assessed to have a neutral or positive impact on the cast iron columns (in that they will now be fully exposed rather than concealed within dry lining / partitions), a neutral impact on the roof trusses (in that they will continue to be exposed) and a positive impact on the vaulted brick arches (in that they will be fully exposed rather than concealed behind suspected ceilings). In this way the key features that contribute to the significance of the heritage asset are retained / enhanced.
- 6.4 The proposed works do not involve any alterations to the exterior of the building and the historic / architectural features of the building will be retained, protected, with a clear expression of the those features for users of the building to enjoy and which help inform the significance of the heritage asset. In this way the proposals should be acceptable in that the proposed works are crucial to ensuring the long-term viability of the building is preserved, with its original structures and historic features preserved for current and future users to enjoy.