Consultation Response from KC, Conservation & Design

2022/92460 Bankgate Mills, Bank Gate, Slaithwaite, Huddersfield, HD7 5DL

Listed building consent for extension to mill, external and internal alterations to form 5 apartments and demolition of outbuilding

Date Responded: 2.3.2023
Responding Officer: Sue Brooks
Responding Ref: CV 5/16

Following the previous Conservation and Design response dated 28 November 2022, amendments have been submitted. The comments below are in response to these amendments.

Mill conversion
As before, we support the conversion and restoration of this prominent historic mill building to provide a sustainable use and ensure its future viability and maintenance.

Externals
The proposal retains most of the external masonry, with limited stone repairs using local sandstone and repointing, with works to the building fabric kept to a minimum. **If the application is supported, full details of pointing and stone replacement need to be submitted for approval.**

Proposed windows are shown on the elevation drawings but no details have been submitted. Following our previous response, the applicant has clarified that slim aluminium framed, multi-paned windows are proposed in the same configuration as the surviving historic timber framed windows to retain the industrial character of the building. We accept the change in material from timber to aluminium with the same profiles and design as maintenance is likely to be difficult at high level and the building is in an exposed location. As most of the historic windows are missing, slim double-glazed units would be acceptable subject to detailing and can be submitted by condition. **If the application is supported full details need to be submitted for approval, including 1:20 elevations and 1:5 sections showing opening lights, profiles, depth within the reveals, glazing, colour and materials.**

In the revised drawing, loading doors are shown on the east elevation and this enhances the character and significance of the building. The historic hoist on the gable is retained both internally and externally. **If the application is supported proposed details of the doors need to be submitted for approval, including 1:20 elevations and 1:5 sections showing design, depth within the reveals, glazing, colour and materials.**

The revised application shows a natural stone slate roof covering on the mill as existing, rather than blue slate with solar panels as originally proposed. Due to the prominent location of the building and the type of roof covering, solar panels would be too visible in this instance and therefore we would not be able to accept them on this roof so this amendment is welcomed. **If the application is supported, existing slates must be used where possible, with any replacements matching the existing. The roof shall be laid in diminishing courses and not turned and shall be laid on a breathable membrane. If insulation and ventilation is proposed, details should be submitted for approval.**

Cantilevered balconies were originally proposed on the south and west elevation, wrapping around the corner of the building and partially obscuring the architectural interest of the south elevation. This has been amended, with the balconies now located on the west elevation and set back from the south elevation, wrapping around the circulation tower. To access them, two window cills will be lowered to create doorways onto these structures. We are not convinced that these balconies respect the architectural style and significance of the former mill, and as they are highly visible we would not agree that they are subservient to the main building. The level of details submitted with the application is limited, including structural details, materials and finish. Based on the information submitted, we are

still unable to support this element of the proposal.

A circulation tower is proposed on the west gable, set back from the façade and with a flat roof at eaves level and with a green living wall. We accept the introduction of this structure to maximise useable floorspace within the building and would recommend that construction details and materials are submitted if the application is supported. We have concerns about the future maintenance of the proposed green wall and need to be convinced that this will remain a positive feature. Consideration to an alternative finish could be considered.

Internals
The internal space within this narrow mill building is mostly open plan on all levels, and this contributes to its significance. The proposed floor plans show extensive subdivision, particularly on the ground floor, with less subdivision on the upper three floor which provides some legibility of the historic plan form.

The historic floors have been replaced with concrete floors set onto steel beams at first and second floor levels and therefore any new floor and ceiling finishes in these areas will have no impact on significance on these levels. A timber floor set on substantial timber beams survives on the top floor, with exposed timber trusses and purlins. The timber floor structure appears to be in poor condition, but no structural assessment has been submitted with proposed repair methods and interventions. The application proposes to retain exposed trusses and purlins, subject to structural condition. **If the application is supported, full details of the proposals for the timber roof and floor structures need to be submitted, with clear justification for any removal of historic fabric.**

Internal walls throughout the building are painted coursed rubble stone with some brick infills and are of low significance. A former fireplace has been infilled on the west gable of the second floor and a fireplace surround survives on the third floor. **If the application is supported, details of proposed dry lining need to be submitted. This must be a breathable finish to prevent moisture build-up in the external walls.**

Demolition and new dwellings
As before, we have no objections to the demolition of the early 20th century brick structure or the principle of constructing new dwellings on this previously developed land, subject to the design and scale preserving the setting of the building and respecting the local townscape and character.

Our previous comments still apply, and we would recommend that the design of the dwellings is reconsidered to respect the setting of the listed mill buildings and the local townscape, which is predominantly characterised by natural stone and slate, simple pitched roofs and terraces.

Landscaping
As before, we have no objections to the use of natural stone and soft landscaping on this site, subject to detailing and materials being submitted for approval. Indicative images show that the retaining walls are substantial and therefore these need to be carefully detailed.

Conclusion
As before, we support the conversion of the mill and construction of new dwellings in place of the exiting derelict buildings, as this has the potential to enhance the site and bring a vacant mill building back into a viable use.

We have concerns about the level of detail submitted with the application and the lack of assessment and justification for the proposed interventions and their impact on the listed building and its setting, as

well as the character of the wider townscape. Based on the information submitted we are unable to support the proposal in its current form and would recommend that further consideration is given to the design of the west elevation of the mill as well as the proposed detached dwellings, with further details submitted as requested in the assessment above.