

Prickleden Mills Holmfirth

Heritage and Visual Impact
Assessment

Undertaken by TheUrbanGlow
Design & Heritage Ltd 2023

TheUrbanGlow



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INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to examine the potential impact of proposed redevelopment of the former Prickleden Mills site in Holmfirth into advanced age apartments and public realm improvements. The proposal will retain the original mill pond and create a contextual development that will integrate into its landscape and historic context through using inspiration from the past.

The purpose of this exercise is to build upon the previous Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment undertaken by Ares Landscape Architects with specific reference to the assessment in terms of the existing historic environment. Therefore, this assessment will be concerned with, and help explain any potential impact upon both listed buildings and the Holmfirth Conservation Area within which this application sits. Where harm is identified an assessment of the Public Benefits of this proposal will also be undertaken.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this assessment exercise has been based on the references to significance in the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised 2021), as informed by two non statutory Historic England documents namely; Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (2015).

The exercise was carried out by Director of TheUrbanGlow Design and Heritage Ltd Mr Andrew Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC and in order to fully appreciate the site a thorough site visit was undertaken in November 2021 and the landscape context of the site was fully explored. This document was revised in December 2022 where updated plans and sections were added.

The assessment of these sites and the associated photomontages are however intended to give an idea with regards the location and potential visibility of the site within the topography of the Holmfirth area. The highlighted shape on the images is in no way intended to reflect the scale or precise location of the site and the Architect's Plans should be consulted in regards to this. The red dot on images denotes the location of the photograph and the blue dot represents the location of the site. In order to give an indication of eaves and ridge height to the proposal red and green lines have been shown. These lines are as accurate as can be based upon the Architect's provided sections of the site but again they are ultimately an indication only of scale within the image.

Google Maps 2021



BACKGROUND OF SITE

Prickleden Mills (or Upper Mills) is shown on the 1854 Ordnance Survey plan as one of a series of mills all sporting similar reservoirs which would suggest some form of water powered mechanisation. In this regard the location of the mills alongside the fast flowing Holm River would provide a highly appropriate location for such an enterprise where the flat levels of the river valley were used and the mills themselves being tucked neatly within the valley sides.

Although little obvious evidence remains as to the scale and size of the former mill, what is clear is that the main mill complex itself was built in a L-shaped arrangement with two mill ponds serving it and there is reference from the late 19th century of the water wheel being dismantled which confirms the older origins of the mill being water powered. The more detailed 25 inch Ordnance Survey Plan of the 1890's clearly shows an underpass/carriageway of some sort through one of the mill ranges which would suggest that it was at least a two to three storey high range if not higher. Remaining foundations within the site would support this theory that the original mill ranges were of some scale and the solidity of remaining structures would certainly support a significantly high structure and robust building.

The mill was originally a scribbling mill dating to at least 1843 when there is a reference to Mary, Elizabeth and John Hobson Farrar, Geo Farrar & Co dissolving their partnership (the previous mill was known as Upper Mill or Farrar's Mill). By 1844 the mill was powering such a scale of machinery that it took 10 loads of coal a day.

By 1906 the mill was disused and by the mid twentieth century the main ranges were seemingly demolished and partially replaced with what looks like a new, albeit simpler warehouse building on approximately the same site. This left what would have typically have been a lower mill range along the river with what were likely weaving sheds within the site. It was likely these structures that survived until final demolition of the site in 2015 following the granting of planning permission for six storey purpose built flats to this site.



Remnants of what appear to have been a substantial mill building survive on the site. The top image is a particularly hefty wall that would easily carry several storeys. Therefore, like other mills in the area, it is likely that Prickleden once contained such high mill ranges that are, or were, common in these places.



Maps of the site illustrating the mill ranges. Of particular note is the underpass feature on the 1893 map (lower left) which would suggest an entrance through a building of at least two Victorian storeys. This range is demolished and extended by 1929 leaving the much lower weaving sheds along the riverside (right) Source The Leeds Library

POLICY CONTEXT

This heritage assessment was undertaken in order to fully understand the potential impact of development of this site upon nearby Listed buildings and the Holmfirth Conservation Area. Its intention is to build upon the previous Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) except with a particular emphasis upon the impact of the proposals upon the historic environment. The policy criteria to be met in assessing the impact of these proposals is as follows:

Firstly, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides the legal framework within which impact of proposals should be assessed. Section 66(2) of that Act requires that 'Special Regard' should be given to the desirability of preserving a Listed building or its setting.

In the case of the site of Prickleden Mills is within the vicinity and setting of some Listed Buildings. Most notably we have identified three listed buildings that could experience some impact to their setting through this proposal and as such Section 66(2) of the Act is engaged.

Section 72 of the same Act requires 'Special Attention' to be paid to the impact of proposals upon Conservation Areas with the requirement that proposals preserve or enhance the character and appearance of such an area.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) provides guidance on the management of the historic environment. Paragraph 200 of the Framework requires Applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets that would be affected by a proposal. This assessment, provides that assessment of significance and will help the Local Planning Authority in its duty to undertake the following:

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage asset(s) affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on

their significance."

The NPPF goes on to offer the following guidance in paragraphs 199-203;

"199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;

b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

Substantial Harm is a high test and will generally only be triggered through the total loss of a heritage asset. In this case the contextual new development upon this site is the focus of this application. Therefore, any harm will be Less Than Substantial as defined by the NPPF.

The NPPF also states the following with regards to less than substantial harm;

201. Where a development proposal 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 proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

This assessment is being undertaken so as to demonstrate a clear and comprehensive understanding of the context of this site and

to elaborate upon the historic evolution of these buildings as well as assess any impact upon the surrounding townscape and landscape context. Although not specifically addressed, the public benefits of this proposal will be assessed below.

CONSERVATION AREA

The site is within the adopted Holmfirth Conservation Area. Unfortunately there is no available area appraisal for the conservation area.

LISTED BUILDINGS

The site is adjacent and within the setting of some Listed Buildings. Many will suffer no impact and these issues can be dealt with through the conservation area assessment. However, this assessment examined in more detail three listed buildings that were identified as being potential candidates for suffering some harm. The list description is copied below from the National Heritage List for England for these structures.

No. 25 and 27 Woodhead Road GVII

Two cottages. Early C19. Hammer dressed stone. Stone slate roof. Coped gables. Two stacks (one ashlar). Two storeys. North-west elevation: No 25: ground floor: central doorway with one 3-light stone mullioned window to one side, and one small single light to other. First floor: one 2-light stone mullioned window, one single light, and one 3-light stone mullioned window. No 27: doorway to left. Three large single light windows with large separating 'mullions'. Central light probable former doorway. First floor: one 3-light stone mullioned window with one light blocked and one 2-light stone mullioned window.

Listing NGR: SE1379707945

Church of St John, Uppertong Lane GVII

Gothic Revival Church. 1848. Hammer dressed stone with ashlar dressings and plinth. Buttresses. Pitched slate roof with gable copings. North and south transepts, the latter with 3 tier square tower over. Lower chancel. Nave of 4 bays to north and 5 bays to south, each side with doorway the one to south in stone porch. Windows are 2-light with traceried heads, some with stained glass. North transept of 2 bays with window as before. North window is 3-light with stained glass. Tower of 3 tiers with bell chamber with pair of 2-light traceried and louvered lights to each elevation. Five-sided

stair turret, to first tier level, on east side. Chancel of 2 bays with windows as before. East window of 4-lights with tracery and stained glass. Interior: chancel arch. Roof trusses supported on engaged colonnettes.

Listing NGR: SE1368408065

Ward Place House and Barn to west of group GV II

Farmhouse and adjoining barn, part of group. Early C18. Hammer dressed stone. Stone slate roof with 2 ashlar stacks and moulded stone brackets Two storeys. Central doorway with Tudor arched lintel and chamfered surround. Bay to left of 4-light double chamfered windows, each with outer mullions removed. Bay to right of 5-light windows the one to first floor with outer mullions removed. To rear is early or mid C19 outshut extension with entrance and 3-light window to ground floor and two 3-light windows to first floor, each with 2 blocked lights. At 90° is barn with large doorway, to each elevation, with timber lintel and later outshut to rear. Queen post trusses with struts. Later addition to north. House to right of farmhouse of no interest.

Listing NGR: SE1389607409

Ward Place House to east of group GV II

Dwelling, part of group. Mid C18. Hammer dressed stone. Quoins. Stone slate roof with gable copings. Entrance to right with deep lintel and chamfered surround. One 3-light window to left. To first floor: one 4-light window. Window openings are chamfered and recessed. Blocked 3-light window, as before, to rear. Adjoining wing to south, not included in the item.

Listing NGR: SE1391907417

PROPOSALS

The proposals to assess represent the redevelopment of this site with the buildings being located along the valley bottom. In so doing, the structures will echo the historic mill typology in terms of both location, form and scale. Most historic mill structures are of a similar 4/5 storey scale and except with generally higher floor to ceiling heights thereby creating buildings of significant mass. As the assessment above illustrates, it is highly likely that this site also had at least one large building range and there is reason to believe that this range would indeed have been of a similar height and scale to that of its neighbours within the town.

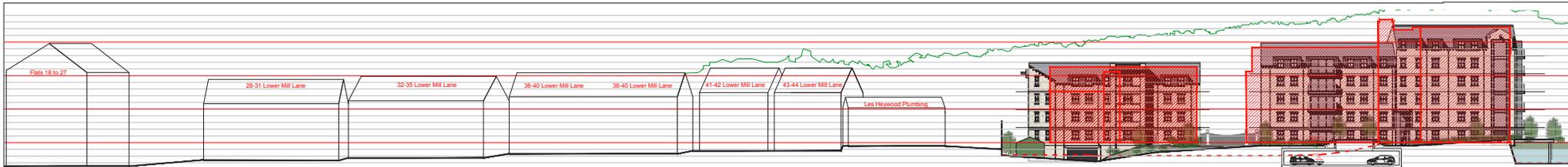
The sections of the site, reproduced below, show how the buildings sit within the valley bottom and moreover, illustrate that the eaves and ridge of the structure will be noticeably lower than buildings along Woodhead Road as well as being lower than those previously approved.

The result, as the following assessment illustrates, is that this building will sit comfortably within its site. Yes, the structures will be large, but no different to the typology of mill buildings within the town and the surrounding area being only 4 storey's high (or the equivalent of). Indeed, the overall design is felt to be substantially better than the previous approval that saw six storey ranges upon this site and the design ethos is to reflect the context and character of the area better whilst at the same time introducing an architectural language that can be said to be 'evolving' this rich heritage.

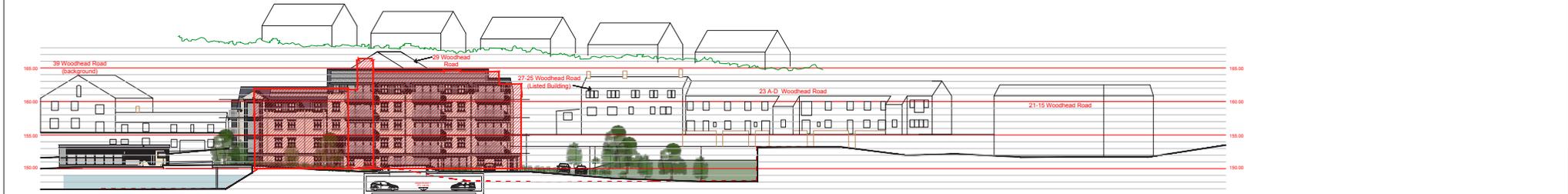
In terms of the actual impact upon the historic environment, assessment of this will be undertaken below. The main impact will likely be upon Grade II Listed buildings at 25-27 Woodhead Road. As explained below, the principle and historical precedent for such a building is not uncharacteristic of the setting of these buildings and as such it is felt that the potential impact is justified especially when the benefits of the overall scheme are taken into account.



The nearby context of large scale mills amongst more domestic buildings rising up the hillsides.



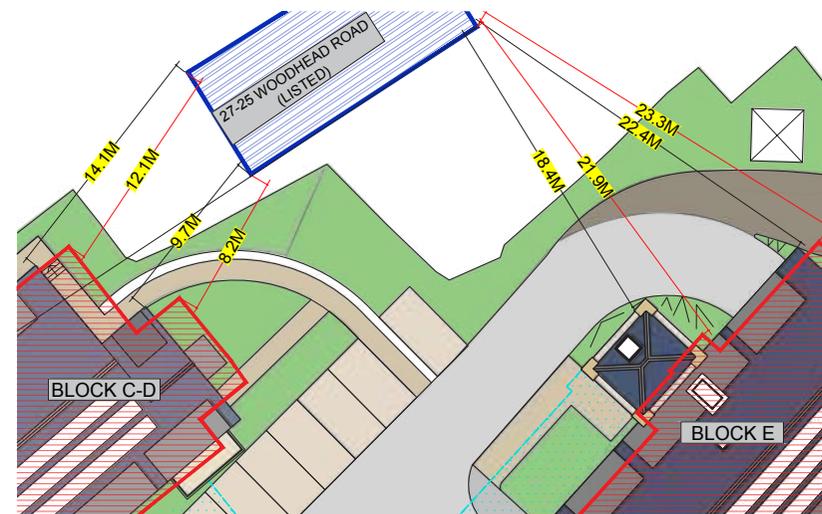
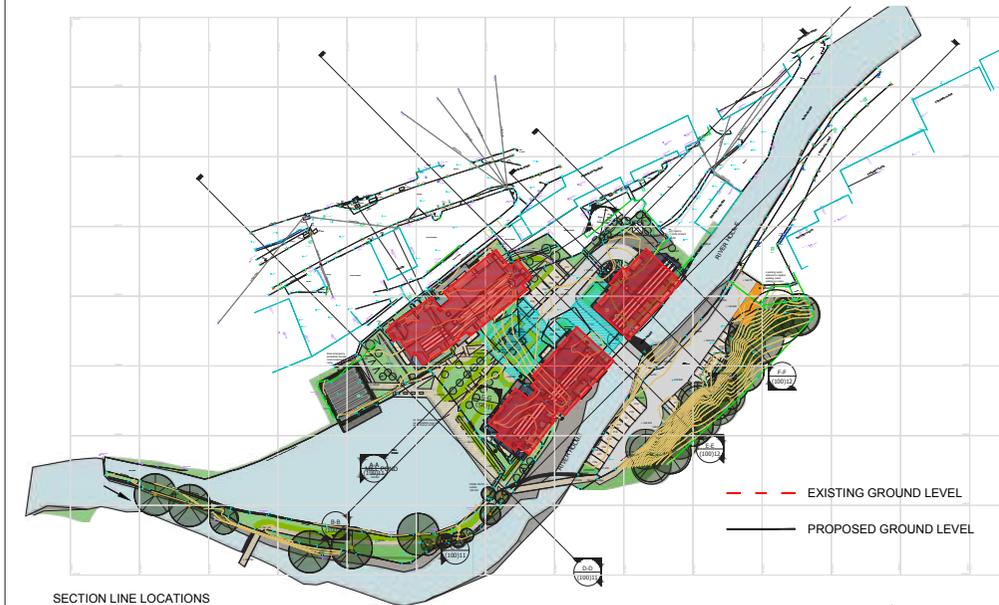
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SECTION B-B 1:200

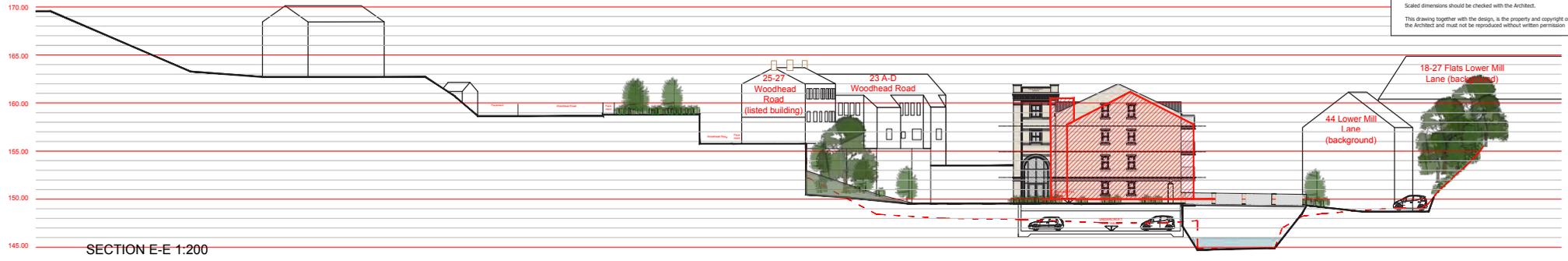


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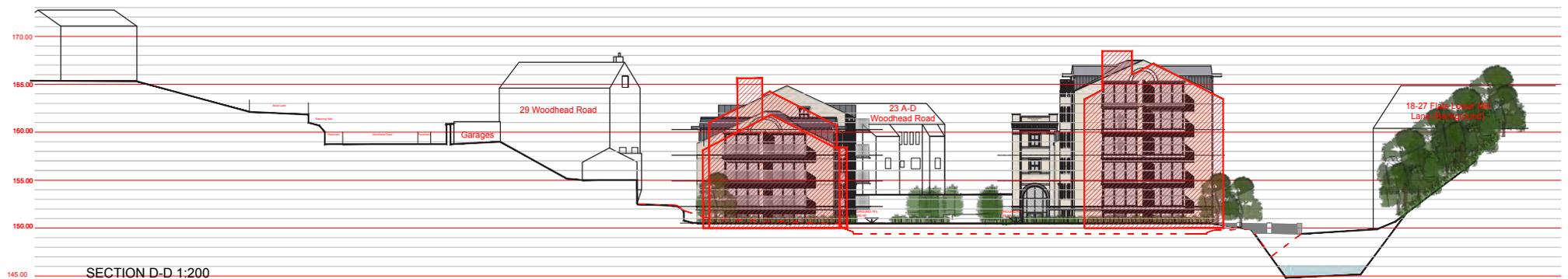



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 PROPOSED SITE SECTIONS
 WITH PREVIOUSLY APPROVED
 OVERLAID SHEET 1 OF 2
 1:200@ A0 FEB21 JF JC
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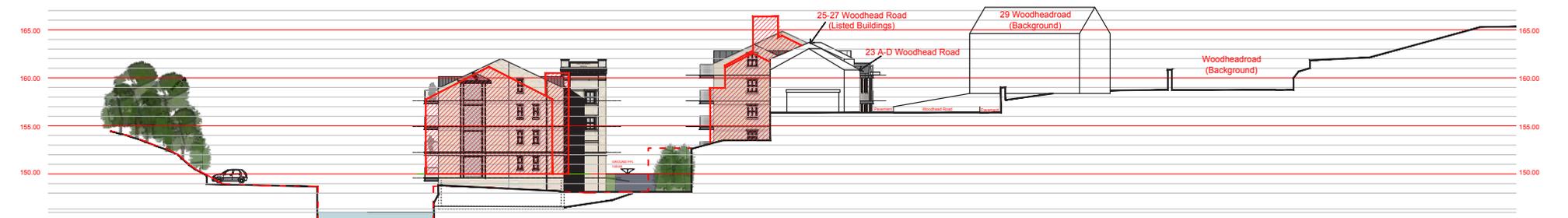
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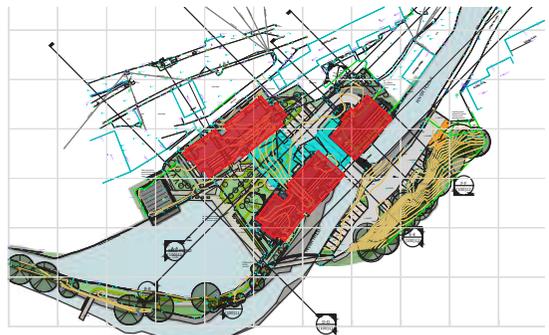
SECTION E-E 1:200



SECTION D-D 1:200



SECTION F-F 1:200



SECTION LINE LOCATIONS

--- EXISTING GROUND LEVEL
 — PROPOSED GROUND LEVEL



SECTION I-I 1:200

DO NOT SCALE OFF THIS DRAWING

Rev	Description	Auth	Date

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ELISTON HOMES

Project: **PRICKLEDEN MILLS HOLMFIRTH**

Project No: **2659** Drawing No: **(100)64** Rev:

Description: **PROPOSED SITE SECTIONS WITH PREVIOUSLY APPROVED OVERLAIN SHEET 2 OF 2**

Scale: 1:200@ A1	Case Origin: APR21	Drawn By: JF	Authorised By: JC
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Exported to IFC:
 Standard: Building Rules Template Combination Custom IFC

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 1 - WOODHEAD ROAD

Viewpoint one is taken along Woodhead Road looking east in the direction of the proposed development site and on the leading spur of the Conservation Area boundary that takes in the area to the right hand side of the image below. Very little is experienced from this viewpoint of the site currently due to the lay of the land and topography.

Potential Impact

Any potential impact would be confined to glimpses of the top of roofs and there would likely be very little if negligible visibility of the proposed buildings. One gable of the riverside range may be visible when trees are out of leaf.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Low**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Very Low/Negligible**



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 2 - LANE ADJ WOODHEAD ROAD

Viewpoint two is immediately adjacent to the application site looking towards the gable end of numbers 25-27 Woodhead Road. The application site is immediately to the rear of these properties and the proposal will echo the form and likely scale of previous mill buildings on this site (those prior to 1929). The ranges will be lower than the Listed Buildings but some change in circumstance will obviously occur. More assessment of this see below.

Potential Impact

Any potential impact would be confined to the valley bottom where the introduction of larger structures would be characteristic of the area. Impact on Listed Building see below.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Very High**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Medium**



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 3 - GREENFIELD ROAD

Higher up the northern valley side along Greenwood Road the site itself is largely not visible with it being tucked snugly into the bottom of the valley. However, from some viewpoints, (like the one pictured) some glimpses between buildings of the site can be obtained.

Potential Impact

There is the potential for some roof structures to be visible amongst the general other roofs in the foreground and middle distance. However these will only be seen between existing dwellings and will not break the important tree line that can be seen from this view. The impact is therefore considered very low as it only occurs at very few select points.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Low**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Very Low**



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 4 - GREENFIELD ROAD

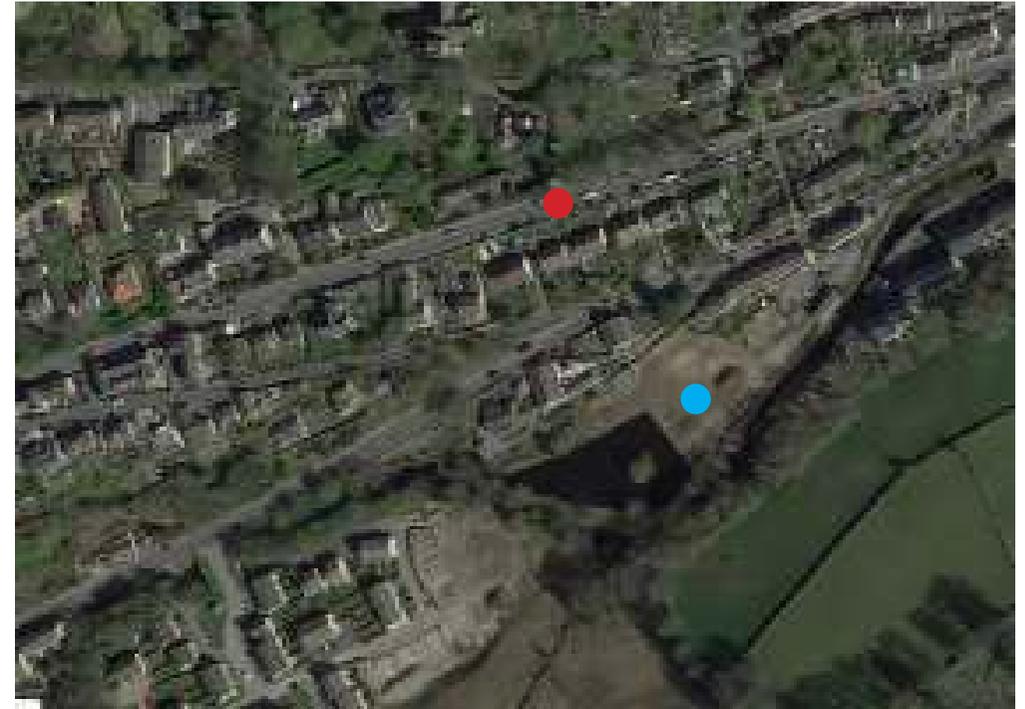
Second view from Greenfield Road illustrating the relative lack of glimpses that reach towards the site here.

Potential Impact

Once again any impact from Greenfield Road will be minimal. From this view in particular existing trees (some of which are evergreen), houses and the topography will not allow any impact to be perceived.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Very Low**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Negligible**



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 5 - LITTLE LANE

Little Lane is an historic and useful route that links the parallel routes of GreenField Road, Woodhead Road and higher up the northern valley slopes. The site cannot readily be seen from any location along Little Lane although the tops of roofs of some existing buildings along Woodhead Road are visible on an axis with the footpath.

Potential Impact

Little Lane is enclosed on both sides and as such offers a forward view into the valley bottom only. With this view being off set with the proposed site, any impact will be negligible.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Very Low**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Negligible**



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 6 - CHURCH OF ST JOHN, UPPERTHONG ROAD

St John's Church is a Grade II Listed building standing high along the upper northern slopes of the Holm Valley. Although the potential of views of the site were anticipated, a site visit confirms that no visibility would occur. Indeed, from the image below, even properties on Greenfield Road appear not to be visible from this part of Uppertong Road or the churchyard.

Potential Impact

There wouldn't appear to be any visual impact upon the church or its setting through this proposed development even though its contextual form would integrate to the general townscape, there will be no impact from viewpoint 6.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Negligible**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Negligible**



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 7 - TOWARDS SITE FROM WOODHEAD ROAD ENTRANCE TO SITE

This image is taken from the main entrance to the site off Woodhead Road and offers an obvious direct view of the site alongside other surrounding buildings that make up the character here. Presently, the relatively open aspect to the middle distance is largely a private view and not a significant view from within the Conservation Area.

Potential Impact

The impact here would be obvious in the fact that construction of buildings would occur. In terms of the amount of impact, there will of course be change. However, any impact/harm would be less than the previous approved applications and arguably less than the original mill buildings that may well have obscured much of this view.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Medium/High**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Low/Medium**



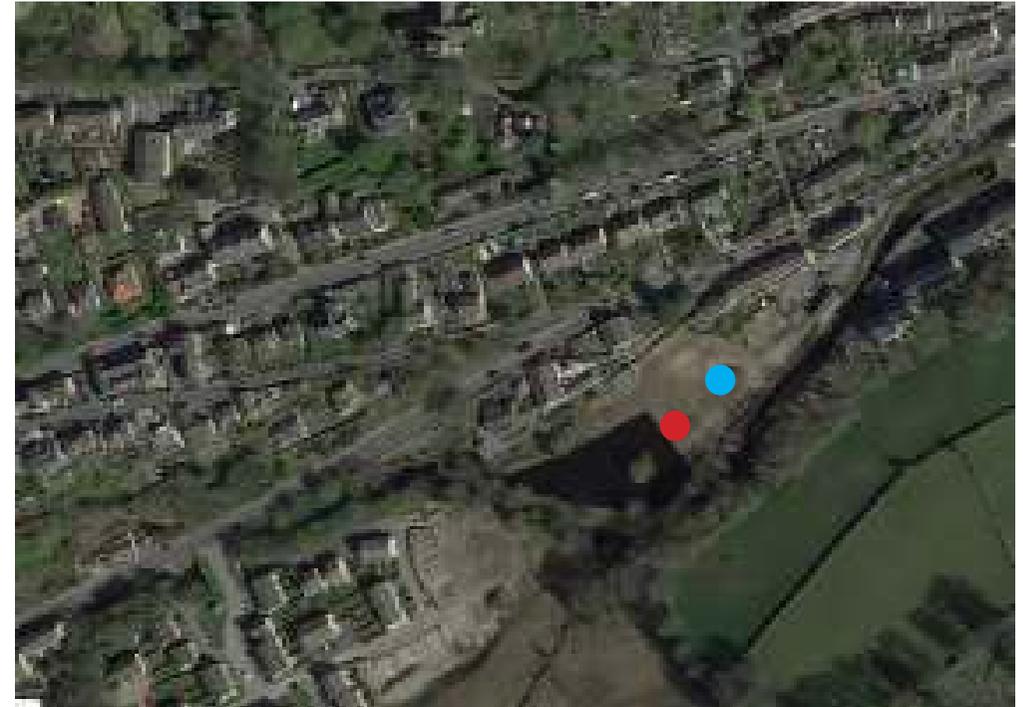
VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 8 - VIEW LOOKING EAST WITHIN SITE ADJACENT MILL POND

The existing character of this view is already one of gable forms of some scale (three to four storeys). When the lay of the land is taken into account, buildings appear higher as they raise up the hill. This is true of the Listed Buildings adjacent also.

Potential Impact

Being within the site there would of course be some considerable impact here through the introduction of new structures. This impact will be contextual and similar to previously consented schemes and with what would likely have sat on this site in the past. By definition therefore larger buildings within the valley bottom are characteristic of Holmfirth and as such although visibility is high, harm/impact would be low.



Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Very High**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Medium**



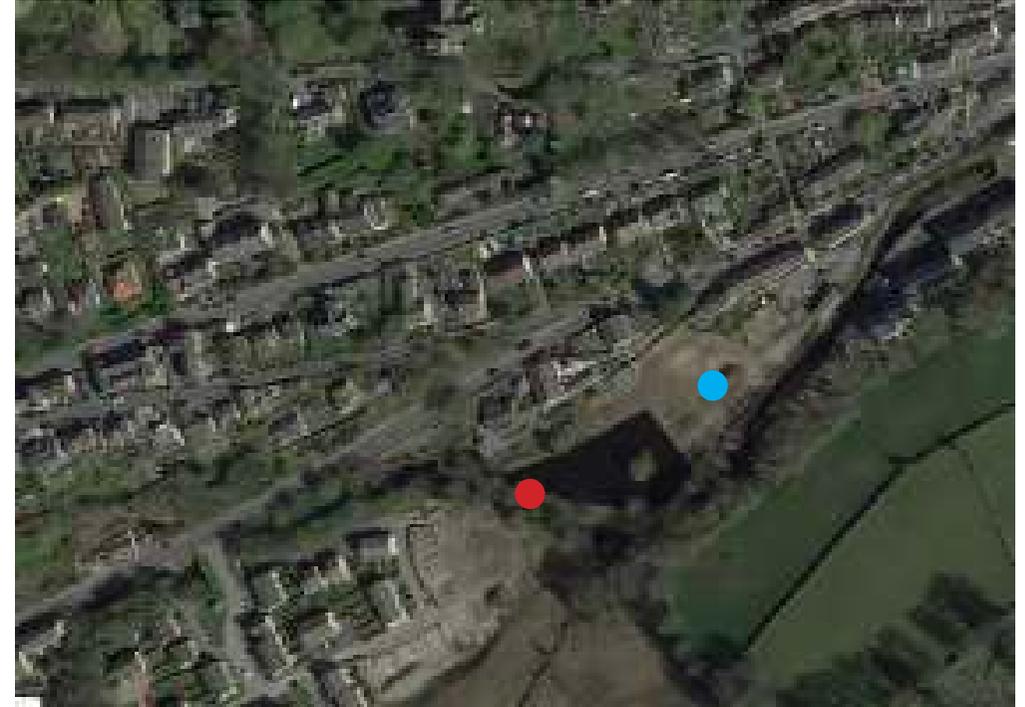
VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 9 - VIEW LOOKING EAST OVER MILL POND

The existing millpond is a strong reminder of the scale of the industrial operation once at work here and although appearing tranquil now, would once have had a very real purpose. On walking around the land between the river and the reservoir a view can be obtained that will remain private but will potentially be used by future residents. The development will introduce some buildings of relative scale and present gables towards this view.

Potential Impact

The impact will consist of the re-introduction of new ranges of buildings into this view to the far end of the former mill pond. This will result in two wings with gable elevations fronting onto the pond. There will be introduction of built form but this will form part of existing built form in this area



Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Medium/High**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Medium**



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 10 - VIEW LOOKING WEST ALONG WOODHEAD ROAD

This image is taken along a major highway route out of Holmfirth towards the west. The adjacent former mill conversion and new build is to the left of this image with the application site sunk within the dip in the valley to the right of the Holm river that can just be seen in this image leading into the distance.

Potential Impact

The proposal may result in some roof forms being visible within this view adjacent to the 'flat iron' type form of the building within the centre of this image. Once again, a modest increase in built form will therefore be visible but its impact is considered low. This impact will also be significantly lower than the previously consented scheme.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Low**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Low**



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 11 - VIEW LOOKING WEST FROM VICTORIAN STREET, ALONG HOLLOWGATE, HOLMFIRTH

This view was assessed so as to rule out any impact upon the town centre of Holmfirth and the core area of the Conservation Area. The site being so far removed and so visually obstructed from this view negate any potential impact upon the core of the conservation area here.

Potential Impact

Due to the distance and buildings in the way there will be no impact or visibility caused by the development upon this view.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Negligible**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Negligible**



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 12 - VIEW LOOKING NORTH FROM CEMETERY ROAD

Cemetery Road runs alongside the southern elevation of the valley except without the amount of buildings that populate the northern bank around Greenfield Road and Upperthong Lane. From this higher level the built form of Holmfirth can be seen below with a plethora of building types, heights and designs.

Potential Impact

The proposal will introduce a building of some stature when seen from this view but this will integrate well with the existing linear lines of stone built terraces and houses on adjacent sites. The impact will therefore be low but consistent with the wider conservation area.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Low**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Low**



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 13 - VIEW LOOKING NORTH FROM WARD BANK LANE

This image is from Ward Bank Lane which runs at the highest point of the southern moor and offers far reaching views towards the town and into the Holm Valley. It is important to assess views from here due to the impact of buildings potentially protruding over this escarpment ridge.

Potential Impact

The proposed site is not actually visible from this viewpoint as it is tucked so far into the valley bottom. There is the minute possibility that tops of roofs may be glimpsed from here but by such impact would be subsumed into the overall townscape and not be obvious.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Low/Negligible**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Low/Negligible**



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 14 - VIEW LOOKING NORTH EAST FROM WARD PLACE

During the assessment of Listed Buildings associated with this proposal a visit was undertaken to Ward Place Grade II Listed Building complex high on the hill of Ward Bank Lane. Due to the height of the site however the site was unidentifiable through this image.

Potential Impact

As above, the visible impact is negligible from the Listed Buildings here.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Negligible**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Negligible**



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 15 - VIEW LOOKING NORTH EAST FROM CEMETERY ROAD

Approaching the lower reaches of the souther hills a public footpath runs from Cemetery Road to the valley bottom. The site is still not visible here but identified on the image below.

Potential Impact

As above, the visible impact is negligible from this location.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Negligible**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Negligible**



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 16 - VIEW LOOKING NORTH EAST FROM FOOTPATH OFF CEMETERY ROAD

As one descends from the hillside to the south the site gradually becomes more recognisable. However, even here any visible impact would be contained to the presence of built form that would appear very small still from such a distance.

Potential Impact

As mentioned above, some impact may occur due to the introduction of built form here. However, this will be encompassed into the existing built form and landscape of this part of the town and valley. Any impact from this viewpoint would therefore be low.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Low**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Low/Negligible**



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 17 - VIEW LOOKING NORTH EAST FROM FOOTPATH

This image is taken nearing new development on Perseverance Road and the new development there. At this location we are once again at the same level as the application site and, although there is tree cover between, the proposed site can be seen.

Potential Impact

The proposal will be visible from this location when seen along the valley bottom. Once again it may be possible to see the two gable forms presenting in this direction, however, as other views have illustrated, such an impact would be seen against the backdrop of built form already and as such any harm would be minimised.

Impact Upon Viewpoint - **Low/Medium**

Impact Upon Townscape/Historic Environment - **Low**



Overall Impact of the Proposed Development Upon the Historic Environment

As mentioned above, this assessment has been undertaken with the intention that any impact upon the historic environment is assessed.

In this case, the principle of larger buildings within the valley bottoms of such areas is very well established. Historically, these were the areas of flowing water, canals and roads and, due to the relative lack of flat land, they became very suitable sites for tall buildings. Holmfirth already has several remaining examples of such large buildings and we have demonstrated above that the original (pre 1929) Prickledon Mills was also likely to have been of some stature and height.

The site immediately adjacent to Prickledon Mills demonstrates both the historic precedent and the capacity of the valley for accommodating buildings of such scale. In the site adjacent for instance the scale and massing is well accommodated within the valley floor. This proposal is ultimately an improvement upon both this adjacent scheme and the previous proposal however both through the design and accommodation of car parking below the building, thereby removing it almost completely from the new public realm spaces that will be created. Indeed the proposed massing of the buildings on this site has been reduced by whole storey in some cases and this has significantly alleviated its impact.

Despite this, it is important to understand the precise impact of this development before us and the following page will attempt to explain and assess this impact where it has the potential to affect designated heritage assets.

Image Right: View along the Holm Valley showing some of the character of cottages, houses and large scale mills. A defining characteristic that this application seeks to echo.



Precedent Analysis

As mentioned above, the context of the application site and indeed the Holmfirth Conservation Area is one of smaller scale, older and domestic buildings interspersed with larger mill and industrial buildings often located along the water courses that ran along the valley bottoms. Such mills traditionally consisted of warehouses or mill floors of four or five (Victorian) storey's high and could often be found in linear or L-shaped forms. Often such mills consisted of several ranges with warehouse, engine house, offices and mill floors of lower storey's. Some exhibited architectural embellishments like towers or neo classical devices such as architraves around openings, pediments and decorated cornices.

Prickledon Mills was likely no different from this and its main two ranges did form an L' shape. We know from the evidence that the mill was both water powered and coal powered and that a 25hp machine was present around 1874 when the mill was let to new owners. The carriage drive under the mill also strongly suggests that this range was of some considerable scale and it is highly likely that the main mill range was over three storeys.

For comparison Lower Mill, located adjacent to Prickledon is of a five storey construction and although its roof height has been enlarged during refurbishment, the last remaining mill range exhibits the sort of scale we would anticipate to find at Prickledon. Lower mill is typical of the scale and solidity we would expect to find along the Holme valley. Similar to this scale is Bridge Mills on Huddersfield Road which is another generous four storeys in a double pile linear range with tower. Although the surviving range of Bridge Mills is later, it is located slightly higher uphill and presents a stark and noticeable feature within the historic townscape.

The new build elements of Lower Mill reflect the generous Victorian proportions and developed a series of interlinked ranges of three/four storey's. The result is a linear development, sat well within its valley context that ultimately allows the development to integrate well into its





context. The main concession however is the reliance on driveway and surface parking with no true undercroft parking. The result is one where the buildings sit well but their public realm is made all the worse due to the lack of practical undercroft capacity. The actual impact upon the townscape is therefore one of hard surfacing, roads and car parking and the site largely fails to deliver much benefit in terms of landscape or amenity space.

The proposal within this statement reflects the scale and proportions of these two significant mill buildings within the town except with the added benefit of vastly improved public realm and accessibility and a lower height (18m at Lower Mill and 15.5m for this proposal). Therefore, although one range of this proposal will be one storey higher the actual height is lower due to the proportional difference. Added to this the vastly improved public realm and the proposal will fully complement and enhance the conservation area.





Sequence of views illustrating the existing industrial valley scale of the nearby site at Lower Mill.

Impact Upon Listed Buildings.

In the case of Listed Buildings, we have identified three buildings on the Statutory List that we felt could potentially have been impacted upon by this development. However, only one Listed Building (actually two houses - 25-27 Woodhead Road) would suffer any potential impact and this has been assessed below.

Impact Upon Number 25-27 Woodhead Road

Number 25-27 Woodhead Road is a group of two cottages likely dating to around the early 19th century. They are effectively split level in terms of their situation on the topography of the area and stand at three storeys to the rear. The cottages therefore sit on a much higher level to that of the site.

The proposal would introduce an element of built form within close proximity to these cottages at the rear. Such a built form is not without precedent here as the listed buildings are above an area of remaining structure that is suggestive of Prickleden Mills being of some stature previously. Moreover, in the mid 19th century the mill buildings enclosed these cottages to the rear to some considerable degree on three sides. We advance the case therefore that it is only a modern situation that has led to these cottages being so open as they presently are to the rear.

In assessing harm therefore, although there will be some change in circumstance for these cottages, this is not necessarily harmful to their understanding or significance.

Had this area to the rear always been open farmland for instance, then this proposal would cause considerable harm. However, as it stands, these cottages were part of a dense tapestry of built form on several levels with large mills in the valley bottom and smaller houses, cottages and farmsteads farther up the hill. This is the character we are dealing with here and as such we must be careful in prescribing our contemporary perceptions upon a Victorian town whose historic

character was substantially different to the one we see today.

In assessing harm to these buildings it must be said that the revised proposals reduce the previously identified harm and that the setting and significance of these cottages is better preserved.

Although there will undoubtedly be some impact, this does not necessarily mean that this impact will cause harm therefore. On balance, when considering the proposed modifications, the character of the town, both today and historically, we can advance the case that any harm will be **Minor/Negligible**.

Impact Upon the Conservation Area

As above, it is important to understand the historic nature of the Conservation Area here. That being large mill structures sitting alongside smaller houses, cottages and farmsteads within a steep valley setting. The principle therefore of a large intervention into the conservation area is therefore based upon a thorough understanding of the area's context and the historic precedent that this provides.

In principle, the reinstatement of larger mill type buildings, of a revised scale to that as previously proposed, will cause no harm to the conservation area and the character and appearance of the area will be preserved. Although the interventions will be large, this scale is synonymous with this overall character and as such it is impossible to argue that through replicating such fundamental elements of an area's context that the area would be harmed to such an extent as to justify refusal of Planning permission.

Indeed, what this proposal is doing, is actually reinstating something of this lost fabric and as such the character and appearance of the area is **Preserved and Enhanced** over that of the previous scheme.

Public Benefits.

In assessing any impact or harm, the Public Benefits of the scheme need to be weighted against the proposal.

In this case, there are considerable Public Benefits that need consideration as part of the Planning Balance.

These not only include the tidying of this derelict site within the conservation area, but also include the very real public benefits of encouraging and providing access through this site and alongside the historic mill pond in order to link to a public footpath along the riverside. Such a route is well needed in Holmfirth and this proposal provides it at its own cost.

There are other benefits due to the provision of undercroft car parking which will 'hide away' vehicles from this new open space and, unlike the site adjacent, this will enable the space to the valley to be attractive and without the clutter of vehicles and hardstanding.

The benefit also of rebuilding upon this site should not be ignored. The existing site is a post industrial landscape that has lain empty for several years. This proposal therefore not only reinstates something like the buildings that were previously likely to have existed on this site, but it also substantially improves this under used site whilst at the same time using local trades and addressing housing need in the town.

Finally, the benefit of introducing a significant amount of older persons housing into such a sustainable location, with easy access into the town centre, must surely be given great weight and this is one of the few sites that could actually provide such accommodation that was truly walkable to the town centre avoiding the need to struggle uphill.

In assessing these public benefits we advance the case that this proposal offers a tangible and real solution that will not only preserve or enhance the conservation area, but will also offer very real benefits for the town as a whole.



The proposal echoes the scale and stature of the site to the north except with the added benefits of vastly improved public realm and the obscuring of car parking from pedestrian routes through the site.

CONCLUSION

These revised proposals would be consistent with the traditional character of the area both existing and historic, where larger, mill buildings populated the lower valley bottoms around Holmfirth.

The impact of such a proposal must therefore be seen against this backdrop and this historic character that actually defines the character and appearance of the Conservation Area here. Through the introduction of a large building reminiscent of what was likely to have previously existed here (see evidence provided above) this character is being maintained and used effectively to provide a highly contextual response to the area.

When recognised that the design changes implemented actually reduce the scale of some significant buildings, along with the tangible Public Benefits of older persons accommodation and the preservation and opening of the Mill pond, the conclusion must be that this proposal does all it can in terms of treading the fine line between a contextual and viable response in achieving sustainable development.

Ultimately this proposal is a significant improvement upon the previous scheme and it meets the requirements within the NPPF.

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