MARSDEN MECHANICS

Proposed New Windows to Rear (East Elevation) - Heritage and Design Statement in support of the Application for Listed Building Consent.

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1 Introduction This document is prepared by Adrian Lord, who is a Chartered Architect (Retired) and Trustee of Marsden Community Trust (the Applicant).

Sections of text are also imported from a similar report for Listed Building Consent to make alterations to the ground floor of the same building, which received approval in August 2016: that report was prepared by Bill Best, Chartered Architect, and also a report for Listed Building Consent for Poster Display Cases by Tom Lonsdale, which received approval on the 23 May 2023.

2 Background Marsden Community Trust was formed by the people of Marsden to provide an appropriate body and form of governance to accept asset transfer of Marsden Mechanics from Kirklees Council, which took place in early 2017. The change of ownership has implications for how the building's use is to evolve and be marketed. Marsden Mechanics is located in the centre of Marsden at a very restricted road junction on Peel Street within the local Conservation Area. The building currently houses the library on the ground floor together with a meeting room and an office for the local Mikron Theatre Company. On the first floor is the function room and performance space used for a wide range of activities and events, including local theatre, music, Sure Start, tea-dance, private parties etc. It is also the main stage venue for the celebrated annual Marsden Jazz Festival.

MAIN FASCADES TO PEEL STREET AND BROUGHAM ROAD

3. The Building is listed grade 2. Listed Building Consent was approved in 2016 for an internal rearrangement on the ground floor, with two new access doorways formed between the conservatory and internal spaces that will be let to commercial tenants. The Trust is currently applying for grant funding to carry out those alterations and the signage described in this report.

3.2 Status and Importance of the Building The Marsden Mechanics movement began in a cottage, previously the Blue Lion public house, in November 1841. However, its popularity meant that it soon outgrew these premises, a public meeting was called and a committee appointed. Land was bought at what was then known as Marsden End for 5 shillings per square yard and building began in 1860. £2,500 was raised by public subscription and the new building was officially opened on the present site in February 1861 with a grand procession around the village, headed by the brass band. An infant's class opened in 1879 and a library was established (but was closed in 1905). The building was taken over by Marsden Council (later subsumed within Colne Valley UDC) and remained the centre of civic and social life in Marsden throughout the first half of the twentieth century. However, in the 50s and 60s the building began to fall into serious disrepair and CVUDC closed the main function room in 1969. Kirklees Council inherited the dilapidated building under local government reorganization in 1974 and scheduled its demolition but a campaign waged by local people led to a major refurbishment and internal reconfiguration in 1991. A community-led Management Association took over management of the building's use at that point with the exception of the library space, which remained under Kirklees management. The history of the building in relation to the local weaving industries, the cause supported by local people to save the building, together with its dominant location in the centre of Marsden and instantly recognisable clock tower, justifiably establish the importance of the building. The institutions and community services it houses are also a considerable asset to Marsden and its area of benefit.

3.3 The Setting The dominant position of Marsden Mechanics Institute (marked as Town Hall on the 1922 OS map left) establish it as a key landmark, visible and immediately recognisable from all the surrounding streets and many elevated viewpoints on the valley sides. At the time of construction Brougham Road was the principal street in the village and Market Place the principal gathering place. Consequently, the building addresses those two aspects, with Peel Street narrowed sharply to accommodate it. This spatial configuration has a traffic-calming effect and creates a powerful sense of place and constitutes an intuitive 'heart' to the village. The building has two generous storeys, with walls of hammer dressed stone with Ashlar dressings. The roof is hipped with blue slate. There is a central portico with paired Corinthian columns on the 3 bay main entrance façade. The elevation to Brougham Road is symmetrical with a second but less grand entrance. The distinctive timber clock tower is a later addition over the northwest corner. The 1991 refurbishment went far beyond a restoration: there was substantial internal reorganisation and, most notably on the outside, the original toilets were removed and new structures were added comprising the conservatory (now in poor condition) and an extension containing a lift, disabled toilet and escape stairs (see photo overleaf). The library was enlarged by removal of the wall between it and Meeting Room 2. Internal toilets and an enlarged foyer were also added. On the first floor the old balcony was removed to create a single performance space with a stage and ample room height, with ancillary bar and kitchen areas at the rear. Significantly, the main entrance was relocated onto the south side, via the new conservatory.

EAST ELEVATION WITH PASSAGE TO INFANT SCHOOL

4. The Rear Elevation facing East is of little consequence visually when compared to the main Facades on Peel Street and Brougham Road. This aspect, together with the close proximity of the building to the Local Infants School, also define this elevation as of little interest architecturally or to the public at large. In order to provide natural light and ventilation to the internal Office on this elevation it is proposed to instal two small windows at high level. These will be mounted in the existing recesses, with minimum 150 mm bearing to lintels each side, well above eye level both internally and externally, and as a result of consultations with the Head Teacher and Business Manager of the School, it is agreed that the glazing will be opaque to avoid any breach of privacy to staff and pupils. These windows have been carefully sized and situated to accord with the existing coursed masonry. The head lintels are placed one course below the existing string course (shown on the elevation, drawing 03), and the height of both windows will relate to three courses of stone in order that head and sill will slot into the existing facade. The materials of the new head, sill, and jambs will be carefully chosen to blend in with the existing.

ADRIAN LORD ARIBA - TRUSTEE OF THE MARSDEN COMMUNITY TRUST

9 JULY 2024

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