



Planning Department
Kirklees Council
Via email

8 June 2026

dc.admin@kirklees.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: 2026/62/90232/W | Marsden New Mills, West Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, HD7 6AZ. Application for demolition, redevelopment and associated landscaping. Conversion of site to residential and commercial uses.

The attention of the Victorian Society has been brought to the application for New Mills in Marsden, West Yorkshire. This application was discussed by our Buildings Committee at their June meeting. **Strong concerns were raised** towards the plans and the Society **objects** to these proposals in their current form due to the level of harm they would cause.

New Mills in Marsden are a collection of C19th-C20th industrial buildings of high significance and special interest. The buildings display a variety of architectural styles and technological advancements. Perhaps the most evocative aspects of the site are the aerial walkways which bridge the gap between the C19th East and West mills. These iron spans are central to the areas character and contribute positively to the New Mills and Brougham Road character areas of the wider Marsden Conservation Area. The former Wages Office is another significant building on site, recognisable through its round arched windows and decorative pilasters and entablature; the former office also contributes positively to the character of the conservation area and the C19th historic character of Marsden, being visible from the main road. The dramatic scale and dominance of New Mills, in addition to its completeness, is a crucial physical and historic aspect of Marsden and the local area.

Marsden, in many ways, can be better understood when compared to the castle/hill towns of the European continent. The main feature, here the mill, is central to the town's economic life and organisation, with roads and access routes running to and through it. The townscape is dominated by the mill, being the most recognisable feature and sitting proudly in the centre of the valley. This is a feature common throughout the Pennine mill towns running between Lancashire and Yorkshire, with compatriots of New Mills being identified along the route.

**Campaigning for
Victorian & Edwardian
Built Heritage**

The Victorian Society

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This application seeks permission for: the demolition of substantial aspects of Marsden New Mills, including the characterful former Wages Office and the weaving sheds; conversion of the remaining mill complex into residential, light industrial and commercial premises; associated landscaping for carparking and garden space; erection of a new building. As a Society, we accept the adaptation and alteration of listed buildings when it results in sympathetic and sustainable reuse. However, in this instance, the proposals for reuse would cause a high level of harm to this historic site and erode the heritage character of Marsden substantially.

Demolition of Mill Buildings and Impact on Conservation Area

The Victorian Society is deeply concerned by the extensive level of demolition at the site, and the loss of substantial heritage buildings of high significance. Of particular concern is the loss of the former Wages Office, the loss of which the Society strongly objects to, and a building which the application describes as being of '*Phase 1*' construction (mid-late C19th), despite the heritage statement describing that the proposal '*retains all of the surviving Phase 1 fabric*' (page 41). We object to the demolition of this building, as an example of the earliest phase of development at the site, and question how 'surviving' fabric has been decided.

We understand that the justification for the demolition of the former Wages Office is to create new access routes. The Society emphasise that this is not adequate justification to demolish a building of this architectural calibre, and that the proposed access routes should be routed or traced around the heritage buildings – especially since these routes do not exist yet and are easily moved on paper at this stage.

We accept the proposed demolition of the weaving sheds, despite their significance to the understanding of the site, as we recognise that these are particularly difficult to reuse. We suggest that some sheds could be retained, perhaps as covered parking, but this aspect is not central to the Society's concerns.

Ultimately, a Conservation Area must be preserved and enhanced to retain the significance of the protected area. The built environment directly impacts this significance, and the level of demolition proposed with this application will inherently and irreplaceably harm the historic character of Marsden and the Conservation Area.

Loss of Aerial Walkways

A particular concern for the Society is the proposed loss of the aerial walkways, which are central to the industrial nature of the site and a unique point of interest for New Mills, especially when considered against other mills across the wider area. Any application to convert the Mills would

need to retain the walkways in situ as a key feature of the site, even if they remained largely inaccessible.

As it stands, their loss would represent serious harm to the Mills and to the wider Conservation Area.

Significance of the Mill

The Committee was concerned that the application has not fully explored the significance of New Mills in the local and national picture. Some of the most significant and interesting buildings on site are proposed for demolition, with other aspects proposed to be unsympathetically adapted. This is particularly strong with the former wages office.

We recommend that the history, significance and special interest is further assessed before the application can be meaningfully considered; this may also allow for amendments to the scheme which allow for more sensitive proposals. Any scheme must be genuinely heritage led and be suitably informed.

Carparking and Other Associated Landscaping

Discussions were held surrounding the car-central nature of the proposals. Given that ~40% of global carbon emissions are released by the demolition, construction, retrofitting and running of buildings, and this application will certainly release a great deal of embodied carbon, we suggest that the proposals are reconsidered to allow for more public transport and light-weight transport, such as bicycles. We accept that some carparking provision will be required, but the current proposals are heavily car-centred and will neither preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.

The landscaping is also uninspired and unsympathetic and does not compliment the wider historic context of the site. Further provision of green public spaces would help lessen the carbon impact of the works and encourage the use of public space.

Conclusion

The Victorian Society objects to these proposals due to the level of harm they would cause for a complex of buildings of high historic significance and special interest, and to the Conservation Area in which they sit. We emphasise that the proposals would not represent a positive contribution to the historic townscape of Marsden and would seriously erode its character.

We highlight that this point in the application process, while the proposals remain on paper, is the apt moment to amend these designs.

We hope these comments will be understood in the helpful manner in which they are intended. If you could keep the Victorian Society updated on your decision in due course, I would be very grateful.

Yours faithfully

Thomas Ollivier
Northern and Welsh Conservation Adviser