Dear Mr Macholc,

Planning Applications 3/2015/0943 and 0944: Renovation and conversion of Grade II Listed property to create kitchens, restaurant, bar, 31-room apart Hotel, brewery with retail outlet, bakery, function room, offices, two retail units and gym/spa leisure complex; Holmes Mill, Greenacre Road, Clitheroe BB7 1EB

Thank you for your consultation on the above planning application. The building complex has been subject to a scheme of recording by Oxford Archaeology North, a copy of which accompanies the planning applications, and the conservation statements make reference to the features of importance identified within that record. An overall assessment of the relative significance of the building elements has been made and is included within the four Conservation Statements for the four main units of the site. This assessment is a subjective one to some degree and it would be possible to make a case for increasing the stated levels of significance for some elements, such as the beam engine house, but overall the assessment is a reasonable one. The proposed uses and levels of intervention proposed seem to relate well to this assessment of significance, and notes within the reports and drawings show the efforts that have been made to retain the most significant elements. Some intervention is still required, however, but it is concluded that what is proposed is reasonable and acceptable given the need to make the complex viable in the long term.

It is noted that asbestos removal works will be required in and around the mill engine and that further investigation is proposed to look at the repair and maintenance needs of this machine and to examine the possibility of having it 'turning over' to provide a visual reference to its former role. It is suggested that the possibility of using compressed air as a driving medium is looked at, rather than powering the engine with a hidden electric motor, as this would provide a more 'authentic' system of operation than the former. It would also minimise the risk of damage to the historic mechanisms by retaining 'designed' stresses and strains rather than effectively reversing them by driving the flywheel.
The only other item of particular concern was the works proposed to the former hoist tower of the 1823 block. The OA North record notes the existence of the hoist mechanism here, along with the original door opening mechanisms (Section 3.2.20, plates 34-37), but these do not seem to be noted within the conservation statements or plans. Whilst these were probably altered in the 20th century they are an unusual survival and may well be worth considering retaining on site if at all possible.

Finally, it may well be worth the developers ensuring that they have an appropriately experienced professional industrial archaeologist available to them during the alteration, refurbishment and repair process, so that any discoveries or issues that occur during the works can be dealt with, with the minimum of delay and inconvenience.

Yours sincerely

Peter Iles

Peter Iles
Specialist Advisory Services