

5-9 The Rock, Bury Heritage Statement



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October 2021

**5-9 The Rock, Bury
Heritage Statement**

Prepared for the Landa Corporation Ltd

by

Jenny Wetton Conservation

October 2021

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was commissioned from Jenny Wetton Conservation in 2021 by the Landa Corporation Ltd. Its purpose is to assess the significance of the building at numbers 5-9 The Rock, which lies within the Bury Town Centre Conservation Area, the setting of the Grade I listed Church of St Mary and of the Grade II listed Union Buildings and is listed on the Bury Draft Local List, and to assess the impact of proposals to convert the building to residential use above the ground floor.

Section 3 of this report summarises the development of the site. The present building dates from the late 19th century and was initially used as a corset and stay maker's shop and printer's shop on the ground floor, with the upper floors probably used as offices; an alley provided access to the rear of the property. In 1926, the whole building was taken over by the department store, F. W. Woolworth, and the alley was infilled, with other changes to the upper floors. Although the ground floor, and probably the first floor, were occupied until recently, the upper floors appear to have been vacant for some time, probably many years.

Sections 4 and 5 provide an assessment of the significance of the building, the character of the setting and this part of the Conservation Area. Numbers 5-9 The Rock is significant for:

- Structure dating from the late 19th century;
- Gothic revival style ashlar front elevation with single-pane sashes, shown in historic photographs from the late 19th century;
- Internally, pressed steel ceilings from 1926 on the ground and first floors, dating from the occupation by the department store, F. W. Woolworth, and a leaded 3-light window on the rear elevation with the Woolworth's diamond logo;
- Historical association with stationer and printer, W. S. Barlow, who occupied number 7 for around 40 years;
- Nationally significant historical association with the Woolworth's department store chain, which opened in Bury in 1926.

The building is considered to be of **medium significance overall and is considered to constitute a non-designated asset in planning terms**. It is listed on the Bury Draft Local List and this assessment supports that identification.

The *Conservation Area Appraisal* identified the building as a significant unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area, although this incorrectly identifies it as dating from the 1930s. **This assessment supports that conclusion.**

The building at numbers 5-9 The Rock is also considered to make a positive contribution to the setting of the listed Union Building and the Church of St Mary, although it forms a **small part of the setting of the church** and it is really only the rear elevation which affects the east end of the church. The front elevation forms a **more important part of the setting of the Union Building, although this elevation is partially obscured by trees.**

Section 6 outlines the heritage planning policy context and gives guidance on the circumstances in which consent may be required. The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act is the primary legislative document; there is a presumption in favour of preserving and enhancing heritage assets. The NPPF provides national policy on heritage assets and development, and sets out a proportionate approach taking account of significance. The public benefits of a proposal likely to affect the character of a designated asset should be balanced against the harm to heritage assets.

Section 7 assesses the impact of the proposals. Although the proposals will result in minor harm to both the non-designated heritage asset and the Conservation Area, they will result in **significant public benefits**:

- Substantial repairs to the exterior of the building to make it weatherproof;
- A new use for and occupation of the upper floors of the building;
- Residential use of the local area during the day and evening.

The proposals are considered to constitute **less than substantial harm which is considered to be outweighed by the public benefits**.

This report acts as a record of the historic buildings and should be added to the Historic Environment Record, in accordance with NPPF Policy 193.

Considered overall, and taking account of the mitigation and benefits outlined above, the proposals are considered to 'preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Borough's Conservation Areas'. With the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF, it is the author's professional opinion that the proposals are compliant with national and local planning policies.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background to the Report

This report was commissioned from Jenny Wetton Conservation in 2021 by the Landa Corporation Ltd. Its purpose is to assess the significance of the building at numbers 5-9 The Rock, which lies within the Bury Town Centre Conservation Area, the setting of the Grade I listed Church of St Mary and of the Grade II listed Union Buildings and is listed on the Bury Draft Local List, and to assess the impact of proposals to convert the building to residential use above the ground floor. The NPPF requires significance to be assessed when changes are proposed to heritage assets, and for the impact of proposals to be assessed in relation to significance.

2.2 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the staff of Bury Library and the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record for their help with the research for this report.

2.3 Purpose of the Report

The report is designed to provide the author's professional opinion of:

- A summary history of the site;
- An assessment of the significance of the building and its contribution to the setting of the listed buildings and the Conservation Area;
- An assessment of the impact of the proposals.

This report has been written by Jenny Wetton, BA MSc (Arch Cons) IHBC, Consultant, based on evidence from documentary sources and a survey of the site. Jenny Wetton is a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and appears on the IHBC Database of Accredited Practitioners.

2.4 Copyright

This report is the copyright of Jenny Wetton Conservation and is for the sole use of the organisations to which it is addressed. This document may not be used or referred to in whole or in part by anyone else without the express agreement of Jenny Wetton. She does not accept liability for any loss or damage arising from any unauthorised use of this report.

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3 HISTORY of SITE

3.1 History of the Site

According to the *Conservation Area Appraisal*, 'Bury developed as a medieval market town with a castle and church, and the street pattern around Market Place reflects this early stage in the town's history. The postmedieval phase of the town's development is associated with its growth as a textile town, initially for woollens but most significantly for the manufacture and processing of cotton in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.... Bury expanded rapidly from the mid-19th century, resulting in ordered grids of terraced housing, and ashlar-faced civic and commercial buildings. Within the conservation area, the prevailing character of the street scene is the result of this 19th century period of prosperity, with Victorian and Edwardian buildings lining the medieval and later streets.¹'

The site is shown on the 1847 map to have been occupied by buildings either side of an alley through to a courtyard, with buildings running along what is now North Back Rock. The 1824 Directory lists the Red Lion Inn at 1 Fleet Street (now The Rock) and this is shown in a painting of the 'Old Red Lion Inn' by James Shaw and dated to 1861 to have been on the site of the present Union Building². To the right of the inn is a row of shops. The Union Building was constructed in 1874 after Fleet Street was widened, to the east of St Mary's Church.

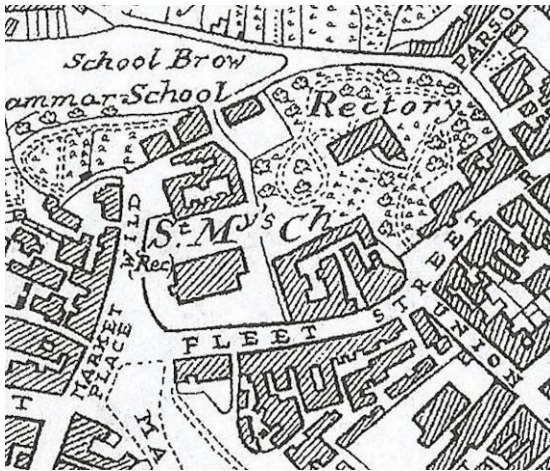
The 1880 Directory has no entries for numbers 5 or 7, which may have been unoccupied, but lists Giles Hewart, a draper and silk mercer, at number 9. By 1888, number 5 was occupied by John Catton, a stay maker, and number 7 by W. S. Barlow, a stationer and printer.

The appearance of the property at nos. 5-9 The Rock is shown in an undated photograph which dates from soon after the Union Building was constructed, judging by its clean appearance and the lack of tram tracks in the street. The building is ashlar-fronted with a unified appearance to the first and second floors. The left side of the building is three storeys high with a break-through gable flanked by a moulded cornice; the right side is five storeys high and topped by crenellations on the front elevation, giving this side of the building the appearance of a tower, and plain brick on the side elevation. There are what appear to be two shops on the ground floor, with a narrow shop window on the left side, the alley in the centre and a wider shop front with a central entrance on the right side, occupied by W. S. Barlow, a printer and lithographer. The first floor featured a canted oriel window with a moulded cornice; other windows on the first, second and third floors appear to be single-pane sashes with wider mullioned windows on the right side. There are three panels on the front elevation at fourth-floor level and three-pane windows under segmental heads on the side.

¹ AHP. *Conservation Area Appraisal: Bury Town Centre Conservation Area* (February 2007), 8

² 'Old Red Lion Inn', Fleet Street, Bury, 1861 James 'Clock' Shaw (1836–1915) Bury Art Museum

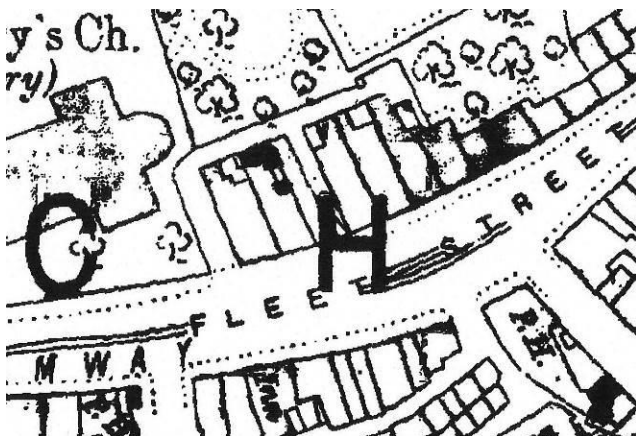
The 1893 map shows that the buildings at the rear of the courtyard had gone and North Back Rock laid out, although the alley survived with buildings on the application site either side. All the buildings in the block along what was then called Fleet Street ran back to North Back Rock. The map also shows a tramway along Fleet Street, which appears in another undated historic photograph of the application site. There is no change shown on the 1910 map, although the alley through the building is clearly marked as covered.



1847 OS Map



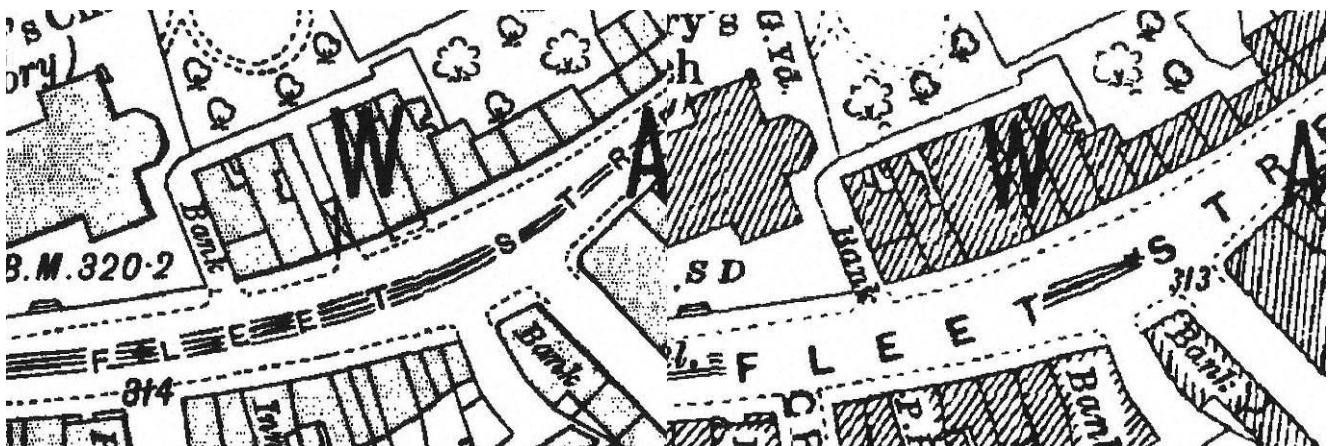
Nos 5-9 The Rock, ca.1880 (Bury Archives Online, Ref. B03090)



OS 1893



Nos 5-9 The Rock, ca.1900 (Bury Archives Online, Ref. B03118)



OS 1910

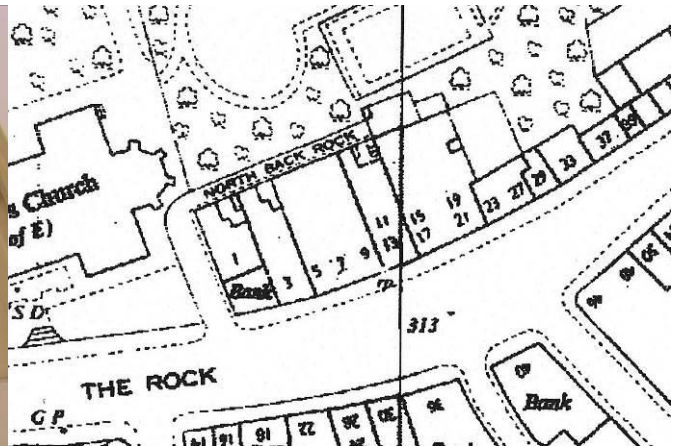
OS 1930

The 1924 Directory does not list number 5 but W. S. Barlow was still occupying number 7. Number 9 acted as the address for a number of businesses which may have occupied the upper floors, including a rating surveyor, commission agent, a scotch wool store, two dress makers, an advertising agency and an accountant.

By 1930, the alley through the building had been infilled and the ground floor unified. The building was taken over by the department store, F. W. Woolworth, in 1926³ and leaded windows are retained on the rear elevation in the former location of the alley, with the initial 'W' in the centre. The same window is shown in an internal photograph dated 1976, accessible at the Heritage Photo Archive⁴. The first-floor oriel was removed, possibly around this time and the appearance of the building is shown in a photograph dating from around the 1970s, shown below. By this time, the building had been painted white at the front, a new shop front had been fitted across the street frontage and a window at fourth-floor level infilled.



Leaded Window on Rear Elevation



OS c1961

³ Woolies Buildings Then and Now [online]. Available at: <https://wooliesbuildings.wordpress.com/2018/12/13/bury-store-217/> [accessed 9.10.21]

⁴ HRS 3659 Bury, Woolworth's logo glass 1975 [online]. Available at: <https://www.heritagephotoarchive.co.uk/p892189240/h4F01074C#h4f01074c> [accessed 9.10.21]



Nos. 5-9 The Rock, ca. 1975 (Bury Archives Nos. 5-9 The Rock, ca. 1990 (Bury Archives Online, Ref. B02957)



The Woolworths branch is believed to have closed in the 1980s and was subsequently used as a furniture shop and later as a branch of the Yorkshire Bank.

3.2 Planning History

- No: 65748 1 no. internally static illuminated fascia, 1no. internally static illuminated projecting sign, 5-9 The Rock, Bury, BL9 0YB Received: Mon 20 Jul 2020 | Validated: Mon 20 Jul 2020 | Status: Decided
- No: 64390 External security shutter to ground floor entrance 5-9 The Rock, Bury, BL9 0YB. Received: Fri 05 Jul 2019 | Validated: Fri 05 Jul 2019 | Status: Decided
- No: 56270 Alterations to front elevation including respray of existing fascia and ground floor windows/doors. 5-9 The Rock, Bury, BL9 0YB Received: Tue 07 May 2013 | Validated: Tue 07 May 2013 | Status: Decided
- No: 98/34290 INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED FASCIA AND PROJECTING SIGNS YORKSHIRE BANK PLC 5-9 THE ROCK BURY. Received: Fri 22 May 1998 | Validated: Fri 22 May 1998 | Status: Decided

4 ARCHITECTURAL ASSESSMENT

4.1 Exterior

The front elevation is painted white above ground floor level, which consists of a modern shop front, although views are constrained by a mature tree close by. The building retains a unified appearance to the first and second floors; the left side of the building is three storeys high with a break-through gable flanked by a moulded cornice; the right side is five storeys high and topped by crenellations on the front elevation, giving this side of the building the appearance of a tower, and plain brick on the side elevations. The front elevation retains single-pane sash windows with horns on the first, second and third floors with wider three-over-three sashes on the right side. There are three panels on the front elevation at fourth-floor level but all windows on the sides have been infilled. Part of the brick parapet on the tower element has been replaced.



Front Elevation



Front Elevation



Infilled Windows on Side Elevation

Views of the rear elevation are very constrained by the wall of the rectory garden to the north but there are two doorways with stone heads and altered brickwork, both fitted with metal doors and fencing. Between them is a 3-light window with a stone head and stone sills, of which the central light is shallower than those flanking. The windows at either side retain leaded glass but the central window is boarded over. A

line in the brick work to the right indicates where the former alley was infilled. There are a number of infilled openings on the rear elevation of the tower element and at upper levels on the south elevation, where part of the parapet has also been re-built.



Rear Elevation, Lower Part



Rear Elevation, Upper Part



Infilled Windows

4.2 Interior: Ground Floor

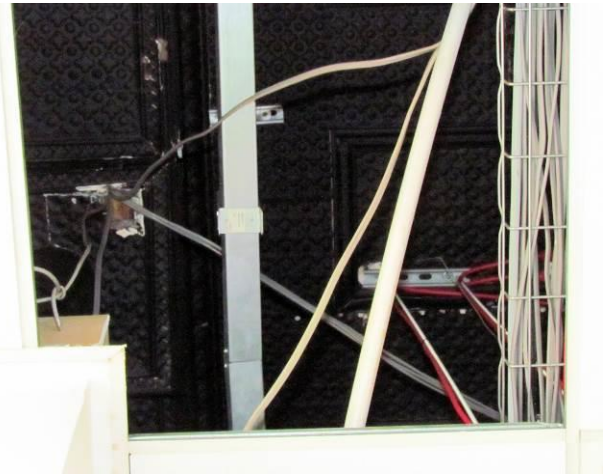
Internally, the building has been unified across the ground floor but retains largely separate structures of the two sides of the building. The ground floor is largely open and modern with a modern floor plan although there is a staircase at the northern end, which provides access to the third floor on the eastern side; access to the upper floors of the western side is via a staircase in the south-west corner from the first floor.

There are few features of historic interest on the ground floor, which has an inserted suspended ceiling, but a moulded ceiling survives behind this which is similar to another which can be seen more clearly on the first floor and will be discussed in the following section.

A further feature is the 3-light window at the north end, which appears to mark the infill of the alley. This is leaded, the central pane being decorated and with the initial 'W' in a diamond in the centre, probably indicative of Woolworth's occupation of the building as discussed earlier in Section 3.1.



View North Across Ground Floor



Moulded Ceiling



Leaded Window

4.3 Interior: First Floor

The first floor consists of three large rooms, toilets and storage and is largely modern with a suspended ceiling. A further moulded ceiling can be seen behind the suspended ceiling in the large south-eastern room, which has been affected by damp in parts and is peeling, indicating that it is pressed steel. A very similar design is shown in an internal photograph dated 1976, accessible at the Heritage Photo Archive⁵, indicating that this decoration scheme dates from the period of Woolworth's occupation of the building. A similar ceiling has survived behind a suspended ceiling in the other large room to the west.

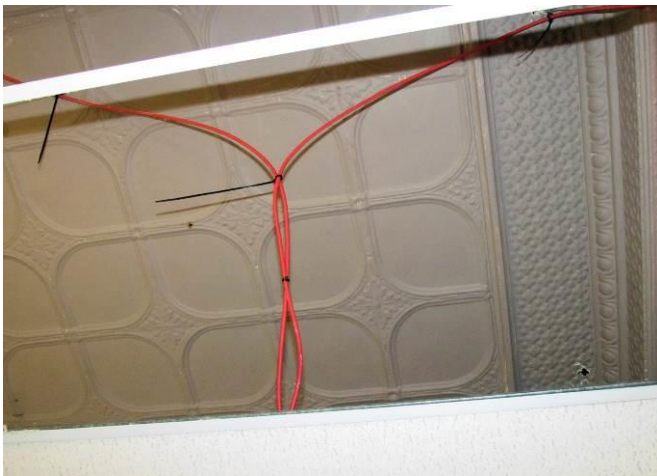
⁵ HRS 33661 Bury, Woolworth's logo glass 1975 [online]. Available at: <https://www.heritagephotoarchive.co.uk/p892189240/h4F01074C#h4f01074c> [accessed 9.10.21]



Room at North End



Room at South End



Moulded Ceiling in Southern Room



Moulded Ceiling in Western Room

4.4 Interior: Second Floor

The second floor is accessed via two staircases, a narrow timber dog-leg staircase with a plain handrail in the south-west corner which appears to date from the mid-late 20th century and a wider timber newel stair on the north side with plain timber balusters and newel posts, which may date from the late 19th century. A corridor with plain plastered walls and painted dado, which may be early 20th century in date, provides access along the east side of the building to toilets and storage rooms, one of which is fitted with timber shelves.

Two rooms at the front appear to have been open historically and later subdivided; the thinner partition wall can be seen in a room to the north. They both have plain plastered walls, that in the south-east corner retains a plastered ceiling although the other ceiling has been seriously affected by damp and has gone. The room to the north of the south-western room has been decorated with a dado and picture rail, subsequent to the subdivision.

There are historic timber board floors throughout at this level, although the south-east room has been boarded over.



Staircase at North End



Staircase at South End



Corridor



Room with Shelves



South-east Room



South-west Room

4.5 Interior: Third Floor

The third floor on the east side is open with a timber board floor, brick wall with infilled openings on the west side and a plain plaster ceiling with steel beams. A timber stair around half way along the space and a further staircase at the south end provide access to the fourth floor.

The fourth floor was not inspected due to the degree of damage from damp on lower floors.



Third Floor

5 SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 Assessing significance

Assessing significance is a key principle for managing change to heritage assets and is embedded within current government policy; NPPF policies 194 and 195 (CLG, *National Planning Policy Framework*, 2021). A key objective in the NPPF is 'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation ...' (NPPF Para. 197). The NPPF advises that the more significant the heritage asset the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation (policy 199). Historic England issued its guidance, *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 12 (2019)*, which allows for values of heritage assets to be expressed as being of archaeological, architectural and historic interest. There are three levels of significance as well as neutral and an intrusive grade:

Exceptional Level of Significance

The element is relatively intact, has a special interest, and makes an important contribution to the wider significance of the site. This would correspond to an individual grade I or II* listing. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be wholly exceptional.

High Level of Significance

A designated asset important at national and regional level, including Grade II listed buildings. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be exceptional.

Medium Level of Significance

An undesignated asset important at a local to regional level, including locally (non-statutory) listed buildings and buildings which make a positive contribution to a conservation area. The element has been altered, has less special interest, and its contribution to the wider significance of the site is less important. May include less significant parts of listed buildings. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is usually scope for adaptation.

Low Level of Significance

An undesignated asset important at a local level. The element has been significantly altered, has a low level of integrity, the special interest has been lost and it makes little contribution to the wider significance of the site. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is more scope for adaptation.

Neutral

The element is historically unimportant but does not have a negative visual impact on the surrounding buildings. May include insignificant interventions to listed buildings and buildings that do not contribute positively to a conservation area. The removal or adaptation of structures in this category is usually acceptable where the work will enhance a related heritage asset.

Intrusive

The element is historically unimportant and has a negative visual impact on the surrounding buildings. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of setting and opportunities for enhancement.

5.2 Significance of 5-9 The Rock

Following the methodology for assessment of cultural significance set out in the Historic England *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* Historic England Advice Note 12, 5-9 The Rock can be identified to have the following heritage interest:

Archaeological Interest:

The present building dates from the late 19th century and was initially used as a corset and stay maker's shop and printer's shop on the ground floor, with the upper floors probably used as offices; an alley provided access to the rear of the property. In 1926, the whole building was taken over by the department store, F. W. Woolworth, and the alley was infilled, with other changes to the upper floors. Although the ground floor, and probably the first floor, were occupied until recently, the upper floors appear to have been vacant for some time, probably many years.

There is no record relating to the site on the Historic Environment Record.

Architectural Interest:

The building has a unified appearance on the front elevation with its ashlar facing in a Gothic revival style, although it looks very different at the third floor level, giving the appearance of the two parts of the building having been constructed at different dates and subsequently re-faced; records appear to indicate this is not the case. It retains single-pane sashes on the front elevation, shown in historic photographs from the late 19th century. The rear elevation and sides are of little interest, many windows having been infilled, although a leaded 3-light window at ground -floor level retains the Woolworth's diamond logo and probably marks the infill of the historic alley through the building.

Internally, pressed steel ceilings from the mid-1920s survive on the ground and first floors. Kathryn Morrison's *Historic England Blog* on Woolworth's stores illustrates the same pattern and states:

'Before the war, most Woolworth's stores were fitted with tin (actually pressed steel) ceilings, stamped with the 'Plastele' pattern. Many survive, for example in Ely and Ludlow, although most have been concealed by later suspended ceilings.⁶

The shop front has, however, been replaced and the ground floor substantially altered since Woolworth's closed. The staircase at the north end from the second floor upwards may date from the late 19th century, although it is very plain and utilitarian, while that in the south-west corner appears to date from the mid-late 20th century. It

⁶ Morrison, K. A. 8 *Classic Features to Help You Recognise an Old Woolworth's Store* the *Historic England Blog* 18 November 2015 [online]. Available at: <https://heritagecalling.com/2015/11/18/8-classic-features-to-help-you-recognise-an-old-woolworths-store/> [accessed 11.10.21]

is notable that the northern staircase is constructed from timber, with no attempt at fireproofing, even though the building is likely to have been partly used for storage, at least initially. Cotton warehouses in Manchester were being built with fireproof construction at this time, with iron or stone and, later, reinforced concrete staircases.

The floor plan on the first floor appears to date from the late 20th century, while that on the second floor may reflect the period of occupation by Woolworth's but retains no evidence as to the usage of the rooms. the third floor is currently open and appears always to have been so.

There was much evidence of damp penetration, especially along the front on the first and second floors where it has affected the historic Woolworth's pressed steel ceiling and a plaster ceiling above, on the north wall of the west side and above the northern staircase, where the ceiling above has collapsed. There was also evidence of unauthorised entry on the third floor. Repair work needs to take place soon to retain the historic interest of the building and the building needs a sustainable new use.



Damaged Pressed Steel Ceiling



Rusting Structural Beam



Ceiling Gone, 2nd Floor



Damp in North Wall, West Side



Ceiling Collapsed Above North Staircase



Evidence of Vandalism

Historic Interest:

The building has a minor historical association with the stationer and printer, W. S. Barlow, who occupied number 7 for around 40 years. The building is also illustrative of the growth of local services on streets around the Market Place.

The building also has a nationally significant historical association with the department store chain, F. W. Woolworth, which opened in Bury in 1926. American in origin, Woolworth's grew rapidly after the first branch opened in Liverpool in 1909 and, by 1930 there were 400 stores, and by 1960 over 1000⁷.

5.3 Contribution Made to Conservation Area and to Setting of Listed Buildings

The NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral'.

The building at 5-6 The Rock has been set in an increasingly urban landscape which has changed substantially in character. Its immediate setting can be defined as The Rock in both directions and North Back Rock.

The *Conservation Area Appraisal* defines the significance of the Conservation Area:

'Bury developed as a medieval market town with a castle and church, and the street pattern around Market Place reflects this early stage in the town's history....Bury expanded rapidly from the mid-19th century, resulting in ordered grids of terraced housing, and ashlar-faced civic and commercial buildings. Within the conservation area, the prevailing character of the street scene is the result of this 19th century period of prosperity, with Victorian and Edwardian buildings lining the medieval and later streets....The conservation area covers the historic core of central Bury, the heart of the medieval settlement, with densely built-up streets radiating to the east, south and west. The irregular grid of streets focuses

⁷ Woolworth's [online]. Available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/woolworths/> [accessed 11.10.21]

on the junction of the Market Place, Bolton Street, Silver Street and The Rock. Although there are no mills within the conservation area, cotton mills were built in the area south of the Rock, and to north of the town centre. The architectural interest of the conservation area is principally in the fine grouping of Victorian and Edwardian civic and commercial buildings which remind visitors of the town's 19th century heyday.⁸

A number of listed buildings and structures contribute to the setting of the application site. As well as the Grade I listed Church of St Mary, there are two Grade II listed memorials to the Slagg and Fairbairn families on the west side of the churchyard and the Grade II statue of Sir Robert Peel beyond, in the centre of the Market Place. Close to the application site to the west lies the Grade II Union Buildings, dating from 1874. The site is considered to affect the setting of both the Union Buildings and the church.

Many of the surrounding buildings on both sides of The Rock are identified in the *Conservation Area Appraisal* as being significant unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area and also contribute positively to the setting of the application site. These are: number 3 Marsden Building Society dating from c.1880s, and 11 to 21 built in an Egyptian style Art Deco in the 1920s on the north side of The Rock and numbers 2-8 Derby Chambers dating from ca.1888, number 14, number 36 NatWest Bank dating from the early 1930s and number 40 Royal Bank of Scotland, built as a bank between 1895 and 1898.

To the west lies the churchyard, which is defined by stone walls with ashlar copings, piers with steeply pitched tops at regular intervals and at entrance steps and railings along the south and west sides, giving the church a formal presence in the streetscape. The churchyard lies above the level of North Back Rock and a gateway gives onto the Rectory garden, at the same level. Dense trees and bushes obscure any views from the garden onto North Back Rock.



View North-east from Peel Memorial



View West Along The Rock

⁸ AHP. *Conservation Area Appraisal: Bury Town Centre Conservation Area* (February 2007), 8



View North-east from Compton Street



Numbers 11-13 and 15-21, The Rock



Numbers 2-8 Derby Chambers



View Along North Back Rock

North Back Rock runs between the rear of the buildings on the north side of The Rock and the tall stone Rectory garden wall. It is now a narrow service street used for parking but retains historic stone setts and a pavement in part.

There are a number of significant views within the setting and the Conservation Area. The *Conservation Area Appraisal* states:

'Narrow views are often framed between buildings in the conservation area, allowing intriguing glimpses of the intimate scale, density and layering of Bury's character. Good examples include the view of the Armoury from the junction of Bolton Street and Cooper Street, and the view of St Mary's from both Crompton Street and Castle Street. In a few cases, negative buildings detract from the view along important streets.'⁹

The application site affects a key view west along The Rock from the Conservation Area boundary, shown above, although the Union Building is obscured by trees in this view. There is a further view towards the Union Building, north-east from Crompton Street, which provides important information about the architectural design and decoration of the front and west elevations and includes part of the front elevation of the application site and the southern extent of the fourth floor of the west elevation.

⁹ AHP. *Conservation Area Appraisal: Bury Town Centre Conservation Area* (February 2007)), 59-60

The setting is considered to make a positive contribution to the significance of numbers 5-9 The Rock. The site is identified in the *Conservation Area Appraisal* as a significant unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area and this assessment supports that conclusion.

5.4 Summary of Significance

Key Points of Significance

Numbers 5-9 The Rock is significant for:

- Structure dating from the late 19th century;
- Gothic revival style ashlar front elevation with single-pane sashes, shown in historic photographs from the late 19th century;
- Internally, pressed steel ceilings from 1926 on the ground and first floors, dating from the occupation by the department store, F. W. Woolworth and a leaded 3-light window on the rear elevation with the Woolworth's diamond logo;
- Historical association with stationer and printer, W. S. Barlow, who occupied number 7 for around 40 years;
- Nationally significant historical association with the Woolworth's department store chain, which opened in Bury in 1926.

The building is considered to be of **medium significance overall and is considered to constitute a non-designated asset in planning terms**. It is listed on the Bury Draft Local List and this assessment supports that identification.

The current Historic England guidance *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* contains a check list to identify elements in a conservation area which may contribute to the special interest. A positive response to one or more of the following may indicate that a particular element within a conservation area makes a positive contribution, provided that its historic form and value have not been eroded.¹⁰:

- Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?
- Does it have landmark quality?
- Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?
- Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?
- Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?
- Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces within a complex of public buildings?
- Is it associated with a designed landscape, e.g., a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?
- Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?
- Does it have significant historic associations with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?

¹⁰ Historic England. *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management Historic England Advice Note 1* (English Heritage, 2016), 16

- Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?
- Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?
- Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?

In response to the above questions, it is considered that the building at 5-9 The Rock does reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age and materials, illustrates the development of the settlement in which it stands, has a significant historic association with the historic road layout, has historic associations with local people and past events, reflects the traditional functional character or former uses in the area and its use contributes to the character or appearance of the area.

The *Conservation Area Appraisal* identified the building as a significant unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area, although this incorrectly identifies it as dating from the 1930s. **This assessment supports that conclusion.**

The building at numbers 5-9 The Rock is also considered to make a positive contribution to the setting of the Union Building and the Church of St Mary, although it forms a **small part of the setting of the church** and it is really only the rear elevation which affects the east end of the church. The front elevation forms a **more important part of the setting of the Union Building, although this elevation is partially obscured by trees.**

6 HERITAGE AND OTHER PLANNING CONTEXT

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

The national legislative framework for development affecting listed buildings and conservation areas is provided by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; often referred to as the Listed Buildings Act. This sets out the duty on local planning authorities with regard to listed buildings and any buildings or land within a conservation area, when determining applications for planning permission. It is essential that these legal duties are considered, alongside the contents of the NPPF and other planning policies and guidance.

For listed buildings, the planning authority *'shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses'* (section 66).

Listed building consent is required for alterations which are likely to affect the character and special interest (significance) of the building. It is not required for like-for-like repairs, nor for alterations to modern fixtures and fittings which will not affect historic fabric, such as the removal of a modern partition.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in July 2021 replacing all former planning policy statements (previous edition NPPFs). *The Planning Practice Guide: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* should be read in the light of the NPPF and does not comprise policy.

The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Government has three interdependent objectives to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The latter objective includes contributing to 'protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.' So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**. Policies 189-208 are related to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

The *Planning Practice Guide* states: 'In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time.'

Policy 193 states: 'Local planning authorities should make information about the historic environment, gathered as part of policy-making or development management, publicly accessible.'

Policies 194 and 195 of the NPPF require planning applicants and local planning authorities to assess the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be appropriate to the

assets' importance and no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Local planning authorities should take this assessment into account when the potential impact of proposed development to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Policy 196 states: 'Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.'

Policy 197 states: 'In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'

Policy 199 states: '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.'

Policy 200 states: '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.

Policy 201 states: 'Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.'

The *Planning Practice Guide* gives guidance on how to assess if there is substantial harm:

'In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm¹¹.'

Policy 202 states; '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.'

Policy 205 states: 'Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.'

6.2 Bury Unitary Development Plan

EN1/2 - Townscape and Built Design

The Council will give favourable consideration to proposals which do not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the particular character and townscape of the Borough's towns, villages and other settlements. Factors to be considered when assessing proposals will include:

- the external appearance and design of the proposal in relation to its height, scale, density and layout;
- the relationship of the proposal to the surrounding area;
- the choice and use of materials;
- access and other design features for the mobility impaired;
- the design and appearance of access, parking and service provision;
- landscaping, including the use of natural landscape features, and open space provision;

¹¹ Department for Communities & Local Government. *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment: Decision-taking: historic environment* [online]. Available at:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/why-is-significance-important-in-decision-taking/> [accessed 13.05.15]

- the use of lighting.

EN2/1 - Character of Conservation Areas

The Council will take action as appropriate to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Borough's Conservation Areas.

The Council will be especially concerned with encouraging and, where appropriate, implementing measures to:

- retain, replace and restore features of historical and architectural interest;
- retain and enhance existing landscape features including trees, parks and gardens;
- initiate and promote environmental improvement/enhancement schemes such as landscaping, refurbishment of street furniture, traffic management and pedestrian schemes;
- remove dereliction and bring unused land or buildings back into beneficial use;
- prepare and promote design guidelines to ensure sympathetic development.

EN2/2 - Conservation Area Control

Development within a Conservation Area will only be acceptable if it preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the area. In considering proposals for development in Conservation Areas, regard will be had to the following criteria:

- the nature of the development in terms of its bulk, height, materials, colour, design and detailing;
- the relationship between the proposed development and the architectural and visual qualities of the surrounding area;
- where demolition is proposed, the contribution of any proposed new building to the character or appearance of the area as compared to the building to be demolished;
- in the case of the re-use of buildings or the introduction of new uses, the impact of the proposal on the character or appearance of the area and the fabric of the existing building.

EN2/3 - Listed Buildings

The Council will actively safeguard the character and setting of Listed Buildings by not permitting works, alterations or changes of use which would have a detrimental effect on their historical or architectural character and features. Proposals for demolition will be opposed and will only be considered where it is demonstrated conclusively that the building(s) cannot be retained.

In considering applications for Listed Building Consent, the Council will have regard to the following criteria: a) the impact of the proposal on the historic fabric of the building;

- the relationship of any extension to the Listed Building in terms of its height, size, design, and roofscape;
- the need to protect the setting of the Listed Building;
- the impact of associated ancillary facilities and infrastructure works.

7 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Summary of the Proposals

Tang & Associates Architects has designed a scheme for the conversion of the upper floors of the building to residential use.

There are further details in the Design and Access Statement and the drawings which accompany the application.

Numbers 5-9 The Rock lies within the Bury Town Centre Conservation Area and within the setting of the Grade I listed Church of St Mary and of the Grade II listed Union Buildings and substantial harm should be wholly exceptional.

7.2 Impact of Changes on the Significance of the Unlisted Building

This analysis is based on the guidance given within the Historic England *Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets*. In Chapter 3 *Addition and Alteration*, and under *General Points*, the guidance states:

'The main issues to consider in proposals for additions to heritage assets, including new development in conservation areas, aside from NPPF requirements such as social and economic activity and sustainability, are proportion, height, massing, bulk, use of materials, durability and adaptability, use, enclosure, relationship with adjacent assets and definition of spaces and streets, alignment, active frontages, permeability and treatment of setting. Replicating a particular style may be less important, though there are circumstances when it may be appropriate. It would not normally be good practice for new work to dominate the original asset or its setting in either scale, material or as a result of its siting.¹²'

7.2.1 External Alterations

There are two changes proposed to the front elevation. It is proposed to replace the three panels at fourth-floor level on the eastern element with plain windows. Although this will result in a change to the appearance of the front elevation and the loss of some historic fabric, the windows are required to provide light to rooms behind. The design has been substantially reduced following specialist heritage advice. The impact of the proposal is considered to be **neutral overall**.

It is also proposed to insert rooflights to the western element. These will be 'conservation style' flush with the roof surface, are also required to provide light and have been positioned lower down the roof slope, again following specialist advice, so they are unlikely to be visible from the street.

The impact of the proposals is again considered to be **neutral overall**.

¹² Historic England. *Making Changes to Heritage Assets: Historic England Advice Note 2* (Historic England, February 2016), parag. 41

On the west elevation, infilled windows will be re-opened and fitted with windows to the same design as shown in the historic photographs shown above in Section 3.1. Although the frames will be uPVC for ease of maintenance, the profile will be thin. The proposals will reinstate something of the historic appearance of this elevation and the impact is considered to be **beneficial overall**.

On the rear elevation, at ground floor level, a double door will be inserted. Although the new door will result in some loss of historic fabric, the leaded window will be re-exposed and should be protected with an appropriate material, such as strengthened glass. With the proposed mitigation, the impact of the proposals is considered to be **beneficial overall**.

Also on the rear elevation, two windows will be inserted at first floor level and the existing windows exposed. Although this will again result in some loss of historic fabric, the windows will match the existing which are currently obscured by metal bars. The rear elevation has been much altered and the new windows will provide some symmetry. The impact of the proposals is considered to be **beneficial overall**.

On the floors above, two windows will be re-opened and four inserted. Although the frames will again be uPVC for ease of maintenance, the profile will be thin and they will match the 3-pane windows on the front elevation. The impact of the proposal is considered to be **beneficial overall**.

On the rear elevation of the western element, a long opening will be shortened and converted to a window and a rooflight inserted above. This part of the building is difficult to see from either street level or the churchyard above and the impact of the proposal is considered to be **neutral**.

7.2.2 Internal Alterations

All floors will be re-modelled to provide apartments, with the removal of both staircases and the steps to the fourth floor. The staircase at the north end from the second floor upwards may date from the late 19th century, although it is very plain and utilitarian, while that in the south-west corner appears to date from the mid-late 20th century.

The floor plans will also be changed substantially, although the only plan of any historic interest is the openness of the third floor. The pressed steel Woolworth's ceilings will be repaired and exposed where possible, following specialist advice.

The impact of the proposals is considered to be **minor harm**.

7.3 Impact of Changes on the Significance of the Conservation Area and the Setting of Listed Buildings

This analysis is again based on the guidance given within the Historic England *Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets* as it is considered that the principal designated asset affected by the proposals is the Conservation Area.

Magnitude of Impact on Conservation Area

The plans and elevations which show the proposals show several changes, namely the insertion of windows and rooflights to the front elevation and the re-opening and insertion of windows to the rear and west elevations.

Impact on Significance

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. The question to be addressed is how far the proposed change impacts on the designated asset and, in that respect, what effect it would have on its significance.

It is the degree to which the change of environment would impact on the values identified in the sections above.

The replacement of the three panels at fourth-floor level on the eastern element with plain windows will result in a change to the appearance of the front elevation. However, these are required to provide light to rooms behind and the design has been substantially reduced following specialist heritage advice.

The impact of the proposal is considered to be **very minor harm**.

It is also proposed to insert rooflights to the western element. These will again be 'conservation style' flush with the roof surface, are also required to provide light and have been positioned lower down the roof slope, again following specialist advice, so they are unlikely to be visible from the street.

The impact of the proposals is again considered to be **neutral overall**.

The insertion of windows to the west elevation will benefit the Conservation Area as it partially reinstates the historic appearance of this elevation, although it is difficult to see.

The impact of the proposals is considered to be **beneficial overall**.

The windows on the rear elevation will match those on the front elevation in style and will provide a greater openness to a currently closed aspect along North Back Rock. The leaded Woolworth's windows will be exposed and protected.

The impact of the proposals is considered to be **beneficial overall**.

7.4 Overall Impact on Significance

As stated above, the design has been altered following specialist advice.

Although the proposals will result in minor harm to both the non-designated heritage asset and the Conservation Area, they will result in significant public benefits:

- Substantial repairs to the exterior of the building to make it weatherproof;
- A new use for and occupation of the upper floors of the building;
- Residential use of the local area during the day and evening.

The proposals are not considered to change the character of this part of the Conservation Area and, taking the proposed mitigation into account, the proposals are considered to be beneficial overall.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Policies 194 and 195 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets 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 information in Sections 3, 4 and 5 of this report provides an assessment of the significance of the application site, the affected parts of the Conservation Area and the setting.

Section 6 sets out the legislative and planning policy framework and gives guidance on the circumstances in which consent may be required. Policy 197 of the NPPF sets out the principles guiding the determination of applications for consent relating to heritage assets. This should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing significance, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to the establishment of sustainable communities and economic vitality and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The assessment of impact on the heritage assets and their setting is set out in Section 7. Policy 202 sets out that where proposals will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Although the proposals will result in minor harm to both the non-designated heritage asset and the Conservation Area, they will result in significant public benefits:

- Substantial repairs to the exterior of the building to make it weatherproof;
- A new use for and occupation of the upper floors of the building;
- Residential use of the local area during the day and evening.

The proposals are considered to constitute less than substantial harm which is considered to be outweighed by the public benefits.

This report acts as a record of the historic buildings and should be added to the Historic Environment Record, in accordance with NPPF Policy 193.

Considered overall, and taking account of the mitigation and benefits outlined above, the proposals are considered to 'preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Borough's Conservation Areas'. With the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF, it is the author's professional opinion that the proposals are compliant with national and local planning policies.

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1930	1:1250	Ordnance Survey (GIS system printout)
c1961	1:1250	Ordnance Survey (GIS system printout)
1984	1:1250	Ordnance Survey Plan SD 8010NW

10 APPENDIX 1: LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

MARKET PLACE Parish Church of St Mary

GV I

Church. Of medieval origin, but entirely rebuilt in the C19 with tower and spire of 1844-5 by E H Shellard, and the rest by J S Crowther, of 1871-6. Dressed stone with slate roofs. Apsidal chapel with vestry and organ chamber to north, and Lady Chapel to south; 4-bay nave and aisles; narthex, with pitched roof at right angles to that of nave, the south end of which forms the main entrance porch to the church; almost freestanding tower to west of narthex. The heavily buttressed 3-stage tower is surmounted by a broach spire with lucarnes. The heads of the 2-light windows in the apse, clerestory and aisles all have Geometrical tracery, and there are small rose windows with similar tracery in the gables at the west end of the nave and both ends of the narthex. INTERIOR. Very lofty proportions. Exposed brick with stone dressings. Fine hammer and tie-beam roof carried by arcade with clustered columns. The chancel floor and aisles in the nave are adorned with brightly coloured mosaic, the sanctuary contains a late C19 painted and gilded reredos, and the apse is enriched with painted panels (1888). There is also much fine woodwork including the choir stalls, many intricately carved with small figures, complete set of benches, and tall architectural cover to stone font. The stained glass in the apse and in the Lady Chapel is by Hardman, while the cycle of windows in the nave is by Clayton and Bell. The tower contains a group of C19 wall plaques including an amusing one with a walrus and elephant commemorating Lieutenants Robert and George Hood (d 1821 and 1823). This, the principal church of Bury, is a very fine example of Crowther's work, displaying his great skill in the design of timberwork and enthusiasm for mosaic floors, and it also has a wealth of other high quality fittings.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1067236>

THE ROCK, No 1 (Union Buildings)

II

Dated 1874. Neo-medieval. Red brick with stone dressings and mock timbering with plastered infill (especially to top stages). Corner site. Irregular. Four storeys. Gable front of three bays and 5-bay left-hand return front. Windows generally have straight heads on ground floor, obtusely pointed heads (and ornamental sill-grilles) on first floor, pointed heads and drip moulds on second floor and multiple mullioned lights on top floor (together with small 4-light roundels). Central window on first floor is rectangular oriel, as are two windows on second and third floors of return front, which has elaborate carving over bi-partite entry, incorporating dated coat of arms, surmounted by roundel on first floor under gabled canopy of pierced bargeboards on corbels. Circular corner chimney rising from foliate capital on shaft running towards ground. Steep tiled roof.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1318009>