

<b>Agenda Item</b>	A6
<b>Application Number</b>	22/00879/FUL
<b>Proposal</b>	Change of use of 96-bed into 62 one-bed self contained student accommodation units, erection of a four storey front extension with roof terrace above linking the Mill and annexe and demolition of part of enclosure wall
<b>Application site</b>	Mill Hall Moor Lane Lancaster Lancashire
<b>Applicant</b>	Afar Properties Limited
<b>Agent</b>	Mr Thomas Zub
<b>Case Officer</b>	Mr Andrew Clement
<b>Departure</b>	No
<b>Summary of Recommendation</b>	Approval

## 1.0 Application Site and Setting

- 1.1 The site that forms the subject of this application is Mill Hall, a Grade II Listed Building located within the Lancaster Conservation Area, part of the Canal Corridor North Character Area. Mill Hall was built as a steam-powered worsted mill in 1819 by Thomas Higgin & Co. Thomas, subsequently operated by Greys of Styal and then Storey Brothers. The building was converted into a cotton spinning factory by 1828, and to student accommodation in 1988-89. This multistorey property has a dominating presence in the townscape, as one of several impressive mills in the area. The frontages of the older mills and factories generally have a uniformly consistent pattern, which emphasises their massing. Industrial buildings such as the application site are particularly important to the character of this area of the Lancaster Conservation Area, and contribute positively to the designated national heritage asset area. The Mill walls are finished in battered squared coursed sandstone under a slate roof, with a rectangular plan along the canal with coped gables, the cap of a ventilation shaft at the southern apex, and with a truncated chimney stack against the north gable. The existing front Doric porch is understood to be a subsequent addition added by Charles B Pearson Son & Partners (Architects), with the roof slope containing 20th century rooflights. The stone wall on the approach to the canal bridge on the north side of Moor Lane adds historic interest to this frontage, with its distinctive coping and response to the change in level.
- 1.2 The smaller Block 2 part of this proposal is also a Grade II Listed Building, which was part of the cotton mill built for Storey Brothers circa 1880, and converted to student accommodation caretakers block in 1988. This 3-storey building is finished in squared coursed sandstone under a slate roof, with a central wagon entrance at ground floor level providing access to a rear courtyard area. The rear wall has a central 1st-floor bay of timber and glass with an iron crane. These Grade II Listed Buildings make a positive contribution to the setting of further Grade II Listed Mill buildings to the south side of Moor Lane, and non-designated heritage asset buildings in the surrounding area. The site is within a parking permit area, adjacent to the Lancaster Canal designated open space, green

space, cycle network and biological heritage site. The site is near a smoke control area and the outer zone 2 for air quality management, and forms part of a regeneration priority area for the broader Canal Quarter area.

## 2.0 Proposal

2.1 This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a four-storey front link extension and to reorganise the existing internal arrangements for student accommodation bedrooms to student studio flats. The proposal would reduce the number of student accommodation bedrooms from 96 predominantly 10sq.m bedrooms, to just 62 en-suite student studio apartments measuring between 19sq.m and circa 28sq.m floorspace. The proposal seeks to remove 15 existing communal WCs, 18 communal bathrooms, and 11 communal kitchen/living space, replacing these with en-suite facilities, a two communal living areas, a communal gym, meeting space, with communal WC by the entrance and within the gym the proposed front extension. The proposed four-storey front link extension with additional roof terrace is to be finished in glazing and corten steel, measuring circa 13 metres above external ground level to the top of the corten parapet, with a further approximately 1 metre tall glazing balustrade to the roof top terrace. The flat roof development measure 10.4 metres long along the frontage, projecting a maximum of 10.1 metres from the front elevation of the 5-storey Mill building. Laundry and bike store to be provided within the existing smaller Mill, with fenced bin-store area in the existing carpark.

## 3.0 Site History

3.1 A number of relevant applications relating to this site have previously been received by the Local Planning Authority. These include:

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
22/00880/LB	Listed building application to facilitate the conversion from 96-bed into 62 one-bed self contained student accommodation units, erection of a four storey front extension with roof terrace above linking the Mill and annexe and demolition of part of enclosure wall	<b>Concurrent</b>
21/00489/FUL	Erection of a two storey front extension linking Mill and annexe, reconfiguration layout from 96-bed into 62-bed ensuite student accommodation with associated facilities, and demolition of an enclosure wall	Refused
21/00490/LB	Listed building application for erection of a two storey front extension linking the Mill and annexe and reconfiguration of internal layout from 96-bed into 62-bed ensuite student accommodation, and demolition of an enclosure wall	Refused
07/00668/LB	Listed Building application for alterations and reinstatement of curtilage wall (following demolition of adjacent buildings)	Refused
07/00665/LB	Listed Building Application for alterations and reinstatement of northern elevation (following demolition of part of the adjacent Heron Chemical Works)	Refused
05/01340/FUL	Installation of laser data communication equipment on gable end at high level	Approved
05/01375/LB	Listed Building Application for installation of laser data communication equipment on gable end at high level	Approved
89/3017/LB	Formation of dormer roof to accommodate internal goods lift and ground floor windows and doors	Approved
87/01084/HST	Convert Mill To Student Accommodation	Approved
87/01085/HST002	Convert Mill To Student Accommodation	Approved
87/00896/HST	Demolition Of Old Mill Buildings	Approved

## 4.0 Consultation Responses

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory and internal consultees:

Consultee	Response
<b>Conservation Section</b>	<b>No objection</b> , loss of portico entrance raises no concern, sought amendments to provide deeper recesses of glazing, lower corten height with capping to this, and improve visualisation, subsequently addressed through amended plans, concluding neutral impacts to heritage assets of Listed Buildings and the Conservation Area.
<b>Lancashire Archaeology</b>	<b>No objection</b> , no formal archaeological investigation or recording required
<b>Historic England</b>	No advice offered, suggest seeking local specialist conservation and archaeological advisers.
<b>County Highways</b>	<b>No objection</b> , no contributions sought towards infrastructure strategy, subject to Construction Management Plan planning condition
<b>Environmental Health</b>	No observation received
<b>Engineering Team</b>	No observation received
<b>Lead Local Flood Authority</b>	No objection, subject to a final surface water sustainable drainage strategy controlled through pre-commencement planning condition.
<b>Lancaster Canal Trust</b>	No substantive comment
<b>Canal And River Trust</b>	General advice, extension would have no direct impact on structural integrity of the canal, and no negative impact on the significant of the canal.
<b>Natural England</b>	No observation received
<b>Fire Safety</b>	<b>No objection</b> , subject to informatives regarding fire safety vehicle and water access
<b>Lancashire Constabulary</b>	No observation received
<b>University Of Cumbria Accommodation</b>	No observation received
<b>LUSU Housing</b>	No observation received
<b>Lancaster University</b>	<b>Concerns</b> regarding privacy of studios with windows to east elevation toward the canal and insufficient cycle storage. Observation that they would like to see evidence of demand for studios, recommend LU homes remit for quality checks through accreditation scheme, fire safety standards, sound insulation, air quality mitigation. Note that studios are aimed at higher end of student housing market.
<b>Lancaster Civic Society</b>	<b>Objection</b> , serious reservations regarding proposed design, materials and height, which would appear overwhelming, harsh and obtrusive, detracting from very handsome mill buildings. Suggest reducing height and more neutral cladding. Support reducing number of student units and elements within the listed buildings themselves. Amendments have resulted in modest improvements aesthetically, but not addressed the fundamental concerns within the objection.
<b>Planning Policy Team</b>	No observation received
<b>Waste And Recycling</b>	Collection vehicles would struggle to access carpark. Communal waste containers should be provided for 7 x 1280 Euro bins for General Refuse and 20 x 360L wheelie bins for recycling (10 x Glass, tins, plastics, 10 x Paper/Cardboard)

4.2 The following responses have been received from members of the public:

- **Three objections**, raising concerns with harm to heritage assets, longevity of student accommodation use, inappropriate materials and design to setting of stone Mills and Moor Lane.

## 5.0 Analysis

5.1 The key considerations in the assessment of this application are:

- Principle of development
- Design, scale and streetscene impact upon heritage assets
- Residential amenity and security
- Energy efficiency, employment and skills
- Transport, parking, waste and air quality
- Ecology, contamination and drainage

5.2 **Principle of development (Development Management DPD DM7: Purpose Built Accommodation for Students, Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD SP1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development, SP2: Lancaster District Settlement Hierarchy, SG4: Lancaster City Centre, SG5: Canal Quarter, Central Lancaster, EC5: Regeneration Priority Areas, Canal Quarter SPD, National Planning Policy Framework Section 2. Achieving sustainable development, Section 4. Decision-making, Section 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes, Section 6. Building a strong, competitive economy, Section 7. Ensuring the vitality of town centres**

5.2.1 The student accommodation use of the site has been long established, and whilst the demand for the accommodation type of cluster flats previously provided appears to have reduced over time, the principle of continuing the use of the site as student accommodation is considered acceptable. The proposal would result in the reduction in the number of bedrooms provided to meet the demand for larger en-suite studio apartments. Whilst the site would accommodate fewer students through the proposal, given the difficulty achieving high occupancy levels under the previous arrangement and sought continued use of the site for student accommodation, the principle of the proposal is considered to be acceptable. The use of the site for student residential accommodation following several years unoccupied and closed will assist with the provision of housing within the district, for which there is an acute need and enable the site to be utilised and support local economic growth.

5.2.2 Student accommodation comprises an important component of the district's housing market and therefore contributes towards the Council's housing supply. Currently, the Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year land supply with only 2.1 years supply of deliverable housing. The consequences of not having a 5-year housing supply means paragraph 11d of the NPPF is engaged ('the presumption in favour of sustainable development') unless policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance (including heritage impacts) provides a clear reason for refusing the development; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessment against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

5.2.3 The site is within a regeneration priority area for Canal Quarter, which will be critical to enhancing Lancaster City Centre's role and function as a sub-regional centre to boost retail, cultural and leisure offers for residents and visitors. The mix of town centre uses in this area will include a range of retail, cultural, leisure, education, residential and employment uses. Proposals within this area should seek to complement and support the role and function of the existing uses within the city centre. Within this area, new buildings should integrate with old, seeking to repair and incorporate the existing fabric and retain buildings and features that are of historic importance, with development proposal of a high standards of design, effectively using the frontage to Lancaster Canal. Sufficient and appropriate provision should be made for vehicle parking, with connectivity to the wider city centre, promoting the role of cycling and walking in accessing the Canal Quarter, with drainage strategies managing to reduce runoff and flood risk whilst protecting biodiversity. These matters will be discussed in the following sections of this report, however the principle of the continued use as student accommodation would be consistent with the mixed town centre uses encouraged within Canal Quarter, as student accommodation is directed towards the city centre through DM DPD Policy DM7.

5.2.4 Given the proposal relates to the conversion and extension of a national heritage asset within a regeneration priority area, provision of higher standard of building and lower density student accommodation is considered to be appropriate at the site, if this is delivered to an appropriate high standard of finish at this prominent and sensitive heritage site. Such matters will be assessed in the

following section of this report, however the principle of the proposal is considered to be acceptable and policy compliant, with provision of student studio residential accommodation, and associated social and economic benefits of this, weighing in favour of the proposal.

5.3 **Design, scale and streetscene impact upon heritage assets** (Development Management DPD DM29: Key Design Principles, DM37: Development affecting Listed Buildings, DM38: Development affecting Conservation Areas, DM39: The Setting of Designated Heritage Assets, DM41: Development Affecting Non-Heritage Assets or their settings, Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD SG5: Canal Quarter, Central Lancaster, SP7: Maintaining Lancaster District's Unique Heritage, Canal Quarter SPD, National Planning Policy Framework Section 12. Achieving well-designed places, Section 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990 Section 7, 17 Paragraph 72, 73

5.3.1 In accordance with the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act, when considering any application that affects a Listed building, a Conservation Area or their setting, the local planning authority must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the heritage asset or its setting. This is reiterated by policies DM37 and DM38. DM38 sets out that development within Conservation Areas will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that:

- Proposals respect the character of the surrounding built form and its wider setting in terms of design, siting, scale, massing, height and the materials used; and,
- Proposals will not result in the loss or alteration of features which contribute to the special character of the building and area; and,
- Proposed uses are sympathetic and appropriate to the character of the existing building and will not result in any detrimental impact on the visual amenity and wider setting of the Conservation Area.

5.3.2 The application site contains two national heritage asset Grade II Listed Buildings, making a strong positive contribution to the city scape and Conservation Area, particularly when viewed in the context of adjacent Grade II Listed Moor Lane Mill buildings and non-designated heritage assets. The frontage to the 5-storey Mill building already contains a modest Doric porch, which is sought to be replaced by a 4-storey flat roof extension to the front, linking to the adjacent 3-storey mill building, also a Grade II Listed Building. The proposal seeks internal alterations to facilitate a reorganisation of existing student cluster flats to student studio flats within the existing Listed Buildings. However, given the previous original conversion to student accommodation, the interior works primarily affect modern alterations, with no undue harm to the interiors of these Listed Buildings through the proposal. The interior is less sensitive to change than the exteriors of these heritage assets given previous works undertaken at the site.

5.3.3 The area sought for development likely contained built form in this location, as shown on historic OS maps, and a 3-storey building was present immediately south of the frontage of the 5-storey building up until the conversion to student accommodation in the late 1980's. From 1948 aerial photography, it is understood that this building previously linked the two remaining Mill buildings, within the location of the proposed development. Whilst this building (Mill 3) was demolished, part of this building had formed part of the original student conversion, with a link roof canopy between the three Mill buildings. However, this was demolished prior to conversion and the link canopy was not implemented. Given the previous built form in this location and proximity of opposite historic mill buildings to Moor Lane, the siting of a link extension in this location may be suitable, subject to a high-quality design and sympathetic proportions in this prominent location. High quality design is vital for new developments in the historic environment, as the vibrancy and richness of the heritage assets strongly contribute to the cultural values of the district, the quality of which could be eroded through inappropriate or low-quality proposals. In certain circumstances, and with an understanding of the significance of heritage assets and their setting, high-quality contemporary and innovative design may be acceptable within the historic environment.

5.3.4 A linking extension to the building has previously been proposed at the site, and was refused due to the design, massing and materials resulting in harm to national heritage assets. The proposed development under this current application is substantially different, addressing the horizontal emphasis through reduced footprint and increased height, bridging the height to 4-storeys tall, providing a vertical link between the 5-storey Mill Hall and 3-storey smaller mill as this steps up Moor Lane eastwards. The location of development would not restrict views of Lancaster Castle from Moor

Lane, and whilst the topography of Moor Lane rises eastwards, the rooftop of the development would be circa 6 to 7 metres above street level, providing a degree of visual containment of any rooftop furniture despite the glazed balustrade to this.

5.3.5 Furthermore, whilst the Canal Quarter regeneration is considered to be at an early stage, with a masterplan unveiled in October 2022 and the council seeking a first phase delivery partner, the Canal Quarter SPD details potential for 4 storey tall development east of Bulk Street as part of phase four. The Canal Quarter SPD also includes a precedent image within the design and materiality section of Caixa Forum in Madrid, which has a large corten vertical extension above a traditional brick heritage building adjacent to a green wall. Whilst surrounding development within this phase of the Canal Quarter would likely be in the medium- to long-term, it is considered that the proposed development is in accordance with the design ethos of this area of the Canal Quarter, and future development aspirations for the wider area to the west nearer Bulk Street could progress in a similar ilk to that proposed. The existing traditional buff and elements of pink/red Cumbrian sandstone walls, vegetation adjacent to the canal and introducing a corten extension to this would achieve a similar appearance to precedent images within the Canal Quarter SPD, and whilst the predominant materials in the immediate vicinity are sandstone under grey slate, the tall red brick tower projecting above the Mills to the south and wider use of render provides some variety, ensuring that the development of contrasting industrial appearance achieves a degree of congruency.

5.3.6 The external materials proposed now include corten steel, considered to be a high-quality material when combined with glazing as proposed, tying into the Mills with an industrial appearance finish and a perforated design inspired by mill punch cards for programmed patterns, albeit this design inspiration may not be immediately obvious. Further minor amendments received following submission have modestly reduced the height of the corten elements, with a glass balustrade atop, providing greater depth/separation of glazed links joining the listed buildings, with some minor design alterations including a parapet top to the corten elements. Such changes are considered to have resulted in a development harmoniously scaled to the adjoining and immediately surrounding Mill buildings, in a clearly contemporary design and appropriate high-quality industrial material, with variation provided by glazing and perforated design.

5.3.7 Whilst full details and samples would be required to ensure the development is suitable in terms of high-quality design, subject to planning conditions controlling such matters, the scale is considered to be proportionate to the vertical emphasis of attached and surrounding built form, in a well-considered design and architecture, finished in high-quality materials and sympathetic to the area and heritage significance. As such, and as concluded by the Principal Conservation Officer in their consultation response, subject to final details and samples agreed through planning condition, it is considered that the development would have a neutral impact upon the Listed Buildings, the setting of the detached Listed Buildings and the Lancaster Conservation Area as a whole. The site is clearly sensitive from a heritage and streetscene prominence perspective, and whilst the development would undoubtable affect the character and appearance, it is considered that this would not be in a harmful way for the aforementioned reasons. Overall, the proposed development would certainly be striking, but due to the contemporary design of extension with positive links and inspiration from the original use of the Mill buildings using high quality design and materials, the proposal would not cause significant harm to heritage asset or the wider streetscene. Whilst concerns and objections have been raised by Lancaster Civic Society and three members of the public, the proposal is considered to be high quality contemporary and innovative design, in appropriate materials, resulting in a neutral impact upon heritage assets.

5.3.8 There are some public and heritage benefits to the proposal to balance against the neutral impacts of the development upon the Listed Buildings and Conservation Area. Whilst the proposal is a reconfiguration of existing student housing provision, this will make modest contribution to meeting the districts housing needs. Furthermore, the refurbishment of the building will encourage long-term maintenance of the heritage assets, through what is now considered to be the optimum viable use of the heritage assets. As such, the heritage impacts are considered to offer modest benefits from the re-use of the building for alternative student accommodation, consistent with the assets' conservation.

5.4 **Residential amenity and security** (Development Management DPD DM29: Key Design Principles, Appendix G: Purpose Built Student Accommodation, Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD SG5: Canal Quarter, Central Lancaster, National Planning Policy Framework Section 8. Promoting

## healthy and safe communities

- 5.4.1 Each proposed studio within the proposal exceeds 19sq.m, and whilst none of these studios meet nationally described space standards, the studio apartments are policy compliant with DM DPD Policy DM7 and Appendix G, subject to planning condition to ensure full-time student occupation only. All rooms benefit from windows with suitable natural light and outlook, with en-suite bathrooms directed centrally to maximise use of existing openings, resulting in most studios benefitting from having multiple windows. Fewer rooms are provided within the roof form fifth floor, ensuring suitable floorspace accounting for lower ceiling heights and outlook from relatively low rooflights (glazed circa 1.6 metres above finished floor level). Furthermore, the most recent student occupation of the site was as part of cluster flats, where students predominantly occupied 10sq.m bedroom, almost half the size of those proposed, with separate communal bathrooms and two shared living/kitchen areas shared with 15 other occupants per floor. The proposed studio apartments, with ensuite bathrooms, private sleeping and living space, in addition to multiple communal areas within the proposed extension, would exceed the previous standards of residential amenity for future occupants. The proposal is acceptable in terms of residential amenity to future occupants.
- 5.4.2 The proposed use is for a less intensive student accommodation use than the most recent use of the site, given that this would provide 62 units of accommodation in comparison to 96 bedrooms previously. The extension would potentially introduce noise during construction, however given the location adjacent to a busy road on the edge of the city centre, combined with the nearest existing dwellinghouse being separated by over 40 metres from the extension, it is considered that the limited duration construction activity would cause no undue harm to neighbouring residential amenity, subject to a construction management plan. Once operative, the communal areas within and atop of the proposed extension could potentially generate noise, at a time when sensitive receptors would be introduced within the development itself, in addition to existing neighbours circa 40 metres from the development. However, given the existing background noise within the locality combined with a planning condition to restrict external amplified noise levels and suitable noise management measure, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in residential amenity terms, resulting in no undue harm.
- 5.4.3 Lancashire Constabulary consultation response to the previous application recommended bollards, which have been incorporated into the proposed site plan, details of which could be controlled through planning condition. The open space to the east of the Mill and west of the Canal is to remain secured by fencing and gate access, again details of which can be controlled through planning condition. Similarly, security details of surveillance, landscaping, lighting, window opening restrictions and other security measures could be adequately controlled through planning condition to ensure suitable security for the proposed development and use.
- 5.5 **Energy efficiency, employment and skills (Development Management DPD DM28: Employment and Skills Plans, DM30: Sustainable Design, Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD SG5: Canal Quarter, Central Lancaster, PAN09: Energy Efficiency in New Development.**
- 5.5.1 In 2020, Lancaster City Council entered into a Climate Emergency focused review of the adopted Local Plan, thus highlighting the importance that the climate emergency has in decision making in the District. The Council is committed to reducing its own carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 while supporting the district in reaching net zero within the same time frame. The Climate Emergency Local Plan Review (CELPR) was submitted to the Government for independent examination in March 2022 and the Hearing sessions of the Examination in Public took place in early October 2022. The Council are now working on a series of proposed modifications discussed during the Hearing sessions and will undertake consultation on these in due course. Should the appointed Inspector be minded to find the CELPR Sound, it is anticipated that the Council could be in receipt of the Inspectors report by Spring 2023, at which time the level of weight that can be attributed to the CELPR policies will be significant. Reference made to CELPR policies in the following report should therefore be considered in this context.
- 5.5.2 The original energy efficiency statement included relatively modest interventions of draft sealing and renovating existing windows within Mill Hall, plasterboard lining between rooms and studios, with LED lighting and appliance/fittings to reduce water and energy consumption. Given the heritage constraints of providing energy efficiency within the existing Mill built form, these are appropriate improvements to the Mill itself. However, the original submission omitted energy efficiency measures

from the proposed extension, which as a new build is less constrained and provides greater opportunity to deliver high standards of sustainable design. Whilst precise details are unavailable at this stage, subsequent information received regarding energy efficiency includes a commitment to exceeding the minimum requirements of building control by at least 5%, with a number of suggested methods to achieving this. Such a commitment is considered to be policy compliant to the current planning policy position, subject to final detail of how this will be achieved being controlled through a pre-commencement planning condition.

5.5.3 Whilst the proposal is a major development, the sought extension measures circa 300sq.m in terms of additional internal floorspace over four floors, whilst reducing the number of bedrooms within the student accommodation. Given that the majority of works are internal to the listed building, in this instance it is considered that an Employment and Skills Plan is not required.

5.6 **Transport, parking, waste and air quality** (Development Management DPD DM29: Key Design Principles, DM61: Walking and Cycling, DM62: Vehicle Parking Provision, Appendix E: Car Parking Standards, Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD SG5: Canal Quarter, Central Lancaster, T2: Cycling and Walking Network, EN9: Air Quality Management Areas, PAN01: Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for Domestic and Commercial Developments, PAN08: Cycling and Walking, National Planning Policy Framework Section 9. Promoting sustainable transport)

5.6.1 The site benefits from an unmarked cobbled parking area within an existing walled courtyard, providing off-street parking as existing. The proposal seeks a fenced bin store within this courtyard, within a space that would struggle to accommodate more than one additional car, with the remaining area providing usable and accessible parking space for approximately 7 vehicles. Given the student accommodation use sought, sustainable city centre location, and principally that the site most recently accommodated more student bedrooms than proposed through this application, reduce parking demand at the site, this is considered to be sufficient car parking provision for the proposal.

5.6.2 Suitable mitigation is available through the bike storage provision of over 22sq.m, and final details of how sufficient parking provision would be provided within this secure internal space can be controlled through planning condition, particularly as promoting the role of cycling and walking is one of the requirements for development within the Canal Quarter area. A planning condition would be required for a construction management plan to ensure this phase of development does not detrimentally harm the highway network in this city centre location. However, subject to such planning conditions, it is considered that the proposal would cause no undue harm to the public highway.

5.6.3 The proposed site plan details a secure refuse storage of 12.85sq.m external floorspace contained by fencing, located in an accessible area for residents and circa 12.5 metres from the public highway for collection, largely visually contained from public perspective due to the location within the courtyard. Subject to details of scale, materials and security of the enclosure, it is considered that the proposal can deliver suitable waste and recycling arrangements through visually contained refuse stores on-site.

5.6.4 The site provides residential accommodation within the outer zone 2 beyond the Lancaster gyratory Air Quality Management Area, however given that the proposed residential use is less intensive than the existing arrangement, the proposal would result in no undue harm with regards to air quality. A modest but suitable scale laundry is proposed within the smaller existing Mill building, and subject to further details of these facilities and extraction equipment, this is considered to be acceptable.

5.7 **Ecology, drainage and contamination** (Development Management DPD DM34: Surface Water Runoff and Sustainable Drainage, DM29: Key Design Principles, DM32: Contaminated Land, Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD SG5: Canal Quarter, Central Lancaster, EN7: Environmentally Important Areas, National Planning Policy Framework Section 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change, Section 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment)

5.7.1 The application site is within the impact risk buffer zone of the Morecambe Bay and its environmental designations, and immediately adjacent to the Lancaster Canal Biological Heritage site. As the proposal would result in a less intensive residential use of the site compared to the existing arrangement, there would be no additional recreational pressure on Morecambe Bay, and no undue



impact upon the environmental designations of the Bay.

- 5.7.2 Despite the proximity to Lancaster Canal, the external development does not include works to the roofs of the existing Mill buildings. The existing development area is currently flagstone with a small roadside bush, considered to be of negligible ecology value, and therefore enhancements in ecology can be provided through more substantive planting to the roadside, as indicated on the proposed site plan and visualisations, with full details controlled through planning condition. As such, subject to such a planning condition, in addition to a construction environmental management plan to reduce impacts upon the canal during construction, and a scheme to control any external lighting of the development, the proposal is considered to cause no undue harm to the environment or protected species, and modest enhancement to ecology. The proposal would have no undue impact upon the Lancaster Canal open space designations.
- 5.7.3 A Surface Water Drainage Strategy has been submitted with this application, surveying the condition of existing surface water manholes within the site and directing to the adjacent combined sewer, and detailing some remediation works to ensure this provides a suitable outfall of surface water from existing buildings on site. A cellular tank is sought to control runoff from the new extension, before connecting to the existing surface water manhole within the site. Given the largely hardsurfaced site, proximity to the existing surface water manhole within the site, subject to final details of a final surface water sustainable drainage strategy and remedial works in accordance with the submitted details, it is considered that the proposal can deliver acceptable drainage arrangements. The Lead Local Flood Authority have raised no objection to the proposal subject to such a planning condition. Such a planning condition should also include drainage measures to collect runoff directly beneath the corten walls, to prevent build-up of any stained runoff from this material.
- 5.7.4 The two existing Mill buildings have been recently occupied for decades by students, and works to these buildings are considered safe for construction workers and future occupants. The proposed link extension would break ground between the Mills, in the location of a demolished Mill building. However, given the previous works to the site and no objection or recommended conditions from Environmental Health to the previous recent proposed at the site (and no response to this application), it is considered that the risk of contamination can be proportionately controlled through an unforeseen contamination planning condition.

## **6.0 Conclusion and Planning Balance**

- 6.1 The proposal for the refurbishment and alteration of existing student accommodation to form higher standard studio student apartments is considered to be policy compliant in principle, and in accordance with the aims of the Canal Quarter Area, bringing regeneration to this important city centre site. Whilst resulting in fewer bedrooms, as student accommodation for cluster flats is calculated on a basis of 3 bedrooms equating to one housing units, and student studio accommodation is considered to be one housing unit in itself, the proposal would make a modest contribution to meeting the districts housing needs. The proposal would achieve social and economic benefits from the development, which are afforded moderate weight.
- 6.2 Importantly, through high-quality contemporary design, massing and materials sympathetic to the industrial past of the Mills and surrounding area, the proposal will make a bold impact but one that is considered to be neutral impact upon heritage assets, subject to planning conditions ensuring suitably high-quality details and samples. Surface water drainage, sustainable design and travel, highway impacts, biodiversity and noise can all be controlled and appropriately mitigated through planning conditions to ensure these matters are also neutral in planning balance. As such, and on balance, it is considered that there are no adverse impacts identified that would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal, and as such this application is recommended for approval, subject to a number of planning conditions.

## **Recommendation**

That Planning Permission BE GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

Condition no.	Description	Type
1	Standard 3 year timescale	Control

2	Development in accordance with the amended approved plans	Control
3	Surface water drainage strategy	Prior to commencement
4	Surface water drainage implementation, verification, management and maintenance details	Prior to completion or occupation
5	Construction management plan	Prior to commencement
6	Energy efficiency measures	Prior to commencement
7	Details and samples of external materials	Prior to above ground works
8	Details of guttering and flues/extraction	Prior to installation and occupation
9	Lighting details	Prior to installation and occupation
10	Noise management	Prior to installation and occupation
11	Details of bin, bike and laundry facilities	Prior to installation and occupation
12	Security measures, including details of bollards and boundary treatments	Prior to occupation
13	Landscaping details	Prior to occupation
13	Unforeseen contamination	Control
14	Restriction to student accommodation	Control

### Informatives

Fire safety

### **Article 35, Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015**

In accordance with the above legislation, Officers have made the recommendation in a positive and proactive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development, working proactively with the applicant to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. The recommendation has been made having had regard to the impact of development, and in particular to the relevant policies contained in the Development Plan, as presented in full in the officer report, and to all relevant material planning considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents/ Guidance.

### Background Papers

None