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I am instructed to comment on the collection of buildings known as Bankwood Mill, in particular the condition and construction of the buildings in relation to the attached planning application.

Whilst I will make brief comments on the areas which are proposed to be demolished, the focus of this report will be on the remaining structures and their suitability for use described in the aforementioned application. In this regard a full detailed survey drawing is attached to this report.

From the historical records that we have sighted we anticipate the initial building to be erected between 1795 and 1800. The original mill building adjacent to the River Etherow (building "A" on the attached plan) is fairly typical of the much smaller scale mills built during the peak of the cotton manufacturing era. Located adjacent to the River Etherow and below the mill pond, this part of the site pre-dates the later substantial extensions which were added when the site became used as a print works.

Construction

The original mill building is constructed of a slate roof over a purlin and rafter timber roof (50% is missing completely). The windows are located over 2 to 3 floors and typically Georgian in character, walls are constructed of 350mm thick clay engineering brick. There are numerous apertures to all 4 elevations as shown on the attached survey plans. The other surrounding buildings are also very similarly built with substantial 350mm thick clay engineering brickwork and Georgian openings. Roofs are slate and asbestos (previously these would have been glazed roof lights on metal trussed rafters). Concrete floors prevail throughout the buildings.

Condition

The original mill building brickwork is generally in a very stable and substantial condition. Very little movement has occurred since construction and walls are plumb and generally well jointed. The brickwork is based on sound foundations and is complete from wall plate down to ground level. All original openings remain in a complete condition (albeit many have been bricked up or covered with boarding for security purposes).

The original mill building however is suffering from a lack of maintenance which is self evident from its existing state. Localised dispersement of bricks has occurred along the east facing gable wall plates where the weather has managed to dislodge a number of bricks and caused deterioration. Evidence of lintels beginning to fail can also be seen as can evidence of bricks "spalling". 50% of the building has no roof; the remaining 50% is laid to slates on a timber rafter roof. This roof is also in need of a full repair by way of a replacement roof. The building has also seen unsympathetic openings installed for various reasons including for industrial sized fans which have been addressed in the proposed scheme by their removal. The other surrounding buildings are in a very substantial condition, however the large former print works (building 'B') has major roof problems including areas beginning to collapse and movement of roof supports with some areas being considered dangerous. Building 'C' however benefits from a metal clad roof and is in relatively high state of repair and is retained within the application.

In summary the original mill building 'A', the brick work is in a sound and substantial state and complete with no requirements to re-build due to missing, collapsed or dangerous brickwork. However the walls do require localised re-bedding at roof level, new lintels to a number of window heads, spalling repairs and a full re-pointing. The mill also requires a complete new roof to 50% of its footprint and whilst it may be possible to repair the other roof, I anticipate it will be economically sensible and technically prudent to do the same on the remaining part of the building.

The scheme demonstrates that the existing buildings are fully capable of conversion without significant alteration, extension or re-building.