

Lathams



# New Development at Portland Mill, Leek

## Design & Access Statement

July 2015

**Portland Mill, Queen Street , Leek .**

**Design and access statement with heritage statement**

**1.0 Introduction**

This document is prepared to support an application for the residential conversion of Portland Mill together with new development to north of the Mill buildings and looks to provide 35 new dwellings in total.

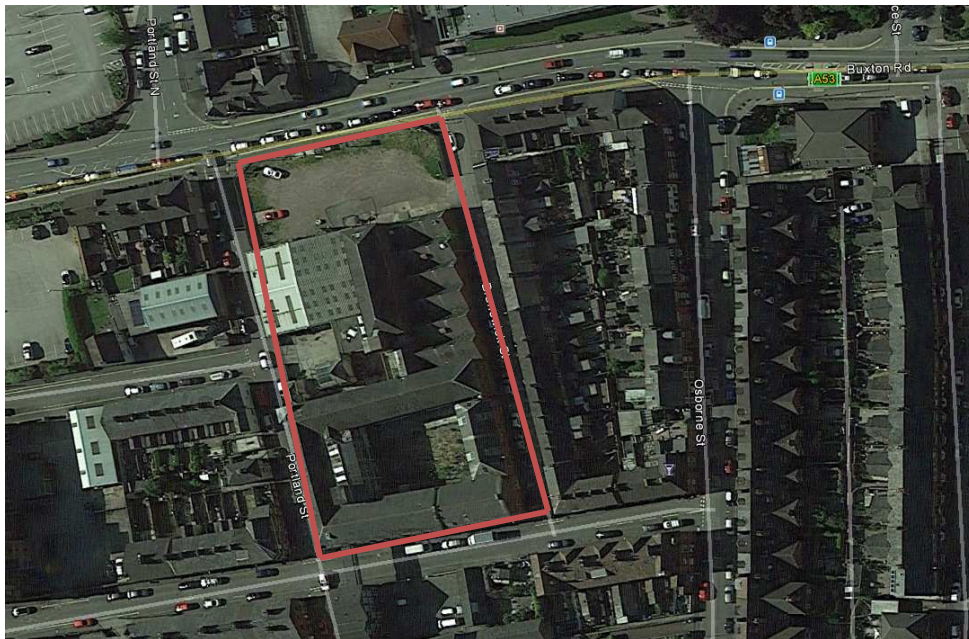
Whilst the existing buildings are not listed and the site is not within a conservation area they are clearly of a heritage significance, principally in their form and massing as a contributor to the character of the area and also in relation to the history of silk manufacture in Leek.

Consequently the proposal retains the core fabric and form whilst the new development seeks to reinstate the some of the character of the old terraced street frontages. This new development adopts a general philosophy whereby materials are chosen from a limited palette similar to those found on the site but adopts a more contemporary character.

## 2.0 Location

The Portland Mill site is located to the east of Leek centre, immediately south of the A53 Buxton Road and bounded by Queen Street to the south, Brunswick St. to the east and Portland St. to the west.

The site boundary is shown in red below:



Aerial View of Site

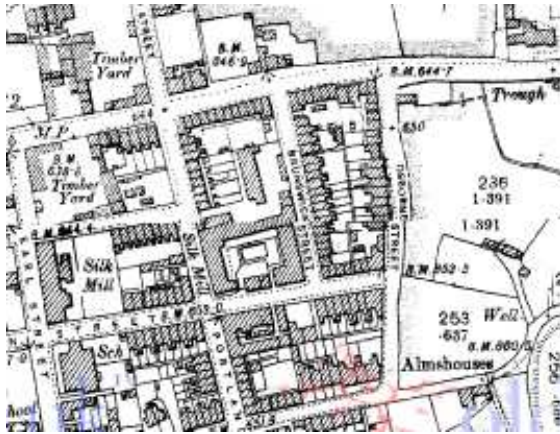
### 3.0 Heritage Statement

Portland Street, or Worthington's Mill, was known to be a silk Mill and is shown as such on O.S. maps from at least 1879. The general history of silk manufacture in Leek is well known and there are some records concerning the Portland St. building the following text is taken from 'British History On-line' - A History of the County of Stafford: Volume 7, Leek and the Moorlands. Originally published by Victoria County History, London, 1996. :

*The later 19th century, and especially the last quarter, saw the increasing concentration of the silk industry in factories. New factories were built on a larger scale and were architecturally more self-conscious. Examples of 1853 are Wellington Mills in Strangman Street and London Mill on the corner of Ashbourne Road (formerly London Road) and Well Street. California Mill, so named by 1892, illustrates the steady concentration of all processes on a single site.*

*A. J. Worthington & Co. Ltd. of Portland Mills in Portland Street and Queen Street was one of the larger firms in Leek by the 1920s, with a workforce of 400. It is said to have originated in 1803 as James Goostrey & Co. James Goostrey was a silk manufacturer in Portland Street in the mid 1830s, presumably at the mill there described as new when it was offered for sale in 1832. Soon afterwards the business was taken over by James Hammond and Henry Turner. By 1838 Andrew Jukes Worthington, a friend of Turner, was a partner, and in 1839 he married the niece of Turner's wife. He bought the Turners out, and the firm became A. J. Worthington & Co., evidently in 1845. In 1861, when he was living in Spout Street, he was employing 200 people. For some years before 1868 he was in partnership with Thomas Halcomb, evidently his brother-in-law. In that year Thomas withdrew, and Andrew's son Ernest became a partner. Andrew died in 1873. Ernest and his brother Philip were in partnership with Henry Russell, a London silk agent, from 1875 until Russell's death in 1885. The brothers continued in partnership until Ernest's death in 1896, and when Philip died in 1902 the business was left in trust for his son Lancelot, a minor. The firm became a private limited company in 1909 and was renamed A. J. Worthington & Co. (Leek) Ltd. in 1936. It took over several firms after the Second World War, and a parent company A. J. Worthington (Holdings) Ltd. was formed in 1953; the group consisted of six companies in 1963. In 1984 the group announced heavy losses, partly as a result of the closure of its subsidiary W. H. White & Sons of Old Bank Mill, Ball Haye Road, a firm dating from 1923. Turnover increased with the re-emergence of White & Sons, and Worthingtons showed a profit again in 1986.*

1879



1900



1927





The bridge linking Portland & Queen St. Mill has clock on both faces with 'Worthington's Silk Mills' named on the face and dates from the 1920's.

### 3.1 Significance

It is considered that the significance of the street frontage buildings to Queen Street ,Portland Street and the return to Brunswick Street is high in terms of social history and architectural character and that they should be retained if at all possible in any scheme of re-use. This should include the following buildings :

#### A. Portland St Building



The Portland Street building with its central pediment and 5 bays of window either side.

Note the bridge is not in the applicant ownership

**B. The Queen Street buildings** with their various stages of development being obvious in the construction joints.



**C. The lower two storey range to Brunswick Street**



The lower two storey range to Brunswick Street which completes the enclosure of the yard and has a good interior appropriate for conversion.

The upper floor interior shown below.



### **Buildings of lesser significance**

It can be seen on site that the rear extension to the Portland Street building is a later and disfiguring construction completed in the mid twentieth century and utilizing a concrete frame. It is felt that this clumsy addition should be removed in any scheme of re-development.



The building crossing the centre of the site has been severely compromised and it is felt should make way to allow for any new development.



The cross building seen to the right of the concrete frame and a view of the ground floor.



## 4.0 The Proposal

Market needs assessment by local agents has established that there is a strong market for houses over apartments and therefore the proposed mix is :

**New Build:**

15No. 3 bed houses  
2No. 2 bed houses

**Conversion :**

7 No. Mews or townhouse conversions  
11No. Apartments

The proposal for new development looks to address the frontages to Portland Street, Brunswick Street and Buxton Road with an evocation of the old back of pavement terraced houses but with a small yard or 'area' in front to allow for some privacy and the deflection of traffic noise with the use of a low wall. In the case of Brunswick Street this wall is a retained remnant of the previous building.



Above: Brunswick Street as proposed with 6 new terraced houses and the end gable of the run towards Buxton Road. The materials are generally red brick walls with a Staffordshire blue plain clay tile roof.

Following the demolition of the late addition rear extension to the Portland Street building the original wall line will be re-instated . There is little remaining of that original wall it having been open following the addition . The design for the re-instatement is to adopt a similar brick with similar openings but to ensure that it is a clear contemporary piece of construction rather than seeking to attempt either a pastiche or a restoration for which no records can be found. See below.



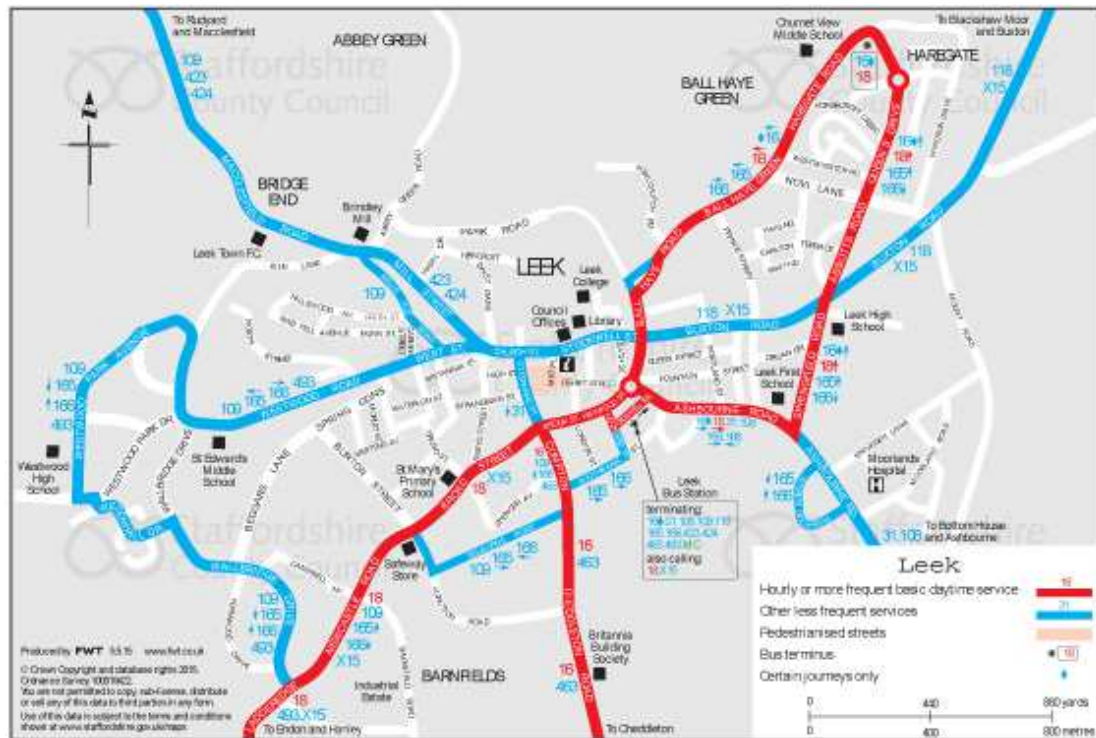
## 8.0 Highways & Parking

The central area is opened up to provide parking and circulation with a proposed adoption of the road up to a first turning head ( shaded grey below) to facilitate refuse and fire access and visibility splays from Portland Street.



The 35 new dwellings each have one parking space allocated within the central court . This represents 35 new spaces in addition to the existing on street provision.

There are bus routes running along both Ashbourne Road and Buxton Road.



Map of Leek bus routes

## 9.0 Ecology

See separate ecology report by Peak Ecology.

## 11.0 Refuse Collection

The proposed design takes into account the Staffs Moorlands requirement for three bin collection and provides storage on site for all dwellings.

