



# FOREFRONT

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## **Heritage statement to accompany planning application** **SMD/2016/0245 at Former Thomas Bolton Copperworks,** **Froghall**

The planning application site lies in close proximity to designated heritage assets, namely Froghall Bridge and a Milepost against south-west pier of Froghall Bridge. In addition Caldon Canal Conservation Area lies in the surrounding area. As a result the planning application requires a Heritage Statement to assess the significance of the planning application on the heritage assets. This document should be read in conjunction with the Supporting Statement already supplied.

### **National Planning Policy Guidance**

The National Planning Policy Guidance states that:

“The conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and effective conservation delivers wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits.

Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use to as yet undiscovered, undesigned buried remains of archaeological interest.”

“Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-taking to ensure that

heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development.

The “**setting of a heritage asset**” is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework.

A thorough assessment of the impact on setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset under consideration and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

Setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, and may therefore be more extensive than its curtilage. All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not.

The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

What matters in assessing if a proposal causes substantial harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, **significance** derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.

Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. 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 harm.

Policy on substantial harm to designated heritage assets is set out in paragraphs 132 and 133 to the National Planning Policy Framework”

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework are as follows:

132 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

133 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 loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

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

134 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 securing its optimum viable use.”

### **Relevant Heritage Assets**

The listing description of the heritage assets close to the site are as follows:

KINGSLEY C.P. A52 SK 04 NW 10/252 Bridge - Froghall Bridge  
(comprising Churnet and railway bridges)

Listed Grade II

Road bridges over river and railway. Former C18, latter mid-C19. Rusticated ashlar. River bridge has wide elliptical arch to low imposts, and roll-moulding at carriageway level; railway bridge (attached) has higher impost and parapet level and smaller elliptical arch; the pair form a virtually continuous whole.

KINGSLEY C.P. A52 (west side) SK 04 NW 10/253 - Milepost against south-west pier of Froghall Bridge

Listed Grade II

Milepost. Possibly early C20. Cast iron. Triangular plan, inclined head set approximately 500mm from ground level and inscribed: "FROGHALL"; left side inscribed: "IPSTONES 2/ONECOTE 6/LEEK 8 3/4/WARSLOW 9 1/4/LONGNOR 13 1/2/BUXTON 19"; and right side: "CHEADLE 3".

### **Statement of Significance and Impact**

The planning application proposes the retention of the following –

1. Installation of landscaped feature.

2. Addition of new external cladding to existing industrial buildings.
3. Erection of 2.4m high boundary fencing.

### Landscaped Feature

It is considered that the location of this development will mean that there would be a negligible impact on nearby heritage assets. This reflects the fact that it will be sited wholly within a hard surfaced yard next to post war utilitarian industrial buildings. This discrete sitting limits the visual impact. It is viewed mainly in context of these buildings. It is therefore considered that it would have a less than significant impact on heritage assets.

### External cladding

The metal cladding has already been added to the building and replaces unsightly utilitarian cladding of post war industrial buildings, which are not listed buildings. One elevation does however lie close to the designated heritage assets, the bridge and milepost. The close proximity of this elevation means that the setting of these is affected. Nonetheless it is considered that this impact will be limited and negligible. This reflects the fact that the industrial building are a completely different entity to the listed structures, and appear as completely different visual elements. The appearance and mass of the existing industrial buildings are completely at odds with the listed structures and as such appear incongruous in context.

The replacement cladding does not attempt to make the building relate well in appearance to the listed buildings as this would be impractical and meaningless due to their scale and appearance. As a result the impact on the heritage assets and the nearby Caldon Canal Conservation Area is neither improved nor reduced, and accordingly it would have a less than significant impact on heritage assets.

### Boundary fencing.

The boundary fencing has already been installed and replaced a wall formed from concrete gravel boards. This has been demolished and replaced with a metal fence 2m height. This is green in colour and is made from metal uprights supporting a mesh fence created from narrow diameter wire. There is conifer planting to the rear of the fence, within the site.

The boundary fencing lies close the designated heritage assets.

The fencing has a “lighter” appearance than the ugly fence it replaced. It therefore represents a less visually dominant and less intrusive feature than was previously the case. It also allows views of landscaping immediately to its rear.

It is therefore considered that the new fencing has a slight beneficial impact on designated heritage assets compared to the former situation. The addition of landscaping is generally welcomed in Conservation Areas.

Accordingly it would have a less than significant impact on heritage assets.

## **Conclusion**

The post war industrial buildings on the application site have a utilitarian appearance and in landscape terms appear visually incongruous to the character of the surrounding area. They are out of character with the nearby Caldon Canal Conservation Area and the nearby listed structures.

In context therefore the works are considered to improve the appearance of the site. The Council's adopted Churnet Valley masterplan identifies the site as retained employment use and as such the LPA does not envisage the removal of the existing buildings. Accordingly the visual incongruity of the industrial buildings is an accepted part of the local scene and likely to remain so.

In this context the works proposed do not have a negative impact on the listed structures and Conservation area.

On balance the works were considered to have a less than significant impact on heritage assets.