From: Bayliss, Gillian
To: Ben Hurst; Planning (SMDC)
Subject: SMD/2020/0129
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4 The Plain, Whiston

The building forms an important part of the Caldon Low Tramways which ran from limestone quarries at Caldon Low down to the canal wharf at Froghall between the late 18th century and early 20th centuries. Four tramway lines were constructed between 1778 and 1847. Historic England funded a study in 2014/15 (Caldon Low Early Railways Project, Marion Blockley) tracing the location, history and condition of the railways and the many buildings and structures associated with the tramways. The report highlights the importance of features associated with the tramways to the area's industrial heritage and landscape character and suggests a series of conservation issues to protect significance. These include:

• Risks from the modernisation and extension of historic buildings associated with the railway (eg Brakesman's cottage at Cotton Incline) leading to erosion of the industrial character and local vernacular

• Loss of minor structures associated with the railway: stables; water points; reservoirs; brakesman's cottages. Structures allowed to collapse and stone removed for use elsewhere

• Need for management proposals to protect the monuments and take into account all aspects of their significance

• The need to develop the protection of the landscape setting of the monuments, as well as the physical monuments themselves

The application building sits alongside the 1804 line which made extensive use of inclined planes, embankments and short tunnels. These features all make a unique visual and physical contribution to the character and feel of their local surroundings. Whilst I haven't got currently access to the Historic England report I believe that the building was a winding house and accommodation for the brakesmen who operated the machinery at the top of the inclined plain. A similar building is at the top of the Great Inclined Plain just above Froghall on the Ashbourne Road in Whiston. The buildings are very distinctive, being tall and narrow in width with a linear plan form. The arrangement of openings reflects the function of each part of the building. The structures are non-designated heritage assets and development proposals should aim to protect their historic significance.

The application proposes the demolition of a small lean too on the gable end facing the tramway, the demolition of a small brick store and rear yard and the construction of a two-storey side and rear extension. Some further information is required:

- **Some ground excavation will need to take place as the land at the rear slopes. There is no information about ground levels and what retaining structures will be required**
- **We need more information about the structures to be demolished – internal and external photos of the gable end lean-to, basement of the main house and the structures to be demolished outside. This will help us to understand the significance of what is to be altered/demolished.**

There may be the potential to construct a two storey gable-end extension (subject to the further information required) but I have concerns about a two storey rear extension as this will fundamentally alter the form and appearance of the building. The long linear form and blank rear wall are particularly distinctive features and part of the buildings appearance, reflecting historic

function. A single storey lean-to of similar footprint may be more acceptable (again subject to more information) but this needs to have a more functional rather than domestic character given that this would have been the working end of the building.

Gill Bayliss MA (Arch Con), MA (Env Planning) IHBC RTPI
Senior Conservation Officer
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council & High Peak Borough Council

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