

Heritage Statement

GORDON MILLS,
WATERLOO STREET,
LEEK



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ASSOCIATES

1. INTRODUCTION AND APPLICATION

This report, sets out an assessment of the potential impact upon the historic environment of development proposals on land at Gordan Mills, Waterloo Street, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 8AY. In undertaking the assessment regard is had to guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012 (hereafter the Framework). Paragraph 128 sets out the information requirements for proposals affecting heritage assets and states that:

When determining applications local planning authorities should require an applicant to provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

The assessment is made in respect of proposals for the residential development of the site, the extent of which is shown on the site plan included as Appendix 1. The development proposals will potentially impact upon the significance of a number of sites and buildings which can be regarded as designated and non-designated heritage assets for the purposes of the Framework.

The report follows Framework and good practice guidance in assessing the heritage significance of those identified designated and non-designated assets potentially affected by the proposals and the contribution made by their setting.

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application at Gordon Mills, Waterloo Street, Leek. The planning application is for planning permission for the development of an affordable housing scheme comprising of 20 no. houses and 12 no. assisted living apartments, to include bin store and parking on site.

This statement should be read alongside the submitted Design and Access Statement and other supporting documents. This statement addresses the heritage considerations relevant to the site being located close to a Grade II listed building and will demonstrate that the proposed residential development will conserve the character and appearance of the area.

2. SITE SETTING

The site (previously Gordon Mills) lies on a rectangular plot defined by Waterloo Street, Barngate Street, James Street, and Langford Street: the earliest sheds were constructed in 1898 for the silk textile industry, which until the late C20 played a large part in the economy of the town.

Waterloo Mill, to the north of the site, was previously a silk mill constructed in 1893-94. The mill was eventually taken over in the latter half of the 20th century by Lux Lux Ltd, a lingerie manufacturer from Glossop. In 2003 the owner of the mill was granted permission to convert it into apartments. The mill was given a Grade II listing on 14 October 1996.

3. PLANNING POLICY

Policy Context

As noted in the introduction the Framework requires applicants for development proposals to provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected by proposed development. It indicates that, in any such description:

The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

A heritage asset is defined within the Framework as:

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Significance, for heritage policy, is defined in the Framework as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

The aim of any heritage assessment is to demonstrate understanding of the nature of significance and the particular interest which contributes to that significance, the extent of the building fabric that holds this interest and its comparative level of importance. The Framework defines the nature of the particular archaeological interest a heritage asset may hold:

Archaeological Interest There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

The Framework does not provide a definition of what constitutes architectural, artistic or historic interest. References can however be drawn from Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance published by English Heritage. In addition the statutory listing criteria used for the selection of buildings of special interest provided definitions of architectural and historic interest, as follows:

Architectural Interest. To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its architectural design, decoration or craftsmanship; special interest may also apply to nationally important examples of particular building types and techniques (e.g. buildings displaying technological innovation or virtuosity) and significant plan forms; **Historic Interest.** To be of special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural, or military history and/or have close historical associations with nationally important people.

There should normally be some quality of interest in the physical fabric of the building itself to justify the statutory protection afforded by listing+

4. IMPACT ON SETTING OF HERITAGE ASSETS

North of the site on the opposite side of Waterloo Street is the Waterloo Mill. Waterloo Mills is included on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest as Grade II. The site is in close proximity to Waterloo Mill and as such development must conserve the character and appearance of the area.

Historically Waterloo Mill has been visible over the roof of the previous factory building. The change of height from the now demolished industrial building to the previously refused apartment building impacted on the visibility of the Listed Mill as viewed along Barngate Street. This increase in height drastically reduced these views.

In order to preserve as much of these views as possible the now proposed apartment building on the north western corner of the site, at the junction of Waterloo Street and Barngate Street has now been reduced from three storeys in the previous refused application to two storeys in the current proposal. The design has been amended to include a parapet roof, similar in height to the now demolished factory building, together with a reduced roof pitch and set back lipped roof.

5. CONCLUSION

This assessment has considered the potential impacts upon the historic environment by a proposal from residential development on land bounded by Waterloo Street, Barngate Street, James Street and Langford Street, Leek.

As the proposal is to replace the now demolished existing building due consideration is to be given to the quality of the new building. During the course of the previous application we worked very closely with the planning and conservation officers of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council on the design of the facade adjacent the listed building.

Agreement was eventually reached whereby these elevations were of a quality which would as stated within the committee report have no adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and in particular the setting of the Listed Building .

The previous application for the site, Reference 13/00462/FUL_MJ, was refused and the subsequent appeal decision, Reference APP/B3438/A/13/2204739, split the decision, approving the 20 no houses and refusing the 12 no apartments.

The inspector concluded that the design and appearance of the apartment building to be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area and particularly the Listed Mill. The inspectors main concern was the impact of the apartments which at three storeys in height and located on the corner of Waterloo Street and Barngate Street, would be detrimental to the vista and views of Waterloo Mill visible up Barngate Street.

The reduction of this element to two storeys drastically reduces this impact and allows views of more of the Listed Mill, particularly as these views unfold when moving towards it up Bargate Street.