

Heritage Impact Assessment

Proposed Alterations to Stone Wall on land off Pimlico Road, Clitheroe

Our Ref: 14-51

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Introduction

The proposed development is for the construction of six apartments in a block adjacent to Pimlico Road, Clitheroe. The site consists currently of vacant land and a former coach house adjoining Pimlico Road. The site is shielded from Pimlico Road by boundary walls and tree planting, with the rear boundary walls retaining the land behind the site at a higher level. A section of the retaining wall runs across the site between the perimeter boundary walls with a change in land level within the site too. The proposal includes excavating the land within the site at higher level and removing a portion of the retaining wall to the rear of the site where the proposed block of apartments will be located.

The existing stone boundary walls are not listed as having historical significance on the National Heritage List for England, however they have been considered as potentially having local historic interest by Ribble Valley Council.

Government guidance on *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment* also states that the NFFP identifies two categories of non-designated heritage assets that local authorities may identify; “1) Those that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments and are therefore considered subject to the same policies” and “2) Other non-designated heritage assets of archeological interest. By comparison this is a much larger category of lesser heritage significance... only a small proportion- around 3% - of all planning applications justify a requirement for detailed assessment.”

Please refer to the Structural Engineer Report and Design and Access Statement for additional information.

This statement is accompanied by the drawings 14-051-01B, 02B, 03E, 04C, 05D, 06D, 07D, 08 and 10.

Description

The boundary walls have maintained their appearance externally, however the retaining walls to the rear of the site have become overgrown with vegetation. The wall to the front of the site along Pimlico Road forms part of the wall of the coach house, and adjacent there is a vertically boarded timber door feature providing access through the wall itself.

The site has historic links with the former Coplow Quarry, to the east of the site. The historic maps provided in drawing 14-051-08 indicate that a train line once ran through the north of the site serving the late 19th century quarry. The train line branched off east from the main route as a secondary line and passed over a bridge across Pimlico Road to the higher land level beyond the site towards the quarry. The

line appears to have fallen into disuse during the latter half of the 20th century and there are no visible signs of the bridge and line remaining today.

Significance

This section assesses the relative significance of the walls and its key significance values. 'Conservation Principles' (English Heritage, 2008) sets out a range of heritage values that can be used to establish the significance of a building, structure or place. These include evidential value (the physical aspects of a building that yield evidence about its past), historical value (the extent to which a building is associated with or illustrative of historic events or people), aesthetic value (includes design, visual, landscape and architectural value) and communal value (includes social and commemorative value and local identity). These values may be tangible, for example, the listed building's grade or they may be intangible, for example, the site's association with a past event or group of people.

Significance is a concept for measuring the cultural value of a place, using judgement to assess the place and its different aspects in a hierarchy. The concept was first developed in Australia by James Semple Kerr, to assist with the management of cultural assets. It has been adopted by the Heritage Lottery Fund and in adapted forms by organisations such as The National Trust and English Heritage. The established levels of significance are:

- Exceptional – important at national to international levels, reflected in statutory designations, such as Grade I listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments.
- High – important at regional or sometimes a higher level, e.g. Grade II listed buildings
- Medium – important at a local level, and possibly at a regional level, for example for group value
- Low – of no more than local value
- Negative or intrusive features – features which in their present form detract from the value of the site.

Significance of Boundary Walls

The boundary walls hold historical value through an association with Coplow Quarry. The train line to Coplow Quarry ran across the north of the site, north of the current proposal. There is no evidence from the historic maps to suggest that the train line ran through the section of wall proposed for removal or across the parcel of land proposed for excavation. The boundary walls lack evidential value as there are no physical aspects that yield evidence about the sites past.

The boundary walls are considered to have low historical significance, due to their local value. The boundary walls are considered to be a local historic interest, but do not contain any importance at a regional level. The walls are not considered to be of any higher level of historical significance as they are not listed as having any further historic significance by Historic England.

Requirements for the Works

The majority of the site is currently vacant, overgrown and uneconomic to maintain. The change in land levels make the site more difficult to develop, further restricted by the retaining wall portioning the site and making the land to the rear unusable. The land needs to be developed to bring it into use and become financially viable for its future maintenance.

Proposals

The historic fabric of the wall will be left as existing where possible. The smallest feasible section of the wall will be removed to create the necessary access in accordance with the Structural Engineer's report to the rear of the site. This will allow the apartment block to be screened from Pimlico Road at street level, and minimise road and hardstanding costs from the public highway.

The excavation of the land behind the proposed section of wall will allow the ground floor level of the apartment block to be lowered and further minimise the impact of the proposal at street level. This will primarily enable the land to be built upon and made suitable for modern use.

Impact of the proposals

The appearance of the wall will be altered. The proposed apartment block in place of the missing section of wall will be in keeping with the materials of the immediate context and mostly screened from view by the existing trees. The external appearance of the remaining walls will not be altered. The existing coach house will not be altered. The door feature through the wall providing access to the site from the public footpath and highway of Pimlico Road will be retained.

Removing the proposed section of wall is not considered to detract from the historical value of the site as the remaining walls enclosing the perimeter of the site will be left intact and the higher level of land where the train line ran to will not be excavated.

The section of wall proposed for removal can be considered to be an intrusive feature as it detracts the functional value of the site. Removing the proposed section of wall will improve the use of the site and allow additional accommodation to be formed. This will allow the land to maintain a residential use and become economically viable to allow for future maintenance of the land and walls of local historic interest.

Conclusion

Referring to non-designated assets, Policy DME4 in Ribble Valley's 2014 Adopted Core Strategy states that developers will be expected to investigate the significance of non-designated archeology prior to determination of an application". However, Government guidance on *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment* states that 'when considering development proposals, local planning authorities should establish if any potential non-designated heritage asset meets the definition in the National Planning Policy Framework at an early stage in the process.' The boundary walls were not identified during the pre-application or previous planning application as being of local historical interest. The walls were first considered as of possible archeological interest during feedback following the refusal.

The walls are considered to be of low to medium historic significance, forming part of the wider landscape and are not listed as requiring any form of historic protection on the National Heritage List for England. Removing the proposed section of the wall does not impact on the significance or understanding of the historic value as it will not detract from the collective visual character or historic significance of the remaining boundary walls and landscape. As a non-designated heritage asset the walls are not considered to have exceptional significance of scheduled monuments or the significance equivalent to designated assets and do not impact on the significance nor understanding of the site's history.

The proposal is for a block of six apartments, removing a section of the retaining wall and excavating the land behind. The proposal is to allow additional accommodation on the site and improve the future maintenance of the site. Key Statement EN5 of the adopted 2014 Adopted Core Strategy for Ribble Valley states that 'the best way of ensuring the long term protection of heritage assets is to ensure a viable use that optimises opportunities for sustaining and enhancing its significance". The proposal will provide a viable use for the site to sustain and enhance the local significance of the remaining boundary walls.

In summary, the walls are not considered to have enough heritage interest as a non-designated asset for their significance to be a material consideration in the planning process. It is considered that the proposal meets the requirements of the NPPF, in particular para. 131. "In determining planning applications, local planning authorities

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should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; and the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality”.

Report prepared by

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