

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT



LAND AT PEEL STREET, CLITHEROE

DEMOLITION OF EXISTING WORKSHOP BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW OFFICES AND FLATS

OUR REF : ALPE/25

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1. INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared for Ribble Valley Borough Council to accompany an application for the demotion of the existing workshop buildings on the site and redevelopment of the site for a new two storey office buildings and a new three storey building for flats, together with car parking and its associated works. The site is not a heritage asset itself but it lies close to the Clitheroe Conservation Area which is to the north west, on the opposite side of the Mearley Brook. As that is a designated heritage Asset, this statement deals with how the proposed development affects the Conservation Areas' setting.

In summary, this statement finds that because of the existing inappropriate buildings on the site which are to be removed, the setting of the Conservation Area will be improved.

2. LOCATION

The site comprises an irregular shaped piece of land that is occupied by three modern steel frame and clad buildings that appear to have commercial use with the rets of the site under concrete or tarmac and used for car parking. The site lies on the A671, which follows the eastern side of the Clitheroe town core. The NGR for the site is : 374513 441589. Adjoining to the south west of the site is Howdens, a modern steel frame building. To the north east there is an open area to the A671. Opposite there are two storey terrace houses. The Mearley Brook runs along the north west boundary of the site where there is considerable tree lining on the opposite side, separating the site from the Conservation Area.

3. PLANNING CONTEXT

The Clitheroe Conservation Area is designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as "an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

4. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Section 16 of the NPPF, "Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment", sets out the relevant part of national planning policy regarding listed buildings and conservation areas. Paragraph 189 states that: "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including

any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance."

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF is also key: "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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be)"

5. LOCAL POLICY

The relevant policy is ENV5 – Heritage Assets of the adopted Core Strategy.

6. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

What is proposed is to redevelop the site by removing the existing industrial buildings and replacing them with a two storey office building and a three storey building for flats. The new buildings will be of stone construction with slate roofs, set in a car park and servicing area, with central access from Peel Street with landscape grounds for the flats.

7. RELEVANT HERITAGE ASSETS

The Clitheroe Conservation Area was designated in 1973. This covers the historic core of the town and in particular the C12th castle, which is a major landmark within the town.

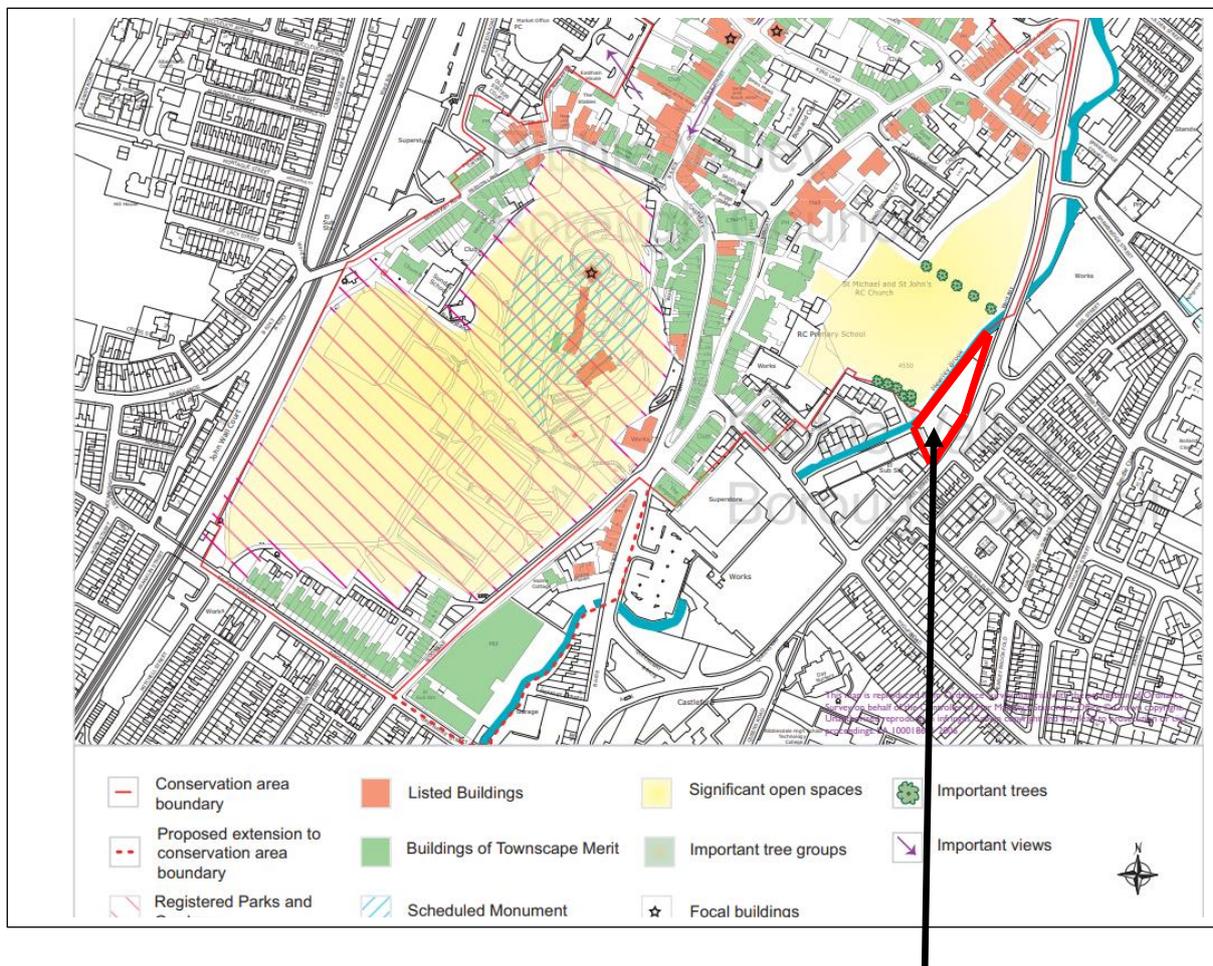
8. CLITHEROE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

The Council produced a Conservation Area Appraisal for Clitheroe in 2005. This identifies a number of features that justify the Conservation Area designation. Amongst these, the open space alongside the Mearley Brook to the rear of SS Michael and St Johns Church is identified as one such feature. In terms of character, the appraisal identifies this open space as the second most important open space for the Conservation Area. The appraisal states :

'The second important open space lies between Lowergate and Mearley Brook at the rear of SS Michael and John's Catholic Church. This grassed area, with individual and groups of trees, appears to have never been developed, perhaps because of the risk of flooding. Being located on the periphery of the conservation area, both open spaces are important to the setting of the conservation area.'

The map below reproduced from the appraisal shows the site in context of the open space referred to:

Extract from Townscape Appraisal map



The site

9. STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The open space is long standing and has resisted development. Historical mapping shows the open space on the 1st edition 1:10,000 OS map, circa 1840-1850 and on the 1st edition 1:2,500 OS map, circa 1890.

Whilst the open space survives, its setting has been much altered in the late C19th development of this area, when urban growth of this area took place by the building of terraced streets and Shaw Bridge Mill and Victoria Mill (both now demolished) nearby. This changed the character of the open space from defining the edge of the town to being an urban space.

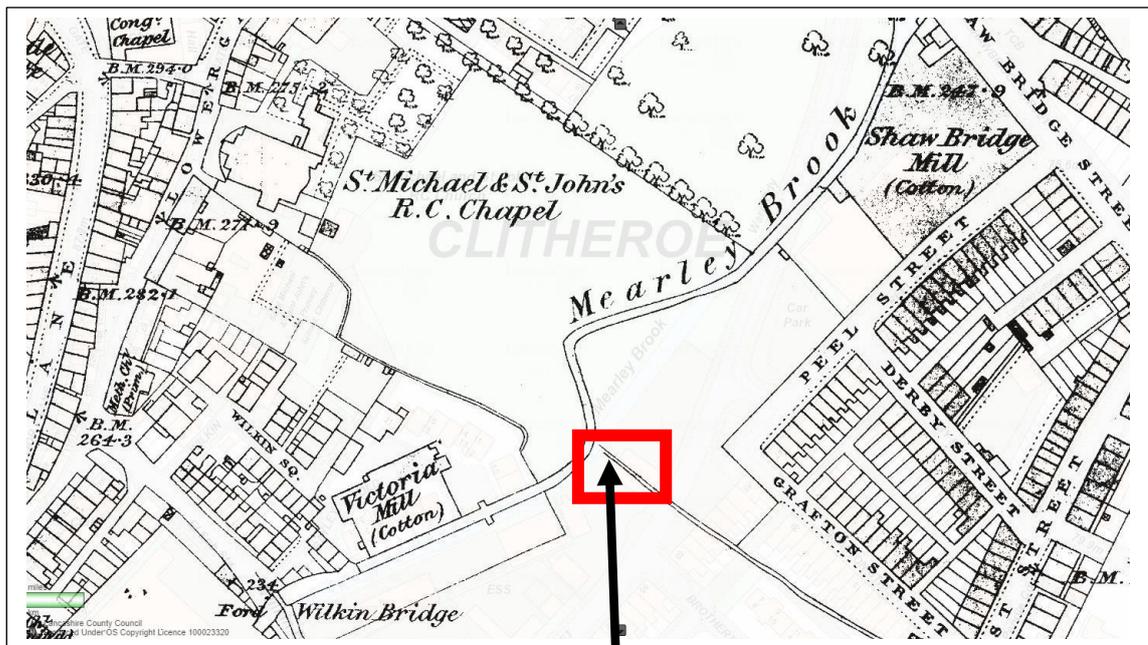
The maps below reproduce the 1st edition 1:10,000 and 1:2,500 OS maps.

1st edition 1:10,000 map circa 1840-50.



The Site

1st edition 1:2,500 map circa 1890.



The Site

10. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

The proposed development would remain physically separated from the Conservation Area and its open space behind the site because of the presence of the Mearley Brook that runs between them. The current setting of the open space along this side of the A671 is urban due to the encroachment of terraced housing and mills in the late C19th. The mills have now gone and this site now contains modern steel frame industrial type buildings, which are not of a style that compliments or fits in with either the Conservation Area or the nearby late C19th development. As well as remaining a separate site and entity to the open space in the Conservation Area on the opposite side of Mearley Brook, the proposed development will be seen as a separate, cohesive entity, not to be confused visually with the open space. In any event, there is visual separation of the site from the open space by the presence of a well tree'd boundary on the open space side. The open space will therefore continue its existing identity as open space and its setting would not be impinged upon by the proposed development.

11. CONCLUSIONS.

It is concluded that the development has a level of impact on the historic environment which would not amount to harm, and so is acceptable within the terms of the NPPF and local planning policies.