

# Heritage Statement

Proposed Gin Distillery at Union Street Mill



Prepared by Anna Williams

**OAKPLANNING**

# Heritage Statement

This heritage statement has been produced to support an application to change the use of an empty industrial unit to a distillery at Union Mill, Sabden. Union Mill is not a listed building but is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset due to its historical and architectural significance. Union Mill falls within the Sabden Conservation Area and is mentioned several times within the Sabden Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

## Purpose of this Statement

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”*

## Methodology

This document has been produced in accordance with the guidance set out in the following documents.;

- Historic England (2008) Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment.
- Historic England (2019) Statement of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets - Historic England Advice Note 12.
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014) Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and recording of Standing Buildings or Structures.
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014) Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment.
- Historic England (2017) The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)

## The Site

Union Mill is set on the southern side of Sabden on the edge of the Conservation Area. The site is set adjacent to a residential area and site opposite St Mary’s Primary School. The proposed unit is attached to the main mill building and is faced in natural stone. The roof is set behind a parapet at the front and is only visible from the side along the north-facing elevation. The only external opening, except for the opening in the roof, is a large folding metal door in the front of the unit. The front of the industrial unit appears to have been a later addition and evidence of previous openings are visible to the front of the unit. The doors are contemporary in design and would have been a much later addition to the building.

## Designations

The only statutory designation covering the site is the Sabden Conservation Area. An extract of the Conservation Area Map is shown below. The Character Appraisal states that “*Union Mill is the best preserved of Sabden’s mills. It was set up in 1856 and then contained 208 looms powered by a single beam engine. Enlarged in 1904, weaving came to an end in 1964 and in 1987 the mill was restored as Pendle Antique Centre, now a popular attraction with a stock of antique furniture and bric-a-brac.*” and the supporting Sabden Conservation Area Map identifies the mill as a building of townscape merit.

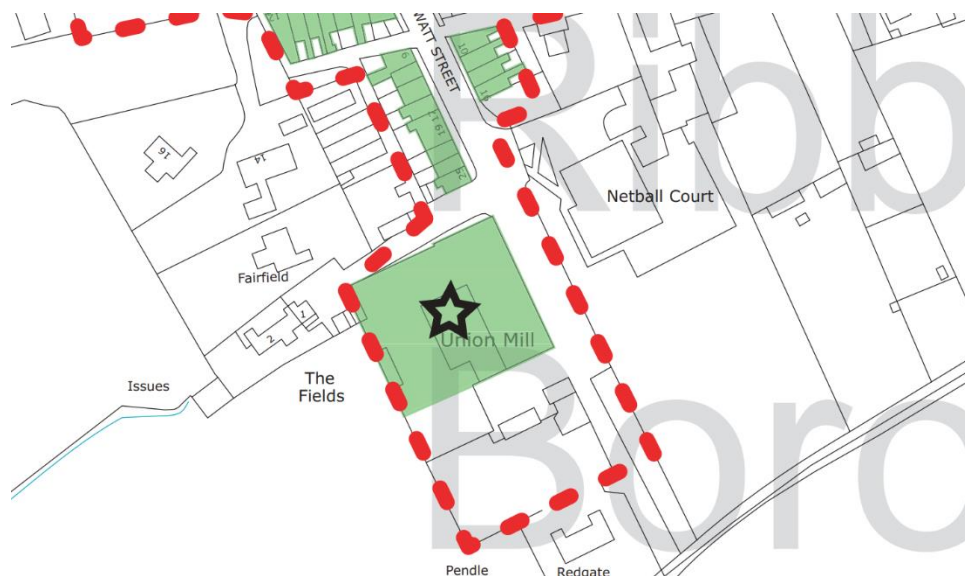


Image showing the location of Union Mill within the Sabden Conservation Area.

## National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

### Considering potential impacts

199. 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). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;

b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional

201. 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 total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply: a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

202. 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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

203. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets. Applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

204. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

205. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible<sup>69</sup>. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

207. Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 201 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 202, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

208. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

## **Local Policy**

The relevant local planning policies are contained within the Ribble Valley Borough Council Adopted Core Strategy (2014).

### **Policy EN5 – Heritage Assets**

There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings. The Historic Environment and its Heritage Assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance for their heritage value; their important contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place; and to wider social, cultural and environmental benefits. This will be achieved through:

- Recognising 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.
- Keeping Conservation Area Appraisals under review to ensure that any development proposals respect and safeguard the character, appearance and significance of the area. Considering any development proposals which may impact on a heritage asset or their setting through seeking benefits that conserve and enhance their significance and avoids any substantial harm to the heritage asset.
- Requiring all development proposals to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness/sense of place.
- The consideration of Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted *development rights where the exercise of such rights would harm the historic environment.*”

### **Policy DME4 – Protecting Heritage Assets**

In considering development proposals the council will make a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings.

#### **1. Conservation Areas**

Proposals within, or affecting views into and out of, or affecting the setting of a conservation area will be required to conserve and where appropriate enhance its character and appearance and those elements which contribute towards its significance. This should include considerations as to whether it conserves and enhances the special architectural and historic character of the area as set out in the relevant conservation area appraisal. Development which makes a positive contribution and conserves and enhances the character, appearance and significance of the area in terms of its location, scale, size, design and materials and existing buildings, structures, trees and open spaces will be supported.

In the conservation areas there will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of elements that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

2. Listed buildings and other buildings of significant heritage interest

Alterations or extensions to listed buildings or buildings of local heritage interest, or development proposals on sites within their setting which cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset will not be supported.

Any proposals involving the demolition or loss of important historic fabric from listed buildings will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist.

3. Registered historic parks and gardens of special historic interest and other gardens of significant heritage interest

Proposals which cause harm to or loss of significance to registered parks, gardens or landscapes of special historic interest or other gardens of significant local heritage interest, including their setting, will not be supported.

4. Scheduled monuments and other archaeological remains

Applications for development that would result in harm to the significance of a scheduled monument or nationally important archaeological sites will not be supported.

Developers will be expected to investigate the significance of non-designated archaeology prior to determination of an application. Where this demonstrates that the significance is equivalent to that of designated assets, proposals which cause harm to the significance of non-designated assets will not be supported.

Where it can be demonstrated that that the substantial public benefits of any proposals outweigh the harm to or loss of the above, the council will seek to ensure mitigation of damage through preservation of remains in situ as the preferred solution. Where this is not justified developers will be required to make adequate provision for excavation and recording of the asset before or during excavation.

Proposals should also give adequate consideration of how the public understanding and appreciation of such sites could be improved.

In line with NPPF, Ribble Valley aims to seek positive improvements in the quality of the historic environment through the following:

- a) monitoring heritage assets at risk and; i) supporting development/re-use proposals consistent with their conservation; core strategy adoption version 99 ii) considering use

- of legal powers (building preservation notices, urgent works notices) to ensure the proper preservation of listed buildings and buildings within the conservation areas.
- b) Supporting redevelopment proposals which better reveal the significance of heritage assets or their settings.
  - c) Production of design guidance.
  - d) Keeping conservation area management guidance under review.
  - e) Use of legal enforcement powers to address unauthorised works where it is expedient to do so.
  - f) Assess the significance and opportunities for enhancement of non-designated heritage assets through the development management process.

### **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Act) 1990**

This act of parliament forms the legislative foundation for decision making on applications that relate in particular to listed buildings and conservation areas.

Section 72 of the Act imposes a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon the character and appearance of conservation areas.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

“In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

### **Summary of Significance**

The existing industrial unit has significance due to its position beside the main Union Mill building and its visibility within the Sabden Conservation Area. Any external alterations to the unit have potential to have an impact on the setting of the mill and be visible along the vista along Watt Street.

Separately, the building could be considered a non-designated heritage asset as part of the Union Mill Complex. The National Planning Practice Guidance provides the following definition:

*“Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.*

*A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets.”*

## **The Development Proposals**

The proposed development primarily consists of internal alterations to the building to facilitate the use of the building as a distillery and for occasional tours and gin school activities. The only external change will be the addition of a glass door for customers adjacent to the sliding metal door at the front. Subject to further details, the proposed door will be metal framed and will have a glass infill panel above. Due to potential concerns with neighbour amenity and parking pressures, the applicant has chosen not to design this aspect of the proposal in detail. Subject to other issues being overcome, the applicant will be able to provide detailed drawings of the proposed access.

## **Impact of the Proposals and the Public Benefits**

The change of use, taken on its own, will have a very negligible impact on the character of the Sabden Conservation Area. The existing, lawful, use could involve the coming and going of delivery vehicles and the generation of significant noise and smells. The proposed use will generate less impacts from those activities but may generate additional visitors wishing to visit the distillery when it is opened for tours and as a small-scale gin school. The level of operation will be very low and is not considered harmful.

The proposed external changes will impact the appearance of the Sabden Conservation Area. The additional glass door has potential to be harmful if not detailed well and further information may be required prior to determination. The existing folding metal door is a contemporary addition and, although typical of industrial buildings, has a neutral impact on the conservation area and the setting of the mill. Subject to further details, the proposed new external door is likely to result in, at worst, less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Sabden Conservation Area and the significance of Union Mill as a non-designated heritage asset.

As the proposal has potential to cause harm to the conservation area consideration must be given to the public benefits of the scheme. The application has been left empty for a considerable length of time and the proposed occupants, the Ribble Valley Gin Company, are a local and growing company currently unable to expand their operations due to a lack of suitable premises. Granting planning permission would provide additional employment in the village, benefit local tourism, and would allow a local business to grow more sustainably.

Separately, the proposal is not anticipated to have any archaeological impacts.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed development will, at worst, result in less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Sabden Conservation Area and the significance of Union Mill as a non-designated heritage asset. The potential level of harm is considered low, and the public benefits of the scheme are considered to outweigh any harm to designated or non-designated heritage assets.