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FAO A Dowd

Dear Mr Macholc,

Planning Applications 3/2017/0144-0145 and 0143-0116: Works to the Mill Building, Stonyhurst College, Avenue Road, Hurst Green BB7 9PZ

Thank you for the copies of emails from Mr Dowd on 26th April and 27th April regarding the above development. With regard to the latter, you ask for our comments regarding the points made by Mr McBurney.

1 The wheel pit and its walls

We are aware that the extant planning permission allows the both the mill gable wall and the second wall which delimits the former wheel pit to be removed and the pit itself to be infilled. Our suggestion was that, given that the layout of the building had been altered that it seemed practicable to alter it a little more and retain the former gable end of the mill building, or at least the ground floor portion of it and the arch which formerly housed the waterwheel shaft. We did not suggest also retaining the other wall which formed the second (southwest) side of the wheel pit enclosure, as it would produce a narrow room of little utility. Neither did we suggest that the underground part of the wheel pit should also be left open.

Mr McBurney suggests that the wheel pit needs to be infilled for structural reasons – we did not see any structural report with the application documentation, although one may have been produced – but does not seem to deal with the removal of the gable wall. Indeed, whilst we accept the point about the ventilation issue for the wheel pit, the need to "*underpin the existing foundations to provide integrity to the existing walls*" seems odd given that the walls above the pit are proposed to be removed. Given that the gable end wall to the mill is extant, that it appears to have been carefully constructed, that it would have needed foundations at least as deep as the wheel pit and, finally, that it was designed to support the weight and vibration of the operational water wheel, it would seem (without a structural engineer's report otherwise) a reasonable assumption that this gable end wall lends significant structural strength to this part of the building. Hence our suggestion (27th March 2017) that its retention would "*retain this historic fabric in situ, avoid the cost of its demolition and add to the structural integrity of this part of the*

building complex". We would therefore, still support our suggestion that the retention of at least the ground floor portion of the former gable end wall to the mill would be desirable. If it is not possible to retain it, then we would recommend that (i) sufficient structural engineering details should be provided to assure the Council that this can be undertaken in such a way as not to impact the structural integrity of the remaining structure; and (ii) the interior sides of the two walls forming the wheel pit should be recorded as an addendum to the previous OA north report.

We would not object to the infilling of the below ground section of the wheel pit itself (although we did not notice that detail on any of the plans), but would hope that it could be done with an appropriate granular fill compacted into the extant space rather than by digging it out and destroying it. It should also be noted that there is some possibility of water wheel parts having fallen into and being preserved in the wheel pit following its abandonment. Any 'cleaning out' of the pit prior to its infilling should check for and record any such remains.

2 The external ramp

We accept that the head race for the waterwheel was raised above the ground and that it well have been formed by a launder supported (at least in part) by a wall running at approximate right angles from the adjacent pond, but the details of this are unclear. It is not known how much, if any, of the top of the wall has been lost and how the channel or launder was supported on it. It is not known if the wall formerly extended all the way to the wheelhouse (although it appears to on the OS 1894 1:2,500 map) and what, if any, water control features (sluices, etc.) were employed in or at either end of the launder. Finally, the levels at which the water was abstracted, crossed the land in front of the wheelhouse and entered the building cannot be determined from the information immediately available.

The OA North photographs (Plates 50 and 51) and the associated drawing (Fig 10) do not indicate a definite base to the blocked opening for the headrace, the blocking/rebuilding visible runs down the face as far as a low obscuring mound of soil. Comparison of this figure with the proposed elevation drawing and ramp details (8642 P 01 and 8642 A(24)05 accompanying application 0116) shows that the base of this blocking is obscured by the proposed ramp and that foundations up to 900mm below the extant average ground level are proposed, directly across the line of the launder. It is thus incorrect to state that the ramp does not conflict with any of the elements of this system. We do not object to the ramp and, if this is the only site that it can be located, then as suggested (24th March, 2017), a scheme of mitigation should be proposed. It is suggested that this take the form of (i) photography of the blocked opening after the soil mound has been removed (and of the interior face if accessible); and (ii) a watching brief during ground disturbance for the ramp foundations.

3 The substation

The attached cross section drawing shows the relative heights of the proposed substation building. As noted it will not be significantly visible from the Registered park and if screened by the proposed fence will only be visible from the first floor and above of the refurbished granary and mill building. New cables coming into the substation from the northeast should try to avoid running through the area occupied by the earlier mill,

alongside the pond, and instead run closer to the cottages and granary building. Does the proposed design lead itself to the incorporation of a green or sedum roof?

4 Roof lights

No comments.

Yours sincerely

Peter Iles