



(former Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) Offices) and a WWII pillbox or guard post built into the perimeter wall as part of the Chorley Royal Ordnance Factory). The proposal will be assessed in relation to whether it causes impact on the NDHA's.

## **Legislation**

The principle statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is to preserve the special character of heritage assets, including their setting. LPA's should, in coming to decisions, consider the principle Act, which states the following;

### *Listed Buildings - Section 66(1)*

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development, which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest, which it possesses.

## **Planning Guidance and Policy**

### NPFF

In determining planning applications LPAs should take account of;

- a. The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b. The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c. The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

P.193 states that when considering the impact of proposals on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be applied. This is irrespective of whether any harm is identified as being substantial, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

### Local Plan

Chorley Local Plan 2012-26 – BNE 8 Protection and Enhancement of Heritage Assets

Central Lancashire Core Strategy – Policy 16 Heritage Assets

SPD Central Lancashire Design Guide

## **Assessment**

I have reviewed the supporting documents, which includes an existing and proposed site layout, Indicative Street Scenes, House Types, Design and Access Statement prepared by Astle Planning & Design Ltd – December 2021 and a

Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment, prepared by Heritage Archaeology – August 2021. I visited the site on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022, to complete visual observations.

The key heritage issues for the LPA to consider under the application are:

1. Whether the proposal would harm the setting of the adjacent Grade II listed building.
2. In respect of NPPF P.203 – whether the scheme will cause any undue loss of significance to any of the nearby non-designated heritage assets (NDHA).

### *The proposal*

The application seeks the demolition of the existing building and the erection of 118 no. dwellings (Use Class C3) with associated access, landscaping, parking and other works. The submission documents present a mixture of a 2, 3 and 4 bedroom detached, semi-detached, and mews type family homes, with some 2 bedroom walk up apartments.

### *Impact on the setting to designated heritage assets*

The issue from a heritage viewpoint is whether the proposal would harm the setting of the Grade II listed 'Stansfield House Barn', which in my view is of moderate to high significance. The properties significance is in its aesthetic and historic context, primarily evidenced in the buildings fabric and architectural form/appearance and former use as an agricultural building.

In relation to setting, Historic England's advice is contained in its Planning Note 3 (second edition) entitled The Setting of Heritage Assets. This describes the setting as being the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced and explains that this may be more extensive than its immediate curtilage and need not be confined to areas which have public access. Whilst setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations it is also influenced by the historic relationships between buildings and places and how views allow the significance of the asset to be appreciated.

The building was likely constructed in the early C18 of handmade brick on a stone plinth, with a stone slate roof. Since its listing in 1984 it has been converted into a dwelling and has undergone some modern alterations, including full height glazing in the cart entrance, previously used for wagons and farm vehicles. Originally, the building was an agricultural barn associated to Stansfield House, which was set in fairly extensive surrounding agricultural grounds. Over time, the land to the north and west have been developed, however, the land to the south remains largely open fields.

The proposal site lies directly to the north east of the listed building, on the opposite side of Euxton Lane, spreading out to the north and east. The site will directly front Euxton Lane but will be partially screened by the boundary fencing

and trees, which will go some way to reducing the view of the proposed development.

According to first edition OS map, as noted above the site was a relatively isolated setting, which gradually changed through the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the arrival of the industrial and commercial buildings within close proximity on the north side of Euxton Lane. These 20<sup>th</sup> century developments have resulted in pronounced physical changes to the wider setting of the listed building.

These cumulative changes have overtime contributed to the gradual erosion of the historic setting and has impacted on how the listed building is now experienced. Therefore, reducing the contribution made by the setting to the overall significance of the Listed Building.

The views along Euxton Lane are open, particularly because of the wide dual carriageway and set back nature of the commercial buildings on its northern side. Nevertheless, due to the hedgerow boundary treatments to the north of the listed building, views of the listed building are limited and the building can only really be fully experienced at close quarter.

In this context, I do not regard that the application site contributes any level of significance to the listed building and can be considered, for the basis of this assessment, to be of a neutral value.

I consider that the significance of the listed building is largely defined by the retained fabric of the building itself, primarily in the buildings design, form and materials and in its immediate setting to the south, which has remained open agricultural land.

Whilst I have no doubt that, the new residential development will be noticeable in the same context as the listed building this in itself does not necessarily translate to a loss of significance.

Given the already eroded nature of the setting to the listed building and its neutral importance, in my view, the impact of the new development on the value of the setting will be very limited. Largely, this will be confined to the visual changes to the wider landscape setting, which is different to loss of significance. Subsequently, I feel the proposal will have no impact on the contribution made by the historic setting on the significance of the heritage asset.

#### *Impact to the Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHA)*

The Governments guidance identifies NDHA's as being 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. P.203 of the Planning Framework makes reference to the LPA's need to consider the effect of an application on the significance of a NDHA when determining an application. In carrying out its planning balance, an LPA should have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The adjacent NDHA's (Former ROF buildings and pillbox/guard post) significance is based in their aesthetic and historic value. This is primarily evidenced in the architectural form, materials of construction and historic associations to their use/function. I do however have to recognise that NDHA's are non-designated because they have lower heritage value and as such I afford them as being of low significance.

Unlike in the case of designated assets, LPA's are only required to carry out a simple weighing exercise of those material matters and that any impact (which carries no statutory duty on behalf of the LPA) should be considered against the merits of the whole application including the benefits generated by sustainable new development. It is for the Council to apply what weight it considers appropriate to those material matters in its decision so long as it is being reasonable.

The NDHA's are of local importance, but are more modern buildings, which have experienced modern alterations and additions that sit amongst other modern commercial buildings.

Architecturally, in terms of the proposed scale, proportions and materials, I do not think that the proposed properties necessarily reflect the scale and mass of the existing adjacent NDHA's. However, I am mindful that other similar housing developments have been granted permission recently, close to the south side of Euxton Lane. I note that, some of the proposed materials match the modern alterations seen on the nearby NDHA's, including the use of uPVC windows.

In this regard, as with the case of the setting to the listed building, due to the existing low significance afforded to the setting, the loss of significance caused by the new development will be negligible. On this basis, the impact of the proposed development on the contribution made by the setting to the value of those NDHA's will be limited and will not cause any discernible harm, to the significance of those locally important buildings.

### ***Conclusion / recommendation***

As I am required to do so, I have given the duty's imposed by s.66(1) of the P(LBCA) Act 1990 considerable weight in my comments and I have provided a balanced judgement in my comments in relation to the NDHA's and the need to preserve heritage.

I consider the proposal would meet the statutory test 'to preserve', causing no harm to the contribution made by the setting to the significance of the Listed Building (Stansfield House Barn). Furthermore, there will be no discernible harm or loss of significance caused to the nearby NDHA's.

Therefore, no balancing exercise is required as per NPPF P.202. As such, the proposal meets the objectives of Chapter 16 of the NPPF and accords with the policies of the Local Plan.

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