

HERITAGE STATEMENT

14 DECEMBER 2023

STOCKSBRIDGE TOWN FUND COMMUNITY HUB
SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by RLB on behalf of Sheffield City Council in relation to a planning application for the demolition of the existing Stocksbridge library to create a new multiuse community hub comprising of library and community spaces, office space and an educational hub sited at Manchester Road, Stocksbridge, Sheffield, S36 1DH.

The site is not located within the boundaries of a Conservation Area or any other heritage designation.

The development is therefore wholly in accordance with Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 16 of the NPPF and the relevant policies of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by RLB on behalf of Sheffield City Council in relation to a planning application for the for the demolition of the existing Stocksbridge library to create a new multiuse community hub comprising of library and community spaces, office space and an educational hub, sited at Manchester Road, Stocksbridge, Sheffield, S36 1DH.

This statement provides information with regards to the significance of the historic environment to fulfil the requirement given in paragraph 194 of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which requires: *an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected.*

To inform an assessment of the acceptability of the proposal in respect to impacts on the historic environment, paragraphs 199 to 203 of the NPPF have been followed. A description of any harm to the historic environment resulting from the proposed development, including impacts to significance through change of setting is provided.

With specific regard to the content of this assessment, Paragraph 194 of the NPPF states: *The level of detail should be proportionate to an assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.*

3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 OVERVIEW

In addition to the planning framework which is primarily set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, legislation relating to the built historic environment is principally set out within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which provides statutory protection for listed buildings and their settings and conservation areas.

In addition to the statutory obligations set out within the Planning Act, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications, are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.2 NATIONAL LEGISLATION AND POLICY

National policy and guidance in respect to planning is set out in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in September 2023. This replaced and updated the previous NPPF published in 2021. The NPPF needs to be read as a whole and is intended to promote the concept of delivering sustainable development. Section 16 of the NPPF relates to guidance on the historic environment.

The NPPF is supplemented by the national Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) which comprises a full and consolidated review of planning practice guidance documents to be read alongside the NPPF and contains a section which relates to the Historic Environment.

The NPPF defines heritage assets as *a building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).*

Section 16, Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states: *Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.*

Section 16, Paragraph 195 of the NPPF sets out what is required by an applicant for any proposals affecting heritage assets, this is as follows:

Description of the significance of any heritage asset affected, including any contribution made by their setting. It is noted that the level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance.

Consultation of relevant historic environment records.

Assessment of heritage asset using appropriate expertise.

The section within the PPG in relation to the Historic Environment confirms that the consideration of significance in decision making is important and states: *Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent, and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.*

3.3 SHEFFIELD UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in 1998, this is the statutory development plan for the city. The plan sets out policies to help guide development and conservation in Sheffield. The policies within the UDP specific to this site are as follows:

Policy BE5: Building Design and Setting

Good design and the use of good quality materials will be expected in all new and refurbished buildings and extensions. The following principles will apply:

Original architecture will be encouraged but new buildings should complement the scale, form, and architectural style of surrounding buildings.

Policy BE15: Areas and Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

Buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest which are an important part of Sheffield's heritage will be preserved or enhanced. Development which would harm the character or

appearance of Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas or Area of Specific Character will not be permitted.

Policy BE19: Development Affecting Listed Buildings

The demolition of Listed Buildings will not be permitted. Proposals for internal or external alterations which would affect the special interest of a Listed Building will be expected to preserve the character and appearance of the building and, where appropriate, to preserve or repair original details and features of interest.

Proposals for change of use will be expected to preserve the character of the building.

Proposals for the development within the curtilage of a building or affecting its setting, will be expected to preserve the character and appearance of the building and its setting.

4.0 STOCKSBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE

Stocksbridge’s modern history dates back to the mid-19th century, the area it developed from has ancient ties. Part of the Manor of Bolsterstone, this valley between the Pennine hills of Hunshelf and Waldershelf was once thickly forested.

Stocksbridge, situated approximately 10 miles northwest of Sheffield, has its own distinct identity. The town’s roots trace back to a tiny hamlet at the crossing point of the Little Don River. Originally known as Hunshelf Water, the river later adopted the name Little Don. The wooden footbridge at the junction of Ford Lane, Hunshelf Road, and Smithy Hill became associated with the name Stocksbridge. In 1812, the wooden bridge was replaced by a sturdy stone bridge, but the name endured.

In 1842, Samuel Fox, an industrialist, arrived from Bradwell. He rented an old cotton mill on land formerly owned by the Stocks family. Fox ingeniously developed the paragon umbrella frame here, revolutionizing the umbrella industry. As the Liberty Steel steelworks (formerly Fox’s mill) expanded, so did the town’s population. At its peak, the steelworks employed over 8,000 people. The steelworks shaped the valley, leaving an indelible mark on Stocksbridge’s landscape.

From 1894 until 1974, Stocksbridge functioned as an urban district council. During this period, the town’s architectural landscape witnessed gradual changes, reflecting the needs of its growing population. Public housing estates, community facilities, and infrastructure emerged.

In June 2016, the Fox Valley retail and office development opened on former steelworks land. This project breathed new life into the town, acting as a catalyst for further investment. Fox Valley became an economic driver, attracting businesses and visitors.

The architectural development of Stocksbridge covers three distinct periods:

Victorian and Edwardian Periods: Stocksbridge saw the construction of residential terraces, workers’ cottages, and small-scale industrial buildings.

Post-War Era: The town expanded further, with public housing estates and community facilities taking shape.

Modern Times: Contemporary architecture blends with remnants of the past, creating a diverse streetscape.

The key notable buildings in Stocksbridge town centre are:

Stocksbridge Clock Tower War Memorial: A poignant landmark, standing tall in the heart of the town.

St. Matthias Church: An architectural gem, offering glimpses of the town's spiritual heritage.

Industrial Structures: While some factories have been repurposed, their original design elements remain embedded in the urban fabric.

Stocksbridge's journey blends industrial innovation, community growth, and architectural evolution. From the paragon umbrella to the bustling Fox Valley.

5.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission is sought for the for the demolition of the existing Stocksbridge library to create a new multiuse community hub comprising of library and community spaces, office space and an educational hub, sited at Manchester Road, Stocksbridge, Sheffield, S36 1DH.

6.0 THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

The site is not located within the boundaries of a Conservation Area or any other heritage designation.

7.0 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

7.1 OVERVIEW

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The policy guidance set out within the NPPF is considered to be a material consideration which attracts significant weight in the decision-making process.

The statutory requirement set out within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, at Section 66(1) directs that considerable weight should be given to the preservation of the historic and architectural interest of Listed Buildings and their settings.

In addition, the NPPF states that the impact of development proposals upon the particular significance of heritage assets such as Listed Buildings should be considered. It is also important to consider whether the proposals cause harm to the significance of these assets. If they do, then one must consider whether any such harm represents 'substantial harm' or 'less than substantial harm' to the identified designated heritage assets, in the context of paragraphs 201 and 202 of the NPPF.

The PPG clarifies that within each category of harm ('less than substantial' or 'substantial'), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.

The guidance set out within the PPG states that substantial harm is a high test, and that it may not arise in many cases. The PPG makes it clear that it is the degree of harm to the significance of the asset rather than the scale of development which is to be assessed.

7.2 IMPACT OF PROPOSALS

The development is not located within the boundaries of a Conservation Area or any other heritage designation, therefore, there is no impact of the proposals on any surrounding heritage assets.

The development has been designed to fit seamlessly into the existing streetscape. The façade has been designed to directly reference local architecture both old and new where traditional stone buildings are simply styled with stone heads and sills, pitched roofs and traditional shop frontages. There are examples of this along Manchester Road and around the Fox Valley development and is a well-established style. The style draws inspiration from existing local buildings at Fox Valley which feature large arched windows.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

Planning permission is sought for the for the demolition of the existing Stocksbridge library to create a new multiuse community hub comprising of library and community spaces, office space and an educational hub, sited at Manchester Road, Stocksbridge, Sheffield, S36 1DH.

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