

# Heritage Appraisal

## Warrington Local Plan - Port Warrington

### Introduction

1. This Heritage Appraisal has been prepared in connection with Port Warrington (the 'Appraisal Site'). It identifies heritage assets with potential to be affected by development of the Appraisal Site and broadly describes their significance and setting. It identifies whether there are heritage constraints to development and how these constraints could be resolved or mitigated.

### The Appraisal Site

2. The Appraisal Site is a c274 hectare situated to the south west of Warrington. It is an irregularly shaped site bounded by the River Mersey to the north and the Manchester Ship Canal in the south. Port Warrington is an existing inland port and warehousing facility located within the Appraisal Site on the northern bank of the Manchester Ship Canal and accommodates a range of road-based storage and distribution uses. The remainder of the Appraisal Site is comprised of the Arpley Meadows landfill site and the Moore Nature Reserve.
3. Historic map regression illustrates that the Site was originally in agricultural use during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was divided by field boundaries. The Mersey and Irwell Navigation, incorporating the Sankeys/St Helen's Canal, to the north of the Appraisal Site was constructed in 1736 to improve transportation between Liverpool and Manchester.
4. In the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the area became heavily industrialised. The London and North Western and the Cheshire Junction Railway Lines were constructed to the south east of the site and the Manchester Ship Canal, which opened on 1 January 1894, was constructed at the southern boundary of the Appraisal Site. As part of the expansion of Warrington town centre, there was an increase in industrial use and large scale development to the east of the site.
5. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, historic maps show a clear contrast between the open agricultural land to the west of the Site and industrial development to the east. In the south of the Site, on the north bank of the Manchester Ship Canal, was a Timber Yard with railway sidings. Other industries included a Sawing and Planing Mill and the Bank Quay Soap Works.
6. By the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Arpley Dredging Deposit Ground and the Walton Dredging Deposit Ground had been constructed within part of the Site together with the Arpley Meadows Landfill Site constituting a significant change of land use within the Site.

### The Heritage Assets

7. The NPPF (2018) defines a heritage asset 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"<sup>1</sup>.*

8. The setting of a heritage asset is defined by the NPPF (2018) as:

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<sup>1</sup> DCLG (2018) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary

*“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an assets, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral”.<sup>2</sup>*

9. Site visit were completed in April and May 2018 to assess the potential for designated and non-designated heritage assets to be affected by future development of the Appraisal Site for residential use. These assets are set out below and are then followed by a broad assessment of their significance (including the contribution made by setting and the Appraisal Site).
10. The following is a list of assets with potential to be affected by the development of the Appraisal Site depending on the extent height and scale of that development:
  - Bank Quay Transporter Bridge (Scheduled Monument, grade II\* listed)
  - Moor Lane Bridge (grade II listed)
  - Penketh Hall (grade II listed) and Penketh Barn (grade II listed)
  - Baronet Farmhouse, with Attached Farm Buildings and Cobbled Yard (grade II listed)
  - Aqueduct carrying the Bridgewater Canal over Chester Road (old line), Thomasons Bridge over Bridgewater Canal, Acton Grange Bridge (Over Bridgewater Canal) (grade II listed)
  - Walton Village Conservation Area
  - Moore Conservation Area
  - Upper Moss Side Farmhouse (locally listed)
  - Lower Moss Side Farmhouse (locally listed)
  - Ferry Inn Public House (locally listed)
11. These designated and non-designated heritage assets have been identified through a search of the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER) dated 19 March 2018.
12. Due to the intervening distance, topography, landscape and/or development it is concluded that the significance of the following assets would not be affected and they are not considered further within this Appraisal:
  - Monks Siding Signal Box (grade II listed)
  - Church of St Luke (grade II\*)
  - Norton Water Tower (grade II listed)
  - 2, Westford Road (grade II Listed)

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<sup>2</sup> DCLG (2018) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary

- The Black House Public House (grade II listed)
- Daresbury Conservation Area
- Sankey Bridge (locally listed)
- The Sloop Public House (locally listed)
- The Coach and Horses Public House (locally listed)
- Bethany Pentecostal Church (locally listed)

### **Bank Quay Transporter Bridge (Scheduled Monument, grade II\* listed)**

#### **Summary of Architectural and Historic Interest**

13. The Bank Quay Transporter Bridge is located to the east of the Appraisal Site, and spans the River Mersey. It was constructed by engineers Sir William Arrol and Coy in 1913-14 to connect the two parts of the large chemical and soap works which were on the site at that time. It is constructed of steel with a 200ft span, from which the transporter deck is suspended, and was designed to carry rail vehicles up to 18 tonnes in weight. It is principally listed due to its high engineering interest and being one of only three major transporter bridges in Britain. It has a functional character, the steel structure gives a striking appearance to the bridge.

#### **Contribution made by Setting to Significance**

14. The surroundings of the bridge were primarily industrial at the date of its construction and continue to be, with some cleared hardstanding, to the immediate north, east and west. To the south is a road network, further transporter bridge and to the south open agricultural land, including the Appraisal Site. The bridge is primarily experienced in conjunction with the Ship Canal, reflecting its relationship with the canal. It is also experienced at close range where its architectural design can be best appreciated. The Appraisal Site forms part of the industrial backdrop which contributes to the historic context of the asset.

### **Moore Lane Bridge (grade II listed)**

#### **Summary of Architectural and Historic Interest**

15. Moore Lane Bridge is a swing bridge over the Manchester Ship Canal dating to c.1894. It has a steel segmental arched riveted structure with lattice parapet, giving a striking appearance to the structure, emphasising its functional use. It is operated from the north bank of the canal by hydraulic water power.

#### **Contribution made by Setting to significance**

16. Moore Bridge is located to the south of the Appraisal Site, spanning the Manchester Ship Canal. To the north is the Moore Nature Reserve within the Appraisal Site and to the north east the large scale warehouses associated with Port Warrington, giving an industrial character. To the south is agricultural land and to the west is a caravan park. It is experienced as part of the infrastructure associated with the Manchester Ship Canal, and there is a visual resonance between the canal and structure. It is therefore best experienced at close range in conjunction with the canal, where its architectural detail can be experienced. It is also experienced with an industrial backdrop to the east, which contributes to an appreciation of its former industrial function.

17. The significance of the bridge lies primarily in its age and engineering interest. The visual, functional and associative relationship with the Manchester Ship Canal contributes to that significance whereas other aspects of setting are incidental to the asset's special interest.

### **Penketh Hall (grade II listed) and Penketh Barn (grade II listed)**

18. Penketh Hall is a house dating to c1757. It is in two storeys, constructed of brick with a gabled slate roof. The principal elevation faces north towards Penketh Barn and is enclosed by a garden. The principal elevation is symmetrical, in five bays with a central semi-circular headed doorway. Internally a dog leg stair and ovolo moulded oak beams are retained. Penketh Barn is an L-shaped barn dating to c.1820. It is constructed of brown brick with a gabled slate roof, with boarded double doors in three large openings, with diamond shaped vents. The interior retains fishbone king post trusses with unsawn oak purlins. These assets are of special interest due to their age and vernacular architecture.

#### **Contribution made by Setting to Significance**

19. Penketh Hall and Barn are enclosed to the west by tree planting. To the east is a late 20<sup>th</sup> century housing development. To the south and west is open land. The land to the north, south and west contributes to its significance as the relationship with the barn to the north indicates its former functional connection and to the south and west the connection to the wider agricultural landscape. The land to the east does not contribute to its significance as this has been developed with modern housing. Due to the intervening topography, railway and River Mersey the Appraisal Site is relatively distant and experienced as part of the broader surroundings of the Hall and Barn.

### **Baronet Farmhouse, with Attached Farm Buildings and Cobbled Yard (grade II listed)**

#### **Summary of Architectural and Historic Interest**

20. Baronet Farmhouse, with Attached Farm Buildings and Cobbled Yard is of significance as a late 19<sup>th</sup> century barn and earlier house. The farmhouse is constructed from handmade brick with a gabled slate roof, with a symmetrical frontage and central doorway with fanlight above. The outbuildings are arranged around a U-shaped courtyard with a cobbled yard, and retain a series of original openings including oeil de boeuf windows regularly spaced across the north west elevation. The roofs are gabled and covered with slate. The group are of special interest in representing an example of planned farmstead development in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and for retention of traditional farmstead features.

#### **Contribution made by Setting to Significance**

21. Baronet Farmhouse and associated farm buildings are set around a cobbled yard. This immediate courtyard setting provides an understanding of the relationship and former function of the buildings. To the south and east is modern residential development. To the west is an open field, hedgerows and trees which give a sense of the former rural character of the farmstead's setting; albeit with glimpses of large scale industrial development and infrastructure beyond.
22. The Appraisal Site is situated to the west of the farmstead beyond the railway. Intervisibility between the site and the asset is limited due to the intervening trees/vegetation and it is concluded that the Site does not contribute to the significance of the asset.

### **Aqueduct carrying the Bridgewater Canal over Chester Road (old line), Thomasons Bridge over Bridgewater Canal, Acton Grange Bridge (Over Bridgewater Canal) (grade II listed)**

23. These assets form a group of three listed bridges on the Bridgewater canal between the A56 and Holly Hedge Lane on the southern boundary of the Appraisal Site. All three bridges were built c1770 and were designed by James Brindley, the engineer of the Bridgewater Canal, for the Duke of Bridgewater. The two road bridges are very similar in appearance; both are constructed of brown brick with sandstone dressings and retaining walls. The aqueduct has stone dressed brickwork and a 20<sup>th</sup> century parapet to the towpath on the north bank of the canal.
24. The three bridges are principally listed due to their late 18<sup>th</sup> century date, high degree of intactness and their functional association with the Bridgewater Canal; often referred to as the first truly man-made canal.
25. The significance of the bridges lies primarily in their age, former function, group value and association with the Bridgewater Canal. Whilst the immediate setting is picturesque, it is not essential to their special interest.

### **Conservation Areas**

#### **Walton Village Conservation Area**

##### **Summary of Significance**

26. Walton Village conservation area is focused on the village of Walton, historically known as Walton Superior or Higher Walton. It is bounded by the A56 in the west and the Bridgewater Canal in the south. The conservation area extends to include the Church of St John the Evangelist in the north east and Walton Bridge on the Bridgewater Canal to the south west. It is comprised of a small number of residential properties with a church and public house. The village is described in Pevsner as *“The most accomplished estate village was built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by a family of successful brewers, Greenhalls, at Walton (Warrington)”*.
27. Until the 1960s, the village was small and consisted solely of Victorian and Edwardian buildings. These buildings are unified in their Jacobethan architectural style and common palette of materials comprising brown brick, half timbering, red Runcorn sandstone, white painted render, red brick and stone dressings. The historic buildings are freely arranged and set back from the Old Chester Road, which runs through and is the primary street in the conservation area, with small gardens to the front enclosed by railings. There are a high number of mature trees within the conservation area and, together with the aforementioned gardens and trees belts along the boundaries of the conservation at the A56 and Bridgewater Canal, they provide a green and attractive character. Post 1960, a cul-de-sac development of c13 dwellings was added at the north end of the village opposite the Church (Lychgate).

##### **Contribution made by Setting to Significance**

28. Walton Village is located to the immediate east of the A56 dual carriageway which visually and physically divides the conservation area from its wider setting in the north and west. To the east it is enclosed by thick tree belt planting. Buildings generally front into Old Chester Road and are framed by a backdrop of trees. As such the village of Walton has an enclosed character. The setting of the conservation area contributes to an understanding of its historic context and development, but due to the conservation area’s enclosure there is a limited visual relationship between the asset and its wider setting.

29. The Appraisal Site is situated to the west of the conservation area beyond the Manchester Ship Canal. Given the enclosure of the conservation area and distance, any visibility of the Appraisal Site from the conservation area is likely to be limited to the broader or more distant surroundings in views from upper floors of (principally modern) buildings along the western edge of the conservation area. As such, it is not considered that the appraisal site contributes to the experience or appreciation of the conserve area.

## **Moore Conservation Area**

### **Summary of Significance**

30. Moore Conservation Area was designated on 26 April 1976. Moore is a linear village with development arranged parallel with the roads, but set back within generous plots on the outskirts of the village and closer to the roadside along Runcorn Road with small front gardens. Building materials are typically brick with slate roofs and painted stone. The plots tend to be linear and stretch back with outbuildings in the grounds, possibly established as burgage plots in the medieval era.
31. The village has been divided north east to south west by the Bridgewater Canal. Listed buildings to the west of the village include the grade II 17th century Manor Farmhouse, the late 17th century Village Farmhouse. Other listed buildings include mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Classically inspired The Pebbles, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Red Lion Public House and 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century farmhouses and cottages. Moore Bridge (grade II) is located over the Bridgewater Canal providing access between the east and west of the village, and to the south of this is the grade II\* Moore Hall, an early 18th century Mansion with elaborate internal and external decoration.

### **Contribution made by Setting to significance**

32. The village core has a verdant quality formed by the collection of mature native trees lining the canal, within plots and at boundary hedges. Boundaries are typically hedges and brick walls, adding to the sense of enclosure created by the trees. The conservation area setting is agricultural, which contributes to its rural village feel. Views towards the Appraisal Site are restricted by tree planting along the boundary of the canal from the east.

### **Locally Listed Buildings (Non-Designated Heritage Assets) - Various**

33. As set out above, there are a number of locally listed buildings within the Appraisal Site. These are set out within Appendix 4 of the Warrington Borough Council Core Strategy which was adopted in 2014.
34. A broad overview of their significance and setting is provided below, culminating in an assessment of the contribution made by the site to their significance. For clarity, there is no clear guidance or existing assessment by Warrington Borough Council as to why these buildings or structures are formally locally listed.
35. **Upper and Lower Moss Side Farmhouses (no.2 locally listed buildings)** are of interest as a 19<sup>th</sup> century farmhouses. Both are constructed in brown brick, in two storeys. Upper Moss Side Farm has two gabled wings to the south and to the north an L-shaped range of outbuildings constructed in red brick with slate roofs and a larger block forming an enclosed courtyard with the farmhouse. Lower Moss Side Farmhouse has slate gabled roofs, with two gables to the south. To the north is a range of outbuildings enclosing the farm in a four sided courtyard.

36. The area around the farmhouses was not accessed. However it is assumed they are of significance as 19<sup>th</sup> century agricultural buildings. They are set back from the road and appear to occupy private plots.
37. **The Ferry Inn Public House** is of interest as a substantial tavern dating to the c.18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century. It is rectilinear on plan with a slate gabled roof and possesses a modest, functional appearance. The Ferry Inn is located on the north of Station Road, to the immediate north of the River Mersey. Its location and name suggests a functional association with the river to the south. The map of 1849 shows a ferry known as Fiddlers Ferry operated to the immediate south of the building.

## **Overview of Legislation and Key National Planning Policy Considerations**

### **Statutory Duty (1990 Act)**

38. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

*“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State 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.”*

39. The concept of ‘preserve’ has been interpreted through case law to mean ‘to cause no harm’.

### **The National Planning Policy Framework, revised 2018**

40. Conservation areas are 'designated heritage assets' within the meaning of the NPPF. Paragraph 185 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

41. Paragraph 190 sets out the principles guiding the determination of applications affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets, and states that:

*'Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal . . . They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.'*



42. Paragraph 192 elaborates that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation, as well as the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
43. Paragraph 193 requires when considering the impact of a Proposed Development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be. Paragraph 194 confirms that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting and any harm or loss requires clear and convincing justification.
44. Paragraph 197 requires that 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 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.
45. In the event that harm is perceived to arise from proposals, the NPPF provides a policy framework at paragraphs 195 and 196 within which such harm can then be weighed against public benefits (196) or substantial public benefits (195) bearing in mind the considerable importance and weight that should be attached to the statutory duty of the Act.
46. Paragraph 200 requires local planning authorities look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to better reveal their significance. With respect to setting, the policy notes that proposals that preserve those elements of setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.
47. The setting of a conservation area is not enshrined in legislation and does not attract the weight of statutory protection.<sup>3</sup> It is however a consideration as set out in the NPPF and has therefore been addressed in this report.

### **Key Heritage Considerations**

48. Having considered the significance of proximate designated and non-designated heritage assets, including the contribution made by setting and the Appraisal Site, it is concluded that there are no significant heritage constraints to the development of the Appraisal Site. It is likely that the greatest change in setting will arise in relation to the Moore Bridge (grade II listed). However this is a functional structure and the key contributing aspect to setting is its relationship with the canal. Even though development is proposed close to the asset, its significance is unlikely to be diminished as a result.
49. Development within the south of the Appraisal Site is likely to be visible within the immediate setting of the three identified grade II listed buildings along the Bridgewater Canal (Aqueduct carrying the Bridgewater Canal over Chester Road (old line), Thomasons Bridge over Bridgewater Canal, Acton Grange Bridge (Over Bridgewater Canal)). However, this would be distanced from the assets and unlikely to affect their significance. In any event, industrial development within the Site is already visible proximate to the assets.

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<sup>3</sup> APP/H1705/A/14/2219070 & APP/U3935/V/14/2216792



