

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE  
BOROUGH COUNCIL  
RECEIVED  
16-Mar-15  
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT  
DIVISION

# Brittannia Works, Coleshill Road, Atherstone, Warwickshire

Consultation Response for Planning Application



*understanding heritage matters*

## Pre-application Advice

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1495  
NOVEMBER 2014



*Working for  
Warwickshire*

**Project:** Pre-application advice  
**Address** Coleshill Road, Atherstone  
**Commissioned by:** North Warwickshire Borough Council  
**Project Report No.** 1495  
**Site Code:** AB14  
**Planning Reference:** NA  
**Author:** Julian C Bagg BSc (Hons), IHBC  
Castle House Heritage Consulting  
**Report checked by:** Stuart C Palmer  
**Date:** November 10th 2014

Archaeology Warwickshire  
UNIT 9  
Montague Road  
Warwick  
CV34 5LW

01926 412278

[fieldarchaeology@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:fieldarchaeology@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/archaeology](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/archaeology)



## DISCUSSION

Britannia Works is a complex of Grade II Listed buildings. As such the Local Planning Authority is statutorily required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses. The site also lies close to the boundary of the Atherstone Conservation Area. As such the Local Planning Authority is statutorily obliged to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the locality.

The complex consists of an eclectic mix of C19th and C20th industrial buildings which have evolved on the site to serve the hatting industry within Atherstone. The site was the factory of Wilson and Stafford hat manufacturers. It grew on the site from the C19th consuming the adjacent Richmond Mill and finally closed in 1999. Since then it has remained redundant and unoccupied. It is considered that the earliest surviving buildings on the site are those forming the entrances off Coleshill Road and that the latest building was the large canalside mill constructed in 1930s. The whole complex is covered by the Grade II Listing.

Following my last consultation response regarding this site the developers have submitted further plans of amended proposals. These proposals consist of a sketch layout and a canalside elevation.

It would appear that the amount of demolition of the listed buildings has increased and now includes the two narrow workshop ranges referred to as R1 and R2 in the original appraisal by Acanthus Clews (Figure 1). These buildings were originally over three floors running back parallel off the entrance block (previously referred to as R but shown on the latest proposal as building G). The northern range (R2) has been heavily altered over the years, being reduced to two storeys and latterly being subject to fire damage.

It is understandable that the developer would prefer to remove buildings R1 & R2 to make way for a more standard form of accommodation rather than factor in restoration and conversion the existing structures into their scheme. However these buildings form part of the earlier evolution of the complex and are distinctive in their form which reflects their former use as craft workshops. These buildings make a significant contribution to the character of the historic complex and are integral to the evolution of the hatting works.

I consider that the removal of these buildings would be harmful to the significance of this complex of listed buildings and that without robust and overwhelming justification the local authority should refuse permission for demolition of buildings R1 and R2.

It is also noted that the building referred to as building 'N' the canteen range in the original appraisal by Acanthus Clews is also shown as having been removed on the amended proposal (Figure 1). The building is thought to be contemporary with buildings R1 and R2 and originated as a canal warehouse. It is understood that the roof and other elements of the original building have been lost or reconfigured, nevertheless the details of the canal side elevation remain legible. It would therefore be harmful to the significance of the complex if this element of the building were demolished. Such a proposal would also impact negatively upon the character and appearance of the canal side elevation of the listed complex.

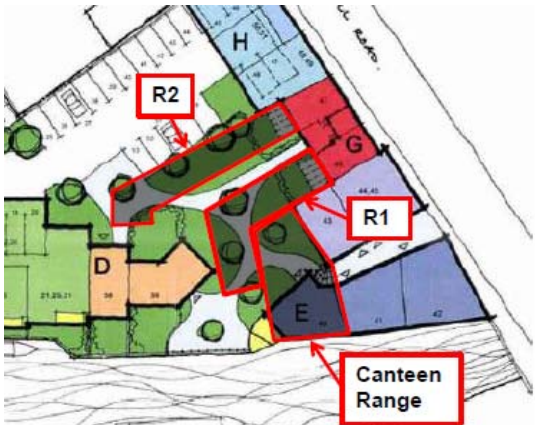


Figure 1 Historically significant elements of the complex proposed for demolition

I consider that the local authority's advice on this site to date has been consistent and reasonable in the consideration of buildings within the site which are of less significance and for which some degree of adaptation or demolition may be acceptable. No doubt any planning application being brought forward including such a proposal would also be assessed by English Heritage as a statutory consultee as required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended, DETR Circular 01/2001 and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010.

I am also concerned about the height of the proposed apartment block in the south east corner of the site. It is difficult to assess from the elevation drawing alone however the proposed building would stand taller than the adjacent retained listed building. The existing buildings on the site, especially the 1930s factory block, are tall and generally out of character with the surrounding urban grain. Clearly this is an exception within this largely

residential area. However the construction of an additional building on site which is not subservient to the existing listed factory or its replacement would be out of context within this locality. The acceptability of the proposed height of this new apartment block would require careful consideration within this location.

### Summary

Demolition of buildings R1 and R2 and the canteen range are not likely to be acceptable. However, justification may be possible for a degree of remodelling and adaptation of less significant elements of these buildings provided the overall integrity and historic character of the listed complex. Furthermore the height of the proposed apartment block in the south east corner of the site is potentially problematic in this location due to an overbearing impact on the setting of the listed complex.