

Woods Mill Area, Glossop

Heritage Impact Statement on behalf of Glossop Land Limited

December 2014



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| Contents | Page |
|---|------|
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 2. The Heritage Asset | 2 |
| 3. Public Benefits Outweigh Harm | 5 |
| 4. Nature of the Asset Prevents Reasonable Use | 11 |
| 5. No Viable Medium Term Use | 13 |
| 6. Grant Funding | 16 |
| 7. Harm Outweighed by Benefits of Redevelopment | 17 |
| 8. Assessment of the Proposed Development | 19 |
| 9. Conclusion | 24 |

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Marketing Agent Letter

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared in support a planning application by Glossop Land Limited that proposes to regenerate the Woods Mill area to the east of Glossop Town Centre. The proposed development generally comprises the erection of 49 dwellings together with a foodstore, two further retail units and the refurbishment of an existing retail building on the Woods Mill site.
 - 1.2. The application site is located within the Howard Town Conservation Area and it is proposed to demolish a number of unlisted buildings and structures within the Conservation Area in order to accommodate the development proposals.
 - 1.3. The planning application (ref: HPK/2014/0408) was submitted to High Peak Borough Council in August 2014 and was subsequently subject to a consultation exercise. In response, the Council's Conservation Officer, Derbyshire County Council and English Heritage have issued consultation responses raising objection to the demolition of the existing buildings and structures and to the acceptability of the proposed development in heritage terms.
 - 1.4. In response to the issues raised, and following a meeting with planning officers, the Applicant has been asked to justify the proposal in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 133 of the NPPF. This Statement has been prepared by the development team, including Kathryn Sather & Associates, in response to that request. Accordingly, the following chapters of the statement seeks to address the following matters:
 - Define what the heritage asset is;
 - Assess whether the substantial harm to the heritage asset is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm;
 - Consider whether the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;
 - Determine whether there is any viable use of the heritage asset that will enable its conservation;
 - Confirm whether funding is available to enable conservation of the heritage asset; and
 - Determine whether the harm to the heritage asset is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
 - 1.5. These matters are considered in turn in the following sections.
 - 1.6. The Applicant has subsequently received written comments on heritage matters from the Local Planning Authority in the context of the proposed development. A response is provided to these comments, and those made by English Heritage, at Section 8.
 - 1.7. As a result of changes to the proposal to address comments made, the residential element of the proposed development now comprises 53 houses and one apartment.
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2. The Heritage Asset

- 2.1. Prior to the consideration of the impact of the proposed development, it is important to understand what the heritage asset is that may be impacted upon.

The Heritage Asset

- 2.2. In this regard, none of the buildings within the application site are listed or of a listable quality. Accordingly, none of the existing buildings are themselves heritage assets. However, all of the buildings and structures are located within a Conservation Area.
- 2.3. The Conservation Area is the heritage asset, not Woods Mill or any other building or structure within the application site. Accordingly, Woods Mill is an undesignated structure located within a designated heritage asset and this must form the basis of assessment.
- 2.4. Whilst the proposed development seeks consent for the demolition of all existing buildings and structures within the application site, the English Heritage consultation response advises that *'the demolition of 20th century structures gives us no cause for concern'*. However, English Heritage contends that *'the loss of Woods Mill and its ancillary structures adjacent to Glossop Brook will cause substantial harm to the significance of Howard's Town'*.
- 2.5. It is, therefore, clear that the proposed demolition of the 5-storey Woods Mill buildings, attached engine house and the terrace of single storey workshops running between Woods Mill and Glossop Brook (Structures One and Two detailed in the submitted Heritage Appraisal) is of greatest concern to English Heritage. No concern is expressed with regard to the loss of the single storey weaving shed and other structures forming Structure 4 of the 20th century additions.
- 2.6. Accordingly, it is the impact on the Conservation Area as a result of the proposed demolition of Woods Mill and its attached structures that is the matter for assessment.

Significance of Woods Mill to the Conservation Area

- 2.7. The Glossop Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2006) provides a historical record of the evolution of Glossop together with a description of the character of the Conservation Area and seeks to identify key features. At section 3.0, the Appraisal identifies the key architectural qualities of the Conservation Area as:
- 'The key characteristic of Glossop as mill town is a network of densely developed streets with terraces of workers housing sitting alongside large industrial complexes with a thriving retail centre at its core. The majority of residential buildings are of a vernacular style; their contribution to the character of the area is subtle in that it is found in the repetition of simple details or in the decorative embellishments on a small number of key buildings. In what remains of the mill complexes their contribution is in the sheer scale of the architectural statement. The polite design of key 19th and early 20th century commercial and civic buildings at its core contributes significantly to the character of the town'.*
- 2.8. The Appraisal identifies Howard Town Mill, outside the application site, as the most important industrial heritage asset and Glossop Brook as a key space within the Conservation Area.
- 2.9. Woods Mill and the attached structures are not identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as being *'key buildings'*. Indeed, remarks in the Appraisal place emphasis on the loss the site has suffered, such as the fact that only half of Woods Mill remains, rather than
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the significance of the building. The Appraisal states:

‘Woods Mill is located at the far eastern end of the complex, farthest away from Glossop’s town centre. The site forms approximately 5 acres and consists of just three of the surviving mill components; the surviving half of a mid 19th century double mill 21 bays in length of 5 storey; the engine house with single storey buildings on the south side of courtyard and a multi storey and single storey bleaching and dyeing buildings. Only a small part of the complex has recently been used and as a result the condition of the buildings has deteriorated. Only one of the two mill ponds survives.’

Assessment of Harm

- 2.10. With regard to Conservation Areas, the English Heritage commentary of the NPPF (27 March 2012) states:

*‘Loss of a building or other element that makes a positive contribution (such as a designed square) requires clear and convincing justification and may amount to substantial **or less than substantial harm**, depending upon the degree of contribution to the significance of the conservation area overall’ [our emphasis].*

- 2.11. Structures One and Two were identified in the submitted Heritage Statement as making a Low Positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, with the extension to Structure One identified as a Negative feature. This is due to the substantial loss of historic fabric and the current state of decay.
- 2.12. When assessing the special interest of a Conservation Area (its overall significance), there are several elements that need to be taken into account, including an assessment of the condition of the area. English Heritage guidance titled *Understanding Place Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* states that the loss of traditional architectural features and fenestration erodes special character.
- 2.13. Also, when identifying structures that make a positive contribution to a Conservation Area, English Heritage provide a list of criteria that only stands if the historic form of the structure has not been eroded. The historic form and architectural features of Structure One and Two have been severely eroded, with half of Structure One having been demolished, both structures having areas of collapse, the loss of original features including fenestration and doors. These losses significantly erode the degree of contribution the structures make to the significance of the Conservation Area overall.
- 2.14. Therefore, evidence from both the Conservation Area Appraisal and English Heritage guidance confirm that Woods Mill makes a low degree of contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area overall. The Applicant, therefore, maintains that its loss amounts to less than substantial harm.
- 2.15. Whilst English Heritage advises that their identification of ‘*substantial harm*’ results from ‘*the loss of the Mill building, the historic focus to the area*’, the Applicant is unable to agree with the reasoning behind this conclusion.
- 2.16. Similarly, the Applicant is unable to agree with the High Peak Conservation Officers concluding comments dated 05 November 2014, which state:
- ‘The industrial character of Milltown – probably the part of the Conservation Area which still best encapsulates the character of Glossop’s industrial past will be lost – primarily due to the loss of the multi-storey mill itself.’*
- 2.17. The loss of Woods Mill will not remove the industrial character of the Conservation Area.
- 2.18. Furthermore, whilst the emerging Local Plan suggests that Eastern Mill (VC Works) to the east of Milltown should be converted to residential uses, no such commitment is offered to
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the retention/conversion of Woods Mill to the west of Milltown. This omission is significant.

- 2.19. There is no evidence that indicates that Woods Mill is the focus of the Conservation Area. Indeed, the Conservation Area currently accommodates three mill buildings (VC Works, Woods Mill and Howard Town Mill). The loss of Woods Mill will not, therefore remove the historic focus of the Conservation Area as English Heritage suggests.
- 2.20. All three existing mill buildings display the relationship between the mill and its power source (Glossop Brook), to which English Heritage attaches weight. This relationship will remain evident in the immediate locality and will not be lost following the proposed demolition of Woods Mill. Indeed, the relationship will be reinforced in the context of VC Works and Glossop Brook following the proposed reintroduction of the mill pond.
- 2.21. English Heritage identifies the '*industrial 'canyon' created by the two parts of Woods Mill over Milltown as a notable feature*'. In this regard, the Applicant has sought to retain the '*canyon*' effect by retaining the existing stone wall along the western edge of Milltown, with the VC Works building opposite being retained on the eastern edge. This key feature will not, therefore, be lost.

Conclusion

- 2.22. Woods Mill is not a unique feature within the Conservation Area and its contribution to the Conservation Area cannot be considered to be '*essential*' to its significance. Should Woods Mill be demolished, the remaining two mills, both of which have a long term future and are not buildings at risk, will continue to provide the focus and will continue to preserve the historic character and setting of the Conservation Area.
 - 2.23. Notwithstanding this, the structural survey relating to the terrace of single storey workshops running between the 5-storey structure and Glossop Brook concludes that the '*ancillary buildings*' are in a partial state of collapse and should be demolished. The condemnation of this structure is not acknowledged by English Heritage.
 - 2.24. Due to the low degree of contribution the structures make to the character of the Conservation Area, the significance of the Conservation Area overall and their relationship to other mill structures in the immediate vicinity, the Applicant contends that the loss of the 5-storey former mill building will not result in the '*substantial harm*' that English Heritage foresees.
 - 2.25. Nevertheless, having identified the 5-storey Woods Mill building as the non-designated heritage asset referred to by English Heritage, the following sections of this Statement demonstrate that the loss of this structure is justified in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 133 of the NPPF.
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3. Public Benefits Outweigh Harm

- 3.1. Paragraph 133 of the NPPF states that the substantial harm of a designated heritage should be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm. Accordingly, the public benefits derived from the proposed development are set out below.

Development Plan

- 3.2. The fundamental objective of planning policy is to encourage the delivery of appropriate development in a sustainable manner in order to meet the needs of the local area.
- 3.3. The adopted and emerging Development Plan, together with other supplementary documents, recognise the application site as a strategic redevelopment opportunity. Indeed, the Local Authority has specifically promoted the regeneration of the application site for a period in excess of 10 years, with the delivery of town centre uses identified as being key to maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of Glossop Town Centre, with opportunities for residential development contributing towards meeting housing needs.
- 3.4. The maintenance and enhancement of the vitality and viability of Glossop Town Centre is clearly in the public interest and, therefore, the significant positive contribution the proposed retail and residential development will make towards sustaining the health of the town centre is a considerable public benefit. The neighbouring Howard Town Retail Park provides a direct example of how the delivery of modern retail accommodation can attract key anchor retailers and other shops and services to Glossop and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre. The proposed development will make a similar positive contribution, attracting a Top 10 global food retailer to Glossop and delivering high quality, modern accommodation that will appeal to a range of other operators.

- 3.5. The residential development proposals also fully accord with the Development Plan strategy. Indeed, paragraph 6.11 of the Submission Draft Local Plan states:

‘The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment indicated that the [Woods Mill] site could accommodate 104 dwellings. These dwellings are likely to be located on land to the east of the site, and as a result of conversion of existing buildings, such as Eastern Mill, to the east of Milltown.’

- 3.6. It is noted that no reference is made to the potential conversion of Woods Mill to an alternative use in the Development Plan.
- 3.7. The allocation of the site as a strategic regeneration opportunity demonstrates that the Council considers there to be a significant public benefit derived from the delivery of new retail and residential uses on the application site. The Development Plan does not explicitly encourage the conservation of the mill building in order to achieve these objectives.

Economic Benefits

- 3.8. Both the retail and residential elements of the proposed development will deliver a range of economic public benefits, as set out below.
- 3.9. The Development Plan encourages development that will sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of Glossop Town Centre, which is a key strategic objective of both the adopted and emerging Local Plan. It has been demonstrated in the submitted Planning and Retail Statement that part of the proposed retail development will be located within Glossop
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Town Centre, with the proposed Lidl foodstore occupying the sequentially preferable site that immediately adjoins the town centre. The retail development proposals will form an integral part of the town centre and will directly and indirectly contribute towards its vitality and viability.

- 3.10. The retail proposals will deliver a range of economic benefits for existing businesses in Glossop Town Centre and the wider area. These benefits will be derived from the increase in the diversity of uses and the extension of the range and choice of goods and services available in the town centre, which will become a more attractive shopping destination.
 - 3.11. Accordingly, the proposals will generate increased footfall in the town centre, providing existing businesses with the opportunity to attract more customers and enhance their economic viability. This increased viability of the town centre will encourage existing businesses to invest, whilst also attracting other shops and services to Glossop, which will, in turn, further enhance footfall and viability. In short, Glossop will be better able to attract and sustain business growth and economic activity.
 - 3.12. The proposed development will deliver a substantial investment in a strategic location in Glossop.
 - 3.13. The proposed Lidl foodstore will deliver direct economic benefits. Consumers will benefit from increased choice and competition, which the NPPF encourages local authorities to promote. Furthermore, the deep discount format has been recognised as bringing wide range of benefits to local communities. Indeed, Lidl appeal cases offer significant support to the benefits that a Lidl store can bring to deprived areas through increased choice, high quality offer and discounted prices. The benefits are not limited to deprived areas, however, with Lidl stores throughout the Country experiencing increased custom as a result of the rising cost of food.
 - 3.14. In reflection of the popularity of discount foodstores, it is widely acknowledged that the existing Aldi store on the western fringe of Glossop Town Centre over-trades. The proposed development will help to address this existing imbalance and addressing the quantitative and qualitative need for additional discount food provision in Glossop.
 - 3.15. Furthermore, the proposed foodstore will not represent a '*one-stop*' shopping destination, with the store offering a more restricted range and choice of goods than other supermarkets. Accordingly, shoppers at the proposal are likely to also visit other shops and services to meet their daily or weekly shopping needs. It can be expected, therefore, that shoppers will park at the proposal and visit other shops and services in the town centre on foot in combination with their shopping trip to Lidl.
 - 3.16. The proposed development will support the existing local businesses that currently occupy parts of the application site. The existing single manufacturing use will be relocated to higher quality accommodation adjacent to the application site on Mill Street, whilst the existing retail occupiers will be offered first opportunity to occupy the replacement retail floorspace in the proposed extension to Unit A. The existing jobs supported on the site will, therefore, be preserved.
 - 3.17. In accordance with English Partnership employment density estimates, the extension to Unit A and Unit B have the potential to create at least 20 FTE jobs, with the Lidl store likely to create a further 25-30 job opportunities. The majority, if not all, of these jobs will be available to local people. Further jobs will be created by the retail and residential elements of the proposal through the construction phase.
 - 3.18. The residential element of the proposals will also deliver economic benefits. The new residents will bring increased local expenditure that will be available to spend in local shops, with the Peak Sub-Regional Retail Study indicating that each new resident will generate approximately £5,865 of spending power per annum that will be available to local shops and services. As a guideline, this could equate to an additional £0.7m of available
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expenditure, which is would be reasonable to assume would be available to local shops and services.

- 3.19. Both the residential and retail elements of the proposal will also provide Council Tax and business rates income for the Local Authority.

Physical Benefits

- 3.20. The application site is currently derelict in the main, with the public opinion expressed at a consultation event run by the Applicant being that the Woods Mill building is an ‘eyesore’ and a safety hazard due to the deteriorating condition of the building. The former Mill has also been subject to acts of vandalism, theft, fly tipping and anti-social behaviour. Other retail and manufacturing accommodation on the site is poor quality, with the buildings not meeting the needs of modern businesses.
- 3.21. The impermeability of the site also physically presents a barrier to Glossop Brook and impedes movement between the town centre and surrounding residential areas. The existing physical condition of the site provides very limited benefits to the public other than its contribution towards the character of the Conservation Area, which is derived from the scale and mass of the building and the use of local materials.
- 3.22. The comprehensive redevelopment of the site, to include the demolition of all existing buildings, received overwhelming public support from local residents that attended the Applicant’s consultation event. The attendees considered that the mill building was in a very poor physical condition and perceived to be on the verge of collapse and, therefore, a threatening structure.
- 3.23. In addition to delivering comprehensive redevelopment, the proposals will deliver a number of further clearly defined public benefits.
- 3.24. The high standard of retail accommodation provided will meet the requirements of retail operators, providing modern, unconstrained stores with larger sales floor plates than are available in the traditional town centre accommodation. This is a critical advantage of the proposal, as delivering accommodation that meets operator needs will significantly enhance the ability of the proposal to attract retail investment. The proposed retail units will extend and diversify the range of premises available in Glossop, thereby widening the town’s appeal to occupiers and making a direct positive contribution towards the viability of Glossop Town Centre.
- 3.25. The redevelopment of the application site also presents an opportunity to address existing issues relating to the site access to Howard Town Retail Park, which is a significant local issue. The proposals will allow customers at the Retail Park to enter/exit via Mill Street, thereby avoiding the contentious Victoria Street junction, which has been the subject of local complaint due to road safety concerns.
- 3.26. The provision of 142 off-street parking spaces will reduce on-street parking pressures on High Street East, having potential to ease congestion caused by on-street parking.
- 3.27. The proposals will deliver pedestrian and cycle links to and from the surrounding residential areas to the town centre. A key element of this will be a riverside walkway along Glossop Brook, which will run from Howard Town Mill to Manor Park, thereby significantly enhancing the accessibility of the town centre on foot.
- 3.28. Glossop Brook also forms a key feature of the Conservation Area. The proposals will deliver significant physical works to the Brook to remove vegetation, rebuild the culvert and create a significantly enhanced riverside environment. The proposals will preserve and enhance the character and setting of Glossop Brook, enabling it to function as a public resource, and will enhance the contribution it makes towards the character and setting of the Conservation Area.
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- 3.29. The proposed works to Glossop Brook will be complemented by proposals to reinstate the mill pond on the neighbouring VC Works site, which will further contribute to the physical character of the Conservation Area.
- 3.30. The existing '*canyon effect*' along Milltown, which has been identified as a key feature of the Conservation Area will be retained, with the existing high stone wall running along the western edge of Milltown retained *in situ*, despite this being in conflict with highway aspirations.
- 3.31. The proposed residential dwellings will diversify the local housing stock, providing house types that are generous in scale and served by off-street parking, garage space and garden areas. Accommodation of this type is in limited supply in Glossop, with the proposal extending the range, choice and quality of the housing supply.

Environmental Benefits

- 3.32. The planning application is accompanied by a range of professional reports that detail the existing environmental conditions on the site and how matters of concern will be addressed to the public's benefit.
 - 3.33. In terms of contamination, chrysotile and amosite asbestos was found to be present in the ground at shallow depths, which presents a significant threat to public health. It is proposed to remove the asbestos and dispose of it in a controlled manner by an approved contractor in accordance with the 2012 Control of Asbestos Regulations. The remediation strategy will be agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Other contaminants identified within the ground will be appropriately remediated and addressed by the proposed development.
 - 3.34. In terms of flood risk, parts of the application site are located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and, therefore, are at risk of flooding. It is proposed to mitigate this risk by raising the finished floor levels of the proposed dwellings above flood levels, thereby enabling residential development to be delivered in an accessible brownfield location, thereby achieving sustainability objectives.
 - 3.35. Furthermore, the submitted Planning Statement demonstrates that the delivery of new homes on a brownfield, urban site will assist the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate a 5-year supply of new homes and will reduce the pressure the Local Authority is under to permit the development of new homes on greenfield sites.
 - 3.36. Whilst the submitted Ecology Survey found that the application site is currently of low biodiversity value, the report suggests that the site provides opportunities to strengthen the ecological network in the area. The enhancement of the waterside environment along Glossop Brook is recommended together with the erection of appropriate nesting/roosting boxes.
 - 3.37. Japanese knotweed has been recorded on the site along Glossop Brook. The Applicant is legally responsible for the control of this invasive species, which will be eradicated as part of the proposed works to the development site.
 - 3.38. The Transport Assessment and Design and Access Statement both demonstrate that the proposed development will reduce the need to travel by car. The application site represents a highly accessible and sustainable location that is within easy walking distance of bus routes, the train station and a range of shops and services, places of work and community and social uses located within and on the edge of Glossop Town Centre. Furthermore, the proposal will encourage trips on foot and by bicycle, thereby making a valid contribution towards reducing vehicle emissions and providing a genuine choice of modes of travel.
 - 3.39. The application site provides a range of opportunities for planting and landscaping,
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especially along Glossop Brook, at the interface between the retail and residential proposals and within the residential area. A planting scheme is proposed to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority in due course, which could include appropriate plant species that support the local wildlife corridor along Glossop Brook and/or include species that are more able to reduce air pollution.

- 3.40. As detailed in the submitted Design and Access Statement, Lidl is firmly committed to delivering modern, energy efficient and operationally efficient building. Accordingly, the proposed store seeks to maximise opportunities to reduce energy consumption, use energy efficient materials and equipment and enhance operational efficiency in addition to qualitatively enhancing the shopping environment.
- 3.41. Measures include the use of highly energy efficient plant and equipment, water efficient fixtures and fittings, remotely operated internal and external lighting, modern materials and sustainable construction techniques. Overall, the store building is expected to achieve a Class A Energy Performance Certificate rating, with the proposals also achieving many BREEAM credits.

Social Benefits

- 3.42. The retail and residential development elements of the proposed development will each deliver clear and significant social benefits.
- 3.43. The proposed deep discount foodstore format has been recognised as bringing wide range of benefits to local communities. Indeed, Lidl appeal cases offer significant support to the benefits that a Lidl store can bring through increased choice, high quality offer and discounted prices.
- 3.44. As detailed above, the retail proposal has potential to create in excess of 55 employment opportunities, with additional job creation resulting from the construction phase. Furthermore, the Lidl foodstore will offer a variety of roles for local people, with each job providing training and development, a team culture, a competitive salary, loyalty and job security.
- 3.45. The delivery of 49 new homes providing 2 and 3-bedroom accommodation in detached and semi-detached house types will directly contribute towards addressing housing needs in Glossop, providing the type and size of home in a highly sustainable location.
- 3.46. In addition to directly addressing housing needs, the proposals will also provide a higher quality of accommodation that is more spacious and which benefits from off-street parking, private garages and private gardens within a high quality setting. The proposals will, therefore, enhance the quality of the local housing stock, providing aspirational yet affordable homes for local people.
- 3.47. The location of the new homes will encourage residents to make healthier travel choices, with a range of shops, services, places of work, community and social uses, for example, being located within easy walking and cycling distance from the site
- 3.48. Whilst the development will result in the loss of the existing buildings on the site, this will deliver a social benefit by removing a long-term vacant site that has been the subject of vandalism, theft and anti-social behaviour and which is perceived to be dangerous and on the verge of collapse.

Conclusion

- 3.49. It is demonstrated above that the proposed development will perform a strong economic, social and environmental role, these being the three dimensions of sustainable development. The NPPF offers a presumption in favour of sustainable development, encouraging local planning authorities to approve such proposals without delay where they
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accord with the development plan.

- 3.50. The Development Plan, of course, allocates the application site for redevelopment and seeks to promote the proposed land uses.
 - 3.51. Whilst the proposals will have an impact on a Conservation Area, this impact will be less than substantial. The clearly defined and wide ranging public benefits that will be derived from the proposed development are substantial and more than outweigh the harm to the Conservation Area resulting from the loss of Woods Mill.
 - 3.52. Furthermore, any harm to the Conservation Area will be compensated by the enhancement of other key elements that form part of the heritage asset, such as the Glossop Brook environment and the important '*canyon*' effect on Milltown.
 - 3.53. The delivery of these substantial public benefits on a Strategic Development Site in a sustainable location comprises a compelling case to address the requirements of NPPF paragraph 133. Accordingly, the NPPF directs the Local Planning Authority to attach greater weight to the public benefits derived from the proposed development and to accept the loss of Woods Mill. The Applicant strongly contends that the Authority should proceed on this basis.
 - 3.54. Whilst this should be an end to the matter, in order to comprehensively address the requirements of paragraph 133 of the NPPF, an assessment of the proposals against the other considerations has, nevertheless, been undertaken and is presented in the following sections of the Statement.
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4. Nature of the Asset Prevents Reasonable Use

- 4.1. It has been demonstrated at Section 2 of this Statement that the loss of the 5-storey Woods Mill building is of key concern and, in the opinion of English Heritage, will result in substantial harm to the Conservation Area. English Heritage has confirmed that the loss of the other structures on the application site is not of concern.
 - 4.2. Accordingly, consideration of whether the nature of the 5-storey Woods Mill building prevents reasonable use of the site is considered below.
 - 4.3. From the outset, it is clear that the Woods Mill building is not suitable for immediate occupation by any reasonable use as a result of the following factors:
 - The partial collapse of the roof;
 - The lack of sealed windows;
 - The presence of one flight of stairs;
 - The limited external access points to the building;
 - Extensive fire damage to the building fabric;
 - Extensive water damage to the building fabric;
 - The local collapse of floors/ceilings
 - The corrosion of steel retaining structures;
 - Failed timber supporting structures;
 - The lack of rainwater fittings;
 - The risk of flooding to the ground floor;
 - The instability of masonry;
 - The presence of asbestos;
 - The presence of other unstable buildings and structures; and
 - The need to secure the site as a whole to prevent further vandalism, theft and anti-social behaviour.
 - 4.4. It is, therefore, necessary for a range of works to be undertaken to the building to enable it to be used by any use.
 - 4.5. In terms of the scope of works, it would not be suitable to undertake remedial works to just part of the building following the sub-division of the structure either vertically or horizontally. This results from the inherent issues with the physical condition of the building as outlined above. Accordingly, at the very least, basic remediation works must be undertaken to the whole of the building to make it watertight, to remove the vegetation growing within the masonry and to consolidate the elevations to remove the potential for falling masonry.
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- 4.6. In addition, the physical condition of the attached single-storey workshops running along Glossop Brook presents a significant danger to any users of the site. This structure, together with the corrugated steel extension of the west elevation of the building, requires demolition before any part of Woods Mill could reasonably be re-used.
- 4.7. The Applicant has considered the cost of repairing the building to a useable condition as part of the Viability Appraisal. A cost of £1.86m has been identified as necessary to make Woods Mill watertight, safe and secure and useable.
- 4.8. On the assumption that funding could be secured to enable these basic works, further consideration has been afforded to uses that the building may reasonably be used for.
- 4.9. The potential for the mill to be put to employment use is significantly limited. The building has few external access points that could accommodate the loading and unloading of heavy good vehicles, with the main existing doorway being direct to Milltown, which is wholly unsuitable for use. The building is also set over 5 floors and there are no lifts to assist the movement of people or goods in between each floor. Each floor also has a limited ceiling height and accommodates a grid of supporting columns 2.8m apart and, therefore, is less suitable for storage and distribution uses and modern manufacturing uses. For example, it is unlikely to be suitable to accommodate the internal movement of goods by forklift truck. HGV access to the site is also constrained.
- 4.10. It is, therefore, the case that significant further investment would be required in order for the building to be capable of supporting an employment use and, even if that investment was delivered, the standard of accommodation would be compromised and would not meet modern requirements.
- 4.11. The Applicant has also considered the potential to convert the building to offices, residential and leisure uses in detail, as set out in the Viability Appraisal. In each instance, the works required in order to re-use of the building resulted in a net loss in excess of £1m on the required investment.
- 4.12. Whilst the conversion of Howard Town Mill and Wren Nest Mill demonstrate that the conversion of a former mill to residential and/or a hotel use may be possible, these conversions were undertaken at significant cost and at a time when market conditions were more favourable. It is noted that demand for residential apartment slowed significantly in 2008 at a time when the Howard Town Mill apartments were nearing completion. The £18m conversion of Howard Town Mill, therefore, delivered 42 of the approved 65 apartment units, which were sold on at significant discounts following the collapse in demand, with the entire property eventually being sold for just £1.4m to the current owners.
- 4.13. It is highly unlikely that favourable market conditions will return in the medium term to enable the necessary investment required to bring the building back into use.
- 4.14. Further details on the viability of the re-use of the mill building is provided in the following Section.

Conclusion

- 4.15. It can be concluded that the nature of the mill building, due to its scale, means of construction, multi-storey design and physical condition, prevent all reasonable use of the site without significant, unviable investment.
 - 4.16. Accordingly, as the English Heritage commentary of the NPPF advises, the harm to the Conservation Area that results from the proposed development can be justified because it is better to free-up the site to deliver a wide range of public benefits identified in the previous section than to keep the non-designated asset.
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5. No Viable Medium Term Use

Viability Appraisal

- 5.1. The planning application was accompanied by a Viability Appraisal, which has subsequently been the subject of independent scrutiny and review. The Appraisal considers the viability of the potential re-use of the Woods Mill building and the viability of the proposed development.
 - 5.2. In terms of the re-use of Woods Mill, the Applicant's Viability Appraisal considers the costs required to bring the building back into use for a mix of residential/retail/leisure/office uses. However, the appraisal concludes that whilst the conversion of the building would have a Gross Development Value (GDV) of just over £9.1m, the cost of delivering the development would be in excess of £10.5m. This equates to a net return of -15%, demonstrating that the conversion of the building is clearly unviable by a significant margin.
 - 5.3. This appraisal has been scrutinised by WYG and Keppie Massie on behalf of the Council, with their parallel viability appraisal concluding that the costs including land may be in the region of £10m. Whilst the Council's advisors are yet to confirm their estimate of the GDV, it is expected to also show a substantial loss or, at best, break even.
 - 5.4. With regard to the proposed development, the Applicant's Viability Appraisal indicates that the proposed development will have a Gross Development Value of £13.6m. However, the cost of delivering that development is forecast to be £13.2m, thereby yielding a net return of just 3%. Unfortunately the parallel assessment prepared by WYG for the Local Authority is not available at this time due to a calculation error on their spreadsheet.
 - 5.5. On the basis that a net return of between 15% and 20% is typically accepted as a reasonable benchmark for '*developer profit*', it is clear that the re-use of Woods Mill does not provide a return (i.e. it generates a loss) and that even the proposed development is of marginal viability with a net return well below benchmark expectations.
 - 5.6. It is noted that the viability of the site has also been assessed independently by the Local Planning Authority. In 2009, High Peak Borough Council adopted the Woods Mill Interim Planning Statement (IPS) to provide detailed design guidance on the comprehensive redevelopment of the Woods Mill site in response to development pressures. The IPS Preferred Option generally sought to deliver retail and commercial uses to the west of Mill Street and residential uses to the east of Mill Street (i.e. as proposed by the Applicant). The overriding objectives for the area included to deliver high quality business space in refurbished buildings and a range of residential uses to maximise the opportunity presented by the reuse of the period mill buildings.
 - 5.7. The Council subsequently prepared a viability appraisal of the development envisaged by the IPS. However, as stated at paragraph 6.10 of the emerging Local Plan (Submission):

*'The findings were that the development mix suggested in the IPS was **unlikely to be commercially viable**, and that for a scheme to be commercially viable, it must be retail-based. The study also concluded that there was a qualified case for new additional food floor-space, and that there were other possible options within a retail-based scheme which could achieve greater commercial viability, but these were still likely to be difficult to achieve largely because of the high cost of conversion of the former mill buildings for housing, employment and tourism uses, and the lack of market appetite for such uses'*[our emphasis].
 - 5.8. It is, therefore, the case that the Local Planning Authority's own viability appraisal
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concludes that the conversion of Woods Mill is not viable, even when allowing for a more extensive retail development than now proposed, and that there is no market interest to deliver such a development. Logic suggests that if the Council's scheme was not viable with a large foodstore, it would be much less viable with a smaller, discount foodstore instead. Furthermore, the physical condition of Woods Mill has deteriorated since the Council's viability appraisal was prepared and, therefore, costs should be expected to have increased.

- 5.9. It is, therefore, beyond doubt that the re-use of Woods Mill is not viable.

Marketing

- 5.10. In addition to viability, the prospects for the re-use of the site have been explored by the marketing of the site by commercial agents, as detailed below.
- 5.11. In 2007, the Applicant entered into a development agreement with Sainsbury's to deliver a new foodstore as part of a mixed-use scheme on the application site. However, this interest was withdrawn in 2012 following a decline in operator appetite to deliver large stores as a result of the 2009 economic downturn. Whilst Asda subsequently expressed interest, no commitment could be secured.
- 5.12. It is, therefore, the case that the application site was not openly marketed prior to Sainsbury's withdrawal in 2010 as the site had a confirmed operator until that time and was not, therefore, available.
- 5.13. The Applicant instructed Cushman & Wakefield to commence marketing of the site in 2010. As detailed in the letter by the marketing agent at **Appendix 1**, activities commenced with details of the property being considered by the various departments at Cushman & Wakefield, which comprise an extensive range of professionals with expertise in all aspects of the property sector, to include agents specialising in the retail, office, industrial and self-storage sectors. None of the agents were aware of any requirements for Glossop that had potential to be satisfied by Woods Mill.
- 5.14. Cushman & Wakefield then circulated the opportunity to a database of national contacts, which received a nil response.
- 5.15. An agency board was erected on the property, which remains in place today, in order to generate local interest. However, over a two-year period, only four valid local enquiries were received, all of which expressed an interest in using the external areas of the site, not in using the mill building itself.
- 5.16. The marketing agent confirms that, based on his extensive experience, the lack of market interest in the mill building was not unexpected.
- 5.17. Furthermore, given the very recent experience of redeveloping the neighbouring Howard Town Retail Park site, the Applicant was also fully aware of prevailing market conditions. This experience, together with the withdrawal by Sainsbury's and lack of commitment from Asda, indicated that more extensive marketing of the site was highly unlikely to yield any interest until economic conditions improved.
- 5.18. Whilst market conditions have since improved to a degree, few large foodstores are being proposed and delivered with the focus being on small to medium-sized foodstores, to include those operated by discount retailers. As a result of growth in this sector, Lidl has identified a requirement for a store in Glossop, with the application site being the only suitable and available opportunity to deliver a new store as close as possible to the town centre.
- 5.19. The application site represents a constrained opportunity for Lidl, however, as a result of the lack of commercial prominence from High Street East and the backland location.
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Accordingly, whilst a discount foodstore is proposed as the most viable option, this viability is not without limits. This element of the proposals could become unviable if onerous restrictions are imposed or commitments sought that will increase costs or reduce the market attraction or performance of the retail uses.

Conclusion

- 5.20. The marketing and viability evidence comprehensively demonstrate that there is no viable use of Woods Mill in the medium term. Furthermore, even following the demolition of the mill, it is also evident that the viability of an appropriate redevelopment scheme is also of limited viability. Accordingly, the case presented to address this requirement of NPPF paragraph 133 confirms that there is no use that will enable the conservation of the mill building in a viable manner.
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6. Grant Funding

- 6.1. The NPPF requires it to be demonstrated that the conservation of Woods Mill by grant funding or other charitable or public ownership is not possible, with the case to address this requirement presented below.

Sources of Grant Funding

- 6.2. The fact that the site is owned by a limited company and not a charitable organisation substantially decreases the funding opportunities from a variety of sources. However, even under charitable ownership, the site would still struggle to gain the level of funding required to undertake a renovation and re-use project of this scale.
- 6.3. Acquiring grant funding is a highly competitive process and Woods Mill is not of sufficient significance to be prioritised by grant-making bodies. For example, the structures are not listed and are not of listable quality, the archaeological remains of the wider area are not considered to be demonstrably equivalent to scheduled monuments and so the potential underground remains should not be treated as such.

Funding Criteria

- 6.4. The level of grant funding available for this site would not be sufficient to ensure the sites conservation and re-use. The site would not qualify for funding from either English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund. With regards to English Heritage funding the scheme does not meet their national priorities. These are:
- Significant elements of the historic environment at risk; and
 - Activities that strengthen the ability of the sector to reduce or avoid risk to the historic environment by understanding, managing and conserving.
- 6.5. The site is of some local significance, but is not considered to be nationally significant as the structures are not listed. This unlisted status would preclude funding from English Heritage as the criteria for the only applicable grant (Grants for Historic Buildings, Monuments and Designed Landscapes) are only awarded to Grade II* and Grade I listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments or registered parks and gardens.
- 6.6. With regards to Heritage Lottery Fund funding, the site as it stands, unlisted and owned by a limited company, would not meet the criteria of any potential grant categories.
- 6.7. Regardless of ownership issues, the unlisted Woods Mill is simply not of sufficient quality for any scheme to provide sufficient benefits to heritage interests to make a successful application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, particularly in a competitive grant environment.

Charitable or Public Ownership

- 6.8. As demonstrated by the viability appraisal, the transfer of the ownership of the application site to a charity or public body would require the Applicant to write-off several millions of pounds to gift the site to a third party. Furthermore, such charity or public body would require funding of approximately £1.8m in order to make the building watertight and usable in the most basic sense.

Conclusion

- 6.9. There is no prospect of grant funding enabling the conservation of the Woods Mill building.
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7. Harm Outweighed by Benefits of Redevelopment

- 7.1. The preceding sections of this Statement have demonstrated that the implied harm to the Conservation Area results from the proposed demolition of the Woods Mill building and ancillary structures. However, it has also been demonstrated that the Woods Mill building is not re-useable without significant investment, is unlikely to be re-used due to the nature and scale of the building and that all reasonable prospects for re-use are not viable.
 - 7.2. Furthermore, it has also been demonstrated that Woods Mill is not the key feature within the Conservation Area and is not a unique feature, with there being two other mill buildings in the area that are not at risk.
 - 7.3. It is also the case that the demolition of the building will enable a comprehensive approach to the redevelopment of the site to be pursued, which will include works to preserve and enhance key features within the Conservation Area, such as Glossop Brook and the 'canyon effect' along Milltown. The loss of one feature will, therefore, enable the character and setting of a more significant and unique heritage assets to be preserved and enhanced.
 - 7.4. This approach follows English Heritage advice in the document *English Heritage Commentary on the National Planning Policy Framework*, 27th March 2012, which states:

'Total loss of a designated heritage asset or substantial harm to it (physical harm or harm through development within its setting), can be justified either on the grounds that the harm is necessary to deliver public benefits that outweigh that harm, or because the asset is demonstrably non-viable and it is better to free-up the site than keep the asset. Less than substantial harm (again, physical harm or harm through development within the setting) should be weighed against public benefits.'
 - 7.5. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated at Section 2 that the loss of Woods Mill will have a less than substantial impact on the Conservation Area. Furthermore, at Section 3, it is demonstrated that the proposed development will deliver an extensive range of benefits to the public in physical, environmental, social and economic terms. It is concluded that the significant and wide ranging public benefits clearly outweigh the loss of Woods Mill. At Section 4, the conclusion is drawn that there is no viable re-use of the mill building that will enable its conservation, with policy, therefore, encouraging the site to be freed-up in order to deliver the substantial public benefits derived from the proposal.
 - 7.6. There is, therefore, a clear and compelling case that justifies the harm to the Conservation Area that may result from the demolition of Woods Mill.
 - 7.7. In addition to the substantial public benefits demonstrated at Section 3, which remain relevant to this separate assessment, further benefits derived from the proposed development are identified below.
 - 7.8. The Local Planning Authority has sought to promote the regeneration of the Woods Mill site for a period in excess of 10 years. During that time, the site has been subject to several draft redevelopment schemes, but these did not progress to the submission of a planning application. Indeed, this current planning application is the only comprehensive redevelopment scheme that has reached planning application stage over that extended period of time.
 - 7.9. The proposed development can be considered to represent the optimum viable use for the site. The nature of the land uses proposed fully accord with the adopted and emerging allocations for the site, with the detail of the proposals seeking to balance heritage impacts with viability and commercial reality, further details of which are set out in Section 8.
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Indeed, as the Council's own viability appraisal concluded and as stated in the emerging Local Plan, the Council's vision for the site is simply not deliverable because it is not viable and there is no market interest in the aspirational scheme. The Council, therefore, has to readjust its vision to take account of commercial reality.

- 7.10. This being said, it is the case that the optimum viable use is of limited viability, with the Applicant being prepared to accept a lower return in order to bring forward the redevelopment of the site after 10 years of trying to do so. In this context, the Applicant is the only party that has the ability to deliver the regeneration of this Strategic Development site, as the site does not provide sufficient returns for a third party developer unless the Applicant makes it available at a substantial loss.
- 7.11. Whilst the Council's aspirational redevelopment scheme cannot be delivered, the proposed development can and will. Lidl has been secured as the operator of the proposed foodstore, which is currently intended to commence trading in 2015. The sale of land to Lidl will enable the delivery of Unit B and the extension to Unit A. The Applicant will pursue the construction of the residential element independently, as this element does not represent a viable proposition to pass on to a volume house builder due to the enhanced material specification, detailed design features and abnormal costs. As the Applicant has to deliver the homes in order to generate a return, this element of the proposals will also be delivered.
- 7.12. The Applicant's ability to deliver the proposed development represents a significant benefit, especially as this will trigger the delivery of the extensive range of substantial public benefits set out at Section 3.
- 7.13. Furthermore, the Local Authority has entered into a partnership with the Applicant to deliver the regeneration of the application site. The Applicant is, therefore, inextricably linked to the redevelopment of the site and has been for over a decade. Accordingly, the Applicant is, therefore, best placed to deliver development of a Strategic Development Site in accordance with the Development Plan strategy.
- 7.14. The proposed development is a significant opportunity for the Local Planning Authority to achieve a longstanding aspiration for the Woods Mill site. Accordingly, whilst of marginal viability, the proposed development is deliverable and will achieve the intended objectives for this Strategic Development Site with the only cost being less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area resulting from the demolition of the undesignated Woods Mill.

Conclusion

- 7.15. It has been comprehensively demonstrated that the benefits of bringing the application site back into use, together with the wide ranging public benefits, considerably outweigh any harm to the Conservation Area caused by the demolition of Woods Mill.
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8. Assessment of the Proposed Development

- 8.1. English Heritage has provided comments on the proposed retail and residential development. These comments are considered below alongside the Conservation Officer's consultation response.
- 8.2. From the outset, the Applicant has strived to propose a scheme that is acceptable in heritage terms. However, the ability to respond to all of the design principles and heritage conservation objectives has been significantly constrained by viability. Quite simply, the proposed development represents the only viable solution to deliver the proposed land uses in a manner that is as respectful as possible to the heritage assets, as demonstrated below.

Proposed Residential Development

Materials

- 8.3. The Applicant acknowledges that the Conservation Area is characterised by local gritstone with either natural slate or Staffordshire blue clay tiles as building materials. The Conservation Officer advises that it is essential that these materials are used to construct the proposed homes, with English Heritage suggesting that the proposed demolition of Woods Mill would provide a substantial amount of re-useable building stone.
- 8.4. The Applicant has investigated the potential to re-use stone reclaimed from the demolition works. However, it is not the case that the existing stones can simply be re-used. The stones are over 300mm thick and would require re-milling in order to present a usable building product. Furthermore, the stone is porous and would also require chemical impregnation. The cost of the necessary works is significant and prohibitive to the re-use of this material when considering the marginal viability of the proposed development.
- 8.5. Notwithstanding this, the Viability Appraisal assumes the use of appropriate natural building products, as requested by the Conservation Officer. However, as highlighted at Section 5, the proposed development is not viable. Accordingly, should the Council insist that natural materials are used, costs will need to be saved elsewhere, otherwise the development will not proceed.
- 8.6. The Applicant has identified the most suitable and highest quality artificial product that is viable. The submitted materials study provides examples of buildings utilising similar coloured/finished materials. The proposed riven finished roof tile and pitched face reconstituted stone will not be incongruous with the Conservation Area and are considered to represent the most suitable and affordable options.

House types

- 8.7. Both the Conservation Officer and English Heritage suggest that the proposed houses should adopt a terraced cottage format of double or triple fronted dwellings.
 - 8.8. Accordingly, a terrace of three storey dwellings is now proposed along the northern bank of Glossop Brook. The new house types introduce greater building height to help mitigate the loss of the 5-storey mill building, whilst also reflecting the design of existing houses on Lower Bank to the south side of the Brook. The Conservation Officer has informally indicated that this revised house type is more preferable to that previously proposed.
 - 8.9. The Applicant is unable to change the house types to 3-storey terraces across the whole site. A thorough investigation of the local housing market indicates that there is an over-
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supply of terraced housing. Detached and semi-detached dwellings are in greater demand, as reflected in the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Needs Final Report (NLP April 2014). Developing any terraced housing, therefore, represents a significant risk to the viability of the proposed development and, therefore, the number of terraced houses must be limited.

- 8.10. The proposed semi-detached and link-detached dwellings seek to deliver the types of home that are in local demand whilst also respecting the heritage setting. Accordingly, two and three-bedroom homes that are served by off-street parking and a garage with private gardens are proposed in order to diversify the housing stock and meet local needs. The housing product seeks to directly address the less popular aspects of terraced housing (on street parking, small back yard, limited storage space etc). The scale of the properties reflects that of the traditional mill workers cottages in the local area.

Layout

- 8.11. Both the Conservation Officer and English Heritage suggest that the proposed residential layout would benefit from addressing the street frontages (other than Milltown) and being more outward looking, with the Conservation Officer also suggesting that plots 24-27 should be re-orientated to face Mill Street.
- 8.12. In response, the proposed layout is unable to be more outward looking as a result of various influences. For example, to the east, the Conservation Officer accepts that the dwellings should not be outward looking to address Milltown in order for the '*canyon effect*' key feature in the Conservation Area to be maintained. To the south, the proposed dwellings are already proposed to be outward looking over Glossop Brook.
- 8.13. The submitted Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the only feasible location for the proposed foodstore is parallel to Glossop Brook and, as a result, the most appropriate location for the service area is the eastern elevation of the foodstore building. Therefore, re-orientating the dwellings next to the service yard to be outward looking would result in frontages facing directly towards the Lidl service area, which will undoubtedly compromise the market appeal of these dwellings and, therefore, does not make commercial sense. Furthermore, such an arrangement is not considered to provide any benefit to the character or setting of the location.
- 8.14. The only potential to provide a more outward looking scheme is to re-orientate the dwellings to face Mill Street to the north. Four of the proposed dwellings already face Mill Street (plots 24-27), with four further dwellings facing away from Mill Street (plots 28-31).
- 8.15. Whilst the Conservation Officer suggests that the four dwellings facing away from Mill Street could be re-orientated, with the change in levels overcome by adding an additional storey, matters are not so simplistic. The existing stone wall running along Mill Street is a retaining wall and there are further existing retaining structures that support plots 24-27.
- 8.16. To enable plots 28-31 to also provide frontage to Mill Street, the ground level would need to be built up by approximately 2.5m. The Applicant has explored the viability of this approach, with the associated cost implication being estimated at £10,000 per dwelling. This additional cost implication would erode/remove any profit margin from the sale of these properties at the expected market value and, therefore, cannot be sustained.
- 8.17. Accordingly, there is only potential in principle to re-orientate 4 of the 49 dwellings proposed. It has been demonstrated that the Applicant is unable to implement the advice received from the Conservation Officer to re-orientate these four dwellings as a result of the costs implications and the limited viability of the proposed development.
- 8.18. The Conservation Officer supports the retention of the significant stone wall on the site boundary in order to preserve the '*canyon*' effect along Milltown. However, it should be noted that this comes at the expense of delivering the optimum site access solution.
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Accordingly, greater weight has been attached to the preservation of a key characteristic of the Conservation Area over and above highways matters.

Retail

Units A and B

- 8.19. The Conservation Officer is generally supportive of the proposals to refurbish and extend Unit A.
- 8.20. In terms of Unit B, a revised approach has been presented that responds to the Conservation Officer's comments and which has subsequently received informal support from the Conservation Officer.
- 8.21. Whilst it is suggested that both Unit A and Unit B should have slate roofs instead of the proposed sheet metal, the additional cost incurred by the use of this material cannot be sustained by the return on development, as demonstrated by the Viability Appraisal.

Unit C

- 8.22. The Conservation Officer confirms that the location of the proposed Lidl foodstore (Unit C) is now accepted.
 - 8.23. However, both the Conservation Officer and English Heritage raise concerns with regard to the design of the proposed Lidl foodstore. These concerns relate to the mono-pitch roof design, the lack of building height, the use of reconstituted stone and cladding panels (Conservation Officer only) and the lack of active frontages.
 - 8.24. In terms of the design and appearance of the Lidl store, the mass and scale of the building and its footprint is almost identical to that of the existing weaving shed. Whilst the proposed development will result in the demolition of the 5-storey Woods Mill building, it is not considered appropriate to seek to replace this structure by artificially increasing the height of the Lidl store. The Woods Mill building is, of course, located on a different part of the application site than the Lidl store.
 - 8.25. Whilst it is noted that the Marks & Spencer Unit in Howard Town Retail Park has been designed to give the appearance of increased height, adopting a similar approach towards the Lidl store is unlikely to be as successful given the greater visibility of the Lidl building from higher ground to the south of Glossop Brook. Accordingly, the only solution would be to increase the height of the roof, thereby creating a significant void above the sales area. However, this would compromise the sustainability credentials of the proposal and add substantially to building costs.
 - 8.26. The proposed mono-pitch roof respond to the fundamental structure of the building, which has to deliver an unconstrained sales floor that is not interrupted by supporting columns. An alteration to the roof design is likely to require the provision of supporting columns within the sales area which is unacceptable to the operator.
 - 8.27. Whilst the Conservation Officer supports the glazed front elevation, the use of reconstituted stone panels and cladding panels is not supported. In terms of the use of natural stone, this material is significantly more expensive (over 400%) than the proposed material and is not, therefore, viable to use. The proposed reconstituted stone product has been accepted as suitable within Conservation Area locations by many other local planning authorities.
 - 8.28. Given the location of the site behind the main retail frontage to High Street and without any main road frontage or commercial prominence, Lidl needs to maximise the ability to promote its corporate identity. The only ways this can be achieved is through appropriate signage and the delivery of a store that is immediately recognisable as a Lidl store. Lidl is a
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top 10 global food retailer and operates from over 10,000 stores across Europe, with the design and appearance of the proposed store having evolved over the last 20 years. Given these operational and corporate requirements, it is not acceptable to blur the corporate identity by seeking to fundamentally change the appearance of the store.

- 8.29. The blank elevations to the north, south and east of the foodstore building result from the function of the building. It is widely recognised that foodstores tend to have an active frontage to one elevation only next to the checkouts, with the other elevations being blank in order for goods to be stacked on shelves up to the wall, whether that be within the sales or storage area. As the floor plan for Unit C illustrates, the warehousing facilities will be located on the northern and eastern store elevations. Sales display stands and banks of refrigerator units will run along the southern store elevation. Accordingly, it is not possible to re-orientate the glazed frontage to the north elevation, or to provide additional glazing, for example, behind the display shelves and refrigerators.
- 8.30. In Merton (APP/T5720/V/04/1171394), the Planning Inspectorate had regard to the need for Lidl to adhere to a particular format, principally based upon a single level store, so as to allow the efficient movement of pallet loads of goods from the delivery bay to the sales area. It was accepted that a more labour intensive arrangement would not only increase the storage required (as goods cannot be transferred to the shop floor as quickly) but also increase costs (more staff required and specially designed displays needed), undermining the ability to sell goods at low prices. The same principles can be applied to Glossop in that the alterations necessary to address the Conservation Officer's concerns would increase costs and undermine the deep discount business model.
- 8.31. Notwithstanding the above, the Applicant notes the design, layout and use of materials employed by the Tesco Extra store on Glossop Brook Road in Glossop. This store has a single aspect, a flat roof and utilises modern cladding materials despite the fact that the store is located within a Conservation Area and adjacent to a Listed Building. It is inconsistent for a foodstore located in a less sensitive location to be required to achieve a significantly higher standard of design.

Landscaping and Public Realm

- 8.32. Whilst the Conservation Officer contends that the proposed development does not allow for greater permeability on a north-south axis along Mill Street, the Applicant strongly disagrees. At present, there is no public access from Mill Street on a north-south axis beyond the limits of the public highway. However, as highlighted in the submitted Design and Access Statement, a new foot and cycle link will be provided from Mill Street into the residential development and south to Glossop Brook.
 - 8.33. Whilst this new access does not follow a direct straight line, as the Conservation Officer may aspire to, it nevertheless significantly enhances permeability on a north-south axis when compared to the existing situation. Furthermore, the proposed route will provide a higher quality environment than a possible straight line alternative route between the Lidl store and the rear gardens of neighbouring properties, which would be less attractive for users.
 - 8.34. The Conservation Officer also suggests that the riverside walkway along Glossop Brook should be diverted to the south of the river via a new pedestrian footbridge in order to avoid the pathway passing directly behind the Lidl store. Whilst this seems to have been suggested in order to increase natural surveillance of the route, the dwellings to the south of the river will provide natural surveillance of the route regardless of whether it passes along the northern or southern bank of the river. Furthermore, if on the northern bank, the route could be monitored by the CCTV system operated from the Lidl store. Surveillance should, therefore, not be a matter of concern. The route behind the Lidl store will be 6m wide with an open aspect to Glossop Brook and, with appropriate landscaping, is expected to create an attractive and safe environment.
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- 8.35. Notwithstanding this, it is considered more likely that pedestrian movements on an east-west axis will pass in front of the Lidl store to link to the proposed residential development or on to Mill Street.
- 8.36. The Conservation Officer contends that the view from High Street East down Mill Street is a key feature, with concern being expressed that the Lidl service area will form a key element of this important view.
- 8.37. In response, it is evident that views of the site from High Street East down Mill Street, and also from the significant part of Mill Street itself (prior to the 90° bend to the east), will be of the proposed residential development. It is clear from the submitted site layout plans that the Lidl service area will only become a feature of views when taken when almost at the 90° bend/edge of the application site.
- 8.38. Furthermore, regard must be had of the change in levels across the application site as a whole and in terms of the sloped ramp down to the service dock. Accordingly, the service area will present itself at a lower level, with views being primarily of the rising fields to the south of Glossop Brook. The service yard will not represent a dominant feature.
- 8.39. The concerns expressed in this regard are, therefore, unfounded.

Conclusion

- 8.40. This section of the Statement provides a review of the heritage impact concerns expressed with regard to the proposed development and seeks to respond to these concerns by demonstrating why the proposal has been unable to adopt the guidance provided. It has also been demonstrated that the Applicant has sought to minimise the heritage impact of the proposal, but taking account of other key influences, primarily viability. In short, whilst the Applicant would support the use of natural materials, for example, it is simply not financially viable to do so.
- 8.41. Accordingly, whilst the heritage comments seek to direct the proposal to a solution that would be fully acceptable in heritage terms, the proposed development seeks to balance these aspirations with commercial reality and viability.
- 8.42. Furthermore, the Applicant has strived to go as far as possible to deliver a development that is sympathetic to the heritage assets but within the confines of viability. For example, the character and setting of Glossop Brook will be preserved and enhanced by the proposals. Similarly, the '*canyon*' effect on Milltown will be maintained and the loss of Woods Mill will be compensated by opening up views of Eastern House (VC Works). Great effort has also been made to deliver a retail development that will complement the neighbouring Howard Town Retail Park. The positive contribution made by the proposed development must also be recognised.
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9. Conclusion

- 9.1. Woods Mill is not a designated heritage asset. It is an unlisted building located within a Conservation Area. Woods Mill is also not of listable quality, with half of the building having been demolished and the contribution the building makes towards the significance of the Conservation Area having, therefore, been eroded.
 - 9.2. Woods Mill is also not a unique feature within the Conservation Area and its contribution to the Conservation Area cannot be considered to be '*essential*' to its significance. Indeed, there are two other mill buildings located in the immediate vicinity, both of which will continue to preserve the historic character and setting of the Conservation Area, with Howard Town Mill being the most important industrial heritage asset and Glossop Brook a key space within the Conservation Area.
 - 9.3. Due to the low degree of contribution the structures make to the character of the Conservation Area, the significance of the Conservation Area overall and their relationship to other mill structures in the immediate vicinity, the Applicant strongly contends that the loss of Woods Mill will not result in '*substantial harm*' to the Conservation Area.
 - 9.4. Nevertheless, in order to respond to Consultees, the Applicant has comprehensively assessed the ability of the proposals to address the requirements of paragraph 133 of the NPPF and, thereby, justify any harm to the Conservation Area. It has been robustly demonstrated that:
 - The proposed development will deliver substantial social, economic, physical and environmental benefits to the public, with these benefits outweighing any harm to the Conservation area;
 - The physical nature of the mill building prevents a reasonable use of the building, even when allowing for the £1.8m investment required to make the building watertight, safe and secure;
 - There is no viable use of the mill building that will enable its conservation, with this conclusion concurring with the Council's own viability appraisal of the intended vision for the regeneration of the site;
 - There is no funding available that would enable the conservation of the mill; and
 - Any harm to the Conservation Area is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
 - 9.5. Notwithstanding the above, it is also the case that the proposed development will make positive contributions towards the character and setting of the Conservation Area. Glossop Brook is a key feature, and the proposals will deliver significant physical works to the Brook to remove vegetation, rebuild the culvert and create a significantly enhanced riverside environment. The proposals will preserve and enhance the character and setting of Glossop Brook, enabling it to function as a public resource, and will enhance the contribution it makes towards the character and setting of the Conservation Area. Similarly, the important '*canyon effect*' along Milltown will be preserved.
 - 9.6. The proposals have evolved following discussions with Officers, with the Applicant revising the scheme in an attempt to deliver a development that Officers can support. However, the limited viability of the scheme imposes restrictions on the scope of revisions, with the proposed development being independently confirmed to be of marginal viability. Any further revisions that bring direct cost implications will render the proposal unviable and
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undeliverable.

- 9.7. Nevertheless, the proposals will deliver the homes that are in demand and the retail facilities that are required in order to sustain and enhance Glossop. The proposed development seeks to deliver the longstanding aspirations for the site, with the site being allocated for regeneration for a period on excess of 10 years. Given the wide ranging public benefits that will be delivered, the NPPF advises that the site should be freed-up for redevelopment.
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Appendix 1

107, Manchester Road, Wilmslow, SK9 2JH

Plan A Limited

20th October 2014

Dear Chris,

I set out below the information required from me in respect of Woods Mill.

1. I qualified from Reading University in 1981 with a BSc in a Land Management and started work with Healey and Baker, Mayfair London who were at the time, the leading retail property consultancy in the UK. The partnership was bought by the American business, Cushman Wakefield during the early 90s
2. During the 1980s, I worked on High Street and shopping centre properties for Healey and Baker and then the Burton Group, then the operators of what are now the Arcadia brands, Burton, Dorothy Perkins, Top Shop, Wallis, Evans etc. and at the time, Debenhams.
3. During the 1990s, 2000s and to date, I worked on the development and asset management of retail warehouse property, both non-food and food all around the country with a bias to the north-west on behalf of landlord clients; the only exception being acting for Asda on the national store acquisition programme for Asda living, now on hold. During this time, I was Director of Development at the Manchester office of Chesterton, an equity partner of Tushingham Moore, founder and senior partner of Petch Hall and, following the sale of that business to Cushman Wakefield, director of Northern out-of-town retail, C&W.
4. I am a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.
5. Schemes around the Manchester conurbation where I acted as sole agent include the Peel Centre Stockport, Trafford Retail Park, Altrincham Retail Park, Macclesfield Lyme Green RP, Middlebrook Bolton (biggest scheme in the country), Kingsway Rochdale, Centre Retail Park Oldham. In addition, I have been involved with a number of foodstore transactions including Asda Hulme and Netto Whalley Range. I have agreed terms and exchanged contracts with the new Sainsbury/Netto format this year in Hull and Sheffield. The stores open shortly.
6. I currently hold instructions from Lasalle Investment Management on behalf of the coal industry pension fund on Snipe Retail Park at Ashton where we are currently seeking to promote foodstore business. I'm currently promoting the U.K.'s largest new retail and leisure scheme on behalf of Derwent Group Property Holdings at Edge Lane, Liverpool jointly with McMullen Wilson of London.

7. I became involved with Glossop Land in the promotion of the site in question for beneficial and viable uses during 2010 and in the summer of 2011, the Directors and I of Cushman Wakefield in Manchester applied our minds to the marketing of Woods Mill. A location and site plan of the property was circulated through the office and all functions invited to comment on any requirements for retail, office, industrial and self storage in the market. There were none. We circulated the opportunity to our national contacts and got a nil response.
8. This came as no surprise to us in the property has difficult access, no visibility, conflicting town centre uses for regular use of HGV, derelict buildings and likelihood of impending redevelopment.
9. In order to also cover the local market, we also erected an agency board on the property and monitored enquiries. I personally handled enquiries over a two-year period; I only had four sensible calls from parties who either wanted to operate a hand car wash or temporary external storage in the yard area. There were no calls on the mill itself. All the other calls were from contractors looking for building work.
10. The outcome of this activity was, and is, as I expected in that there was no interest in Woods Mill nor are there any future prospects of finding an occupier of the existing buildings on commercial terms. I left Cushman Wakefield in April 2014 but stayed as retail agent to Glossop land in the promotion of this important site.
11. One of my very first projects, as a junior surveyor was the Hardshaw centre Buxton and at the time we had similar issues, in the end the site was cleared and now forms the best section of retail activity in the town.
12. The opportunity exists here to provide the shopping catchment of Glossop with a bright, fresh and easily accessed facility to improve their daily lives and as a welcome alternative to the Howard town Mill and Wrens Nest locations which both have traffic and access issues.
13. By way of background, I confirm that the preferred solution of a new Sainsbury store didn't proceed because the landscape of food retailing nationally changed during 2012 and it is a well-publicised fact that the big four food retailers aren't expanding and that their German rivals are acquiring further market share. Subsequent to Sainsbury's withdrawing their interest, we did come close to agreeing a layout for a small format Asda complete with a PFS but the discussions broke down during 2013 when they withdrew their interest.
14. We are delighted to be able to agree terms with Lidl and I personally think that there are real asset to Glossop and will trade successfully.

I trust this note is sufficient for your purposes would be delighted to meet with the relevant people and discuss any areas of concern in detail.

Yours sincerely

Chris Petch