



NEW MILLS – NEW MILLS SECONDARY SCHOOL – INTERNAL FRA WORKS

CHURCH LANE, NEW MILLS, HIGH PEAK,
DERBYSHIRE, SK22 4NR

Heritage Impact Assessment



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Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Use.....	5
3. About the Development.....	5
4. History	6
5. Listing	7
5.1. Architectural interest:	7
6. Site.....	8
7. Existing Construction.....	8
8. Proposals	9
9. Conclusion	10

1. INTRODUCTION

This document is submitted in support of the listed building application for the improvement of one existing door to a 60-minute fire rating, installation of one new fire door, frames and the replacement of three existing fire door sets and associated works.

The following documents have also been provided as part of the listed building application and should be read in conjunction with this statement:

525061-CDP-XX-00-DR-B-3001	Site Location Plan
525061-CDP-XX-00-DR-B-3002	block Plan
525061-CDP-XX-XX-DR-B-2001	Key plan
525061-CDP-XX-XX-DR-B-5001	Existing and Proposed doors
525061-CDP-XX-XX-DR-B-7001	Door Schedule

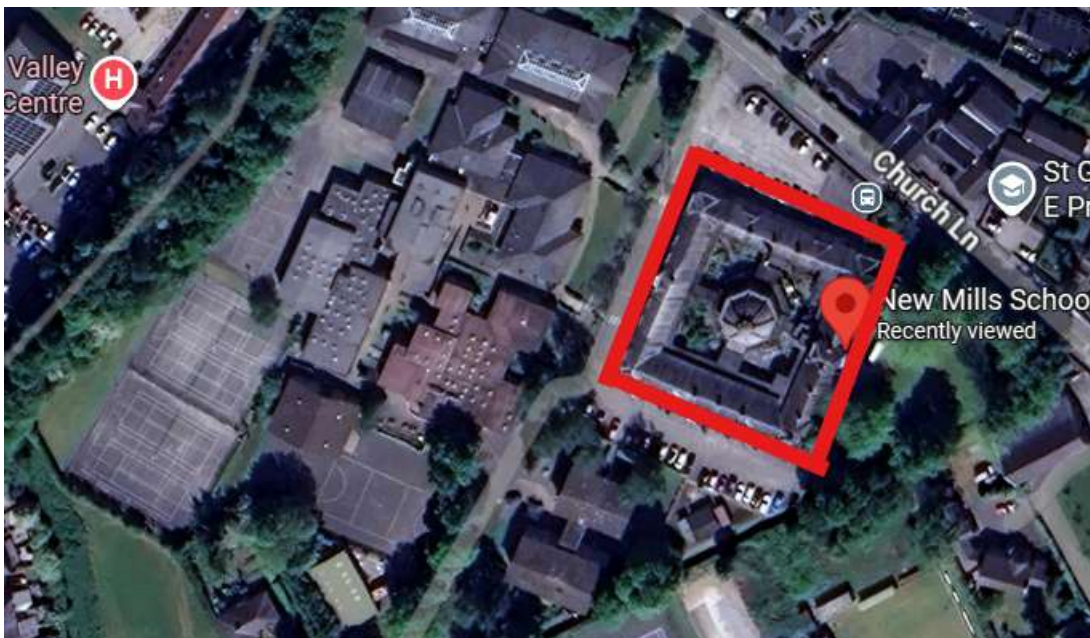


Fig 1: New Mills Secondary School, Block 01, Grade II listed – Via Google Maps

2. USE

New Mills Secondary School, Church Lane, SK22 4NP is located centrally within the Town of New Mills and serves as the secondary school for the surrounding areas. New Mills Secondary School caters to an age range of 11- to 16-year-olds. The school has the capacity to educate 750 students and, as of 19th May 2026, has an occupancy of 680 students.

The building in which the works will take place is currently used as the main entrance access to New Mills Secondary School, several classrooms for education purpose, staff break out areas and offices for the school. The existing use for the building will remain as per its current use. There is no proposed additional development over and above the existing use of the building or spaces within the site.

3. ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT

The development site includes:	Yes	No
A listed building?	☒	☐
A scheduled ancient monument?	☐	☒
A site of archaeological interest?	☐	☒
Within a designated conservation area?	☐	☒
A non-designated heritage asset (including locally listed buildings)?	☐	☒
Within a registered historic park and garden?	☐	☒
In the setting of / adjacent to one of the above?	☐	☒

4. HISTORY

New Mills is a town in the Borough of High Peak, Derbyshire, England, 8 miles south-east of Stockport and 13 miles from Manchester at the confluence of the river.

In the 14th century New Mills originated around a corn mill built in 1391 on the River Sett at a place later called Ollersett. This was known as New Mylne and gave the town its name. Over time the area grew from a set of small hamlets in the area historically called Bowden Middlecale, part of the Royal Forest in north-west Derbyshire.

During the late 18th century, New Mills became an industrial village as water-powered Cotton Mills and Print Works were established in the dramatic Torrs gorge where the Rivers Sett and Goyt converge. By 1810, the town had a significant textile economy with multiple Cotton Mills, Weaving Mills and Print Works, all exploiting the fast-flowing water and local resources. Workers' housing was built tightly into the steep riverbanks, a form of settlement that still shapes parts of the town's built heritage.

In the 19th century industrial activity within the area continued to bring people into the area, increasing its population and the expansion of housing and commercial buildings. The continued expansion also saw the arrival of canals and railways reinforcing New Mills as a manufacturing centre. The town developed Victorian architectural characteristics with public halls, shops and churches constructed in local gritstone during this period. In 1871, the Town Hall was opened (later becoming a municipal headquarters in 1895), reflecting civic pride and growing local governance structures. The area then became more of an Urban District in 1894, which lasted until the 1974 local government reorganisation when it became part of High Peak borough.

Industrial decline began in the early 20th century as local coal reserves depleted, and larger textile centres elsewhere outcompeted the smaller mills. Many mills and print-works closed by the mid-20th century within the area. As well as this, flood events, such as the June 1930 flood, also impacted the town's industrial infrastructure and community.

The town today still retains many landscape and industrial archaeological features such as mill foundations and weirs in the Torrs, railway viaducts, and historic buildings constructed from local gritstone. The Torrs Riverside Park and the New Mills Heritage & Information Centre interpret the industrial past and promote conservation of historic sites.

New Mills Secondary School began in 1878 as the Spring Bank Mixed School and has undergone several expansions. The first expansion was in 1890 when the school was enlarged to house a technical school onsite. The school was officially opened as the New Mills Grammar School in 1912, following the Education Act of 1902. The school grew steadily throughout the mid-20th century from an occupancy of 500 students in the early 1960s to roughly 700 students in 1969 including a large sixth form. During this time the school converted into a non-selective comprehensive school. In 2018 the school's sixth form was closed and the education focus of New Mills Secondary School switched to year 7 to year 11.

5. LISTING

5.1. ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

The Grade II listed New Mills School, completed in 1912, stands as a testament to the architectural prowess of George H. Widdows, the esteemed designer renowned for his innovative ideas on school planning and hygiene during the early 20th century. Widdows, serving as the Chief Architect to Derbyshire County Council from 1910 to 1936, designed the school as part of a significant wave of educational infrastructure development responding to the population surge in Derbyshire, particularly fuelled by coal mining and textile manufacturing.

According to the Grade II Listing, constructed in a distinctive neo-vernacular style, the school boasts a 'quadrangular' plan with classroom ranges linked to an octagonal central hall. The exterior, crafted from uncoursed polygonal rubble gritstone with ashlar gritstone dressings, showcases a meticulously designed front elevation featuring advanced pavilion-like bays with tall, canted mullion and transom windows. The entrance, with a barbican-like appearance and narrow ashlar towers, leads to a richly detailed interior that retains original fixtures such as door and window joinery, fireplaces, and stained-glass windows depicting figures representative of Arts, Literature, Music, Science, and Engineering.

Widdows' commitment to high standards of hygiene is evident in the school's design, incorporating features like open veranda-style corridors for effective cross ventilation and generous full-height windows. Notably, the New Mills School is one of only two known examples of Widdows' quadrangular design, and its original plan form remains unaltered, contributing to its special architectural interest. The exterior, characterized by locally worn gritstone, and the well-preserved interior further enhance the school's significance as a historic and architectural gem, standing as a testament to Widdows' transformative contributions to English school architecture in the early 20th century.

6. SITE



Fig 3: Site Plan and Boundary

The site has one access point from Church Lane serving as the pedestrian and vehicular access onto the site.

7. EXISTING CONSTRUCTION

EXTERIOR MATERIALS:

- Walls: rubble gritstone with ashlar gritstone dressings.
- Roof: Hipped slate roof typical of Georgian architecture.
- Windows feature advanced pavilion-like bays with tall, canted mullion and transom windows made from timber with single glazing.

8. PROPOSALS

The proposed works involve the upgrade of the original door “D01” to provide 60-minute fire resistance and replacing two existing fire doors with new frames and a 30-minute fire-rated door with a smoke seal (D03 and D04). The existing fire doors are inadequate and do not meet the current standards set out in Approved Document B of the Building Regulations.

D01 is planned to be improved by means of treating the door, frame and ironmongery to give 60 minutes of fire resistance. This shall be done by applying a clear Envirograf HWAP primer, then coating both faces of the door with Envirograf ‘Product Number: 42 HW02N’ (a clear, water-based intumescent coating for all types of timber and timber-related products). This treatment has been tested and offers over 60 minutes of fire resistance. Finally, the door will be treated with a clear topcoat to protect the door and the applied HW02N. The door is understood to be original and as to protect the heritage of the building, it would be prudent to retain the door and upgrade it without affecting the aesthetic of the building or the door’s appearance/finish, instead of removal and replacement.

The door provides access to a staff kitchen. If a fire were to break out in this area with the existing door in place this could lead to the fire spreading through the building, putting student and staff lives at risk. Especially as the door is in the main school reception, meaning that there is always someone in close proximity to the door. With the suggested upgrades completed, the existing door will provide the necessary protection in the event of a fire, not only to the staff and children, but also to protect the rest of the building fabric, allowing emergency services the time to react to protect life and the building.

D03 appears not to be original due to the overall design. This includes the glazing panes not being Georgian wired, which would be expected in a building of this age and the other doors within the building containing this type of glazing. The door currently provides no protection against fire or smoke. This means that this door could compromise the health and safety of the children and staff if a fire broke out, due to smoke inhalation and the fact that fire can pass through the door easily. We have proposed that the door be replaced due to these factors. The proposed door will be FD30s and match the existing door in style and colour, therefore having no visual impact on the building whilst preventing any health impact upon staff and students in the event of a fire.

D04 is not original due to the style of the door and the type of vision panel. Therefore, replacing this door will have a minimal effect on the characteristics of the building. The door will change in style to accommodate Approved Document M of the Building Regulations. The door will have two vision panels: one large vision panel and one smaller vision panel near the bottom of the door. This will allow people to see when someone walks by and not hit them when opening the door, including wheelchair users. The door will also be FD30s to prevent a fire from spreading throughout the building and allow people to evacuate the building in a timely manner, reducing the risk to life.

We believe that D03 and D04 do not significantly support the heritage of the building, as both doors appear to have been installed within the last 20 years and are therefore not original. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF 2024 states:

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

To reflect, the decisions made within this Heritage Statement and the proposed works have been selected to adequately protect the significant aspects of the building, whilst increasing the health and safety to the occupants. It is of upmost importance that occupants of the building are protected or can safely egress from the building, whilst protecting significant elements of the building for future enjoyment.

The works will also consist of installing two new 30-minute fire-rated doors and door sets, with smoke seals along the corridors within the building to compartmentalise sections of the building, slowing fire spread and protecting the building fabric and health and safety of the building's occupants. This could have drastic improvements on the building and minimise risk to life or life-altering consequences upon students and staff who are unable to escape within a safe time duration. Currently, fire will be able to spread rapidly as there is no form of barrier within the corridor. Alongside this, the newly installed fire doors will also prevent property damage to the entirety of the Grade II listed building as fire spread will be slowed down giving emergency departments time to put the fire out, result in less damage to the building as result of a fire.

Design Considerations

The proposal will take the character of the listed building into account. Fire doors that are to be replaced will be done so to the same in design and style as the existing. They will have the same fixtures and furniture as the removed. This is providing that the doors meet the requirements as set out in Approved Document B. where the doors do not meet these requirements and do not directly affect the characteristics of the listed building, the new door sets will be as close to possible in style and colour to match the existing fitting.

Where new fire doors are to be fitted within the corridors, the doors are to match the style of existing door within the building as to not undermine the architectural style of other doors within the building.

For the door which expressly contributes to the character of the listed building, D01, it is appreciated that replacement is not suitable. For this reason, the addition of fire resistant, clear coatings to both sides of the door has been designed to ensure the continuance of the building's character while providing greater fire protection to both the building and the occupants.

9. CONCLUSION

Based upon the historical assessment of the site, we are confident that the proposals are empathetic to building's importance and construction methods. The appearance of the building will remain largely unchanged, whilst improving the fire compartmentation within the building persevering integral historic elements from smoke and fire damage in the event of a fire.

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