

HERITAGE NOTE

LAND NORTH OF THE VIADUCT ADJOINING ORCHARD BUSINESS PARK, LEDBURY, HEREFORDSHIRE

Cotswold Archaeology is the heritage consultant to the applicant, Bloor Homes Western, for development of land at the site known as 'Land North of the Viaduct adjoining Orchard Business Park, Ledbury, Herefordshire'. A series of heritage assessments and surveys have been carried out in order to provide suitably detailed information on the historic environment of the site and its environs, and any effects of the development upon this.

Studies have included:

- heritage 'desk-based' research and assessment
- geophysical (magnetometer) survey
- archaeological trial trenches
- the 'setting' of heritage assets

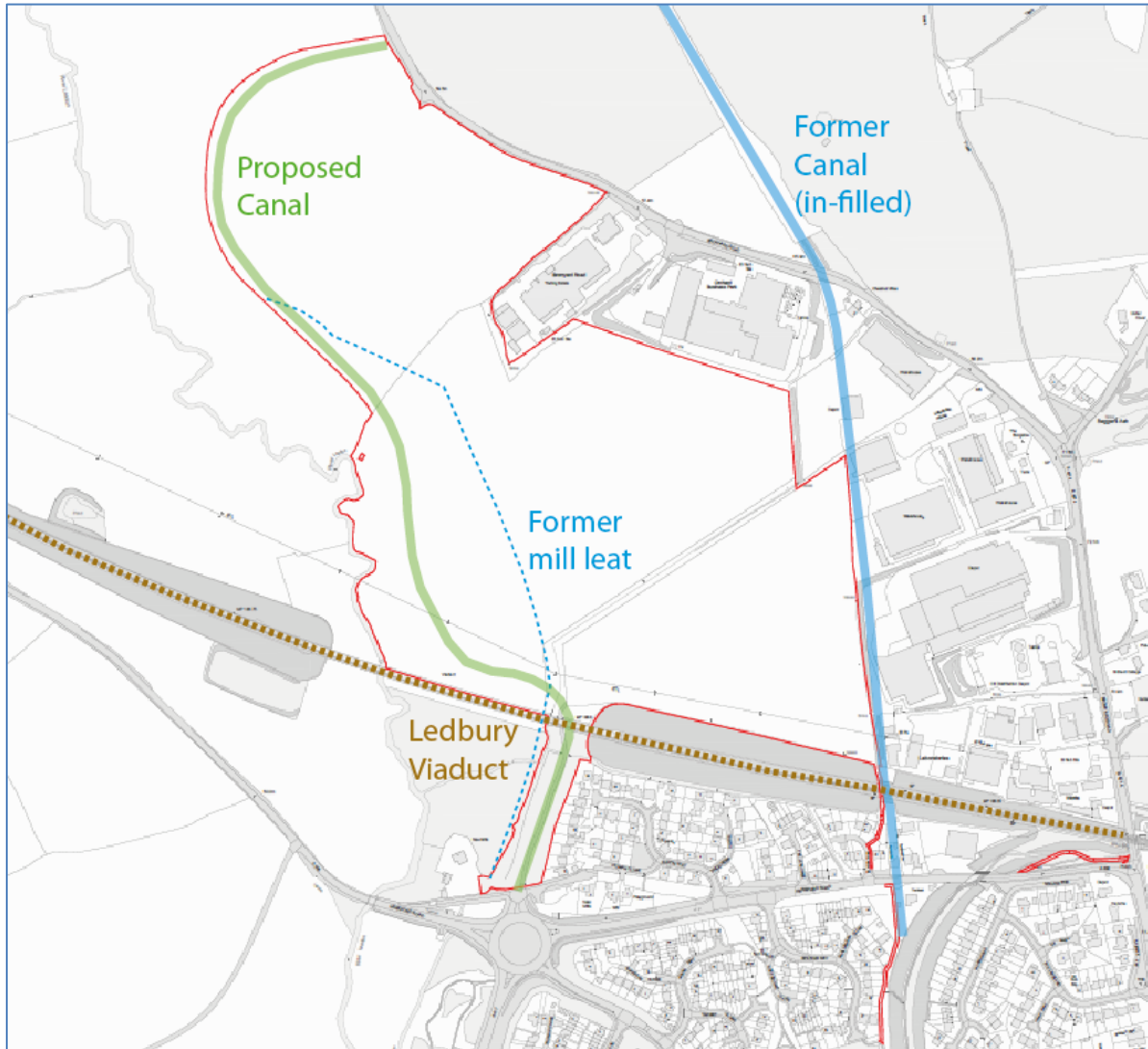
These heritage works provide a suitable and proportionate level of information to allow determination of the application, in accordance with the requirement of Paragraph 128 of the NPPF.

Summary

As noted above, the heritage assessment works included detailed consideration of the 'setting' of heritage assets, carried out in accordance with the heritage guidance set out in Historic England's publication 'The Setting of heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3' (known as 'GPA3'). We should note that in December 2017 a Second Edition of GPA3 was published. We have reviewed the results of the settings assessment following this, and the min or changes of the revised publication do not affect the results.

The Canal, Viaduct and Mill Leat

The site redline area, the former Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal, the Ledbury Viaduct, and a former mill leat are illustrated on Figure 1 below.



Construction on the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal (Figure 1) began in 1793, and by 1798 (following technical and financial difficulties with the Oxenhall Tunnel) was opened to within a mile south of Ledbury at the Ross-on-Wye Road. Following the appointment of Stephen Ballard in 1827, the canal reached Ledbury in 1832, and the canal was completed to the new Hereford Basin in 1845. This extended route ran along the eastern side of the application site, as illustrated on Figure 1. It is now in-filled.

Ledbury Viaduct (Figure 1) was constructed 1859-60 to a design, it is supposed, by Stephen Ballard. It is a Grade II listed building. The contractors were Ballard and Thomas

Barrey, and the red bricks (made from clay dug for the foundations) were made by Robert Ballard. It is some 300m in length comprising 30 round-headed arches on slender piers.

The former mill leat (Figure 1) once fed the mill pond at New Mills, a corn mill just to the west of the application site. It fed the mill pond from the River Leadon to the north, and ran south through the application site (and is now in-filled).

The application and the 'setting' of Ledbury Viaduct

The proposals include the provision of a new canal north through the viaduct, and thence along the western edge of the site. As noted, the original course of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal to the east of the application site is now infilled and largely built over. The proposed new canal runs close to the line of the former mill leat (which ran below the viaduct at the same location), although following the western edge of the application area rather than running through it. Whilst not on the course of the original canal, the proposed canal is a design measure which reflects the former relationship between the canal and railway, both so closely tied to the career of Stephen Ballard. The new canal will illustrate the relationship between the historic use of canal waterways, and the subsequent railways. This relationship will be 'experienced' by the public, particularly from the proposed footway and cyclepath alongside the new canal i.e. experienced and used as a towpath. This route will allow members of the public to experience and understand the history of transport in the area in a way not currently possible, providing heritage benefit and enhancement.

These design measures will enhance the significance of the listed viaduct. Paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that 'local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within.....the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably'. The proposed heritage enhancements of the proposed Masterplan will better reveal the significance of the listed viaduct.

It is the case that the residential development within the site would lead to some change in views from current agricultural land and the B4214 Bromyard Road to the north; although the contribution of these views to the significance of the viaduct is small. Design has included mitigation measures to reduce such change, in accordance with step 4 of GPA3 'maximising enhancement and minimising harm'.

There have been some additional slight changes to the Masterplan, which do not affect the conclusions of the heritage assessment or the discussion set out in the previous heritage advice letter. These include the 3m wide footway/cycleway between Hereford Road and Golding Way; the additional strip of land on Ballard Close; an indicative emergency access (within the site or highway land); and the removal of the Bromyard Road footpath.

The Environmental Impact Assessment and Transport Assessment previously fully considered the provision of a new road from the A438 roundabout northwards, below the viaduct to the residential development within the site. It is the case that the effects of such a road would have likely led to a degree of harm to the significance of the viaduct. This would have been due to the introduction of a modern transportation route, somewhat eroding the intelligibility of the historic railway and canal.

[Previous comment from the Conservation Officer](#)

A consultation response was provided from the Council's Building Conservation Officer dated 8th and 19th June 2017: Ref 171532.

The officer raised concerns that the provision of a road beneath the viaduct could lead to harm to its heritage significance. This is indeed the case, and, as noted, a road is not proposed.

The officer raised the possibility that the residential development might affect the significance of the viaduct due to change in its wider setting, including as experienced from Bromyard Road B4214. As noted above, the contribution of this element of setting and is limited, and any such harm would be very restricted, certainly when compared to the very real benefits of the provision of the canal: a notable provision in illustrating the viaduct's historic significance.

[Conclusions](#)

The proposed development provides an opportunity to 'better reveal' the historical significance of the Grade II listed Ledbury Viaduct, through the provision of a new canal. The historical links between railway and canal transport are extremely strong in the locality, and measures that better illustrate the relationship are significant. The provision of the footpath and cycle path along the canal and beneath the viaduct will improve the 'experience' of the viaduct, and will again 'better reveal its significance' in accordance with heritage policy set out in the NPPF.

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APPENDIX: DETAILED RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC COMMENTS FROM THE CONSERVATION OFFICER

The consultation response from the Building Conservation Officer, Mr Knight, at Herefordshire Council (dated 08.06.17 / 19.06.17, Ref 171532) provided comments in relation to two aspects of the proposals, as follows:

- 1) the potential for the heritage significance of the Grade II Listed Ledbury Viaduct to be affected as a result of changes to views specifically from the Bromyard Road (B4214), facing south-east towards the viaduct; and
- 2) the potential for the heritage significance of the Grade II Listed Ledbury Viaduct to be affected as a result of the construction of a proposed road below the Viaduct, as identified within the Environmental Statement, Chapter 6 'Cultural Heritage'.

1. Views from Bromyard Road

The heritage assessments submitted to date provide sufficient information in relation to the potential non-physical effects of the proposals upon the heritage significance of Grade II Listed Ledbury Viaduct. The information provided is more than sufficient for the purposes of an outline planning application.

On 21.03.16 Cotswold Archaeology was advised by the Case Officer (Mr Roland Close) to consult Ms Sarah Lowe, Historic Buildings Officer, regarding potential non-physical development impacts. Accordingly, we emailed Ms Lowe on 24 March 2016. On 24 June 2016, Ms Lowe provided a very brief reply. Ms Lowe did not report that she had found any aspect of the report inadequate, though she indicated that there may be (unspecified) elements which might be open to challenge. We asked Ms Lowe to expand on her comments that same day, but received no response.

To summarise the findings of the report, Ledbury Viaduct draws its significance primarily from the evidential and historical (illustrative and associative) value embodied within its fabric as an example of mid-19th century infrastructure, associated with notable local architects and brickworks. It is also a prominent example of 19th-century industrial architecture, which derives aesthetic value from its architectural detailing including its early Victorian brickwork, impressive arcade, as well as its scale and its status as a local icon. As a functioning railway viaduct, the asset shares an intrinsic relationship with the railway line itself, and with the associated movement and sound of the regular train services. Its relationship with the line of the canal over which it was built is the other key element of its historic significance. As such, both transportation routes (railway and canal) form a key part of the setting of Ledbury Viaduct from which it draws historic (illustrative and associative) value. There is no element of formal design to the agricultural landscape through which the viaduct passes, and its siting was purely functional. As such, the surrounding fields make a neutral contribution towards the viaduct's significance. These fields may be considered to make a small, and entirely fortuitous, contribution to viaduct's aesthetic value.

The views from the Hereford Road (A438) to the south of the Viaduct make a positive contribution to its significance, enabling full appreciation of its architectural detail. The views from the B4214 to the north are inferior, being glimpsed, partial and distant. These views also take in the Bromyard Trading Estate. As such, the contribution of these views to the significance of the viaduct, is comparatively small. The proposed development includes the construction of housing in the north-west of the Site, with three storeys being the maximum proposed height. As such, the views of the viaduct from this location will change. The following design mitigation measures have therefore been included within the proposals:

- View corridors, preserving the clearest views of the viaduct from the B4214

- North-east / south-west aligned roads within the central area, preserving further views of the viaduct
- A significant green buffer immediately north of the viaduct ensuring that the proposed development preserves those views of the viaduct from Hereford Road (the A438), as well as providing for new close-up views of the viaduct from within the Site; no such views are possible at present as the land is private property

In addition to the above design measures, the proposed development includes the provision of a canal, and a parallel footpath, which passes beneath the Viaduct. The canal would make a positive contribution to the rural environs of the Viaduct, and would also allow for new and enhanced views thereof, allowing for greater appreciation of its principal heritage values as embodied within its physical fabric and architecture. As such, this aspect of the proposals is a significant heritage benefit.

2. A road beneath the viaduct

The application does not propose a road under the Viaduct linking to the Hereford Road.