

Firepool Taunton, Somerset

Heritage Assessment

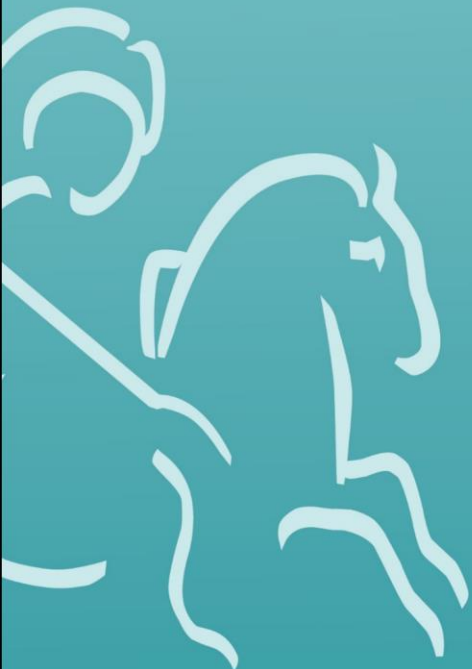


Report prepared for:
Somerset West and Taunton Council

CA Project: CR1184

CA Report: CR1184_1

August 2022



Firepool Taunton, Somerset

Heritage Assessment

CA Project: CR1184

CA Report: CR1184

Updated from EX0149_1

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Firepool

Location: Taunton, Somerset

NGR: 322917 125206

Cotswold Archaeology was commissioned in June 2020 to undertake an updated Heritage Assessment in respect of a proposed residential and commercial redevelopment of land at Firepool, Taunton, Somerset. The report follows on from two previous Heritage Assessments (2015 and 2017) encompassing a similar Site boundary, and has been prepared in the context of the revised scheme proposals, recent development in the local area, revisions to the appropriate policy and guidance, and updated historic environment data.

This assessment has identified no overriding heritage constraints that would preclude re-development of the Site. There is considered to be limited potential within the Site for any surviving archaeological remains pre-dating its 19th century development associated with the construction of the canal and railway works, and any remains present are not anticipated to be of a high level of heritage significance. An extant former GWR goods station is present within the north of the Site, and will be retained and renovated for public use as part of the proposed development.

This report has also assessed the potential effects of the development upon the significance of designated heritage assets, through the alteration of their settings, in accordance with industry standard guidance. Assets identified for consideration comprised nine Listed Buildings and the St Mary and St James Conservation Area. It has been established that the proposed development would not alter any elements that contribute to the architectural and historic interest of these buildings, nor the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and no harm to the overall significance of these assets will occur.

On the basis of this assessment, the proposed development would not be in conflict with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990), the approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, or Local Planning Policy.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In August 2022, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) was commissioned by J Price Consulting, on behalf of Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) Council to update a Heritage Assessment provided to SWT Council in July 2020 (CA 2020), pertaining to the proposed residential and commercial redevelopment of the land at Firepool, Taunton, Somerset. The site is centred on NGR: 322917 125206 (henceforth referred to as ‘the Site’; Figure 1).

The 2020 assessment followed two prior versions in 2015 and 2017 (CA 2015 & 2017). Outline planning permission for a retail and office led scheme with supporting residential and leisure uses was granted in 2019. The proposals (detailed below) have since been revised, and this updated Heritage Assessment is required to inform a Local Development Order for the scheme. The primary changes reflect changes to the redline boundary, and an update of the Somerset Historic Environment Record data.

Site description

- 1.2. The Site is situated in the town of Taunton, Somerset, to the north of the historic core. The current proposal area is split into two areas comprising a total of approximately 6.5ha bisected by the River Tone. The majority of this land is currently occupied by a vacant grassed area and tarmacadam surfaced car parks (Photographs 1 and 2). A large modern office block is present within the south of the Site. Canal Road runs east-west through the north of the Site. Two extant buildings are located within the north of the Site: a former Great Western Railway goods depot and the Auction House. Two former buildings in the north of the Site (No. 9 Canal Road and a former commercial garage building) have recently been demolished.
- 1.3. The Site is partially bounded to the north by Trenchard Way, beyond which lies the railway line. Priory Bridge Road forms the Site’s southern boundary, while residential and commercial developments, including the recently constructed Firepool Lock apartments, lie to the east, south and west. The eastern edge of the Site is flanked by a stretch of the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal, where it meets the modified course of the River Tone; an adjacent footpath runs parallel to the river and canal within the east of the Site, looping round to the south to follow the River Tone at the southern boundary of the Site’s northern section. A row of terraced houses along Canal Road is situated immediately to the north-west.



Photograph 1: View across the north-eastern part of the Site, towards the south-east



Photograph 2: View across the central part of the Site, towards the west

Development proposals

- 1.4. The Site is proposed for a residential led development, with supporting leisure, retail and office uses. The development forms part of the Firepool waterfront regeneration project set-out in the adopted Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (Taunton Deane Borough Council 2008).

- 1.5. Residential development would be largely concentrated within the east of the Site, with retail and recreational facilities located in the north-west. The proposed buildings

in the centre of the Site would be a range of a 5 to 7 storeys in height, and in the southern area of the Site a range of 4 to 7 storeys in height.

Objectives and professional standards

- 1.1. The composition and development of the historic environment within the Site and wider landscape are discussed in this report. A determination of the significance of any heritage assets located within the Site, and any heritage assets beyond the Site boundary that may potentially be affected by the development proposals, is presented. Any potential development effects upon the significance of these heritage assets (both adverse and/or beneficial) are then described.
- 1.2. Cotswold Archaeology (CA) is a Registered Organisation (RO) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). This report has been prepared in accordance with appropriate standards and guidance, including the ‘Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment’ published by CifA in 2014 and updated in 2017 and 2020. This states that, insofar as they relate to the determination of planning applications, heritage desk-based assessments should:

‘...enable reasoned proposals and decisions to be made [as to] whether to mitigate, offset or accept without further intervention [any identified heritage] impact’ (CifA 2020, 4).

- 1.3. The ‘Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment’ (Historic England 2015), further clarifies that a desk-based assessment should:

‘...determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area, and the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the historic environment, or will identify the need for further evaluation’ (Historic England 2015, 3).

Statute, policy and guidance context

- 1.4. The Site is located in the local authority of SWT Council, which was established on 1 April 2019 through the amalgamation of the former West Somerset and Taunton Deane districts. A new Local Plan for the Somerset West and Taunton area, which will replace the existing local plan documents of the each of the former districts, is currently in the initial stages of preparation. In the interim, the Taunton Deane Borough Council Core Strategy (adopted September 2012) remains the principal

planning policy document for the Site, along with selected saved polices of the Taunton Deane Local Plan 2004.

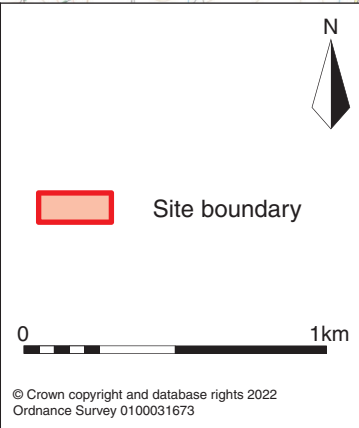
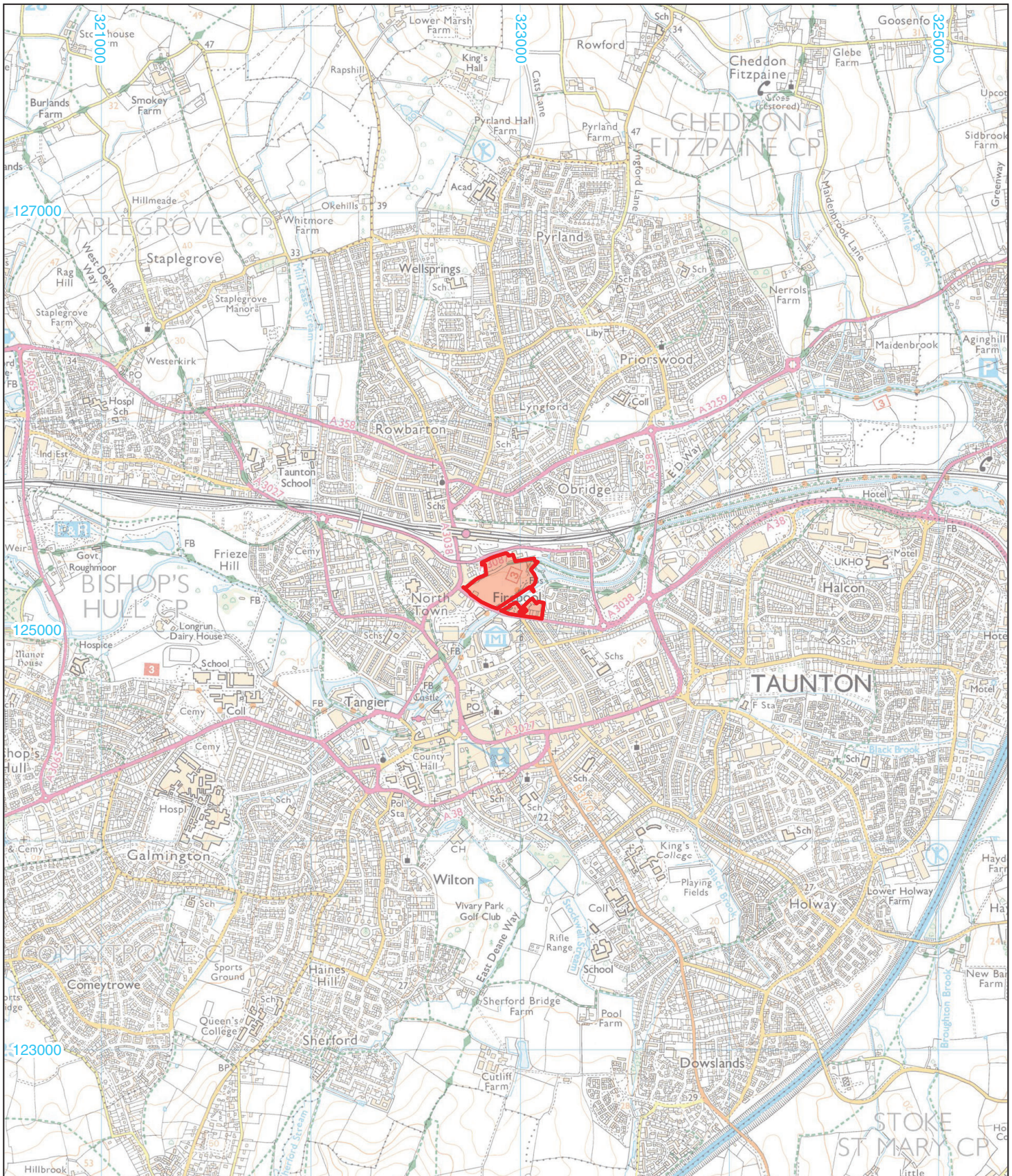
- 1.5. This assessment has been undertaken within the key statute, policy and guidance context presented within Table 1.1. The applicable provisions contained within these statute, policy and guidance documents are referred to, and discussed, as relevant, throughout the text. Fuller detail is provided in Appendix 1.

Statute	Description
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)	Act of Parliament providing for the maintenance of a schedule of archaeological remains of the highest significance, affording them statutory protection.
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)	Act of Parliament placing a duty upon the Local Planning Authority (or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State) to afford due consideration to the preservation of Listed Buildings and their settings (under Section 66(1)), and Conservation Areas (under Section 72(2)), in determining planning applications.
National Heritage Act 1983 (amended 2002)	One of four Acts of Parliament providing for the protection and management of the historic environment, including the establishment of the Historic Monuments & Buildings Commission, now Historic England.
Conservation Principles (Historic England 2008)	Guidance for assessing heritage significance, with reference to contributing heritage values, in particular: <i>evidential</i> (archaeological), <i>historical</i> (illustrative and associative), <i>aesthetic</i> , and <i>communal</i> .
National Planning Policy Framework (2021)	Provides the English government's national planning policies and describes how these are expected to be applied within the planning system. Heritage is subject of Chapter 16 (page 55).
National Planning Practice Guidance (updated July 2019)	Guidance supporting the National Planning Policy Framework.
Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 2 (GPA2): Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2015)	Provides useful information on assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness.
Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3 (GPA3): The Setting of Heritage Assets, Second Edition (Historic England, 2017a)	Provides guidance on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas, and landscapes.

Statute	Description
Taunton Deane Borough Council Core Strategy 2011-2028 (adopted September 2012); Saved policies of the Taunton Deane Local Plan 2004	Comprises the local development plan (local plan), as required to be compiled, published and maintained by the local authority, consistent with the requirements of the NPPF (2021). Intended to be the primary planning policy document against which planning proposals within that local authority jurisdiction are assessed. Where the development plan is found to be inadequate, primacy reverts to the NPPF (2021).

Table 1.1

Key statute, policy and guidance



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PROJECT TITLE
 Firepool, Taunton, Somerset

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

DRAWN BY EE **PROJECT NO.** CR1184 **FIGURE NO.**
CHECKED BY DJB **DATE** 23/08/2022 **1**
APPROVED BY JS **SCALE@A4** 1:25,000

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2. METHODOLOGY

Data collection, analysis and presentation

- 2.1. This assessment has been informed by a proportionate level of information sufficient to understand the archaeological potential of the Site, the significance of identified heritage assets, and any potential development effects. This approach is in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF (2021) and the guidance issued by CifA (2020). The data has been collected from a wide variety of sources, summarised in Table 2.1.
- 2.2. This assessment is based upon research conducted for the previous DBA of the Site which was carried out in 2015 and subsequently updated in 2017 and 2020 (CA 2015, 2017, 2020). The present assessment incorporates an updated review of Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER) data, which was acquired in August 2022.

Source	Data
National Heritage List for England (NHLE)	Current information relating to designated heritage assets, and heritage assets considered to be 'at risk'. Updated data obtained July 2020.
Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER) Updated data obtained August 2022	Heritage sites and events records, Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) data, and other spatial data supplied in digital format (shapefiles) and hardcopy.
Historic England Archives (HEA) Data obtained October 2015.	Additional sites and events records, supplied in digital and hardcopy formats. Data was not updated due to Historic England Archive closures during the Coronavirus pandemic.
Somerset Heritage Centre	Historic mapping, historic documentation, and relevant published and grey literature. Visited October 2015. No subsequent visit considered necessary.
Historic England's Aerial Photograph Research Unit	Vertical and oblique aerial photography ranging in date from the 1940s to present. Visited October 2015. No subsequent visit considered necessary.
Genealogist, Envirocheck, National Library of Scotland & other cartographic websites	Historic (Ordnance Survey and Tithe) mapping in digital format.
British Geological Survey (BGS) website	UK geological mapping (bedrock & superficial deposits) & borehole data.

Table 2.1 Key data sources

- 2.3. Prior to obtaining data from these sources, an initial analysis was undertaken in order to identify a relevant and proportionate study area. This analysis utilised industry-

standard GIS software, and primarily entailed a review of recorded heritage assets in the immediate and wider landscape, using available datasets.

2.4. On this basis a 250m study area, measured from the boundaries of the Site, was considered sufficient to capture the relevant HER data, and provide the necessary context for understanding archaeological potential and heritage significance in respect of the Site. All of the spatial data held by the HER – the primary historic data repository – for the land within the study area, was requested. The records were analysed and further refined in order to narrow the research focus onto those of relevance to the present assessment. Not all HER records are therefore referred to, discussed or illustrated further within the body of this report, only those that are relevant. These are listed in a cross-referenced gazetteer provided at the end of this report (Appendix 2) and are illustrated on the figures accompanying this report.

2.5. Site visits were undertaken in October 2015, to inform the original assessment, and again in July 2020 for the for the previous report (CA 2020). The primary objectives of the site visits were to assess the Site’s historic landscape context, including its association with any known or potential heritage assets, and to identify any evidence for previous truncation of the on-site stratigraphy. The site visits also allowed for the identification of any previously unknown heritage assets within the Site, and assessment of their nature, condition, significance and potential susceptibility to impact. The wider landscape was examined, as relevant, from accessible public rights of way. The most recent site visit took note of changes within the Site and its environs since the time of the original assessment.

Assessment of heritage significance

2.6. The significance of known and potential heritage assets within the Site, and any beyond the Site which may be affected by the proposed development, has been assessed and described, in accordance with paragraph 194 of the NPPF (2021), the guidance issued by ClfA (2020), Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 (HE 2015) and Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (Historic England 2019). Determination of significance has been undertaken according to the industry-standard guidance on assessing heritage value provided within Conservation Principles (English Heritage 2008). This approach considers heritage significance to derive from a combination of discrete heritage values, principal amongst which are: i) evidential (archaeological) value, ii) historic (illustrative and associative) value, iii) aesthetic value, iv) communal

value, amongst others. Further detail of this approach, including the detailed definition of those aforementioned values, as set out, and advocated, by Historic England, is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

Assessment of potential development effects (benefit and harm)

- 2.7. The present report sets out, in detail, the ways in which identified susceptible heritage assets might be affected by the proposals, as well as the anticipated extent of any such effects. Both physical effects, i.e. resulting from the direct truncation of archaeological remains, and non-physical effects, i.e. resulting from changes to the setting of heritage assets, have been assessed. With regard to non-physical effects or ‘settings assessment’, the five-step assessment methodology advocated by Historic England, and set out in the Second Edition of GPA3 (Historic England, 2017), has been adhered to (presented in greater detail in Appendix 1).
- 2.8. Identified effects upon heritage assets have been defined within broad ‘level of effect’ categories (Table 2.2 below). These are consistent with key national heritage policy and guidance terminology, particularly that of the NPPF (2021). This has been done in order to improve the intelligibility of the assessment results for purposes of quick reference and ready comprehension. These broad determinations of level of effect should be viewed within the context of the qualifying discussions of significance and impact presented in this report.
- 2.9. It should be noted that the overall effect of development proposals upon designated heritage assets are judged, bearing in mind both any specific harms or benefits (an approach consistent with the Court of Appeal judgement *Palmer v. Herefordshire Council & ANR* Neutral Citation Number [2016] EWCA Civ 1061).
- 2.10. In relation to non-designated heritage assets, the key applicable policy is paragraph 203 of the NPPF (2021), which states that:

*‘The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the **scale of any harm or loss** and the **significance of the heritage asset** [our emphasis].’*

2.11. Thus with regard to non-designated heritage assets, this report seeks to identify the significance of the heritage asset(s) which may be affected, and the scale of any harm or loss to that significance.

Level of effect	Description	Applicable statute & policy
Heritage benefit	The proposals would better enhance or reveal the heritage significance of the heritage asset.	Enhancing or better revealing the significance of a heritage asset is a desirable development outcome in respect of heritage. It is consistent with key policy and guidance, including the NPPF (2019) paragraphs 185 and 200.
No harm	The proposals would preserve the significance of the heritage asset.	<p>Preserving a Listed building and its setting is consistent with s66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990).</p> <p>Preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area is consistent with s72 of the Act.</p> <p>Sustaining the significance of a heritage asset is consistent with paragraph 185 of the NPPF, and should be at the core of any material local planning policies in respect of heritage.</p>
Less than substantial harm (lower end)	The proposals would be anticipated to result in a restricted level of harm to the significance of the heritage asset, such that the asset's contributing heritage values would be largely preserved.	<p>In determining an application, this level of harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, as per paragraph 196 of the NPPF (2019).</p> <p>Proposals involving change to a Listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, or change to the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, must also be considered within the context of Sections 7, 66(1) and 72(2) of the 1990 Act. <i>The provisions of the Act do not apply to the setting of Conservation Areas.</i></p>
Less than substantial harm (upper end)	The proposals would lead to a notable level of harm to the significance of the heritage asset. A reduced, but appreciable, degree of its heritage significance would remain.	<p>Proposals involving change to a Listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, or change to the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, must also be considered within the context of Sections 7, 66(1) and 72(2) of the 1990 Act. <i>The provisions of the Act do not apply to the setting of Conservation Areas.</i></p> <p>Proposals with the potential to physically affect a Scheduled Monument (including the ground beneath that monument) will be subject to the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979); <i>these provisions do not apply to proposals involving changes to the setting of Scheduled Monuments.</i></p> <p>With regard to non-designated heritage assets, the scale of harm or loss should be weighed against the significance of the asset, in accordance with paragraph 197 of the NPPF.</p>

Level of effect	Description	Applicable statute & policy
Substantial harm	The proposals would very much reduce the heritage asset's significance or vitiate that significance altogether.	Paragraphs 193 – 196 of the NPPF (2018) would apply. Sections 7, 66(1) and 72(2) of the Planning Act (1990), and the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), may also apply. In relation to non-designated heritage assets, the scale of harm or loss should be weighed against the significance of the asset, in accordance with paragraph 197 of the NPPF.

Table 2.2 Summary of level of effect categories (benefit and harm) referred to in this report in relation to heritage assets, and the applicable statute and policy.

2.12. The July 2019 revision of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) defines non-designated heritage assets as those identified as such in publicly accessible lists or documents provided by the plan-making body. Where these sources do not specifically define assets as *non-designated heritage assets*, they will be referred to as *heritage assets* for the purpose of this report. The assessment of *non-designated heritage assets* and *heritage assets* will be equivalent in this report, in line with industry standards and guidance on assessing significance and impact. They may not, however, carry equivalent weight in planning as set out within the provisions of the NPPF.

Limitations of the assessment

2.13. This assessment is principally a desk-based study, and has utilised secondary information derived from a variety of sources, only some of which have been directly examined for the purpose of this assessment. The assumption is made that this data, as well as that derived from secondary sources, is reasonably accurate. The records held by the HER are not a record of all surviving heritage assets, but a record of the discovery of a wide range of archaeological and historical components of the historic environment. The information held within these repositories is not complete, and does not preclude the subsequent discovery of further elements of the historic environment that are, at present, unknown.

2.14. The July 2020 site visit was undertaken in dry and clear weather conditions. Access was afforded within the Site, although such observations are limited since archaeological remains can survive below-ground with no visible surface indications

of their presence. It is possible that unknown archaeological remains may be present within the Site, and the presence of modern infrastructure may possibly have inhibited identification of any possible upstanding remains. There is an element of uncertainty over the nature, condition, frequency and extent of the potential buried archaeological resource; which may be clarified through intrusive investigation. There was also sufficient access to heritage assets to assess likely impacts upon the significance of the assets due to changes to their setting.

- 2.15. Due to government restrictions imposed in response to the 2020 coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, the Historic England Archives and the Somerset Heritage Centre were closed at the time of conducting this assessment. As such, data held within these repositories, including aerial photographs at the Historic England Archives, could not be accessed or reviewed for this assessment. However, as this information had previously been reviewed as part of the original 2015 Heritage Assessment (CA 2015), no subsequent visits were considered necessary to inform the present assessment.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Landscape context

- 3.1. The Site occupies relatively low lying, level ground in the floodplain of the River Tone, at elevations between 15m and 18m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The present course of the river, which divides the Site from north-east to south-west, is the result of later 20th century alterations. A former course is depicted on historical mapping meandering through the centre of the Site, and provides some potential for palaeoenvironmental deposits to be present.
- 3.2. The underlying geology within the Site is mapped as mudstone and halite-stone of the Mercia Mudstone Group, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 200 to 251 million years ago in the Triassic Period. This is overlain by Quaternary alluvium deposits, comprising clay, silt, sand and gravel (British Geological Survey).

Designated heritage assets

- 3.3. There are no designated heritage assets within the Site.
- 3.4. Within the study area there are a total of 12 Listed Buildings (Figure 3). Those within closest proximity to the Site include:
- the Grade II Listed Firepool Pumping Station I, located c. 60m to the east of the Site;
 - the Grade II Listed former shirt and collar factory premises of Barnicotts (**H**), c. 40m to the south of the Site;
 - the Grade II Listed Priory Lodge (**I**), c. 70m to the south;
 - the Grade II* Listed Priory Barn (**B**), c. 85m to the south;
 - and the Grade II Listed Gurdy (**G**), c. 25m to the west;
- 3.5. The St Mary and St James Conservation Area lies partially within the study area, approximately 170m to the south of the Site at its nearest extent (Figure 3). The Conservation Area contains a number of Listed Buildings, three of which, including the Grade II* Listed Church of St James (Figure 3, **A**), are also within the study area. The Staplegrove Road Conservation Area lies at the western edge of the study area.
- 3.6. There are no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields within the Site or the study area.

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- 3.7. Designated heritage assets are considered further within the settings assessment presented in Section 5.

Previous investigations

- 3.8. There is no record of any previous archaeological investigations within the Site. A number of previous investigations have taken place within the study area, and have predominantly focused on the site of the former priory, to the south of the Site.
- 3.9. A watching brief was undertaken within the northern area of the Site (Figure 2, **45**) by Cotswold Archaeology in 2021 (CA forthcoming). The watching brief identified and recorded the opening to for the 19th century canal lift for the former Grand Western Canal.
- 3.10. A series of watching briefs carried out during works to the County Cricket Ground, c. 40m to the south of the Site, in 2009, 2016 and 2018, did not identify any finds or features of archaeological significance (Figure 2, **40**).
- 3.11. The archaeological and historical development of Taunton has been the subject of an Extensive Urban Survey, prepared by Somerset County Council (Gathercole 2002).

Prehistoric

- 3.12. Indications of prehistoric activity within the study area are limited to a single findspot of a Neolithic axe found c. 140m to the south-west of the Site (Figure 2, **1**). Unstratified finds make up much of the prehistoric resource within the urban area of Taunton, where later developments are thought to have largely removed any more substantial remains. In the wider landscape, multiple phases of prehistoric settlement were identified during construction work on the M5 Motorway, c. 2.2km to the south-west of Taunton, while a hilltop enclosure at Norton Fitzwarren, c. 3km to the west, appears to have formed a focus for Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation (Gathercole 2002). Excavations and aerial photographic surveys have revealed traces of field systems and settlement remains across a wide area surrounding the hillfort, suggesting that the broad valley of the River Tone was a well-settled and intensively utilised landscape in later prehistoric periods.
- 3.13. The Site, containing a former course of the River Tone, may have offered opportunities for seasonal resource exploitation in prehistoric periods, but owing to

its low lying floodplain location, liable to waterlogging and periodic flooding, is unlikely to have been conducive towards any substantial or continuous settlement.

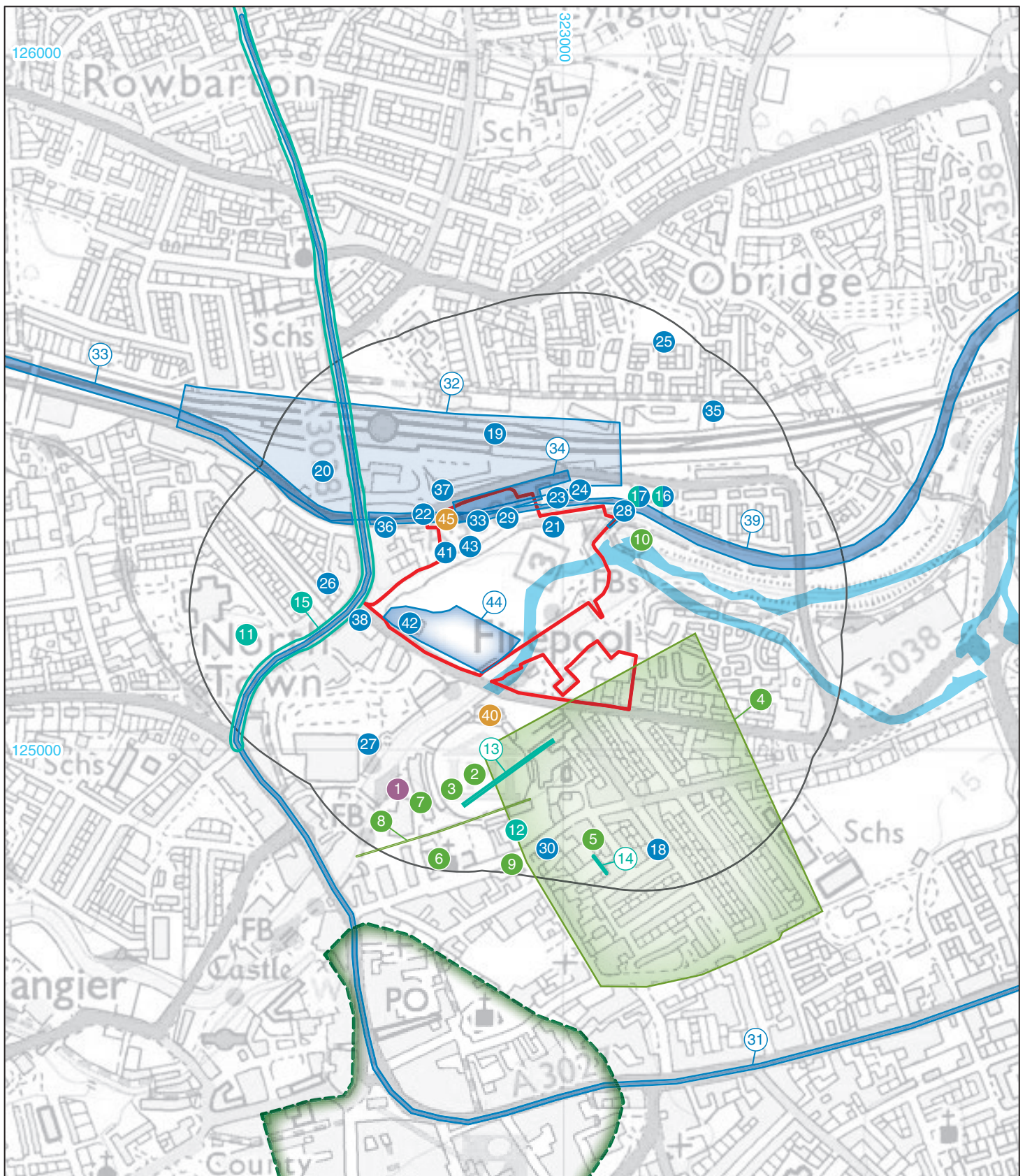
Romano-British

- 3.14. Although Roman settlement in the wider surroundings of Taunton is well-attested in the archaeological record, evidence for activity within the town itself is somewhat fragmentary (Gathercole 2002). Within the study area, a ditch of possible Roman date was recorded c. 90m to the south of the Site during an evaluation at Priory Barn (2), while a 1st century AD coin was recovered from a garden at Priory Villa in 1856 (3).

Early medieval and medieval

- 3.15. The earliest documentary reference to Taunton is in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of AD 722 (Gathercole 2002: 2). Shortly afterwards, probably by the mid to late 8th century, Taunton became the site of a Saxon minster and was granted to the see of Winchester, with the Kings of Wessex maintaining control over most of the manor. An early 10th century charter makes clear that Taunton had, by this point, developed into a commercial and administrative centre, acquiring its own mint by the mid-10th century. While the precise location and extent of this early settlement is unclear, the site of the minster and an associated cemetery has been identified beneath the later medieval castle, approximately 440m to the south-west of the Site (Leach 1984: 5-7; Clements 1984: 26-30; Gathercole 2002: 2).
- 3.16. No archaeological finds or features of early medieval date have been recorded within the study area. Based on the inferred limits of the Saxon settlement defined in the Extensive Urban Survey (Gathercole 2002), it is likely that the Site lay beyond the main focus of activity in this period.
- 3.17. Taunton continued to flourish into the medieval period, and by the time of the Domesday Survey of AD 1086, had 64 burgesses and a total population of around 300 (Aston and Leech 1977). The medieval town plan, as reflected in the layout of the present town centre, is thought to have been established during the early 12th century, under the Bishops William Giffard and Henry of Blois (Gathercole 2002).
- 3.18. In the early 12th century, the minster was converted into the Augustinian Priory of St Peter and St Paul. This was followed by the construction of the castle, built to serve as an administrative centre for the Bishop's estates, and the enclosure of the town within a defensive bank and ditch. The Site lies outside the medieval core of the town delimited by the defences (Figure 2).

-
- 3.19. Due to increased pressure on the availability of space and resources following the foundation of the castle, a grant of new lands to the east the town was made in 1158 for the relocation of the priory. These new lands extended from the borough's boundary ditch in the west to the St Margaret's leper hospital in the east, and from the river in the north to East Reach in the south (*ibid*). Much of this land is likely to have been occupied by meadows and fields, with the relocated priory precinct and associated buildings concentrated in a much smaller area just to the north-east of the town defences. The extent and layout of the priory precinct has not been fully defined, although excavations, together with documentary sources and limited cartographic evidence, indicate that the main focus of the buildings was to the north of the present Canon Street, with the eastern limit situated just outside Winchester Street. Quantities of 14th century pottery found during the construction of Priory Bridge Road have led to the suggestion that the northern extent of the precinct lay within or just beyond this area, thereby placing the south-eastern part of the Site within its conjectured limits (Gathercole 2002; 4). It is noted that watching briefs immediately the south of the Site, at the County Cricket Club, did not identify any remains of medieval date (40).
- 3.20. The only priory building to remain extant is the Grade II* Listed Priory Barn, c. 90m to the south of the Site (Figure 3, B), which is thought to date predominantly to the 15th or 16th century, with some earlier elements evident in its fabric. The area of the priory has, however, been subject to numerous archaeological investigations. These have revealed the remains of building foundations and wall footings, as well as boundary ditches and a probable bell pit. A considerable number of inhumation burials have also been identified in the southern portion of the inferred priory precinct, suggesting the existence of an associated cemetery in this area (5).



- Site boundary
- Study area
- Area of medieval town
- Former course of River Tone
- Prehistoric
- Medieval
- Post-medieval
- Modern
- Previous archaeological works

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PROJECT TITLE

Firepool, Taunton, Somerset

FIGURE TITLE

Recorded non-designated heritage assets

DRAWN BY	EE	PROJECT NO.	CR1184	FIGURE NO.
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- 3.21. The relocation of the priory appears to have encouraged the development of extramural settlement in the area to the north and east of the town defences, over which the priory would have held control. Although the present building is largely of 19th century construction, the Church of St James, c. 230m to the south of the Site (Figure 3, **A**), is first referenced in 1186 and was presumably established to serve this new suburb, later becoming a parish church following the Dissolution (Gathercole 2002). Evidence of medieval occupation in the vicinity of the church was recorded during an excavation at 18 St James's Street, c. 250m to the south of the Site (**6**). Other medieval features identified in the area of the medieval suburb include a possible leat (**8**) and a series of ditches and post-pits containing 11th to 12th century pottery (**7**). A row of timber-framed buildings previously located to the west of the priory are believed to have served as almshouses associated with the priory (**9**).
- 3.22. Given its location within the river floodplain, and in relation to the known areas of occupation, it is likely that the Site lay predominately within open land or meadows during the medieval period. The possible site of a 15th or 16th century fulling mill has been identified from documentary sources immediately to the east of the Site (**10**), suggesting the occurrence of small-scale industrial activity along the river.
- 3.23. An early 20th century account of excavations on the site of Taunton Castle notes that material removed during clearing of the castle grounds was used to provide foundations for the construction the cattle market in the south-west of the Site (**44**; PSANHS 1928). There is therefore some potential for unstratified medieval building debris to be present within this area. Any such finds would be of limited heritage significance due to the lack of any surviving context.

Post-medieval and modern

- 3.24. Despite the destruction of the priory following the Dissolution, Taunton continued to prosper in the early post-medieval period, with the suburb of St James becoming a focus for commercial and residential developments. Evidence for possible 17th century industrial activity, represented by brick-lined pits containing large quantities of pottery and animal bone, was identified c. 180m to the south of the Site, on the site of a later brass and iron foundry (**12**). Elsewhere within the study area, Flook House, a mid-17th century manor house is recorded approximately 160m to the west of the Site (**11**).

-
- 3.25. During the civil war between 1642 and 1646, Taunton represented a Parliamentary stronghold in a largely Royalist region. Consequently, the town was besieged on a number of occasions, with the final attacks in 1644-1645 prompting the construction of a series of defensive ditches, entrenchments, outworks and barricades. Excavations on the site of the County Cricket Club, c. 60m to the south of the Site, revealed a substantial linear ditch which was thought to form part of the defences (13), while a second possible defensive ditch has been identified at Priory Court, c. 220m to the south (14).
- 3.26. The 18th and 19th centuries saw a period of rapid expansion and industrial development in the town, stimulated by improvements in the transportation network. Turnpike roads were among the earliest of these infrastructure projects; the road between Taunton and Buncombe Hill, immediately to the west of the Site, was turnpiked in 1752 (15), with a tollhouse constructed at the south-west boundary of the Site in 1841 (38). The tollhouse was removed prior to the construction of Priory Bridge Road in the early 20th century.
- 3.27. In 1796, an act was passed authorising the construction of the Grand Western Canal, which was intended to connect Bristol with Exmouth. After several setbacks, construction of the canal began in 1831, and the section between Taunton and Tiverton was finally opened in 1838. At Taunton the canal was a tub boat design, with inclined plains and lifts, as proposed by the engineer James Green. The canal was fairly short-lived, with the section between Taunton to Lowdells closing in 1867, after which it was largely infilled and reused by the railway. The canal formerly passed through the north of the Site (33), terminating at a junction at Firepool, immediately to the east. No traces of the canal, or associated features including a former lift recorded just outside the north-western boundary of the Site (22) and a regulating lock at the north-eastern edge (23), now show any evidence of survival above -ground within the Site.
- 3.28. The Grand Western Canal joined the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal (39) immediately to the east of the Site. The Bridgwater and Taunton Canal was authorised by an Act of Parliament in 1811, and opened in 1827. The canal connected to the River Tone at Firepool wharf (16). A section of the canal to the east of the east of the Site remains extant. A number of bridges associated with the Bridgwater and Taunton canal are recorded within the study area (17, 24, 28), as well as the recently recorded remains of the canal lift (45).

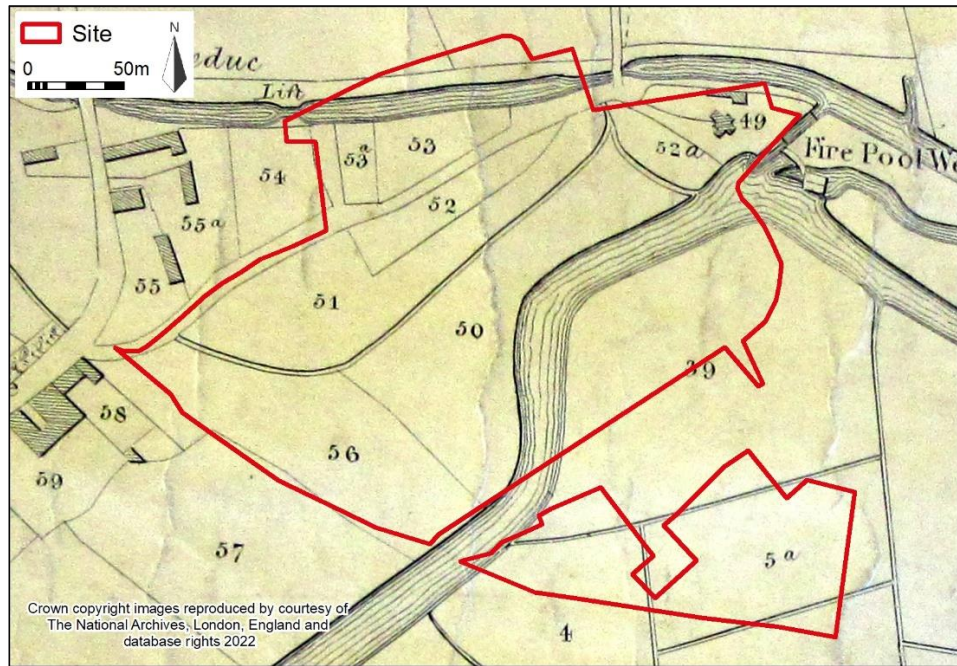
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- 3.29. Both canals were soon superseded by the Bristol and Exeter Railway (later the Great Western Railway), which was constructed c. 50m to the north of the Site in 1842 (35). A station (32) was established on the south of the line, the southern range of which is designated as a Grade II Listed Building (Figure 3, D). The Great Western Hotel, also Grade II Listed, was situated near the entrance of the station on the approach from the town (Figure 3, E). Following the purchase of the Grand Western Canal by the railway in 1866, the station and associated goods yard were expanded, and a goods avoiding loop was constructed immediately to the north of the Site. A goods shed lay to the south of the avoiding loop, within the north of the Site (34). This was replaced with a larger structure in the 1930's, following further expansion of the railway and goods yard. This replacement goods shed has recently been demolished, although a smaller depot building constructed to the south of this remains extant (29; Photograph 7).
- 3.30. A former water pumping house, used to raise water from the Grand Western Canal for the powering of locomotives, is recorded immediately north of the Site (37), although the precise location of the structure is uncertain. Following its destruction by fire in the 1870's, a replacement pumping station was constructed at Firepool Lock, to the east of the Site, over a pair of limekilns formerly associated with the Bridgwater Canal.
- 3.31. Other modern features recorded within the study area include a cement works (25), a sawmill (27) and a chapel and Sunday school (26). An anti-aircraft gun tower site, one of a number of Second World War fortifications associated with Taunton Station, lies to the north of the Site (19), while a partially buried air raid shelter has been identified to the west (36).

Development of the Site

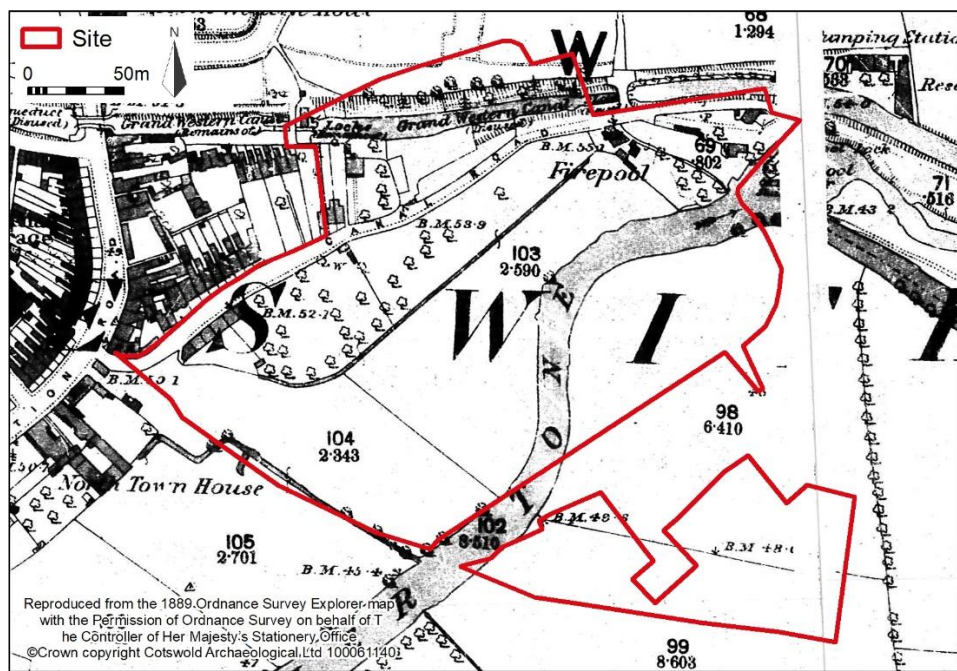
- 3.32. The earliest available cartographic source to depict the Site in detail is the 1840 Taunton St James Tithe Map (Photograph 3). This shows the Site predominantly within agricultural land, recorded in the accompanying Tithe Apportionment as comprising a mixture of meadow and pasture. The former course of the River Tone is shown meandering through the central part of the Site, and the Grand Western Canal is depicted in the north. A parcel of land in the north-west of the Site, to the south of the canal, is named in the Tithe Apportionment as 'wharf at lift' (parcel 53), in reference to the lift depicted immediately to the north-west (22). Canal Road is

shown along its current alignment in the north of the Site. Two structures, recorded as 'house and yard', are depicted near the eastern edge of the Site.

- 3.33. The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1889 (Photograph 4) records little change in the southern portion of the Site, which continues to be depicted within agricultural fields. A group of additional structures are recorded in the north-east of the Site, to the south of the canal, and two rows of terraced houses, associated with the eastward residential expansion of Taunton, are shown to the north-west, alongside Canal Road and extending in to the edge of the Site.
- 3.34. By the time of the 1904 Second Edition Ordnance Survey map (not illustrated), the railway had been expanded, with the goods depot (**34**) now depicted in the north of the Site. The Grand Western Canal is shown to have been infilled. A football ground and associated grandstand are recorded in the west of the Site. The Site is shown as relatively unchanged on the 1914 Edition Ordnance Survey (Photograph 5), although some additional buildings are illustrated to the south of Canal Road.
- 3.35. Some further development along Canal Road is recorded on the 1930 edition Ordnance Survey (Photograph 6), although the most significant change is shown in the south-west of the Site, which was by this point occupied by the new cattle market (**44**). The newly constructed Priory Bridge Road is also depicted along the southern Site boundary. The south-east of the Site is recorded as allotment gardens. The extant railway goods depot to the north of Canal Road (**29**), and to the south of the now demolished goods shed, is not depicted, though can be seen on a subsequent aerial photograph dating to 1947.



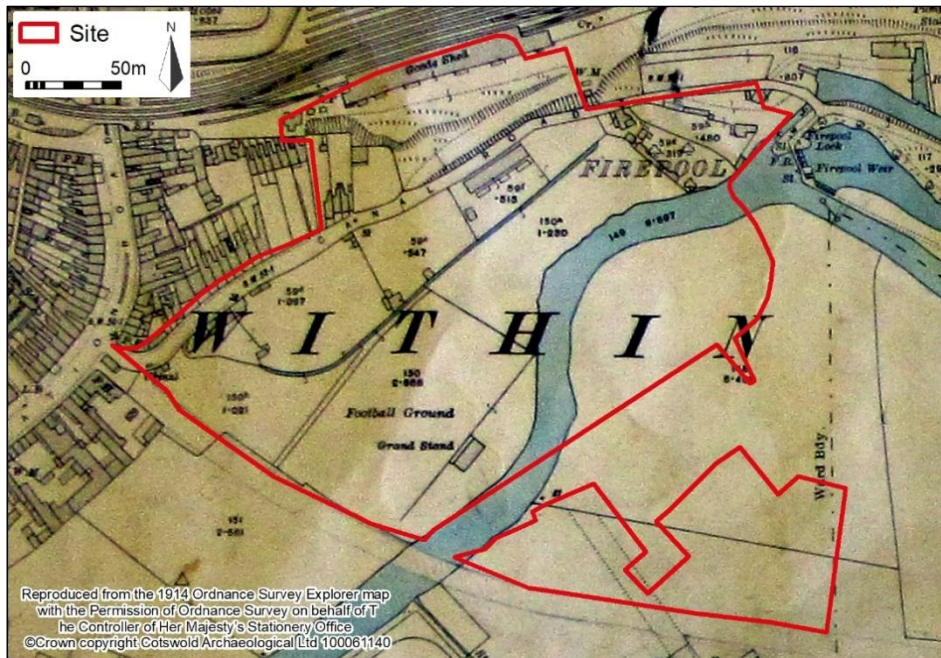
Photograph 3: Extract from the 1840 Taunton St James Tithe Map



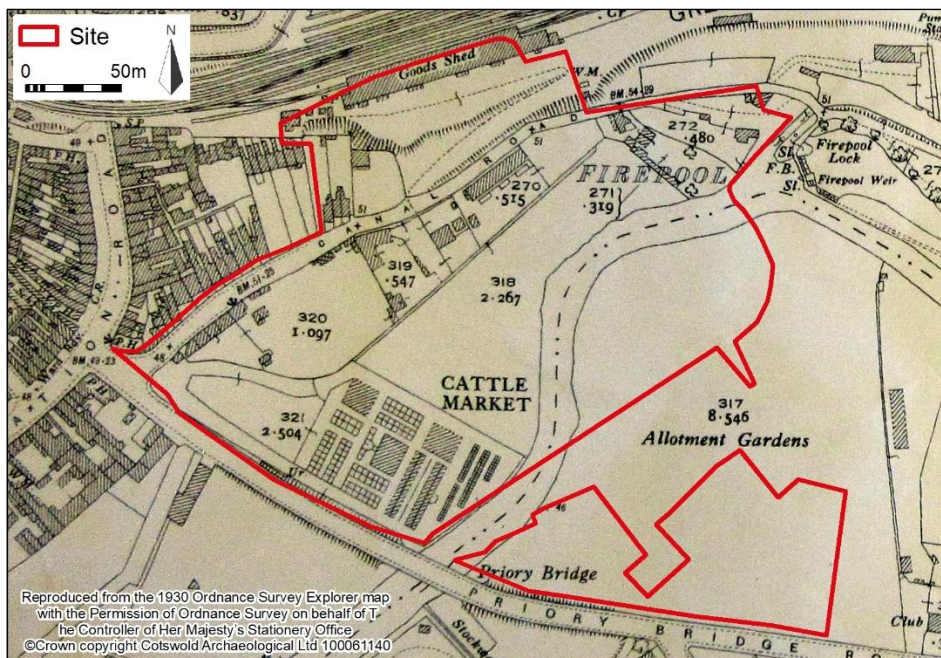
Photograph 4: Extract from the 1889 Ordnance Survey map

3.36. The livestock market had been expanded eastwards by the time of the 1959-1960 Ordnance Survey edition, and car parks constructed to its north and east. A coal yard is depicted in the north of the Site, to the south of the goods shed. The second goods depot (34) is also shown. No change is recorded in the south of the Site, which remained as allotment gardens. The Auction House, depicted to west of the cattle market, remains extant in the south-west of the Site (42).

3.37. The 1970 Ordnance Survey edition shows further expansion of the livestock market, with buildings, pens and car parks now occupying much of the central part of the Site. The River Tone had been straightened by this point, and is depicted on its present course. Car parks are recorded in the area south of the river. Car parks are recorded in the area south of the river.



Photograph 5: Extract from the 1914 Ordnance Survey map



Photograph 6: Extract from the 1930 Ordnance Survey map

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- 3.38. The layout of the Site remained largely unchanged until the early 21st century, at which time the cattle market was removed to make way for new development, along with the railway goods shed in the north of the Site and the majority of the structures lining Canal Road. Two buildings recorded within the north of the Site during the 2015 site visit, comprising No. 9 Canal Road (**41**) and a former commercial garage (**43**), have also since been demolished.
- 3.39. The goods depot building (**29**) and former Auction House for the livestock market (**42**) remain extant within the Site; detail on the date, form and significance of these structures within the site is provided in the following section.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE & POTENTIAL EFFECTS

Previous impacts

- 4.1. Previous impacts within the Site which may have compromised the survival of archaeological remains, if/where present, primarily relate to its urban development over the 19th and 20th centuries. Historic mapping indicates that since the later 19th century, the Site has been occupied by industrial, commercial and residential developments, including the Grand Western Canal, railway depot buildings, a livestock market and car parks. Ground disturbance associated with these developments would be most likely to derive from construction and demolition activities such as the excavation of the canal, digging of foundation trenches, ground reduction/levelling and excavation of drains and utilities, which may have led to the complete or partial removal of any earlier archaeological deposits.

The significance of known and potential archaeological remains within the Site

- 4.2. This assessment has identified that no designated archaeological remains are located within the Site; no *designated* archaeological remains will therefore be adversely physically affected by development within the Site. Known and potential heritage assets identified within the Site are discussed below.

GWR Goods Depot

- 4.3. The GWR Goods Depot (29; Photograph 7) was constructed in the early 1930's as part of improvements to the station goods facilities following the expansion of the railway. The building is rectangular in plan, and constructed of brick. An inscribed stone pediment on the the main, south-east elevation reads 'GWR Goods Offices'. The building was refurbished by SWT Council and currently in use as an office building.
- 4.4. The Historic England guidance document *Listing Selection Guide: Infrastructure: Transport* (Historic England 2017b) sets out specific criteria to be considered when assessing the significance of railway structures. This includes factors such as period, architectural distinctiveness, rarity, and group value. The GWR depot building is of a well-represented form and is not an early example. It does not incorporate any features of particular architectural note, and, due to the removal of associated depot buildings, it is now an isolated structure with relatively little intelligibility. The building does possess some evidential and historical value as an extant example of a railway goods depot, reflecting the 20th century development and expansion of Taunton

Station; but based on the above criteria, it is certainly not of a quality that would warrant statutory designation. The building does, however, hold a level of historic illustrative and associative value, in how it represents a phase of transport development in the area associated with the GWR.



Photograph 7: Former GWR Goods Depot in north of Site, viewed from the south

The Auction House

- 4.5. The Auction House, located in the south-west of the Site (42; Photograph 8), is first depicted on an aerial photograph dating to 1947, indicating a mid-20th century date. The building is rectangular in plan, and constructed of red brick, with a double pitched, corrugated metal roof.



Photograph 8: Former Auction House in north-west of the Site, viewed from the north-west

- 4.6. As a mid-20th century brick-built warehouse, the building is of a form which is well-represented, both locally and nationally, and is unremarkable in its design, with no notable architectural features. The building does possess some historical value as an illustrative remnant of a phase of the town's development, but is on the whole of very limited heritage significance.

Potential archaeological remains

Prehistoric and Roman

- 4.7. There is little evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity within the study area, although remains of these periods are recorded throughout the wider landscape surrounding Taunton. The Site is situated within the floodplain of the River Tone, a former course of which traverses the central part of the Site. Such a location may have been favourable for transient or seasonal resource exploitation in prehistoric periods, but due to the probability of flooding and waterlogging, is unlikely to have supported intensive settlement. As such, the potential for any highly significant remains of these periods to be present is considered limited. The presence of the former river course does however provide some limited potential for the preservation of palaeoenvironmental deposits, which would be of evidential (archaeological) value.

Medieval

- 4.8. The Site lies outside the main area of medieval settlement at Taunton, as defined by the town defences. The Augustinian Priory of St Peter and St Paul is believed to have been situated to the south of the Site, with the inferred northern extent of its precinct intersecting the southern Site boundary. As such, there may be some potential for remains associated with the former priory to be present within the southern area of the Site, although it should be noted that this boundary is largely conjectural. No finds or features related to the line of the former precinct are known from redevelopment works within this area. Any remains present are furthermore likely to have been subject to considerable disturbance as a result of previous development within the Site.
- 4.9. Given its location within the floodplain of the River Tone, it is probable that the majority of the Site would largely have been situated within open land or meadows associated with the medieval priory; any features present within the northern portion of the site may therefore be most likely to relate to agriculture or water management,

rather than significant settlement or other activity. It has been noted that there is also the potential for unstratified medieval building debris, derived from the clearing of Taunton Castle, within the area of the former livestock market in the south-west of the Site. These remains have been removed from their original context, and would therefore be of very limited evidential value.

Post-medieval and modern

- 4.10. The Site was subject to development in the 19th and 20th centuries, following the construction of the Grand Western Canal which ran through its northern part. A number of former features associated with the canal, including a lift and a regulating lock, have been identified immediately adjacent to the Site on historic mapping, but appear to have been removed around the time of the infilling of the canal in the late 19th century. It is considered that the canal and associated features are adequately understood through documentary and cartographic sources, and any surviving below ground remains of these would be of overall low heritage significance.
- 4.11. In addition, two structures, referred to as a house and yard, are recorded within the east of the Site on the 1840 Tithe map. Any buried remains of these former structures would be of some limited evidential value in informing the 19th century development of the Site, but would be of low significance overall.

Potential development effects

- 4.12. Construction works associated within the proposed development are expected to include excavations for building foundations and service trenches, levelling and re-surfacing. Such activities would have potential to disturb or remove any buried archaeological features which may be present within their footprint. As discussed above, however, the potential for currently unrecorded remains of prehistoric, Roman or medieval date within the Site is limited, and any features present are unlikely to be of such significance as to influence design or preclude development.
- 4.13. The proposals will lead to the removal of the extant Auction House building within the north of the Site (**42**), however the significance of this building is limited and not of such a level that it would impede redevelopment of the Site.
- 4.14. The former GWR goods depot in the north of the Site (**29**) is proposed to be retained and restored for public use as part of the new development. Subject to the final design of the renovations, the retention of this building would ensure that its limited heritage significance is preserved.

5. THE SETTING OF HERITAGE ASSETS

5.1. This section considers potential non-physical effects upon the significance of susceptible heritage assets within the Site environs. Non-physical effects are those that derive from changes to the setting of heritage assets as a result of new development. All heritage assets included within the settings assessment are summarised in the gazetteer in Appendix 2, and shown on Figure 3. Those assets identified as potentially susceptible to non-physical impact, and thus subject to more detailed assessment, are discussed in greater detail within the remainder of this section.

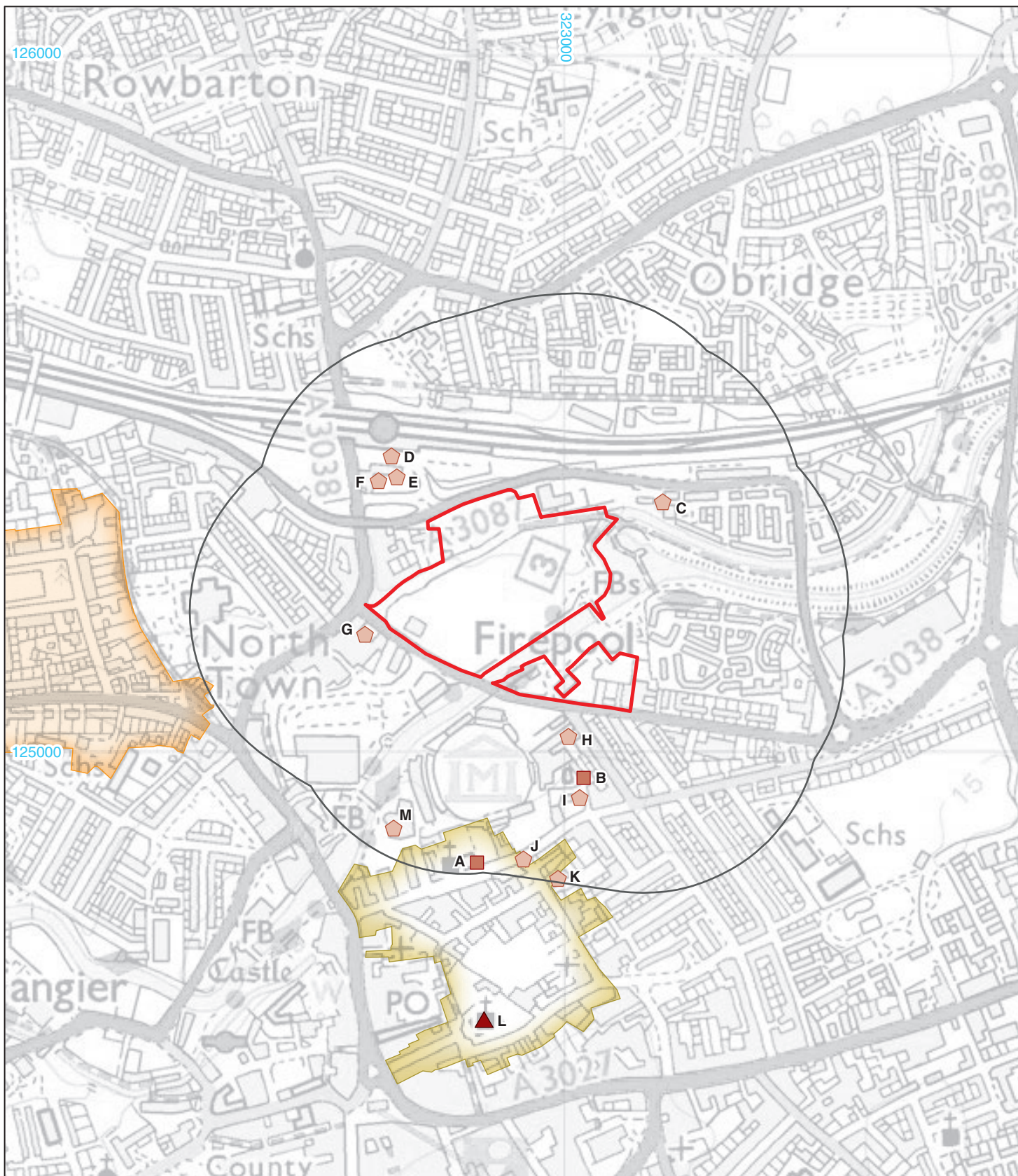
Step 1: Identification of heritage assets potentially affected

5.2. Step 1 of the Second Edition of Historic England's 2017a 'Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3' (GPA3) is to 'identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected' (see Appendix 1). GPA3 notes that Step 1 should identify the heritage assets which are likely to be affected as a result of any change to their experience, as a result of the development proposal (GPA3, page 9).

5.3. A number of heritage assets were identified as part of Step 1, as potentially susceptible to impact as a result of changes to their setting. These assets have been identified using a combination of GIS analysis and field examination, which has considered, amongst other factors, the surrounding topographic and environmental conditions, built form, and lines of sight, within the context of the assets' heritage significance. Those assets identified comprised:

- Grade II* Listed St James's Church (**A**);
- Grade II* Listed Priory Barn (**B**) and Grade II Listed Priory Lodge (**I**);
- Grade II Listed Firepool Pumping Station(**C**);
- Grade II Listed Taunton Station South Block (**D**), Grade II Listed Former Great Western Hotel (**E**) and Grade II Listed Wheel Tapper Public House (**F**);
- Grade II Listed Gurds (**G**);
- Grade II Listed Barnicott's (**H**);
- St Mary and St James Conservation Area.

5.4. These are discussed in detail below.



- Site boundary
- Study area
- ▲ Grade I Listed building
- Grade II* Listed building
- ◡ Grade II Listed building
- St Mary and St James Conservation Area
- Staplegrave Road Conservation Area



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5.5. The Site visit, and study area walkover, confirmed that there would be no non-physical impact upon the significance of any other heritage assets as a result of changes to the use and/or appearance of the Site. These unaffected assets include the Staplegrove Road Conservation Area, along with three Grade II Listed Buildings within the study area: 24 and 25 St James Street (**J**), a wall attached to the left of 17 Canon Street (**K**), and The Old Brewery House (**M**). The settings of these buildings is defined by their immediate streetscapes, within which they are best perceptible and intelligible as heritage assets. This setting would not be altered, and would be preserved, as would the assets' key contributing values and views. Views of the surrounding landscape (including the Site) from these assets are blocked by intervening built form, and there are no other discernible (non-visual) historical or landscape associations between any of these assets and the Site. As such, the proposals will not result in any non-physical harm to the significance of these assets, and they have not been assessed in any further detail.

Steps 2 – 3: Assessment of setting and potential effects of the development

5.6. This section presents the results of Steps 2 to 3 of the settings assessment, which have been undertaken with regard to those potentially susceptible heritage assets identified in Step 1. Step 2 considers the contribution that setting makes to the significance of potentially susceptible heritage assets. Step 3 then considers how, if at all, and to what extent any anticipated changes to the setting of those assets, as a result of development within the Site, might affect their significance.

Grade II* Listed St James's Church

5.7. St James's Church (Photograph 9) is a Grade II* Listed Building, located approximately 240m to the south of the Site. The present building is thought to have originated in the 15th century, or possibly earlier, though was restored and extensively altered in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The north aisle, nave and chancel are all of 15th date. The main building is constructed of grey-brown rubble, with ham-stone dressings and a slate-covered roof. The four-stage perpendicular tower, which represents a later 19th century near-replica of its medieval predecessor, is built in Williton red sandstone. The building design, and in particular the tower, is typical of the West Somerset Perpendicular style which emerged in the Tudor period.

5.8. The significance of the church is derived from a combination of evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal heritage values, as embodied within its physical fabric. Evidentially, the physical architecture and historic fabric of the church retain some

potential to provide valuable information regarding its historical use and development, while also allowing for an appreciation of the design and craftsmanship of its construction and adaptations over time. As noted in the Listing description, the surviving 15th century fabric is of particular importance in understanding the development of the Somerset Perpendicular style. Historically and communally, the church formed a key part of the history and development of medieval suburb of St James, serving as a focal point and later parish church for the local community. The association with the Augustinian Priory further adds to the historical value of the building.



Photograph 9: Grade II* Listed Church of St James, viewed from the east

Physical Surrounds – ‘What Matters and Why’

- 5.9. The church is situated within a rectangular churchyard, which is enclosed to the south and east by a stone wall topped with a wrought iron fence. The north and east boundary walls are of a clearly recent date, and appear to be contemporary with the construction of the cricket ground to the north. Nevertheless, the churchyard, together with its associated burial and religious monuments, has a strong historical and functional relationship with the church, forming an integral setting.
- 5.10. Beyond the churchyard, the wider surroundings of the church are of a predominantly modern, urban character, with 20th century commercial buildings present along St James’s Street, immediately to the south, and the cricket ground situated to the north. These modern elements, while representative of the dynamic character of the surrounding townscape, do not add to the significance of the church. Some aspects

of the wider surrounds do, however, inform significance of the building. St James's Street, alongside which the church is located, is believed to be of medieval origin, forming the main route between the enclosed medieval town and the Augustinian Priory. As a surviving element of the medieval priory, Priory Barn, to the north, also has an important contextual relationship with the church, with church having historically been a subordinate of the Priory.

Experience – 'What Matters and Why'

- 5.11. The architectural and historic interest of the church, derived from its physical fabric, is best appreciated from the within the interior of the building, and at close proximity externally from within the surrounding churchyard, as well from St James's Street, immediately to the south (Photograph 9). It is from these locations that that the historic fabric and fine architectural detailing of the church can be most clearly seen and appreciated, and thus this experience enhances the significance of the asset. This will not be altered by the proposed development.



Photograph 10: Grade II* Church of St James and Grade I Church of St Mary Magdalene, as viewed from within the Site

- 5.12. Visibility of the church from within the wider surrounding area would have been an important aspect of its design and function, with the prominent tower providing a dominant and easily recognisable marker within the historic townscape. The tower can be discerned in several views from the Site, appearing behind modern buildings alongside Priory Bridge Road (Photograph 10). These views, while demonstrating the intended visibility of the church, are in themselves incidental, and the Site itself does not offer a unique vantage point from which to appreciate the historical and

architectural qualities of the structure. The views are furthermore dominated by the prominent floodlights of the cricket ground which feature within the foreground to the church and appear of considerably greater height. Due to intervening built form, no views of the proposed development Site are available at ground level from outside the church.

- 5.13. There are further views available from within the wider townscape, including from Trenchard Way and Malvern Terrace, to the north, which show the Site and church tower juxtaposed. From these perspectives, the Site appears as part of the wider urban environment surrounding the church, and does not represent an integral part of its setting, or add to its intelligibility. The cricket ground floodlights again form a visually intrusive element within these views, drawing attention away from the church tower.

Summary of development effects

- 5.14. The proposed development would be visually screened within views at ground level from within the churchyard, with intervisibility with the Site limited to the distant views of the tower. The tallest of the proposed buildings would be located within the south of the Site, and would feature at the periphery of the views towards the church. Given the presence of the existing visually dominating cricket ground floodlights, it is considered that the current modern, urban character of the views would not change.
- 5.15. While the proposed development would be visible within views of the church from within the wider townscape, it would not affect the present contribution made by setting towards the significance of the church, which will continue to be seen within the context of its modern urban surroundings. The development represents a residential expansion of the town, which can be seen to reinforce the intended function of the church as a public amenity and place of worship for the surrounding settlement.
- 5.16. The development would not affect the ability to appreciate and understand the historic function and aesthetic qualities of the church; the major contributors towards its architectural and historic interest, embodied within its physical fabric, would remain unaffected, as would the key elements of its setting detailed above. It is therefore the case that no harm will be occasioned to the overall heritage significance of the Grade II* Listed Church of St James.

Priory Barn (B) and Priory Lodge (I)

- 5.17. The Grade II* Listed Priory Barn (Photograph 11) and Grade II Listed Priory Lodge (Photograph 12; formerly listed as St James's Vicarage) are located c. 85 and c. 70m to the south of the Site respectively, and together form a group. Priory Barn is thought to represent the only surviving building of the Augustinian Priory of St Peter and St Paul, and appears to date predominately to the 16th century. It is built of local stone rubble, with red brick repairs to its north end, and has a tile covered roof. The south elevation incorporates two early 14th century windows. To the south-west of the barn, St James's Vicarage comprises a two-storey house of early 19th century construction. The building is square in plan, and has stuccoed elevations with a castellated parapet and Gothic sash windows.



Photograph 11: Grade II Priory Barn, viewed from the south*

- 5.18. The significance of the buildings is derived primarily from the historic and architectural interest of their physical fabric. This is most accurately reflected in the evidential and historical illustrative value of the form and architectural detail of the structures. As a surviving remnant of the former medieval priory, the historical value of Priory Barn is also associative.

Physical Surrounds – ‘What Matters and Why’

- 5.19. A key aspect of the assets settings is the spatial and contextual relationships between the buildings themselves, which together form a coherent group of historic structures representing the medieval and later development of this part of Taunton. Both

structures' also have an important association with the nearby Church of St James, which once formed a subsidiary of the priory.

5.20. The buildings are set back from Priory Avenue, to the south, with Priory Lodge, the southernmost of the two buildings, surrounded to its south by a rectangular garden enclosed behind a stone wall. This garden area forms a strongly defined setting to the front of the building, providing a sense of seclusion which emphasises its nature as a private dwelling. This will not be altered by the proposed development.

5.21. To the north and west, the buildings are surrounded by a complex of modern buildings forming part of the County Cricket Club, beyond which lies Priory Road and further urban expansion. These modern surrounds are not representative of the historical context of the buildings, and in no way add to the understanding or the intelligibility of their architectural and historic interest. The Site, as part of these wider modern surrounds does not form part of the setting which contributes to the heritage significance of the buildings. While the southern part of the Site lies within the inferred boundary of the priory as recorded by the HER, this has not been confirmed and no visible features of the priory, beyond Priory Barn, remain extant.



Photograph 12: Grade II Priory Lodge, viewed from the south along St James Street

Experience – ‘What Matters and Why’

5.22. The architectural form of the assets, and their important interrelationships, can be best appreciated from within their immediate vicinity, with wider views from and towards the buildings obstructed by the surrounding urban development. During the site visit it was established that no views of the Site can be obtained from the Listed

Buildings and, likewise, the buildings are entirely screened within views from the Site by intervening developments, including the cricket ground.

Summary of development effects

- 5.23. Due to the scale and density of the surrounding built form, it is expected that there would be no visibility of the development within the available views from the Listed Buildings. The current experience of the buildings, as a discrete group enclosed by modern urban development, would not change, and the key aspects of their settings, comprising their surviving spatial and visual relationship with one another and the enclosing garden to the lodge, would be preserved. As such, and owing to the absence of any discernible historical or functional connections between the buildings and the Site, the proposed development would not harm the significance of the Grade II* Listed Priory Barn or the Grade II Listed Priory Lodge.

Firepool Pumping Station (C)

- 5.24. The Grade II Listed Firepool Pumping Station (Photograph 13) is located approximately 60m to the east of the Site. The structure comprises a hot air engine house which was constructed in 1866 over two earlier limekilns situated on a wharf along the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal. A water tank was added in 1877 and in 1889, the building was remodelled as a pumping station for the Bristol and Exeter Railway, using water from the canal to power steam locomotives. The limekilns forming the base of the structure are built of limestone rubble with keyed brick arches. The remainder of the building is predominantly of English bond red brick, featuring blue brick string and impost courses. The roofs to the main structure are hipped and slate covered, while a segmental corrugated iron roof overlies the wrought-iron water tank. Two sets of Pearn three throw engines reportedly survive within the building interior. The pumping station became redundant in the 1960s following the withdrawal of steam locomotives, and is currently disused and in a deteriorating condition.
- 5.25. The pumping station derives its significance from its architectural and historic interest, as reflected in its statutory designation. This interest primarily relates to the evidential value of the building's physical form as a surviving example of a late 19th century water pumping house, incorporating earlier features, namely the 1840's limekilns. As an illustrative remnant of the 19th century industrial development of Taunton, the building also retains historical value.

Physical Surrounds – 'What Matters and Why'

5.26. The pumping station is situated alongside a footpath running adjacent to an extant section of the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal. As vital aspect of its functionality, the canal would have been a key influence in the original siting of the pumping house, and earlier limekilns, and so contributes towards its historical, illustrative value. The railway to the north of the pumping house, and station to the north-west, represent further surviving elements associated with the pumping house, and thus also contribute to significance, although subsequent redevelopment in these areas has somewhat reduced the intelligibility of these contextual relationships. The immediate surroundings of the asset have also experienced recent modern development, with the construction of the Firepool Lock apartment buildings to its immediate north, east and west.



Photograph 13: Grade II Firepool Pumping Station, viewed from the south-east

5.27. The Site, although formerly containing a section of the adjoining Grand Western Canal and, later, part of the railway goods yard, retains little visual evidence of these former industrial features, which have since been removed. In its present, largely derelict state, the Site does not add to the ability to understand or appreciate the architectural and historic interest of the asset, and hence does not form a part of the setting which contributes to its heritage significance.

Experience – ‘What Matters and Why’

5.28. The pumping station is best experienced at close proximity, from the canal footpath immediately to the south (Photograph 13). It is from this perspective that the architectural form of the pumping station can be best appreciated, while the surviving

section of the canal and associated features, including a bridge and a lock, enable an understanding of the historical and functional context of the structure. The building's altered immediate context, with modern apartment buildings located either side, is apparent, and has resulted in the building now being experienced as part of an isolated group alongside the aforementioned surviving aspects of its immediate and functional setting (Photograph 14). The present neglected state of the asset somewhat detracts from the ability to appreciate its heritage significance.



Photograph 14: Grade II Firepool Pumping Station, viewed from the east with adjacent development and canal bridge visible

- 5.29. A good appreciation of the building within its immediate context, alongside the associated features, can also be attained from the footpath at the eastern edge of the Site, where framing vegetation obscures the adjacent modern developments from view (Photograph 15).
- 5.30. At present, views towards the Site from ground level outside the pumping station are limited by intervening vegetation, although views from the upper levels of the building would be possible. Owing to its functional nature, however, views from and towards the pumping station are not expected to have formed part of the original design intent of the building, and as such, do not contribute to its significance. Similarly, while the pumping station can currently be discerned in views from within the wider landscape, including from Priory Bridge to the south of the Site and from the pedestrian and cycle route along the River Tone, these views do not allow for a clear appreciation of the building as a late 19th century industrial structure. The Site lies within the foreground

of these views, and although its open character does enable wider visibility of the building, in its present disused state it is considered to form a negative aspect of its setting. The recently constructed apartment block at Firepool Lock can also be seen immediately adjacent to the Listed Building.



Photograph 15: Grade II Firepool Pumping Station, viewed from the footpath at the eastern edge of the Site

Summary of development effects

- 5.31. The proposed development would alter the present character of the Site, and introduce a new built element within the wider surroundings of the Grade II Listed pumping station. However, as discussed above, the Site does not bear any discernible functional or historical relationships with the asset, and does not inform its architectural and historical interest.
- 5.32. The proposed development would rejuvenate the present vacant character of the Site, and through careful design and use of landscaping, present an opportunity to enhance this aspect of the Listed Building's wider physical surrounds. The primary contributors to the significance of the asset, comprising the evidential and historical values inherent in its physical fabric, would be in no way affected, and nor would the key elements of its setting, namely the relationship with the adjacent canal and lock; it is expected that the existing view from the footpath at the eastern edge of the Site, which allows for an understanding of this immediate context, would be preserved as part of the development proposals. Consequently, it is considered that the proposed

development would not harm the overall heritage significance of the Grade II Listed Firepool Pumping House.

Gurds (G)

- 5.33. Gurds, a Grade II Listed Building, is situated approximately 25m to the west of the Site. It comprises mid-19th century shop, the front of which is attached to an older building. The structure is of two storeys in height and has stuccoed elevations, a tile-covered roof with bargeboards and finial, and ogee hoodmoulds on the shop front windows. Fascias on the main, shop front are supported by panelled pilasters, featuring painted tiles decorated with classical motifs. The building is adjoined to the west by a single storey extension.
- 5.34. The significance of Gurds is derived primarily from the historic and architectural interest of its physical form. This relates to the evidential and historical value as a surviving example of a 19th century shop front, representative of the historic development of this part of Taunton and featuring various architectural details. As a shop, a function that it still maintains today, the asset also has some communal value.



Photograph 16: Grade II Listed Gurds, viewed from the north-west

Physical Surrounds – ‘What Matters and Why’

- 5.35. Gurds is situated along Station Road, with its principal elevation fronting north-west, directly onto the street (Photograph 16). Numerous contemporary structures are present within the immediate vicinity of the asset, including the adjoining Crown and Sceptre public house. Through reinforcing the historic focus and context of the asset

as shop set alongside a street of 19th century origin, these immediate physical surrounds represent a key aspect of the setting of the asset, enhancing its historical, illustrative value. Although representative of the wider urban context of the building, areas beyond this immediate streetscape contribute relatively little towards its significance. In its present disused state, the Site is considered form a negative aspect of the building's wider setting.

Experience – 'What Matters and Why'

- 5.36. Due to its focus upon Station Road, it is the views towards and from the north-west elevation of Gurds that are key to the experience of this designated heritage asset, enabling an appreciation and understanding of the historic form and function of the building. Views from and towards the rear and side elevations of the building are restricted by the presence of adjacent structures, although some glimpsed views towards the east, in the direction of the Site, may be possible from second storey windows. Where afforded, these limited views of the Site are incidental and, owing to a lack of any clear historical association, are of no relevance to the asset's intelligibility or significance.

Summary of development effects

- 5.37. The proposed development would introduce a new modern built element into the wider surroundings of the Grade II Listed Gurds, and would potentially alter easterly, glimpsed, views available from upper storey windows of the building's side elevation. This change to the asset's wider surrounds would in no way affect the key components of the asset's architectural and historic interest, inherent within its physical fabric, and would not impinge on its important historical relationship with Station Road. As established above, the Site does not form a part of the setting that contributes to the significance of the asset, and no harm has therefore been identified.

Former shirt and collar factory premises of Barnicotts Limited Printers (H)

- 5.38. The former shirt and collar factory Barnicotts (Photograph 17) is a Grade II Listed Building, located approximately 40m to the south of the Site. The building dates to around the 1890's and is thought to have been designed by A B Cottam on behalf of the Tone Vale Manufacturing Company. The building was originally used as a shirt and collar factory, before being taken over by Barnicotts printers in the 1960's. Constructed in the Late Victorian Renaissance style, the building is of three storeys in height, and arranged over 12 bays with a three bay wing on the south-east side. The north-east and south-west gable ends feature giant brick pilaster buttresses,

supporting deep eaves. It is built of red brick, with concrete dressings and a slate covered roof. The principal elevation of the building faces north-east onto St Augustine Street.

- 5.39. Barnicotts derives its significance from its architectural and historic interest, as reflected in its statutory designation. This interest primarily relates to the evidential and historic illustrative value of the building's architectural detailing and physical form as an example of a late Victorian textile factory, reflecting the industrial development of Taunton.

Physical Surrounds – 'What Matters and Why'

- 5.40. Barnicotts is situated at the northern end of St Augustine Street, which was laid in the late 19th century. With the exception of those immediately east and west of Barnicotts, comprising modern commercial structures, the buildings lining the street are clearly Victorian in appearance. The preservation of this contemporary streetscape compliments the Listed Building, and serves to enhance the character and understanding of the historic development of this area of Taunton.



Photograph 17: Grade II Listed Barnicotts, viewed from the east along St Augustine Street

- 5.41. Throughout much of the building's history, its wider surroundings to the north-west were characterised by open land along the River Tone floodplain. This was altered considerably in the 1920's following the construction of Priory Bridge Road. While characteristic of the evolving urban environment and 20th century expansion of

Taunton, modern development within this area, including the Site, does not contribute to the intelligibility or significance of the Listed Building.

Experience – ‘What Matters and Why’

- 5.42. Barnicotts is primarily experienced from St Augustine Street (Photograph 17), or from the western approach along Priory Bridge Road. It is from these perspectives that the historic and architectural interest of the building can be most clearly seen and understood. However, the presence of dominating floodlights for the cricket ground, which from a prominent visual element to the rear of the Listed Building, somewhat detract from the appreciation of the asset
- 5.43. Intervisibility with the Site is largely limited to the south-eastern part, which can be seen within views obtained from the main, north-east elevation. Such views are not an intentional aspect of the building design, and would not add to the ability to understand or appreciate the architectural and historic interest of the asset. Recent developments within the Site and the wider area, including a large office block, are already apparent within these views, and are representative of the modern urban character of the area. The remainder of the Site is visually screened from the building by intervening buildings and trees to the north-west, although some glimpsed views may be possible from upper storey windows on the rear and side elevations. Again, these views are of no relevance to the significance of the building.



Photograph 18: Grade II Listed Barnicotts, viewed from the north-east from within the Site

5.44. Within views from the Site, along the river walk in the south-west, the Listed Building can be seen alongside the modern office block in the south of the Site, which from a prominent element in the foreground (Photograph 18). Although perceptible as a historical building, the asset cannot be clearly appreciated within these limited and distant views.

Summary of development effects

5.45. The proposed development would introduce a new modern built element into the wider surroundings of the Grade II Listed Barnicotts, and would result in a change to north-easterly views from the asset. As established above, the Site does not form a part of the setting that contributes to the significance of the Listed Building, and any visibility of the development, within the context of the existing urban surrounds, would not affect the intelligibility of the asset.

5.46. The introduction of new built form within the Site would alter or potentially block the the existing views of the building from within the south-west of the Site, however these do not offer a good appreciation of the asset. The development would have no impact on the major contributors to the architectural and historic interest of the building, as embodied within its physical fabric, or upon the key experience of the building from St Augustine Street. As such, it is considered that any change arising from the proposed development would not be of such a degree that it would result in any harm to the significance of the Listed Building.

Taunton Station South Block (D), Former Great Welrn Hotel (E) and Wheel Tapper Public House (F)

5.47. These three Grade II Listed buildings, comprising Taunton Station (south block), the former Great Western Hotel and the Wheel Tapper Public House, are located approximately 70m to the north-west of the Site, and together form a group. Taunton Station south block, the northernmost of the buildings, dates to around the opening of the railway in 1845. The structure is brick built, and of two storeys in height with lower wings to the sides. A canopy over the ground floor is supported by curved iron brackets with scrolled detail. Opposite the station block is the former Great Western Hotel (Photograph 19), a mid-19th century two storey structure, featuring sash windows with moulded surrounds and pilasters and entablature on its two doorways. The Wheel Tapper Public House (Photograph 20) lies to the south-west, near the entrance to the station, and comprises a two-storey building, also of mid-19th century construction, with colourwashed walls and a hipped, slate-covered roof.

5.48. The Listed Buildings derive their significance from their architectural and historic interest, as reflected in their statutory designations. This interest primarily relates to the evidential and historic illustrative value of the buildings' physical form as surviving examples of mid-19th century railway features, reflecting this important aspect of the historical development of Taunton. On account of their public functions, the buildings are also of communal value.

Physical Surrounds – 'What Matters and Why'

5.49. As an integrated and legible group of historic structures with a shared history and function, it is the spatial and contextual relationships between the building themselves that represents the most important aspect of their settings, together with other extant railway buildings and features. These key relationships would not be disrupted by the proposed development. In the case of the Great Western Hotel, the asset is set within enclosed grounds, with gardens to its front providing a sense of seclusion and adding a degree of aesthetic value.



Photograph 19: Former Great Western Hotel, viewed from the south

5.50. The wider surroundings of the buildings beyond the station, although forming part of the urban area of Taunton served by the railway, make a considerably lesser contribution to the significance of the buildings. While the Site formerly comprised part of the later goods yard associated with the railway, nearly all of the structures have been removed, and little visual evidence of this historical association now remains. In its present, largely disused state, the Site does not add to the ability to understand or appreciate the architectural and historic interest of the assets. The

recent construction of Trenchard Way, to the immediate north of the Site, has also served to visually and physically separate the buildings from this wider setting to the south.

Experience – ‘What Matters and Why’

- 5.51. The Listed Buildings are best experienced at close proximity, from within the station grounds and from Station Road, to the west. From these aspects the architectural form of the buildings can be fully appreciated, and their historical and functional context and relationships understood. Due to their focus on their immediate surroundings, including the railway station itself and, in the case of the Great Western Hotel, its private garden, wider views from the buildings are not anticipated to have been a part of the design intent of the buildings. Outward views from the station complex, where present, are generally limited to those towards the west from the Wheel Tapper Public House, with views to the south, in the direction of the Site, obscured by intervening built form.



Photograph 20: Grade II Wheel Tapper Public House, viewed from the south-west along Station Road

Summary of development effects

- 5.52. As discussed above, the Site does not add to the intelligibility or significance of the Grade II Listed Taunton Station South Block, Former Great Western Hotel, and Wheel Tapper Public House. The Site does not feature within the experience of these buildings, and it is not anticipated that the development would alter the existing views from the assets. The development would not alter the present modern urban

character of the assets wider surroundings, and any visibility of the Site from or alongside these Listed Buildings would not result in any harm to their overall significance, as derived primarily from their physical fabric.

St Mary and St James Conservation Area

- 5.53. The St Mary and St James Conservation Area lies c. 170m to the south of the Site at its closest extent. It encompasses the historic suburb of St James, which developed around the medieval priory of St Peter and St Paul. A detailed assessment of the special character of the Conservation Area is included in the St Mary and St James Conservation Area Character Appraisal document prepared by Taunton Deane Borough Council (2007). This describes the Conservation Area as having a 'structurally distinctive streetscape', reflecting multiple trends and phases in Taunton's development.
- 5.54. A range of building types and architectural styles are represented within the Conservation Area, including polite 18th century townhouses and former works and warehouse structures. This architectural diversity is described as providing 'a back street variety, depth and texture lost from elsewhere in Taunton'. The evidential and aesthetic values inherent in the physical fabric of its constituent buildings, both designated and non-designated, forms a primary contributor to the character of the Conservation Area, contributing to the local vernacular and collectively providing a visual illustration of the historical development of the area. The Grade II* Listed Church of St James (**A**; discussed separately above), and the Grade I Church of St Mary Magdalene (**L**; located c. 470m to the south of the Site) provide important focal points within the Conservation Area. Other key features include the historic street layout, as influenced by the medieval priory, and areas of open space.

Physical Surrounds – 'What Matters and Why'

- 5.55. The setting of the Conservation Area does not contribute strongly towards its significance. The Conservation Area lies in a transition zone between the medieval core to the south-west, and modern industrial, commercial and residential developments to the north, east and south. These modern surroundings serve to illustrate the continually evolving urban environment encompassing this historic suburb, but do not enable an appreciation of the historic and architectural qualities of the Conservation Area.

Experience – ‘What Matters and Why’

- 5.56. Due to the density of its built form, with structures positioned directly along street edges, the Conservation Area has a strongly enclosed feel. Key views identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal document are exclusively inward-focused. These include a celebrated and strategic vista along Hammet Street (Photograph 21), terminated by the imposing form of St Mary Magdalene’s Church (L; Taunton Dean Borough Council 2007). It is from here, as well from the surrounding churchyard and adjacent Magdalene Street, that the architectural detailing of this prominent historic building is most readily apparent. Glimpses of the distinctive church towers of St Mary and St James from elsewhere within the Conservation Area are also noted as key within the Conservation Area Appraisal.



Photograph 21: View along Hammet Street towards the Grade I Church of St Mary Magdalene

- 5.57. The Site does not feature within any of the identified key views, and due to the surrounding built form, is not visible from any points within the Conservation Area. Intervisibility between the Site and the Conservation Area is limited to the distant views of the towers of St Mary’s and St James’s churches (Photograph 10); such views do not enable a clear understanding of the character of the Conservation Area, or the significance of these key contributing elements. The Site can be seen alongside the church towers within some views from within the wider surrounding area, including Trenchard Way and Malvern Terrace, to the north; however, these views are fortuitous and heavily filtered, incorporating intervening built form including dominating modern elements such as the cricket ground flood lights. These views do

not contribute to the significance of these individual assets, and nor do they contribute to the character or appreciation of the Conservation Area.

Summary of development effects

- 5.58. In summary, the aspects which can be seen to contribute to the character and appearance, and thus significance, of the Conservation Area include the architectural and historic interest of the built heritage; the historic layout preserved in the open spaces and principal roads; the aesthetic quality provided by high quality built form as well as green spaces and vegetation; and the potential archaeological interest of the medieval suburb.
- 5.59. The Site does not lie within the Conservation Area, and therefore does not fall within the duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, specifically the duty to provide special attention to 'the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance'. It has, however, been assessed in order to understand the potential development effects resulting from changes within the setting of a designated heritage asset, as required by the NPPF.
- 5.60. The Site is located within the wider surroundings of the Conservation Area, within area of distinctly modern character. It does not represent an aspect that defines the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area as identified by this assessment. The proposed development is likely to be discernible on the skyline in some views which encompass the towers of Grade I St Mary Magdalene and Grade II* St James churches within the Conservation Area, however, owing to distance and the quality and character of the intervening built form, it will not noticeably detract from these non-specific views. The significance of these individual assets, as derived from their settings, will not be harmed by the proposed development, and neither will there be any harm to the character or significance of the St Mary and St James Conservation Area.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. This assessment has included a review of a comprehensive range of available sources, in accordance with key industry guidance, in order to identify known and potential heritage assets located within the Site and its environs which may be affected by the proposals. The significance of the identified known and potential heritage assets has been determined, as far as possible, on the basis of available evidence. The potential effects of the proposals on the significance of identified heritage assets, including any potential physical effects upon buried archaeological remains, and potential non-physical effects resulting from the anticipated changes to the settings of heritage assets, have been assessed. This assessment has not identified any overriding heritage constraints which would preclude the redevelopment of the Site.

Physical effects

6.2. There is considered to be limited potential within the Site for any surviving archaeological remains pre-dating its 19th century development, and any remains present are not anticipated to be of a high level of heritage significance. There is some potential for the preservation of palaeoenvironmental remains within the former course of the River Tone, which extends through the northern part of the Site, while some minor potential has been identified within the south of the Site for remains of medieval date associated with the Augustinian Priory of St Peter and St Paul, which lay to the south.

6.3. In the 19th century, the Grand Western Canal was constructed within the northern part of the Site, and a number of former features associated with the canal, including a lift and a regulating lock, have been identified within the Site on historic mapping. These appear to have been removed around the time of the infilling of the canal in the late 19th century and no upstanding remains are present within the Site. Any surviving below ground remains would be of low heritage significance.

6.4. Further industrial development occurred within the north of the Site in the 20th century with the expansion of the adjacent railway works, and a former GWR goods depot remains extant towards the northern site boundary. This building has been identified as being of some minor heritage significance, and is proposed to be retained as part of the development proposals. The proposed removal of a former auction house in the north-west of the Site would not represent a significant heritage impact.

Non-physical effects

- 6.5. This report has assessed the potential effects of the development upon the significance of designated heritage assets, through the alteration of their settings, in accordance with the accepted Historic England guidance. Assets identified for consideration comprised nine Listed Buildings and the St Mary and St James Conservation Area. It has been established that the proposed development would not alter any elements that contribute to the architectural and historic interest of these buildings, or the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and no harm to the overall significance of these assets will occur.
- 6.6. The proposals are therefore in accordance with the obligations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which require 'special regard' be given to the desirability of preserving Listed buildings and their settings. The proposals would furthermore be in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, and with local planning policies regarding heritage.

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Aerial photographs

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RAF/543/922	47	24 MAY 1960
RAF/58/3881	1	28 OCT 1960
RAF/58/3890	22	31 OCT 1960
RAF/58/3904	190	02 NOV 1960
RAF/58/3904	191	02 NOV 1960
MAL/65079	13	01 SEP 1965
MAL/65079	14	01 SEP 1965
OS/88035	27	11 APR 1988
OS/88035	28	11 APR 1988
OS/83191	2	23 SEP 1983
OS/83191	3	23 SEP 1983
OS/89158	914	08 MAY 1989
OS/89158	915	08 MAY 1989
OS/98443	813	16 NOV 1998
OS/98443	814	16 NOV 1998
OS/54T16	174	19 MAY 1954
OS/54T16	175	19 MAY 1954
OS/54T16	176	19 MAY 1954
OS/54T35	46	27 AUG 1954
OS/54T35	47	27 AUG 1954
OS/54T35	48	27 AUG 1954
OS/54T36	11	27 AUG 1954
OS/54T36	12	27 AUG 1954
OS/54T36	13	27 AUG 1954

APPENDIX 1: HERITAGE STATUTE POLICY & GUIDANCE

Heritage Statute: Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments are subject to the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The Act sets out the controls of works affecting Scheduled Monuments and other related matters. Contrary to the requirements of the Planning Act 1990 regarding Listed buildings, the 1979 Act does not include provision for the 'setting' of Scheduled Monuments.

Heritage Statute: Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are buildings of 'special architectural or historic interest' and are subject to the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'). Under Section 7 of the Act 'no person shall execute or cause to be executed any works for the demolition of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, unless the works are authorised.' Such works are authorised under Listed Building Consent. Under Section 66 of the Act 'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.

Note on the extent of a Listed Building

Under Section 1(5) of the Act, a structure may be deemed part of a Listed Building if it is:

- (a) fixed to the building, or
- (b) within the curtilage of the building, which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948

The inclusion of a structure deemed to be within the 'curtilage' of a building thus means that it is subject to the same statutory controls as the principal Listed Building. Inclusion within this duty is not, however, an automatic indicator of 'heritage significance' both as defined within the NPPF (2021) and within Conservation Principles (see Section 2 above). In such cases, the significance of the structure needs to be assessed both in its own right and in the contribution it makes to the significance and character of the principal Listed Building. The practical effect of the inclusion in the listing of ancillary structures is limited by the requirement that Listed Building Consent is only needed for works to the 'Listed Building' (to include the building in the list and all the ancillary items) where they affect the special character of the Listed building as a whole.

Guidance is provided by Historic England on '[Listed Buildings and Curtilage: Historic England Advice Note 10](#)' (Historic England 2018).

Heritage Statue: Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are designated by the local planning authority under Section 69(1)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'), which requires that '*Every local planning authority shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*'. Section 72 of the Act requires that '*special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*'.

The requirements of the Act only apply to land within a Conservation Area; not to land outside it. This has been clarified in various Appeal Decisions (for example APP/F1610/A/14/2213318 Land south of Cirencester Road, Fairford, Paragraph 65: '*The Section 72 duty only applies to buildings or land in a Conservation Area, and so does not apply in this case as the site lies outside the Conservation Area.*').

The NPPF (2021) also clarifies in [Paragraph 207](#) that '*Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance*'. Thus land or buildings may be a part of a Conservation Area, but may not necessarily be of architectural or historical significance. Similarly, not all elements of the setting of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance, or to an equal degree.

National heritage policy: the National Planning Policy Framework

Heritage assets and heritage significance

Heritage assets comprise 'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest' (the NPPF (2021), Annex 2). Designated heritage assets include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas (designated under the relevant legislation; NPPF (2021), Annex 2). The NPPF (2021), Annex 2, states that the significance of a heritage asset may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' looks at significance as a series of 'values' which include 'evidential', 'historical', 'aesthetic' and 'communal'.

The July 2019 revision of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) expanded on the definition of non-designated heritage assets. It states *that 'Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as*

having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.’ It goes on to refer to local/neighbourhood plans, conservation area appraisals/reviews, and importantly, the local Historic Environment Record (HER) as examples of where these assets may be identified, but specifically notes that such identification should be *made ‘based on sound evidence’*, with this information *‘accessible to the public to provide greater clarity and certainly for developers and decision makers’*.

This defines *non-designated heritage assets* as those which have been specially defined as such through the local HER or other source made accessible to the public by the plan-making body. Where HERs or equivalent lists do not specifically refer to an asset as a *non-designated heritage asset*, it is assumed that it has not met criteria for the plan-making body to define it as such, and will be referred to as a *heritage asset* for the purpose of this report.

The assessment of *non-designated heritage assets* and *heritage assets* will be equivalent in this report, in line with industry standards and guidance on assessing significance and impact. They may not, however, carry equivalent weight in planning as set out within the provisions of the NPPF, should there be any effect to significance.

The setting of heritage assets

The ‘setting’ of a heritage asset comprises ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral’ (NPPF (2021), Annex 2). Thus it is important to note that ‘setting’ is not a heritage asset: it may contribute to the value of a heritage asset.

Guidance on assessing the effects of change upon the setting and significance of heritage assets is provided in ‘Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets’, which has been utilised for the present assessment (see below).

Levels of information to support planning applications

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF (2021) identifies that ‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance’.

Designated heritage assets

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF (2021) explains that heritage assets 'are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance'. Paragraph 199 notes that 'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'. Paragraph 200 goes on to note that 'substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building...should be exceptional and substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance (notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites)...should be wholly exceptional'.

Paragraph 202 clarifies that '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'.

Development Plan

The relevant policy of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (adopted September 2012) comprises Policy CP8: Environment, which states:

'The Borough Council will conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment, and will not permit development proposals that would harm these interests or the settings of the towns and rural centres unless other material factors are sufficient to override their importance.'

In addition, Saved Policy EN23: Areas of High Archaeological Potential of the Taunton Deane Local Plan 2004 states:

'Where a proposal affects a site of archaeological interest or Area of High Archaeological Potential, or it is suspected the development could affect archaeological remains, developers must provide for satisfactory evaluation of the archaeological value of the site, and the likely effects on it before planning applications are determined.'

The Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (TTCAAP) was adopted in October 2008 and forms part of the Local Development Framework of the borough. The document sets out the

strategy for the regeneration of Taunton town centre, and provides the framework for the redevelopment of a number of key areas. The Firepool site is allocated within the TTCAAP for a mixture of residential and commercial development.

Good Practice Advice 1-3

Historic England has issued three Good Practice Advice notes ('GPA1-3') which support the NPPF. The GPAs note that they do not constitute a statement of Government policy, nor do they seek to prescribe a single methodology: their purpose is to assist local authorities, planners, heritage consultants, and other stakeholders in the implementation of policy set out in the NPPF. This report has been produced in the context of this advice, particularly 'GPA2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' and 'GPA3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets'.

GPA2 - Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment

GPA2 sets out the requirement for assessing 'heritage significance' as part of the application process. Paragraph 8 notes 'understanding the nature of the significance is important to understanding the need for and best means of conservation.' This includes assessing the extent and level of significance, including the contribution made by its 'setting' (see GPA3 below). GPA2 notes that 'a desk-based assessment will determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area, and the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the historic environment, or will identify the need for further evaluation to do so' (Page 3).

GPA3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets

The NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary) defines the setting of a heritage asset as 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced...'. Step 1 of the settings assessment requires heritage assets which may be affected by development to be identified. Historic England notes that for the purposes of Step 1 this process will comprise heritage assets 'where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way)...'.

Step 2 of the settings process 'assess[es] the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated', with regard to its physical surrounds; relationship with its surroundings and patterns of use; experiential effects such as noises or smells; and the way views allow the significance of the asset to be appreciated. Step 3 requires 'assessing the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the asset(s)' – specifically to 'assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the

ability to appreciate it', with regard to the location and siting of the development, its form and appearance, its permanence, and wider effects.

Step 4 of GPA3 provides commentary on 'ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm'. It notes (Paragraph 37) that 'Maximum advantage can be secured if any effects on the significance of a heritage asset arising from development liable to affect its setting are considered from the project's inception.' It goes on to note (Paragraph 39) that 'good design may reduce or remove the harm, or provide enhancement'.

Heritage significance

Discussion of heritage significance within this assessment report makes reference to several key documents. With regard to Listed buildings and Conservation Areas it primarily discusses 'architectural and historic interest', which comprises the special interest for which they are designated.

The NPPF provides a definition of 'significance' for heritage policy (Annex 2). This states that heritage significance comprises 'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic'. This also clarifies that for World Heritage Sites 'the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance'.

Regarding 'levels' of significance the NPPF (2021) provides a distinction between: designated heritage assets of the highest significance; designated heritage assets not of the highest significance; and non-designated heritage assets.

Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' expresses 'heritage significance' as comprising a combination of one or more of: evidential value; historical value; aesthetic value; and communal value:

- Evidential value – the elements of a historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, including physical remains, historic fabric, documentary/pictorial records. This evidence can provide information on the origin of the asset, what it was used for, and how it changed over time.
- Historical value (illustrative) – how a historic asset may illustrate its past life, including changing uses of the asset over time.
- Historical value (associative) – how a historic asset may be associated with a notable family, person, event, or moment, including changing uses of the asset over time.

-
- Aesthetic value – the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a historic asset. This may include its form, external appearance, and its setting, and may change over time.
 - Communal value – the meaning of a historic asset to the people who relate to it. This may be a collective experience, or a memory, and can be commemorative or symbolic to individuals or groups, such as memorable events, attitudes, and periods of history. This includes social values, which relates to the role of the historic asset as a place of social interactive, distinctiveness, coherence, economic, or spiritual / religious value.

Effects upon heritage assets

Heritage benefit

The NPPF clarifies that change in the setting of heritage assets may lead to heritage benefit. Paragraph 206 of the NPPF (2021) notes that ‘Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and 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 the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably’.

GPA3 notes that ‘good design may reduce or remove the harm, or provide enhancement’ (Paragraph 28). Historic England’s ‘Conservation Principles’ states that ‘Change to a significant place is inevitable, if only as a result of the passage of time, but can be neutral or beneficial in its effects on heritage values. It is only harmful if (and to the extent that) significance is reduced’ (Paragraph 84).

Specific heritage benefits may be presented through activities such as repair or restoration, as set out in Conservation Principles.

Heritage harm to designated heritage assets

The NPPF (2021) does not define what constitutes ‘substantial harm’. The High Court of Justice does provide a definition of this level of harm, as set out by Mr Justice Jay in *Bedford Borough Council v SoS for CLG and Nuon UK Ltd*. Paragraph 25 clarifies that, with regard to ‘substantial harm’: ‘Plainly in the context of physical harm, this would apply in the case of demolition or destruction, being a case of total loss. It would also apply to a case of serious damage to the structure of the building. In the context of non-physical or indirect harm, the yardstick was effectively the same. One was looking for an impact which would have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced’.

Effects upon non-designated heritage assets

The NPPF (2021) paragraph 203 guides that ‘The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgment will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset’.

APPENDIX 2: GAZETTEER OF SELECTED RECORDED HERITAGE ASSETS

Archaeological remains

Ref.	Description	Period	NGR	HER ref. HEA ref.
1	Butt of a Neolithic polished stone axe found beside the river Tone in 1974.	Prehistoric	ST 2275 2496	44418 190869
2	Ditch of possible Roman date, recorded during evaluation at Priory Barn.	Roman	ST 2301 2496	44699
3	Sestertius of Vespasian found 1856 in garden at Priory Villa.	Roman	ST 2299 2492	44423 190849
4	Priory of St Peter and St Paul. Numerous investigations have taken place in the vicinity, with some recording wall foundations and ditches probably relating to water management features.	Medieval	ST 2300 2490	44434 44436 44437 44700 57188 44452 12254 44435 17297 28186 28249 30681 32374 190832
5	Site of a probable cemetery associated with priory, indicated by several investigations which have recorded human remains.	Medieval	ST 2300 2480	16739 44438 28131 16738 26287 32371 32373
6	Evidence of medieval and post-medieval occupation, dating from 13th to 18th centuries, recorded during excavations at 18 St James Street.	Medieval	ST 2283 2482	44443
7	Medieval features, including ditches and post-pits containing 11th to 12th century pottery, recorded during watching brief at County Cricket ground.	Medieval	ST 2287 2497	28383
8	Possible medieval leat recorded during watching brief at County Cricket ground.	Medieval	ST 2269 2485	28384
9	Site of medieval almshouses recorded as belonging to priory.	Medieval	ST 2293 2483	44387
10	Possible site of a 15th/16th century fulling mill at Firepool.	Medieval	ST 2310 2530	44393
11	Flook House: 17th century manor house.	Post-medieval	ST 2255 2515	14709 190613

Ref.	Description	Period	NGR	HER ref. HEA ref.
12	Site of a brass and iron foundry.	Post-medieval	ST 2293 2486	14499
13	Possible Civil War fortification ditch recorded during excavations at County Cricket ground.	Post-medieval	ST 2296 2500	28388
14	Probable Civil war ditch recorded during investigation at Priory Court.	Post-medieval	ST 2304 2483	16568
15	Eighteenth-century Turnpike road between Taunton and Buncombe Hill, Broomfield	Post-medieval	ST 2064 2571	26228
16	A coal and culm wharf constructed on the canal to serve a pair of limekilns.	Post-medieval/ modern	ST 2312 2534	44375
17	Bridge over the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal associated with Firepool lock	Post-medieval/ modern	ST 2307 2532	22894
18	Remains of a 19th century building recorded during evaluation.	Modern	ST 2310 2484	44457
19	Second World War anti-aircraft gun tower site. One of four located around Taunton station.	Modern	ST 2289 2544	16683
20	Engine shed recorded on 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map.	Modern		16758
21	Site of the Sun Inn public house, recorded on 1970 Ordnance Survey map.	Modern	ST 2298 2532	16766
22	Former canal lift on the Grand Western Canal.	Modern	ST 2289 2535	44129
23	Former regulating lock on the Grand Western Canal.	Modern	ST 2297 2534	17492
24	Canal bridge recorded on 1888 Ordnance Survey map.	Modern	ST 2298 2534	17556
25	Cement works and engineering works shown on Ordnance Survey map of 1904.	Modern	ST 2309 2559	14680
26	Chapel and Sunday school shown on Ordnance Survey map of 1904.	Modern	ST 2266 2523	14688
27	'Saw Mills' shown on Ordnance Survey map of 1904.	Modern	ST 2272 2500	14689
28	Bridge over the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal associated with Firepool lock.	Modern	ST 2307 2532	44128
29	GWR goods depot, built in 1930's.	Modern	ST 2288 2531	22900
30	Late 19th century Malthouse.	Modern	ST 2290 2480	29208
31	Tramway.	Modern	ST 2270 2450	15693

Ref.	Description	Period	NGR	HER ref. HEA ref.
32	Taunton railway station, opened 1842, and associated goods yard and other buildings.	Modern	ST 2289 2548	29983 14659 14043 18286 32371
33	Grand Western Canal. Opened in 1838.	Modern	ST 2301 2621	44126 44130 1043293
34	Taunton Station goods depot. Constructed in 1932 on the site of an earlier goods shed.	Modern	ST 2290 2530	32370
35	Bristol and Exeter Railway. Opened at Taunton in 1842.	Modern	ST 3240 5560	12964 1359290
36	Partly buried probable air raid shelter.	Modern	ST 2275 2531	32384
37	Site of a water pumping engine house.	Modern	ST 2282 2534	32375
38	Toll house constructed in 1841. Demolished prior to construction of Priory Bridge Road in 1922.	Modern	ST 2271 2519	32433
39	Bridgwater and Taunton Canal. Opened in 1827.	Modern	ST 3000 2747	43826 44127 1341586
40	Watching briefs on improvements to County Cricket Club. No archaeological features or finds recorded.	Previous works	ST 2288 2504	28294 41085 36382
41	No. 9 Canal Road. Late 19th century terraced house.	Modern	ST 2282 2527	-
42	Mid-20th century brick-built warehouse associated with the livestock market.	Modern	ST 2278 2517	-
43	Modern garage building.	Modern	ST 2286 2530	-
44	Cattle market, constructed c. 1928	Modern	ST 2283 2515	37367
45	A watching brief undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in 2020 recorded a 19th century Canal Lift	Previous works	ST 22848 25324	-

Listed Buildings

Ref.	Description	Grade	NGR	HE ref.
A	St James Church	II*	ST 2285 2484	1059956
B	Priory Barn	II*	ST 2301 2496	1344774

Ref.	Description	Grade	NGR	HE ref.
C	Firepool Pumping Station	II	ST 2311 2535	1372427
D	Taunton Station (South Block)	II	ST 2273 2542	1344769
E	Former Great Western Hotel	II	ST 2274 2540	1234018
F	The Wheel Tapper Public House	II	ST 2271 2538	1059939
G	Gurds	II	ST 2269 2516	1344768
H	Former shirt and collar factory premises of Barnicotts Limited Printers	II	ST 2299 2501	1391326
I	St James's Vicarage	II	ST 2296 2499	1059953
J	24 and 25, St James Street	II	ST 2291 2485	1059957
K	Wall attached to left of No 17	II	ST 2297 2482	1278193
L	Church of St Mary Magdalene	I	ST 22884 24607	1278073
M	The Old Brewery House	II	ST 22755 24883	1344736

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