

A virtual meeting of the Trustees of the Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway was held on Thursday, the 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2021.

**Present:** Matthew Pease (President),  
Chris Lloyd (Vice President),  
Niall Hammond (Chairman),  
Alan Townsend (Vice Chairman and Assistant Secretary),  
Alan Macnab (Secretary),  
Ross Chisholm (Planning Officer),  
Peter Bainbridge (Membership Secretary),  
Norman Hugill.

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Caroline Hardie, Barry Thompson and Mike Renton. Niall Hammond informed the meeting that Jane Hackworth-Young will attend later in this meeting.

### **2. Minutes of the last Trustees Meeting**

The minutes of the last Trustees Meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2021 were presented. The meeting agreed that they were a true record of the proceedings.

### **3. Matters Arising**

Peter Bainbridge raised the issue of the Bellway site at Bowesfield, Stockton on Tees and asked for a progress report. Niall Hammond responded that he had written to Bellway Homes to ask that the area which was part of the Stockton and Darlington Railway was kept on a care and maintenance basis but he had not received a reply.

### **4. Declarations of Interests**

Niall Hammond declared an interest in the Cultural Recovery Fund payment.

### **5. Cultural Recovery Fund**

Niall Hammond left the meeting at this point and took no part in the discussions. The meeting was chaired by Alan Townsend.

Alan Townsend explained that Niall Hammond as Project Manager had raised two points to consider before this meeting. In the discussions while he was "out of the room" at the Trustees meeting of 7th January, it was realised that the Trustees had management responsibilities over the satisfactory conclusion of work, and would be involved in the staging of payments to Trustees. Niall's views in his email are very similar.

Due to a relaxation nationally of CRF grant end points, there is a previously unexpected need to stage the approved payment to Niall of £9,500. The work done so far is minuted under CRF

monthly, and as a reminder the principal heads of work appear on the agenda of this meeting. Alan Townsend had asked Trustees early in the week after studying Niall's text Niall's request for payment now of half the sum, £4750. Alan Townsend reported that the 8 Trustees agreed to the payment to Niall Hammond of £4,750 and there were no trustees against the payment. The trustees therefore agreed and ratified the payment of £4,750 to Niall Hammond

Alan Townsend reported that Niall Hammond had raised two question of Trustees' approval of payment of contract invoices in general. Alan Townsend asked the Trustees to agree that once the work had been completed, found to be satisfactory by the Project Manager the invoice should be paid or should it be the responsibility of the Project Manager to authorise payment after satisfactory completion of the work.

Following a discussion, the Trustees agreed that for projects of £1,000 or over the payments should be authorised by the Trustees following a report to the Trustees that the work was satisfactory and for projects under £1,000 the Project Manager be responsible for arranging payment following satisfactory completion of the work and his report to the Trustees.

NIALL HAMMOND RESUMED THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE MEETING.

## 6. Chairman's Activity Report

The Chairman's Activity Report is given in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

Niall Hammond reported that he had met David Madden the Chairman of the Auckland Trust and the Weardale Railway who asked how the Weardale Railway can contribute to the bicentenary. Further discussions would be held. At this point Norman Hugill declared an interest as an officer of the Weardale Railway.

## 7. Historic England Capacity Grant Report

Niall Hammond reported that this grant was staged over three years, we are now in year 2 and the budget is managed by the HAZ Officer. The year 1 projects consisted of the following two projects and which were nearly complete:

**Definitive Booklet.** A grant was provided for the production of a definitive booklet which Caroline Hardie was working on. The text and images had been completed and uploaded but the software deleted the references which had to be manually inputted which had been completed and printing of the booklet would take place within the next two weeks. A painting for the front cover had been donated by John Wigston which was gratefully received.

**Heritage Crime.** Niall Hammond reported that a draft had been completed and will be circulated to Trustees,

## 8. Culture Recovery Fund Grant Report

Niall Hammond reported on the following projects. It was noted that the grant aid (£35,000 including VAT), had to be spent by end of June, otherwise the National Lottery Heritage Fund may require unspent monies to be repaid.

**Business Plan.** Niall Hammond stated that he was discussing with the three Councils how they viewed the Friends as a body for consultation purposes and as a source of expertise or as a body which manages assets and employs staff. Examples of how other charitable bodies operate were

being looked at so as to provide a range of options as to how the Friends might undertake their business in future. A draft version of this plan would be brought to trustees in the next few months for debate and action.

**Website.** A company had been commissioned to produce a new Friends website. Caroline Hardie had sent some suggestions through to the company. Caroline Hardie been working closely to specify our requirements and to provide text and images to populate the new website.

**Volunteering.** Niall Hammond reported that there was a need for the skills which trustees have and the skills they need to fulfil their role as Trustees to be identified. A questionnaire had been circulated to trustees by Andie Harris Associates (AHA) who were undertaking this work for us and should be returned asap. A similar volunteering questionnaire would be issued to all current and potential volunteers in the near future. AHA were also researching volunteering models from other charities to help us inform our own development.

**Fund Raising.** £5,000 of the CRF grant had been allocated to the commission of a fund-raising strategy. Jane Robinson of True North Consultants had undertaken a preliminary piece of work for a fee of £1680. Jane had insufficient capacity to take the work forward in the time permitted and so a discussion had taken place between NH & AT with Patrick Boggon of Tarnside consultants to see how we could best use the remaining £3320.

**Budget Spending.** There will at present be an underspend on the original grant aid of £35,000. Unspent money would in theory have to be repaid to the NLHF. Providing spending was on items in the approved grant headings then it was in our interests to reallocate the underspend and make use of it before end of June. Subject to confirmation of some elements already commissioned, NH indicated that the underspend was in the region of £8000 excluding VAT. Niall Hammond asked if £1,000 can be allocated to CH for work on the website which consisted of two days' additional work on content development and proof reading/testing. A 10 year web hosting could also be paid for in advance. Trustees were asked in particular for any ideas for funding historic buildings and structures and which should be sent to Niall Hammond. It was suggested that funding could be used for design work and investigations on the Waiting Shed at Fighting Cocks. Niall Hammond reported that funding will only be for surveys and investigations and not rebuilding or capital costs. Ross Chisholm suggested the Mill Wall at Middleton St. George. Normal Hugill suggested the cattle dock at Fighting Cocks, Peter Bainbridge suggested the FC crane base.

Ross Chisholm asked if the trustees can see the Business Plan, the options and what is required of the Friends, Niall Hammond confirmed this would be circulated and debated once it is ready. Caroline Hardie will submit a proposal/report on the website work she has carried out and the time devoted to the work so far to provide a case for the additional 2 days work (£1000). The Trustees agreed that funding will be ring fenced for the website. If the grant is not spent it has to be returned to the HLF.

## **9. National Lottery Heritage Fund bid with Darlington Borough Council**

There was nothing to report. The first round bid was being drafted. Niall Hammond reported that Darlington Borough Council wanted to refurbish the Lime Cells as a base for the Friends. He had met the Assistant Director responsible for the project. The following options for the Friends occupation of the building had been tabled.

- a. A lease similar to the other heritage groups on the Railway Museum site on a tenancy basis for a peppercorn rent which can be either a short or long term lease. The Borough Council would be responsible for insuring the building and its upkeep and maintenance.
- b. Transfer the freehold of the building to the Friends who would be responsible for its care and maintenance and if the Friends ceased the building would revert back to Darlington Borough Council.

Niall Hammond referred to the plans for the building which had been circulated to the Trustees. The Assistant Director was keen to have the Friends on the Railway Museum site. Trustees questioned if the Freehold option was chosen the Friends would be responsible for managing the property and for the heating, lighting, cleaning, furnishing and bookings and there was some doubt that the Friends had the finance or the capacity to take over responsibility for the Lime Cells building.

Niall Hammond referred to the need for the building to be large enough for meetings and to have a kitchen, a place for refreshments, toilets, a lift, staircase, storage space and a library. The plans will be considered at a remote meeting next Tuesday, the 8<sup>th</sup> June at 10.30 a.m. Trustees wishing to attend should let Niall Hammond know.

Trustees welcomed the opportunity to occupy the Lime Cells building but considered that the Friends should do this on a leasehold basis with a review at 3 to 5 years to see if asset transfer or continued leasing was the way forward..

## **10. Rail Heritage Board.**

### **10.1 Economic Impact Assessment**

Alan Townsend reported that Hatch Associates had been commissioned to produce the Economic Impact Assessment of why millions of pounds should be put into regeneration of the area. The consultants could not make progress until they had an indication of the progress which was being made to arrange events which would draw visitors to the area. Ritchie Starrs asked for information on the events planned by the Friends in the lead up to and during the bicentenary year to draw visitors into the area.

Alan Townsend stated that he will circulate to Trustees and John Raw two tables – one for events which are planned in the lead up to 2025 and the other for events in 2025. These would include walks, talks, the conferences, school, exhibitions, theatre performances, live animation/rail activity that could take place and indicate likely dates (or season to give a rough idea), scale, cost, frequency, visitor numbers etc.

Alan Townsend will be sending an email to Trustees enclosing two tables to enable Trustees to submit their events to him as soon as possible.

JANE HACKWORTH-YOUNG ENTERED THE MEETING.

### **10.2 Branding and Wayfinding**

Niall Hammond showed the Trustees the draft brand and identity for the whole length of the

route and emphasised that the designs were in their early stages. The Trustees considered that the designs were a really good basis for future designs.

### **10.3 Interpretation Strategy**

Niall Hammond reported that 20 sites had been selected by the Rail Heritage Board for detailed interpretation. The drafts looked good and he will circulate them to the Trustees for comment.

### **11. The Globe**

Niall Hammond reported that the next edition of The Globe will carry an obituary to Brendan Boyle. He requested that remembrances of Brendan be sent to Caroline Hardie.

### **12. Membership Report**

The Trustees agreed that a letter be sent to Sue Boyle asking if she wished to continue membership of the Friends. Peter Bainbridge reported that there were 5 memberships which were pending. It was suggested Sue be offered life time membership of the FSDR in recognition of Brendan's work. RC would contact her.

### **13. HMRC Registration**

Peter Bainbridge and Niall Hammond reported that the Friends had now been registered with HMRC. This would allow a claim for gift aid to be made soon

### **14. Planning Officer's Report**

Ross Chisholm's report is given in Appendix 2 to the minutes. Ross Chisholm added that there is a proposal to construct a solar panel farm north of Burtree Lane and we will suggest that a financial contribution be sought from the developers to help pay for improvements to paths in the area, including Patches Lane, for the walking and cycling route. He had attended a meeting with Darlington Borough Council on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2021 which discussed the extension of the footpath along Whessoe Road, Darlington in order to make it safer for pedestrians. However the Borough Council were unwilling to extend the footpath because there was insufficient space which did not meet the Council's standards for a footpath.

**Platform 1 Planning Application.** Ross Chisholm reported that the planning application would be heard by Darlington Borough Council's Planning Committee on the 9<sup>th</sup> June. The Planning Officer's report recommended that the application to convert the pub to a convenience store be approved. The Planning Officer had ignored the views of the Borough Council's own Conservation Officer, the historic importance of the building and site and the views of the Friends, the Parish Council and the Save the Fighting Cocks Pub Group.

It was reported that one of the Trustees who is a Borough Councillor was discussing the application and recommendation with the Council's Controlling Group. Niall Hammond will send a briefing note to the Trustee to enable him to discuss the application again with the Chairman of the Planning Committee and the Controlling Group.

The Trustees were appalled at the recommendation to approve the planning application and that the Conservation Officer had not been listened to and were concerned that if the application was

approved it would make Darlington Borough Council's commitment to preserving and protecting its railway heritage very hollow.

Ross Chisholm agreed to attend the Planning Committee and to address the Committee to support the community who were opposed to the planning application. Chris Lloyd agreed to write an article for publication in the Northern Echo on the 8<sup>th</sup> June.

Niall Hammond reported that he had received a reply from the Tees Valley Mayor on the Bank Top Station and Teesside Airport interpretation and footway and gave details of the response.

Two workshops on the Northgate Townscape in Darlington will be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> June. Ross Chisholm agreed to attend the workshop on the 17<sup>th</sup> June.

## **15. Fighting Cocks Report**

Ross Chisholm reported that very little had happened on the Heritage hub. He was waiting for a reply from Creative Darlington on the proposed artwork and from Story Homes on planning commitments including interpretations. Slow progress was being made with grant aid and seeking a licence from Darlington Borough Council.

## **16. Area Group Activities.**

### **16.1 WASH**

It was reported that John Raw was very active in organising meetings, events and walks.

### **16.2 Other Group Activities**

It was reported that the signal had been put back on the Masons Arms in Shildon.

No other reports were given.

## **17. Events**

**7<sup>th</sup> August, 2021.** Jane Hackworth-Young reported that the Little Big Meeting will take place in Hackworth Park, Shildon on the 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2021. The Trustees agreed to the Friends attending the event. Jane Hackworth-Young agreed to arrange for a gazebo to be provided.

**25<sup>th</sup> September, 2021.** Barry Thompson submitted a written report giving the progress with the 196<sup>th</sup> birthday in Stockton on Tees on the 25<sup>th</sup> September which the Trustees agreed be published in the minutes of this meeting. Barry Thompson's report was as follows:

- We are to proceed with plans for the marquee event on Saturday 25 September in Stockton High Street
- Perhaps surprisingly, SBC want to proceed with the 'one big marquee' version for now, as opposed to the 'two smaller, socially-distant, marquees' version we were developing for last September

- Via "Save the Date" e-mails, Angela and I have secured the participation of 20+ traders / exhibitors so far (almost all old friends) with various invites, discussions, etc. going on elsewhere as we work towards an initial marquee floor plan
- We've also secured the participation of all our sub-groups and associates, so we're intending to re-visit / re-create the "Walking the Line" arrangement along one long side of the marquee as per our aborted plans for last year.
- In the week leading up to the event, there will be at least three performances of "Beer & Bread" - the street theatre production we are developing with InterActing UK Ltd which aims to tell the navy-story (via a pub crawl).
- We asked Tara Connor to check with Rueben Kench re the possibility of the previously discussed "Community Tea". We didn't detect much enthusiasm in the (zoom) room, but we'll push, and report back.

**4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2021.** Ross Chisholm reported that a portrait of Timothy Hackworth will be unveiled at the Institute in Shildon at 1 p.m. on the 5<sup>th</sup> September. There will be events on the 4<sup>th</sup> September at the Masons Arms, Shildon.

**24<sup>th</sup> September, 2021.** Jane Hackworth –Young reported that the Etherley Group will be displaying the Tom Walker's model steam engine.

**27<sup>th</sup> September, 2021.** Jane Hackworth-Young reported that there will be a walk at West Auckland as part of the Heritage Open Days programme. Details of the Heritage Open Days will be given at the next Trustees meeting.

#### **18. Any other business**

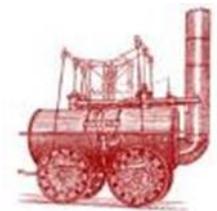
No other business was raised.

#### **19. Date of next meeting**

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 at 7 p.m.

## **APPENDIX 1**

**Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.**  
**WWW.SDR1825.org.uk. Registered Charity 1177252**



### **Chair's Report/activity for May 2021**

Weekly each Tuesday morning progress meeting with Brightwhite (plus Richie and Kirsty) on the progress of the Branding and Wayfinding strategy.

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May; S&DR Project Economic Impact Assessment workshop with Hatch Associates.

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> of May; meeting with David Maddan, Chief Executive Officer Auckland Project and CEO Weardale Railway.

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May; interview and information for article on the S&DR through 'The people's Friend' magazine.

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> May; meeting with Patrick Boggon of Tarnside Consultants regarding fundraising

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May; meeting/workshop with Brightwhite consultants re interpretation strategy.

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>; meeting with Drystone walling association regarding grant aid for a possible project at St Helen's Auckland (morning); Meeting with Brightwhite over comparative sites/means of interpretation with the S&DR.

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May; meeting with FSDR education trustee (TP) on education programme.

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May; Meeting with Hatch Associates regarding the S&DR economic impact assessment.

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> May; meeting with Ian Thompson (DBC) ref FSDR use of the Lime Cells as offices.

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May; Meeting with accountant regarding charity obligations and relations with HMRC.

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> May; catch up meeting with HAZ officer.

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May; S&DR Interpretation sub group meeting.

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> of May; Attend WASH sub group meeting at St Helens Auckland.

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May; meeting with rep from Durham University engineering dept regarding possible project links.

Correspondence/paperwork; Darlington RHQ lottery bid; Ben Houchen TVCA mayor; Cllr Richard Bell DCC; MPs along the line; Bellway Homes; Historic England listing team; Shildon 'Stute'; continuing work on FSDR Business Plan. Agenda/minutes/website and FB correspondence etc.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Planning Officer's Report; S&DR Trustees Meeting 3 June 2021**

Any updates on the following items will be presented at the meeting

#### **1 DURHAM COUNTY**

##### **a Proposed Industrial Unit at Dabble Duck Industrial Estate, Shildon. 20/00680/OUT**

Further to previous reports, this application has still not been decided.

##### **b DM/20/00713/FPA Change of use of land for use within a General Industrial (B2) Class use. Hackworth Industrial Park Darlington Road Shildon**

Further to previous reports, the application has still not been determined. The roadside trees and other landscaping are in need of attention. The County Council should look after it better or hand it over to the applicant.

#### **2 DARLINGTON BOROUGH**

##### **a Land at Vulcan Street/East of Wards Industrial Estate 19/00108/FUL**

Still nothing has been heard from the developer regarding designing and managing the S&DR corridor landscaping. The unauthorised railings have yet to be moved and the whole site remains unoccupied.

## **b Darlington Local Plan**

The modified Policies Map has omitted the Darlington Coal Depot Branch and the northern end of the Croft Branch is inaccurately plotted. I have drawn this to the attention of the Council planners and to the Inspector at the Examination in Public. Hopefully they will eventually get this right.

### **c 20/00939/RM1 Application for reserved matters approval relating to outline planning permission for residential development at Burtree Lane.**

I have a meeting with the Council and Richie Starrs of the HAZ project on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June to discuss the possibility of providing a footpath on the east side of Whessoe Road and other matters regarding the walking and cycling route to the north.

### **d Platform 1 conversion from public house to convenience store 21/00223/OUT. Outline application with details of access, appearance, layout and scale (landscaping reserved for future consideration) for the conversion, partial demolition and rear extension of public house (Sui Generis) to form convenience store (Use Class E) with car parking, new access and associated works. Platform 1 Darlington Road MIDDLETON ST GEORGE DARLINGTON**

The County Archaeologist has flagged up the former workers cottages in the south west corner of the site and is recommending conditions for a written scheme of investigation setting out a programme of archaeological work and a post investigation assessment.

The application may be submitted to the next Planning Applications Committee meeting, to be held on June 9<sup>th</sup>. At the time of writing, the recommendation is not known. There has been a recent campaign to support the application, but most local comment is in favour of keeping the pub.

### **e 21/00292/SCR | Request for a screening opinion pursuant to Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for a proposed solar farm array of up to 49.9 MW | Land North Of Burtree Lane Burtree Lane DARLINGTON**

The Council has determined that a formal Environmental Impact Assessment under the Regulations is not required. However, the developers have been informed by the Council of the importance of the setting of the S&DR and the proposed walking and cycling route.

### **f 21/00529/FUL | Residential development comprising of 260 no. dwellings including access, open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage systems and associated infrastructure and works | Land To The West & South Of Station Road Station Road MIDDLETON ST GEORGE DARLINGTON**

This is a resubmission of an earlier application which has been deferred until the outcome of the Local Plan is known. If approved there are opportunities to secure contributions towards the cost of S&DR enhancement works and information displays at the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub. We have until 14 June to make comments.

## **3 STOCKTON BOROUGH**

**a Layfield House 21/1007/RET | Part retrospective application for the erection of summerhouse in rear garden and replacement of 1.8m high fence to side | Layfield House Urray Nook Road Eaglescliffe TS16 0JN**

Further to last month's decision to object to the application, our submitted comments and accompanying email to the case officer are included below.

Hello Fiona,

I attach the comments of the Friends of the S&DR on the above application.

The recommendation to remove the unauthorised structure was arrived after much debate at the Friends Trustee meeting held on 6 May. It is their opinion that the present and past owners have adopted a somewhat cavalier approach to the property, despite being aware of the importance of it and the protection given to it by the planning process. You will recall the Friends drawing the Council's attention to the damaging repointing of the brickwork and the introduction of unsympathetic secondary glazing.

I visited the site today (10 05 2021) and I was disturbed to find that the entrance gates and the block paving in the yard had been removed, contrary to the listed building consent granted in 2019. The entrance has been widened and I am concerned that new solid gates will be installed, obstructing the important view up the side of the house where the tracks once ran. The hedge along the eastern boundary, with 11 South View, has been removed and replaced with a horizontal board timber fence, not in keeping with the heritage of the site and the listed building. All this conflicts with the assurances given in the Design, Heritage and Access Statement accompanying the 2019 application.

The Friends confirm their support for the Local Plan policies and this will be a good test of their effectiveness. We will help as much as we can to achieve a successful conclusion.

Kind regards

Ross Chisholm

FSDR

The Friends of the S&DR **object** to the application for the following reasons;

1 The submitted Design Heritage Statement is a misnomer as it gives no account of the heritage importance of the Yarm Branch of the S&DR and the importance of Layfield House, contrary to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and policy HE2 of the Stockton Local Plan. A properly researched and presented heritage statement and impact assessment should be required. This will demonstrate that the current and future owners are aware of the importance and sensitivity of not just the appearance and fabric of the house but also the heritage and archaeological value of the whole of the curtilage.

2 The summerhouse has been constructed over the site of the Yarm Branch tracks which provided access to the weigh house and on to the coal and lime depot, as recorded on the 1856 OS 25 inch plan (see below). The design and location of the development, including the replacement fence on Urray Nook Road, fails to safeguard the branch line and detracts from the setting of Layfield House, a Grade 2 Listed Building and Designated Heritage Asset, thus conflicting with Policy HE3 of the adopted Stockton Local Plan.

3 Construction of the summerhouse allowed no opportunity to investigate any surviving physical archaeological remains of the railway, contrary to the requirements of policy HE2 and may have resulted in causing damage to them.

4 The introduction of so much new timber work in the summerhouse and boundary fences fails to respect the heritage of the site and the design and appearance of Layfield House.

5 Paragraph 192 of the National Planning Policy Guidance 2018 states that LPAs should take account of ‘the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets...’ The unauthorised development detracts from the significance and therefore conflicts with this advice. The Friends therefore recommend that the summerhouse be removed and its site reinstated to its former condition.

If it is decided to grant permission, the Friends suggest that the following conditions be attached to the consent;

-The applicant be required to pay for the cost of creating and installing an illustrated public information display in a position to be agreed describing the history and significance of the S&DR Yarm Branch and Layfield House; and

-Treat the new fence on Uraly Nook Road to harmonise with the appearance of the listed building.

#### **b 21/0786/OUT Castlegate Shopping Centre And Multi-storey Car Park redevelopment.**

Further to last month’s report, various transport issues are to be resolved before permission can be granted.

#### **21/1037/COU Change of use from tanning studio to kitchen showroom to include raising of eaves and ridge height of existing roof and associated external alterations to existing windows and doors. | 704 - 706 Yarm Road Eaglescliffe**

Further to last month’s report our submitted comments are included below. Stockton Council has referred the application to Historic England for action to protect the building.

The Friends support the retention and improvement of the building to a viable use ensuring its long term survival. There are, however, several aspects regarding the details on which we comment.

#### **Heritage Appraisal.**

This is reasonable as far as it goes, and it recognises the significance of the building and the S&DR. However no attempt is made to suggest what the Yarm Road elevation originally looked like or how it changed over the years to its present appearance.

An addendum to the Heritage Appraisal should be requested in order to bring it up to date, to assess the building’s significance against the requirements of the current NPPF and the adopted local plan, and to address the findings of the Structural Condition Survey. It now has status as a non-designated heritage asset.

The Friends challenge the conclusion that the building is of ‘low significance in heritage terms’. The history and significance if the building has been researched by the Yarm Branch Study Group of the Friends and this is attached to these comments. We support Tees Archaeology’s request that a historic building survey be carried out and made available before work commences. This will help to establish the correct value of the building. The Friends would welcome the opportunity to inspect the interior in order to add to the Study Group’s research. Photographs submitted with the Structural Condition Survey show hand -made bricks of different periods.

#### **Comments on the detailed proposals**

### The Floor

If any of the existing concrete floor needs to be repaired or replaced, the opportunity should be taken to inspect what lies beneath to see if any older flooring, eg stable blocks, exist.

### Fireplace and Chimney

The significance of these should be established. They should be retained and enhanced.

### The Roof Structure

It should not be necessary to raise the height of the roof. The new trusses can sit on the wall at its existing height and be designed to allow a higher ceiling. Any sound timbers from the existing structure should be used in making the new trusses.

### Roof Pantiles

Fenland clay pantiles with a weathered finish are proposed but the Structural Condition Survey recommends reusing the existing tiles although the Design and Access Statement says they are modern. This should be clarified. The existing pantiles should be reused if they are in good condition and are not modern concrete versions.

### The Parapet

The submitted roof construction means that the parapet is to be removed. Its significance and condition should be explored, with a view to retaining it and positioning the roof trusses behind it.

### The Interior Wall

The Yarm Branch Study Group's research shows that the building was originally in a range of three joined buildings; any remaining evidence of these divisions should be retained. The Structural Condition Survey recommends that the internal wall immediately south of the double doors to the front elevation be replaced with a blockwork wall. The age, condition and appearance of this wall should be determined with a view to retaining/repairing it. The Proposed Plan shows no means of access to the display areas from the central access door; this should be clarified and details supplied.

### Yarm Road Elevation

Although there is no evidence of the original appearance of this elevation, neither the existing nor the proposed enlarged windows pay respect to a building of this age and heritage. A historic building survey may give clues to the original fenestration. Alternative designs which reflect better the heritage of the building and the character of the conservation area should be submitted. The same applies to the proposed design of the new entrance doors.

### Rendering

The proposal to give all the walls a new K-Rend textured render coat in Antique White is noted but the opportunity should be taken to take samples of successive layers of paint and render to determine the earlier appearance of the wall.

Ross Chisholm  
Planning Officer  
FSDR  
29 05 2021

