

Creams Mill and Hall Lane, Bolton

Environmental Statement: Non Technical Summary

On behalf of

Watson Construction (Holdings) Limited

November 2020

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1. Introduction

Purpose

- 1.1. This document is submitted on behalf of Watson Construction (Holdings) Limited, it summarises the Environmental Statement (ES) undertaken as part of the full planning application for the construction of 274 dwellings and repairs to the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal across two sites, namely Creams Mill and Hall Lane located in Little Lever in Bolton.
- 1.2. This document provides a summary of each of the chapters contained within the ES in non-technical language. The ES and appendices contain the full details of the assessment and should be referred to for detailed information on each of the disciplines assessed.

The EIA

- 1.3. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a formal assessment of topics where significant environmental effects have the potential to arise as a result of the proposed development. The Environmental Statement (ES) presents the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment including the proposed mitigation to reduce any of the impacts identified to an acceptable level.
- 1.4. The requirement of the ES is set out within the Town and Country (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 as amended ('the EIA Regulations'). The Regulations require that before consent is granted for certain types of development, an EIA must be undertaken.
- 1.5. Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations lists the types of development which must be accompanied by an EIA. Other developments which may require an assessment are set out in Schedule 2. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) must determine whether Schedule 2 development is likely to give rise to any significant environmental impacts. The proposed development falls within Schedule 2, Paragraph 10(b) (Infrastructure Projects). If the LPA determines that the development may give rise to any significant environmental effects, an EIA must be undertaken.
- 1.6. In accordance with the Regulation 2(1), developments which fall within 'sensitive' areas may be required to undertake an ES. Although the site is not directly located within a sensitive area, it is located with the Green Belt, within a river corridor and comprises a significant area of currently undeveloped land.
- 1.7. It is important to note that where EIA's are necessary, they are required to be proportionate to the proposal. The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) relating to EIA's states:

'The Environmental Statement should be proportionate and not be any longer than necessary to assess properly those effects. Where, for example only one environmental factor is likely to be significantly affected, the assessment should focus on that issue

only. Impacts which have little or no significance for the particular development in question will need only brief treatment to indicate that their possible relevance has been considered'.

- 1.8. Due to the tight timescales for the applicant to achieve planning permission, a screening request for the development was not submitted to the Council. Instead, it was agreed with the consultant team and the Council that as the proposed development exceeded the thresholds for an ES, that a scoping report would be prepared.
- 1.9. The scoping report was submitted to Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council on 14 September 2020. The scoping report set out the initial baseline positions from the identified potential environmental receptors and sensitivities.
- 1.10. A response was received from the Council on 14 October 2020. The Council accepted the approach proposed within the scoping report and the proposed topics to be covered within the ES, along with the technical reports to be submitted in support of the application. The topics to be covered within the ES are;
 - Drainage and Flood Risk
 - Ground Conditions and Contamination
 - Ecology and Nature Conservation
 - Landscape and Visual Impact
 - Traffic and Transport
 - Socio-Economics

The Proposal

- 1.11. The proposal seeks full planning permission for:

Residential development on land at former Creams Mill site alongside land off Mytham Road with associated internal access, landscaping and infrastructure including a new two-way bridge at the former Creams Mil site and provision of two woodland walks

Residential development on land south of Hall Lane and west of Newbury Road with new access from Hall Lane and associated landscaping, internal access and infrastructure including path along the canal frontage and path linking Moses Gate Country Park.

Repair to the canal breach alongside wider restoration works and re-lining of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal including restoration of towpath for the canal to be brought back into water.

- 1.12. As set out in the development description, the proposed development includes C3 (residential), associated access, infrastructure and hard and soft landscaping, as well as repairs to a breach on the Manchester, Bury and Bolton Canal.
- 1.13. A total of 274 dwelling units are proposed across both sites, of which 244 units would be affordable.
- 1.14. The proposed residential development at the Creams Mill site would provide **178** units. This would be split over the 4 distinct development parcels, including the land previously occupied by the mill.
- 1.15. 50 two bed houses, 51 three bed houses and 9 four bed houses will be provided across the whole of the Creams Mill site, with 49 one bed apartments and 19 two bed apartments on the lower site, closest to the River Irwell.
- 1.16. The Hall Lane site would deliver 96 new homes. The development would comprise 96 dwellings in total with 29 two bed; 31 three bed and 7 four bed houses and 18 one bed and 11 two bed apartments.
- 1.17. The development will enable repair and restoration works to the Canal breach which is expected to act as a catalyst to the wider restoration of the Canal, fulfilling the long held intentions of Bolton Council, the Canal and River Trust and the Manchester Bolton and Bury Canal Society, through putting water back into the Canal and reinstating the footways for the first time in 84 years.

Site Location and Description

- 1.18. This section provides a detailed description of the application site and its location. This section provides a detailed description of the application site and its surroundings.
- 1.19. The application site is split into two physical separate parcels of development:
 - Land along the river valley comprising the former Creams Mill Paper site stretching up to the 1936 breach to the Manchester Bolton and Bury Canal and an additional parcel of land to the east of Mytham Road
 - A triangular parcel of land to the south of Hall Lane and west of Newbury Road
- 1.20. Although the separate parcels are located 1.4km apart, the proposed development is required in its entirety to enable the repair to the canal breach and through pre-application discussions with Council Officers, it was agreed that the proposals should form a single planning application.
- 1.21. The submission documents supporting the planning application have largely described the sites in these ways, unless specified otherwise.

- 1.22. The Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (ADBA) that supports this application (prepared by Archaeological Research Service) provided some historical context for this section.

Development Sites

- 1.23. While there are two main development parcels identified above, for clarity this section splits the residential development at the Creams Mill from the works to the Canal. Due to the size of Creams Mill site, the proposed residential development would be further split into four separate development parcels (Sites 1-4) which is elaborated in Section 4.

Creams Mill

- 1.24. The Creams Mill site comprises two parcels of land located off Mytham Road in Little Lever, divided in two by the (Manchester, Bolton and Bury) Canal.
- 1.25. The 'top site' comprises a 1.6ha parcel of relatively flat land, screened effectively by existing residential development on Cedar Avenue which bounds it to the north, and by a dense belt of trees to the east, south and west. Access is taken from Mytham Road to the west from which point the site is visible from the public highway. The top site is largely flat and currently used for grazing and exercising horses, with the land falling away steeply through the trees down to the canal to the south.
- 1.26. The 'lower site' (2.7ha) is also accessed from Mytham Road, which currently narrows into single track falling steeply before crossing the canal and dropping down towards the river as you enter the proposed development site.
- 1.27. Existing access into the lower site is via a one-way bridge over the disused canal. The lower site is densely populated with self-seeded trees which have become more prevalent since the former buildings were demolished. It has a steep gradient down to the area of land along the waterfront, previously occupied by the Creams Mill paper mill. The paper mill only ceased use in 2004, and was demolished in 2011 following fire and vandalism, with large areas of hardstanding remaining.
- 1.28. There are many typically urban features associated with the lower site that include the extent of hardstanding (particularly towards the River Irwell), the retaining wall which supports the Canal and the existing access through to the lower site from Mytham Road. There are also remnants of buildings and other apparatus such as streetlamps which were previously in this area.
- 1.29. The area previously occupied by Creams Mill is formally allocated (Allocation 56SC). The area occupied by the former Creams Mill paper mill benefits from planning permission for 95 open market dwellings and the construction of a new bridge over the canal which lapses in April 2021 (application reference 97139/16). It has never been implemented and has proved unviable.

- 1.30. The Creams Mill site is identified on the Bolton Council Core Strategy Proposals Map as being within the Green Belt and the Little Lever and Kearsley Core Strategy Sub Area; within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (for coal/brick and clay); sites of biological importance due to the proximity to the canal; and within a designated landscape area. The Creams Mill site is not within a Conservation Area and does not contain any listed buildings or structures. There are no Tree Preservation Orders on site. The Canal towpath located between the two areas of the Creams Mill site is a Public Right of Way.
- 1.31. The top site is located within Flood Zone 1, and is at low risk of flooding, as well as the area immediately south of the canal. Most of the bottom site is located with Flood Zone 1, with some areas located within Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- 1.32. The site is partly located within a Coal Development High Risk Area and is known to contain contaminants and invasive species.
- 1.33. Taking this into consideration, the development of the lower site would be challenging given the topography, the investment and infrastructure required to deliver any development, the previously developed land and required remediation of contamination and invasive species, flood risk in part and large number of self-seeded trees in situ.

Hall Lane

- 1.34. The Hall Lane site is located approximately 1.4km as the crow flies to the west of the Creams Mill site. It comprises a roughly triangular piece of well-contained undeveloped land approximately 2.15 hectares in area. The site is bounded by residential development to the north/north-east, the Canal to the south, Hall Lane to the north and a woodland to the west. The Hall Lane site stands at the western extent of the Canal, where it terminates in a basin.
- 1.35. The site can be accessed currently from Newbury Road and Hall Lane by foot. There are existing established informal footpaths across the north of the site leading to the woodland and the footpath network to the south of the canal, which will be retained as part of the development.
- 1.36. The site slopes from Newbury Road down to the canal. The site was previously mined with the crater the remnants of the mining shaft access. This is reflected in the site being identified as within a Mineral Safeguarding Area for coal, brick and clay.
- 1.37. Like the Creams Mill site, the Hall Lane site is located within the Green Belt and the Little Lever and Kearsley Core Strategy Sub Area; within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (for coal/brick and clay); sites of biological importance due to the proximity to the canal; and within a designated landscape area. The site is not within a conservation area but there is a Grade II Listed mile marker for the canal within the red line boundary of the Hall Lane site.
- 1.38. There are no TPOs within the application site, however a blanket TPO (ref: 20) is located to the south-eastern end of the site towards the rear of the Ascot Road properties.

Manchester Bolton and Bury Canal

- 1.39. The Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal (the Canal) opened in 1797. As the name suggested, the Canal originally ran north from Manchester and Salford north to Prestolee near Little Lever. The Canal split in two at this point (via Prestolee Locks), with the main part of the Canal continuing towards Bury (which bypasses the Creams Mill site) and a branch that headed north-west to Bolton (towards the Hall Lane site). This Bolton branch is known to have gone further into the town however it currently terminates in a basing adjacent to the Hall Lane site.
- 1.40. The ABDA noted that the construction of the canals in this part of Bolton aided the coal mines in the area during the Industrial Revolution, in which a former mine shaft is known to have existed at Hall Lane.
- 1.41. In 1936, there was a breach in the Canal approximately 160 m to the west of the bridge over the Canal, which restricted navigation along this canal.
- 1.42. The Canal has a towpath which is defined as a Public Right of Way between the backfilled stretches. The towpath provides links with Radcliffe to the east and Moses Gate Country Park and Farnworth to the West. The towpath negotiates the canal breach through the towpath being stopped up and diverted around the breach of the Canal before re-joining the towpath.
- 1.43. The backfilled part of the Canal is within the applicant's ownership and is largely overgrown with vegetation.
- 1.44. The former paper mill also made use of the empty Canal by building a warehouse for storage close to the existing access bridge over the Canal. The building was demolished following cessation of the former paper mill, however the remnants of building material still evident in the Canal bed.
- 1.45. The applicant had several meetings with the Canal and River Trust (CRT) prior to submission of this application. The CRT are a charitable body that manage over 2,000 miles of rivers, canals and their infrastructure within England and Wales. The CRT took over management in July 2012, having previously been managed by British Waterways.
- 1.46. Following meetings with the CRT, it is understood that the redevelopment of the Canal is the CRT's top priority, with the CRT website confirming that 'plans are being formulated with a view to complete restoration of the canal within the next few years'.

2. Environmental Impacts

Drainage and Flood Risk

- 2.1. The drainage and flood risk chapter has considered the potential impacts of the proposed residential developments on the water environment, including appropriate assessments of the possible impacts on surface water, groundwater, and flood risk.
- 2.2. The construction phase mitigation measures would significantly reduce the risks to the identified receptors and the residual significance is assessed to be not significant
- 2.3. There are no identified adverse residual effects during the operational phases of the development.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

- 2.4. The ground conditions and contamination chapter assess the potential impact on ground conditions and the effects of contamination on human health, flora and controlled waters, buildings and properties, potential instability effects on buildings and infrastructure and also the potential sterilisation of mineral deposits.
- 2.5. Both development sites represent a risk to human health for the intended end use and a risk to controlled waters. The redevelopment includes the remediation of the soil, as well as gas and ground water mitigation measures. The remediation will remove or reduce the source of contamination and breaking contaminant exposure pathways and will bring about major beneficial impacts to both the site and the surrounding local environment.
- 2.6. There is an instability risk across the sites from mineshafts, surface working and shallow underground working. The redevelopment includes treatment stabilisation of the mining features and reduce the risk of instability.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

- 2.7. A full assessment of the impacts of the proposed development on Biodiversity, Ecology and Nature Conservation has been undertaken alongside a separate Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and a range of Phase II ecological surveys.
- 2.8. This assessment has been undertaken in line with best practice guidance and following comments received from Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. It provides an evaluation of the potential ecological receptors in a geographical context.
- 2.9. The assessment identifies potential impacts arising from the proposal, in the absence of mitigation, suggests mitigation measures and identifies the effects of the proposal following the implementation of the mitigation measures.

- 2.10. The assessment has had regard to European statutory nature conservation sites, UK statutory nature conservation sites, non statutory nature conservation sites, habitats and species.
- 2.11. The assessment concludes that there are no sites of international importance within the site boundaries or within 10km of the proposals. Two national important sites are within the zone of influence of the proposals. The geological Ashclough SSSI is unaffected but the Nob End SSSI is impacted but this impacted is significantly reduced through mitigation.
- 2.12. There are two non-statutory designated Sites of Biological Interest within the proposal sites and a further ten within the zone-of-influence. The proposed canal restoration represents a major long-term benefit to the two canal SBIs effectively reconnecting the two and producing a major wildlife corridor improvement.
- 2.13. Some protected, rare or notable fauna species are present on site or at least using the site for transit and foraging. Most significant is the presence of otter in the River Irwell however mitigation allows the impact on this species to be reduced to a point where it is not significant at a population level. Nesting birds are present throughout the sites and will be impacted upon. Landscape enhancements will generate a slight improvement for nesting and foraging birds in the long-term.
- 2.14. The main ecological aspect of the site is its gross contamination by problematic species. Whilst their presence presents challenges the proposals bring about a significant reduction in their presence. Eradication on the Creams Mill site is unlikely but may be achievable at Hall Lane but substantial control will be brought about to the benefit of native biodiversity and in the case of giant hogweed human safety.
- 2.15. The proposals are not considered to generate any substantial or moderate impacts, either direct or indirect, upon ecological receptors after mitigation. Landscaping improvements are likely to generate a minor improvement to the site ecology by providing new niche habitat and foraging opportunity.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 2.16. The Landscape and Visual Impact chapter has assessed the visual impact of the proposal and its possible effect on the landscape, with reference to the relevant guidelines from the Landscape Institute.
- 2.17. The proposals have been developed through an iterative process and mitigation incorporated where necessary.
- 2.18. National and local level planning policy encourages sustainable development in suitable locations that do not have significant effects on the landscape. The proposed development supports this in that it is on a site on which landscape and visual effects can be minimised, and is included within a wider setting whereby either, or both, sites would not be perceived. It is

considered that the site has capacity to accommodate the proposed development without significant residual, adverse effects on the landscape and visual amenity of the area.

Traffic and Transport

- 2.19. The traffic, transport and access related environmental impacts have been assessed in line with guidance from the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) with particular regard to the impact on the local highway network, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.
- 2.20. The assessment considers the effects both during construction and the operational stage of the development. The study area used for the assessment was agreed in advance with Bolton Council.
- 2.21. The effects on transport during the construction phase are below the level requiring assessment and would be lower than then effects of the operational phase.
- 2.22. A Construction Environment Management Plan will be prepared to ensure that the site access arrangements during the construction phase are carefully designed and agreed with the Council and does not present a danger to highway safety. It will also agree the construction traffic routes, with facilities for on site car parking, loading and unloading of plant and materials as well as wheel washing.
- 2.23. The adverse residual effects on transport once the site is operational is considered to be minor and therefore will have no impact upon the environment. Overall, the impact and effect on the receptors identified has found to be minimal. Following the implementation of the mitigation method identified the impact and effect of the proposed development will be negligible.

Socio Economic

- 2.24. This section of the ES focuses upon the socio-economic effects as a result of the proposed development. The assessment considered both temporary effects arising as a result of the construction phase and the permanent effects which would arise as a result of new residents occupying the housing and access to open space.
- 2.25. The majority of socio-economic effects described in this ES section are beneficial and permanent in the longer-term. However, the beneficial effects arising from the construction phase are temporary across a three-year construction period.
- 2.26. Approximately 240 construction workers per year on average would be supported, both on and off site, including those directly involved with the construction process and indirectly in the supply of goods and services to support the scheme. Construction workers are likely be drawn from across Bolton and the wider Greater Manchester area.

- 2.27. The proposed development would deliver 274 new homes, with around 90% being affordable homes and the remainder market housing. New housing in the Little Lever area, particularly affordable housing, will help meet a range of local housing needs and contribute towards addressing the under-supply of new housing in Bolton and in meeting the area's housing targets.
- 2.28. Once the proposed development is completed and occupied, it is estimated that the new housing would be home to between 560-640 residents. This resident population will help to address the local area's fall in population over recent years and, given that the new housing will likely accommodate working-age individuals and couples, as well as families, it will also help to address the area's above average ageing population. Allied to this is the role in which new housing plays in supporting the sustainability of local neighbourhoods through households' expenditure. It is anticipated that Little Lever can capture some of this via local retailers and other businesses.
- 2.29. The assessment has shown that the proposed development would place demands on local school and GP healthcare facilities. However, based upon the scale of likely demands, as well as a review of the available evidence on local capacity, the assessment concludes that these effects are likely to be insignificant adverse. As such, no mitigation measures are considered necessary as a result of the proposed development.
- 2.30. The proposed development also supports the enhancement and creation of a restored canal, towpath and a network of walking and cycle ways, as well as open spaces for public enjoyment and recreation. This will benefit both residents of the proposed development, existing local Little Lever residents and visitors to the area. While the evidence shows that the local area is well served by open spaces, the proposed development would lead to an increase the quality and quantity of local provision.
- 2.31. Considering cumulative effects, the beneficial effects identified within the identified impact areas would be further enhanced through the construction and occupation of the two further developments. While adverse effects were identified with regards to demands placed on local GP health facilities and schools from the proposed development, these were judged to be insignificant adverse. The assessment of the cumulative developments does not change this judgement. Given the modest scale of these demands, existing facilities would have the capacity to accommodate these residents. As such no mitigation measures are considered necessary.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1. The non-technical summary provides a summary of the full Environmental Statement (ES).
- 3.2. The purpose of the ES is to identify and assess any potential significant environmental impacts that may arise as a result of the proposal. The EIA considers the impacts of the proposal at the Site and the surrounding area where impacts may be felt outside of the site boundaries,
- 3.3. Each of the EIA chapters have been undertaken using best practice guidance from relevant professional bodies. The chapters take into account the requirement of the 2017 EIA Regulations and their findings presented in a comprehensive and consistent manner.
- 3.4. The findings of the EIA are summarized in the preceding chapter. The findings show that no significant environmental impacts are anticipated or expected as a result of the proposed development.
- 3.5. The EIA provides suggested mitigation measures to ensure any impacts of the proposed development are minimized as much as possible, even where no significant impacts are identified.
- 3.6. Overall, a thorough and detailed EIA has been undertaken which identifies that, following the mitigation proposed, no significant environmental impacts will arise from the proposal on any of the disciplines assessed.

