

THE OAKS

WREXHAM INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
WREXHAM

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

APRIL 2019 UPDATED OCTOBER 2019



Townscape: Chartered Town & Heritage Consultant Ltd
Unit 1 Carnforth Station
Carnforth Lancashire LA5 9TR
01524730382 / 07583152804
info@townscape.org.uk / www.townscape.org.uk

April 2019, Updated Oct 2019

All rights in this work are reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means (including without limitation by photocopying or placing on a website) without the prior permission in writing of Townscape except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Applications for permission to reproduce any part of this work should be addressed to Townscape info@townscape.org.uk.

Undertaking any unauthorized act in relation to this work may result in a civil claim for damages and/or criminal prosecution. Any materials used in this work which are subject to third party copyright have been reproduced under license from the copyright owner except in the case of works of unknown authorship as defined by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Any person wishing to assert rights in relation to works which have been reproduced as works of unknown authorship should contact Townscape info@townscape.org.uk

Townscape asserts its moral rights to be identified as the author of this work under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Reference	Date	Author	version
ROF Wrexham HIA	April 2019	Jason Kennedy	1
	Oct 2019	Jason Kennedy	2

Actual site not shown on cover image

contents

1. Introduction
2. Relevant Planning Policy
3. Scope of work
4. Landscape & Visual assessment
5. Contribution of setting to the heritage assets
6. Statement of significance
7. The proposal
8. Heritage Impact Assessment
9. Conclusion

Appendices

1. Introduction	2. Relevant Planning Policy framework	need extensive analysis and some proposals may not have any impact at all.
1.1 This report explores the potential impact on cultural heritage of a proposal to develop a site for commercial use known as The Oaks, which forms part of the Wrexham Industrial estate at Marchwiell, Nr Wrexham.	2.1 Heritage policies contained within the Planning Policy Wales December 2018 (Chapter 6 para 6.1.23 Archaeological remains) states <i>“The planning system recognizes the need to conserve archaeological remains. The conservation of archaeological remains and their settings is a material consideration in determining planning applications, whether those remains are a scheduled monument or not”.</i>	• If proposed change or development is likely to have an impact on setting, it is important that the applicant prepares a proportionate and objective written assessment to inform the decision-making process. This should take into account the significance of the asset and its setting and quantify the extent of the impact. The methodology and level of information should be proportionate to the case.
1.2 This heritage impact assessment has been written to reflect the planning requirements where development proposals may impact upon heritage assets and has been prepared based upon current and existing planning legislation and guidance.	2.2 Impact assessment process - Definition of ‘Setting’ within TAN 24 is as follows: <i>The setting of an historic asset includes the surroundings in which it’s understood, experienced, and appreciated both in the past and in the present. 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.</i>	• Development proposals should aim to minimise any harmful impact on the setting of a historic asset.
1.3 The proposed development site to which this report relates, currently has neither designated nor non-designated heritage assets. The site contains a number of former industrial structures (recorded on the local historic environment record HER) associated with the production of cordite during the period of 1941-1945 or thereabouts.	In addition, the document Setting of Historic Assets in Wales (2016) best practice guidance provides a proposed methodology for understanding and assessing impact on heritage assets.	2.3 The best practice guide also outlines when an impact assessment should be carried out and this assessment is as a result of the development site falling within one of the categories.
1.4 During pre-application discussions both with Wrexham Borough Council and CADW it has been suggested that some of the existing buildings/structures hold a degree of historic significance, enough to merit their being formally designated as scheduled ancient monuments.	• Setting is important to the way in which historic assets are understood, appreciated and experienced and contributes to their significance. • Setting often extends beyond the property boundary, or ‘curtilage’, of an individual historic asset into a broader landscape context. Intangible as well as physical factors can be important in understanding the setting of a historic asset. These may include function, sensory perceptions or historical, artistic, literary and scenic associations. • When change or development is proposed, it is important to identify the historic assets that might be affected, define the setting of each historic asset and assess the potential impact of the development on that setting. However, few cases will	3. Scope of work
1.5 In the absence of any formal scheduling to date, the development on the site has been reduced to reflect this scheduling intention. The broad master plan has made allowance for a heritage zone which contains the structures considered to be of interest.		3.1 The document ‘The Setting of Heritage Assets, Wales’ has set out guidance on managing change within the setting of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas and landscape. The guidance includes a methodological approach to assessing the effect of proposed development on the setting of assets, which has been followed in this study. The methodology has four key stages:
1.6 It is therefore important that in considering the site development, attention is given to the potential impact on heritage assets. The assessment, which has been carried out by Jason Kennedy, Director of Townscape, Chartered Town Planning & Heritage Consultants and follows the methodology set out in the TAN 24, The Historic Environment and the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Annex 6, Setting of Historic Assets in Wales.		• Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected. • Step 2: Define and analyse the settings to understand how they contribute to the ways in which the historic assets are understood, appreciated and experienced. • Stage 3: Evaluate the potential impact of a proposed change or development on those settings. • Stage 4: Consider options to mitigate the potential impact of a proposed change or development on those settings.

3.2 The impact assessment includes an assessment of the effect of direct and indirect impact, including physical changes, visual or aural impact on individual heritage attributes, assets, and intangible associations. Professional judgment has been used to evaluate the significance of effect. It is generally accepted that conservation is about managing sustainable change and that every reasonable effort should be made to avoid, eliminate or minimise adverse impacts on significant places. In accordance with planning policy however, it may be necessary to balance the public benefit of any proposed changes against the harm to the place. In this regard, an overall assessment of impact on setting has been made balancing any public benefits and dis-benefits within a summary and conclusion.

4. Landscape and visual Assessment

4.1 In addition to the assessment of impact on heritage assets set out in this document, a separate assessment of landscape and visual impact has been carried out by Land Studio. This follows the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment produced by the Landscape Institute.

5. Significance of heritage assets

5.1 Significance assessment - In order to assess the significance of the heritage assets identified as having very high or high significance, four component values need to be considered for each site: ¹:

- Evidential Value
- Historical Value
- Aesthetic Value
- Communal Value

The updated archeological report provides for a broader archaeological understanding to the site and structures.

5.2 Significance Assessment of remainder of ROF Wrexham

Approved in August 1939, the massive Royal Ordnance factory Marchwiell, Wrexham covered an area of c.1,730 acres or 700ha and was second in size to ROF Waltham Abbey. The site was chosen for a number of reasons:

- High local unemployment and available labour
- Ground relief and topography meaning ease of building
- Distance from large urban conurbations and large populations.
- Distance from mainland Europe
- Good railway links

5.3 Contractor McAlpine at a cost of £10.9million built the site. The factory began production of propellants in March 1941. Three units producing nitroglycerine and two units producing nitrocellulose supplied the cordite section. To the south west of the main factory there were production units and two smaller tetryl nitration plants.

5.4 Employing more than 10,000 (mainly construction) workers many of whom were brought in from other sites, the ROF at Marchwiell had its own internal railways system, which was powered by diesel engines to avoid the danger of sparks igniting the munitions. The buildings were dispersed and earth bounded over a large and wide area reducing the chances of a chain reaction explosion and also making bombing from the air less devastating, as a hit on one building would have little or no effect on any others.

5.5 Buildings were steel framed with reinforced concrete and brick in-fill and most buildings/structures were single storey. The largest buildings in terms of height were the acid section, but internally open to the roof. They housed acid

towers used for the concentration of sulphuric acid or de-nitrification of spent acids and were ventilated by means of large metal circular vents or roof louvers.

5.6 The design and construction of the site was based on a priority first basis. The more important the production material was, the more likely were it to be constructed and commissioned in the first phase of construction.

5.7 **Factory design and operation** - The factory was laid out in accordance with the explosives act and in anticipation of possible aerial attack by the Germans. Important sections were duplicated. Buildings and structures were designed to resist incendiary bombs and blast and to comply with blackout regulations. The blackout led to poor ventilation in many buildings and operatives generally had to work under inadequate artificial lighting. The site comprised of dozens of dispersed units known as houses grouped by process and most surrounded by large earthen banks as a protection against German wartime bombing raids.

5.8 A network of service roads, truck ways and standard and light gauge railways lines connected the units. Water and other mains services were run in a ring ditch round the factory perimeter with buried connections.

5.9 ²ROF Marchwiell produced cordite for use in propellants and was one of three new cordite factories commissioned in 1939 to boost production outside of Waltham Abbey, Bishopton, Wrexham and Ranskill.

5.10 The cordite facility was principally made up of three nitrocylycerine factories and two nitrocellulose sections together with a tetryl nitration plant. ³The production process involved Sulphuric acid and Nitric Acid which were made to high concentrations and used to prepare nitrating acid made up of 75% Sulphuric acid, 17% nitric acid and 8%

¹ Conservation Principles (2011) for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales, CADW

² Cocroft Wayne D, Dangerous Energy, The Archaeology of Gunpowder and military explosives manufacture, English Heritage 2000

³ T Sumpter, ROF Marchwiell, Redwither Road, Structural recording of two magazines, 1999

water. The nitrating acid was added to glycerin to produce nitroglycerine and to cellulose in the form of paper to give nitrocellulose or guncotton. Both the nitroglycerine and the nitrocellulose with addition of mineral jelly formed the Cordite which was then rolled in a process to help remove impurities and the cordite cut to size and packed into boxes with waxed paper. It was then either stored in on site magazines or transported to filling factories elsewhere in the UK.

5.11 The most distinctive buildings within the factories were those of the acid sections (nitrocylerine). They were the tallest, often standing 3 storeys high, though internally open at the roof. Their function was to house the tall acid towers used in the concentration of Sulphuric acid. Massive steel frames passing through its successive platforms supported these towers. Crane gantries were also fitted for periodic maintenance.

5.12 The site operated on a number of differing products, namely acid, nitroglycerine, nitrocellulose, magazines, stores and sidings together with administration offices, accommodation housing and workshops. Also Personnel and welfare facilities consisting of staff canteen seating 100 persons and a central kitchen serving six dining rooms of which five catered for up to 300 persons and another for 50. In addition, a medical block with doctor and dentist with other first aid posts and cleansing posts scattered within the site.

5.13 Other buildings included laboratories, police and security positions and housing, telephone exchange and stores. Stocking and storage provisions became a large land use for the site with provision for 10,000 ton of coal and 2,000 ton of Sulphur to be maintained on site at any one time.

5.14 ROF Wrexham, like many other ROF sites was carefully designed to a standard design which enabled rapid construction in a phased process according to demand of products.

5.15 The former ROF Wrexham is made up of a number of existing derelict buildings and structures constructed in both brick and reinforced concrete. Some of the building identified consist of storage buildings or amenity buildings and indeed toilet blocks and are all in a perilous and dangerous condition.

5.16 The more substantial brick buildings with adjoining concrete structure are manufacturing buildings which were used in the process of making cordite. All of the remaining structures deemed to be of interest are located within the heritage zone of the proposed master plan to which this report relates.

5.17 In order to provide an understanding of their significance, the structures have been alphabetically identified in fig 1 and a brief understanding of their function, form, condition and setting is as follows:

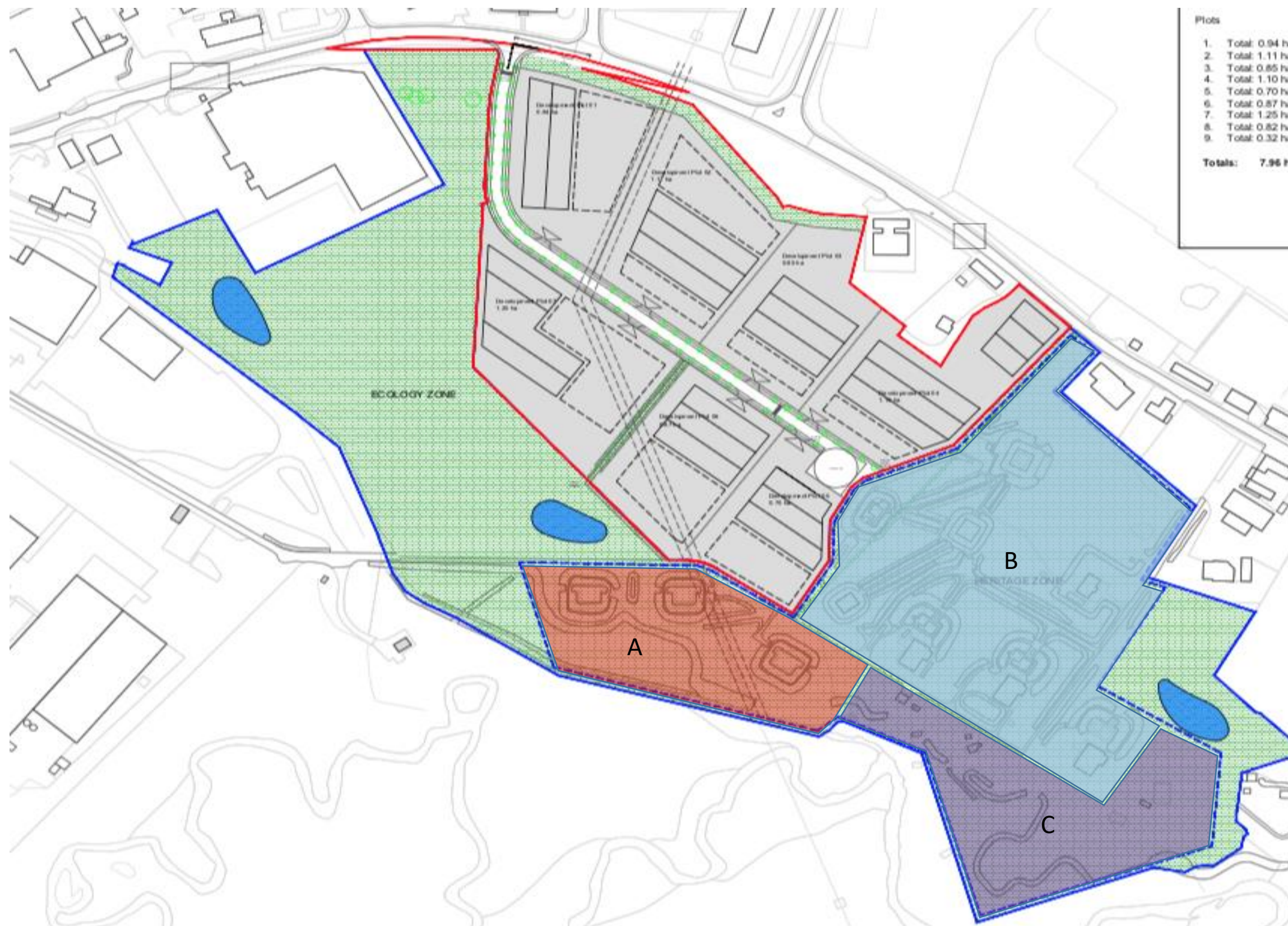


Fig 1 Proposed site layout and heritage zone marked A,B & C

Area A:

The structures grouped in to category A consist of a number of substantial reinforced concrete structures, connected with partial underground tunnels to which a small railway system existed. The structures themselves consist of a low lying flat area with slightly raised central area with concrete edging raised area bounded by concrete and earth bunds framed in reinforced concrete. Their actual function within the process of cordite manufacturing is unknown.

The structures are located to the edge of the development site set above the ravine of the Redwither Brook below.



Area B:

The structures contained within the area identified as Area B form the central core of the structures and it is believed that the structures combined formed a nitro-clycerine plant and consist of two interconnected reinforced concrete pits, each with substantial reinforced concrete bunds with reinforced concrete tunnels.

In addition, 3 small complexes exist incorporating brick warehouse/nitration houses with a deep internal pond or drowning tanks to one end. The structures are connected via pipes to a substantial reinforced concrete structure which themselves are earth bunded in a broadly horseshoe design.

As with all the structures on site, the actual function of the structures was for the production of cordite. The overall condition of the structures is extremely poor from a structural, access manner and indeed, the structures pose a severe health and safety risk.





Area C:

The site identified as area C contains a number of structures which are of brick construction and again their function is unknown; however, it is assumed that the buildings were more of a service nature, such a toilet and welfare facilities together with possible blast shelters. Their location close to central truck ways would have ensured that personnel could have been transported to places of manufacture fairly quickly.

Overall the structures are in a poor condition and are extensively overgrown. The structures form a health and safety risk and public access should be prohibited.



6. Statement of Significance

6.1 The statement of significance set out above is a summary of the cultural and natural heritage values identified above and how they inter-relate. It explains the relative importance of the heritage values, how they relate to physical fabric, the uncertainty about its values in relation to the sites potential and the tensions between conflicting values.

6.2 The proposed development site is the last remaining element of the former ROF Wrexham to contain built structures pertaining to their original use. The remainder of the former ROF site has been lost to the late 20th century development of the Wrexham Industrial estate; therefore, it is clear that whilst the existing structures have significance, their significance is slightly diminished by the fact that the site was one part of a much larger production site. In isolation the remaining structures represent the last remnants of the wider site of what was the only WW2 ROF site in Wales to produce cordite and therefore exhibit unique evidence to the past use of the site, retain a legibility and surviving plan form to the industrial process that operated on the site.

6.3 The structures on site are in extremely poor condition, derelict and structurally deteriorated, the structures are not to be used for any public access due to the inherent health and safety risks associated with the site. There is a recognition that the site has significance in history and played a role in a major UK event and the remaining structures from an archaeological perspective are rich. **The significance of the site is very high**

○ Evidential Value

The archaeological examination of the remains, aided by the historical evidence provides an indication of a single, yet nationally important historical episode of past human activity. Yet the enclosure and all the remaining structures can be accurately dated. Their evidential value is in their archaeological interest as a remnant or evidence of an

important historical event in the UK. **The evidential value of the site is high**

○ Historical Value

The historical value of the site depends to a large degree on the evidential values which provide the means for the understanding of its history, function and form. Collective evidence based on other comparative developments, may throw light on the functions associated with the site and structures. Further interpretations of evidence will therefore be required and the historical understanding and the values on which it rests will continue to evolve. Such information and interpretation will rely on 'expert' investigation and analysis. **The site has high historic value** in that the site historical value as the last remnants of a key industrial process in Wales

○ Aesthetic Value

The ROF Wrexham is an abandoned industrial site and the remaining structures have no set or acknowledged aesthetic and therefore their actual aesthetic value is neither specific nor accomplished. Industrial design by its very nature is its function over form and the structures are neither landmark nor other distinguishable features. Notwithstanding the ongoing process of historical and industrial analysis to the site and selected structures, the site has a powerful presence which communicates intangible characteristics of past communities that inhabited it and its activities. This experience is heightened by the physical and topographical form of the site and its sense of abandonment contributing to its setting. It also depends on exposure to the elements and the 'otherworldly' nature of the place. The sense of long-term abandonment itself is a particular aesthetic value.

The otherworldly character of the site depends to a considerable degree on its abundance of trees and shrubs and its general overgrown character. These are deliberately excluded to protect the physical fabric of the structures, but contrast with the gentler natural topographical features of the surrounding landscape, in particular the wooded slopes -of the adjoining Redwither Brook. This makes the site

distinctive. In addition, whilst the structures within the site are primarily industrial, there is rich architectural evidence within the broader understanding of the structures to their function and therefore the sites **aesthetic value is high**.

○ Communal Value

The former ROF has limited communal value. There is no access via public rights of way or any other public access. The site has been used by off road cyclists and as a site of interest to those of interested in derelict places. However, it is clear there is no recreational or communal value to the site nor does it provide a sense of place or any form of identity. The site could hold historical memories to those persons who worked there and has a limited sense of history and connection with a small past community. The site does not constitute a landmark and its overall **communal value is medium**.

6.4 Contribution of setting to the significance of ROF Wrexham

○ Extent of Setting

The setting of the site is difficult to assess as a whole in its original context as part of the ROF site is lost to later 20th century development. In isolation, the site doesn't readily have a setting other than built remnants of a former industrial process. However, landscape has provided a natural setting and the site is located in level ground with the southerly aspect elevated above the ravine of the Redwither Brook. For the most part the setting of the site is as a parcel of derelict land to which nature has been left to its own devices with little public exposure or experience with the exception of the curious. There are no public rights of way and public experience or appreciation is limited. In addition, the site is bounded by the Wrexham Industrial estate main link road Oaks Road and has development on 3 sides of the area consisting of small to medium mixed commercial uses.

○ Relationship between setting and significance.

The significance of the site is limited as set out above. The way in which the site can be experienced and understood is

limited by its setting, access and evidential history without prior background knowledge to the sites previous function and use. Views from within the site and from outside are indistinguishable in that views do not provide an experience to appreciate the heritage assets without prior information to the form and function of the site and are merely viewed as industrial remnants.

- Contribution of setting to significance
Viewpoints are limited due to restrictive public access and fleeting views are only available from Oak Road and its footpath which skirt the site, therefore there are no identified views of the site.

Views are private and generally of individual structures. Views are further restricted by the amount of under growth and dense tree and shrub cover resulting in many structures completely hidden from view.

- Views of ROF Wrexham
Given the restricted number and nature of views and the fact that many of them can only be glimpsed from a travelling vehicle, their kinetic nature means that understanding of significance relies on a matrix of views rather than a few static viewpoints. This makes it difficult to model the potential impact of the proposed development, since the setting changes in a dynamic sequence of vistas. Localised views can provide more information about the site, since its form and structure is better revealed when the viewer is close to the site. However, views in themselves are difficult to ascertain without prior knowledge to the function and form of the site.
- Views from the ROF Wrexham
Views from the site principally extend to the Wrexham Industrial estate and to the deep ravine at Redwither Brook. The views in themselves are only gained from the very edges of the site and no views outwards are available from within the site due to the overgrown nature. No one view of or from any of the structures exists and there is no group view that is discernable.

- Environmental Conditions
The relative quietness of the site contributes to its significance, however this is primarily down to the restricted private nature of the site and its prohibition of public access. There is no public access.
- Spatial association
There is no spatial association to the site in that it is largely hidden from view.

7. The proposal

- 7.1 The proposed erection of 8 industrial units ranging from B1 light industrial use and B8 use. The total site area is 22.20ha of which 7.96ha is proposed to be developable land; 0.82ha for infrastructure and the remainder of the site totaling 14.24ha is to be allocated as the heritage and ecology amenity zone.
- 7.2 Access to the site will involve a new access road from Oak Road with a turning circle towards the perimeter of the site closest to the heritage zone. The proposed industrial units will be designed to blend with adjacent industrial estate buildings and comprise of steel frame with aluminum cladding. The size of the proposed units ranges from 1,500 sqm to 5,000 sqm. All proposed units will have car parking allocations together with cycling facilities.

8. Heritage impact assessment

- 8.1 Assessment of Views - A number of techniques exist for assessing heritage significance in a view and the impact of development on that view. No perfect technique exists, since many views are dynamic and change as the viewer moves along. Views assume different qualities in different light and climatic conditions; a photographic view can be changed dramatically by the width of the subject matter and there is much subjectivity in the relative importance of views.

- 8.2 However, as noted earlier there is no one singular or any group views identified that can be attributed to the site. No one structure within the heritage zone of the development site has an indefinable view.

- 8.3 As an aid to the assessment process, The Setting of Heritage Assets Wales provides a list of attributes for consideration. Those which are relevant to the development proposals and their impact on the setting of the site are as follows:

- Location and siting of the development – The location and siting of the proposed development is on a brownfield, derelict parcel of land adjacent to the existing Wrexham Industrial estate which was previously land forming the ROF Wrexham. The development site is the last remainder of the ROF and is made up of land incorporating derelict structures used for the production of Cordite. The site has been abandoned for the past 70 years.
- Form and Appearance of the development – The proposed development consist of a number of industrial units forming an extension to the existing Wrexham Industrial Estate.
- Prominence, dominance or conspicuousness – The proposed development consists of a number of industrial units to which many structures of a similar size and scale exist in the immediate vicinity, therefore the proposed development will have no lesser or greater level of prominence or dominance in relation to its wider context. The industrial form of the development is consistent with the industrial function of the remaining structures but from a different era. The proposed development will not impact upon the safeguarded heritage structures.
- Visual permeability (extent to which it can be seen through)
- Design, layout and material use - the design and layout of the proposed site will form a small industrial estate. The layout is dictated by providing safe highways access, the design and material use of the industrial estate is consistent with that of

other adjacent industrial estates. There is no conflict in material use to that of the identified heritage assets.

- Mitigation – In mitigation to any heritage impact, the development proposal will provide an increase in employment space and employment opportunities and will safeguard and enhance ecology and the last remnants of the former ROF Wrexham. The applicant is committed to the local environment and ensuring that the local community, employees and visitors alike continue to enjoy local heritage assets and will consider working with the local community to better understand and appreciate ROF Wrexham and contribute to improving access, signage, way markings and/or interpretative display board associated with the heritage asset.

8.4 Other Effects of the development

- Change to skyline – The proposed SAM will not be affected as a result of the proposed development.
- Noise, odour, vibration, dust, the spread of odour, dust and noise as part of the manufacturing process will be minimized through efficient machinery and appropriate assessment have been undertaken to minimize any disturbance. However, through construction there will be disturbance for a limited period of time. These impacts do not directly impact the significance of the SAM nor lessen its enjoyment and experience.
- Lighting effects and light spill – The development proposal will need to be illuminated, which will increase the amount of light spillage in the area, however, the new development will only have light where it is absolutely necessary and lighting will be down lighters to avoid light spill which could alter the impact on the SAM. A comprehensive lighting impact study has been undertaken to accompany the planning application.
- Change to general character – no change to the character of the SAM.
- Changes to public access, use and amenity – no change.
- Changes to land use, land cover, tree cover – no change.

- Changes to communications, accessibility, permeability – no change.
- Permanence of the development, anticipated lifetime and reversibility – no change.
- Longer term or consequential effect of the development Changes to ownership arrangements, Economic and social viability – No change.

8.5 These issues are considered where relevant in the context of the views analysis and assessed in terms of impact on the setting of the proposed scheduled ancient monuments (to be confirmed) as set out below. The overall impact on significance is a combination of the importance of the view and the magnitude of impact.

8.6 Due to the current nature of the site being intensively overgrown there are no views available within the site. Structures are separated by landform both natural and man made and therefore there is no one view which provides for a contextual view of the whole site or individual structures from the proposed industrial estate.

9. Conclusions

9.1 This report considers the heritage impact of development on the significance to remaining structures on derelict land at the former ROF Wrexham.

9.2 The way in which significance can be experienced and understood is influenced by its setting. This assessment has been carried out in accordance with the Setting of heritage Assets in Wales, annex 6 Historic Environment Wales act 2016.

9.3 This report has identified elements within the immediate vicinity of the development that hold heritage value and a significance assessment undertaken. Of those sites assessed as holding merit, a heritage impact assessment of the proposed development upon their settings has been undertaken.

9.4 In addition, through the assessment of the proposal having an impact on the setting of the heritage asset ROF Wrexham, a full heritage impact assessment has concluded that a slight, minor impact has been identified only as seen from the Oak Road and is more of a moving or kinetic view. The remaining views are considered to be neutral in that the proposal will have no greater or lesser impact on the heritage asset's significance.

9.5 On balance this assessment finds that the overall impact and consequence of the proposed would have a less than substantial impact upon the former ROF Wrexham, its setting and significance. This conclusion accords with para 1.15 of the Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment that states:

Heritage impact assessment is a structured process that enables the significance of a designated asset to be taken into account in developing proposals for change. Heritage impact assessments should be proportionate both to the significance of the historic asset and to the degree of change proposed, and should include sufficient information to enable both the significance of the asset and the impact of change to be understood. The results of the heritage impact assessment should be summarised in a heritage impact statement which must form part of any listed building consent, conservation area consent and, when requested, scheduled monument consent applications.

9.6 In addition, the development proposal will bring substantial public benefits such as increased employment opportunities securing existing and generating new jobs. Economic investment into the local economy. Providing a well considered design response appropriate to its locality and context and the proposal will introduce enhanced levels of natural landscaping, opportunities for biodiversity, public access and a detailed conservation/heritage management plan for both the identified heritage and ecology zones..

Jason A Kennedy, MA MRTPI, IHBC
 Townscape: April 2019, Updated October 2019

Appendix 1 Archive maps and images



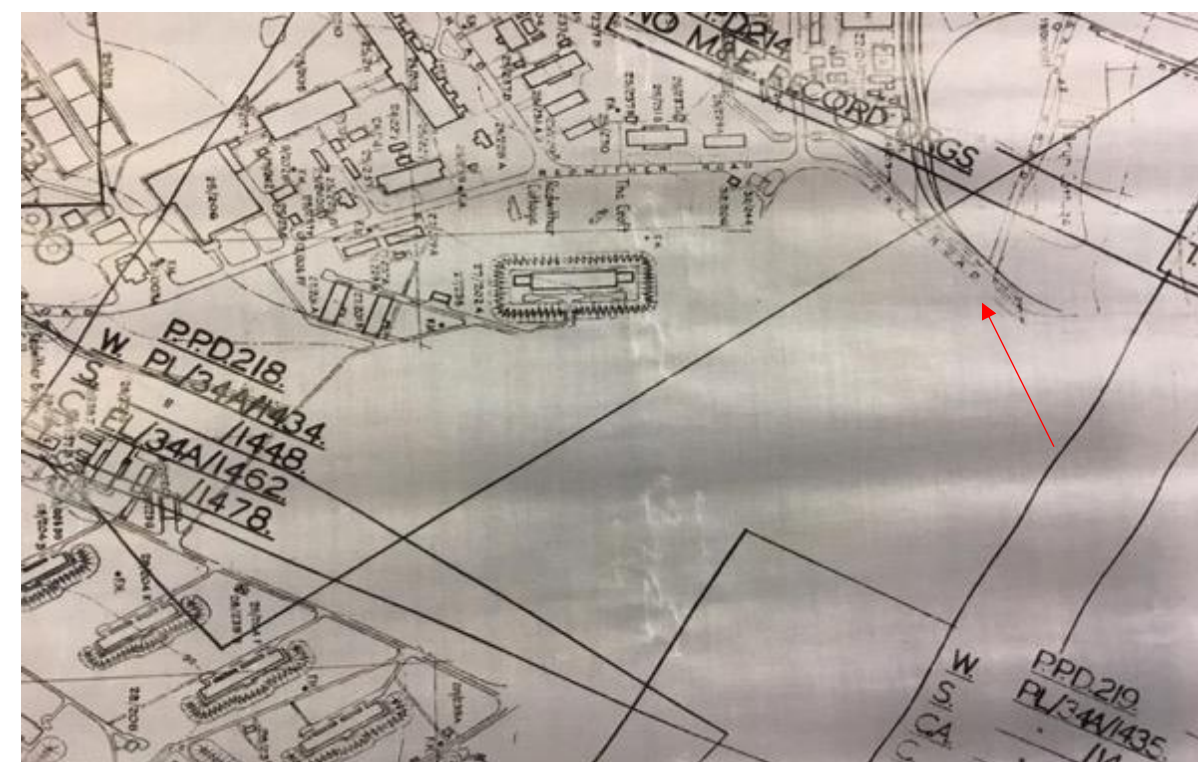
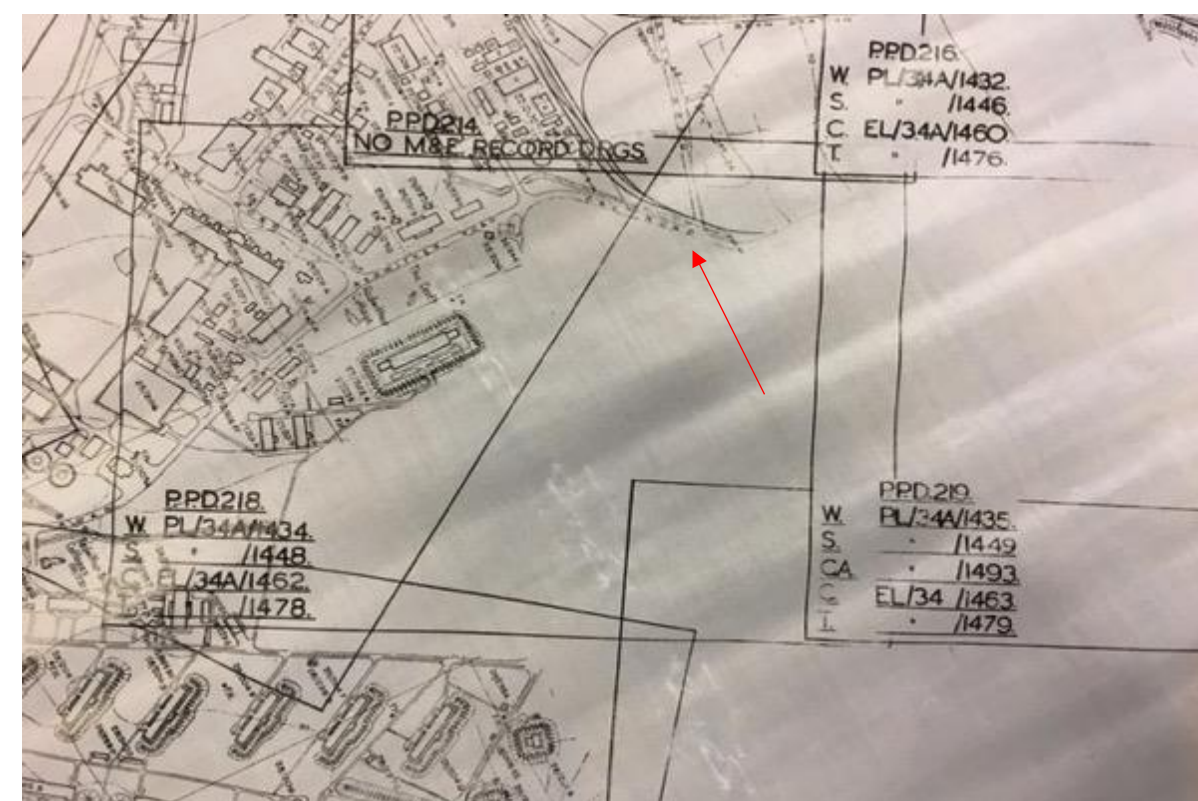
Photo image, Wrexham Archives, Reconnaissance image 1946, The Oaks not in picture



Image part of ROF Wrexham undated, Wrexham Archives, The Oaks site not in view



Aerial Photograph 30 May 1958, Source: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. The Oaks site outlined in red.



Map extracts from original construction drawings Ministry of Defence held at Wrexham Archives, dated June 1941. The plans show ROF Marchiel under construction with subsequent phases yet to be constructed. The red arrow shows Oak Road and the subsequent development of this phase south of Oak Road is yet to be completed.

Appendix 2 Email correspondence from CADW

Dear Jason,

Thank you for your email. Please accept my apologies for the delay in my reply – I have been away on leave.

Following our site visit, I have done some more research and am now pleased to confirm that the remains of the nitro-glycerine works at former ROF Wrexham are of significant interest to Cadw. The remains at the Oaks are the only Second World War ROF nitro-glycerine works surviving in Wales, and therefore retain unique evidence. In a wider UK context, many of the sister ROF cordite production facilities across England and Scotland have been cleared for redevelopment, so the Oaks site is also a very rare survival in a British context as well.

While some of the built structures may appear to be in poor condition, from an archaeological perspective the above ground remains are exceptionally rich and retain a very high state of detail and preservation, in which the primary chemical process pathways and ancillary structures are very legible. The surviving combination of earthworks, built structures, pathways and roads is also important. That the remains are from one construction phase is also significant, as this can be considered a pure build which did not alter pre-existing cordite buildings, nor were they altered by subsequent Cold War-related activity. As such, the original intentionality of the physical arrangement and spacing of the different process stages can be appreciated.

Additionally, there is a strong likelihood of well-preserved below ground archaeological deposits relating to the construction, operation and decommissioning of this part of the ROF. The structures retain important internal group value, and also external group value with other cordite manufacturing sites at RNPF Caerwent and RNCW Waltham Abbey. Finally, the importance of the archaeological remains is enhanced by the survival of associated documentation, plans and photographs.

As such, the surviving part of the cordite works on the east side of the proposed development area is of significant interest and in my mind meets the non-statutory scheduling criteria. I am therefore minded to propose the remains for legal designation as a scheduled monument of national importance.

I would be grateful if you could convey this to your client. I see from your email below that your client would like the scheduling process to start ASAP. I will start to put the paperwork together and I look forward to hearing any additional comments from you in due course. If your client would like to meet with me on site, I would be happy to do so. As I explained on site, your client will be formally consulted on the proposed designation, and there is an opportunity to appeal the scheduling should this be felt necessary.

Many thanks,

Jon

Dr Jonathan Berry

Senior Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Archaeology | Uwch-arolygydd Henebion ac Archaeoleg

Historic Environment Branch / Cangen Amgylchedd Hanesyddol

Cadw, Plas Carew, 5/7 Cefn Coed, Parc Nantgarw, Cardiff / Caerdydd CF15 7QQ

03000 25 90 73 | 07968 60 98 38

jonathan.berry@gov.wales | jonathan.berry@llyw.cymru



Follow Cadw / Dilynwch Cadw:

cadw.gov.wales | cadw.llyw.cymru

www.facebook.com/pages/Cadw/254566024556911

mobile.twitter.com/cadwwales | mobile.twitter.com/cadwcymru

www.youtube.com/user/cadwwales

www.flickr.com/photos/cadwwales

Join our monthly newsletter to stay up to date with the latest Cadw news, events and special offers <http://bit.ly/T4vO2n> | Cofrestrwch ar gyfer ein cylchlythyr misol i gael y wybodaeth ddiweddaraf am newyddion, digwyddiadau a chynigion arbennig Cadw <http://bit.ly/NhfxHW>

Help our environment - only print this if really necessary / Helpwch yr amgylchedd - peidiwch ag argraffu hon os nad oes gwir raid.