Written Scheme of Investigation

for a Level 2 Historic Building Record

Wheatsheaf Workshops
High Street, Rhosymedre, Wrexham, LL14 3YE

Client: Gurjit Mahal of Finchfield Homes Ltd
Local Authority: Wrexham County Borough Council
NGR: (SJ 28408 42542)
Planning Application: P/2025/0390
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1 Background

1.1 This document is a written scheme of investigation (WSI) describing the standards and methodology to be employed in the preparation of a Level 2 Historic Building Record of Wheatsheaf Workshops, High Street, Rhosymedre, Wrexham, LL14 3YE. It has been prepared by independent heritage consultant Rebecca Luxon on behalf of Gurjit Mahal of Finchfield Homes Ltd.

1.2 An application for planning permission has been made to Wrexham County Borough Council for the conversion of an existing commercial building and outbuildings into 16 no. one and two bedroom apartments and associated external works (reference P/2025/0390). The relevant condition placed upon permission for the scheme states:

'Prior to the commencement of works a programme of building recording and analysis, equivalent to an Historic England Level 2 building survey, shall be secured and implemented. This shall be in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by a qualified and competent expert, experienced in understanding historic buildings, and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The programme of building analysis and recording will be completed in line with the written scheme of investigation discharged as part of the condition. The recording report shall be completed by a competent expert, experienced in understanding historic buildings, and must meet the standards laid down by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in their Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures. A copy of the resulting report should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and the Planning Archaeologist, Heneb: Clwyd Powys Archaeology (The Offices, Coed y Dinas, Welshpool, SY21 8RP). After approval by the Local Planning Authority project data must be submitted and approved for inclusion in the Heneb: Clwyd Powys Archaeology Historic Environment Record. The full digital archive must also be submitted and approved for inclusion within the National Monuments Record, RCAHMW or the Archaeology Data Service, ADS.

Reason: To allow an adequate analytical record of the buildings to be made, before they are altered, to ensure that the buildings' origins, use, and development are understood and the main features, character and state of preservation are recorded.'

1.3 The rationale for this requirement is described in a consultation response from Neil Bayliss, Planning Archaeologist at Heneb on 21st May 2025 and is detailed below:

'Information held within the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER) and provided by the applicant indicates the buildings were built in 1915 as a bakery and they are of at least local historical and vernacular interest. There is currently little information on these buildings and prior to their conversion an appropriate level of building recording should be completed before work commences.

In this case we would advise that a Level 2 historic building survey is completed in accordance with the Planning Policy Wales (Feb 2024) and TAN 24 (May 2017) guidance, and an appropriate condition is supplied below.

The Level 2 survey would include a detailed photographic survey, written descriptive survey, phased plans of the buildings development and a measured survey using annotated architects plans where these are available, or a new survey where architects plans are not of sufficient detail.'

1.4 This WSI has been prepared in partial fulfilment of the above condition.

2 Site Location and Description

2.1 The Wheatsheaf Workshops site is located at NGR SJ 28408 42542, directly west of the junction of Chapel Street and High Street, in the village of Rhosymedre, approximately 6.5 miles southwest of Wrexham. The site also sits within the boundary of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, which is recognised as a place of outstanding universal value. The immediate surrounding area is largely residential with a small number of local shops adjacent.

2.2 The main workshop sits within a 0.3 acre plot and is an imposing two storey building constructed of brick and slate with stone dressings, render to the ground floor and a number of large, evenly spaced fixed pane casement windows to the first floor. The building occupies a prominent position fronting on to the village high street. The outbuildings are single storey, of brick construction with gable roofs and parapets in a mixture of materials, and sit behind to the north of the site, separated by an area of hardstanding for car parking and use as a courtyard, which is accessible from both High Street and Chapel Street.



Figure 1: *Site Location (not to scale) (Ordnance Survey, 2025).*



Figure 2: *Existing layout of site (not to scale) (HDS Architectural Services, 2025).*

2.3 Wheatsheaf Workshops was constructed in 1915 where it operated as a bakery and bakery plant under the Cefn & District Co-operative Society. Owing to the nature of the buildings, a number of small independent businesses later operated from the site such as a cleaning services company and furniture shop, before it was eventually taken over by Wrexham County Borough Council in the 1980's for use as an 'unemployed centre' (British Newspaper Archive, 2025). Following this, the workshops were let out under a Wales Co-operative Centre and Wrexham County Borough Council initiative to allow members of the local community to try out new business ventures.

2.4 The buildings have been vacant for a significant period of time and have been poorly maintained, as is evident from the appearance of the external finishes. It is understood that the interior is in a similar condition and thorough renovation is required throughout.

2.5 The Wheatsheaf Workshops and associated outbuildings are not recorded as non-designated heritage assets on the regional Historic Environment Record and are not listed or locally listed buildings (Archwilio, 2025; Cadw, 2025). However, consultation received from Heneb indicates the site is considered to be of at least local and vernacular interest.

3 Description of Development



Figure 3: *Proposed layout of site (not to scale) (HDS Architectural Services, 2025)*

3.1 The proposed development scheme is for the conversion of the existing building and outbuildings into 16 no. one and two bedroom apartments and all associated external works including parking and amenity (as illustrated in figure 3, above).

4 Aims and Objectives

4.1 The aim of the historic building recording is to create a permanent record of the Wheatsheaf Workshops and outbuildings prior to conversion.

4.2 It has been specified that a historic building record is required, equivalent to an Historic England Level 2 building survey, as described in Historic England's guidance document *'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice' (2016).*

4.3 A level 2 survey is a descriptive record, and therefore the objectives of the programme of recording are as follows:

- To provide a drawn record in the form of measured plans and elevations as existing, and at an appropriate scale, as previously submitted to the local planning authority during the planning process. Annotations will be incorporated where relevant, identifying features of historical and architectural interest.

- To examine, photograph and describe the exterior and interior of the buildings within the site boundary, including their construction, building materials, functional detail, architectural detail, and contents.

- To produce a written account with respect to the form, function, development and use of the buildings in order to contribute to a wider understanding of the local, regional and historical context.

5 Methodology

Standards and guidance

5.1 The proposed methods outlined in this section below will be carried out in accordance with Historic England's guidance document *'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice'* (2016) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) '*Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures'* (2020a) and '*Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment'* (2020b).

Fieldwork

5.2 Reasonable access to the buildings within the Wheatsheaf Workshops site for the purpose of completing the programme of historic building recording will be secured by the client.

5.3 The fieldwork will be completed by an independent heritage consultant, with expertise in historic buildings, experienced in producing historic building records.

5.4 There are no known areas of archaeological preservation within the site and therefore invasive works such as excavations will not be carried out. Consequently, protection measures such as exclusion zones and fencing will not be required.

Drawn record

5.5 The drawn record will comprise existing measured plans with annotations, including site location, elevations and floor plans of the Wheatsheaf Workshops and outbuildings.

5.6 A photographic key will be provided alongside a further site plan, showing the location and direction of accompanying photographs.

5.7 Phased drawings, where applicable, will be supplied with coloured shading to show successive phases of the buildings' development.

Photographic record

5.8 All digital images will be captured using a camera which exceeds 10 megapixels as to deliver good quality images at high resolution. A ranging rod will be included in all images to provide a scale.

5.9 Externally, the photographic record will comprise general views of the buildings in their wider setting and a series of oblique elevational views to give an overall impression of their form and appearance.

5.10 Internally, the photographic record will comprise a series of general and oblique views of the principal internal rooms and circulation areas.

5.11 In addition, any external or internal detail (structural, functional or decorative) which is relevant to the buildings' use, design or development, including date marks and inscriptions, will also form part of the photographic record.

Written record

5.12 The written record will comprise the precise locations of the buildings as an address and national grid reference (NGR), details of any statutory or non-statutory designations, date the record was made, by whom, and archive deposition.

5.13 An objective, descriptive summary will present the buildings' form, function, date and sequence of development, alongside the names of architects, builders and owners where possible. It will describe the buildings' historical and architectural detail, use, construction techniques and materials.

Post fieldwork assessment, analysis and reporting

5.14 An illustrated report will be prepared upon completion of the work on site. The following information will be contained within it:

- Non-technical summary
- Table of contents, list of figures and abbreviations
- Location and national grid reference (NGR).
- Statutory and non-statutory designations
- Date of record, recorder and archive deposition
- Introduction
- Site location
- Topography and geology of the site
- Aims and objectives
- Methodology
- Summary of the form, function, date and development of the building
- Past and present usage
- Documentary research including historic maps and excerpts of trade directories, census records and newspaper archives, where available.
- Evidence for former existence of demolished structures and removed fittings, where applicable.
- Supporting site plans, elevations, floor plans and photographs
- Conclusions
- An archive content list and archive deposition location and timing statement
- A data management plan and selection strategy
- Bibliography

Public engagement, dissemination and publication

5.15 Given the proposed change of use of the buildings and short-lived nature of the recording works, public engagement activity with the local community throughout the life of this project is not considered appropriate.

5.16 Digital copies of the report will be issued to the client, the Local Planning Authority and the Heneb Planning Archaeologist. Following approval by the Local Planning Authority, project data will be disseminated for inclusion in the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust's Historic Environment Record, which can be accessed publicly.

Archive

5.17 The overall archive will be submitted for inclusion within a suitable digital repository for archaeological and heritage data, such as the Archaeology Data Service, in line with a data management plan and selection strategy.

5.18 The overall archive will conform to the principles and guidelines described in Historic England's document '*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)'* (2015), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) document '*Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives'* (2020c), and the National Panel for Archaeological Archives in Wales document '*National Standards and Guidance to Best Practice for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives in Wales 2017'* (2019).

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