

## Briefing Note

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**Our ref** 62392/01/MHE/NBr  
**Date** 9 March 2021  
**To** South Tyneside Council  
**From** Nick Bridgland, Heritage Director  
**Copy**

### **Subject Harton Quay Office Building Supplementary Heritage Note**

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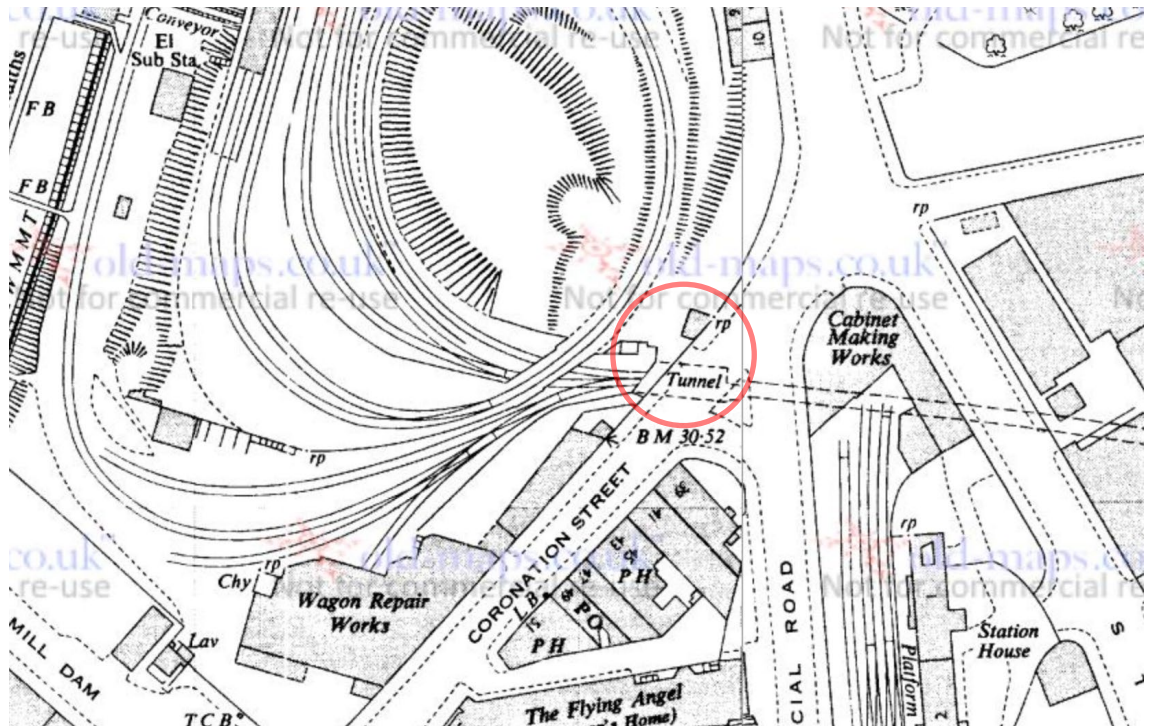
#### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This note has been prepared to supplement the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Lichfields to support the planning application for the erection of a commercial office building (use class E) with undercroft car park and associated landscaping and infrastructure at Harton Quay (ref ST/1070/20/LAA).
- 1.2 In subsequent discussions related to the incorporation of the existing substation into the proposed building, South Tyneside Council has expressed concern regarding the impact of a new access created through the Mill Dam Wall adjacent to the junction with Commercial Street to provide essential access for the Fire Service in the event of an incident at the building. This supplementary note addresses the history of the Mill Dam Wall, its significance and the impact on this of creating a new opening.

#### **2.0 Mill Dam Wall**

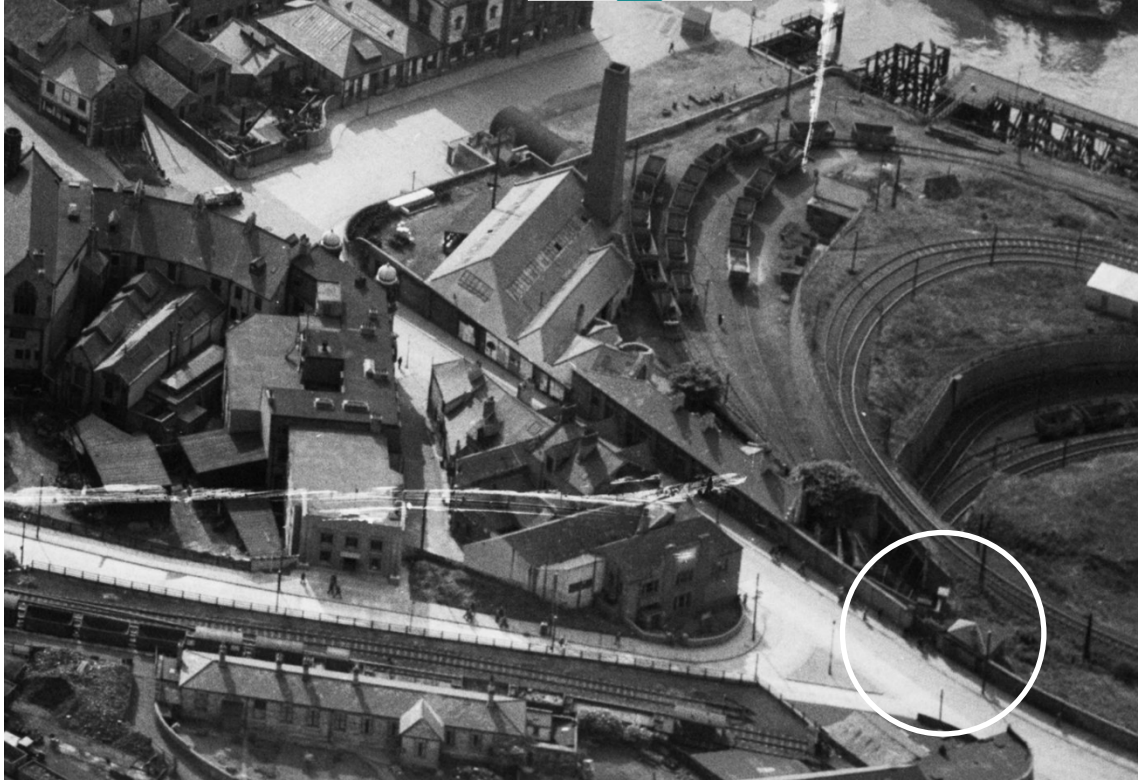
- 2.1 The Mill Dam Wall is a locally listed building and a distinctive feature in the Mill Dam Conservation Area.
- 2.2 The wall appears to date from the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment, this period saw the replacement of Swineburne's Glass Works with a series of railway lines serving staithes, accompanied by related buildings, included a wagon repair shop. The building fronting onto Mill Dam, whose front was formed by part of the Mill Dam Wall, Staithes House, was largely demolished c.2016.
- 2.3 The wall is built of red brick with pier-and-panel construction typical of its date. The section of the wall which formed the street frontage of Staithes House is identifiable by its blocked windows and doors. It makes decorative use of dentilled and dogtooth cornices and a nail-head detail to the window cills. The boundary wall east of this is simpler in detailing with a dentilled cornice to the panels. It is a feature of the blocking that they appear to have been consistently executed in a slightly paler brick than the original wall. Close to the junction of Mill Dam and Commercial Street is a panel, between two pairs of close-spaced piers, which is made up of this slightly paler brick.
- 2.4 Mapping evidence from the 1956 OS 1:1250 map shows an entrance through the wall at this location immediately south-east of a small building (lodge) which may be a remnant of the glassworks complex. The entrance is indicated by the turn of the pavement line at this location.

Figure 1 OS 1:1250 1956 (Entrance through Mill Dam Wall circled)



- 2.5 Further clarity is provided by an aerial view from 1947 which shows the lodge building and a dark gate adjacent to it, contrasting with the paler brick. This gate seems to have allowed access to the narrow strip of land between the railway leading to the staithe and Station Road.

Figure 2 Aerial View 1947 (detail)



Source: Britain from Above <https://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/en/image/EAW008941>

- 2.6 Comparison with modern imagery shows the opening of the former gateway, blocked by paler brick, flanked by paired piers. It is also possible to discern where upper courses of the wall to the right have been rebuilt following the removal of the eaves of the lodge building. The sandstone block within the pier to the right of the blocked entrance may have borne signage (painted or applied) but its function is not clear.
- 2.7 As set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment, the Mill Dam Wall is a surviving element of the industrial heritage of this area, indicating the enclosure of the wagonwright's workshop and the staithe site. It provides a very strong local feature within the Conservation Area.

Figure 3 Former gateway through Mill Dam Wall



Source: Google Streetview (May 2018)

### 3.0 Impact

- 3.1 The proposal for the new access through to the electricity substation will see the reopening of the historic access through the Mill Dam wall. The blocking up of the gateway has no identifiable significance in itself and its reopening better relates to the history of the use of this site.
- 3.2 The reopening of this historic access will better reflect the historic form of the Mill Dam Wall and enhance its role as an historic feature in the Conservation Area. This alteration to the proposals should therefore be seen as a heritage benefit, enhancing the historic character of the conservation area.