

Town And Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 78 (As Amended)
Town And Country Planning Act (General Development Procedure) Order 1995
Town And Country Planning Appeals (Determination by Inspectors)
(Inquiries Procedure) (England) Rules 2000

Proof of Evidence of Mr Dennis Rodwell

On behalf of Milton Keynes Council

Planning Appeal reference: APP/Y0435/E/09/2108771/NWF
Conservation Area Consent Appeal reference: APP/Y0435/A/09/2108786

Planning Application reference: 07/01975/FUL
Conservation Area Consent Application reference: 07/02014/CON

McConnell Drive, Wolverton, Milton Keynes

APPEAL BY TESCO STORES LIMITED AGAINST THE DECISION BY
MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL TO REFUSE
PLANNING PERMISSION AND CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT
FOR THE DEMOLITION AND REPLACEMENT OF
THE EXISTING FOODSTORE (CLASS A1), FOUR NON-FOOD (CLASS A1)
RETAIL UNITS AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

October 2009

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CONTENTS

SECTION 1:	INTRODUCTION	3
SECTION 2:	PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK	7
SECTION 3:	WOLVERTON CONSERVATION AREA	15
SECTION 4:	PLANNING HISTORY	23
SECTION 5:	APPEAL APPLICATIONS	25
SECTION 6:	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	30
APPENDIX 1:	WOLVERTON WORKS CHRONOLOGY	33
APPENDIX 2:	<i>The Trainmakers: The Story of Wolverton Works,</i> by Bill West (Barracuda Books, 1982)	39

1.0 INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

1.01 This Proof of Evidence is submitted on behalf of Milton Keynes Council. It focuses on the conservation and related matters that are encompassed by:

(a) Planning Application reference 07/01975/FUL: stated reasons in the Refusal Notice dated 2 June 2009:

The proposal would be contrary to National Planning Policy PPS6 and to Milton Keynes Local Plan 2001-2011 policies KS6 (ii), R1 (ii), TC1, TC11 (ii), HE6 and specific reference to paragraph 12.45 of the Local Plan for the reasons that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre, an unacceptable adverse impact on the Wolverton Conservation Area because of the loss of part of the Fire Station and the likely loss of retail shops within the Conservation Area.

(b) Conservation Area Consent Application reference 07/02014/CON: stated reasons in the Refusal Notice dated 20 May 2009:

Demolition of the existing store, community building, units shops, wall, and former fire station leaving just its facade, would be premature and detrimental to the character and appearance of Wolverton Conservation Area, as there is no permitted scheme for their replacement. Demolition in advance of detailed and acceptable plans for redevelopment would be contrary to Policy HE6 of Milton Keynes Local Plan 2001-2011, and to advice in paragraph 4.27 of PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment, and also paragraph 3.15 in respect of the former fire station building.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS PROOF OF EVIDENCE

1.02 My name is Dennis Rodwell. I am a principal in private practice and have been since 1975.

1.03 Since 1973 I have been on the United Kingdom Register of Architects, a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects and of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, being elected a Fellow of the latter in 1982. I was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1990 and of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Science (the RSA) in 1991. I became a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation in 1998, having previously been an associate member of its predecessor organisation, the Association of Conservation Officers, for a number of years. I became a student member of the Royal Town Planning Institute in the year 2000.

1.04 Additionally, I am a member of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Georgian

Group, Victorian Society, Association for Industrial Archaeology, Urban History Group, and European Association for Urban History.

- 1.05 From July 1975 until June 1998 I headed the architectural practice of Dennis Rodwell Architects, based in Edinburgh and Melrose. The practice focused on conservation work, working primarily on historic buildings and in conservation areas. Clients included Edinburgh and Glasgow City Councils, the Scottish Development Agency, the National Trust for Scotland, and the Isle of Man Government. The work of the practice was recognised by a number of heritage and conservation awards. During this same period I successfully promoted the rescue of a number of historic buildings at risk, including the former railway station at Melrose, category A listed (equivalent to grade I in England), which I acquired derelict in 1985, restored in 1986, and managed as a mixed-use commercial development until 2003.
- 1.06 Since July 1998 I have been working continuously as a consultant in cultural heritage and sustainable urban development for a number of international and national organisations, including the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Centre and Division of Cultural Heritage, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, the World Bank, United Kingdom Trade and Investment, the British Council, the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment, the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), the United Kingdom Local Authority World Heritage Forum, and English Heritage. This work has focused on the promotion and achievement of best practice in the management of the historic environment from the scale of individual buildings to entire cities.
- 1.07 From December 1999 through January 2003, I additionally served as Conservation Officer and Urban Designer to Derby City Council (the sole in a city of 250,000 inhabitants), where my responsibilities included the Darley Abbey Conservation Area, which straddles the River Derwent and comprises the former factory village of Darley Abbey, associated structures and designed landscape. I prepared the consultative draft for the Darley Abbey Conservation Area Appraisal in 2001 and amended it for publication in 2003. Concurrently, I coordinated archaeological and historical research into the former medieval abbey, cotton manufacturing complex and associated workers' village; instigated and informed a full review by English Heritage of the statutory list entries for Darley Abbey, and reviewed the relevant entries in the Derby City Council local list; and implemented extensions to the Conservation Area boundary. My responsibilities at Derby also included the Railway Conservation Area and the adjacent listed complex of locomotive and carriage works.
- 1.08 From July through August 2009, during an officer's maternity leave, I served as Principal Planner (Heritage and Design) for Burnley Borough Council, where my responsibilities included the preparation of the consultative draft Conservation Area Appraisal for the Canalside Conservation Area, which comprises a 5.1 kilometre length of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal that encircles the town centre and incorporates the heart of the former cotton manufacturing complex in the town, together with associated commercial,

community and residential buildings. This consultative draft proposes a full review of the statutory list, the Burnley Borough Council local list, and extensions to the boundary of the Conservation Area.

- 1.09 Concurrently with the above professional activities, also since 1975, I have researched and published widely on subjects related to best practice in the management of the historic environment, including in the UNESCO review *World Heritage*, the IHBC journal *Context*, the *Journal of Architectural Conservation* (Donhead Publishing, Shaftesbury), and my book *Conservation and Sustainability in Historic Cities* (Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2007).
- 1.10 Organisations that I have previously represented at Public Inquiries include the Trimontium Trust (Melrose), Edinburgh City Council and Derby City Council.
- 1.11 For the purposes of this Inquiry I can confirm that I have visited the application site and its immediate surroundings and reviewed the application documentation.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 1.12 The evidence set out in this Proof is limited to the conservation and related matters that are encompassed by the two Refusal Notices referred to in 1.01 above. Accordingly, the structure of this Proof is as follows:
 - Section 2: considers relevant aspects of the national and local Planning Policy Framework
 - Section 3: highlights key issues in relation to the Wolverton Conservation Area, including the former Fire Station
 - Section 4: considers relevant aspects of the Planning History
 - Section 5: comments on relevant aspects of the Planning and Conservation Area Consent Applications that are the subject of this Appeal
 - Section 6: sets out my Summary and Conclusions

OVERVIEW

- 1.13 I was instructed by Milton Keynes Council at the end of August 2009. Having reviewed the papers, visited the site, and discussed matters with officers, it is my view that Council members not only had reasonable grounds for refusing both applications but were correct to do so. I therefore support their decisions.
- 1.14 It is clear from the applicant's Design and Access Statement (see 5.10 to 5.17 below) that the initial design that was presented to officers for the proposed new superstore envisaged the complete removal of the Fire Station together with the loss of the characteristic solid line of enclosure along the Stratford

Road frontage that defined the separation between the historic Wolverton railway works to the north and the town to its south. Although the scheme design has evolved, the Design and Access Statement illustrates that this essential factor in the character of the Conservation Area was misunderstood; also, that although the importance of the Fire Station has now been acknowledged, this recognition is both retrospective and incomplete.

- 1.15 In my view the existing Fire Station serves to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the loss of its three-dimensional integrity would be detrimental. Notwithstanding the belated recognition of the importance of the Fire Station, the applicant has continued to pursue a course – retention only of the facade and its immediate side returns – that is challenged, amongst others by English Heritage (see 5.03 below).
- 1.16 I defer to the evidence of my colleague Mr Adrian Fox on all matters of policy, quantification, scale of floorspace, and impact in relation to retail matters, but in my view even if one accepts the applicant's arguments to justify the construction of the new superstore on all of the above retail grounds, there is no reason why a scheme could not be brought forward that preserves and enhances the Conservation Area and at the same time retains the Fire Station in its entirety. This view is also supported by English Heritage (see 5.07 below).
- 1.17 It is also my evidence that the character of a Conservation Area is not limited to its physical layout and architecture but is also related to its uses and activities. The appellant acknowledges that traditional shop fronts are an important original feature of the parades of shops in the Conservation Area. As such, unacceptable impact on the viability of the independent businesses in the vicinity of the Tesco site resulting from the very substantial enlargement of the store would be likely to have a negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

LEGISLATION

- 2.01 Section 69 of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* (the Act) imposes a duty on local planning authorities to

... determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and [to] designate those areas as conservation areas.

It also places a duty on local planning authorities

... from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas.

- 2.02 Section 71 of the Act requires local planning authorities

... from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.

Additionally, to consult the public on such proposals and to have regard to any views expressed.

- 2.03 Section 72 of the Act places a general duty on local planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area in the exercise of its planning functions.

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE 15

- 2.04 *Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994), known as PPG15, highlights at section 1, 'Planning and Conservation', paragraph 1.1 that:

It is fundamental to the Government's policies for environmental stewardship that there should be effective protection for all aspects of the historic environment. The physical survivals of our past are to be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage and our sense of national identity. They are an irreplaceable record which contributes, through formal education and in many other ways, to our understanding of both the present and the past. Their presence adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness which is so important an aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages and countryside. The historic environment is also of immense importance for leisure and recreation.

At paragraph 1.3:

The Government has committed itself to the concept of sustainable development - of not sacrificing what future generations will value for the sake of short-term and often illusory gains. [...] This commitment has particular relevance to the preservation of the historic environment, which by its nature is irreplaceable. [...]

And at paragraph 1.6:

The Government urges local authorities to maintain and strengthen their commitment to stewardship of the historic environment, and to reflect it in their policies and their allocation of resources. It is important that, as planning authorities, they adopt suitable policies in their development plans, and give practical effect to them through their development control decisions. [...] Above all, local authorities should ensure that they can call on sufficient specialist conservation advice, whether individually or jointly, to inform their decision-making and to assist owners and other members of the public.

- 2.05 Under section 2, 'Development Plans and Development Control', paragraph 2.14, PPG15 reads:

The design of new buildings intended to stand alongside historic buildings needs very careful consideration. In general it is better that old buildings are not set apart, but are woven into the fabric of the living and working community. This can be done, provided that the new buildings are carefully designed to respect their setting, follow fundamental architectural principles of scale, height, massing and alignment, and use appropriate materials. [...]

- 2.06 Under section 3, 'Listed Building Control', paragraph 3.15, PPG15 reads:

[...] The preservation of facades alone, and the gutting and reconstruction of interiors, is not normally an acceptable approach to the re-use of listed buildings: it can destroy much of a building's special interest and create problems for the long-term stability of the structure.

This should be read in conjunction with paragraphs 4.25 to 4.27 of PPG15: see 2.08 below; see also 2.22 to 2.23 below.

- 2.07 Under section 4, 'Conservation Areas (assessment and designation)', paragraph 4.4, PPG15 reads:

The more clearly the special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded, the sounder will be the basis for local plan policies and development control decisions, as well as for the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of an area. The definition of an area's special interest should derive from an assessment of the elements that contribute to (and detract from) it. Conservation areas vary greatly, but certain aspects will almost always form the basis for a coherent assessment: the topography [...] and its historical development; the archaeological significance and potential; the prevalent building materials; the character and hierarchy of spaces; the

quality and relationship of buildings in the area [...]. The assessment should always note those unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the special interest of the area. [...]

- 2.08 Under section 4, 'Conservation Areas (control over demolition)', paragraph 4.25, PPG15 reads:

Conservation area designation introduces control over the demolition of most buildings within conservation areas [...]. Procedures are essentially the same as for listed building consent applications.

At paragraph 4.26:

In exercising conservation area controls, local planning authorities are required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area in question; and, as with listed building controls, this should be the prime consideration in determining a consent application. In the case of conservation area controls, however, account should clearly be taken of the part played in the architectural or historic interest of the area by the building for which demolition is proposed, and in particular of the wider effects of demolition on the building's surroundings and on the conservation area as a whole.

And at paragraph 4.27:

The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. The Secretary of State expects that proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings (paragraphs 3.16-3.19). In less clear-cut cases - for instance, where a building makes little or no such contribution - the local planning authority will need to have full information about what is proposed for the site after demolition. Consent for demolition should not be given unless there are acceptable and detailed plans for any redevelopment. It has been held that the decision-maker is entitled to consider the merits of any proposed development in determining whether consent should be given for the demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area.

- 2.09 Under section 6, 'Identifying and recording the historic environment', paragraph 6.2, PPG15 reads:

There is growing appreciation not just of the architectural set pieces, but of many more structures, especially industrial, agricultural and other vernacular buildings that, although sometimes individually unassuming, collectively reflect some of the most distinctive and creative aspects of English history. [...]

And under paragraph 6.16:

[...] many buildings which are valued for their contribution to the local scene, or for local historical associations, will not merit [statutory] listing. Such buildings will often be protected by conservation area designation (see paragraphs 4.2 ff). It is also open to planning authorities to draw up lists of locally important buildings, and to formulate local plan policies for their protection, through normal development control procedures. [...]

LOCAL LISTS

- 2.10 The use of local lists is noted under paragraph 6.16 of PPG15 (refer 2.09 above) as an effective method of identifying non-statutorily listed buildings worthy of special consideration through the development control process. Local lists are advisory and do not provide a local planning authority with additional powers.
- 2.11 Notwithstanding the above proviso, it is my experience and evidence that local lists are especially effective in conservation areas. They constitute an objective and immediately available aid to the identification of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area, and for which there should be a general presumption against demolition in whole or in part.

This view is reinforced by the sentence in paragraph 4.4 of PPG15 (see 2.07 above) that reads:

The assessment should always note those unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the special interest of the area.

- 2.12 English Heritage is currently in the process of developing non-statutory best practice guidance for local authorities and their communities for the identification and management of local heritage assets and the consolidation of these assets into local lists. Encouraging the identification and management of heritage at the local level is an important component of the ongoing heritage protection reform programme. It is anticipated that such guidance may be available by the Spring of 2010.

GUIDANCE ON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS

- 2.13 The English Heritage paper *Guidance on conservation area appraisals*, published in February 2006, summarises, at Appendix 1, the suggested format for a Conservation Area Appraisal. It is a format that I commend for its structure, logic and inclusiveness. Under ‘Character analysis’ it contains three sub-headings that are of particular relevance to my evidence:

Activity and prevailing or former uses and their influence on the plan form and buildings

Unlisted buildings

An audit of heritage assets (if appropriate)

2.14 Paragraph 2.3 identifies current and past uses as a characteristic factor, and paragraph 3.7 refers to sustaining the activities and uses that contribute to the special character of a place. Paragraphs 2.1 and 2.3 also identify social and economic background as a characteristic factor.

2.15 Paragraph 4.16 reads:

Unlisted buildings

- *In addition to listed buildings, it is important to identify on a map those unlisted buildings that make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area, as well as those which clearly detract from it and could suitably be replaced. A checklist of questions to help with this process can be found in appendix 2.*
- *Recommendations for new or additional 'buildings of townscape merit' or locally listed buildings could form part of the appraisal, especially where the existing statutory list is of some age. If there is no 'local list', the appraisal might recommend the introduction of a local category for identifying important unlisted buildings.*

2.16 Appendix 2 reads:

Unlisted buildings in a conservation area

When considering the contribution made by unlisted buildings to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area, the following questions might be asked:

[...]

- *Has it qualities of age, style, materials or any other characteristics which reflect those of at least a substantial number of the buildings in the conservation area?*
- *Does it relate by age, materials or in any other historically significant way to adjacent listed buildings, and contribute positively to their setting?*
- *Does it individually, or as part of a group, serve as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement in which it stands, or of an earlier phase of growth?*
- *Does it have significant historic association with established features such as road layout, burgage plots, a town park, or a landscape feature?*
- *Does the building have landmark quality, or contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces, including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?*
- *Does it reflect the traditional functional character of, or former uses within, the area?*
- *Has it significant historic associations with local people or past events?*

- *Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area?*
[...]

In English Heritage's view, any one of these characteristics could provide the basis for considering that a building makes a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area, provided that its historic form and values have not been seriously eroded by unsympathetic alteration.

It is my evidence that the former Fire Station in the Wolverton Conservation Area, in its extant three-dimensional form, satisfies all of the above quoted criteria in whole or part.

2.17 Paragraph 4.19 reads:

An audit of heritage assets

- *An audit will only be needed in larger, more complex areas, where there is a wide range of historic structures, and/or in areas with an industrial heritage. [...]*

It is my evidence that the Wolverton Conservation Area falls into the category of a complex area with a wide range of historic structures in an area with an industrial heritage, and that an audit of its heritage assets is both appropriate and essential baseline information for the appraisal of its character and significance.

2.18 This Guidance paper also recommends an analysis of urban morphology (at paragraph 2.4), and emphasises the importance of taking into account the values attached to the area by the local community (paragraphs 3.1, 3.2, 3.8, 4.3 and 4.5).

GUIDANCE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

2.19 The English Heritage paper *Guidance on the management of conservation area*, also published in February 2006, 'identifies the key aspects of good practice that need to be taken into account by local authorities in managing their conservation areas'. It stresses the importance of maintaining up-to-date character appraisals (paragraph 1.5), community involvement (paragraphs 3.8 to 3.10), and sets out the potential components of a management strategy (paragraph 5.2).

MILTON KEYNES LOCAL PLAN 2005

2.20 The Milton Keynes Local Plan, Adopted December 2005, contains the following entry under Chapter 5, 'Historic Environment', at pages 43 to 44:

Conservation Areas

Objectives of policy

- *To preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance which contribute to the special interest of a designated Conservation Area*
- *To avoid inappropriate development in Conservation Areas following from the grant of outline planning permission*
- *To avoid the erosion of the special interest of a Conservation Area through the inappropriate loss of historic fabric.*

5.17 The 1990 Act requires local authorities to determine whether any part of their area should be designated a Conservation Area, by virtue of its special architectural or historic interest. There are currently 24 Conservation Areas in the Borough.

5.18 The Council is preparing Conservation Area Character Statements for each of the designated areas, in order to define the special interest which justified its designation. These documents will be used when assessing development proposals affecting Conservation Areas.

5.19 PPG15 provides general guidance on development control in Conservation Areas and this is supplemented in greater detail by the English Heritage guidance, "Conservation Area Practice".

5.20 Separate legislation and procedures cover the actual designation of new Conservation Areas. PPG15 and English Heritage guidance set out clear criteria to use when designating Conservation Areas.

5.21 Designation should not be seen as an end in itself. It should be followed by proposals to enhance the area, which has resource implications for the Council as local planning authority. [...]

POLICY HE6

Development proposals within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area.

The criteria used to assess such proposals are set out in English Heritage Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas (1995); and interpreted in Character Statements for specific Conservation Areas.

Full planning applications will be required for all proposals in Conservation Areas, including detailed plans and elevations showing the new development in its setting.

Conservation consent for demolition will be refused for buildings or features that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area, unless the proposed redevelopment would enhance the character of the area.

NOTE: The English Heritage documents referred to in Policy HE6 have subsequently been superseded by: *Guidance on conservation area appraisals*, English Heritage, February 2006; and *Guidance on the management of conservation areas*, English Heritage, February 2006.

- 2.21 Additionally, Chapter 4 of the Local Plan, 'Design', includes the following passages in relation to:

Urban Design Aspects of New Development

Objective of policy

- *To ensure that all new development is of a high standard of design*

Policy D2A

Development proposals will be refused unless they meet the following objectives:

- Character in townscape and landscape by identifying and reinforcing better quality and locally distinctive design elements*

[...]

Policy 2

Development proposals for buildings will be refused unless they:

[...]

- Relate well to and enhance the surrounding environment*

[...]

FACADISM

- 2.22 Paragraph 3.15 of PPG 15, quoted at 2.06 above, states the policy resistance to facadism. This resistance is explicit in relation to the Appeal applications in the English Heritage letter to Milton Keynes Council dated 27 November 2007 (see also 5.03 below) which reads:

[...] English Heritage cannot accept facade retention as a meaningful response to historic context [...].

- 2.23 Facadism is anathema to the United Kingdom and international conservation community. It is variously characterised as superficial and an unsatisfactory compromise that destroys the integrity of the heritage and reduces historic buildings to the role of theatrical scenery. At the ICOMOS-International Conference 'Facadism and Urban Identity', held in Paris in 1999 and which I attended, the following was stated:

The practice of facadism represents a real danger to the spatial integrity of our heritage.

3.0 WOLVERTON CONSERVATION AREA

WOLVERTON

- 3.01 Wolverton holds an important place in the history of the development of the United Kingdom railway system.
- 3.02 Wolverton developed as a railway town from the late-1830s onwards. Located at the mid-point of Robert Stephenson's London to Birmingham railway, it served initially as a locomotive repair works for the line. Later, it concentrated on the building and repair of carriages, becoming the largest carriage works in the country.
- 3.03 Wolverton is reputed as the world's first purpose-built railway town and the precursor, amongst others, of Swindon – chosen by Isambard Kingdom Brunel as the site for the railway works on his London to Bristol line.
- 3.04 By 1844, the railway company had built some 200 houses for its workers at Wolverton, along with schools, a church and a market. Wolverton continued to expand throughout the Victorian and Edwardian periods, its prosperity dependent upon the complement of primary and supporting industries and workshops all focused on the railway. The chronology of the development of the Wolverton Works is shown at the Appendix.
- 3.05 Historic Wolverton is characterised in topographical and urban planning terms by its relationship to the Grand Union Canal, the main and spur railway lines, the siting of the railway works to the north and east of the town centre, and the grid-planned layout of the town centre and residential streets.



Aerial photograph of Wolverton in 1965 from the north east, showing the curved line of the Grand Union Canal in the foreground and right, the swathe of the principal area of the railway works diagonally across the centre, and the grid-planned layout of the commercial and residential town top left.

- 3.06 Stratford Road marks the historical divide between the principal area of the railway works to the north and the commercial and residential town to the south. This principal area of the works was defined along the northern side of Stratford Road by a secure and continuous line of enclosure, pierced only occasionally by gated entrances and doorways.



*‘Men leaving works at Wolverton’
A distinguishing feature of the north side of Stratford Road was the physical demarcation between the railway works and the town*

- 3.07 During the post-Second World War period, from the 1960s onwards, the decline of the railway works and the growing strength of the Milton Keynes conurbation led to the dilution of Wolverton’s tightly knit railway community and its enrichment through inward migration from home and abroad, including from countries of the British Commonwealth.



The diversity of independent businesses on the south side of Stratford Road

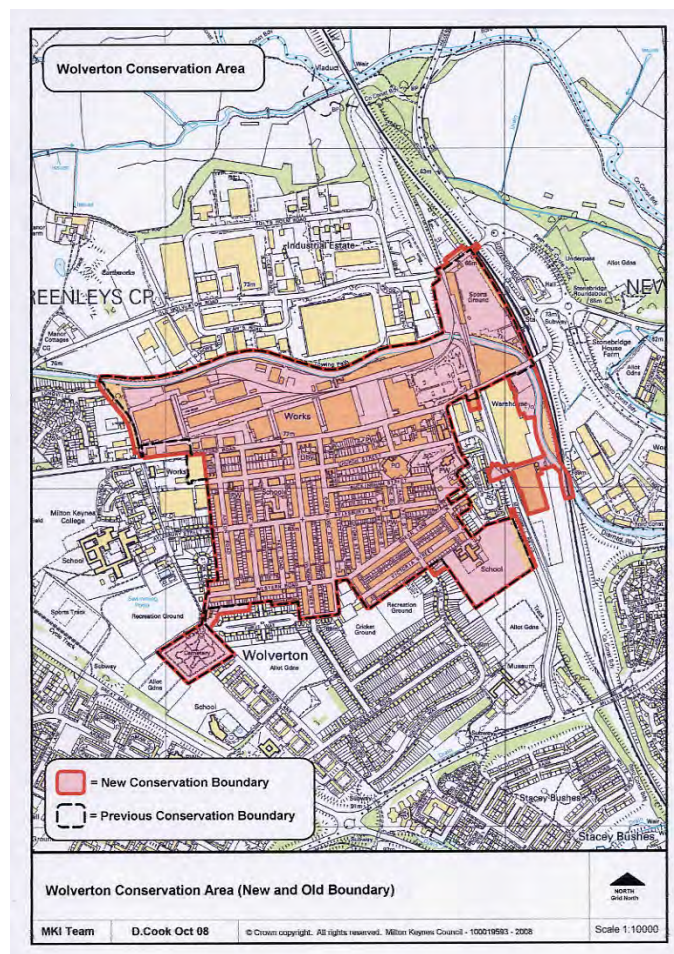
- 3.08 The resulting cultural changes have supported socio-economic continuity in one of the key activities that characterise Wolverton’s historic town centre today, namely the diversity of independent shopkeepers and traders. This activity is notable on the south side of Stratford Road, immediately opposite

the Appeal site; also, in Church Street and The Square behind. It is an activity that is a determining factor in the vitality of this part of Wolverton; hence, of the continuing functionality of the distinctive rows of shops and other businesses in Stratford Road and neighbouring streets, and associated repair and maintenance of the fabric of the buildings.

This relates directly to 2.13 and 2.14 above: to the references in the English Heritage publication *Guidance on conservation area appraisals* to prevailing or former uses and their influence on the plan form and buildings, and to sustaining the activities and uses that contribute to the special character of the place.

DESIGNATION OF THE WOLVERTON CONSERVATION AREA

- 3.09 The Wolverton Conservation Area was first designated in 2001. It was amended in 2008 (see map below). It is bounded to the north by the Grand Union Canal and to the east by the main line railway. Its defining significance and special interest is that of an early Victorian railway town complete with the surviving components of the railway works, housing, commercial and community buildings, and public spaces.



Map of the Wolverton Conservation Area showing the 2001 and 2008 boundaries

- 3.10 The documentation that accompanied the initial designation of the Conservation Area in December 2001 comprised the report on designation, designation notice and plan. The report on designation was prepared on behalf of Milton Keynes Council by the consultancy Conservation Architecture and Planning. Its paragraph 1 reads as follows:

Statement of Significance

The significance of Wolverton as an historic area derives from the following attributes:

- 1. Its location as a critical component of the world's earliest railway developments.*
- 2. The physical survival of some of its earliest built elements, including bridges and other structures built under Robert Stephenson's direction.*
- 3. The survival of the pattern of development and range of buildings from its zenith of growth and production.*
- 4. The portrayal of technological and social history represented in the buildings and layout of the town.*
- 5. The concentration of a number of industrial, public and religious buildings of special architectural and historic interest.*
- 6. The interest of a collection of building forms, functions and spaces which are unique in the region.*
- 7. The relationship of the town to part of the Grand Union Canal which runs through it.*
- 8. The archaeological potential to recover further evidence of Robert Stephenson's and other important early works.*
- 9. The potential benefits to the physical character and life of the community which may be achieved through proactive conservation measures.*

It is my evidence that items 3, 4 and 6 from the above list are of especial relevance in the context of this Inquiry as they may be fairly interpreted to encompass the former Fire Station.

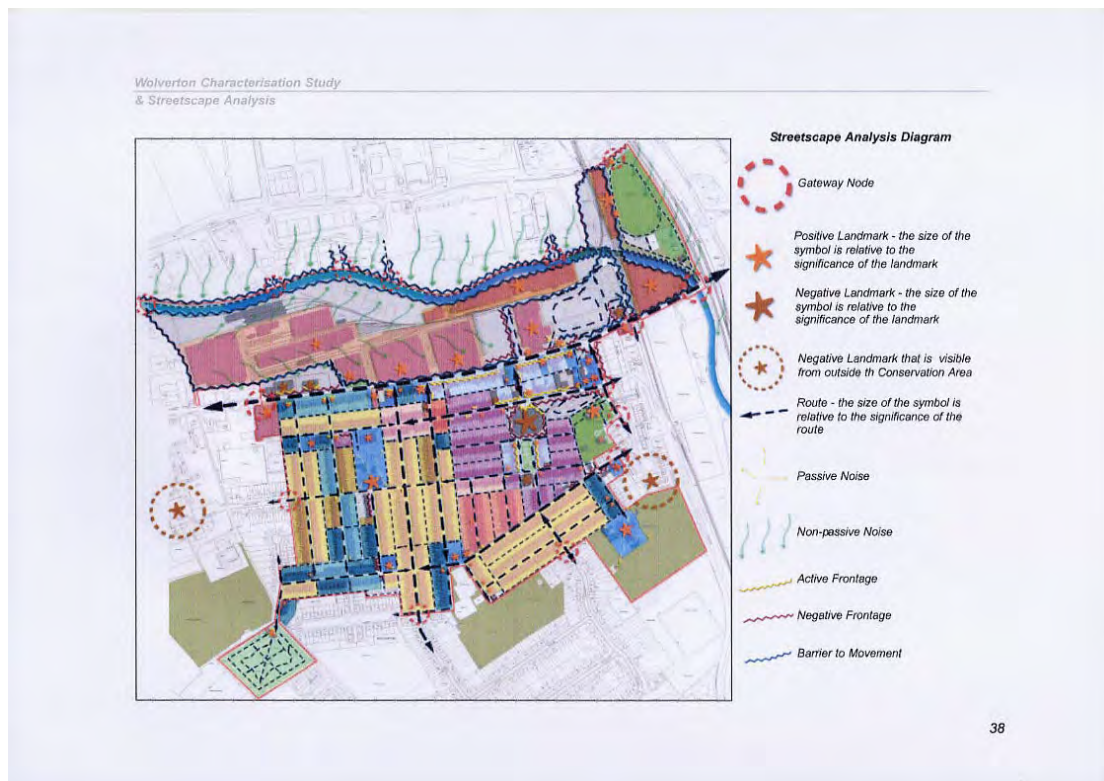
- 3.11 Paragraph 27 of the same report on designation lists 'negative or neutral aspects'. Of note is the inclusion in that list of the 'Tesco car park and petrol station' but not of the Tesco store itself.

WOLVERTON CHARACTERISATION & STREETScape ANALYSIS

- 3.12 The report *Wolverton Characterisation & Streetscape Analysis*, by Jonathan Phillips and John Brushe, was published by the Wolverton Society for Arts and Heritage in 2002.

Paragraph numbered 7 at page 7 records that 'the world's oldest purpose built railway workshop [...] made way for Tesco's car park, and Appendix 1 identifies a list of important lost buildings in Wolverton. Given the irreplaceable nature of the nation's heritage (refer the quotes from paragraphs 1.1 and 1.3 of PPG15 at 2.04 above), this adds to the onus to safeguard for posterity that which survives.

- 3.13 The third paragraph on page 20 of this same report identifies the Tesco service station as an example of ‘buildings that fail to utilise space that is at a premium within the Conservation Area’; and at page 21 the Tesco car park is identified as a negative space ‘that has no urban landscaping characteristics.
- 3.14 The above comments refer only to the Tesco service station and car park. The map at page 38 of this *Wolverton Characterisation & Streetscape Analysis* identifies the existing Tesco store as a ‘Positive Landmark’. The legend states that ‘the size of the symbol is relative to the significance of the landmark’. The symbol used for the Tesco store is of the largest size used on this map.



The existing Tesco store is identified in the highest category of ‘Positive Landmark’ in the Wolverton Characterisation & Streetscape Analysis, published in 2002.

- 3.15 Appendix 3 of this report omits mention of the former Fire Station. Please refer to 3.16 to 3.18 and 3.22 to 3.23 below.

THE FORMER FIRE STATION, STRATFORD ROAD

- 3.16 The Fire Station was built in 1911. A specific characteristic was that it served both the railway works and the town and was the only building along the north side of Stratford Road to function directly in such a way. This duality is reflected in the structural openings that occur at both the front and rear elevations for the passage of fire appliances. The form of these openings is still apparent and is crucial to the understanding of this building.



*The former Fire Station today: elevation to Stratford Road (left); rear elevation (right).
The form of the structural openings that allowed fire appliances to serve both
the railway works and the town is clearly visible today.*

- 3.17 The Fire Station features in *The Trainmakers: The Story of Wolverton Works*, by Bill West (Barracuda Books, 1982), at page 69 and at pages 83–90 in the chapter ‘Helping Hands’, where its role in the life of the Wolverton community is described and illustrated.



The Stratford Road elevation of the Fire Station and adjoining buildings in 1911



*Old photograph of the same elevation
(also showing men leaving the works)*



*Stratford Road elevation in 1990, illustrating
the rear doors seen through the front ones*

- 3.18 It is my view that the significance of the Fire Station in the history of the town has at times been understated; and that, specifically, it falls into the categories quoted in 2.16 above from Appendix 2 of the English Heritage publication *Guidance on conservation area appraisals*, and items 3, 4 and 6 at paragraph 1 of Milton Keynes Council’s report on designation quoted in 3.10 above.

WOLVERTON REGENERATION STRATEGY

- 3.19 The *Wolverton Regeneration Strategy* was published by Milton Keynes Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance in September 2004. This document made no adverse comment concerning the existing Tesco store building and did not anticipate the current applications to redevelop it.
- 3.20 Referring back to 3.14 above, and the identification of the existing Tesco store in the 2002 *Wolverton Characterisation & Streetscape Analysis* as a ‘Positive Landmark’, paragraph 5.2.6 of the *Wolverton Regeneration Strategy* includes the following passage:

Landmark buildings [...] may not necessarily imply high buildings but buildings of special architectural quality and treatment.

I interpret this to be the meaning that is also attributed to the word ‘landmark’ in the *Wolverton Characterisation & Streetscape Analysis*.

WOLVERTON CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW

- 3.21 The *Wolverton Conservation Area Review* was published by Milton Keynes Council in April 2009. Entitled ‘Review’, but referred to as an ‘Appraisal’ in the minutes of the meeting of the Milton Keynes Council Cabinet held on 24 June 2008, this document does not in my view exhibit the structure and inclusive content that is anticipated in the 2006 English Heritage paper *Guidance on conservation area appraisals* (see 2.13 to 2.18 above). This 2009 Review does not have the status of a Supplementary Planning Document.
- 3.22 Absent from this Review is any itemised audit or appendix of heritage assets. Even the ‘some sixteen’ listed buildings referred to in paragraph 2.5.1 are not identified by type, name or address, nor can they be readily deciphered on Map 2.2.
- 3.23 Paragraph 2.5.1 also refers to the identification of ‘forty nine significant buildings and terraces across the town’ at Appendix 3 [sic] of the 2002 *Wolverton Characterisation & Streetscape Analysis* (see 3.12 to 3.15 above). Paragraph 2.5.2 goes on to refer to ‘some important omissions’ in this schedule, including ‘the individual industrial buildings of the works and the wall that so dramatically subdivides the town’. It is my evidence that the former Fire Station falls into this category of omissions.
- 3.24 The subsequent paragraph 2.5.3 of this Review reads as follows:

However, the absence of a building (or item) from the schedule in the Wolverton Characterisation and Streetscape Analysis, or indeed from this review, does not necessarily mean that it is of no significance. The council will appraise the significance of individual buildings, structures and other features on a case by case basis and shall, where appropriate and reasonable, ask for independent assessments to be submitted with planning applications to ensure

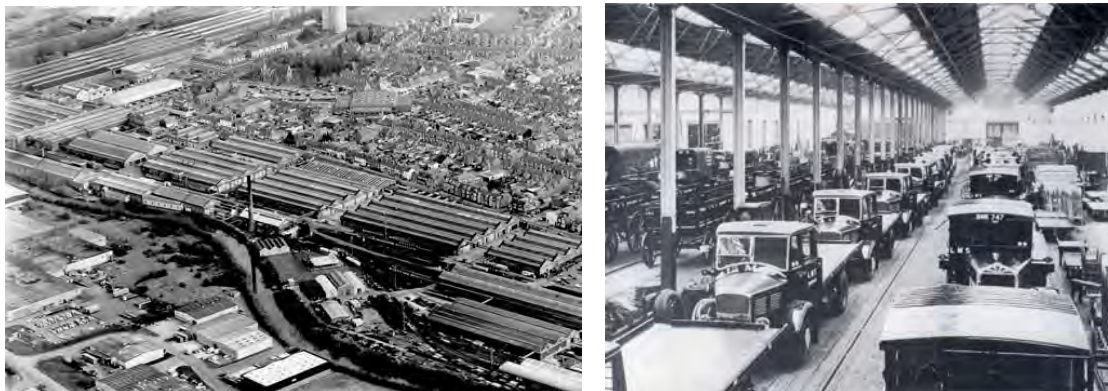
that the significance of a building or group of buildings has been properly understood prior to determining applications.

- 3.25 I do not consider that a case-by-case basis in the context of live planning applications offers an objective aid to the identification of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a conservation area. The absence of an assessment of unlisted buildings in this Review, as specifically called for in paragraph 4.4 of PPG15 (see 2.07 and 2.11 above), is in my view a serious omission. Additionally, I note that no independent assessment of the former Fire Station has been called for by council officers in connection with the applications that are the subject of this Appeal. My concern about the lack of such an assessment is borne out by the Design and Access Statement that forms part of these applications (see 5.10 to 5.17 below).
- 3.26 Map 2.2 on page 50 of this Review identifies the existing Tesco store as a 'harmful building to be replaced or removed'. This advice is inconsistent with the 2001 report on designation (see 3.11 above) and the 2004 *Wolverton Regeneration Strategy* (see 3.19 above). Furthermore, it contradicts both the 2002 *Wolverton Characterisation & Streetscape Analysis* (see 3.14 above) and the 1991 planning consent (see 4.05 below). The only explanation in this Review for this negative characterisation of the Tesco store is at paragraph 2.3.6, where it is described as 'somewhat uninspiring'. In my view there is no justification for these negative expressions of view and they represent an error. Moreover, it is somewhat curious to say the least that Tesco are also now criticising their 1991 and 2001 design approach (specifically in the Design and Access Statement that forms part of the Appeal applications).
- 3.27 Also absent from this Review are an analysis of urban morphology (see 2.18 above) – notably in the context of the Appeal applications in relation to the roof forms that characterise the historical buildings of the railway works – and of proactive management proposals to sustain the uses that contribute to the special character of the commercial streets on the south side of Stratford Road and to its south.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

THE 1991 AND 2001 PLANNING CONSENTS

- 4.01 The planning consent granted in 1991 for the initial construction of the Tesco store did not require conservation area consent for the various demolitions on the site of the store, its car park and service station as it predated the conservation area designation. In this 1991 application, despite neither being on the statutory or any local list, the former Bath House and Fire Station were retained in their three-dimensional forms. Both buildings were subsequently the subject of careful restoration to their external structures, respecting the materials and architectural details of the two buildings. Alterations to their external appearance were confined to the two buildings' gable walls and to the detailed arrangements within the retained structural door and window openings.
- 4.02 The planning consent granted in 2001 did not impinge on either the former Bath House or Fire Station. It led to the enlargement of the initial store – visible from the exterior at its east, north and west elevations. The south elevation between the Bath House and Fire Station remained largely unaffected.
- 4.03 It is evident that considerable care was taken by the architects of these two developments to design the initial store and its extension in harmony with the industrial character of the Wolverton railway works without slavishly copying its architectural details. This allows the Tesco store to be a good neighbour to its historic setting without being confused with it.
- 4.04 The equal pitch roof forms of the railway works sheds have been interpreted in the design of both phases – visible from ground level at the east, south and west elevations – as has the brickwork at actual or blind openings – the latter especially at the west elevation.



The locally distinctive roof forms of the Wolverton railway works are clearly visible in this 1970s' aerial photograph and interior view of the vehicle paint shop.

The Stratford Road elevation between the former Bath House and Fire Station has also been interpreted as a continuation of the industrial character of the

formerly continuous enclosing wall along this north side of the road, without seeking to replicate the 1911 elevation that is reproduced at 3.17 above.



The Stratford Road elevation of the existing Tesco store today, viewed from the east (left) and west (right)

- 4.05 As the Committee Report dated March 1991 in relation to the initial planning application MK/65/91 states:

The new buildings will be constructed in red brick with natural slate roofs to match the materials of the area, and will be designed to echo the Victorian architecture of the area but in a modern style. [...] While the design does not attempt to recreate the appearance of Victorian engine sheds, the materials and design are considered to be appropriate for this location.

This same report also comments that the design of the Stratford Road frontage relates to the scale of the buildings opposite and retains the sense of enclosure along the street frontage.

- 4.06 Although these consents pre-dated the Milton Keynes Local Plan, it is my professional view that the design of the existing Tesco store meets the expectations both of paragraph 2.14 of the 1994 PPG15 (quoted at 2.05 above) as well as Policy D2A of the 2005 Milton Keynes Local Plan (quoted at 2.21 above).

5.0 APPEAL APPLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

- 5.01 It is not my intention to describe the dual applications in detail, simply to focus on the conservation and related matters that are encompassed by the two Refusal Notices referred to in 1.01 at the outset of this Proof of Evidence.

A BALANCE OF CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.02 It is clear from the application documentation that a balance of considerations led to the officer recommendations to grant approvals to the applications; likewise to the decision of elected members to refuse them.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE FORMER FIRE STATION

- 5.03 Members were concerned about the loss of all but the street facade of the former Fire Station.

This concern is reinforced by the representations of English Heritage. In this context their letter to Milton Keynes Council dated 27 November 2007 reads:

[...] English Heritage cannot accept facade retention as a meaningful response to historic context [...].

And the English Heritage letter to DPP dated 30 January 2008 reiterates

... that facade retention is not usually an acceptable response to change in the historic environment and in this instance the result compromises the contribution that the retained element makes to the conservation area. It will be for the local authority to decide if the justification for this erosion of special interest in the conservation area is adequate.

Clearly members have determined that the justification is not adequate, and I fully support that decision.

- 5.04 This English Heritage letter to DPP also notes ‘your justification for only retaining essentially a facade to the fire station’ under the explanation that ‘the basic reason for this approach is the inflexible operational requirements of your client’. These requirements are spelt out in paragraph 8.89 of the Design and Access Statement (see also 5.10 to 5.17 below), which includes the ambiguous statement that ‘the utmost care and attention will be taken to ensure that the facade is preserved and retained in the scheme’. I deduce a note of warning in this, to be read in conjunction with that given in paragraph 3.15 of PPG15 (see 2.06 above) concerning ‘problems for the long-term stability of the structure’. There is no reason to my knowledge why the building if retained without further alteration should not be capable of long-term retention.

- 5.05 As noted in 3.25 above, council officers did not call for an independent assessment of the former Fire Station before recommending approval of these applications. At the same time, however, the Principal Planning Officer - Design & Conservation reported to the May 2009 Planning Committee that:

The fire station does make a positive contribution to the area. It accords with the consistent character of Wolverton and represents an important building within the public realm that served both the works and the residential buildings. [...]

- 5.06 Concerns about the loss of all but the facade and immediate returns of the former Fire Station are also reflected in representations from the community, including in the e-mail from Denise Illet, Secretary of the Wolverton Society for Arts & Heritage, dated 9 February 2009, which reads:

We would hope that an effort could be made to retain the distinctive rear elevation of the Old Fire Station. It is equally as important as the front elevation and has matching gabled features and circular window.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE IMPACT ON THE TOWN CENTRE

- 5.07 Members were also concerned about the impact that the proposed new superstore would have on the vitality and viability of the town centre and the likely loss of retail shops in the conservation area.

This concern is also reinforced in the representations of English Heritage. In this context their letter to Milton Keynes Council dated 27 November 2007 highlights

... the importance of assessing the potential impact of further expansion of the Tesco store on the existing retail activity in the town which is located in its historic core and contributes to the special character of the town by being small scale.

And the English Heritage letter to DPP dated 30 January 2008 states that

It is [...] a matter for the local authority to be satisfied that they have a thorough understanding of the likely impact on local retailers and therefore the character of the conservation area of expanding on the current Tesco store.

- 5.08 Clearly members were sufficiently concerned about the potential impact on this aspect of the character of the conservation area to determine against the planning application. Here, I must defer to the detailed advice of my colleague Mr Adrian Fox, except to confirm my evidence to the effect that the character of a conservation area is not limited to its physical layout and architecture but is also related to its uses and activities, and that any threat to the viability of the independent businesses in the vicinity of the proposed Tesco superstore

would be likely to have a negative effect on the area's character and serve as a potential threat to the viability of its buildings.

This concern is further reinforced in the numerous representations of other members of the community.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE SCALE OF THE PROPOSED SUPERSTORE

- 5.09 Having the seen the retail evidence I am concerned at what my colleague Mr Adrian Fox reports as the lack of justification for the scale of the proposed Tesco superstore. The impact that this degree of enlargement has on the footprint and volume of the proposed development is severe, and for my part I disagree in this respect too with the Design and Conservation Officer's report to Committee 'that the net benefit from the proposed scheme outweighs the impact on the conservation area resulting from the partial demolition of the Fire Station'. There is no reason in my view, in any event, why the Fire Station could not be retained in its entirety irrespective of the scale of development proposed.

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

- 5.10 The Design and Access Statement that accompanied the applications contains a number of passages and illustrations that relate to my evidence.
- 5.11 Paragraph 5.18 of this Statement recognises the commercial interest that is concentrated on the south side of Stratford Road, Church Street and The Square, and that 'traditional shop fronts are an important original feature of these parades'.
- 5.12 Section 7.0, 'Scheme Evolution and Development' outlines the evolution of the scheme design in consultation with officers of the Council:

Paragraph 7.1 admits to the initial December 2005 'revolutionary 'concept' proposal [...], which sought to introduce a futuristic, fully glazed building to the site'. This scheme, which is illustrated at Fig 5 on page 25, would have led to the loss of the former Fire Station in its entirety, including its facade. In my view this design was seriously inconsistent with the appraisal of the character of the Wolverton Conservation Area and its setting, as set out in the immediately preceding sections 5.0 and 6.0 of this same Statement.

Paragraphs 7.2 to 7.12, together with the further illustrations at Fig 5, describe two further stages in the evolution of the design, from to November 2006 and March 2007. In both of these latter scheme designs the facade (only) of the former Fire Station is shown retained, notwithstanding that paragraph 7.10 refers to 'maintaining the landmark buildings along the Stratford Road frontage to the store, including the Old Bath House and Fire Station'; that paragraph 7.11 refers to retaining 'the key buildings along Stratford Road';

and that paragraph 8.89 also refers to the former Fire Station as a landmark within Wolverton.

- 5.13 Paragraph 8.7 sets out the ‘key elements of the proposal’, which include a pre-determined quantum of floorspace. At no point in this Statement is this quantum related to the constraints of the site in either two- or three-dimensional terms. It is my view that the retention of the former Fire Station should be a constraint that determines either the extent of floorspace, the design approach, or both.
- 5.14 Under the subsection heading ‘Appraisal of Wolverton Conservation Area’, paragraph 5.17 recognises that the former Fire Station makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. However, without explanation, the corresponding Fig 3 on page 17, entitled ‘Conservation Area Character Study’, does not identify the building as whole, solely its facade. In my view this serves to pre-empt the outcome of the design process. This view is reinforced at Fig 4 on page 19, entitled ‘Site Constraints Overview’, where one of the arrowed captions reads ‘Respect the existing Fire Station facade as a key part of the local heritage’; also at the final bullet point of the recommendations at paragraph 6.5, which reads ‘The former Bathhouse and the facade of the former Fire Station on Stratford Road should be integrated into any scheme of development’. The absence of any independent assessment of the former Fire Station has already been noted at 3.25 above.
- 5.15 Paragraph 8.53 again refers to the positive contribution of the former Fire Station to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, but only in terms that recognise its facade. Paragraph 8.56, however, acknowledges that the design approach of retaining only the facade of the Fire Station is a ‘compromise’, and paragraph 8.61 admits ‘that this building comprises an important part of Wolverton’s heritage’ [my emphasis].
- 5.16 Nowhere in this Design and Access Statement is there any reference to paragraph 3.15 of PPG15 (see 2.06 above), or any attempt to either explain or justify an approach that adopts facadism as a starting point in the evolution of the scheme design for the proposed Tesco superstore.
- 5.17 There is also lack of clarity in this Statement concerning the decision to retain the whole of the structure of the former Bath House and not also that of the former Fire Station. Paragraphs 8.60 and 8.61 state these as *faits accomplis*; paragraph 8.61 also states that the approach of facadism ‘has been agreed on throughout the consultation process’ without clarifying with whom. It is apparent from the two English Heritage letters quoted at 5.03 and 5.04 above that English Heritage was not party to any such agreement process.

ADDENDUM

- 5.18 I fully respect that, so far as adverse impact on the Wolverton Conservation Area is concerned, members’ reasons for the refusal of these applications are directed to loss of part of the former Fire Station and concerns about the likely

loss of retail shops within the Conservation Area. It is with those aspects that this evidence is concerned.

- 5.19 At the same time, for completeness, I ought to record my independent professional view that two particular aspects of the design approach to the proposed new superstore are not appropriate and are likely to have a negative rather than positive effect in terms of the preservation or enhancement of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Briefly, these are as follows.

Firstly, the chosen design of the ‘north light’ roof lights to the proposed new Tesco superstore has no precedent in the Wolverton railway works. Amongst others, it is a distinctive feature of the Lancashire cotton industry. The inappropriateness of this architectural feature to the Wolverton Conservation Area is confirmed in the letter of representation from the Reverend Steve Barnes to the Planning Inspectorate dated 4 September 2009.



‘North light’ cotton weaving sheds in Burnley, Lancashire

Secondly, although it has not as yet been agreed in detail, I do not consider that a ‘landmark’ corner feature entrance to the proposed store at the eastmost end of the Stratford Road elevation, for which there is no precedent along the historic enclosure wall to the Wolverton railway works, would either preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

POLICY BACKGROUND

- 6.01 PPG15 emphasises the irreplaceable nature of physical survivals in the historic environment and their role in ‘sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness which is so important an aspect of the character and appearance of our towns’. It also ‘urges local authorities to maintain and strengthen their commitment to stewardship of the historic environment’.
- 6.02 PPG15 states that ‘the preservation of facades alone, and the gutting and reconstruction of interiors, is not normally an acceptable approach [...]: it can destroy much of a building's special interest and create problems for the long-term stability of the structure’. Facadism is anathema to the United Kingdom and international conservation community. It is variously characterised as superficial and an unsatisfactory compromise that destroys the integrity of the heritage and reduces historic buildings to the role of theatrical scenery.
- 6.03 PPG15 calls for clarity in the definition and recording of the special interest that justifies the designation of conservation areas, draws particular attention to the need to ‘note those unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the special interest of the area’, and recommends the use of local lists ‘as an effective method of identifying non-statutorily listed buildings worthy of special consideration through the development control process’. It is my experience and evidence that local lists are especially effective as a tool in the management of conservation areas.
- 6.04 The 2006 English Heritage paper *Guidance on conservation area appraisals* paper reinforces the importance of identifying ‘those unlisted buildings that make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area’, and its Appendix 2 sets out a checklist of criteria as an aid to their identification.
- 6.05 The same 2006 English Heritage paper also identifies current and past uses as a characteristic factor in conservation areas and refers to sustaining the activities and uses that contribute to the special character of a place.

THE FORMER FIRE STATION

- 6.06 Members were concerned about the loss of all but the street facade and immediate returns of the former Fire Station. This concern is reinforced by the representations of English Heritage and members of the local community.
- 6.07 The former Fire Station was built in 1911. It comprises an important complementary building type in the rich tapestry of Wolverton’s architectural heritage. A specific characteristic was that it served both the railway works and the town and was the only building along the north side of Stratford Road to function directly in such a way. This duality is reflected in the structural openings that occur at both the front and rear elevations for the passage of fire

appliances. The form of these openings is still apparent and is crucial to the understanding of this building.

- 6.08 It is my evidence that the former Fire Station, in its extant three-dimensional form, falls in whole or part into eight out of the ten criteria for the identification of unlisted buildings that make an important contribution to the character of a conservation as set out in Appendix 2 of the 2006 English Heritage paper *Guidance on conservation area appraisals*. Also, that it falls into at least three of the nine attributes that are listed under the statement of significance in the 2001 report on designation for the Wolverton Conservation Area.
- 6.09 There is no local list in place for the Wolverton Conservation Area and the Council's 2009 Wolverton Conservation Area Review does not contain a comprehensive audit of the area's heritage assets. That Review does state that 'the council will appraise the significance of individual buildings, structures and other features on a case by case basis and shall, where appropriate and reasonable, ask for independent assessments to be submitted with planning applications to ensure that the significance of a building or group of buildings has been properly understood prior to determining applications'. Officers have not however called for such an assessment of the former Fire Station in relation to the Appeal applications, an omission that I regard as serious.
- 6.10 Additionally, the various references to the building in the appellant's Design and Access Statement admit to a starting point in their initial design approach that would have led to the loss of the former Fire Station in its entirety, and thereafter focus only on the retention of its street facade. There is no recognition in this Statement of the particular, dual role of the former Fire Station in the Wolverton railway works and town community, nor that its extant three-dimensional form is critical to the understanding of that role.
- 6.11 It is my view that the loss of all but the Stratford Road facade and immediate returns of the former Fire Station would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Wolverton Conservation Area and should be resisted. Even Tesco's consultants accept that this loss would represent a compromise.

RETAIL SHOPS IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

- 6.12 Members were also concerned about the impact that the proposed new superstore would have on the vitality and viability of the town centre and the likely loss of retail shops in the conservation area, a concern that is again reinforced in the representations of English Heritage and members of the local community.
- 6.13 The character of a conservation area is not limited to its physical layout and architecture but is also related to its uses and activities. The historic town centre of Wolverton is characterised by the diversity of its independent shopkeepers and traders, an activity that is a determining factor in the vitality

of the south side of Stratford Road on the opposite side of the road to the Appeal site; also in Church Street and The Square behind. The appellant acknowledges that traditional shop fronts are an important original feature of the parades of shops in the Conservation Area. As such, unacceptable impact on the viability of the independent businesses in the vicinity of the Tesco site resulting from the very substantial enlargement of the store would be likely to have a negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area and, subject to justification on retail grounds, should be resisted.

PLANNING HISTORY AND THE APPEAL APPLICATIONS

- 6.14 The 2002 report *Wolverton Characterisation & Streetscape Analysis* identifies the existing Tesco store in the highest category of 'Positive Landmark', notwithstanding which the Council's 2009 *Wolverton Conservation Area Review* identifies it as 'a harmful building to be replaced or removed'. In my view there is no justification for this negative expression of view and it represents an error.
- 6.15 Committee documentation that accompanied the 1991 planning consent for the initial phase of the construction of the existing Tesco store recognised that the design approach was appropriate for its location, and this design approach was continued for the 2001 extensions. Although these consents pre-dated the designation of the Conservation Area, it is my view that the design of the existing Tesco store preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area.
- 6.16 My attention is therefore drawn to the passage in Policy HE6 of the 2005 Milton Keynes Local Plan that reads:
- Conservation consent for demolition will be refused for buildings or features that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area, unless the proposed redevelopment would enhance the character of the area.*
- 6.17 I am not therefore persuaded by the argument presented by officers of the Council 'that the net benefit from the proposed scheme outweighs the impact on the conservation area resulting from the partial demolition of the Fire Station'.

CONCLUSION

- 6.18 I urge the Inspector to refuse both Appeals.

APPENDIX 1 – WOLVERTON WORKS CHRONOLOGY

- 1830 London to Birmingham Railway Company inaugurated
- 1833 Act of Parliament obtained for railway line
- 183? George Aitcheson appointed as the architect for the Locomotive Engine Depot
- 1837 Edward Bury appointed Locomotive Superintendent of the L&BR with his HQ at Wolverton.
- 1838 Line opened
- 1839 December - Schools established for workmen's children. [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.107]
- 1840 June: 14 acres purchased from Radcliffe estate [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.15]
- 1840 Second Station constructed [bib22775 p.17]
- 1840 June - Tenders accepted for construction of 4 clerks houses [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.15]
- 1841 Tender accepted for 4 carriage sheds and a crane [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.15]
- 1842 Market House opened [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.118]
- 1844 New Turnpike Road constructed (Stratford Rd) [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton' frontispiece]
- 1845 Wolverton completed its first locomotives [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.19]
- 1845 Company approved the construction of drains for the houses at Wolverton.
- 1846 New locomotive shop (Triangular Building) built on 3 acres to east of line [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.25]
- 1846 L&BR railway amalgamated with the Birmingham & Manchester Railway and the Grand Junction Railway to form the London and North Western Railway [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.25]
- 1847 September - Company allocated £2500 for a combined lecture room, library, reading room and music hall [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.107]
- 1847 Young Street and southern half of Ledsham Street built [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.26]
- 1848 Water supply condemned [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.113]
- 1848 Gas works constructed south side of Stratford Rd [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.26]
- 1849 Anniversary of Wolverton mechanics Institute [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.29]
- 1850 Wharf warehouse demolished and Triangular Building extended for tender repairs [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.26]
- 1854 L&NWR acquired a site in Bradwell from Earl Spencer on which erected 116 houses and a public house at Bradwell [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.34]
- 1855 Spring located south of Blue Bridge and east of the railway used as the water supply [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.113] T Tank for the water above a house at 99 Ledsham Street and a bath house opened on the ground floor. [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.61]
- 1858 Nine acres of allotment behind Bury Street purchased together with 11 acres on the opposite side of Stratford Road [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.37]
- 1859 land purchased to the west of Bury Street purchased from Radcliffe Trustees. New boiler and erecting shop constructed [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.37]
- 1860 Seven houses in Bury Street demolished and a rolling mill, forge, smithy and carpenter's shop built [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.37]

- 1860 First houses in Stratford Road completed. Mr. Aveline set out roads and land for building in Stratford Road, Radcliffe Street and Church Street [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.39]
- 1861 Foundation stone of the mechanics Institution laid [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.38]
- 1861 North Western Hotel erected [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.39]
- 1862 The locomotive works lost its independence and came under Crewe [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.25]
- 1863 Scientific balloon ascent by Glaisher & Coxwell from the site of the old allotment gardens [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.50]
- 1864 Mechanics Institute opened [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.50]
- 1865 Carriage department completed move from Saltley [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.26]
- 1864 or 5 Twenty acres of land purchased [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.26] [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.51]
- 1865 Second bridge over the canal constructed
- 1865 First Market for the sale of agricultural produce in May. [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.51]
- 1865 The Bodyshop and saw mill were completed [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.52]
- 1867 Privately owned Newport Pagnell branch Line opened [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.119]
- 1869 New carriage shed constructed on site of 1st station. [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.52]
- 1870 The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in the Reading Room was taken over as a trimming and sewing room [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.26]
- 1870 Paint and trimming removed from London and concentrated at Wolverton [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.52]
- 1871 Mess room constructed [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.114]
- 1877 Manufacture and repair of locomotives ceased at Wolverton and site was known as L&NWR Company's carriage works [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.26] [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.53]. The Brake Shop was reorganized. An entrance contained 2 sets of tracks was made in the north wall and a traverser was built. The main activity in the shop was lifting [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.55]
- 1878 Company decided to re-route and quadruple the main line to the east of the works [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.55]
- 1878 Company erected last workmen's cottages in Buckingham Street [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.113]
- 1878 Wolverton Permanent Benefit Building Society established in October [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.102]
- 1880 Mess Room extended to seat 400 men [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.114]
- 1880-1 Iron Foundry (shop31) constructed [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.56]
- 1881 Fitting shop extended [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.57]
- 1882 Main line deviation completed [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.120] and new station opened in August. New gas works built to north of works site that provided gas to Wolverton and stations between Euston and Stafford [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.55]
- 1882 12'0" high wall erected around the works [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.56]

- 1882 Body shop destroyed by fire and a new body shop constructed together with the Horse Box & Wagon Shop (shop 10) and the Parcel Cart & Omnibus Shop (shop 11) [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.56]
- 1883 New Finishing Shop (shop 20) constructed close to the gates [. Also another carriage repair shop was being erected to the east of the old I & B line and linked to shop 45 by a tunnel bored under Stratford Road . [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.56]
- 1885 Brass Foundry (shop30) constructed [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.56]
- 1885 New finishing shop completed (shop 12) [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.56]
- 1885 Polishing shops (shops 23 & 24) erected at the side of shop 17 [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.57]
- 1885 New recreation ground opened on 3rd August [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.99]
- 1887 Wolverton L&NWR Association Football Club formed. [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.101]
- 1887 Stony Stratford to Wolverton tramway opened [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.120]
- 1888 Company constructed 'The Gables' for the superintendent [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.55]
- 1888 The Lamp or Tin Shop (shop 32) built [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.57]
- 1889 New Lifting Shop (shop34) [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.57]
- 1890 Gas Street and Bury Street demolished and new bogie shop (shop 25) erected which abutted the fitting shop [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.57]
- 1890 Wolverton wooden engine shed constructed [West 1993 'Wolverton Works In Camera' p.5]
- 1890 New baths replaced the baths at 99 Ledsham Street. [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.57]
- 1891 New sewers constructed with an outfall works constructed between Wolverton and Stantonbury [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.114]
- 1891 New Baths opened to the public [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.57]
- 1894 Board agreed to erect a school costing £2800 for a new boy's school [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.107]
- 1894 Tool Shop (shop 38) and Testing Room (shop 39) erected on the site of Gas Street [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.57]
- 1894 Large Timber Stores (shop 4) erected [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.57]
- 1894 circa: Shops 46, 49 & 50 erected as Paint Shops [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.57]
- 1896 Company demolished north side of Glynn Square and erected a laundry [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]
- 1897 General Offices rebuilt facing Stratford Road [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]
- 1898 Body shop (no. 6) and Wheel shop (no.7) constructed expanding the works westwards [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.30]
- 1898 12 acres north of Stratford Road purchased [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]
- 1899 Drinking water was supplied to the town and works from the Tank House at 99 Ledsham Street [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.61]
- 1899 Shop 16 was used for building steel underframes and bogies and called the Frame Shop [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.57]
- 1900 Power house built west of the Saw Mill [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]
- 1900 New Lifting Shop (shop 5) built [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]
- 1900 Timber Drying Sheds and Log Gantry erected [West 1993 'Wolverton Works In Camera' p.75]

- 1901 September: Power House became operational and all shops were lit by electricity [West 1982 'Trainmakers', pp.59-60]
- 1902 New Lifting Shop (shop3) and traverser constructed [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]
- 1903 Hair Room constructed (shop 54) [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]
- 1905 Fettling Shop constructed [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.56]
- 1905 Chemical laboratory built above the Testing Room [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]
- 1906 Fire damaged Market House. This was rebuilt as a Gas Fitters Shop [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.118]
- 1911 Fire Station constructed on Stratford Road [West 1982 'Trainmakers', pp.69 & 83]
- 1913 Shop 5 doubled in length [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]
- 1914-18 war: Approximately one fifth of the workforce were in the armed forces. 246 of the workforce killed. [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.56]
- 1923 L&NMR became part of the London, Midland & Scottish Railway [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.56]
- 1923 Reading room converted into stores offices [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.26]
- 1926 Electricity supplied by Northampton Power Station. The work's Power House used for providing steam [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]
- 1929 Last steam powered traverser between shops 16,17, & 13 converted to electricity [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.60]
- 1930 circa _ Laundry closed and activities transferred to Willesden [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]
- 1933 Rolling Mill and Forge closed [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.37]
- 1933 Shop 49 burnt down and was rebuilt within a year [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.57]
- 1939 On outbreak of WWII construction work of carriages suspended and Wolverton used for war effort works including special carriages, armored vehicles, mobile kitchens, aircraft repairs, rifle stocks and butts, Horsa gliders, shell cases and assault boats [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', pp.57-72]
Cellars beneath smithy used as air raid shelter [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.37]
- 1945 Wolverton works returned to its pre-war role [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.85]
- 1948 Buckinghamshire Water Board took over supplying the town and Works with water [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.60]
- 1954 Wolverton training School opened in the former laundry building [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.104]
- 1955 Gas works taken over by the Gas Board [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.55]
- 1957 The Wolverton Building Society merged with the Northampton Town & County Building Society [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.102]
- 1959 Iron Foundry ceased casting [West 1993 'Wolverton Works In Camera' p.5]
- 1963 Beeching Plan relegated Wolverton Works to a repair centre [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.132]
- 1963 The Gables was demolished after being empty for 3 years [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.60]
- 1963 Last wagon built at Wolverton Works [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.139]
- 1963 The Smithy ceased working [West 1993 'Wolverton Works In Camera' p.53]
- 1965-6 Carpenter's Shop and Saw Mill joined together using the site of 40 boilers [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]

1966 Wheel Shop removed from shop 7 to shop 5 [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]

1966 Paint shops closed [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.132] Purchase by Robert Maxwell. Old Cell Shop used as Book Warehouse and the rest let to Dunlop & Rankin [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.143]

1966 Wolverton goods yard closed and transferred to Bletchley [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.142]

1968 Reading rooms vacated and no future use found [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.26]

1969 Iron Foundry demolished. Eastern wall collapsed destroying a lorry and four railway wagons [West 1993 'Wolverton Works In Camera' p.5]

1969 Wet asbestos house built [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.132]

1970 Gas Works closed [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.55]

1970 January - Works formed part of British Rail Engineering Ltd. [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.132]

1970 Cell shop extended on part of the site of the old Iron Foundry [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.132]

1975 Hammer shed demolished [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.37]

1977 New wheel shop constructed in part of the Road Vehicle Shop [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.132]

1977 West Asbestos shop erected alongside 1969 West Asbestos Shop [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]. Dry Asbestos House constructed on north side of shop 3 [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]

1979 Traversers widened programme begun in order to cope with 23m coaches. Lift shop traverser completed. [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.136]

1979 Trade Effluent Plant to treat chemical waste from Cell & Brass Shops erected on the site of the old Iron Foundry [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.136]

1979 Wheel shop in shop 5 moved to the old Road Vehicle Shop [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.136] [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.59]

1980 Extension to the training School opened [West 1982 'Trainmakers', p.144]

1980 Dry Asbestos House opened [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.136]

1981 Heavy repair traverser completed [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.136]

1981 Last road vehicle completed on the site [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.136]

1982-3 Old Timber Drying Shed dismantled and Test Shed for EMUs constructed [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.136] [West 1993 'Wolverton Works In Camera' p.75]

1982 Test track erected with 25k

1983 Traverser between East & West Repairs Shops completed [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.136 & 139]

1984 Traverser between East Repair Shop and High Volt test bay completed [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.136]

1986 Works formed part of the BR Maintenance Group [West 1987 'The Railwaymen Wolverton', p.144]

1984 New Asbestos House closed and turned into stores

1988 Wolverton timber engine shed sold to the Great central Society, Loughborough and re-erected on the Nottingham extension [West 1993 'Wolverton Works In Camera' p.5]

1995 June British Rail Maintenance sells Wolverton Works to the Railcar Consortium
[R Cook 1995 'Milton Keynes' p.4

APPENDIX 2 - *The Trainmakers: The Story of Wolverton Works*, by Bill West (Barracuda Books, 1982), page 69 and pages 83–90



ABOVE: Works fire station and stables in 1911, and front elevation of main entrance 1890-1911; CENTRE ABOVE LEFT: The main entrance from Stratford Road, 1911 to 1972; RIGHT: The main entrance from inside the Works, from 1911 to 1972; CENTRE BELOW LEFT: The main entrance from Stratford Road, from 1972; RIGHT: The old entrance to shops 10 and 11, from 1882 (not now in use). Note change of height of wall 1898. The far gate, known as the middle gate, was used to give access for the Stony Stratford-Wolverton Tram for lifting and repairs in shop 11; BELOW: Examples of the craftsmanship of the Wolverton signwriters.

HELPING HANDS

The first authentic record of the Fire Brigade was in the shape of a standpipe bearing the date 1854. Seven years later (1861) the first steam engine was purchased, and at this time the firemen's houses were distinguished by a red cross fixed above and to one side of the doorway. Their uniform consisted of a very thick dark blue tunic, leggings, belt with spanner and lamp, cap and leather helmet. This steam engine was a 'Rail Steamer' and was a converted locomotive tender which needed a locomotive coupled up to work the pumps. This same steamer was parked on the gravel siding until after the second war and was ready for use. If there was a fire on the main line, Bletchley sheds supplied the locomotive. It spent its last years until around 1950 parked hard on the buffers outside the 'bus shop before being scrapped. In 1877 the control of the Fire Brigade was taken over from the locomotive department by the carriage department. The first big fire in Wolverton Works was in November 1882, when the body shop was burnt down and many men lost their tools. The fire destroyed 28 new and 22 old carriages. The loss was estimated at £20,000. A rail steamer and a manual fire-engine were used until after breakfast time, when the dome was blown off the steamer and water had to be pumped from the canal by the manual. After this experience a fire pump was installed and mains laid down.

W. Purslow was Superintendent of the Brigade from 1886 until the end of 1907. In 1906 the second large fire in the Works occurred in the Market Hall. This was practically burnt to the ground; after rebuilding it was put to use as a gas fitter's shop and the Market was transferred to the Old Schools (its present site). Mr Purslow was succeeded by Mr Mason who was Chief Officer until he left Wolverton for Newton Heath in 1923. Under his command the Brigade obtained a degree of efficiency hitherto undreamed of, both in fire fighting qualities and on the less serious side of competition work, in which they won many national trophies beside many successes in open competitions in various parts of the country. H.H.Coker succeeded him and was Chief Officer from 1923-1934.

In 1896 the Brigade became responsible for the fire protection of Wolverton outside the Works, under an agreement with the Wolverton Parish Council. This was afterwards extended to the whole of the Urban Area when that was formed.

In 1911, the Fire Station was built and it was planned to have a large club room on a second storey, but due to lack of funds this never happened — hence the room above the Station has such a low headroom. There was an arrangement through a system of pulleys and counterweights that, on the releasing of a rope, the stable doors opened. The horses were trained to trot into the Station and stand in position in the shafts. On operating a second rope the harness descended from the roof and positioned itself on the horse's backs, and with the buckling up of two straps and hooking on of four chains they were ready for off. Until after the second war the strength of the Brigade was 24, divided into two companies, one on call, the other on leave. In 1913, as a result of voluntary efforts by members of the Brigade and a band of willing helpers outside, funds were raised and a steam fire-engine purchased. This was presented to the Brigade in the Park on Saturday 17 May (Whit Saturday) before a crowd of 5,000 by Mrs Norman McCorquodale. It was a Shand Mason patent Double vertical variable steam engine, first built in 1905 at a cost of £450. The last time the steamer was used was at the orphanage fire at Stony Stratford on 30 March 1938. It was shortly after this that Buckinghamshire County Council supplied a new appliance, a tender and pump combined, named *Princess Elizabeth*.

On Sunday 23 July 1933 the Works experienced the third fire in its history. The outbreak enveloped a section of No 2 paint shop (more familiarly known as the east paint shop). The Wolverton Works Fire Brigade (24 members — under the command of Chief Officer H.H. Coker) confined the outbreak to the one workshop. The shop was full of railway coaches being readied for holiday traffic and also there were eight coaches of the Royal Train, including the King's and Queen's personal saloons. The outbreak was first discovered at about 4.15 a.m. The Works' Brigade gave the alarm to its members at about 4.25 and in less than no time the firemen were on the scene and at work on the blazing interior. Residents of adjoining streets turned out to help, mainly to get the Royal Train to a place of safety. There was no engine and no electric power available. The coaches were pushed by the men, women and children while the 'travey-way' between the burning shop and that adjacent had to be hauled by man-power. One by one the coaches were taken to the adjacent workshops. Of the other coaches in the shop, fifteen were completely destroyed and a number damaged. 165,000 gallons of water were used. Minor injuries were reported.

The cause of the fire was never discovered.

In 1934 Mr Coker retired and Mr Felts became Chief Officer, but he too retired in 1935. The position was then filled by Mr Canvin until 1945. During the London blitz the Brigade was on standby at Reading, and when Coventry was bombed they stood by at Solihull. After the war outside calls were taken over by the NFS. The *Princess Elizabeth* was returned to the Buckinghamshire County Council but remained in Wolverton at the new Town Station. The Works Brigade then returned to the purely domestic job of fire prevention and protection within the Works. In 1948 the Works suffered its fourth major fire.

Tens of thousands of pounds of damage were caused in the trimming shop on Monday 25 October and Tuesday morning 26 October. The fire swept through 80 yards of building in half an hour. The alarm was given just before 11 o'clock by four men who had left the Galleon Inn after playing darts. The Works Brigade, under Chief Officer Frank Bates, was soon on the spot. Brigades from Newport Pagnell and Stony Stratford arrived shortly afterwards. The 80 feet flames could be seen as far afield as Whitchurch near Aylesbury. The flames were brought under control by one o'clock.

In 1955 Chief Officer Bates retired after over 40 years' service to the Brigade; he was followed by Mr Barrett, 1955-57, and he by Mr Valentine, 1957-74. Although no competition work is now done, the Brigade lives up to its traditions of readiness and competence under Chief Officer E. Riley.

Members of the St John Ambulance Brigade who work within the Works belong to the Wolverton Section, but for competition work, they represent the Works. The first evidence of a Works team is in the early 1890s under the training of Col W.H. Bull of Stony Stratford. There are some 150 members in the Works now.

In the early years the arrangements for dealing with serious accidents meant the patient was taken to the station on a litter and the first available train Northampton-bound. Later a horse ambulance was used to take casualties to the station, and to their home address when the case was less serious.

In 1926 Wolverton St John Ambulance Brigade obtained a motor ambulance by public subscription which was built, maintained, and manned by Works personnel. The Works paid all the expenses. This service was open to anyone living within the Wolverton Urban Area, and not only to Works employees. The entrance fee was 2s 6d (12½p) and thereafter 6d (2½p) per year for which a card was given.

This service continued until the introduction of the Health Service after the second world war. During the period 1926-46 three such ambulances were built and maintained within the Works. In 1946 the last one was handed over to the Wolverton St John Ambulance Brigade, and the Works built one for their exclusive use. Since that date, a further two have been built.

During the years the Works teams have been successful in both national and railway competitions: winners of the Empire Cup (1935), Brigade Finals (five times), winners of the All England St John's, etc. The most successful team perhaps was in the 1930s.

In the 1950s a Works ladies' team was formed, but this was disbanded in 1958. In 1968 this section was re-formed. This team has since won the Midland Region finals (five times) and represented the railways at international level.

At the train crash at Weedon on 21 September 1951, when the Liverpool to Euston express left the rails outside Stowe Hill tunnel and plunged 13 feet down an embankment, fifteen people were killed and thirty injured. The Wolverton team was called to the scene of the accident where they set up a mortuary.

The Works members and the Works ambulance, along with the St John Ambulance, and members from McCorquodales and Hanslope Park were called out again on 20 March 1972 to a major accident on the M1 in dense fog with 150 vehicles involved. A total of about 40 members from North Buckinghamshire went to the crash area and helped with rescue and first aid treatment and a shuttle service of stretcher-bearing to ambulances. Nine people died and 51 were injured.

In June 1953, the Wolverton Works 'A' ambulance team was selected for duty in Westminster Abbey for Queen Elizabeth's Coronation.

The first attempt to form a volunteer movement proved fruitless, owing to the difficulty of obtaining a captain and a drill ground. In August 1877 a gentleman in the neighbourhood offered his services as captain, promising to contribute £50 towards expenses. Other gentlemen came forward to act as officers. The L & NWR Company, through their representative at the Carriage Works, Mr R. Bore, took the matter up and issued notices inviting men to join. As a result a public meeting was held in the Science and Art Institute, presided over by G.M. Fitzsimmons, and supported by Colonel Wethered, Captain Rev F.W. Short of St Paul's School, Stony Stratford, Rev C.P. Cotter, Vicar of Stantonbury, and J.G.V.F. Johnson of Wolverton Mills.

Colonel Wethered referred to the abortive attempt of 1872 and offered a donation of £20. Captain Short undertook to act as Captain. A committee was then appointed: R. Bore, Captain Rev F.W. Short, Rev C.P. Cotter, and J.G.V.F. Johnson, W. Wilkinson, G.M. Fitzsimmons, Aldermen Young, Scotton, Polhill, Hayman, Clewitt, Smith, Fry, Goodyer, Muden and Williams. (Mr H.M. Williams the 'Outdoor Assistant' in the Works was later to become Major H.M. Williams and Commanding Officer of the Wolverton Companies.)

On 26 November 1877 another meeting was held in the New Dining Room on the Stratford Road. 49 attended but 50 others had applied to join. So started the Wolverton Company (No 6) of the 1st Buckinghamshire Rifle Volunteers (raised in 1860).

On the Thursday evening following, the first drill for recruits took place in the large paint shop (No 45). This shop was used as a drill shed and HQ for the Wolverton Companies until 1914, at which time the Drill Hall was built.

The Wolverton Company repeatedly won the Battalion cups for smartness, drill and marksmanship. Shortly after the company's initiation a band was formed.

On 10 October 1899 the Boer War broke out. On 1 January 1900 a meeting was held in the Science and Art Institute when it was announced that no less than 86 members of the Wolverton Company (No 6) had volunteered for service in South Africa. Five weeks later, on 6 February, a farewell dinner was given. The following morning they paraded on the Market Square under the Command of Major Williams and Lieutenant Hawkins and marched off to the Railway Station headed by the band playing the regimental quick-step *Ninety Five*.

On 18 May 1901, the men of the Wolverton Volunteers returned from South Africa. Previously they had been met at High Wycombe by the Mayor and Corporation and Officers of the 1st Buckinghamshire Rifle Volunteers. The arrival of the special train at Wolverton was heralded by

fog signals and deafening cheers. A procession was then formed and marched to the Market Square. Here C.A. Park, Superintendent of the Works, addressed Lieutenant Hawkins and the men.

Two Wolvertonians did not return from South Africa, and in the cemetery there is a simple obelisk to the memory of Private J.M. Gould, 'the first Bucks Volunteer to die on Active Service in the South African Campaign', and to Trooper G. Ruddleden, formerly of Wolverton, who was killed in action at Krugersdorp in September 1900.

To commemorate this part of Wolverton history, public donations were made, and from the sum collected, a tablet was made in the Works and hung in the Science and Art Institute until its closure. (It is now displayed in the foremen's room in the Works.)

In 1904, the Stony Stratford Company (No 7) which itself was formed in 1881, and whose headquarters were at the old St Paul's College, was transferred to Wolverton.

In the new Liberal Government of 1906, Lord Haldane became War Minister, and in 1907, the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act of 1907 was passed and the old Volunteers disappeared and the new Territorial Army took its place. On 31 March 1908 the 1st Buckinghamshire Rifle Volunteer Corps became the 1st Buckinghamshire Battalion, the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. The numbers six and seven Companies at Wolverton became F and G Companies with Captain L.C. Hawkins taking on the dual command. Every volunteer of suitable age was invited to join the new Territorials and about seventy per cent took on for a four year term. The final parade of 250 of the old Volunteers was held in the old Drill Shed in Wolverton Works, where Major Williams said farewell. Major Williams was the only officer on parade, but Captain Hawkins was present in mufti as a spectator. After the parade, the companies formed up in the Stratford Road, and after the Last Post and the Reveille were finally dismissed.

On the outbreak of war against Germany on 4 August 1914, the Wolverton Companies were mobilised and with the rest of the Battalion formed part of the 48th South Midland Division (145th Brigade) and saw service in France and Italy, where they gained many laurels.

The Reserve Battalion was designated 2nd/1st Buckinghamshire Battalion in September 1914, but was usually referred to as the 2nd Buckinghamshire Battalion.

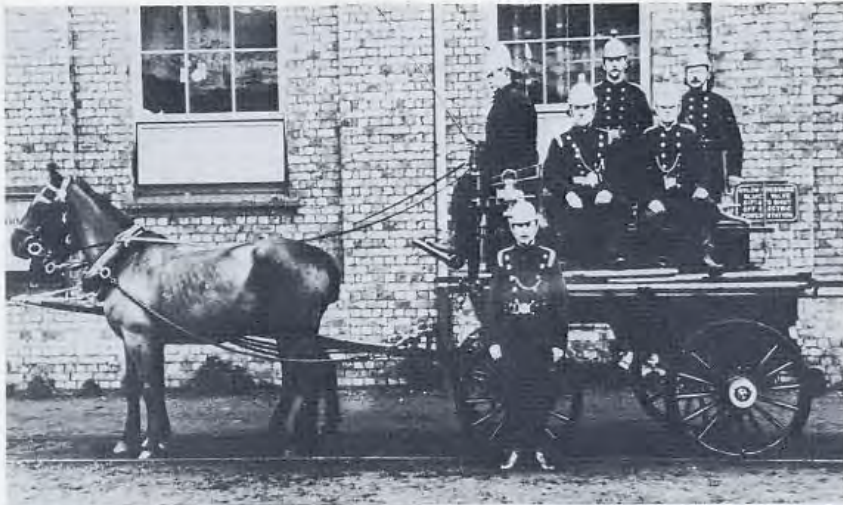
At the cessation of hostilities the Battalion returned home, and in remembrance of the men of the Wolverton Companies who did not return, a tablet was obtained and suitably engraved in their honour. This tablet was displayed in the Drill Hall, but now, like the South African War tablet, is in the custody of the Works Foremen's Association and hangs in the foremen's room.

On the reforming of the 1st Buckinghamshire Battalion after the Great War, the Wolverton Company (now 'B' Company) became remote from the Works in that they no longer used the Works premises for drill or an HQ. However, on the other hand, a large proportion of its members were Works employees. By 1938, the Wolverton Company had been redesignated 'A' Company.

During the last week of August 1939, they were mobilised, and were in France by early January 1940, and were in action and suffered heavy casualties at Hazenbrouck. The survivors returned to England via Dunkirk and reformed at Plymouth in Devon. They returned to France via the beaches of Normandy on the invasion of Europe on 6 June 1944.

During this conflict (1939-45) the LMSR Company paid all its employees who were in its employ before the war and who served in the Forces, by making up their Army pay to that of daywork, on whichever grade the individual had left, taking into account any increments in the case of men under 21, and any rises that occurred in their absence.

After 1945 the Works completely lost their association with the 1st Buckinghamshire Battalion, for in the post-war (1947) designation of TA Units, the 1st Buckinghamshire Battalion, in spite of its long and honourable history, was the Junior Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. Its new role was that of a Light Antri-Aircraft Regiment and this regiment was not to be raised at Wolverton.



ABOVE: The Works' horse-drawn manual fire engine, c1920; Fire Chief-Mr Mason; 2nd Officer-Mr Coker; BELOW: Market Hall fire, 21 September 1906. (SHC)



LEFT: The Steamer, purchased by public subscription; RIGHT: The hose trucks outside the stables (the wages office in 1978); BELOW: After the paint shop fire in July 1933 (shop No 49 on the 1906 map).



ABOVE: The trimming shop fire 1948, the morning after (26 October 1948);
LEFT: The Dennis motor converted to fire tender and escape made in the
RV shop, 1925; RIGHT: Wolverton's first motor ambulance, 1926; (SHC)
BELOW: The Wolverton Volunteer Band of the 1st Bucks Battalion TA
(c1912).



ABOVE: The Wolverton Companies of the VRC at camp in 1907; CENTRE: The Wolverton Companies marching through Chelmsford *en route* to France in 1915. The rifleman wiping the sweat from his cap is Frank Bates, later to become Fire Chief in the Wolverton Works Fire Brigade; BELOW: A group of Wolverton Territorials (A Coy, 1st Bucks Batt Ox and Bucks LI) at annual camp, Bulford, July 1938. Left to right, front row — J. King, G. Davis, H. Sear. Back row, left to right — J. Cook, H. Watson, D. Cooke.