

I make this written submission to the Planning Committee of Frodsham Town Council and apologise for not being able to attend the meeting in person due to a prior commitment.

I write to urge the Town Council to object to the proposal to demolish the former Goods Shed at Frodsham Railway Station.

I base my request on a number of Material Planning Considerations. In no particular order of importance these are:

1. Pre-application planning consultation.

There has been inadequate local consultation regarding the application and little if any consultation about what uses the building could be put to.

It appears that this application has been rushed through to accommodate the need for additional car parking spaces created by the re-opening of the Halton Curve.

This demand should in reality be answered by those that own and manage the railway station itself and not be responsibility of a local authority funded by local residents.

In the limited recent consultation that has taken place over 70% of respondents objected to the demolition of the building.

2. Local Planning Policies.

Whilst the Frodsham Local Plan is still being developed and written this area is covered by the retained Vale Royal Local Plan within the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan that states;

“Demolition of a building which contributes to the character or appearance of the conservation area will not be allowed, unless it is incapable of repair at reasonable cost and is incapable of accommodating a viable alternative use”.

Cheshire West and Chester Council have failed to consult with local businesses and the local community to determine if there are viable alternative uses that the Goods Shed can be utilised for.

The cost of demolition is estimated to be £200,000.00. The cost of restoration cannot be significantly greater than this. Indeed it may well be much less to bring the building back into use.

Furthermore the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan speaks of creating better environments for people to live in, work in and visit.

The development of the Goods Shed rather than its demolition will easily achieve these requirements and bring a vibrancy to Frodsham. Its development will also create employment and enhance the economy of one of our Cheshire Market Towns. It will stimulate further investment and bring prosperity and vitality to a town centre at a time of decline.

3. Adverse impact on nature conservation interests and biodiversity opportunities.

A very limited survey has been undertaken. Even this identified issues that would prevent the demolition of the building and at the very least a further study should be undertaken. Indeed this forms part of the recommendations made by the Total Environment Team who conducted the initial survey carried out over only three days during July 2018.

4. Effect on listed buildings and conservation areas.

Whilst this building is not listed it sits within the Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Frodsham (Town) Conservation Area.

It has been argued that the building is separated from the SSSI by existing car parking and rail track. This is not accepted. The site must be treated as a whole. The building forms an integral part of the station and its close environment and to claim that there is a distinct division is plainly wrong.

The building contributes to the architectural heritage of the area. The Frodsham (Town) Conservation Area Appraisal (200⁰) stated that:

“the character of an area depends upon its historic background, the architectural quality and interest of its buildings, their materials and detailing and how they relate to each other.”

The Goods Shed meets this definition in terms of its proximity to the other nearby station buildings.

Finally, whilst not a material planning consideration I would make mention of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that seeks to achieve sustainable development and sets out three overarching objectives:

1. **An economic objective.** The demolition of the Goods Shed and the provision of a limited number of car parking spaces is not financially sound decision making. It merely serves to satisfy a need, that even according to the recent Mott Macdonald Report, is not clearly evidenced, for more car parking spaces. If needed this can be achieved without the need for demolition.
2. **A social objective.** This is a wish to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities. An objective that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.
3. **An environmental objective.** This is to contribute the protection and enhancement of our natural, built and historic environment.

The demolition of the Goods Shed achieves none of these. Indeed its retention and development satisfies them all and makes good use of the land on which it sits.

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This can only be achieved by retaining and preserving the Goods Shed and I strongly ask that Frodsham Town Council object to the demolition of a building that is part of our heritage.

M.J.Garvey
Local Resident