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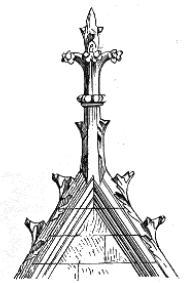
Conservation, planning  
and historic buildings

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Date: June 2012



**Heritage Report**  
**Proposed redevelopment at Little London**  
**Newport**  
**Isle of Wight**



The site in Little London

## **Introduction**

This report relates to a planning application for residential development including live/work units on the site of former industrial sheds which were historically utilised by Medina Food Services. This should be read in conjunction with the submitted plans and documents.

The report will identify and evaluate the heritage assets (designated and undesignated) and their settings in relation to the impact of the proposed development.

Information has been taken from the Historic Environment Record as well as the Isle of Wight Council guidance and local publications.

## Location and Context



Historic photograph showing the old warehouses on the western side of the river



The reconstructed building known as Carpenters Quay with the more industrial buildings behind  
Also note the trees which are part of the character of this area.

Little London is the name locally given to the area on the western bank of the river Medina, close to the Quay and Sea Street.

The area was formerly an important commercial centre used for wharfage and handling of bulk goods entering and leaving the Island by ship. It is a particularly significant location where the quay and associated warehouses link to the town of Newport which is the Island's principle market town.

Whilst some commercial shipping still takes place to the northern part of the area, Little London now mostly comprises a mix of modern industrial units and warehouses with a variety of commercial, cultural, leisure and residential uses, some of which are within converted former warehouses.

The harbour includes the quays which extend both sides of the River Medina. The western side includes Little London and is more built up than the eastern side where much of the quayside is open and was previously used for bulk storage and latterly for winter storage of pleasure craft.

## Historic Overview

### Early town

Newport town is based on an informal medieval grid road pattern. The town has a charter dating from the late twelfth century which established a market and it was incorporated as a borough in 1608. Newport as its name implies was originally developed as the 'new' commercial port to serve the medieval castle and settlement at Carisbrooke.

Newport was effectively destroyed by the French in 1377, but was reconstructed on a medieval street grid, much of which is still evident. There were originally three markets at St Thomas Square, St James Square and outside the old market hall in High Street/Holyrood Street which was in-filled as buildings encroached.

The town is located in the centre of the Island but importantly the River Medina is navigable to the town and has therefore provided an essential link for goods and travellers throughout the town's history.

The original street pattern remains in the centre of the town, but many of the buildings have been reconstructed during the C18<sup>th</sup> – C19<sup>th</sup> and later. More recently extensive development has taken place around the town with typical residential and commercial estates.

The river flows north from Newport Quay to Cowes and then to the Solent and therefore provides a direct link from the centre of the Island. This was particularly significant as water born transport was the only practical method of moving bulky goods prior to the relatively recent improvements to the road and rail networks. Early maps, illustrations and descriptions indicate that the area was mostly marshland which was gradually developed by reclaiming land and constructing quay walls and warehouses near the town. Further north the area remained relatively undeveloped until the mid C 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **The Quay/Harbour**



Historic overview of the harbour showing Little London and the site on the left

Newport Harbour is located at the point where the River Medina is joined by the Lugley Brook. Both watercourses originally powered various watermills around and within the town. Of particular significance was the location of Mew Langton's malting and brewery works in Holyrood Street as this had direct access via the waterway to the warehouse which is now the Quay Arts Centre and was originally used to transfer the beer barrels via a crane and narrow rail track to the barges at the head of the quay.

Whilst the warehouses including the arts centre, nearby converted dwellings and the rope store still survive, many equally significant warehouses in Sea Street were demolished in the 1970s to provide car parking for County Hall. This has seriously damaged the historic context and character of an area which was historically the hub of the Island's trade as seen in various old photographs and accounts of the locality.



Historic warehouses in Sea Street which were demolished in the 1970s



Rear view of the warehouses showing the railway viaduct and direct unloading of ships from the river

### Historic development of the harbour

The commercial trade was dominated by the Shepard and Croucher families during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Records for the Shepard family go back in Newport to the C 14<sup>th</sup> and there are possible links with St Cross Priory which had a landing stage at Little London and owned a considerable amount of land on the western side of the river. The family were fishermen and later mariners during the C 18<sup>th</sup> and by 1800 they were running a regular cargo service to and from the mainland as well as acting as carriers around the Island.

The Croucher family established a similar business in the first quarter of the C 19<sup>th</sup> and over the next seventy years these family businesses would own many ships and dominated the trade in the harbour. Their names can still be seen on some of the buildings and were prominently displayed in old illustrations of the area. The Shepard family were responsible for constructing many of the buildings including the model warehouse and the derrick store (now the Bargeman's Rest PH) as well as selling land to build the railway viaduct which led to the construction of the Rope Store.

### The railway

The railway was a significant factor influencing the commercial and physical development of Little London.

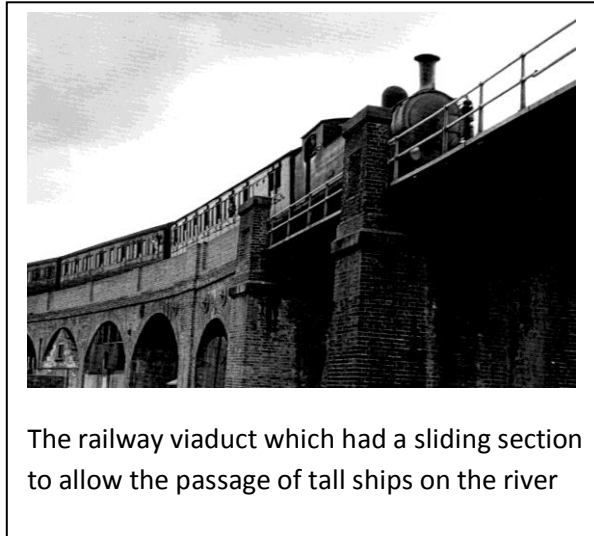
#### Station



Newport railway station in the 1950s

Newport railway station (c1860) was located to the west of Little London and originally linked to Cowes and later to the West Wight. The building was fire damaged in 1874 but was insured and was rebuilt and extended.

### **Railway viaduct**



The railway viaduct which had a sliding section to allow the passage of tall ships on the river

Critical to the expansion of the railway was the construction of a viaduct in 1875 to link with railway across the Medina. This involved the purchase of land owned by the Shepard family and they negotiated improvements to the quay walls which stabilised the previously marshy river banks, as well as a contract for railway deliveries. As noted above the land purchase also provided space for the construction of the rope store with its distinctive shaped roof, which now remains as part of the arts centre.

The viaduct was located in the approximate position of the current dual carriageway and it was a distinctive feature of the Coppins Bridge and Little London areas until its removal in the 1960s.

As tall masted ships still required access to the head of the Quay, the viaduct was constructed with a sliding section of track which allowed the bridge to be opened for the passage of ships. However this proved awkward to use and often caused delay and obstruction at critical tide times resulting in conflict and court cases.

Almost the Island's entire rail network was closed and dismantled following the Beeching Report in 1963. This led to a decline in the commercial activity at the harbour, which is now based on leisure and community uses with some commercial and industrial activities in the more recent warehouses which relate to the Riverway industrial estate.

## The Quays



Historic overview of the harbour showing the warehouses and quays along both sides of the river

The harbour extends along the eastern and western banks of the River Medina. The quays were used for docking ships and loading and handling of cargo. Areas around the southern head of the harbour close to the town tended to be built up with two and three storey warehouses, many of which backed onto the river and had frontages onto Sea Street. Other areas of the quayside were more open and were used for bulk storage and goods handling.

### West bank



West bank looking south to Little London



West bank looking north with Carpenters Quay on the right

The west bank includes Little London and extends northwards past the Odessa Boatyard to Blackhouse Quay which is the last remaining commercial quay to handle bulk goods (aggregates).

The southern part including Little London has retained some of the historic warehouses and workshops which contribute to the character of this location.



## Notable structures

### Quay Arts Centre



The Quay Arts Centre and the entrance into Little London from Sea Street



Little London runs alongside the Arts Centre

As mentioned above this substantial range of warehouses was originally used by Mew Langtons brewery to store and load the barrels onto barges for shipment as well as for loading oncoming produce. Some elements of the crane and narrow gauge track still exist. This is a significant historic structure which extends over the Lugley Brook and it was converted to an arts centre in the 1970s and later extended to include a small theatre and galleries.



The section of the watercourse which originally connected the brewery and malt house to the warehouse



The remains of the crane for lifting barrels from the barges



The rail for transporting the barrels to waiting ships in the harbour

## Rope Store



The Rope Store was constructed on land adjacent to viaduct which has now been replaced with the road bridge



The unusual roof shape of the Rope Store is due to the wedge shaped piece of land left over following the construction of the railway viaduct.

This building is a three storey warehouse built on a wedge shaped piece of land to the south of the new railway viaduct. The shape of the building resulted in the distinctive curved roof form. This building had a single hoist system serving loading doors on the river frontage and was used by Messrs Croucher Ltd to store rope which was extensively used in varying sizes ranging from hawsers capable of towing a hundred ton barges to light cords for securing canvas aprons. The use of these materials continued until after the Second World War. The building is now part of the arts centre.

## Newport Electric Light Works (A B Cook workshop)



Historic photograph of the electricity works shortly after completion c1900  
Note the distinctive design and also the tall brick chimney

This building was constructed at the turn of the C 19<sup>th</sup> – C 20<sup>th</sup> and was known as 'The Newport Electric Light Works' or the power station.



Cables were laid into the town of Newport and as far as Carisbrooke Road by 1901.

The building itself is of very distinctive design with stepped red brick gables contrasting with the buff brickwork on the main elevations. The side elevations are more utilitarian in design but reflect the overall character and form of the whole. It is understood that some original interior fittings including gantries and hoists remain.



The stepped gables on the main frontage overlooking the river



Detail of the decorative red and buff brickwork.

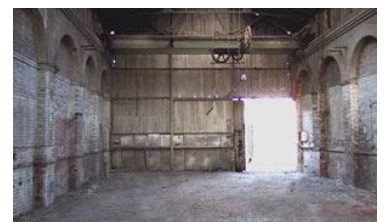
There are additional smaller elements which appear integral to the main frontage which also have stepped gable detailing and probably comprised original offices and manager's accommodation and possibly an engine room.



Overview of the three main gables showing the contrasting brick and stepped profile



The side elevation which although visually quite prominent has simpler detailing



The rear entrance to the turbine hall in Newport power station  
The travelling crane used to lift the generators out for maintenance is still in place and can be seen at the top.

There was originally a substantial brick chimney located in the yard between this building and the derrick store. This chimney seems to have been removed in the mid C 20<sup>th</sup>. There is a substantial electrical sub-station adjacent to the building.

The former power station (later the A B Cooke workshop) is a building of local historic significance which has been the subject of previous proposals for redevelopment.

A recent appeal decision relating to this building dismissed a proposal for residential use which the inspector considered would result in loss of significance due to the extent and nature of the

proposed alterations. The inspector did comment that residential use may be appropriate but should be designed to respect the historic significance of the building.

In particular the significance of the building was described by the inspector as follows:-

*'The three stepped or 'crow step' gables of the front elevation are without question the most prominent and distinctive expression of the architectural character and presence of the building. Though surprisingly juxtaposed with the massive industrial form of the halls behind this manorial, or even baronial façade, gives the building an air of bombastic pride, a characteristic befitting an industrial building of a confident, aspirational age. However, this elevation does not constitute the sum of its architectural interest, it being more accurately at the top of a hierarchy of form and detailing which is carried through to other key aspects of the building. This is most obviously apparent in the expressive detailing of the single storey office range on the south elevation, but also in the corbel table or cornice detailing of the west range flanking the generator hall.'*

And the setting:-

*'The existing structure, with its imposing industrial presence above the quay, forms an important component of the industrial and mercantile character of the harbour area. This relationship is especially apparent when the building is viewed from the east quay where it forms part of the matrix of buildings, both historic or of mercantile or industrial character, which critically define the special character of the area. The loss of the greater part of the building, specifically the integrity of its three dimensionality, and its replacement (notwithstanding appearance is reserved) with the form and layout of development proposed, would significantly diminish that special character, resulting in material harm to it'.*

The building has been used as a vehicle repair work shop and is now disused. This building along with the Derrick Store, the Arts Centre and the Rope Store as well as the altered model store comprise an important historic group which is still recognisable as part of the original quayside character of Little London.

This group would originally have been strengthened by the proximity of the railway station and viaduct and the now lost warehouses in Sea Street as well as the various cranes, hoists, mooring posts and quayside furniture of which some limited evidence remains.

The building has historic and architectural significance relating to an important phase in the evolution of Newport and the developing technology of electrical supply. The design of the building is unusual and distinctive and its prominent location means that it is a local landmark structure. It also retains its form and character as well as some interior fittings relating to the original use.

## Derrick Store (Bargemen's Rest PH)



The Bargeman's Rest PH showing the original Derrick Store in the central part



Historic image of the Derrick Store showing the original loading bay and the derrick lifting system on the quayside



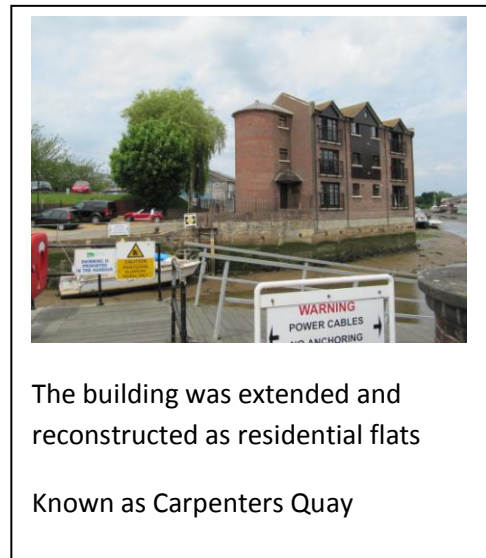
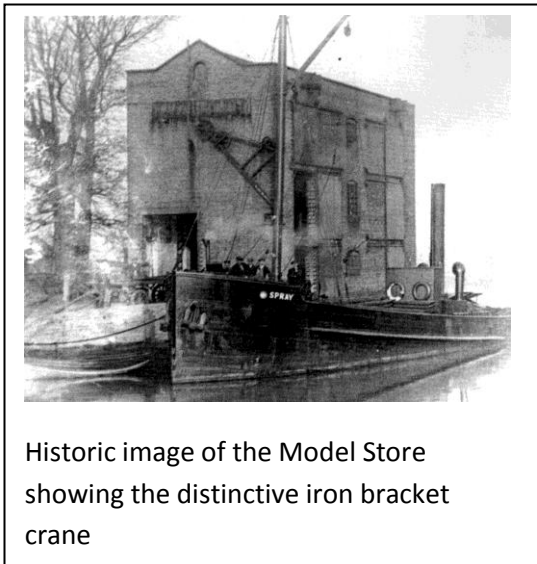
The main mast of the original derrick hoist has been retained to carry the sign board

The building known as the Derrick Store was constructed by the Shepard family and there appear to have been former artisan workers cottages in this location previously, but which had been unoccupied and in poor condition. Prior to the building of the viaduct and the quay walls, this part of the riverbank was a natural shoreline with no deep water berth.

There is a public right of way along the riverbank which prevented the construction of a warehouse directly on the quay wall so the Shepard family constructed the Derrick Store set back with a hoist and derrick set equidistant from the wall and the building to achieve an efficient loading system without obscuring the right of way. The main mast of this structure still remains as important evidence of the original use of the building.

This building remains with later alterations and extensions and is now the Bargeman's Rest PH and is significant as evidence for the form character and use of the former warehouse and derrick. It is one of a close knit group of former warehouses which contribute to the character and setting of Little London.

### Model Stores



The Model Stores was a three storey warehouse located on an extended quay wall along the river frontage to the north of the Derrick Store at the point where the river turns slightly to the west. It was constructed to incorporate every aid to cargo handling and its large iron bracket crane on the southern gable was a distinctive feature.

This was another Shepard family building which was the subject of dispute regarding land ownership between the Shepards and the Council which was settled in court in favour of the Shepards in the late C 19<sup>th</sup>.

This building has been significantly reconstructed, extended and altered and is now in residential use as flats known as Carpenters Quay. Although little if any historic fabric remains, the building has been constructed to reflect the scale character and location of the old warehouses and it is a visually significant building in the locality.

## Other structures

### The Ark



Historic photograph of this quirky structure which was in the approximate location of the site

Old illustrations show a curious timber clad structure known as the ark located to the north of the model stores. This appears to have been constructed onto an old barge around 1850 and was occupied by the Cooper family who at one time hired out rowing boats. The structure remained until the 1920s when it was unoccupied.

### Odessa Boatyard



The original cottage appears to date from the C 18th



Part of the adjacent cottage which is probable C 19<sup>th</sup> in date



Historic timber workshops which are part of the Odessa Boatyard



Latter buildings follow the traditional form and scale



This was founded by the Bishop family in 1883 although the existing cottage appears to be older, possibly dating from the C 18<sup>th</sup> and was known as St Cross Cottage. The business expanded to accommodate engineering works to repair and build motor vessels which were taking over from the sailing barges.

The last sailing vessel was The Bee which had been built in 1801 and was used by the Shepard family until 1917.

The boatyard is still in operation and has expanded to include a Victorian cottage. There are several historic vessels moored alongside and the site includes some historic cranes and old timber outbuildings which contribute to the overall character.

### **East bank**

This part of the harbour is more open in character with a wide access road running from the end of Quay Street to Seaclose and the former goods yard which has recently been developed as a travel lodge and public house. Although not part of Little London it is an integral part of the character and setting of the harbour.

### **Notable structures**

#### **Riverside Centre (part of the old gas works)**



Part of the original gas works buildings



Modern extension which reflects characteristics of the original building

Although there are records of gas being supplied in Newport, (mostly for street lighting), in the early 1800s, the construction of the gas works at Newport Harbour was commenced in 1851 by Sir Augustus William Hilary and later by the Newport Isle of Wight Gas Company which was transferred to the Corporation in 1946. Coal was delivered directly to the gas works from the railway viaduct during the night to avoid interfering with the scheduled train service.

In 1937 a substantial retort plant was constructed using brick from the Rookley brickworks. This was a large (85' high) structure which dominated the area. There were also two gas holders and also a substantial (80' high) chimney.

The works were redundant by 1958 and the materials were sold at auction by Sir Francis Pittis and Sons.



The remaining buildings were converted and extended as the Riverside Centre which is a community facility.

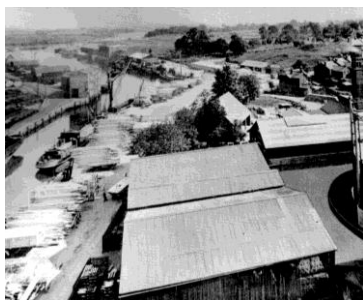
### **Harbourmaster's Office**



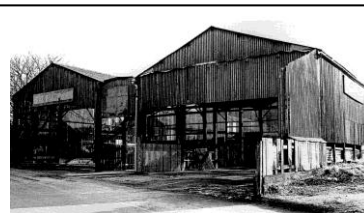
This is a brick building which appears to date for the turn of the C 19-20<sup>th</sup>. The ground floor is now public toilets and yachtsmen's facilities and the upper floor within the roof space is the Harbourmasters office. This building is close to the Riverside Centre and is part of the group of traditional buildings on the west side of the harbour.

### **Timber merchants**

The eastern side of the quay is relatively open and allowed for vessels to be tied up alongside the open quay for unloading. Old photographs show this area to be used for stacking timber to be loaded into the open slatted sheds belonging to the two substantial timber merchants (Moreys and Sharps) which dominated the area. These businesses were established in the second half of the C19<sup>th</sup> and the large ships importing timber from Scandinavia had to unload at Medham and the timber was then loaded onto smaller barges which were towed to Newport. Cement and roof slates were also unloaded onto the quay in the C20<sup>th</sup>.



Historic illustration of the east quay with timber on the quay side and large storage and drying sheds in front of the old gasholder



One of the timber storage sheds which no longer exist.

The timber drying sheds no longer exist.

## Jubilee Stores



A large three storey warehouse now converted to offices and craft studios.



View to the south  
Note the historic cobble sets to the outside loading area.

This is a substantial late C 19th three storey brick warehouse with loading doors to the main elevations fronting the river and the quay. This is located close to the quay wall in the northern part of the harbour, close to the rear of Fairlee Cemetery and was presumably constructed at the time of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. The main building is finished in red brick with internal iron columns and frame. There is also an enclosed hoist bay at the southern end. An area of stone cobbles on the quay with inset metal rails is a significant reminder of the historic surface in this area.

This building has been restored for use as offices and craft workshops.

## Green Store



The former green store has been demolished and is now a car park for Jubilee Stores



Historic view of the Green Store showing the Crouchers' name on the gable

Immediately to the south of Jubilee Stores was the Green Store constructed in the 1920s at the request of the Croucher family to store incoming goods such as sugar, biscuits and newsprint for the County Press. The main floor was constructed above road level to avoid damage to the stored goods in case of flooding which was relatively frequent. The raised floor allowed direct access from vehicle tailgates and there was a lower basement area for storage of less perishable goods.

This building was removed relatively recently to provide additional parking for Jubilee Stores.

### Brick warehouse



This workshop probably dates from the early part of the twentieth century and is a typical example of the saw-tooth or north light roof



Detail of the saw-tooth roof shape

Note the later window insertions for use as a sail loft

An early C 20<sup>th</sup> warehouse with a 'saw-tooth' north light roof exists further to the north of Jubilee Stores band this was previously used by Vectis Shipping as well as by a sail maker.

### Curved roof warehouse



A C 20<sup>th</sup> warehouse with a TRADA lattice curve roof exists to the south east of the brick warehouse and this is setback from the river abutting the raised bank which is part of Seaclose Park. This building was probably used for boat building or repair, as well as storage and was until recently part of the classic boat museum.

### Other buildings

There are various other workshops and storage buildings along the quay which date from the mid-latter part of the C 20<sup>th</sup> including a large shed used as part of the bus museum. Whilst these contribute to the overall working character and industry of the quay area, the buildings are not believed to be of special architectural or historic significance and old maps and illustrations show that this northern part of the quay was relatively undeveloped until the mid C 20<sup>th</sup>.



View to the south showing the brick buildings



The northern gables of the brick buildings



Old stores and workshop



Later prefabricated clad warehouse which is now used as a bus museum

## Quay walls swing bridge etc



Historic (listed) stone masonry quay wall

Also historic stone paving



The swing bridge has been replaced with a modern fixed bridge but the junction of the rivers can still be identified

As noted above much of the quay wall was reconstructed and extended as part of the construction of the railway viaduct. There are some areas of earlier stone walling in the area at the head of the quay behind the converted warehouses.

There was an opening swing bridge to allow vessels to enter the Medina where it flowed behind the warehouses which used to line Sea Street which is now the council car park. This used to include the Reform Wharf which was constructed in 1832, following the Reform Bill of that year, and given to the Church Wardens and Overseers for the benefit of the poor. The inscribed stones were later relocated to Coppins Bridge in the 1970s as part of an 'improvement plan'.

In this context the various remaining elements for the working quays including historic railings, mooring posts, derricks, cranes and crane bases, historic surfaces, etc should also be given due regard as part of the historic environment of the harbour.

## **Historic Assets and Significance**

### **Designations**

#### **Conservation area**

Newport town centre and environs are within the designated conservation area. The area was reviewed and extended in 2007. Due to the extent and complexity of the townscape and character the conservation areas has been designated with various character areas. The boundary of the conservation area includes the medieval streets and extends to Sea Street which abuts the harbour and includes the Quarts Centre and the Rope Store.

The quay and the harbour were not included within the designated conservation area as significant changes including the loss of some historic warehouses and the construction of the dual carriageway which bridges over the river, were believed to have affected the character of the area and future development potential was linked to the regeneration brief referred to above. Importantly this brief identified the significant buildings and local character and recognised the benefits of building on local distinctiveness.

#### **Listed buildings**

The Quay Arts Centre and the Rope Store are listed grade 2

Other remaining warehouses in Sea Street are also listed grade 2.

Parts of the historic stone quay walls are also listed grade 2.

#### **Local list**

The A B Cooke building (power station) is included in the local list of buildings of architectural and historic interest.



The surviving hand powered crane situated at Seaclose quay is also included in the local list and it is important as a surviving example of the cranes which previously existed throughout the eastern side of the quayside.

## Heritage Assets

Various buildings and structures are also included as heritage assets in the Council's Historic Environment Record or otherwise qualify for consideration as locally significant historic assets as identified in this report.

Examples of local heritage assets which contribute to the character of the harbour



Old ships propeller used as a sculptural feature



Historic stone paving with circular crane base



Old iron mast in Little London



The last remaining historic hand operated crane unfortunately now 'protected' with wire mesh and railings





Polished stone water drinking fountain which is being restored in a new location opposite the rope store

Inscribed 'In memory of Sir Barrington Simeon 1909 be mercival'. The Memorial drinking fountain is badly damaged with parts missing, but is now being restored in its new location.

Sir John Stephen Barrington was Member of Parliament for Southampton from 1895 to 1900, and lived at the family estate Swainston Manor.



Old mooring bollard



Iron post and crane base on the quay side

## Archaeology

Excavations in the Historic Town Centre of Newport have shown that this area has been the focus of activity from the prehistoric periods to the present. This is probably due in part to Newport being at the head of the Island's largest navigable river. The area of highest archaeological potential is centred on the Quay, as this would have been both a crossing point and the centre of trade and commerce from the Roman period onwards. Recent excavations suggest that the easternmost limits of Pyle Street were an artisan area in the 13th century producing goods for sale or trade in the emergent market town.

## Analysis of heritage significance

### The site

The application site is situated to the north of the Bargeman's Rest and to the west of the re-constructed Model Stores which are now residential flats (Carpenters Quay). The land levels rise to the west and the road follows the line of the original right of way to the west of the model stores and then following the quay wall outside the Bargemen's Rest.

The site was until recently used as a meat packing warehouse as the existing building comprises a prefabricated warehouse constructed of concrete panels with corrugated cladding. This appears to date from the 1930-40s. There are other modern warehouse buildings in the immediate vicinity and the site also abuts the buildings on the Riverway trading estate which are also large modern structures. This area has been built on relatively recently (mid C 20<sup>th</sup>) as old maps and illustrations shown the area to be relatively undeveloped.



The existing concrete panel building on the site



The northern side with a later corrugated clad building adjacent

### Historic context

The relevant historic context in relation to the proposed development therefore comprises the group of buildings which include the Model Store (now altered and converted as Carpenter's Quay, but still a significant feature building), the Bargemen's Rest PH which includes the original Derrick Store, the A B Cooke warehouse which was formerly the Newport Electric Light Company building as well as the Rope Store and the Quay Arts Centre.

These should also be considered in the wider context of the overall character of the quay with the remaining historic structures and its relationship to Newport town centre as described in this report.



The modern warehouses are a backdrop for the smaller scale traditional workshops and boatyards



Odessa boatyard with modern warehouses behind

## Impact

The proposal would not directly affect the historic structures, but there would be some impact on their setting in the wider context as established in this report. The area is very mixed in terms of building design and uses and the principle issue is therefore considered to be the relationship of the form, scale and general characteristics of the proposed development and how this would relate to the historic and wider context of the locality. The design of the proposed development responds to the scale, form and historic context of Little London as outlined in the published guidance and described in the accompanying planning documents. The proposed landscaping will also serve to separate this from the larger Riverway Estate and therefore help to reveal and enhance the local characteristics of the historic harbour.

It would be desirable to screen the large industrial sheds within the Riverway as they are utilitarian buildings which have a form, scale and mass which are juxtaposed with to the historically evolved quayside. Although the Riverway buildings were justifiably created for employment purposes, it is desirable to screen such buildings to suppress the large volumes, particularly from across the river and on the adjacent side of Newport Quay. The current proposal certainly will achieve this as it introduces a more domesticated/historic industrial form and has a better proportion, detailing and fenestration which suits the quayside rather than having a backdrop of a large grey industrial shed. This will certainly enhance the setting to the area and will add to the context and character.

## Relevant Heritage policies and guidance

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The framework was published in March 2012 and is intended to simplify the planning system and make it more accessible, whilst protecting the environment and supporting sustainable development.

The NPPF supports appropriate sustainable development where this accords with up to date local policies. It also acknowledges the importance of the historic environment and the contribution that it makes to economic sustainability.

*‘Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.’*

Relevant NPPF heritage policies include:-

- **Requiring good design**  
*‘...respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation’*
- **Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**  
*‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional.’*

## **Island Plan Core Strategy**

The Isle of Wight Council adopted the Island Plan Core Strategy in March 2012. The policies are therefore up to date and relevant.

The Core Strategy identifies the Medina Valley as a key regeneration area where appropriate economic led regeneration will be acceptable in principle. Further supplementary guidance will be developed in due course.

Strategic and development management policies also aim to support the retention and enhancement of historic assets and their settings as part of the overall aim of protecting the Island’s natural and built environment.

The site is within the Medina Valley regeneration area and will be a focal point for residential and economic growth. The local planning authority will be preparing an Area Action Plan to identify appropriate sites and development objectives. (AAP 1)

The following policies from the Core Strategy are considered to be relevant to the design and heritage issues for this application.

- ☐ SP1 Spatial Strategy
- ☐ SP3 Economy
- ☐ SP5 Environment
- ☐ DM2 Design Quality for New Development
- ☐ DM8 Economic Development
- ☐ DM11 Historic and Built Environment

## □ DM12 Landscape, Seascape, Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Section 6 of the Core Strategy relates to the area action plans (DPDs) for the key regeneration areas which includes the Medina Valley. Detailed action plans and allocations will be drawn up with community consultation, but the council acknowledges that applications are expected to come forward in advance of the DPDs which will be considered on their individual circumstances in accordance with the policies in the Core Strategy including DM 11 which relates to the historic and built environment.

Newport is the historic county town and is the primary commercial centre.

The Core Strategy plans for the provision of 1,350 new dwellings in the Medina Valley during the plan period and development is expected to be concentrated in the existing settlements.

The River Medina is a working river providing access and wharfage for commercial and leisure uses. There are a number of employment sites on the River Medina that have water access. The Council is aware of the importance of such sites and wishes to examine the approach required to ensure that appropriate water access for employment uses is retained.

### **Newport Harbour Guidance**

The Isle of Wight Council published a Newport Harbour Regeneration Brief which was the subject of public consultation in 2001. Although this document was based on previous policies and guidance and is now out of date, it did include an extensive analysis of the area and establish some important aims and a vision for the harbour which are still considered relevant in the current context.

In particular the ad hoc development and expansion of the quay has allowed vistas to remain open between the older warehouses and modern sheds which relate to the water frontage. The document also identifies buildings of character which are suitable for retention and possible conversion.

The brief acknowledges that the area is unlikely to be developed as a single proposal but will evolve incrementally on the basis of the stabled principles.

Likely acceptable uses were considered to include an element of residential accommodation along with possible leisure, craft, commercial and some retail space. It is acknowledged that the balance of uses would be important to the successful regeneration of the harbour.

The documents include an analysis of the harbour including the following information regarding building form which have informed the design proposals:-

*The original buildings on the quay are linear, rectangular and simple in plan.*

*The building forms reflect the process of unloading the merchandise from boats.*

*The buildings are positioned either right up to the water's edge or set back to allow for loading space depending on whether a pulley lifting system or crane was used. The buildings generally run parallel to the water's edge.*

*Buildings are functional and devoid of frivolous decoration.*

*Openings are large and vertically stacked immediately above one another.*

*Window heads are generally flat although larger openings on ground floors, which may be arched. Small features incorporating iron grills are arched or circular.*

*Window heads line up horizontally and window reveals line up vertically, window sills and lintels are substantial.*

*Window frames are dark, painted black, brown or green, brilliant white is out of place.*

*Roofs are shallow duo pitched and shallow top take slates, although clay tiles have been used in conjunction with slates in some places.*

*Roofs pitch along the length of the plan or several roofs pitch across the width with intersecting valleys.*

*Gables are strong and hipped roofs are uncommon, eaves are small and plain except for corbelled brickwork*

*Bricks are rich in colour deep orange reds through to mid browns and blues.*

*Upper floors project out in places and are often part timber clad or panelled.*

## **Building in Context and By Design (HELM)**

### **The Right Approach**

*The right approach is to be found in examining the context for any proposed development in great detail and relating the new building to its surroundings through an informed character appraisal. This does not imply that any one architectural approach is, by its nature, more likely to succeed than any other. On the contrary, it means that as soon as the application of a simple formula is attempted a project is likely to fail, whether that formula consists of 'fitting in' or 'contrasting the new with the old'. A successful project will*

- *relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land*
- *sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it*
- *respect important views*
- *respect the scale of neighbouring buildings*
- *use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings*
- *create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting.*

## **The proposed development**

The proposal has been designed as two linear terraces and is shown as part of a wider development context in the submitted documents.

The town houses comprise three story accommodation including integral garages whilst the western block would have work units at ground floor level with accommodation above. The profile includes 'saw-tooth' roofs to reflect the character of the industrial buildings and to allow views through the blocks. There is a difference in level across the site (east-west) of about three meters allowing the rear units to have views over the frontage block.

### **Design**

The proposed buildings would be of simple contemporary design with vertical massing and relatively large glazed areas reflecting the scale and proportions of the older buildings. Additional tree planting



and landscaping would be introduced to enhance the backdrop and to help to screen the large warehouses on the Riverway Estate and also the electrical substation. This would also contribute to the setting of the historic buildings and would reinforce the character of Little London as being distinct from the Riverway developments.

### **Scale and mass**

The blocks are designed with vertical proportions and would reflect the overall scale and mass of the existing historic buildings. The change in site levels adds variety and interest and the proposed buildings would reinforce the built form in this location.

### **Area strategy**

Regeneration - this proposal is seen as part of a wider regeneration strategy for the area including the potential restoration and reuse of the former AB Cooke building, as well as introducing additional business uses into the area combined with additional housing to generate mixed uses supporting the wider regeneration of Newport. There is also the possibility of introducing a footbridge to link the east and west sides of the river which would improve the vitality and use of the harbour as a whole.

Whilst these wider suggestions are not part of the application they do demonstrate the potential for future regeneration which would complement the application proposals **and** generally reflect the aims of the former harbour regeneration strategy.

### **Summary**

It is important to recognise that the protection of historic assets should be relative to their significance and potential vulnerability. In this context the historic assets which are closest to the site and are therefore most likely to be affected are the Bargemen's Rest and the A B Cooke warehouse (former power station). Neither building is included on the national list of buildings of historic or architectural interest. They do not directly adjoin the site of the proposed development.

The buildings are recognised as local historic assets and the impact on their settings would not be considered to constitute significant harm in this context.

The proposed development has been carefully considered in terms of the scale, massing, design and use of materials which respond to the already mixed character of the area. The contemporary design approach reflects the evolution and characteristics of the area without trying to mimic the older structures. This approach accords with national advice by CABE and English Heritage as published in 'By Design' and 'Building in Context'.

The existing buildings within the site are not considered to be of special interest and are now disused and untidy. The proposals are accompanied by an analysis and proposed regeneration strategy for the area which includes suggestions for the enhancement and use of the heritage assets which would enhance their appreciation and setting. This reflects the proposals in the Council's earlier regeneration brief for the harbour and would be a basis for continuing development and enhancement of the area.