



11 November 2018

Ms Helen Hockenhull
Planning Inspector

Dear Ms Hockenhull

THE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION DEC. 2018 PERTAINING TO SITE5.1
(MATTERS 9)

The following letter addresses issues raised by the local plan examination matters 12, policy 23,1.

I am the current owner of Vine Cottage, former home of Polly and James Lawrence. James died at Brinsley Pit in 1880. Approximately 20 years later DH Lawrence used this real life event and the two structures as the framework and setting for his short story 'Odour of Chrysanthems' and mining play 'Widowing of Mrs Holroyd'. Over time these two literary publications forged an inextricable link between the two structures and their surrounding landscape.

A HERITAGE LANDSCAPE

The U shaped area of land surrounding Brinsley Headstocks, bordered to the south by Mansfield Road, to the west by Church Lane and to the north by Cordy Lane is the village of Brinsley's area of special distinctiveness. A space that shaped its unique character. This spirit of place may not be something a council planning officer might easily recognise or regard as being of heritage value. DH Lawrence's writing was essentially about the interaction of people within a specific landscape. Visitors from Japan or America don't come to Nottinghamshire to see cast iron plaques screwed into red brick walls, they come to see a surviving Lawrencian landscape. An example of which currently exists to the east of Church Lane, Brinsley.

THE PIT

For generations of Brinsley people everything depended on and revolved around the mineshaft. It provided warmth, it provided food and it provided comradeship. Brinsley Pit moulded and shaped the community that now surrounds it. Today, as cars and buses pass by on Mansfield Road heads turn instinctively towards it. Locals walk their children and pet dogs around it. It has become an iconic piece of industrial archeology, a much loved sculpture and a source of assurance and wellbeing.

The Headstocks, Vine Cottage, Brinsley Brook, the old railway line and Saints Coppice all form part of an historic package. They provide a context within which Lawrence's novel 'Sons and Lovers', his short stories 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' and 'Daughters of the Vicar' and the play 'Widowing of Mrs Holroyd' are set.

The landscape around the Headstocks can not be separated from it. Remove just one of its constituent parts and you damage the story as a whole.

Take for example the opening few pages of 'Odour of Chrysanthemums'. It pulls together so many interlinking themes and observations to offer a snapshot view of how this community was formed. What must also be included in this vista is Saints Coppice, part of an ancient forest that originated way back in the 1300's, and has links with one of the nearby priories, possibly Beauvale, the brook, the fields and the old mineral line which forms a backbone through the landscape, Vine Cottage, the local dialect and the source of employment – the pit.

Take away just one of the story's landscape features and you are not only damaging Broxtowe's literary heritage but also its tourist industry. Mining accidents occurred regularly at Brinsley Pit during the late 1800's and early 1900's. On such occasions bells and sirens would echo through the village. Family after family would race across the fields from Church Lane and Cordy Lane to the pit head. The crowds helped with rescue teams and tended the injured but more importantly they searched to discover whether one of their family – sons, husbands, fathers – were amongst the victims. The trails across the fields were in fact part of a much longer tradition. They were the funeral paths that connected the village to the pit and Greasley Church. Today these paths still exist in the form of an annual coffin walk organised by ex miners and St James's church.

IMPLICATIONS AND ISSUES OF SUSTAINABILITY

If this historic landscape is lost, if the space around Brinsley Headstocks is destroyed, it would be like having the Bronte Parsonage in Howarth minus its wild heath – its Heathcliffe inspiration. The Headstocks should be seen as a piece of heritage sculpture that not only requires a plinth but also a context in which to breath. The historic pastureland around Saints Coppice provides that context and without it we are left with a mere fragment of a story, a fragment that has no real meaning. I am convinced that if this heritage site is lost or severely damaged there will be a devastating drop in Lawrence visitors/tourists to the county. There would be little point in extending the blue line heritage trail from Eastwood (Durban House heritage museum has already been closed down by the Council) or restoring Vine Cottage. Broxtowe Borough Council would in fact be shooting itself in the foot. There would be a knock on effect that would negate Broxtowe's socio economic policy for Eastwood – loss of trade,, further shop closures, loss of morale within the community and local schools.

I am completing this letter on the Sunday morning of the 11th day of the 11th month of

2018. Around the world countries are commemorating the enormous sacrifice people made during the first world war. In both Belgium and France battlefields are preserved because enlightened communities know that through an understanding of the past we may better understand our future. Film director Peter Jackson said at the end of his remarkable film 'they shall not grow old', that he hoped people would be encouraged to investigate whether a member of their family had fought in the 1914-18 war.

'Odour of Chrysanthemums' is set in the dank, dark days of November. Throughout the story there are children watching. A young boy snatches petals from a chrysanthemum. In response his mother Elizabeth answers – 'it was chrysanthemums when I married him, and chrysanthemums when you were born, and the first time they ever brought him home drunk he'd got a brown chrysanthemum in his buttonhole'. Surely it is our human right to make sure that these children and their children's children are given the opportunity to shape and develop a sense of identity borne of an understanding of their past.

This local plan regarding site 5.1 is neither SOUND in terms of the way it was conducted, ie ignoring the neighbourhood plan and the democratic wishes of Brinsley people. Nor is it SOUND in terms of the protection it should have given to the Borough's important heritage landscape. It is also not SOUND in terms of sustainability because its actions will destroy the economic potential of its tourist industry.

Yours sincerely

BRANDON KINTON