



**Congleton Leisure
Centre, Congleton
Heritage Statement**

Client: PULSE DESIGN & BUILD LTD.

AB Heritage Project No:60581

Date:11/12/2018

Congleton Leisure Centre, Congleton

Heritage Statement

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 AB Heritage has been commissioned by CBW Architectural Design Ltd. on behalf of their client Pulse Design & Build Ltd. to produce a Heritage Statement covering a proposed development at Congleton Leisure Centre, Congleton, Cheshire.
- 1.1.2 The leisure centre is positioned at the edge of a public open space area which is adjacent to Congleton Park, a Grade II Listed Park. For this reason, the Local Planning Authority have requested that a heritage statement be provided as part of the planning application.
- 1.1.3 No archaeological assessment of the site was requested. Therefore, this report focuses solely upon above-ground heritage assets.

1.2 Site Location & Description

- 1.2.1 The proposed development site (hereafter 'the site') comprises Congleton Leisure Centre and a small part of its associated playing fields. This is located off Worrall St, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 1DT and is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SJ 86231 63182 (Figures 1 & 2).
- 1.2.2 The A54 Mountbatten Way / Willow Street is located c. 140m to the south of the site, while the northern boundary of the site is formed by the River Dane.

1.3 Proposed Development

- 1.3.1 The current proposal (Figure 3) is for:
- The demolition of the existing swimming pool building;
 - The redevelopment of the existing multi-use sports hall building;
 - The construction of a new swimming pool building alongside the east end of the retained sports hall building; and
 - The repositioning of the car park to lie fully along the southern side of the leisure centre plot, with parking alongside the sports pitch removed.

2. AIMS & METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 NPPF paragraph 189 requires local planning authorities to request descriptions on the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. This states that:

'The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.'

- 2.1.2 The aim of this report is to facilitate such a process by understanding the historical development of the application site and the likely impact upon any surviving heritage assets resulting from the proposed development, devising appropriate mitigation responses where necessary.

2.2 Data Collation

- 2.2.1 The assessment has been carried out, in regard to the collation of baseline information, in line with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment (January 2017).

- 2.2.2 This assessment includes relevant information contained in various statutory requirements, national, regional and local planning policies and professional good practice guidance, including:

- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979;
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990; and
- The National Planning Policy Framework, 2018.

- 2.2.3 Due to the size of the leisure centre buildings and the open area to their north, a 250m study radius was considered the most appropriate, in order to ensure that any potentially affected heritage assets beyond the immediate boundaries of the site could be reviewed.

- 2.2.4 The Cheshire Historic Environment Record is the primary source of information concerning the current state of archaeological and architectural knowledge in this area. This information was supported by examination of data from a wide range of other sources, principally:

- Heritage Gateway for information on local heritage assets;
- Pastscape and other research resources, including the National Archives;
- The Historic England website professional pages, particularly the National Heritage List for England; and
- A site visit was undertaken on 24th October 2018.

2.2.5 Additional relevant documentary resources at the Cheshire Archives and Local Studies were accessed on the 23rd October 2018, along with online historic sources; Information from these sources was used to understand:

- Information on statutory and non-statutory designated sites;
- Information on the proposed development site's history from readily available historic maps and photographs;
- Any information on the proposed development site contained in published and unpublished archaeological and historical sources;
- A greater understanding of key cultural heritage issues of the proposed development site and surrounding area developed through the on-site walkover; and
- The impact of the proposed development on the known and potential cultural heritage resource, resulting in the formulation of a mitigation strategy, where required, which appropriately targets any future works to those required to gain planning consent.

2.3 Assessment of the Cultural Heritage Resource

2.3.1 The importance of identified cultural heritage resources is determined by reference to existing designations (Table 1, below).

Table 1: Assessing the Importance of a Cultural Heritage Site

SCALE OF SITE IMPORTANCE	
NATIONAL	The highest status of site, e.g. Scheduled Monuments (or undesignated assets of schedulable quality and importance). Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings. Other listed buildings that can be shown to have exceptional qualities in their fabric or historical associations not adequately reflected in the listing grade. Conservation Areas containing very important buildings. Undesignated structures of clear national importance. Extremely well-preserved historic landscape, whether inscribed or not, with exceptional coherence, time depth, or other critical factor(s).
REGIONAL	Grade II Listed Buildings or other designated or undesignated archaeological sites (in addition to those listed above), or assets of a reasonably defined extent and significance, or reasonable evidence of occupation / settlement, ritual, industrial activity etc. Examples may include areas containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historic character, burial sites, deserted medieval villages, Roman roads and dense scatter of finds.
LOCAL	Evidence of human activity more limited in historic value than the examples above, or compromised by poor preservation and/or survival of context associations, though which still have the potential to contribute to local research objectives. Examples include sites such as 'locally designated' buildings or undesignated structures / buildings of limited historic merit, out-of-situ archaeological findspots / ephemeral archaeological evidence and historic field systems and boundaries etc.
NEGLIGIBLE	Assets with very little or no surviving archaeological interest. Examples include destroyed antiquities, structures of almost no architectural / historic merit, buildings of an intrusive character or relatively modern / common landscape features such as quarries, drains and ponds etc.
UNKNOWN	Insufficient information exists to assess the importance of a feature (e.g. unidentified features on aerial photographs).

2.3.2 For some types of finds or remains there is no consistent value and the importance may vary, for example Grade II Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. For this reason, adjustments are occasionally made, where appropriate, based on professional judgement.

2.4 Impact Assessment Criteria

2.4.1 The magnitude of impact upon the archaeological and heritage resource, which can be considered in terms of direct and indirect impacts, is determined by identifying the level of effect from the proposed development upon the baseline conditions of the site and the cultural heritage resource identified. The criteria for assessing the magnitude of impact are set out in Table 2 (below).

2.4.2 In certain cases, it is not possible to confirm the magnitude of impact upon a cultural heritage resource, especially where anticipated buried deposits exist. Where possible a professional judgement as to the scale of such impacts is applied to enable the likely ‘Significance of Effects’ to be established; however, a magnitude level of ‘uncertain’ is included for situations where it is simply not appropriate to make such a judgement at this stage of works.

Table 2: Criteria for Determining Magnitude of Impact

IMPACT LEVEL	DEFINITION
HIGH	Changes to most or all of the key archaeological or key heritage baseline elements, or comprehensive changes to the setting of such key features that lead to total or almost complete alteration of a features physical structure, dramatic visual alteration to the setting of a heritage asset, or almost comprehensive variation to aspects such as noise, access, or visual amenity of the historic landscape.
MEDIUM	Changes to many key archaeological materials/historic elements, or their setting, such that the baseline resource is clearly modified. This includes considerable visual change to many key aspects of the historic landscape, noticeable differences in noise or sound quality, and considerable changes to use or access changes to key historic landscape elements
LOW	Detectable impacts which alter the baseline condition of an archaeological or heritage receptor to a slight degree – e.g. a small proportion of the surviving heritage resource is altered; slight alterations to the setting or structure, or limited changes to aspects such as noise levels, use or access that results in limited changes to historic landscape character.
NEGLIGIBLE	Barely distinguishable change from baseline conditions, where there would be very little appreciable effect on a known site, possibly because of distance from the development, method of construction or landscape or ecological planting, that are thought to have no long-term effect on the historic value of a resource.
UNCERTAIN	Extent / nature of the resource is unknown and the magnitude of change cannot be ascertained.

2.4.3 The overall Significance of Effects from the proposed development upon the Cultural Heritage Resource is determined by correlating the magnitude of Impact against value of the Cultural Heritage resource. Table 3 highlights the criteria for assessing the overall Significance of Effects. Where effects are moderate or above these are classified as significant.

Table 3: Significance of Effects

IMPORTANCE	MAGNITUDE			
	HIGH	MED	LOW	NEG
NATIONAL	Severe	Major	Mod	Minor
REGIONAL	Major	Mod	Minor	Not Sig.
LOCAL	Mod	Minor	Minor	Not Sig.
NEGLIGIBLE	Minor	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Nt.

Not Sig. = Not Significant; Nt. = Neutral; Mod = Moderate

2.5 Limitations

- 2.5.1 It should be noted that the report has been prepared under the express instruction and solely for the use of CBW Architectural Design Ltd. and their client Pulse Design & Build Ltd.. and any associated parties they elect to share this information with. Measurements and distances referred to in the report should be taken as approximations only and should not be used for detailed design purposes.
- 2.5.2 All the work carried out in this report is based upon the professional knowledge and understanding of AB Heritage on current (October 2018) and relevant United Kingdom standards and codes, technology and legislation. Changes in these areas may occur in the future and cause changes to the conclusions, advice, recommendations or design given. AB Heritage does not accept responsibility for advising the client's or associated parties of the facts or implications of any such changes in the future.
- 2.5.3 This report has been prepared utilising factual information obtained from third party sources. AB Heritage takes no responsibility for the accuracy of such information. It should also be noted that this report represents an early stage of a phased approach to assessing the archaeological and cultural heritage resource of the application site to allow the development of an appropriate mitigation strategy, should this be required. It does not comprise mitigation of impacts in itself.

3. CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE BASELINE

3.1 Known Cultural Heritage Assets

Within the Proposed Development Site

3.1.1 There are no known heritage assets within the proposed development site.

Within the Study Area

3.1.2 Within a 250m study radius around the site, the Cheshire HER lists the following:

- 20 monuments, most of which are records of former industrial buildings to the south of site, such as former Victoria Mill, located c. 30m south of site;
- Two Grade II Listed buildings, St. Stephen's Vicarage and 9 Park Street, located 130m east and c. 140m south-west respectively of the leisure centre site;
- One Grade II Listed park, Congleton Park, located c. 100m north of the site;
- One Locally Listed building, St. Stephen's Church, located c. 50m east of the site; and
- One Conservation Area, the Moody Street Conservation Area, located c. 130m south-west of site.

3.1.3 The following heritage assets were scoped out of further assessment during the site visit, as they are considered to be too far removed to be affected by the proposed development (and will therefore have no impact assessment undertaken):

- St. Stephen's Vicarage (Grade II);
- 9 Park Street (Grade II); and
- The Moody Street Conservation Area.

3.1.4 This report will be concerned only with the potential impact upon Congleton Park and St. Stephen's Church, which have the potential to be impacted by the proposed development.

3.1.5 No undesignated assets within the study radius have been assessed. Undesignated buildings in the general proximity of the site are considered to be of Local Importance, at most (in line with Table 1), and therefore any impacts from the proposed development will be equivalent to those for St. Stephen's Church (see Section 7.1).

4. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF SITE

- 4.1.1 Congleton is a town and Civil Parish in the Unitary Authority of Cheshire East. It lies to the south of the River Dane and is believed to have been founded as a Saxon village, recorded in Domesday as *Cogeltone* (The Domesday Book Online 2018). Congleton was granted a Charter in 1272, but during the 15th century it was all but destroyed by flooding of the River Dane and was rebuilt on higher ground (Congleton Museum 2018).
- 4.1.2 Significant development of the town did not occur until the Post-Medieval period, with the town becoming an important producer of textiles in the late 18th century (Lambert 2018). Early silk throwing mills were built from around 1760, one of which appears to be depicted on the map of 1795 (Plate 1) on north bank of the River Dane, labelled 'Silk Works'.
- 4.1.3 Plate 1 shows the site as fields to the north-west of Willow Street. Development of the town is limited to the roads converging on the market square.

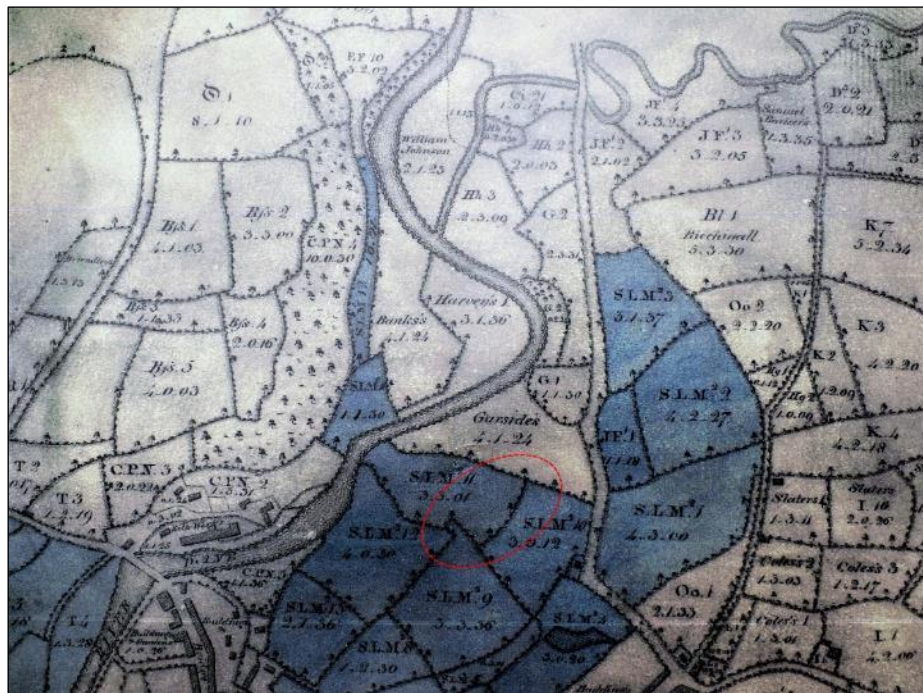


Plate 1: Extract from 1795 Map of Congleton (reproduced in 1818), with approximate site location

- 4.1.4 The 1845 Congleton tithe map (Plate 2) depicts the area containing the site occupies fields lying to the northwest of Willow Street. To the north of the River Dane the area now occupied by the Grade II Listed Congleton Park is shown as agricultural fields.
- 4.1.5 In the wider area, expansion of the town along Moor Street and Willow Street to the south and west of the site is visible.



Plate 2: Extract from the 1845 Congleton Parish Tithe map

- 4.1.6 The 1st edition 25" Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1875 (Plate 3) shows that the site remained in use as fields. Outside the site, the map depicts the addition of the locally listed St. Stephen's Church and the Grade II Listed Building 'The Vicarage', (located c. 100m and 180m to the east of the site), while the Grade II Listed Congleton Park is also present (c. 100m north of the site), having been opened to the public in 1871. A small terrace of houses is visible to the south of St. Stephen's Church which are no longer extant.



Plate 3: Extract of 1st edition 25" OS Map 1875

- 4.1.7 The 1897 25" OS map shows the site was still used as fields even as Congleton continued to expand.
- 4.1.8 In the wider area, the silk and cotton industries in Congleton were in decline by the end of the 19th century; this decline and the subsequent conversion of mills to Faustian Cutting is depicted on Plate 4 to the west of the site. A path between St. Stephen's Church and the vicarage is also depicted, while buildings marked as 'pavilions' have been constructed at the east and west ends of Congleton Park.

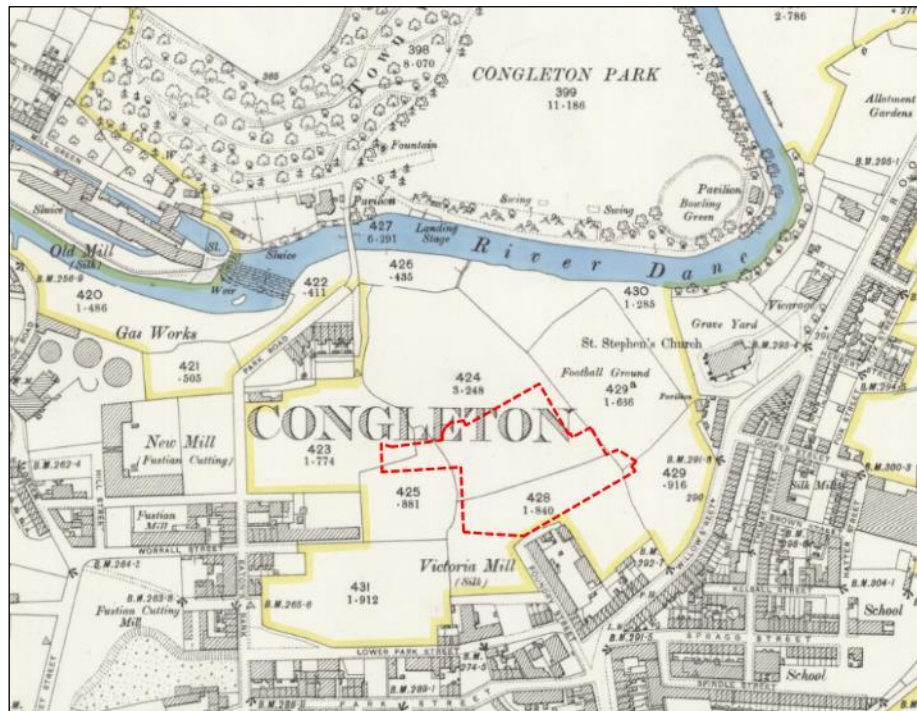


Plate 4: Extract from 1897 OS 25" map of Congleton

- 4.1.9 No changes within the site are shown on the 1938 OS 6" map (Plate 5), and there are no depicted changes to Congleton Park or the plot of St. Stephens Church.
- 4.1.10 Throughout the mid-20th century the town continued to expand with further encroachment into the surviving open fields surrounding the site. By the mid-late 20th century these became an open park with a bowling green situated in its southwest corner. The site remained undeveloped until the construction of the current leisure centre in the early 1980s.



Plate 5: Extract from the 1938 6" OS map

5. SITE VISIT

A site visit was conducted by Paul Cooke on the 24th October 2018. This was to better understand the proposed development and any potentially impacted heritage assets.

5.1 Congleton Leisure Centre

- 5.1.1 The leisure centre and its associated car parking is accessed from Worrall Street at the southern edge of the site (Photo 1). The leisure centre buildings comprise a cluster of single and two-storey structures of modern date, constructed of red brick. These are not considered to be of any heritage value.



Photo 1: The leisure centre and car park, view from south-west

- 5.1.2 To the rear (east) of the main buildings there is further parking and a skate park. This is set within green space and playing fields, which continue north of the leisure centre (Photos 2 & 3).



Photo 2: Leisure centre, parking and skate park, view from east

- 5.1.3 Car-parking continues to the west of the leisure centre, alongside the sports pitch (Photo 3).



Photo 3: Leisure centre and playing field, view from north-west

5.2 Congleton Park

- 5.2.1 The southern edge of Congleton Park lies c. 100m north of the site, separated from the playing field by the River Dane. The southern bank of the river is marked by mature trees which partly interrupt the view from the park to the site (Photo 4).



Photo 4: River Dane, view from west. Congleton Park lies on the left, playing field on the right

- 5.2.2 The western end of Congleton Park contains the former pavilion, currently in use as a tea-room, as well as formally laid-out gardens (Photo 5).



Photo 5: Congleton Park formal garden beds, view from west

- 5.2.3 The eastern half of Congleton Park consists of a children's play area, a pavilion with grassed area, and a playing field (Photo 6).



Photo 6: Congleton Park play areas, view from east

5.2.4 Mature trees line the edge of the River Dane on both banks, while sparse trees are located within the interior of the park, such as alongside the footpath (Photos 4 – 6).

5.3 St Stephen's Church

5.3.1 St Stephen's Church is located beside the eastern boundary of the green space around the site, c. 70m from the proposed development. It is partially obscured from the site by mature trees within its western boundary (Photo 7).



Photo 7: St Stephen's Church, view from west

5.3.2 The main access to the church is from Willow Street (the A54) (Photo 8).



Photo 8: St Stephen's Church, view from east

- 5.3.3 Views from within the churchyard to the site are currently limited by vegetation cover, although this will be reduced during winter (Photo 9).



Photo 9: View west to the leisure centre from St Stephen's Church

- 5.3.4 St. Stephen's Vicarage is located c. 180m east of the leisure centre. It was noted during the site visit that it had limited to no visibility to the leisure centre, due to the intervening position of St. Stephen's Church, as well as cover provided by mature trees. The former path between

the church and the vicarage can be seen to lead to what is now a continuous hedgerow (Photo 10)



Photo 10: View east to St. Stephen's Vicarage from the church

6. SETTING OF HERITAGE ASSETS

6.1 Current Setting of Congleton Park

- 6.1.1 Congleton Park is a Grade II Registered park which was designed, purchased and laid-out as a public park during the mid-19th century, being opened to the public in 1871. It was designated in 2001 and is described by the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) as being:

“divided into two distinct areas, the south-east-facing Town Wood to the north-west and the open triangular area to the south-east, bounded by the river on two sides. The lower area is provided with a circuit path and from the north-west section five sets of stone steps give access to a series of irregular footpaths in Town Wood, which frames the lower area. From the higher woodland paths there are views out to distant countryside and from the lower area views out across the river to the town with St Stephen's church dominant to the south-east” (NHLE entry 1001530, 2018).

- 6.1.2 The current setting of Congleton Park focusses on the area of the park itself, comprising a small area of largely open park with recreational facilities, provided with a degree of removal from its urban location by the River Dane along its southern edge, and the forested ridge (Town Wood) to its north.
- 6.1.3 The wider setting of Congleton Park has been subject to changes throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, from a largely open, agrarian landscape to an increasingly industrialised and urban one. However, the immediate setting of the park, protected by the River Dane and the Town Woods, has remained largely unchanged.
- 6.1.4 The playing field which separates the site from the River Dane, (which forms the southern boundary of Congleton Park), provides a sympathetic accompaniment to the setting of the Park. This helps to soften the transition into a wider mixed residential and commercial setting to the south of Congleton Park and has preserved an open-air environment despite the large-scale urbanisation of much of the former farmland around Congleton.

6.2 Heritage Importance of Congleton Park

- 6.2.1 As a Grade II Registered Park, Congleton Park is considered to be a heritage asset of Regional Importance (in line with Table 1), as it is an example of a planned 19th century park which has survived intact to the present day.
- 6.2.2 Its position within the space between (and including) Town Wood and the River Dane is important to its aesthetic value as an area of leisure and recreation, including paths through the woods and along the river.
- 6.2.3 It is considered that the immediate setting of Congleton Park (i.e. the park itself) contributes to its Heritage Importance to a High degree. This is because the natural features of this area would have been the main rationale behind the placement of the park, as this would have enhanced the experience of using the park for its intended purpose of leisure and recreation.

6.3 Current Setting of St. Stephen's Church

- 6.3.1 St. Stephen's Church is a Locally Listed heritage asset which was designed by Joseph Clark along with the neighbouring vicarage and constructed between 1858-60. It was designated as Locally Listed asset due to its association with the Grade II Listed Vicarage (HER record DCH9352). As noted above (Section 3.1.), St. Stephens Vicarage has not been assessed in this report as it is considered too far removed to be impacted by the proposed development.
- 6.3.2 The current setting of St. Stephen's Church is relatively varied, with the River Dane, the leisure centre playing field and the plots of the vicarage and the church itself providing a relatively rural character, especially to the north and west. However, this is in contrast to its location beside the A54 (Willow Street), with mixed residential and industrial properties across the road to the south.
- 6.3.3 This mixed setting appears to reflect the original setting of the church relatively accurately, as it can be seen on the Ordnance Survey map of 1875 (Plate 3) to have occupied a similar position at the edge of the urban development of Congleton during the 18th and 19th centuries, providing the church and the vicarage with an aesthetically pleasing and easily accessible location beside a main routeway for the community which would have used it.

6.4 Heritage Importance of St. Stephen's Church

- 6.4.1 As a Locally Listed building, St. Stephen's Church is considered to be a heritage asset of Local Importance, in line with Table 1. This is due to its connection with the Grade II Listed Building of St. Stephen's Vicarage, located 50m to the east. Both were designed by Joseph Clark and constructed between 1853 to 1863.
- 6.4.2 It is considered that the group value of the vicarage and St Stephen's Church contributes to the heritage importance of St. Stephen's Church to a High extent, due to their value as a pair of buildings designed and constructed together, and linked in their purpose, the vicarage providing the residence for the church vicar.
- 6.4.3 It is considered that the setting of St. Stephen's Church contributes to its heritage importance to a Medium extent. Its location, on the edge of both the urban / industrial expansion of Congleton and a surviving pocket of farmland and countryside may suggest that this was deliberately chosen and has, to a greater extent, continued through the maintenance of Congleton Park and the playing field and green space around the leisure centre.

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Predicted Impact of Proposed Development to Congleton Park and St. Stephen's Church

- 7.1.1 Based on the current design (October 2018), it is considered that the proposed development would have a Negligible Magnitude of Impact upon Congleton Park, and St. Stephen's Church, in line with Table 2, i.e. '*Barely distinguishable change from baseline conditions*'. While the current design proposal will result in some degree of alteration to the existing footprint covered by the leisure centre buildings and car-parking, as well as a change in appearance to the leisure centre complex, these changes will not alter the character of the setting or affect the understanding or appreciation of the heritage assets, since the leisure centre and the playing field will continue to provide a recreation and leisure function.

7.2 Predicted Significance of Effects

- 7.2.1 A Negligible Magnitude of Impact leads to a Not Significant result for Significance of Effects on both Local and Regional heritage assets, in line with Table 3. Therefore, no further works are recommended.

7.3 Conclusion

- 7.3.1 The proposed developments at the Congleton Leisure Centre have been assessed for potential to impact upon the setting of the Grade II Registered Congleton Park, and the Locally Listed St. Stephen's Church.
- 7.3.2 It is considered that the proposed development, while altering the footprint and outline of the site, will not change the character of the setting to any significant degree and will, therefore, have a negligible impact to the setting of Congleton Park, and St. Stephen's Church.
- 7.3.3 Therefore, it is considered that these proposed changes will not have a significant impact upon the settings of these heritage assets. As such, this report recommends no further works.

8. REFERENCES

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Planning Policy

Introduction

The following section highlights the key planning and legislative framework relevant to this project, including legislative framework, national planning policy and relevant sector guidance.

Statutory Protection for Heritage Assets

Current legislation, in the form of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, provides for the legal protection of important and well-preserved archaeological sites and monuments through their addition to a list, or 'schedule' of archaeological monuments by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. This necessitates the granting of formal Scheduled Monument Consent for any work undertaken within the designated area of a Scheduled Monument.

Likewise, structures are afforded legal protection in the form of their addition to 'lists' of buildings of special architectural or historical interest. The listing of buildings is carried out by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. The main purpose of the legislation is to protect buildings and their surroundings from changes that would materially alter the special historic or architectural value of the building or its setting. This necessitates the granting of formal Listed Building Consent for all works undertaken to or within the designated curtilage of a Listed Building. This legislation also allows for the creation and protection of Conservation Areas by local planning authorities to protect areas and groupings of historical significance.

The categories of assets with some form of legal protection have been extended in recent years, and now include Registered Parks and Gardens, and Historic Battlefields. While designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site is not a statutory designation under English planning law, such a designation is regarded as a material consideration in planning decisions, and World Heritage Sites are in practice protected from development that could affect any aspect of their significance including settings within the Site and a buffer zone around it.

National Planning Policy

The NPPF sets out government policy on the historic environment, which covers all elements, whether designated or not, that are identified as 'having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest'.

One of the over-arching aims is to 'Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations'. To achieve this, local planning authorities can request that the applicant describe 'the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting'. The level of detail required in the assessment should be 'proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'. It goes on to say that 'where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.'

A key policy within the NPPF is that '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'.

With regard to non-designated heritage assets specific policy is provided in that a balanced judgement will be required having due regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset affected.

Paragraph 194 states that 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional, while substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, should be wholly exceptional'.

Paragraphs 195 & 196 explain that 'where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss'.

It also advises that where a proposal involve less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Local Planning Policy

Cheshire East Local Plan

The Cheshire East Local Plan was formally adopted on 27th July 2017. It contains the following policies relevant to this report:

Policy SD 2: Sustainable Development Principles

The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development.

1. All development will be expected to:

Respect, and where possible enhance, the significance of heritage assets, including their wider settings.

Policy SE 1: Design

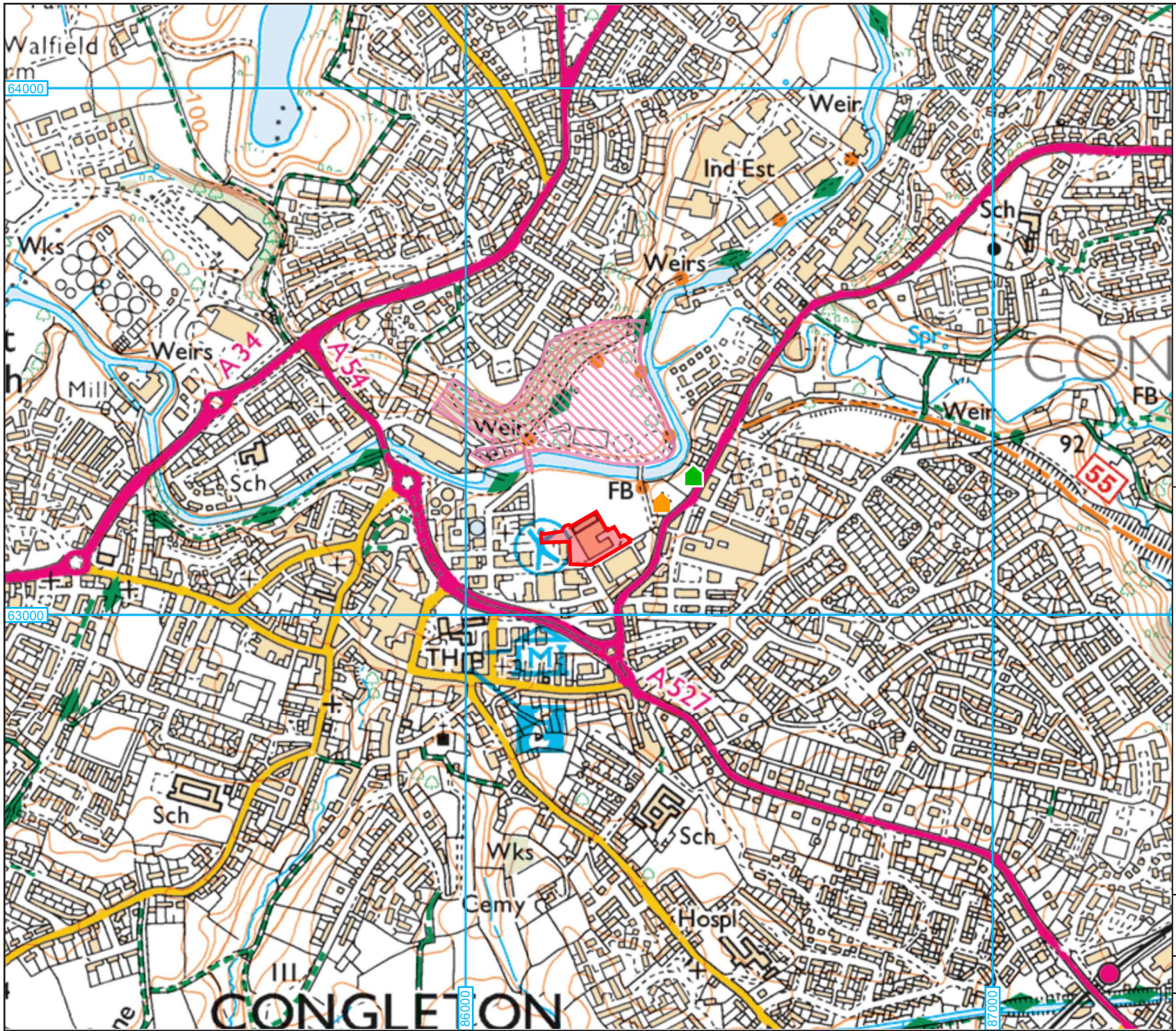
Development proposals should make a positive contribution to their surroundings in terms of the following:

1. Sense of place
 - ii. Ensuring sensitivity of design in proximity to designated and local heritage assets and their settings.





Policy SE 7: The Historic Environment

1. Cheshire East has an extensive and varied built heritage and historic environment, described in the justification text to this policy. The character, quality and diversity of the historic environment will be conserved and enhanced. All new development should seek to avoid harm to heritage assets and make a positive contribution to the character of Cheshire East's historic and built environment, including the setting of assets and where appropriate, the wider historic environment.
2. Proposals for development shall be assessed and the historic built environment actively managed in order to contribute to the significance of heritage assets and local distinctiveness. Where a development proposal is likely to affect a designated heritage asset (including its setting) the significance of the heritage asset, including any contribution made by its setting, must be described and reported as part of the application.
3. The council will support development proposals that do not cause harm to, or which better reveal the significance of heritage assets and will seek to avoid or minimise conflict between the conservation of a heritage asset and any aspect of a development proposal by:
 - a. Designated Heritage Assets:
 - i. Requiring development proposals that cause harm to, or loss of, a designated heritage asset and its significance, including its setting, to provide a clear and convincing justification as to why that harm is considered acceptable. Where that case cannot be demonstrated, proposals will not be supported.
 - ii. Considering the level of harm in relation to the public benefits that may be gained by the proposal.
 - iii. The use of appropriate legal agreements or planning obligations to secure the benefits arising from a development proposal where the loss, in whole or in part, of a heritage asset is accepted.
 - b. Non-Designated Assets:
 - iv. Requiring that the impact of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be properly considered, as these are often equally valued by local communities. There should be a balanced consideration, weighing the direct and indirect impacts upon the asset and its setting, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss. The presumption should be that heritage assets should be retained and re-used wherever practicable and proposals that cannot demonstrate that the harm will be outweighed by the benefits of the development shall not be supported. Where loss or harm is outweighed by the benefits of development, appropriate mitigation and compensation measures will be required to ensure that there is no net loss of heritage value
4. For all heritage assets, high quality design should be achieved. It should aim to avoid poorly executed pastiche design solutions and should foster innovation and creativity that is sensitive and enhances the significance of heritage assets in terms of architectural design, detailing, scale, massing and use of materials.

5. Cheshire East Council will seek to positively manage the historic built environment through engagement with landowners/asset owners and other organisations and by working with communities to ensure that heritage assets are protected, have appropriate viable uses, are maintained to a high standard and are secured and have a sustainable future for the benefit of future generations. Proposals that conserve and enhance assets on the Heritage at Risk register will be encouraged.



KEY

-  Site Boundary
-  Listed Building, St. Stephen's Vicarage
-  Locally Listed Building, St. Stephen's
-  Congleton Park

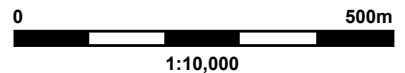
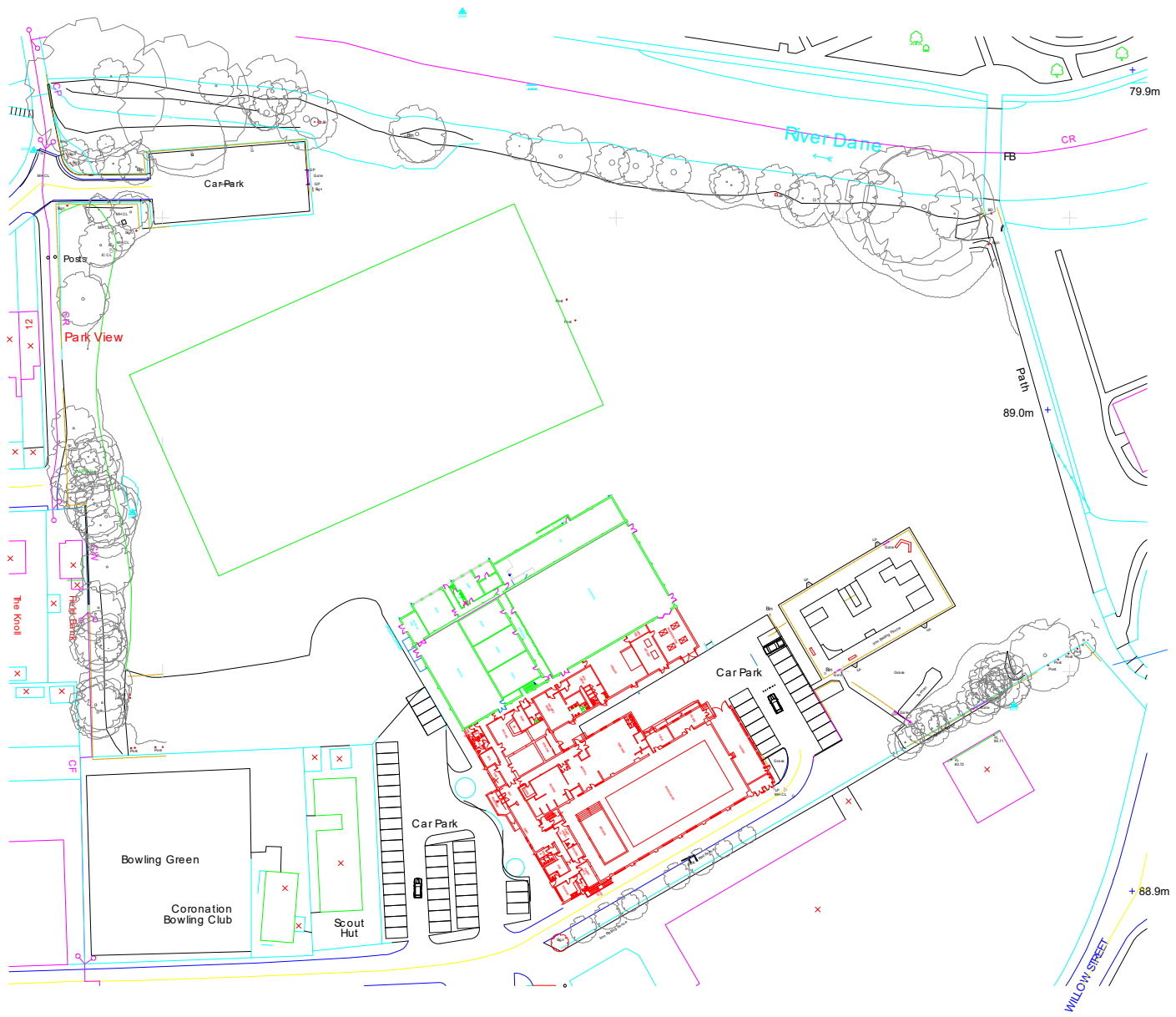


Figure 1: Site Location

Project: Congleton Leisure Centre

Date: 26/10/18

Job No: 60581



Key:

- Existing Building to be demolished
- Existing Building to be retained

Existing Site Plan

REVISION NO.	DATE	REFERENCE

CLIENT
Pulse Design & Build

PROJECT
Proposed Redevelopment of Congleton Leisure Centre


DRAWING TITLE
Existing Site Plan


SCALE
1:500 @A1

DATE
August 2018

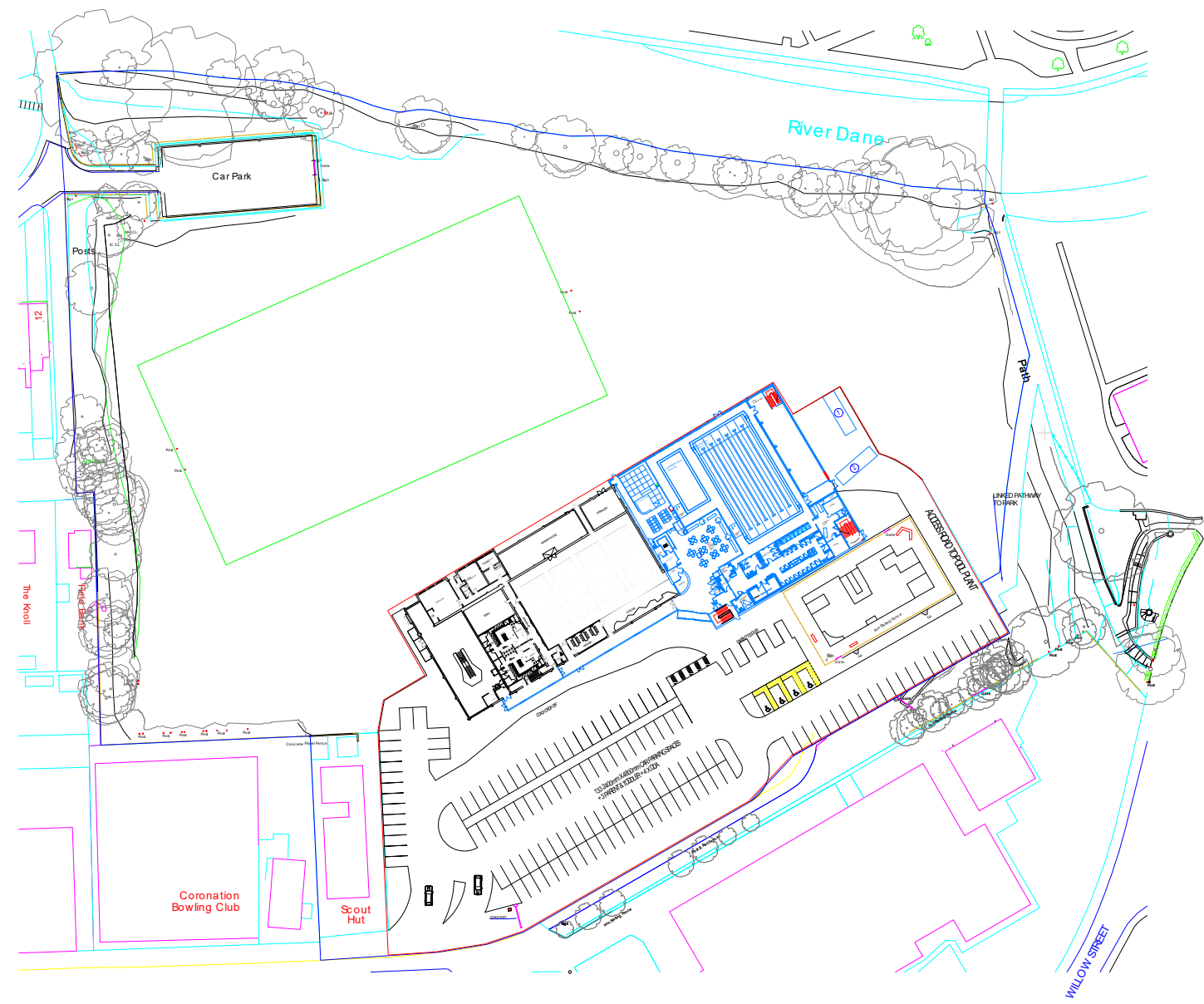
JOB NO.
162

DWG NO.
001





The Old Bakery House, Heath Farm, Alcester Rd, B67 8AJ
Email: info@pulse-design.co.uk
Website: www.pulse-design.co.uk



Proposed Site Plan

REVISION No.	DATE	REFERENCE

CLIENT
 Pulse Design & Build

PROJECT
 Proposed Redevelopment of Congleton Leisure Centre


DRAWING TITLE
 Proposed Site Plan


SCALE
 1:500 @ A1

DATE
 August 2018

JOB NO.
 162

DRG NO.
 SP2





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