

# COMMITTEE REPORT

### **UPDATE (FROM HERITAGE, LANDSCAPE AND DESIGN TEAM)**

#### **Issue of Building Preservation Notice on the winding engine house and machinery at Grove Rake Mine, Rookhope, Weardale, County Durham.**

#### **Introduction**

1. To inform Members that the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development has exercised his emergency powers as set out in paragraph 12 of Table 1 of the delegations to Chief Officers in order to issue a Building Preservation Notice under Section 4(1) and 4(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 on the winding engine house and machinery at Grove Rake Mine, Rookhope.

#### **Background**

2. Under Section 4(1) and 4(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Local planning authorities may serve an emergency Building Preservation Notice (BPN) on a building which is not listed, but which they consider is of special architectural or historic interest and is in danger of demolition or of alteration that would adversely affect this special interest.
3. A BPN takes effect immediately when it is affixed to the building and protects the site for 6 months or until the Secretary of State (for Culture, Media and Sport) lists the building or informs the authority that she does not intend to do so. Whilst the BPN is in place, the building is subject to the same protection as a listed building and any works to the building will require listed building consent.
4. The group of buildings that survive at Grove Rake mine, of which the winding house and machinery are part, represent a unique collection. The mine was worked from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century for lead; later iron and fluorspar. Upon closure in 1999 it was believed to be the last fluorspar mine operating in England and the last deep mineral mine in Durham. The engine and housing are a very rare example of surviving power plant at a mine in Durham. The building is a utilitarian, 20<sup>th</sup> century structure that derives its historic significance from; the plant it contains, its contribution to the group value of the Grove Rake site, and its association with the headgear over the Old Whimsey shaft – the latter being the last structure of this type in the North Pennine Orefield.
5. Grove Rake Mine was the subject of a number of planning applications for the extraction of fluorspar however operations ceased in 1999 and the planning authority are of the opinion that any conditions relating to former permissions at the site are now unenforceable due to time lapse.
6. The winding engine house recently suffered a partial collapse and as a consequence DCC Building Control issued a Section 78 notice on the site occupier that required them to make the building safe. The preferred method of achieving this due to the historic

significance of the building and machinery was to erect fencing around the building however the occupier indicated that their intention was to demolish the structure.

7. The loss of the engine house, and with it the engine, would represent severely detrimental harm to the overall significance of the group of surviving structures at Grove Rake Mine.
8. An application to designate the remaining features at the site (either through group listing or scheduling) has been submitted to English Heritage in accordance with guidance on the issue of a BPN.
9. As the building was considered to be of special historic interest and was imminently threatened with demolition it was considered appropriate for the Council to exercise their power to serve a BPN on the building until the decision on designation is taken by English Heritage (on behalf of the Secretary of State).

**Recommendation:**

That Members note the serving of the Building Preservation Notice on the winding house and machinery and also the action taken by the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development under his emergency powers contained in paragraph 12 of Table 1 to Part 3(c) of the Constitution.