

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1991**  
**THE REGISTERED BUILDINGS ( GENERAL) REGULATIONS 1991**

To: **Clucas PLC., Tromode Industrial Estate, Carrs Lane, Tromode, Onchan.**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at a meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2004, the PLANNING COMMITTEE of the Department of Local Government and the Environment, in pursuance of its powers under the above Acts and Regulations confirmed Registration of the following elements :

**The Two Chimneys and Switch Room (also known as the Old Engine Room) at Clucas Laundry, Tromode Industrial Estate, Carrs Lane, Tromode, Onchan.**

as represented by the buildings shown outlined in red on the plan hereto attached, in the PROTECTED BUILDINGS REGISTER by reason of their special architectural and historic interest.

Note: This notice supersedes and replaces that issued on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2004.

The effect of this notice is to maintain prohibition of the alteration, demolition or change of appearance of the Registered elements (namely the Two Chimneys and Switch Room (also known as the Old Engine Room)) except in compliance with an obligation imposed by or under any statutory provision or with the prior written consent of the Planning Committee whilst removing from the Register the Mill Race, Sluices and Leats.

Dated this 6<sup>th</sup> day of January 2005

By Order of the Committee



J Callow  
Secretary, Planning Committee.

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Murray House,  
Mount Havelock,  
Douglas,  
IM1 2SF.

**NOTE : An appeal against this decision may be made in writing to the Minister of DLGE within 21 days of the date of this notice.**

**To:**

**The Directors, Clucas plc, Tromode Industrial Estate, Carrs Lane, Tromode, Onchan**

**James Quinn & Co Advocates, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Victory House, Prospect Hill, Douglas, IM1 1EQ**

**The Director, Manx National Heritage, Kingswood Grove, Douglas**

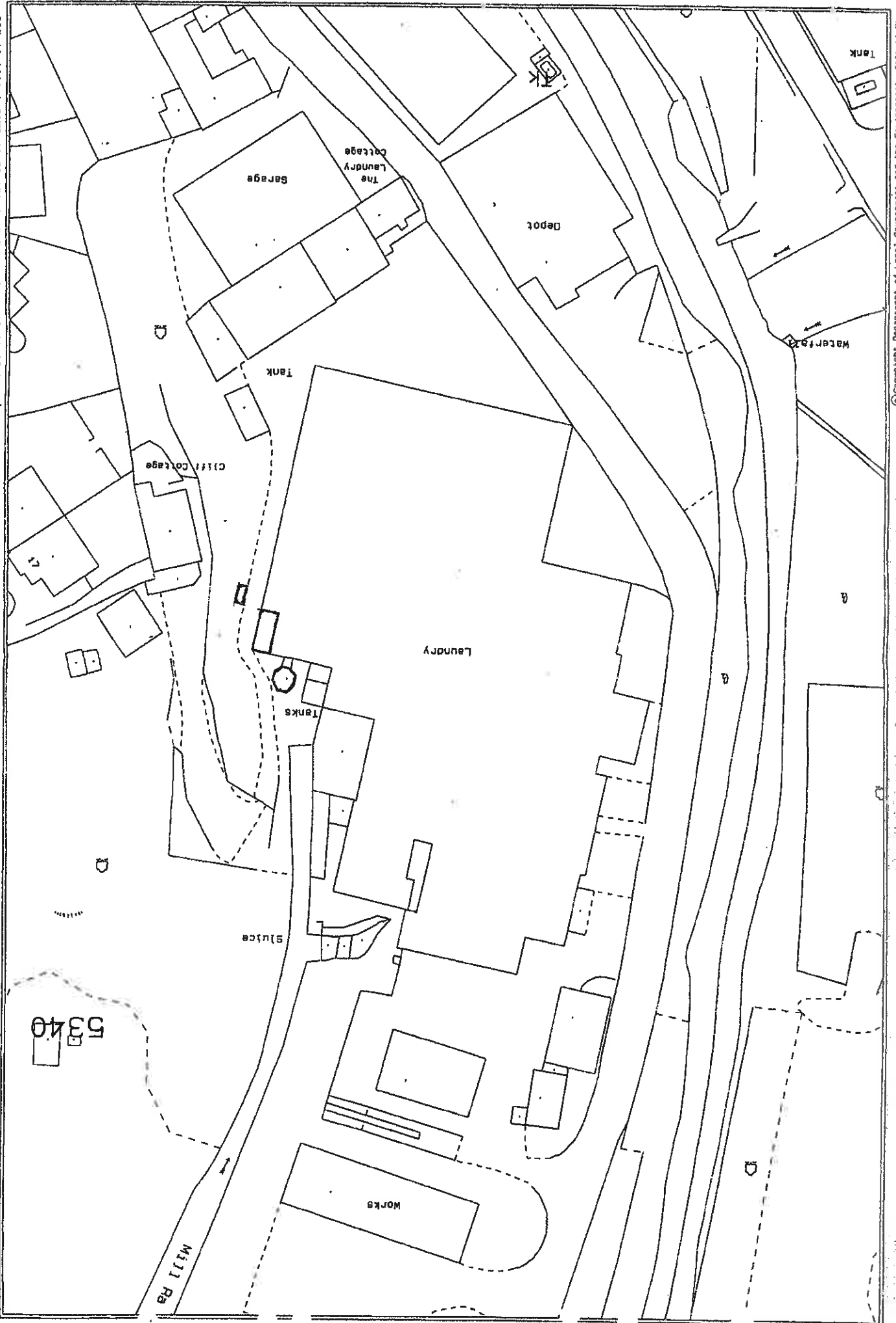
**Clerk to Onchan District Commissioners, Hawthorn Villa, 79 Main Road, Onchan, IM3 1RD**

**Advisory Council on Planning and the Environment, Marjon House, 52 Alberta Drive, Onchan, IM3 1LX**

**Richard Green Associates, Ocean House, 87 Circular Road, Douglas, IM1 1AX.**

Scale 1:500

Department of Local Government & the Environment, Isle of Man



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## TROMODE FLAX MILL

In 1825, Moore, whose family had owned the Pulrose Estate for over 300 years, bought the Cronkbourne Estate in Braddan and founded a linen factory there, along with a bleach works.

Moore's linen mills were established in 1790 with works originally both at Tromode and Factory Lane (now Drumgold Street), Douglas. Processes on the first site included scotching, spinning, weaving (both hand and machine) and bleaching while the products ranged from coarse sacking to fine damask figured with three-legs emblems. One of its later claims to fame was to provide the sails of Brunel's "Great Britain" and sailcloth for the British Navy. Manx flax was later replaced by imports from the Baltic

The factory became a laundry (Clucas'), a needed support trade for the industry, supplemented by brush-making in the winter. Initially it still drew on the mill dam for water.

Samples of the canvas produced are preserved in the "Star of India" in San Diego, California, U.S.A. and in the Manx Museum which also has the factory bell. Copies of the very strict rules governing the workers came from Northern Ireland – the independent Manx apparently would not allow their children to do factory work which might involve crawling around the machines. The majority of the workers lived in one of the few examples of industrial housing in the Island, Cronkbourne Village.

Moore's works at Tromode was the longest surviving of the Islands's flax mills, and one of the few to introduce a real flavour of industrialisation to the Isle of Man. Its products show an interesting development from a wide diversity of household goods to a specialisation in sailcloth, which was of so high a quality as to warrant an Admiralty contract and to be used on Brunel's Great Britain. As Strutt told the Factories Inquiry Commission in 1833, "small fines" were used to maintain discipline. The "crimes" also show a similarity to those recorded in Strutt's Quarterly wages book, 1801-1805, though the Manx fines seem to have been lower. The

Tromode hands were provided by their employer, with a cricket club for the summer, and a reading room for the winter.

In 1851, of a total of about eighty manual workers, some thirty were Irish, two were English and one Scot. Some skilled workers were recruited from the Irish linen trade.

In 1861, William Moore is recorded as employing one hundred and fifty workers in all. In 1851, both hand and power-loom weavers were recorded as being employed. Tromode was the largest of the flax mills on the Island, which originally made "sheeting, towel-ling, sailcloth and sackcloth", but since about 1850, sailcloth only. Cotton nets for the herring industry were also made there between 1852-1866. The works closed in 1905.

Moore is recorded as being the largest employer of labour on the Island, exclusive of the mines, no one has done more than him to develop the industries of the Island. Moore, was head of the firm W.F. Moore and Son and held the position of Speaker of the House of Keys.

#### REFERENCES:

Industrial Archaeology of the Isle of Man – Flax Processing p.32

Industrial Archaeology of the Isle of Man: 1972

Garrard, Bawden, Qualtrough and Scatchard – Flax-processing and the Linen Trade p.171-5

An Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Isle of Man:1997

Gordon N. Kniveton (Ed.)

[www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook](http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook)

## **THE CHIMNEYS**

There are two chimneys on the site, the first, a stone built structure on the surface of the rock dates from the time of the Sailcloth Mill and the second, a tall brick-built structure was constructed during the lifetime of Clucas' Laundry.

A lithograph (c.1850) is included with this report; the view is looking up the river towards the factory and village from Cronkbourne House, the bridge in the foreground is illustrated on the 1868 Ordnance Survey map as the bridge adjacent to the offices. The lithograph includes three chimneys on the site but the 1868 map makes no reference to chimneys at the factory, despite including a chimney and flagstaff near to Cronkbourne House.

### **The Cliff Face Chimney**

This is the older chimney of the two and there is clearly a chimney visible at the top of this cliff on the lithograph (c.1850), possibly an extension of what remains today. The chimney is not visible on a photograph taken of the site dating from 1900, but this is possibly due to the overgrown surrounding area. The house visible on the cliff face in this picture still remains today, this house was constructed by the time the Ordnance Survey map of 1868 was surveyed but it is highly likely that this house was not built until this chimney was abandoned due to the toxic fumes.

Today little remains of the chimney except for a series of holes and shafts on the surface of the rock, also the damping plate is still in place. It is quite apparent that there were once underground ducts from the base of the chimney to the adjacent boiler house which today contains two large boilers.

### **The Brick Chimney**

This chimney was constructed in 1933 and therefore it does not date from the time of the sailcloth mill. A lithograph of Cronkbourne Village (c.1850) includes a view of the mill and there appears to be a chimney on this site in this picture but it is unclear on the 1868 Ordnance Survey map whether a chimney existed here then, a photograph of the site c.1900 clearly shows that there was no chimney (certainly not of this size) on this spot at that time.

Due to its size, the chimney could possibly be classified as a landmark structure. However, as a result of the position of the mill in a valley, its distance from the main road and the growth of the surrounding industrial estate and housing, the chimney is not a notable feature from the main road. At some point in the past the chimney has been repaired with metal tie bands and it could be maintained for many years to come but it will eventually need either major refurbishment or replacement.

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**Isle of Man**  
Government  
*Reillys Ellan Vannin*

**Department of Local Government and the Environment**  
Rheynn Reillys Ynnydagh as y Chymmyltaght

2518

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**Chief Executive:**  
**R. A. Hamilton,**  
**AIPD, MCM**

**Please reply to the Chief Executive**

Our ref: RAH/MC

12<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

Dear Sir/Madam,

**ON APPEAL: Registered Building No. 222 – 2 chimneys and switch room  
(also known as the Old Engine Room) at Clucas Laundry, Tromode  
Industrial Estate, Carrs Lane, Tromode, Onchan**

I refer to the recent appeal hearing in respect of the above planning application.

In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 7(5) of Schedule 1 to the Isle of Man Planning Scheme (Development Plan) Order 1982, I am enclosing herewith a copy of the report of the person appointed to hear this appeal.

I am directed to advise you that the Minister, having considered the report, has agreed to accept the recommendation of the appointed person. Accordingly, he has directed that the appeal be allowed in respect of the brick chimney, and that chimney be removed from the Protected Buildings Register. However, he has directed that the appeal be dismissed, in so far as it relates to the stone chimney and the switch room, with the effect that the inclusion of those buildings on the said Register be confirmed.

Yours faithfully,

**Chief Executive.**

Please see over for circulation list/.....

## **Circulation List – RB222**

1. Mr. J. Quinn, James Quinn & Co., Advocates, 11 Myrtle Street, Douglas (Your ref: JBSQ/LCJ/CL013.01);
2. Richard Green Associates, 87 Circular Road, Douglas, IM1 1AX;
3. Onchan District commissioners;
4. Mr. A. Johnson, Manx National Heritage, Manx Museum, Douglas;
5. Highways & Traffic Division, Department of Transport;
6. Ian Mansell, Environmental Health officer, DLGE;
7. Advisory Council on Planning & the Environment, Marjon House, 52 Alberta Drive, Onchan, IM3 1LX;
8. IOM Water Authority, Tromode Road, Douglas;
9. Ashley Pettit Architects, 4 Osborne Terrace, Douglas, IM1 3LH;
10. Secretary, Planning Committee;
11. Chairman and Members of the Planning Committee;
12. Conservation Officer, DLGE;
13. Secretary, Planning Appeals Inspectorate;
14. Mr. T. O'Hanlon, Treasury;
15. The Editor, Isle of Man Newspapers, Peel Road, Douglas;
16. Manx Radio Newsroom, Douglas Head, Douglas;
17. Ms. J. Green, Apt 5, Greenhill, Stanley Mount West, Ramsey, IM8 1LR;
18. Radio 3FM, 45 Victoria Street, Douglas, IM1 3RS;
19. Energy FM, 100 Market Street, Douglas, IM1 1PH.

**Report of an inquiry, held on 15 February 2006, into an appeal by Clucas Ltd against the decision to register 2 chimneys and a switch room (also known as the Old Engine Room) at Clucas Laundry, Tromode Industrial Estate, Carrs Lane, Tromode, Onchan.**

**The Site and the Registered Buildings**

- 1 The Clucas Laundry forms part of an extensive complex of industrial buildings lying to the north of Johnny Watterson Lane and east of the River Glass. The industrial use of this site began in about 1790. In the first half of the nineteenth century the flax mill here produced linen sheeting, but from the 1850s onwards the works concentrated on the manufacture of sailcloth. Among other things, the factory produced the sails for Brunel's "Great Britain" and supplied sailcloth to the Royal Navy. Workers were housed nearby in Cronkbourne Village, which was developed by the factory owners and completed in about 1850. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the sailcloth mill became one of the first industrial businesses to generate and use electrical power.
- 2 By the end of the nineteenth century the demand for sailcloth was falling as steamships gained supremacy. As a result the Tromode Sailcloth Mill closed in 1906. However, in 1911, the factory was re-occupied by the Clucas Laundry, which provided a vital service to the Isle of Man's growing tourist industry. The laundry eventually closed in 2002, and the owners now propose to redevelop the site with modern industrial units.
- 3 The appeal is against the registration of three, closely grouped buildings, within the Clucas Laundry site. The oldest of these is the remnant of a Victorian stone chimney flue, which abuts the cliff face that forms the eastern edge of the site. The flue appears to have provided a link between a boiler house in the former sailcloth mill, and a venting chimney on the cliff top. The stone base of the cliff top chimney remains in place, but is in a different ownership and is not registered. The registered flue is in a ruinous condition, consisting of an array of holes and shafts within a masonry stack.
- 4 The Old Engine Room is an industrial building dating from about 1870. It is mainly of stone construction, with slate walls and sandstone lintels, but with brick window jambs. It has a pitched roof, although the original roofing material has now been replaced by asbestos sheeting. The building measures about 6m by 3m, and has a first-floor extending over part of its area. It is in a reasonably sound condition and is watertight. It originally housed a steam engine, and was more recently used as the electrical switch room for the Clucas Laundry.

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- 5 The third of the registered buildings is an octagonal, free-standing, brick chimney, which was erected in 1933 to serve the laundry's pump house. The chimney has a current height of about 24.8m. However, I understand that it was originally over 31m high, its upper parts having been removed for safety reasons in the 1970s and 1980s. A steel efflux cone has been fitted at the top of the single flue. The chimney is girdled by a series of steel restraining bands. It is in need of some repair and re-pointing, exhibiting a number of cracks.
- 6 The site is set in a natural depression between the River Glass and the cliff that marks its eastern edge. As a result, the brick chimney is frequently screened in local views. When visible, it is seldom seen against the sky, more frequently emerging from a backcloth of other buildings. It can be seen from the northern end of Tromode Road, and from various locations in Johnny Watterson's Lane, Castleward Green, Nobles Hospital, Ballafletcher Farm Road and Ballafletcher Road, as well as from within the Tromode Industrial Estate.

### **The Case for the Appellants**

- 7 In 2002 the applicants applied for approval in principle to demolish certain buildings in the Tromode Industrial Estate, and to erect 3 light industrial units. Although this approval was subsequently granted, it excluded the demolition of certain buildings that had been recommended for registration. These included the buildings that are the subject of the present appeal, which were placed on the Protected Buildings Register by Order dated 13 May 2004 (Doc 1, Appendix 6).

### **Legal Defect in Registration**

- 8 Contrary to Rule 4 of the Registered Buildings Regulations 1991, the Register contains no particulars of the special architectural or historic interest of these three buildings. The appellants are prejudiced by this breach of the legal requirements, in that they know neither the reasons for registration nor the case they have to meet.
- 9 When the applicants asked the Planning Committee to provide them with this information, they were sent a report of the research carried out by Ashley Pettit, Architects, in 2003 (Doc 1, Appendix 10). The report concluded as follows:

Historically the most important feature is the old stone chimney which could be registered but now it is only a shadow of its former self ... The tall brick chimney could be questioned to be a landmark due to its size, however it is not a notable feature on the landscape and hidden from view of the main road. This chimney has already been repaired in the past with metal tie bands and eventually it could become a costly structure, needing either major refurbishment or replacement.

This scarcely suggests that either of the chimneys should be registered.

- 10 In the appellants' view, there is insufficient architectural or historic interest to justify the registration of any of these three buildings. The Department of Local Government and the Environment's Planning Policy Statement 1/01 deals with the conservation of the historic environment. Policy RB/1 sets out the considerations that are to be taken into account in assessing the merits of a building with regard to its possible registration.

#### Architectural Interest and Aesthetic Value

- 11 The first consideration is the building's architectural interest and/or aesthetic quality. However, none of the three buildings are of particular architectural or aesthetic merit. The Ashley Pettit report attaches importance only to the historical value of the stone chimney; and the importance (or otherwise) of the brick chimney as a landmark. There is nothing special about these buildings in terms of their design, decoration or craftsmanship; or the eminence of their architects. The brick chimney originally had an attractive corbelled capping, but this has now been removed. The switch room is constructed in local stone, with window jambs of local brick. It is not unusual. Its original roof has been replaced.

#### Historic Interest

- 12 The second consideration is the building's historic interest. In its original state, the stone cliff-face chimney might well have been worthy of registration as a vestige of the historic sailcloth mill. However, the Ashley Pettit report properly describes it as a "shadow of its former self". In its present ruined condition it has little historical interest. Until recently it was overgrown with weeds. Such interest as it has would be better preserved by proper recording than by preservation, especially as the structure is beyond repair.
- 13 The 1933 brick chimney is a relatively modern structure. It has no real historic interest, having been built to serve the laundry rather than the earlier sail cloth mill.
- 14 The switch room was originally built to house a stream engine. It would be of historic importance, were the engine still in place; but it is not. The original slate roof was replaced with corrugated asbestos sheeting in about 1962, so the structure is no longer intact as an example of a mid-Victorian industrial building. It has no greater significance than any of the other mill buildings which will be demolished to facilitate the redevelopment of the site.
- 15 There is no functional link between the three registered buildings. They were built at different times for different purposes, and do not stand together as an historic entity. They have no group value. Although the old sailcloth mill was owned and managed by members of the Moore family, the stone chimney flue and switch room have no particular historical associations of a personal nature with the family.

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- 16 The buildings are not readily accessible to the public. Members of the Victorian Society have visited the site only once in the last 15 years. This suggests that the buildings are not of major interest. It is not clear that they would attract any more interest in future.

#### Landmark Qualities

- 17 Although it has been claimed that the brick chimney constitutes a landmark, this is disputed. As the Ashley Pettit report concluded, "it is not a notable feature on the landscape and hidden from view of the main road". Policy RB/1 indicates that "some buildings will be clearly recognised as having landmark qualities whether they be located in isolated coastal or rural locations, or as focal points within a busy local townscape". The brick chimney has none of these characteristics. Photographs taken from various points in the surrounding area show that its visual impact is quite limited (Doc 1, Appendices 14 and 15)

#### Age and Rarity

- 18 The final considerations listed in Policy RB/1 are the building's age and rarity. The policy makes it clear that buildings dating from between 1800 and 1860 may be worthy of registration, although even then some selection will be necessary. However, only the best examples of later buildings will qualify for registration. On this basis, none of the buildings at the Clucas site automatically qualify.
- 19 The two chimneys now have a certain rarity value in the context of the Isle of Man. A number of industrial chimneys have been demolished elsewhere on the Island, though a few remain. It is not clear why the truncated brick chimney on the Clucas site should be considered any more worthy of preservation than some that have recently been demolished.

#### Future Use and Maintenance

- 20 Policy RB/6 of Planning Policy Statement 1/01 indicates that the value to be derived from the continued use of a registered building will be among the factors to be taken into account in considering applications for demolition. None of the three registered buildings on the Clucas site is used at present, and there is no practical use to which they are likely be put. They will look out of place on a modern industrial estate. There is no realistic alternative use for either of the chimneys. The switch room could be used for some form storage, but its design, size and location do not make it particularly suitable or attractive for such a use.
- 21 Policy RB/6 indicates that another factor to be taken into account in assessing applications for the demolition of a registered building is the condition of its fabric and the cost of its repair and maintenance. A recent inspection by a firm of steeplejacks indicates that about £43,000 now needs to be spent on essential maintenance to the brick chimney (Doc 1, Appendix 12). The inspection excluded



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- an internal examination of the chimney, and the sum quoted may therefore be an underestimate. If the structure is retained, it will be necessary for specialist surveyors to carry out inspections every two years. The cost of such inspections varies according to whether the surveyor is already visiting the Isle of Man for other purposes, but one quotation as high as £11,750 has been received. The chimney would generate no income to offset these costs.
- 22 In addition there would be an annual insurance premium to pay. In the past, the brick chimney had been seen to sway in strong winds, and glass "tell tales" cemented to the structure have fallen off. Since the 1960s, restraining bands have been progressively installed to contain the cracks in its fabric. There might well be health and safety concerns if the structure were to be retained indefinitely.
- 23 Although the Government may pay a grant of 60% of the cost of maintaining a registered building up to a maximum of £20,000, this is discretionary, and a maximum payment is not guaranteed. Clucas plc would have to bear the balance of any costs incurred. The company would derive no benefit from maintaining buildings for which there is no use.
- 24 The company have offered to sell the brick chimney to the Victorian Society or to the Government for a nominal sum, but neither body has shown a firm interest, presumably because the future cost of maintenance and repair would be too high. If the present appeal is unsuccessful, the company will immediately apply for permission to demolish these registered buildings. In the light of Policy RB/6, there is good reason to expect that permission will be granted. In the circumstances, the registration of the buildings would appear to serve no useful purpose. Accordingly the Minister is asked to allow the appeal and remove all three buildings from the Protected Buildings Register.

**The Case for the Planning Committee**

- 25 A Building Preservation Notice protecting the two chimneys was served on Clucas plc in December 2002, following the Onchan District Commissioners' recommendation that the brick chimney be registered. In 2004, following further research into the historic value of the site, the Committee formally registered both chimneys, and the associated switch room and sluices. An application for the de-registration of these structures resulted in the removal of the mill race, sluices and leats from the Register. However, the registration of the two chimneys and switch room was confirmed in January 2005.

**Reasons for Registration**

- 26 Policy RB/1 of the Planning Policy Statement 1/01 ("Policy Guidance Notes for the Conservation of the Historic Environment of the Isle of Man") sets out the considerations which are to be taken into account in assessing the merits of a

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building with a view to its registration. The first of these is the building's architectural interest and/or aesthetic quality. The buildings on the Clucas Laundry site are of undoubted architectural interest and aesthetic quality, being characterised by the use of fine materials and good detailing. This is exemplified by the use of brick window jambs, sandstone lintels and high quality stonework in slate

- 27 The second factor listed in Policy RB/1 is the building's historic interest. The Clucas Laundry represents one of the most significant groups of industrial buildings to survive on the Isle of Man. First used for the production of linen and sailcloth in the nineteenth century, in the twentieth century the mill buildings were used as a commercial laundry, and were of particular importance to the hotel and boarding house trade. In the nineteenth century, the mill had close associations with the Moore family, and was of such a scale that its workforce (which numbered up to 150) required specially built industrial housing at Conkbourne Village.
- 28 A third factor listed in Policy RB/1 turns on the building's importance as a landmark. The brick chimney provides a focal point that is visible both from within the Tromode Industrial Estate, and from vantage points elsewhere, including Ballafletcher Road; Hightonwood Hill; the Millennium Oakwood; and the Ballanard Road/Johnny Watterson Lane junction (Doc 2, Appendix G).
- 29 Policy RB/1 also refers to the group value of a collection of buildings. The registered buildings at the Clucas Laundry help illustrate the important part that this site played in the industrial history of the Isle of Man.
- 30 The final consideration listed in Policy RB/1 is the age and rarity of the building. Buildings dating from before 1800, which survive in substantially their original condition, are likely to be worthy of registration. Buildings built between 1800 and 1860 may be worthy of registration, although some selection will be necessary. Greater numbers of buildings erected between 1860 and 1920 survive, so only the best examples will be identified for registration. For the same reason, only selected buildings erected after 1920 will be registered.
- 31 As the only purpose-built industrial complex of its type remaining on the Isle of Man, the group of registered buildings on the Clucas Laundry site is certainly a rarity. The stone split-flue chimney is one of the oldest industrial flues on the Island. Although the top section of this chimney has now been lost, it is shown in a nineteenth century lithograph (Doc 2, Appendix K). The twentieth century brick chimney serves as a reminder of the progression of technology during the life of this industrial site. Few industrial chimneys now remain on the Isle of Man. The octagonal brick chimney at the Clucas site has no counterpart.

**Future Maintenance and Use**

- 32 The historic Buildings Conservation Scheme 2000 provides grant assistance for the maintenance of historic buildings. The grant can cover up to 60% of the cost of

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- works up to a maximum of £20,000. Additional money could be paid to employ a suitably qualified professional to supervise the execution of works.
- 33 The appellants' argument that the brick chimney has no future use is not necessarily accepted. For instance, it could possibly be used as a tower for telecommunications aerials. The appellants concede that the switch room could be used for storage.
- 34 In the circumstances, the buildings are considered to be worthy of registration, and there is no certainty that an application for their demolition would be successful. The Minister is requested to dismiss the appeal.

**The Case for the Onchan District Commissioners and for the Advisory Council on Planning and the Environment**

- 35 Mr Kelly presented a joint case for the Commissioners and the Advisory Council, who each support the registration of all three buildings.
- 36 The Commissioners had first recommended registration of the brick chimney as they considered this to be an important landmark. It is a familiar sight in the locality, being visible from Abbotswood, Castleward Green, Nobles Hospital, the Oak Wood and Balafletcher Road.
- 37 Although the top of the chimney was removed in the 1980s, a conical cap has been added, restoring some of the height that had been lost. The redevelopment of the Tromode Industrial Estate would permit enhanced views of the brick chimney, which should provide a focal point for the site. In a similar way, the free-standing 1901 clock tower has been used as a focus for the Clock Tower Industrial Estate at Foxdale. There is also a parallel with the preservation of the spire of St Andrew's Church, Finch Road, Douglas, after the remainder of that church was demolished.
- 38 The chimney, which was built in 1933 using bricks from the Glenfaba Brickworks at Peel, is the last remaining industrial chimney in Onchan, and is one of only a few left on the Isle of Man. It is the tallest (and the sole octagonal) brick chimney on the Island. It is of historic importance as a reminder of Clucas's Laundry, which was by far the largest commercial laundry on the Island. The erection of the brick chimney marked the installation of the large boilers associated with the change from water power to steam power.
- 39 The stone chimney/flue on the cliff-face has its own importance as a relic of the earlier history of this site as a sailcloth mill. There is documentary evidence to indicate that the chimney was built shortly after 1850. It is depicted in a lithograph from about that date. The fact that "it is a shadow of its former self" is not a sufficient reason for its de-registration. Its method of construction and unusual inclination can still be seen and should be preserved for future generations.

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- 40 The Old Engine House is also a token of the former sailcloth mill. The mill played an important part in the in the social history of the Isle of Man, being the site of the first electricity generating station on the Island. The Old Engine House is a fine building. Its walls are of a local slate, which was quarried on the far side of the River Glass. The sandstone forming its window lintels was imported from Whitehaven in Cumbria. The bricks used in its window jambs, were from the local Ballanard Brickworks. They were of a type used elsewhere in the locality, for instance in Braddan School.
- 41 The registration of a building does not rest on the ability of its owner to finance its maintenance. Financial assistance for this purpose is available through the Department of Local Government and the Environment. In the circumstances, the Minister is requested to dismiss the appeal and confirm the registration of all three buildings.

### **The Case for Manx National Heritage**

- 42 Manx National Heritage supports the registration of these structures. The Clucas Laundry site contains one of the most significant groups of industrial buildings to survive on the Isle of Man. The site had originally been used for the production of linen, and later sailcloth. The mill was credited with producing the sails for Brunel's "Great Britain" as well as for numerous Royal Navy warships and Manx fishing vessels. Following the decline of the sailcloth industry, the site was used as a commercial laundry, washing huge quantities of bed-linen and table-linen for the hospitality trade every day. In view of the historical importance of the buildings themselves, and the part they played in the economic and social development of the Isle of Man, the Minister is asked to dismiss the appeal.

### **Conclusions**

- 43 There appears to be a defect in the registration of the three buildings that are the subject of the present appeal, since the relevant entries in the Register contain no particulars of the special architectural or historic interest of the buildings as required by Rule 4 of the Registered Buildings Regulations 1991. However, it seems to me that that matter can be easily rectified. I do not consider the appellants to have been significantly prejudiced by this defect. The special architectural or historic interest of the three buildings was clearly explained in the Planning Committee's evidence to the inquiry.
- 44 In my view, the stone chimney flue adjacent to the cliff-face has undoubted importance as a remnant of the sailcloth mill that has played such a significant part in Manx history. Although I acknowledge that this chimney is now "a shadow of its former self" the same might be said of Stonehenge, the Colosseum or the Parthenon. It does not necessarily tell against the preservation of that which

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remains. The evidence is that the chimney dates from about 1850. I consider that its age and its value as a piece of industrial archaeology tell in favour of its registration. I have seen no evidence to suggest that the retention of the stone flue would interfere significantly with the planned redevelopment of the site. It seems to me to be most regrettable that it has become overgrown in the past through neglect.

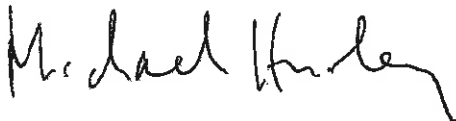
- 45 The switch room, which dates from about 1870, is also a vestige of the former sailcloth mill. Although it has been subject to some alterations, including the replacement of its original roof with asbestos sheeting, it is largely intact and in a reasonable state of preservation. It provides a good example of an industrial building of the period, largely constructed in local materials. Whilst it may not be ideally suited to modern commercial use, the building is watertight and is plainly capable of continued use of some sort. I conclude that the stone chimney and the switch room are worthy of registration, and that the appeal should be dismissed in respect of these structures.
- 46 I do not consider the case for the registration of the brick chimney to be so clear cut. This structure, which dates from 1933, has no association with the historic sailcloth mill, having been built for the purposes of the more recent laundry. In my view, it has little architectural merit or aesthetic appeal. Although it is visible from various places in the surrounding area, it is most often seen against the backdrop of other buildings. Its value as a landmark has been reduced with its loss of height. However, I accept that it is a rarity, being the highest of the few remaining brick industrial chimneys on the Isle of Man, and the only such chimney that is octagonal in plan.
- 47 The retention of this structure would clearly entail a considerable ongoing financial commitment. I have no reason to question that essential repairs that are currently required would cost about £43,000. That figure might well increase following an internal inspection of the chimney. Further periodic inspections would be needed in future, and these might well reveal the need for further expensive repair work to secure the continued integrity of the structure and the safety of those who come near it. The cost of insuring such a structure might also be significant.
- 48 I accept that the appellants have no use for the chimney, and see no prospect of securing any income from it. There is no evidence to suggest that any telecommunications operator wishes to use it to carry aerials, even if such a use of the registered building were to be permitted. I cannot immediately envisage any use of this structure that would generate an income sufficient to offset its potential ongoing maintenance costs.
- 49 Those costs would have to be borne by the private owners, and possibly by the public through grant aid. I note that the Government declined to buy the property for a nominal sum, and thereby accept total responsibility for its future maintenance. On balance, I am not persuaded that the benefits of preserving this

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structure justify the high and continuing maintenance costs that are likely to be incurred. Accordingly, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed, insofar as it relates to the registration of the brick chimney.

**Recommendation**

50 I recommend that the appeal be allowed in respect of the brick chimney, and that that chimney be removed from the Protected Buildings Register. However, I recommend that the appeal be dismissed, insofar as it relates to the stone chimney and the switch room, with the effect that the inclusion of those buildings on the Register be confirmed.



**MICHAEL HURLEY**  
Inspector

**APPEARANCES**

**For the Appellants**

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He called:

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Mr A Kneale

Mr R Green

**For the Planning Committee**

Mr S Moore – Building Conservation Officer, DOLGE

**For the Onchan District Commissioners and ADCO**

Mr P Kelly

**For Manx National Heritage**

Mr A Johnson