

Historic England

Mr Michael Eastham
Arun District Council

Our ref: P01334150
18 January 2021

Dear Mr Eastham

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**LAND AT FORD ROAD, ARUNDEL, WEST SUSSEX
Application No. AB/135/20/OUT**

Thank you for your letter of 15 December 2020 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Summary

The application is for outline planning consent for the development of 90 dwellings and associated amenity at land at Ford Road, Arundel.

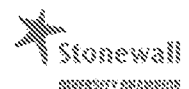
The proposed development site is adjacent to Tortington Priory scheduled monument and Grade II* listed Priory Barn. These are designated assets of the highest importance, and the settings of both assets include the proposed development site. There is also potential for non-designated heritage assets to be present, including archaeological remains associated with the Priory and important prehistoric remains.

The applicant reports that there would be no impact on Tortington Priory or Priory Barn as a result of changes within their settings. We cannot agree with this assessment. In our view, the applicant has not sufficiently considered the importance of the agricultural landscape setting to these designated assets' significance, and has over-estimated the effectiveness of planting as mitigation.

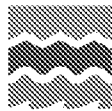
The proposed development would result in loss of a proportion of Tortington Priory and Priory Barn's settings, which would be harmful to their significance. The mitigation planting proposed by the applicant would be of only limited effectiveness in reducing that harm. It is likely that the degree of harm to those designated assets would be 'less than substantial' in planning (NPPF) terms. The question of whether such harm is justifiable is a matter for your planning balance; however, great weight should be given to these asset's conservation irrespective of the level of harm.



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Historic England has concerns regarding this application, and think that further work by the applicant is required to demonstrate that conservation and enhancement of heritage assets has been adequately achieved, and harm to the historic environment has been avoided, minimised and appropriately justified, as detailed in the NPPF.

Historic England Advice

Significance of the historic environment

The proposed development site is adjacent to the scheduled monument 'Tortington Augustinian priory and ponds, including part of priory precinct' (List Entry Ref: 1021459), which includes the grade II* listed building 'Tortington Priory Barn, to the north of Priory Farm' (Ref: 122196).

The Priory was founded in c. 1180 and was one of 225 such religious houses belonging to the order of St Augustine, which formed a major component of their local communities during the medieval period. Tortington Priory scheduled monument survives well as an archaeological site, as demonstrated by limited excavation that located the church, chapel and claustral buildings, and includes remains of its fishponds.

A few fragments of the medieval priory's buildings have been incorporated into later structures, including the listed barn. The barn dates to the late 17th or early 18th century and is constructed of stone with weatherboarding. The thatched, hipped roof rests on queen-post trusses between its six bays. The medieval (13th century) component includes part of the south and east walls. The building is listed at Grade II*, indicating that it is a particularly important building of 'more than special' interest.

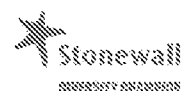
The Priory's setting makes an important contribution to its significance. The Priory was the centre of an agricultural estate, in addition to its role as a spiritual enclosure, and was closely associated with the surrounding communities and settlements. The scheduled area constitutes only the centre of a wider monastic estate. Its setting within the agricultural landscape is therefore integral to understanding its significance.

There is potential for non-designated remains associated with the priory to be present within the surrounding landscape. The Historic Environment Record notes the presence of ridge and furrow, trackways, ditches and enclosures associated with the Priory. A medieval moated site has also been located and excavated, next to the river south of Tortington Priory. Other as-yet unidentified associated sites may be present, and any such remains could be of equivalent significance to the Priory monument itself (i.e. of national importance).

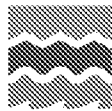
In addition to medieval remains, there is potential for the proposed development site to



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include non-designated assets of other periods. For example, important Palaeolithic remains have been located in this area. In addition, later prehistoric and Roman discoveries are found along the River Arun. The potential for the proposed development site to contain any such remains has not been assessed by the applicant.

Impact of the proposals

1. Impact on heritage assets through development in their setting

The Heritage Statement contends that the Priory Barn's setting relates to the priory and its ancillary buildings but makes little mention of the wider landscape setting. However, the agricultural landscape was fundamental to the function of the barn and is also inter-visible with it. As such, the relationship between this wider setting and the listed building contributes to its significance. On the basis of the information provided, it is therefore likely that Priory Barn's significance would be harmed by the proposed development.

The Heritage Statement argues that the setting of Tortington Priory scheduled monument is "reduced" because it cannot be understood above ground (para. 4.3.3). However, Historic England's guidance on setting is clear that buried heritage assets retain a presence in the landscape and have a setting ('*The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3*', p.5). It is clear to us that Tortington Priory does have a setting that includes the proposed development site, which is likely to be harmfully altered by the proposals.

Harm may additionally result from indirect effects of the proposed development, such as alterations to traffic, light or noise within the setting of Tortington Priory and Priory Barn, which could affect how these assets are experienced. The application does not provide sufficient information to make a determination on whether the designated assets would be harmed by any such impacts.

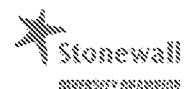
There may be harmful alteration of the views towards Tortington Priory and Priory Barn, and views including the assets and proposed development. There are some representative views provided with the application, but the versions of these available are of poor quality and do not provide sufficient information to assess the degree of harm that may result from changes to these views.

2. Impacts on non-designated heritage assets

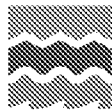
The application is not accompanied by an archaeological desk-based assessment. The Heritage Statement refers to archaeological background but does not present the baseline conditions adequately, assess the significance of non-designated heritage assets, or consider the likely levels of harm associated with the application.



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The applicant has also not addressed whether or not there may be nationally important non-designated buried archaeological remains present on the site. However, the proposed development is likely to have an adverse impact on any such assets that are present.

3. Cumulative impacts

The proposed development may have a cumulative impact in conjunction with other developments proposed nearby. In particular, the proposed development may have an increased effect on Tortington Priory and Priory Barn as a result of cumulative impact in relation to the proposed A27 Arundel Bypass. There appears to be no consideration of this potential harm in the application, so we do not have the means to determine any such impacts or their level of harm.

4. Effectiveness of proposed mitigation

We welcome the Masterplan's proposed use of the land on the south of the proposed site as "a buffer of open and undeveloped land" (Heritage Statement, para. 5.3.2), as this would reduce the degree to which new building would harmfully alter the settings of Tortington Priory and Priory Barn.

It should be noted, however, that change from agricultural land to green amenity space, would still result in a reduction of the degree to which the historic landscape character and setting of the designated heritage assets could be understood and appreciated. This means that there would still be harm arising from the proposals, despite this sensitive design approach.

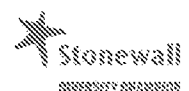
The application aims to reinforce hedgerow and introduce coppicing along and north of Priory Lane to screen the proposed development from the former priory. The effectiveness or appropriateness of this approach should be considered with great care. Screening the views to hide the built form of the proposed development would also harm the designated heritage assets by removing the view of the agricultural land to the north. In addition, vegetation planting would not effectively screen those views, as a line of trees or hedgerow still affords glimpsed views, and filtered views such as those proposed are seasonally variable in effectiveness. In winter, the view of the built form is likely to be present.

Policy considerations

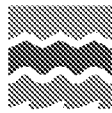
Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) it is a core planning principle to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations



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(para.184 NPPF).

The NPPF states that where a proposed development site 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 should also be carried out (NPPF para 189).

Local planning authorities are required to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset), and to take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal (NPPF para 190).

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. No other planning concern is given a greater sense of importance in the NPPF. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be (para.193).

The NPPF (para. 194) directs that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, should be wholly exceptional.

Applications that would lead to substantial harm to a designated asset should be refused consent unless that harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh it, or unless (a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site, (b) no viable use of the asset can be found in the medium term, (c) conservation by grant-funding is not possible and (d) the harm is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use (para. 195).

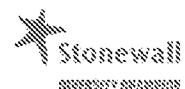
For applications that would result in less-than-substantial harm to a heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (para. 196).

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be considered when determining the application (NPPF para 197). Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets (NPPF para 194; footnote 63).

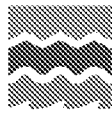
Para 200 of the NPPF is clear that local authorities should look for opportunities for new development within the settings of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve the elements of setting that make a positive



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contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

In determining this application, you should additionally bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have 'special regard' to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Section 72(1) of the 1990 Act also requires you to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Historic England Position

The scheme is likely to cause harm to the nationally important Tortington Priory scheduled monument and grade II* listed Priory Barn, which are both designations of exceptional importance in planning terms.

The application does not provide a complete and robust account of the heritage baseline conditions or the likely effects of the proposed development to support an informed decision on the merits of the application.

Sufficiently identifying the significance of assets, and using this to evolve the Masterplan, is critical to providing a strong basis for design decisions. This is particularly relevant in light of the NPPF (para. 189) requiring an applicant to describe the significance of any assets affected, and (paras. 184 and 193) to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

To understand the significance of non-designated heritage and the potential for nationally important buried archaeological remains, the applicant should provide an archaeological desk-based assessment. Following the results of the desk-based assessment, it is likely to also be necessary to carry out a programme of field work that might include, for example, both geophysics and archaeological evaluation.

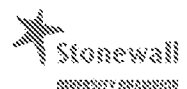
To fully understand the degree to which the Tortington Priory and Priory Barn would be harmed by change to their setting, the applicant should produce visualisations from viewpoints agreed with Historic England. The assessment of setting-related impacts on these designated assets should be reconsidered in relation to those additional views and in relation to non-visual aspects of their settings.

The applicant should also provide an assessment of the cumulative impacts of the proposals in relation to other proposed and planned developments.

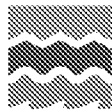
The Masterplan should not be agreed until the heritage significance of the site and its



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capacity to absorb change is well understood. Once the work described above has been carried out, the Masterplan should be reconsidered to identify ways in which careful design could improve the outcome for the historic environment.

The applicant should seek to reduce the harm to archaeological remains through careful placement of buildings, services and other sub-surface intrusions. Design solutions should be sought to minimise truncation of significant buried archaeological remains (for example by including important remains in areas of public open space) and harmful alteration to the settings of heritage assets.

Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

We are not satisfied that the scope and quality of the historic environment assessment is sufficiently robust to inform the decision-making process, and advise that additional work is required to provide adequate supporting information and justification for the development Masterplan.

We consider that the application does not meet the requirements of the NPPF, as detailed above, but in particular paragraph numbers 184, 189, 190 and 200.

Given the importance of the heritage assets within the area, we encourage you to seek improvements to the supporting documentation, and the overall approach taken.

While Historic England would anticipate complementing and not duplicating the advice of your heritage advisors, we would be pleased to discuss the points we have made in this letter, and can provide further advice about the issues raised, if requested, in due course.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

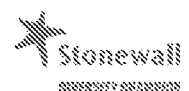
Yours sincerely

Rebecca Lambert

Inspector of Ancient Monuments



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