

Conservation Officers response

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From: Martyn White <Martyn.White@arun.gov.uk> **On Behalf Of** Conservation Officer
Sent: 29 October 2024 16:52
To: Planning.Responses <Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: LU/246/24/PL

LU/246/24/PL

Land at Toddington Lane Littlehampton BN17 7PN

Demolition of existing structures and development of land to create 10 No. residential dwellings, landscaping, access, car parking and cycle parking. This application may affect the setting of listed buildings, is in CIL zone 2 and is CIL liable as new dwellings.

A map-based assessment has identified that the proposed development is close to two listed buildings: The Old Farmhouse & Holly Cottage and Dovecote at Toddington Farm. The site is also

in close proximity to a third: Toddington House. A comprehensive heritage and settings assessment has been provided which I have reviewed as part of the assessment of this application.

The Old Farmhouse & Holly Cottage

One building with 2 houses arranged in a northern and southern wing. The Southern wing is identified as being C16 or early C17. It is 2 storeys of flints with red brick dressings, quoins and stringcourse. Crow-stepped gables and chimney breasts at the ends, east chimney breast much wider than the West; modern shafts. Casement windows, modern on ground floor with timber mullion and transoms under segmental arches on 1st floor. 2 small blocked original mullion windows in West wall. Slate roof.

The northern wing is thought to date to the C19 and is in similar style to the southern one. 2 storeys, brick, with 2 crow stepped gables to the north. It is considered that the listed building derives its significance from its architectural and historic interest.

The setting of the listed building includes its own curtilage, the neighbouring listed building, along with the surrounding roads and the site.

Dovecote at Toddington Farm

The Dovecote is dated 1699 and is a 2 storey square building with flint elevations and a tiled roof. It is attached to, and forms part of the property known as Old Byrne House. It lies on the far western side of the plot, whilst the remainder of Old Byrne House comprises former agricultural buildings which have been converted into residential use. The dovecote is considered to derive its significance from its architectural and historic interest.

The setting of the listed building includes its own curtilage, the neighbouring listed building, the surrounding roads and the site.

Toddington House (including stables or barn at South end of south wing)

This is a grade II listed building. It is thought to date to the C16 or early C17 and is an 'L' plan timber framed house which is now faced with brick and flints. It has a clay tiled roof with later Horsham slabs at the base. The northern elevation has a catslide roof and a modern extension. Of note is the tall chimney at the west end with stone quoins and octagonal stack. Timber casement windows.

There are attractive barns in the grounds which have been converted into other uses. It is considered that both the house and the barn derive significance from their architectural and historic interest.

These buildings are located to the south of the site and separated by a terrace of modern houses and the railway line. Whilst they are experienced in their own curtilage, views towards the front of the old farmhouse and the edge of the site are 'just discernible'.

The Proposal

The proposal is for a development of 10 new dwellings together with access and associated parking. I am aware that the wider area is currently experiencing a large amount of residential development, and that the site has previously had planning permission approved for housing.

The site is bordered by Toddington Lane on two of its sides: the northern and eastern boundaries. There are some modern houses which form part of the wider and larger residential development. To the south of the site is a small terrace of modern houses and the railway line, and to the west is what looks to be a small industrial estate. The surrounding area contains a mixture of uses

including commercial and residential which has a somewhat suburban character to it. However, this part of the lane still retains a semi-rural character to it – partly informed by the now semi-green site.

To the north-east of the site and therefore close to it are two of the listed buildings: The Old Farmhouse & Holly Cottage and Dovecote at Toddington Farm. The third listed building is situated to the south which has some intervisibility with the site when approaching it.

As you are aware, the wider historic settings of all of the identified assets have been impacted as a result of the loss of the agricultural character. However, as stated in the heritage statement, this should not prevent or discourage further change from being responsive and sensitive to those aspects of setting which are still positive to the appreciation of the heritage assets.

The current proposal would represent the development of what now looks to be land covered with greenery, albeit scrub. It would appear that the site is raised above the lane, which means that it can be more easily visible from there. The result of this increased land level is that any development in this location would be prominent, and easily viewed.

The new houses would be set within three groups, two of which would face out or front onto the lane, whilst the third group would front inwards onto the new service road. The development would introduce built form closer to the two nearest listed buildings, and in their settings. The northern terrace (plots 3-6) would front onto the lane, and it is noted that an existing footpath would be continued onto the site. It is clear from the layout, street scenes and 3d render images that this terrace will be visible from the lane. Likewise, the pair of cottages to the east (plots 1 & 2) also face onto the lane and potentially be visible. This is especially because of the raised ground level here. For instance view E of the settings assessment which looks westwards towards the site considers that The Farmhouse and Dovecote are very much part of this scene. The semi-detached dwellings and the northern terrace and their boundary treatment will be visible from here, and within the setting of the listed buildings.

We are informed in the heritage statement that setting the proposed properties back from the lane and therefore the heritage assets, along with the use of landscaping helps to mitigate their impact within the street scene. The use of trees to the edges of the development along with the use of hedging is a positive feature as it would help to ensure that it reflects the trees in the grounds of the listed buildings, whilst helping to maintain a more verdant setting to the closest listed buildings. From my perspective, I would like for the trees and hedges to be more mature so that they will have an instant impact and help to screen/soften the houses from the completion of the development. However, I would have to rely on our colleague in Parks and Landscapes to comment on the detail of the proposed landscaping, as well as for them to confirm what that would be acceptable in terms of maturity etc.

The site is only marginally visible in the context of Toddington House and the view northwards from the front across the railway line, the development is unlikely to be visible from here, and therefore not harm to the setting of the heritage asset.

The houses are a modern design which we are informed responds to the local surroundings and landscape setting and incorporates local building characteristics. The concept of a modern design would seem to be logical as it is not always best to create a pastiche of a traditional property, especially when so close to positive listed buildings which are reflective of the local vernacular. This way, the dwellings can easily be read as new development. However, my only concern relates to the colour of the brick chosen which does not fully reflect the vernacular.

It is clear that the existing access point would be retained and enhanced. This is positive as it not only maintains the distances from the listed buildings, we are informed that this is an historic track

off Toddington Lane. Whilst it is clear that the access point will have to be amended to meet current standards, it is also positive that this historic access is to be retained. The site plans indicate that the junction design will have a simple appearance, with no pedestrian pavements. Such a design will help to maintain the current simple arrangement, and views along Toddington Lane/listed buildings, which is positive.

I am therefore of the opinion that the development would lead to the loss of open space and the semi-rural character of the settings of the two closest listed buildings that currently exists. Although, it is acknowledged that this would of course occur with any scheme that was occupying what is currently identified as a largely empty area of land, such as this plot. Such harm is considered to be less than substantial harm, and in the lower half of the spectrum.

Conclusion

At present, based on the information available to me, I believe that the setting of Toddington House would not be impacted by the proposal, but the setting of both Toddington Farmhouse and the Dovecote would experience some harm as a result of development in their setting. The impact can be described as causing less than substantial harm in accordance with paragraph 208 of the NPPF (2023). The level of harm is considered to be on the lower end of the scale. As such, you will also need to consider the public benefits that the development may achieve as part of your assessment of the application, along with the contents of section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

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