

**ADC Planning Consultation
Conservation/Design Officer Response**

Application Number	WA/44/17/OUT
Address	Land to the east of Tye Lane, Walberton
Description	New residential development affecting the settings of designated heritage assets
Case Officer	Michael Eastham
Date	19 July 2017

The site is located to the north and north-east of the Walberton Village conservation area and there are a number of listed and locally listed buildings in the vicinity. The site is presently an open, gently sloping space and extensive residential development is proposed.

Designated Heritage Assets potentially affected by the proposal:

- Avisford Park Hotel, a Grade II listed building to the north of the site.
- A number of Grade II listed buildings and locally listed 'Buildings of Special Character' fronting The Street, to the south and south-east of the site.
- Walberton village conservation area, to the south and south-east of the site

Avisford Park Hotel

Ground level falls away gently to the south of the listed building and various ancillary structures, as well as mature trees and shrubbery, exist between the heritage asset and the proposal site. These intervening elements, together with the landscaped buffer to the northern edge of the proposed development effectively obstruct direct views between the existing and new built form. Although the new development may be distantly visible in long views to and from the listed building, it will be experienced within the wider, richly textured landscape context and it will neither compete with - nor distract attention from - the heritage asset.

Avisford Park Hotel will remain pre-eminent in the immediate vicinity and continue to sit in a spacious, softly landscaped setting. The presence of the new development some distance to the south and east will have little impact on the way in which the designated heritage asset is experienced and cause no harm to its significance.

Grade II listed buildings and locally listed 'Buildings of Special character' fronting The Street

The proposed development will have a negligible impact on the special qualities of the settings of these buildings, due to distance and intervening modern built form. For the same reasons, it will not intrude into important views either to or from the formally and informally designated heritage assets, and their significance will be unaffected by the proposal.

Walberton Village conservation area

Only a small part of the southern boundary of the proposal site abuts the Walberton conservation area and for the most part, it is well separated by intervening built form. Although ground level rises slightly to the northeast of the conservation area, existing buildings and the strong presence of mature trees and shrubbery will largely screen the new development and it is unlikely to intrude into any locally distinctive views.

The most tangible impacts of the new development on the character of the conservation area are likely to be increased vehicular activity and general busyness, together with greater demand for local goods and services. Although these changes may not harm the significance of the conservation area per se, they will alter the way in which the designated area is presently experienced. These particular impacts will be more fully reviewed elsewhere in the planning process and in accordance with para. 134 of the NPPF, any harm resulting from the proposal should be weighed against the public benefit.

The importance of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, is emphasised throughout section 12 of the NPPF and para. 132 requires great weight to be given to their conservation.

Due to topography, intervening built form and the presence of mature trees and shrubbery, the proposed development will have less impact on the heritage assets in the vicinity than may have been expected. No direct harm is caused to the significance of the potentially affected designated heritage assets and there is no objection in terms of the following Conservation Policies:

- Local Plan 2003: GEN 22 and Area 2:
- Emerging Local Plan 2014: HER DM1, 2 and 3.

Design Quality

The importance of high quality, locally appropriate design is emphasized in Section 7 of the NPPF, with para. 58 advising that new development should establish a strong sense of place and para. 60 stating that it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

It is noted that the outline proposal seeks permission for up to 175 dwellings, which is a welcome reduction from the figure of up to 200 proposed at pre-application stage. However, the reduction is not evident when comparing the site layouts of the preliminary and outline proposals, as there appear to be less open green space and a more intensive form of development in the current scheme. It is also noted that the DAS (p45) refers to the new built form being 'no higher than 2 storeys', while the Building Heights drawing (2507-A-1402-A) shows the buildings with a ridge height of up to 9m, which suggests three storeys. It is questioned whether three storey development is appropriate to the local context, where village buildings are modestly scaled and rarely exceed two storeys.

The DAS demonstrates that careful consideration has been given to pedestrian connectivity and the design of safe, welcoming amenity spaces with compatible uses. Clear delineation of public, semi-private and private spaces has been achieved with a hierarchy of boundary treatments and streets are enclosed by active frontages, with 'landmark' buildings occupying strategic locations to facilitate legibility.

As the application is for outline permission only, detailed architectural proposals have not been provided at this stage. However indicative sketches suggest the new built form is designed and scaled to complement local models, although it is noted that three storey

buildings have not been illustrated. A high quality, locally appropriate indicative materials palette is included in the DAS (p68).

When reviewing architectural details as part of a subsequent Reserved Matters application, the following aspects will be carefully considered:

- The rich texture of the neighbouring built form is a local characteristic and it should be given a modern interpretation and continued, so that a strong sense of connectivity between the old and the new is established. However, careful attention must be given to achieving variety and interest without creating suburban chaos.
- Contrived replicas of 'organic development' are usually unconvincing.
- The 'scaling up' of modest historic forms to 21st century proportions and the random application of 'historic' elements unrelated to function, such as imitation chimneys, should be avoided.
- Consistent window treatments across buildings of disparate form intentionally designed to suggest historic 'organic development', appear entirely alien and should be avoided.
- Attempts to match handmade vernacular materials with modern, mass produced alternatives are rarely successful and a better visual effect is likely to be achieved by using honestly contemporary materials which complement, rather than imitate, the traditional palette. Good combinations of modern materials and textures create visual interest and are more appropriate in the context of 21st century buildings.

Angela Haywood
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