

Arun District Council, Civic Centre, Maltravers Rd, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5LF

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From: Martyn White <Martyn.White@arun.gov.uk>
Sent: 26 May 2022 17:31
To: Planning.Responses <Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: Y/10/22/PL

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Land to the south of Ford Lane and east of North End Road Yapton BN18 0DS

Erection of 15 No dwellings (including 4 No affordable units) with associated access, parking, landscaping, drainage and public open space (additional units to those approved under application Y/123/21/PL). This application may affect the setting of a listed building, affects the character & appearance of the Church Lane Conservation area, affects a Public Right of Way and is in CIL Zone 2 and is CIL Liable as new dwellings.

The site is to the immediate north of Yapton village and consists of part of a larger development which is a former arable field. The new site is bound to the east by a number of mature trees, an open boundary to the north on to current housing development, as well as varied development to the south and west. This development includes the Orchard Business Park and a line of housing along North End Road and Church Lane. The site is crossed by two public rights of way which link the site to Church Lane.

A heritage statement has been provided as part of the submission. My own map-based assessment has identified that there are a number of heritage assets in close proximity to the site, including, but not limited to:

Listed Buildings:

- St Mary's Church (Grade I)
- Church House (Grade II)

- Park Lodge (Grade II)
- The Old Cottage (Grade II)

Locally Listed Buildings:

- 1 & 2 Church Cottages
- Little Orchard
- Yapton Lodge

Conservation Area

- Yapton: Church Lane Conservation Area

Of specific interest to this application are St Mary's Church (Grade I) and the conservation area. St Marys Church, which is a Grade I Listed Building is a very attractive, unrestored medieval church. Of note is the Chancel, nave with aisles and tower (to the south west of the nave). The Nave and tower are both C12. The nave has lean-to roofs with later, large dormer windows inserted which have a striking impact upon the elevation. The tower has red brick buttresses and a hipped shingled roof. The church tower is present in the local views, especially along the footpaths that navigate the site. The church is considered to be of architectural and historic interest.

Whilst there are two conservation areas in the village (as evidenced by the separate boundaries, names and information within the SPG), it is The Church Lane Conservation Area which is of interest in this particular case. The conservation area covers a small and tightly defined area around the church and contains a limited number of houses. It is noted that it coincides with the medieval village location and includes two large, early 19th century houses, and some cottages of similar date and formal appearance.

The layout of the conservation area means that the older buildings within the conservation area are located close to some more modern houses and bungalows on the north side of Church Lane. Whilst these properties appear to have been built during the C.20 and provide some separation between the conservation area and the site, there is still some links between the conservation area and the development as a result of the footpath. Views of the church and towards the conservation area (Church Farm House) are noted from the footpath

Within the conservation area, boundary walling, mainly in flint, and mature landscaping enhance the street scenes and are important features and contribute to the rural character of the Conservation Area. It is considered that the conservation area is of architectural and historical significance.

The other heritage assets which have been identified based on a map-based assessment are located so as to not be directly affected by the proposed development. They are characteristic of the village and of architectural and historic significance.

The Proposal

The proposal is for the erection of an additional 15 dwellings in part of the area identified as open space to the south of the existing area of new housing.

Previously the development had been designed so that the new houses were set back from Church Lane and the associated heritage assets through the creation of a new area of open space. The open space was to continue into the site following the route of one of the existing footpaths so as to make a feature of it. This had the benefit of moving the housing further away from the conservation area, whilst also forming a pleasant transition area between it and the main part of the development. It also allowed for the church tower to remain a feature of views from within the site, whilst not harming the setting of the church. It is noted that the spire and the

grounds of the neighbouring property can be seen from footpath, but that the views of the spire will remain.

I note that the heritage statement identifies previous appeal decisions which help it to conclude that the current proposal would be acceptable. However, as above, this was on the basis of the housing being separated from the conservation area: I believe that one of the inspectors also noted that 'subject to reserved matters, the houses would stand well beyond the conservation area and separated by open space and landscaping'. The current proposal would reduce this open space.

Given the semi-rural character and origins of the conservation area, the previously agreed open space was considered important in order to retain that character as viewed in the approach into and out of village from the public footpath. A previous heritage statement is also noted as identifying that 'The detailed proposals as presented in a previous reserved matters application preserve the qualities of the site that are of value to the designated heritage assets to the south on the edge of the historic centre of Yapton. For St Mary's Church, the appreciation of the church in its rural setting on the edge of the modern village in views from the footpath across the site is preserved as part of the new framework of landscaped open spaces within the development. *The informal areas to the south and east of the site provide a significant physical and visual buffer between the new development and the church group*, and the footpath is framed by the central space and the southern development edge' (author emphasis). It is interesting to note the reference to "*significant physical and visual buffer...*"

Previous heritage assessments of the development at reserved matters stage (by the LPA consultee) were based on the provision of the larger area of proposed open space. For instance "This is in part due to the location of the area of open space in the southern section of the site...."

The proposal to develop this part of the open space (which was to be provided as part of the larger housing estate), represents an intrusion into *this significant physical and visual buffer* between the housing and the conservation area. The current proposal would reduce this open space so that the buffer area between the conservation area and the main part of the development is much smaller with development much closer to the conservation area. It would also negatively impact upon the pleasant transition area between the conservation area and the main part of the development. Such an approach would appear to be in conflict with the original aspirations of the design of the development. I note that a large portion of the reduced green space would be used as a play area or a pond, which would greatly reduce the area left for informal landscaping. The result is that the proposed development will negatively affect this part of the setting of the conservation area.

Whilst the design of the houses appear to be based on the designs of properties constructed in the early to mid C20, they are now more of a standard design found in many different parts of the district. Their individual qualities no longer apply to this location. I previously identified that the success of such designs will ultimately depend upon the quality of the materials proposed, which should be carefully considered. However, it appears as if standard machine made materials are to be used, which is also disappointing and not fully appropriate given the proximity to the heritage assets. Other developers in the local area have provided improved materials for those buildings closest to identified heritage assets.

Conclusion

Any harm cause, however minor is harmful and must be identified as such. The NPPF only identifies three types of harm. This consultation has therefore identified that the proposal is such that the impact can be described as causing less than substantial harm in accordance with paragraph 202 of the NPPF (2021). 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 the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

Martyn White
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Planning Services



Please note: I work on Conservation for half of the working Week (all day Monday and Friday and Tuesday Afternoons)

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