

Amanda Scholes | Receptionist, Department, [Arun District Council](#) | Location: Ground Floor, Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton, BN17 5LF

Internal: 37736 | External: +44 (0) 1903 737500 ext 37736 | E-mail: amanda.scholes@arun.gov.uk



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From: Martyn White <Martyn.White@arun.gov.uk>
Sent: 02 April 2020 13:39
To: Planning.Responses <Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk>
Cc: Simon Davis <Simon.Davis@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: Y/77/19/OUT

Y/77/19/OUT

The proposal is for the erection of 10 dwellings in the hamlet of Flansham. I note that the current application is a re-submission of a previously refused one that was subsequently dismissed at appeal.

The site and immediate surrounds

The site is triangular in shape and is essentially former paddock land at the eastern edge of the hamlet of Flansham and north of the adjoining village of. Access is via a driveway servicing two existing properties (bonhams and Flints).

The site has defined boundaries with the main A259 Felpham Relief Road running to the eastern and southern edges and includes planted bunds alongside that road.

This is supplemented by a strong hedged field boundary to the west and Hoe Lane to the north. Hoe Lane has considerable planting along the boundary with the site, as well as generally in various parts along the lane, including immediately opposite the proposed access point. The lane is rural in character and in strong contrast to the nearby village of Felpham, which is more sub-urban in nature.

To the south of the A259 is the settlement of Felpham which includes a large, modern development which is still being built out. This development has a character of its own, more appropriate to a modern sub-urban settlement.

Immediately adjoining the north/north-western part of the site are two dwellings and their associated residential curtilages; Bonhams house sits immediately alongside Hoe Lane and 'Flints', a smaller property further back from the lane. Both of these properties are served by the proposed access road.

Bonhams is a large property with a formal garden area immediately to the east. It is visible in this part of the Hoe Lane street-scene, and therefore plays an important role in the development of its character. It is an attractive flint and brick house with a clay roof.

Whilst no Bonhams is no longer a statutory listed building, it is considered that it is still of local importance, and therefore worthy of identification as a non-designated heritage asset in accordance with the definition contained within the NPPF.

As noted in the appeal decision, there is some visual connection from outside the appeal site on Hoe Lane towards the built development at Felpham as the recent development there can be seen across the roundabout. It is also possible to see roofs of properties to the south of the relief road from this point.

However, the bunds do provide a visual screen and barrier between the hamlet and Felpham. As the vegetation on the bunds matures the roofs of properties to the south of the BRRR will become less prominent.

The Character and Appearance of the Local Area

Flansham has a very distinctive character which still maintains the feeling of entering a country lane. The local area consists of approximately 50 houses of which 4 are listed and 5 are locally listed.

It is believed that the hamlet of Flansham grew up around the two historic farmsteads with linear development along Hoe Lane in more recent times including in the twentieth century. Some of the farm buildings have been converted to residential dwellings and commercial units. A third farm, Rookery Farm, lies a short distance to the east of the main area. It is noted that some of the properties have been and continue to be extended and altered to meet the needs of the current occupiers.

Whilst not located within a conservation area, the proposed development is situated within an area which has a special character that is in strict contrast with the surrounding, more suburban development. The hamlet has a relatively older, dense core with an increasingly looser distribution of buildings to the North as the hamlet form recedes to agricultural land; also to the South/south-east along Hoe Lane, where properties are well set back in isolated plots. Some of these properties are well screened with dense vegetation, including mature trees.

Materials such as flint, brick and a variety of architectural styles and periods contribute to the character, and although typical of the area, are special in their contribution to the hamlet as a whole. Properties vary in appearance throughout the hamlet.

The Propose Development

The development is believed to have a number of issues, namely

- the impact upon the character of the local area
- the impact of the development upon non-designated heritage assets.

The impact upon the character of the local area

The applicant has stated that the development would be designed so that it reflects the character of the hamlet. Whilst the concept of a development would appear to have been designed to appear as a farmstead, the development is still problematical. It is considered that this development would be out of keeping with the hamlet in that the developed area of the site would be greater in depth than that of the existing developed area and would not follow the linear pattern of development along the Lane. This would mean that, rather than being considered as part of the hamlet, it would be viewed as a separate enclave of development made up of the proposal and the building known as Flints.

There is a difference between the developed urban area Felpham to the south of the site and the distinctly more rural character of Flansham. Further, apart from the section of Hoe Lane which is located closest to the relief road roundabout, there is little visual linkage between the two settlements. However, this would change if the development were to take place.

Whilst the existing vegetation on the bunds would help screen the houses to some extent, the development of the site would link the hamlet and village together. This as noted by the inspector, would 'significantly and demonstrably harmfully change the difference in characters between the two settlements, and be demonstrably harmful to the character of Flansham as a separate hamlet'. I have no reason to disagree with this approach.

It is also thought that development in this location would remove the sense of leaving Flansham when traveling both along Hoe Lane eastwards, but also when using the neighbouring footpath to the immediate west of the site.

The Inspector stated in para 24 that 'It would significantly and demonstrably harmfully change the existing character of the appeal site turning it into an urban area, linking Felpham and Flansham and would not satisfactorily recognise and respond to the intrinsic character of the countryside. It would therefore be contrary to paragraph 170 of the Framework which indicates that planning decisions should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'.

The impact of the development upon non-designated heritage assets

The PPG states that heritage assets can be identified at any time; either as part of a formal list/document in accordance with published criteria, or as part of the decision making process. The Council have previously identified that Bonhams was a non-designated heritage asset in accordance with the definition contained within the Planning Practice Guidance. Reference has also been made to the hamlet itself.

Bonhams:

Bonhams was previously a listed building but was delisted in 2013 as it had been remodelled and much altered so that its architectural interest had been eroded. However, as noted by the appeal inspector, it must be remembered that the delisting relates to its national architectural and historic interest rather than any local interest. It is considered that the significance of Bonhams derives from its original date, its evolutions and the origins of the building in relation to the hamlet of Flansham.

Whilst the council does have a local list (of non-designated heritage assets), Bonhams is not included. The reason behind this being that when it was prepared, the building was still statutorily listed. The local list has not been updated since its production a number of years ago. As the delisting of Bonhams post-dates the adoption of the local list it is considered that the building is a non-designated heritage asset as the reasons for its delisting do not detract from its local significance.

Bonhams is set in the northern part of its site with extensive grounds to the east and south. The grounds are surrounded by a line of trees and fencing. Depending on the location of the houses, the proposed development could be visible over the fence and in between the trees. This could be greater in the winter months when the tree canopy is more exposed. It is thought that the development may cause some harm to the setting of the non-designated heritage asset. Although this would be at the lower end of the spectrum.

Whilst the hamlet (or part of it) also has some potential as a heritage asset, it does not have any formal or local status. At present, due to the lack of an identified boundary, this designation has little weight. However, the issues discussed above in respect of character are still of relevance.

Flansham:

The appeal proposal could also harm the character of the hamlet itself. Whilst it is also not identified in any document as being such an asset, it is considered that it has some heritage significance which requires further consideration; whilst it would meet the definition of a non-designated heritage asset, there is no defined boundary

for the area. As such, limited weight can be allocated to its significance at this time. Further work into this would be required by the LPA.

Conclusion

It is therefore considered that development in this location would not be in accordance with the character of the existing hamlet. It is also considered that the development would cause harm to the setting of the non-designated heritage asset. This harm would be at the lower end of the spectrum.

Martyn White | Principal Conservation Officer, Planning Policy, Directorate of Place, Arun District Council | Location: First Floor, Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton, BN17 5LF
Internal: 37717 | External: +44 (0) 1903 737717 | E-mail: Martyn.white@arun.gov.uk



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