

SOUTH EAST OFFICE

Mr Cian Cronin
Arun District Council
Arun Civic Centre
Maltravers Street
LITTLEHAMPTON
West Sussex
BN17 5LF

Our ref: P00346957

6 February 2014

Dear Mr Cronin

LAND TO THE NORTH AND EAST OF ST MARYS CHURCH, YAPTON, WEST SUSSEX

The proposed development is for up to 250 dwellings on land to the North and East of St Mary's Church in Yapton. St Mary's is a grade I listed 12th century church with later additions. It sits within the Church Lane and Main Road/Church Road Conservation Area in Yapton, a small conservation area which includes a number of early 19th century listed and unlisted buildings.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of heritage assets, including the contribution made by their setting; and that the level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (para. 128).

I acknowledge this application to be for outline planning consent only however I would suggest that the level of detail falls well short of what should be required to make any meaningful assessment of the impacts of the proposed development on heritage assets. The heritage statement itself is very brief, forming only an appendix in the 'Planning Summary, Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement' document. This we do not feel provides sufficient analysis of the church, which being listed at grade I is considered of exceptional interest and is within just 2.5% of buildings designated at this highest grade.

I visited the site, and noted that from within the verdant churchyard, there is a high sense of enclosure provided by the characteristic brick walls around the north and east boundaries, although the aspect is more open to the south and east. However, I also walked across the footpaths that cross the application site, and along the roads from where views to the church tower are possible, providing a local landmark. I cannot agree with the statement within the heritage statement that 'the application site to the



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north and east of the church contribute little to its setting being largely treeless and featureless in arable fields...' In my view the arable fields clearly assist in understanding the building as a rural parish church and contribute positively to its significance.

I do not wish to provide further comments on the current application, and indeed am not able with the information before me to form a view as to the likely level of harm to heritage assets. We therefore recommend that the local planning authority requires as a minimum a full heritage impact assessment, which should include an analysis of the historic evolution of Yapton, map regressions, and probably a form of views analysis, although without a more detailed housing layout, it will remain difficult to assess the potential impacts of the proposed development on designated or undesignated heritage assets.

Yours sincerely



Samantha Johnson

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas



cc Martyn White, Arun DC



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