

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)

APPEAL REFERENCE: APP/X1735/W/20/3259067

LPA REFERENCE: APP/19/00427

APPEAL AGAINST THE DECISION BY HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL TO REFUSE FULL
PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE
ERECTION OF 50 DWELLINGS TOGETHER WITH ACCESS, LANDSCAPING AND OPEN
SPACE ON
LAND AT LOWER ROAD, BEDHAMPTON, HAVANT, PO3 3NB

SUMMARY PROOF HERITAGE EVIDENCE

FOR THE APPELLANT: BARGATE HOMES

John Trehay BA MCIfA

Technical Director, Terence O'Rourke Ltd

Submitted 5 January 2021

Inquiry starts: 4 February 2021 (4 days listed)

- S1 I have been appointed by Bargate Homes to give evidence on cultural heritage matters. I have been involved in the project for the proposals at the Appeal Site since early 2018 and am responsible for the Heritage Statement(s) that were produced in support of the planning application. There has been no criticism from the council of these Heritage Statements or of the assessment methodology employed; the study area used, or the level of information provided.
- S2 Effects on heritage were cited as a reason for refusal (no.1) but the wording falsely alleges that it is the scale of the proposed development (a 50-unit scheme of one and two-storey houses opposite similar properties along Lower Road) to be sited on the only remnant area of agricultural land (but land immediately east and west will continue in agricultural use) is sufficient reason to refuse. My evidence clearly shows how the Appeal Site is not identified as a key contributory attribute of the Old Bedhampton conservation area and further development of the scale and design proposed will not give rise to harmful effects to character or appearance.
- S3 The appeal site comprises 3.85 hectares of agricultural land to the south of Lower Road, Bedhampton immediately adjoining the urban settlement boundary. To the north of Lower Road modern residential properties of varying ages provide the immediate setting to the site. The site does not lie within any area designated for its landscape or heritage importance, although part of the site lies adjacent to an outlying 'satellite' area of the Old Bedhampton Conservation Area known as Character Area 5 - Old Manor Farm.
- S4 No physical works or changes are proposed to any heritage asset, either designated or non-designated, as part of the proposed development. There is therefore no potential for effects on the significance derived from the fabric of the heritage assets. Consideration is given only to changes to the contribution of the setting of the assets to the significance and to the ability to appreciate that significance.
- S5 My proof adopts a staged approach to assessing the setting, as well as the character and appearance of the Old Bedhampton conservation area. It focuses on the two character areas defined in the adopted conservation area appraisal (Sept 2019, CD H3) that lie in close proximity to the Appeal Site namely:
- Character Area 1: Historic core
 - Character Area 5: Old Manor Farm.

- S6 I explain in detail in my proof how the Appeal Site does not positively contribute as part of the present setting of the historic core of Old Bedhampton conservation area and does not contribute to an understanding or appreciation of its significance. Evidence obtained under an Environmental Information Regulations (Freedom of Information FOI) by the Appellant in September 2018 clearly shows the lengths taken to include the Appeal Site within a revised conservation area boundary and the measures taken to inflate the significance of Old Manor Farm. Several HBC conservation officers along with Historic England failed to identify the Appeal Site as an area worthy of inclusion within a future revision and failed to advise on its inclusion as a green buffer or area that contributes positively to the setting of Old Bedhampton conservation area.
- S7 I clearly set out evidence in my proof and supplemented in Appendix 5 to show the incessant nature of efforts by local objectors, before this Inquiry as a Rule 6 party, led to informed professional officer opinion being undermined by Members as a result of vociferous and continuous emotive arguments presented to numerous committees. This has resulted in a flawed conservation area appraisal and the inclusion of areas that add little or no significance to Old Bedhampton.
- S8 The Appeal application was the subject of extensive pre-application discussions with the Planning Officers, thorough community engagement and an extensive dialogue during the determination of the application to ensure that all relevant matters raised had been appropriately resolved in order to enable the Planning Officer to recommend the application for approval.
- S9 This conclusion was reached primarily due to an acceptance by the conservation officer that while the Appeal Site fell within the setting of the conservation area, there were measures within the layout, design and appropriate vernacular material palette that it was felt minimised the degree of harm to allow the application to be balanced against the public benefits, as per NPPF paragraph 196. This Appeal is being heard as a consequence of HBC members consistently ignoring their officer recommendations on the acceptability of the proposals. The excessive local pressure intensified following their unsuccessful attempt to get the Appeal Site included within the review of the conservation area boundary. This has led to unwarranted inflation of the importance and role of the Appeal Site as a contributing element of the

significance of the conservation area that is not supported by the CAA, or the archaeology evaluation works undertaken.

- S10 No physical works or changes are proposed to any heritage assets as part of the proposed development. There is therefore no potential for effects on the significance derived from the fabric of the heritage assets. Consideration is given only to changes to the contribution of the setting of the assets to the significance and to the ability to appreciate that significance.
- S11 The assessment in my proof of evidence follows the sequence given in the Good Practice Advice – The setting of heritage assets steps 1 to 4 (Historic England 2017; CD H6). We also utilised the recently adopted Old Bedhampton conservation area appraisal (CD H3) to determine the recognised significance of the Appeal Site and adjacent land parcels and dwellings. The Appeal Site, Old Manor Farm sited to the west or how the Appeal Site hints at the former rural setting of the village are not mentioned as being special interest character features of the Old Bedhampton conservation area.
- S12 My assessment clearly shows by reference to the Old Bedhampton CAA (Adopted September 2019; CD H3), the application of the staged process in determining change to the setting of this designated heritage asset (CD H6) and the production of GLVIA verified photomontages of the proposals how the proposals will not result in material harm to the conservation area as a whole. Three of the identified character areas were sieved out at step one as there were unlikely to be any potential effects. Of the remaining two, no effects are predicted on the historic core and a minor visual change will occur to the setting of the Old Manor Farm satellite character area 5. Overall the effect of the proposals at the Appeal Site on the character and appearance of Old Bedhampton conservation area, including the contribution of its setting, is neutral.
- S13 The proposals at the Appeal Site are for 50 dwellings (including 30% affordable homes) of comparable scale to existing residences adjacent together with a new access from Lower Road, landscaping and public open space. These proposals will not appear alien in form as they will be sited opposite the existing residential suburban form on Lower Road. This, in my opinion, will allow the proposals to assimilate within an appropriate residential character area and result in no material

harm to the identified significance that contributes to the character and appearance of Old Bedhampton conservation area.

- S14 The NPPF clearly states (paragraph 201) that “*Not all elements of a...conservation area...will necessarily contribute to its significance*” and the CAA clearly does not identify the Appeal Site as being a key feature that contributes to the special interest of the designated area. The statutory approach in determining the potential effects to the significance of the heritage assets close to the Appeal Site has been met. I have considered the effects together with the benefits embedded within the detailed proposals and conclude the likely effects to be neutral and no harm will arise. Therefore the policies within the NPPF are not engaged and the recognised heritage values of the nearby assets will be sustained for future generations and the history of the Old Bedhampton area will remain readable and legible following development at the Appeal Site.