

Heritage Team Consultation Response

Ref: APP/20/00212

Site: 3 London Road, Purbook

Proposal: Proposed change of use of site to vehicle washing facility (sui generis).

The proposed site is located in a sensitive position in terms of the historic environment. It is located directly adjacent to the St John's Conservation Area (bordering on two sides) and in close proximity to two listed buildings, which lie to the north.

The area to the west of the site is Marrelswood gardens which comprises a modern residential cul de sac, adjacent to an area of woodland.

Historically, the core of the Conservation Area is the London Road frontage containing three buildings – the Parish Church, the Victorian First School and the Methodist Chapel. The first two are statutorily listed buildings, but the Methodist Chapel (now serving as a church hall) although of a later date and style, contributes equally to the streetscene with its restrained front gabled elevation to London Road. It thus forms part of an important group, together with the other two principal buildings on this frontage to London Road.

South of the Victorian School (now used as a play school), the quality of the streetscene dissolves, with a utilitarian shed style commercial building (subject of this enquiry) next door and the site of the former petrol station which is now a car sales forecourt. The boundary of the Conservation Area skirts to the west of these two sites. The area is an active, mixed commercial and residential neighbourhood centred upon the London Road.

Whilst it is not within the conservation area, the site in question is prominent given its site area and street frontage presence. The proposal is to use the site for a car wash facility. The existing portacabin on site would be relocated to the northern corner of the site. The application site is currently screened from the west boundary of the conservation by a fence and semi-mature vegetation. As such no different impact is expected on this side of the conservation area.

The Planning, Design and Heritage Statement advises that the London Road frontage would include a new planting scheme to soften the appearance of the development within the streetscene. No details of the type and nature of planting have been provided thus far.

Conclusion

No further buildings are proposed on the site and the relocation of the portacabin to the north-west corner will make it less prominent in the context of the streetscene and wider conservation area. Following officer feedback that the application did not include a heritage statement in accordance with Policy DM20 of the Local Plan (Allocations), the Planning and Design Statement was amended to include a heritage statement. Whilst this lacks details, it does recognise the designated heritage assets which may be affected and make reference to the relevant heritage related local plan policies.

The site is not within the CA and therefore only has potential to affect its setting which forms part of the significance of the conservation area. Given that no new structures are to be erected as part of the proposed scheme, the views of the nearby listed buildings would be unaffected. The use of the site would not be ideal long term however, it is recognised that it is within a mixed residential and commercial area and a planting scheme is proposed to enhance the quality of the street frontage.

Overall therefore, subject to a condition being included for further details of the planting scheme to be submitted and agreed, no objection is raised.

12/5/2020