

Heritage Team response

Eastleigh House, Bartons Road

APP/20/00366 and 367

The Site

Eastleigh House was built as a residential dwelling in the early 19th century. It appears to have been part of a larger farmstead in the C18 which included a surviving remnant of a listed barn which is not part of the adjoining garden centre. It includes later additions including a later Regency build and frontage. The house is well set back from Bartons Road and accessed via a sweeping driveway which leads to the front entrance of the house which faces south. This was meant to take advantage over the wider views of the countryside however, this open land is now currently being developed for housing. The east elevation of the house faces a private sunken lawn. The north area of the house has recently been developed with 10no. dwellings. However, the open space about the east and to some degree south of the site, in addition to being enclosed by a mature tree screen along the boundaries, makes for an enclosed and established setting for the listed building.

The building was listed in 1952 (Grade II). It displays the typical characteristics found at that time; shallow pitched roof, refined regency proportions, built in yellow brick with a Flemish bond. A two-storey block has been added to the southern end of the original building and a further later additional has now been converted into two residential dwellings under a previous planning permission.

Planning Background

The land to the north of the dwelling has been developed with 10no. residential dwellings, with the original access and the open space to the south and east of the main house being retained. To the south of the site, development is under way for a large housing site.

With regards to the main listed building itself, a previous permission granted approval for a change of use to office use (Class B1), but subsequently left vacant by the tenants. Since then a further application has been approved to convert the main house into 6 x 1no. bed apartments. This is currently being implemented.

Internally a high proportion of original features remain throughout such as fireplaces, windows, shutters, skirting boards and mouldings and have been incorporated into the most recent conversion.

Legislative and Policy Context

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires planning authorities, when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

National Planning Policy Framework

The revised NPPF (February 2019) sets out in Chapter 16, the core principles relating to development affecting Heritage Assets that local planning authorities should consider in making planning decisions in the following paragraphs:

184. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner

appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

189. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

190. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

191. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

192. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

193. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

194. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Historic England Advice

In addition to the advice laid out in the NPPF, Historic England has published planning advice in the form of Good Practice Advice Notes (GPA's) and Historic England Advice Notes (HEANs). Most relevant to this application will be GPA2 – Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment and GPA3 – Setting and Views.

GPA2 states at paragraph 4 - 'The significance of a heritage asset is the sum of its archaeological, architectural, historic, and artistic interest'. It also advises that an assessment of significance is required as part of the application process including the understanding of the nature of the significance, the extent of that significance and level of significance. Paragraph 11 states 'to accord with the NPPF, the application will need to undertake an assessment of significance to inform the application process an extent necessary to understand the potential impact (positive or negative) of the proposal and the level of thoroughness proportionate to the relative importance of the asset whose fabric or setting affected'.

GPA3; the Setting of Heritage Assets defines setting as "the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral".

GPA3 advises a broad approach to assessment, undertaken a series of steps that apply proportionately to the complexity of the case, from straightforward to complex;

Step 1 – identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected

Step 2 – Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset or allow significance to be appreciated.

Step 3 – Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether the beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it.

Step 4 – Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

Step 5 – Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

Local Planning Policies

Policy CS11 (Protecting and Enhancing the Special Environment and Heritage of Havant Borough) states that planning permission will be granted for development that:

"Protects and where appropriate enhances the borough's statutory and non-statutory heritage designations by appropriately managing development in or adjacent to conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, archaeological sites, buildings of local historic or architectural interest".

Policy CP16 (High Quality Design) (1a) of the Core Strategy states that "Planning permission will be granted for development that is designed to a high standard, which helps to create places where people want to live, work and relax. All development should demonstrate that its design:

Identifies and responds positively to existing features of natural, historic or local character within or close to the proposed development site".

Policy DM20 of the Allocations Plan states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that conserves and enhances the historic assets of Havant. It also states that application which affect, or have the potential to affect, heritage assets are expected to provide a Heritage Statement that:

1. Describe the significance of the asset and its setting, using appropriate expertise and where necessary original survey, at a level of detail proportionate to its significance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal.

2. Sets out the impact of the development on the heritage assets and mitigation that is proportionate to the impact and the significance of the heritage asset, including where possible positive opportunities to conserve and enjoy heritage assets.

Emerging Policy E13 from the Draft Local Plan 2036 provides similar advice to existing Policy CS11, but also adds that where harm cannot be avoided, mitigation may be proportionate to the impact and the significance of the heritage assets and fully incorporated into the development proposals.

Proposal

The proposal is for the provision of 5no. 1xbedroom retirement bungalows. These would be located in the existing open space to the east and south east of the listed building. They would be set out in a 'L' shape formation, with the front elevations facing towards the listed building. Each bungalow would have a private rear amenity space. Parking including 1no. space per unit would be located on what is currently the front landscaped area for Unit A and B which are attached to the main listed building and were built under a previous permission. The bungalows would be accessed via a path which would be delineated by planting. The bungalows are proposed to be constructed from brick and slate materials with wooden casement windows.

Assessment of significance

Both the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act and the NPPF attach significant importance to the conservation of historic assets and require decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their setting.

Contrary to advice laid out in the NPPF and Policy DM20 of the Local Plan (Allocations 2014), the application has been submitted without an adequate Heritage Statement, which should set out the significance of any designated heritage assets (including the setting) and how it is likely to be affected by the development. The submitted Design, Access and Heritage Statement does include a reference to the listing of Eastleigh House however, this only relates to its current description and a copy of its listing, which is not considered to be an adequately detailed assessment.

The Grade II listed building has a high level of significance being the only listed building on Bartons Road and within the immediate area before Southleigh House, which is located towards Horndean Road. Eastleigh House is accessed via a driveway which sweeps round to the front entrance. The house appears to have been part of a larger farmstead in the C18 which also included the listed barn now encompassed within the adjacent Garden Centre. The front elevation which is considered to be a Regency period addition fronts onto the farmland to the south. However, this is now being altered with the construction of new housing. The east elevation faces onto a sunken, more formal lawn area. The area to the north of Eastleigh House was previously part of the grounds and included a swimming pool and garage. However, this has now been subdivided for new housing which was not considered to adversely affect the significance of the main listed building.

Part of the analysis on the impact on setting, is to establish whether the setting of an affected heritage asset makes a contribution to its significance and the extent and/or nature of that contribution; both setting, and views which form part of the way a setting is experienced, may be assessed additionally for the degree to which they allow significance to be appreciated.

The remaining site is enclosed by extensive trees grouped along the west, south and east boundaries which gives the house and its setting a sense of privacy and tranquillity. The sweeping nature of the driveway gives a long view of the west elevation, which now includes two separate dwellings and the landscaped space in front of these. It then arrives at the front of the house (south elevation) with a pear drop formation to allow the frontage to be appreciated. The formal garden space to the front and east envelopes the main house to a good degree and allows views back towards the main house, with the lawn to the east being 'sunken'.

It is considered that whilst the listing focuses on the architectural merit of the property, the formalised open space about the building to the west and mainly south and east, contributes significantly to its setting. Whilst the site has been made significantly smaller due to the new housing to the north, it is not considered that this part of the site formed a key part of the buildings setting.

Assessment of the proposal

The proposed dwellings would be positioned directly within the formalised setting of the listed building (as described above). Three dwellings would face north with the other two facing towards the east elevation of the main house. They are proposed to be constructed of traditional materials (brick and tile) but other than this, there would be minimal architectural association with the style of the main listed building. Whilst they would be single storey in height, the location of the dwellings would eradicate a large degree of the formalised garden setting. It is therefore considered that the proposal would result in significant harm to the setting of the listed building which forms part of its significance. As the listed building itself does not form part of this application or proposed to be changed in anyway, the proposal would not result in the total loss of significance of the designated heritage asset and is therefore considered to result in less than substantial harm, as required by the NPPF. However, due to the significant harm caused, it is considered to be on the higher end of less than substantial harm.

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF advises that 'any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 196 advises that 'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

It is also worth noting that as the listed building is already subject to an extant approval for conversion to apartments and not considered to be at risk, there does not appear to be a viability / enabling development reason for this proposal.

Conclusion

Overall, is it considered the development would result in significant harm to the setting of the listed building which forms part of the significance of that building. The proposal therefore fails the test of Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires planning authorities, when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

However, as the harm is isolated to the setting of the heritage asset only, it is concluded the level of harm caused is ***less than substantial***.

As such, in line with the NPPF, paragraph 196 which states 'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset', it will be a matter for the planning application to determine how this harm weighs against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Recommended reason for refusal:

'The proposed development would be located within the immediate setting of a designated heritage asset (Eastleigh House), (the setting of which forms part of its significance) and it considered to result in significant harm to the setting. The application fails to assess the significance of this asset, including the contribution made by its setting and the impact that the proposed development will have on the significance of the designated heritage asset. It is therefore contrary to Policies CS11, DM20 and emerging Policy E13 and the NPPF.

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Senior Conservation Officer – 22/6/20