

Consultee Comments for Planning Application APP/15/01435

Application Summary

Application Number: APP/15/01435

Address: Land South of Bartons Road, Havant

Proposal: Outline application for residential development (175 dwellings) with associated infrastructure.

Case Officer: David Eaves

Consultee Details

Name: Mr John Heritage Team

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On Behalf Of: Conservation Officer

Comments

My observations relate specifically to the heritage interest which in this case is the statutory duty to safeguard the setting of heritage assets. The heritage asset in this case is Eastleigh House.

Eastleigh House is grade II listed. The principal building dates from c.1820 with what appears to be an earlier lower wing. The house is built in Regency style and is orientated with the principal entrance front and aspect facing south over what is currently open countryside and the subject of the current application.

BACKGROUND

The farmland immediately to the south is included as a housing allocation within the adopted allocations plan which forms part of the up to date local plan. The building currently benefits from spacious grounds with an open commanding view over the countryside. Developing the land south of Bartons Road, will inevitably impact on this setting. It will result in harm to the setting.

The Heritage Statement is archaeologically focused and is weaker when it comes to listed buildings. I concur the only listed building directly affected by the proposal, would be Eastleigh House; but not on the conclusions regarding setting. I feel the submitted Heritage Statement is partial in this regard and gives insufficient weight to the contribution the open farmland provides to the buildings setting. In particular I take issue with the following statements.

6.5.6 . Wider agricultural land less important (to the setting of Eastleigh House). - Disagree

6.5.8 Although the site in its present form is considered to contribute only in a minor way to the significance of the heritage asset (Disagree), any changes to the wider agricultural land and rural landscape setting of the house may potentially result in an adverse impact upon the setting.(Agree)

6.5.10 . The proposed provision of an area of open space immediately adjacent to this boundary, has the potential to enhance the setting of the house by evoking something of its former parkland setting.

The location of open space adjacent to the boundary could provide a degree of mitigation. In my view harm will still result and it is misleading to suggest the area of open land indicated would go so far as to enhance the present setting.

FACTORS WEIGHING IN FAVOUR OF THE PROPOSALS

The NPPF and associated guidance places great weight on the protection of the setting of historic assets. The objective should always be to avoid harm and if possible enhance and better reveal the significance of the listed building. This has been tested in the courts and decisions successfully challenged and overturned where due regard to the setting of historic assets has not been properly taken into account e.g Barnwell.

In determining applications a balance needs to be struck. The NPPF accepts that in certain circumstances where there are other compelling circumstances it may be necessary to accept a degree of harm, to fulfil other strategic planning objectives. One such factor could be the provision of housing and the social and economic benefits that arise from this. It is beholden on the local planning authority in allocating housing sites to have proper regard to constraints, such as trees, archaeology and other heritage assets in determining suitability and restrictions this may impose. The importance attached to safeguarding the setting of Eastleigh House has been identified as one of the constraints on this site.

THE PROPOSALS

The application includes an illustrative layout. Its focus is primarily to determine the overall housing numbers and means of access. All other matters are reserved.

It is impossible to maintain the present open setting and to develop the site for housing without having some detrimental impact on Eastleigh House. The objective must therefore be to mitigate the harm to an acceptable level. The provision of an area of open space immediately to the south of Eastleigh House is a useful starting point. It needs to be of a reasonable size and have a purpose. It needs to form an integrated part of the development, contributing to the visual quality of the new housing, as well as softening the environmental impact on Eastleigh House.

Although the layout is purely illustrative, it is the only solid information to comment on. I have the following observations to make based on this layout.

The area of land set aside in the illustrative proposals is considered to be the minimum necessary to go towards any kind of mitigation for impacting the open setting of the listed building.

It is unclear as to the intended building heights. I consider 2-storey dwellings with some possible

limited use of attic space to be appropriate here.

Utilising the existing pedestrian access to integrate with the surrounding development is sound and a positive attribute..

The way the proposed buildings (to the west of the footpath) address it, and provide natural surveillance of the new open space is positive. The building layout suggests flats. This land backs onto the present garden centre. I feel this can be achieved without detriment to the converted listed barn (aquatics centre) based on this land.

The design and use of the open space is important. I see it as an informal open space with the opportunity to include limited additional native tree planting which overtime will obtain some stature and in itself make a positive contribution to existing and new development. The inclusion of a LAP needs careful consideration as to its appropriateness and if and how it can be successful integrated.

The indicative flats on the eastern side of the proposed open space are more of a concern. It introduces car parking to the rear. An earlier iteration of the scheme showing housing with back gardens providing a more acceptable buffer was much better. It would have still achieved adequate surveillance. The change appears numbers driven, and the design has suffered as a consequence,

There is a reasonable landscape buffer separating the path from Eastleigh House. Any upgrading of the path needs to take this into account with care to prevent invasive light pollution for example.

CONCLUSION

The proposal will cause harm to the setting of Eastleigh House. The harm will be less than substantial, but still requires strong justification. Nether the Heritage Statement nor the Planning Statement really properly address this. I feel the Heritage Statement rather deliberately downplays the significance of the farmland to the listed buildings wider open setting.

To realise the agreed strategic housing allocation means that the open setting for Eastleigh House will inevitably be compromised. The justification for doing so would have to be based on the wider public benefit to be gained in meeting the Boroughs required strategic housing allocation in an area of high demand and limited capacity. In weighing this in the balance, the local planning authority must ensure the mitigation measures put in place are adequate to minimise the harm caused to an acceptable degree,

I feel the current illustrative layout goes along way to achieving this. If outline permission is granted, it will be essential when dealing with reserved matters that this is not watered down. I have provided some pointers as to the key heritage issues to be born going forward.

John Townsend
Conservation Consultant