

APPLICATION REF:2/2018/1124/OUT

LOCATION: Land N or Crown Road, Marnhull

PROPOSAL: develop land for 72 dwellings and new community facilities

CASE OFFICER: Penny Canning

CONSERVATION OFFICER Further COMMENTS ON AMENDMENTS

Previous comments from the former Conservation officer dealing with the case recommended support was unable to be forthcoming, due to heritage constraints and the resulting less-than-substantial harm caused by the development.

- Since then, a great number of revised layouts have been submitted and superceded over the past 18months the application has been live, with the present version being referenced "Rev L".
- It is noted that in this time a rebuttal has also been received, in terms of the former conservation comments made, which referred to the report statement, that the scheme resulted in the complete removal of the historic connection between the listed building, Laburnum Cottage, and the adjacent rural landscape, being an overstatement.

It has been established that the outlook from the public RofW criss-crossing the proposed site provides open unspoilt views of the pastoral rural scene with the listed building, forming part of an isolated historic group within the foreground, nestled at the base of the slope, and set against the distant hillside backdrop. The character of the area to the N & NE is one of pastures, between a network of very narrow historic lanes (Tanzy Lane and Sodom Lane being two) with scattered farmsteads. The natural green open fields provide separation between the built settlement of Marnhull and the satellite building groups, such as Stoneylawn, Corner Close and the historic New Inn Farm (an undesignated heritage asset). As identified in the submission, Marnhull, is of Saxon origins and a settlement of two halves, with buildings generally following the historic linear planform along Crown Road/New Road and Burton Street. The separation between the two routes is a defining factor of the village and its Conservation Areas, the later C20 infill development of Ashley Road being somewhat of a misnomer, which has not adhered to this topography.

In terms of heritage, the setting is described in Historic England guidance (Planning Note 3:Setting of Heritage Assets), as *that from which the building can be experienced*. Therefore, although the rebuttal indicates no direct historical association has been identified between the listed building and the proposed site, this is not relevant in terms of setting. The significance of the cottage can be fully experienced from many external viewpoints as well as from the various RofWs within the site and its historical development phasing, is in fact far better revealed from this approach than from the road, where the rather oblique view is mainly dominated by the modern roadside extension, and the single storey southern addition appears rather recessive, belying its historical importance.

Contrary to the historic appraisal submitted, the southern addition's interior, in fact evidences being that of an earlier house than the main listed building on the site, its two storey western elevation with its stone mullioned windows being of aesthetic, historical and evidential value.

At present the outlook from the western elevation of the Laburnum Cottage is one of green fields and natural sloping open hillside, with the hard perimeter line of the Ashley Road development incorporating mainly bungalows, a relatively distant feature with the natural environment the stronger feature of its surroundings. This direct, unrestricted connection between house and rural environs is part of the listed buildings' character, further exaggerated by the lack of curtilage to the west of the house, the building and its outward looking windows approx. no more than 1m from the unobstructed field edge.

The settlement of Marnhull is located on a hill, likely from which it takes its name and as such, the proposed site forms one of its slopes rising in a steady gradient from north to

south, toward the properties located along the main arterial route of Crown Road. Due to the gradient of the land, there are clear immediate views of the site from incoming routes to the north, (Nash Lane, Ashley Farm Lane), as well as sightlines to the upper areas of the site on the approach into the village along Sodom Lane. Although set at a distance from the Conservation Area, the open field forms a foil to both the listed Laburnum Cottage and the landmark Grade I church set at the top of the hill with the Conservation Area around it. The site is therefore considered to help both preserve the historical hillside context of the settlement and Conservation Area, as well as contributing positively to the setting of these key heritage assets.

There is also reference by Senior DC Archaeologist to the site having possible key archaeological potential contrary to suggestion, having yet to be investigated and with the finding of a historic burial barrow in the vicinity and seeks at least a condition should approval be forthcoming.

Revised Layout (L)

The scheme has now been reduced, which has enabled a greater separation of the proposed development from the western elevation of the listed Laburnum Cottage. The development immediately adjacent to the western edge of the field somewhat mirrors that existing, so having little impact on heritage whereas. In addition, an area with a more parkland character has been incorporated to the far NE corner, in recognition that the western aspect and outlook to this listed building is of far more significance than its in-turned views of its enclosed eastern garden, as suggested previously. However, the proposed housing (nos. 72 – 60) still remains within the heritage asset's direct sightlines, its overly suburban repetitive arrangement of relatively sizable detached dwellings set around a modern close, behind the roadside hedge, appears out of context and overly intrusive within the pastoral field setting of the listed building,

The proposed drainage area also remains located immediately adjacent to its curtilage despite previous and ongoing concerns as regards the threat to the heritage asset, given the drop in ground and lower floor level of the listed building, and mitigation measures to ground water not being easy to accomplish in the case of heritage assets, with an unresolved potential for detrimental impact to historic fabric and/or character.

As regards the remaining site, it is also acknowledged that attempts have also been made to try and preserve the existing natural character of the settlement slopes by maintaining a central open area of field site, however, due to the constraints of access which prevents the creation of separate development clusters with individual character, served by short access roads (ie: along the western edge and to the southern corners, the scheme has adopted a layout which relies on an excess of housing estate road snaking across the whole hillside site. This and its associated, standard suburban style, individual front driveway parking (much facing outwards) will be seen from the many N and NE viewpoints (potentially exacerbated at times by sunlight reflection off cars, further accentuating the over domestication of this pastoral setting and the existing character of the heritage asset's natural foil).

Access

This now appears to be centred on the junction of SE end of Tanzy Lane and Crown Road, which at present is without sightlines onto the main road and is stated on requiring redevelopment. Tanzy Road is an example of the existing historical lane network in the area with its high hedges and enclosed character, therefore the manner in which any approved works are undertaken here to meet requirements should be carefully conditioned to preserve the character of the approach into the settlement along Crown Road and that of the rural setting. In terms of ground surface finishes and its edges, hedgerows, engineering works.

Summary

it is acknowledged that incremental efforts have been made to revise the scheme, to address

the numerous constraints of the site, however, this has been a reactive approach rather than the proactive one that is advocated by the NPPF, in that any scheme should be guided by appropriate assessment with great weight being given to the conservation of heritage assets and their setting, whether designated or undesignated, and to development delivering a positive contribution, or better revealing the significance of those heritage assets. The development as a whole has failed to take reference from the existing grain of the settlement, the open vistas, the agrarian landscape and historic character of the area and the clusters of the more historic buildings to the Crown Road southern edge, in regards to design of its layout and built form. Instead it employs straight roads, replicated lines of modern semi-detached dwellings and segregated pockets of detached properties around urban closes.. It is acknowledged within the applicant's submission makes reference to the existing C20 development (Ashley Road) having not previously responded well to the local landscape setting and that the proposed development will constitute a high level of change due to its prominent slopes location, being seen clearly juxtaposed with the heritage assets, rather than having the recessive character required being set within what could be constituted a visual buffer zone, below the historic settlement and Conservation Area.

As such, the present development scheme does not preserve or enhance the setting and has not have successfully responded to the setting and is considered to constitute less-than-substantial harm to the significance and setting of heritage assets, which is not the same as acceptable harm. Despite some public benefit it is considered that alternative schemes have potential to offer less impact and as such, in this specific instance the harm is not sufficiently outweighed or justified.

RECOMMENDATION: Unable to support

POLICY CONSIDERATION

In determining the proposals due consideration has been given to Section 16 (Paragraphs 190,192,193,194,195,196,200) of the NPPF, Section(s) 66/72 of the 1990 Act and Policy 5 of the Local Plan

CONDITIONS

Should the officer deem to approve the scheme then please re-consult over conditions.

Informative

OFFICER: Jen Nixon

TITLE: Senior Conservation & Design Officer

DATE: 26.5.20