



Lichfield
District Council

SUMMARY HERITAGE PROOF OF EVIDENCE

(LDC/3)

(CD7.8)

By

Simon Roper-Pressdee

Conservation Officer (Consultant) for Lichfield District Council

APPEAL BY:

Marrons Planning on behalf of Summix BLT Developments Ltd.

AT:

Land North Of Browns Lane

Tamworth

Staffordshire

PLANNING INSPECTORATE REFERENCE: APP/K3415/W/24/3340089

LPA PLANNING APPEAL REFERENCE: 24/00004/REF

LPA ORIGINAL PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE: 18/00840/OUTMEI

1. Introduction

- 1.1. My name is Simon Roper-Pressdee BSc (Hons) PG Cert IHBC of Lichfield District Council. My qualifications and experience are set out in the preface to my main Proof of Evidence. I appear at this Inquiry on behalf of Lichfield District Council in support of their refusal of the Appeal Scheme APP/K3415/W/24/3340089 and with regard to the impact of the Appeal Scheme on the significance of surrounding heritage assets. As such, I am responding to one Reason for Refusal (**Reason for Refusal 2**), relevant to my expertise. My assessment is based on a professional assessment of the Appeal Proposals, having regard to relevant legislation, policy, guidance and best practice, as set out in Section 4 of my Proof of Evidence and contained within the Core Documents (CD6.3). The opinions expressed herein are my professional opinions.
- 1.2. This Proof of Evidence has been written to address the impact of the development on relevant designated heritage assets, and in particular whether the proposals will cause any harm to the significance of the Wiggington Conservation Area.
- 1.3. At Section 4 of my Proof, I provide a detailed synopsis of relevant statutory provisions and relevant case-law as it pertains to understanding the legal and policy requirements for assessing the potential impact of proposed development on the significance of heritage assets, extracts of which are contained within the Core Documents (CD8.3)
- 1.4. Within my Proof, at Section 6, I provide a history of the Appeal Site, resulting from research and analysis of historic data, including historic mapping and historic landscape characterisation, which in turn are included in Appendices E and F respectively of my Proof of Evidence.
- 1.5. Section 7 of my Proof of Evidence provides a detailed assessment of the significance and setting of each of the identified heritage assets, together with an assessment of the impact of the Appeal Proposals on such significance and setting.
- 1.6. Section 8 of my Proof of Evidence sets out the Council's case relating to heritage as well as providing an assessment of the Appellants submitted Heritage Assessment, whilst Section 9 concludes my Proof of Evidence.

2. Summary of LDC's Case relating to Heritage

- 2.1. My Proof contains a detailed assessment of the significance of relevant heritage assets and has been undertaken following the Historic England guidance set out in its *Good Practice Advice Note 3 (GPA3): The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Ed.)*, as well as identifying the elements which make up significance, as set out in English Heritage's *Conservation Principles, Policy & Guidance: Aesthetic, Historic (illustrative); Historic (associative); Communal; and Evidential*.
- 2.2. The Wiggington Conservation Area has considerable historic illustrative and aesthetic values, through the Anglo-Saxon origins, the range of building types and their positions within the landscape. The setting of this designated heritage asset is that of the surrounding open countryside. The presence of an historic footpath across the Appeal Site, leading from south of the Appeal Site to Syerscote Lane, provides an important kinetic experience on the approach to and from the Conservation Area, ensuring that the rural setting of the assets can be readily experienced. In addition, the surrounding rural and agricultural landscape, including that formed by the Appeal Site, make an important contribution to the heritage values of the Conservation Area, as an historic rural and agriculturally-focused settlement.
- 2.3. The impact of the Appeal Site on the significance of the Wiggington Conservation Area will remove a large tract of this rural landscape and will impinge on an important element of setting of this designated asset, resulting in a degree of less than substantial harm, at the moderate end of the spectrum.
- 2.4. The Appeal Scheme will result in the introduction of new built form, together with increased light pollution and increased traffic, thereby harming its significance as a rural settlement.
- 2.5. Considering the identified harm, and giving great weight to such harm, that there is a requirement for sufficient public benefits to outweigh the totality of this harm. No heritage benefits have been identified which may be given equal weight to this harm.
- 2.6. As such, the Appeal Scheme is non-compliant with national policy and guidance, and with the relevant Policies of the Lichfield District Local Plan documents, the Historic Environment SPD and the Wiggington, Hopwas and Comberford Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.7. Two Heritage Assessments were submitted, with the first identifying that the identified harm should be given great weight, although the amended Heritage Statement removed all references to this and therefore presented an inaccurate assessment of impact. This latter report was used for the Appellant's balancing exercise, where no titled balancing exercise was undertaken – contrarily, the Appellant's Statement of Case

specifically affords a variety of weights to their identified public benefits, but again fails to afford great weight (or no weight) to the identified harm, thereby again failing to undertake the required tilted balance as required by Section 16 of the NPPF.

- 2.8. The Inspector is therefore respectfully asked to consider that the reasons pertinent to heritage provided in Reason for Refusal 2 are legitimate and that the Appeal Proposals be refused.