

PL/2025/09486

Site: Land South of Trowbridge

Proposal: Reserved Matters Application for a) The scale of the development; b) The layout of the development; c) The access road and the 'foot-cycleway' connecting the housing with the A361: including kerbing, any cutting/embankment/retaining structures, camber, surfacing, drainage and the stream crossing; d) The external appearance of the development; e) The landscaping of the site following outline planning consent 20/00379/OUT

Officer: Jemma Foster

Comments by: Helen Garside, Principal Conservation Officer.

Scope of comments: The following comments relate to the conservation of the built historic environment. Other issues, such as those relating to the impact on the wider landscape in general and to below ground archaeological deposits will be subject to consideration by other colleagues within the Council whose specific disciplines relate more closely to these issues.

National Policy and guidance: From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 66 (PP) requires that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Section 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. Paragraphs 214-16 of the NPPF require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved. Paragraph 210 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Additional relevant guidance is provided within Historic England's document "The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3" (HE GPA3) which notes that "The importance [of setting] lies in what the setting contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance."

Local Policy: The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that "designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance."

Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy Policy CP57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping': A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.

Details submitted: the submission seeks approval in relation to reserved matters including scale, layout, access, appearance and landscaping pursuant to the outline approval 20/00379/OUT for up to 180 houses.

Relevant planning history/planning context:

20/00379/OUT - Outline planning permission with all matters reserved except access for the erection of up to 180 residential dwellings and associated infrastructure (allowed on appeal).

The site is allocated for housing within the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan 2020. Policy H2.6 – Land at Southwick Court notes that the site is allocated for development comprising “approximately 180 dwellings (in a sensitive design and layout, which ensures the significance of heritage assets and their settings are not subject to unacceptable harm); a sensitively designed vehicular access from the A361 and road across the site that minimises intrusion within the historic landscape.”

Site: the site is located just beyond the southern extent of the built up area of Trowbridge which coincides on the western side of the site with the well treed route of the Lambrok stream. The interface with the post war development which constitutes the edge of Trowbridge to the eastern side of the site is marked by a drainage ditch and line of mature trees and vegetation.

The site is in agricultural use for pasture. To the immediate south of the centre of the site is Southwick Court Farmhouse, a late-16th, early-17th century farmhouse and moated manorial site, the moat being fed by the Lambrok. Slightly further to the south lies modern development at the edge of Southwick village and a significant area occupied by a solar farm.

The site area itself is not included within a designated conservation area and contains no major standing heritage. However, the Southwick Farm complex which lies immediately to the south of the centre of the site is a sensitive historic site which includes the Grade II* listed farmhouse, gatehouse and bridge. The farmhouse dates from the late C16th/early C17th, whilst the bridge is thought to date from the late 15th century. Both incorporate earlier work and the complex is thought to be built upon the site of moated manor house recorded as being in the ownership of the de Grenville family from the C13th.

Issues: impact on the setting of the Southwick Court grouping of listed and non-designated assets.

Assessment: the details fall to be assessed against the established context of a housing site allocation with outline approval for up to 180 houses. It is implicit in both the initial allocation and outline approval that some harm will result to the Southwick Court assets but that these will be offset by an appropriate level of public benefit resulting from the provision of required housing. The outline approval was allowed at appeal and the Inspector gave detailed consideration to the impact of the development via various illustrative materials including a housing and access layout showing indicative landscaping, description of the road type and an illustrative view of the bridge which would be required to cross the Lambrock stream.

The current details propose that the Lambrok stream be culverted under a raised section of road rather than a traditional bridge arrangement. The embankment sides are proposed to be constructed using a green wall system, with only a narrow concrete portal to each of the culvert openings. The balustrade is limited to the minimum required and in line with the simple post and rail fencing proposed alongside the access from the site entrance. Overall, the impact of the structure within the landscape will be no greater (and arguably potentially slightly less) than the illustrative views of the possible bridge crossing viewed by the Inspector at appeal. The level of harm which would result from the introduction of the crossing within the agricultural landscape which forms part of the setting of the Southwick Court group and which contributes to its setting would therefore be no greater than anticipated by the Inspector in reaching his planning balance. Details should be provided to secure the monitoring and maintenance required to ensure the appropriate establishment of the green wall system.

Similarly, the details of the access road, housing layout and landscaping are broadly in line with the illustrative materials submitted at outline stage in so far as they impact on the

landscape and with the harms considered by the Inspector. I would expect to defer to my colleagues in the Council's highways, urban design and landscaping specialisms in respect for the details on these matters.

Conclusion: subject to securing the monitoring and maintenance of the green wall system to ensure its effectiveness, the impacts on heritage assets which will result from development in accordance with the proposed details will be broadly in line with those anticipated and implicit within the initial allocation of the site and approval of the outline consent. I therefore have no objection on the ground of the built historic environment.