

LAND EAST OF BALL ROAD, PEWSEY, WILTSHIRE

Heritage Statement



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LAND EAST OF BALL ROAD, PEWSEY, WILTSHIRE

Heritage Statement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The owner of an area of land to the east of Ball Road, Pewsey is seeking Permission in Principle to build three detached houses, plans for which have been prepared by Fowler Architecture & Planning. The land lies within the Pewsey Conservation Area and the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. The site is currently part of a pasture paddock with a hedged boundary to Ball Road, the areas of proposed development lying to the south of No. 19 Ball Road (Plot 1) and south-east of Nos. 27 and 29 Ball Road (Plots 2 and 3).

1.2 Forum Heritage Services has been commissioned to make an assessment of the heritage significance of the conservation area and the contribution of the land along Ball Road to that significance, and consider that impact of the proposals upon that significance and to prepare a Heritage Statement in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Bob Edwards BSc (Hons) PG Dip. IHBC MCIfA, Director of Forum Heritage Services, visited the property in December 2025 and subsequently prepared this report.

1.3 This report will present:

- A brief background history to the site
- A description of Ball Road with a focus on the land to the east of the lane, and the settings of any nearby listed buildings
- Policy and guidance background
- An assessment of the significance of the conservation area following Historic England's *Statements of Heritage Significance Assessing Significance in Heritage Assets* (Historic England Advice Note 12, 2019)
- An assessment of the potential impact of the proposals upon the significance of the conservation area and listed buildings through change within their settings
- Conclusions

2.0

BACKGROUND



2.1 The Pewsey Tithe map of c.1840 shows Ball Road with houses irregularly spaced along the west side of the lane, and with a farmstead including a relatively large U-plan farmstead to the east side of the lane just north of the proposed development site (Figure 1). A small, non-domestic building stood on the edge of the lane where Nos. 27 and 29 now stand.



2.2 The Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" map of 1887 shows relatively little change on the east side of Ball Road apart from the construction of Nos. 27 and 29. The farmstead group remained with only perhaps minor modification to the south range of the farm buildings group. Several additional houses had been constructed in the period from 1840 along the central part of the lane on its western side.

2.3

There had been no significant change to the proposed development site or the general character of Ball Road by the mid-20th century. In the later 20th century the farmstead on the east side of the lane was demolished, and the site of the farm buildings was developed for housing. The development of St John's Close to the east of Ball Road introduced a modern suburban character to the area north of the proposed development site as seen in views from the east. Development to the rear of The Cooper's Arms has also brought built form some distance away from the street frontage.

- 2.4 To the south of the proposed development site is a public house, The Cooper's Arms, which was added to the *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest* at Grade II in 1986. The building is described in the *List* as:

Inn. C17, timber framed and whitewashed. Brick front. Thatched roof. Two storeys. Two bays, extended right beyond main stack as single storey off-license sales shop. Central 6-panelled door. Timber casement windows. Gable stacks. Roof half hipped. Interior has large fireplace in right gable with timber fire lintel, and formerly with brick oven. Chamfered stopped spine beams.

- 2.5 On the west side of Ball Road to the north-west of the site are Nos. 22 and 24 Ball Road which are also Grade II listed, and described as:

House, and cottage in extension. C17. Timber framed on brick sill walls, rendered panels. Thatched roof. Single storey and attic, raised to 2 storeys. Somerset House is of 3 bays with 6-panelled and fielded door in left bay under a thatched porch. Right bay rebuilt in brick. False timbering to front elevation. No 24 is of 1 bay, brick and framing, single storey and attic, being formerly an extension of No 22. C20 casement windows. Roof has heavy purlins and stacks between bays 2 and 3, and on right of No 24.

- 2.6 The Pewsey Conservation Area was designated in 1985 and was the subject of a conservation area appraisal and management plan prepared by the then Kennet District Council in 2007.

- 2.7 There have been previous proposals for the development of the land east of Ball Road including a proposal for seven houses within the area between the Cooper's Arms and No. 19 Ball Road, and two proposals for four houses within the southern part of the field adjacent to the Cooper's Arms:

2013 Erection of 7 no. dwellings; with associated parking, turning, landscaping, the creation of a new vehicular access point, the provision of a community orchard, a footpath link, and an extension to the curtilage of No. 29 Ball Road (13/02770/FUL) Withdrawn

2014 Erection of 4 no. dwellings; with associated parking, turning, landscaping, the creation of a new vehicular access point, and an extension to the curtilage of No. 29 Ball Road (14/01661/FUL) Refused

2014 Erection of 4 no. dwellings; with associated parking, turning, landscaping, the creation of a new vehicular access point, and an extension to the curtilage of No. 29 Ball Road (14/08324/FUL) Refused on appeal.

3.0 DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The description of the site and its environs within the Pewsey Conservation Area will take the form of a series of captioned photographs, the location of which are marked on Figure 3.
- 3.2 Ball Road lies to the east of the centre of Pewsey, running approximately north – south from the small settlement at Ball Corner to the north to a further small cluster of settlement at King's Corner to the south from where the lane swings to the south-east towards Southcott and is called Southcott Road. Once peripheral settlement foci separate from Pewsey, these areas of historic settlement have been subsumed within the recognised bounds of Pewsey Village.

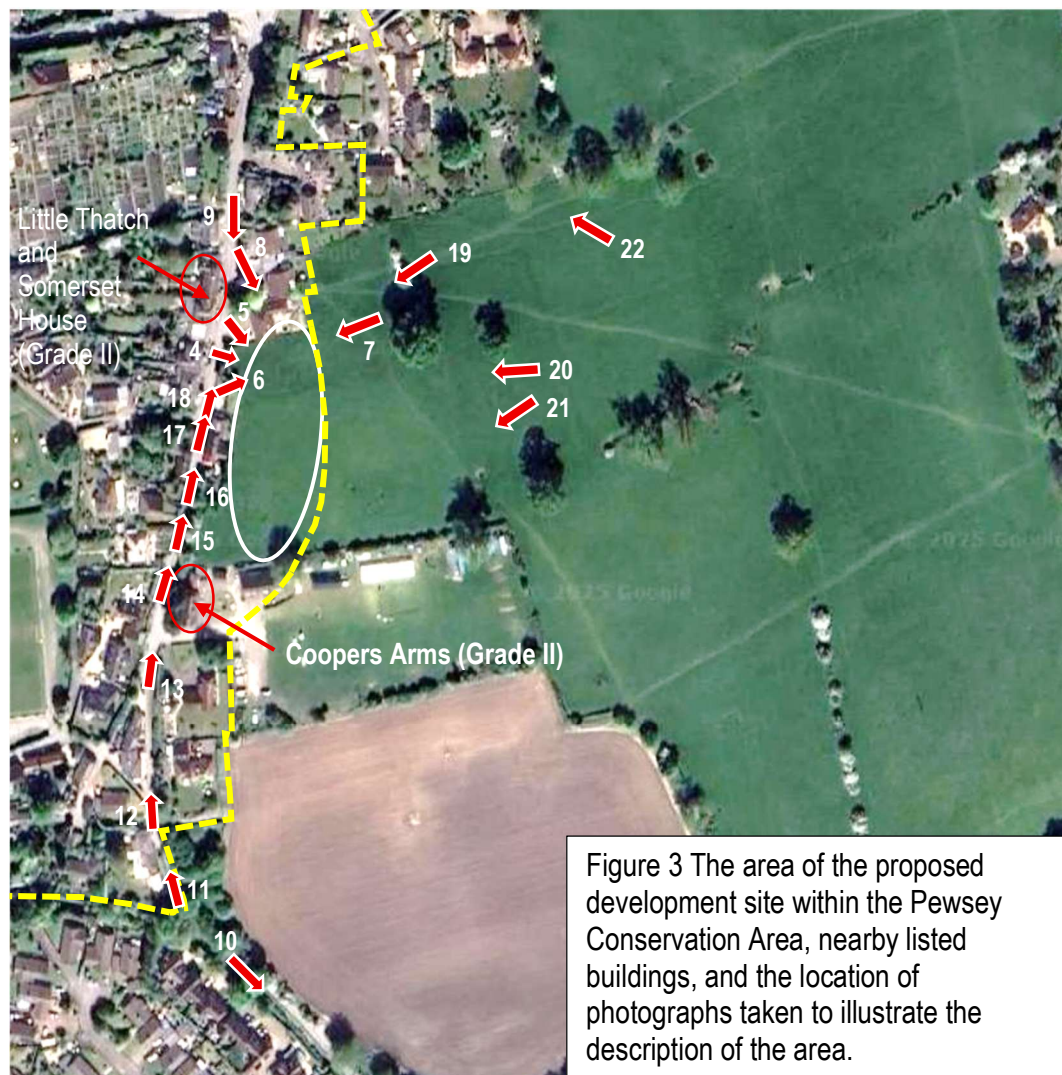




Figure 4 The proposed development site from the immediately adjacent section of Ball Road, looking east.



Figure 5 There is a short area of Ball Road opposite No. 19 from where a relatively open view into the proposed development site can be obtained. From here the lower ground of the northern part of the site has a short scarp slope up to the higher area of the field to the south.



Figure 6 Approaching the site from the south, the substantial hedge and bank to the east of Ball Road, followed by Nos. 27 and 29 prevent views into the landscape to the east and the proposed development site. Moving past Nos. 27 and 29, the site is partly screened by close-boarded fencing to the parking and garden area in which there is a timber clad shed.



Figure 7 The proposed development site as seen from within the field to the east of the site. The area can be seen to be slightly sunken from the rest of the field, possibly relating to the former farmstead area that lay to the north, where there are now modern houses including No. 19, to the right of the picture. The double gable end of No. 27 is prominent to the left with 19th century houses on the west side of Ball Road opposite the site, partly screened by small trees and shrubs.



Figure 8 To the north of the proposed development site are three late 20th century bungalows, set back from the street frontage and creating a highly suburban character to the northern part of the lane.



Figure 9 The view looking south along Ball Road towards the proposed development site with the timber-framed Grade II listed Little Thatch and Somerset House to the right. Through the small gap at the entrance to No. 19 the ridge of a modern building associated with The Cooper's Arms can just be seen in the distance and behind No. 27 and 29.

3.3

It has been identified that Ball Road makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area and so the following pictures present a

sequence of photographs of the road, commencing from the south, where the road is called Southcott Road, and moving northwards towards the proposed development site.



Figure 10 Southcott Road runs alongside a small stream and has a wooded boundary along its eastern side, the land to the east of road being only marginally higher than the road.



Figure 11 Approaching Kings Corner where the lane becomes Ball Road, there are houses at street level to the west but there is now a notable change in ground level to the east side of the road.



Figure 12 Moving northwards through Kings Corner the lane is set approximately 2 m below the higher ground level to the east, the steep bank together with the hard boundary along the west side of the lane creating a strong sense of enclosure to the lane.



Figure 13 Moving towards The Cooper's Arms and moving out of the core of the small area of settlement at Kings Corner, there is a hedge set upon a bank to the west of the lane whilst to the east the bank has been cut away to provide the access to the car park of the public house and the modern house No 41. The vernacular character of the Grade II listed Cooper's Arms with its thatched roof and rendered walls maintains the rural character of this section lane.



Figure 14 From opposite The Cooper's Arms the lane to the north has grass banks to both sides but the character, particularly to the west side of the lane is less rural due to the domestic edging, trimmed grass and domestic paraphernalia including trellis fencing and garden buildings. The section of hedge to the east of the lane however remains rural in character and there remains a strong sense of enclosure and being within a sunken lane.



Figure 15 As the lane begins to climb at a gentle gradient between the public house and Nos. 27 and 29 the road appears markedly less sunken on its eastern side, the change in height being concealed by the substantial hedge which maintains the enclosure to the lane. The latter section of this hedge is of leylandii.



Figure 16 As the lane approaches No. 27 and 29 to the right and No.44 to the left, it is more evident that the road is entering into an area of settlement, and here the sense of enclosure to the lane is derived from the presence of buildings set close to the street frontage rather than by banks and hedges.



Figure 17 To the west of No. 27 and 29, Ball Road becomes increasingly suburban, the lane being slightly wider here allowing car parking to one side and the property plots being bounded by fences and brick walls.



Figure 18 Moving north beyond the parking area of No. 27 there is a further section of bank, lower than the section to the south of No. 27 and 29, topped by a relatively thin hedge to the east, but to the west there are houses set close to the frontage and parked cars are a major feature of the character of the street.

- 3.4 A public footpath leads eastwards from Ball Road, the path running along the north boundary of No. 19, heading east. The path turns to the south to run along a field boundary, these public rights of way allowing views back to the settlement at Ball.



Figure 19 From the west – east path there are views across the relatively level field back towards Ball Road in which the relatively fully built-up frontage on the west side of the road and No. 19, 27 and 29 are all visible. The extent of housing that is visible in the views back towards the settlement from the footpath do not give any impression of there being a notable

gap between the area of settlement at Ball and that at Kings Corner lower down the slope and largely hidden from view.



Figure 20 This view is taken from the area of the field to the east of the proposed development site from slightly further south of the position in Figure 19 looking west, and reflects the views from the north – south section of the public footpath.



Figure 21 From the public footpath looking to the south-west across the field the thatched roof of The Cooper's Arms can be seen rising above various single-storey additions and ancillary buildings. The listed building is seen in association with a large half-hipped roofed building to the rear, and is seen in the context of other houses on the west side of Ball Road.



Figure 22 From the field east of Ball Road, looking north from the west – east footpath the view is towards the rear of modern housing set around the cul-de-sac St John's Close which lies outside of the conservation area. This modern development is relatively prominent in landscape terms when looking towards Pewsey from the public footpaths.

4.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the statutory approach to the management of historic buildings and areas and requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses, and its setting, under Section 66 – a matter the Courts have held should be afforded considerable importance and weight. Section 72, relating to Conservation Areas requires that ‘special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’.
- 4.2 The statutory approach is reflected in Policy CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted January 2015 (CS) and Policy 99 of the Draft Local Plan Review: Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment which has ‘weight’ following submission to the Secretary of State in late October 2024.
- 4.3 Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) states that:
- 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.*
- 4.4 Paragraph 212 advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation whilst para. 208 states that 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 assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 4.5 Historic England’s *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2* (March 2015) states that understanding the nature of significance is important for understanding the need for and

best means of conservation. Understanding the extent of that significance leads to a better understanding of how adaptable a heritage asset may be and provides the essential guide as to how policies should be applied.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designations

- 5.1 The Pewsey Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest and is a designated heritage asset.
- 5.2 There are two Grade II listed buildings near the proposed development site: The Cooper's Arms to the south and Nos. 22 and 24 Ball Road on the west side of the road to the north-west of the site.

Assessment of Significance

- 5.3 In 2007 a conservation area appraisal to identify and describe the character and significance of the conservation area was undertaken which identified various sub-areas or character areas within the conservation area including the area from Ball to Kings Corner. The appraisal document sets out an assessment of the character of this area (with the particularly relevant sections of text in terms of this report highlighted):

'Ball Road is an ancient narrow, sunken, lane linking the outlying settlements of Ball and Kings Corner. To the south the lane continues on to Southcott. At the eastern end of the High Street, at the edge of the village, the former hamlet of Ball still retains a certain sense of separation from the main village. At the road junctions, the cast iron direction post relocated from the space now occupied by Alfred's statue, forms a focal point. The buildings are set above and back from the level of the road junction, elevating the impression of their simple two storey and attic forms. The continuity of ridges gives a sense of uniformity of skyline, especially between the cottages on either side of Ball Road. When viewed from the High Street, the projecting cruck framed wing which forms No.1 Ball, and gable end of Ball House produce a definite stop to the eye. Because of their 'vista end' and route junction location, nodal points such as Ball junction and Kings corner play an enhanced part in the visual perception of Pewsey, beyond their actual size. At Ball, the modern developments off Hollybush Lane and at St John's Close clearly differ from the compact, linear grouping of the thatched cottages which typify this former hamlet and are excluded from the conservation area.

Although the terraced housing making up Wilderness Row, and other buildings at Kings Corner are densely packed together their unit size, total number and virtual encirclement by open land bestows a rural, rather than suburban or urban character to this identifiable part of the Conservation Area. Here, as at Ball, the distinction with the nearby modern estates, which are excluded from the designation, is clear. The modern estate developments of Swan Meadow and Tinkers Mead are separated and screened by the natural buffer of the River Avon and Hurley Lake from the historic centre of the settlement, and from the groups of more traditional buildings at Swan and Kings Corner.

Between the two key junctions a number of important groups of historic road edge properties along Ball Road emphasise the enclosed nature of the route. Open agricultural land to the east of the lane is largely hidden from view within the lane. Although the driveways of more recent developments have occasionally interrupted the bordering banks and hedges, the intimate atmosphere of this narrow sunken lane has survived for most of its length. Care should be taken to ensure that any further development along the lane, including that in land immediately beyond the conservation area boundary, provides for the retention of the remaining banks and hedges without interruption. The dismissal of a recent appeal has endorsed this view. Away from the main route, the lower levels of traffic have allowed the back lanes to retain a tranquil, almost rural, character accentuated by the soft verges and roadside banks and hedges. The absence of formal kerbs and separate footways in the area is a key factor in defining the special character of the public realm.'

- 5.4 In addition to the two listed buildings that stand near the proposed development site, the appraisal identifies other, non-designated buildings that also contribute to the significance of the conservation area. Included in these are Nos. 27 and 29, Nos. 30 – 38 and No. 44 on the west side of Ball Road opposite the proposed development site.
- 5.5 The character of Ball Road is not consistent along its length. At the northern end, the road is closely built-up with buildings of various dates including late 20th century bungalows set back from the street frontage which is at odds with the historic character of development along the road. Whilst the gap between Ball and Kings Corner has been cited as an important aspect of the character of this area, in reality, there is no break in development on the western side of the road – it is just that the houses closer to King Corner, opposite

The Cooper's Arms, are set on higher ground behind hedges with a grass bank down to the road which creates a different character than in the northern part of the road.

- 5.6 The importance of the character of the road as a sunken lane is also identified. Whilst the sunken character of the road, with the banks and hedges rising up either side is undoubtedly an important characteristic, this is not a character that relates to the full length of the road. The sunken character commences at the curve in the lane where Ball Road becomes Southcott Road and effectively ends near Nos. 27 and 29 at which point the lane begins to level out after climbing from Kings Corner. The section of lane between Nos 27 and 29 and The Cooper's Arms is of particular significance in terms of its contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 5.7 From Nos. 27 and 29 moving northwards, the character is one of a built-up settlement along a narrow (but slightly wider) lane that is now dominated by parked cars that convey a suburban feel to this section of the road. As noted in the conservation area appraisal document, *'Open agricultural land to the east of the lane is largely hidden from view within the lane'* and there are no significant views out to the landscape to the east across the proposed development site, even though there is a gap at the entrance to No.19.
- 5.8 The Cooper's Arms public house, a Grade II listed building stands to the east side of Ball Road near Kings Corner. This building makes a strong contribution to the character of the area as an example of the local vernacular of its thatched roof and rendered walls. The important aspect of the setting of this building is its relationship to Ball Road, and its association with the area of settlement at Kings Corner. The parking area to the rear and ancillary buildings are at best neutral in terms of the importance of setting as this area is of minimal aesthetic quality. The field to the north provides a gap between the Kings Corner area and the settlement area of Ball. However, in terms of experiencing the listed building, whilst its thatched roof is visible from the public footpaths, the ability to appreciate the significance of the listed building is limited.
- 5.9 Little Thatch and Somerset House are Grade II listed. Somerset House is a 17th century timber-framed house with a thatched roof with Little Thatch being a later addition of brick laid in Flemish bond using burnt headers. The importance of the setting of these buildings relates to their grouping within the settlement of Ball, reflecting the historic origins of this

area of development. These houses are primarily experienced from Ball Road, and there is little opportunity to experience them from beyond the northern section of Ball Road. From the west – east public footpath the thatched roof and a small section of timber-framing can be seen over and between the modern bungalows, but other than its presence, little of the importance of the building can be appreciated from this path.

5.10 Nos. 27 and 29 Ball Road appear to sit in a narrow strip of roadside waste characteristic of squatter development. The earlier part of Nos. 27 and 29 has a vernacular character, largely due to its thatched roof but the walling is largely modern brick, and the element may be considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The northern part of No. 27 presents a double gable to the north and has rendered walls and slate roof. Although of traditional form, this part of the property does not have the level of historic character as No. 29 and is considered to be a neutral element of the conservation area.

5.11 On the west side of Ball Road, opposite the proposed development site are Nos. 30 – 38 and No. 44 Ball Road. These houses are of various forms, with Nos. 30 and 32 being a pair of red brick cottages with a pyramidal hipped slate roof and central stack of mid-19th century date which make a clearly positive contribution to the conservation area. Nos. 34 – 38 are later 19th century houses, with rendered or brick elevations and slate roofs, with No. 38 having a conservatory addition on its Ball Road elevation as this house faces onto Easterton Lane. Only one of the three, No. 38, retains possible historic windows and this house makes a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area whilst Nos 34 and 36 have ‘modernised’ elevations and are of less significance, and may be regarded as neutral elements in the conservation area. No. 44 is a 1½ storey cottage with rendered walls with some elements of timber-framing exposed and a thatched roof close to the roadside, and partly faces No. 29, the vehicular access to this property and the leylandii hedge. As a traditional cottage that appears to have possible 17th century origins, No. 44 clearly makes a positive contribution to the character and interest of the conservation area. The importance of the settings of these buildings is their relationship to Ball Road from where the houses are primarily experienced and their significance can be understood and appreciated.

5.12 The conservation area appraisal identifies 'views' that are regarded as being significant. Along Ball Road such 'views' are shown looking south along the road from the northern part of the road, and looking north along the road from adjacent to The Cooper's Arms. These are not really views of particular value or importance – they are simply sightlines along the road. There are no views of importance looking into or through the proposed development site or the landscape beyond, as noted in the conservation area appraisal.

6.0 PROPOSALS & ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

- 6.1 It is proposed to build three detached houses with garages within the field to the east of Ball Road: Plot 1 in the northern part of the field adjacent to No. 19 Ball Road with the vehicular access from Ball Road adjoining the entrance to No. 19, and Plots 2 and 3 in the southern part of the field south-east of Nos. 27 and 29 Ball Road, a new access being formed through widening the existing vehicular entrance to No. 29 by c.2.0m, removing a section of the leylandii hedge (Figure 23). As Permission in Principle is being sought, there is no detail as to the exact form, size, detail or materials of the proposed houses.

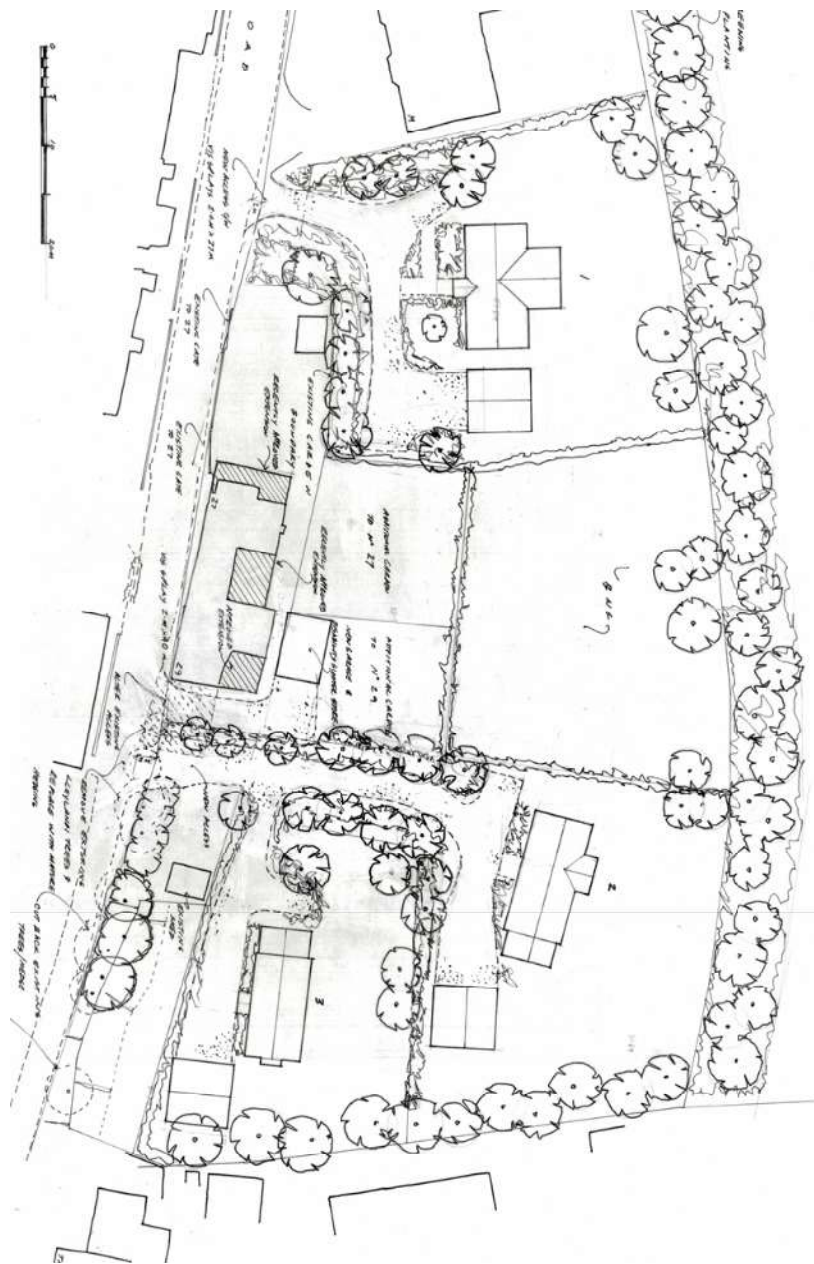


Figure 23 Proposed site plan.

6.2 Any proposal for development on this site must take regard of the reasons for the refusal of the appeal submitted following the second application for four houses made in 2014. The principal areas of harm that were identified were:

- The removal of a large section of bank and hedge to the east side of Ball Road to provide the access to the development
- The cul-de-sac form of the development which would be counter to the character of roadside buildings along Ball Road
- The scale of development into an undeveloped parcel of land which would be visually prominent in views from the surrounding landscape and the urbanizing effect on the rural setting of the conservation area.

6.3 There is no question that the entrance to the development as proposed in 2014 would have had a serious and harmful impact on the character of Ball Road, removing possibly the best section of bank and hedge that makes a major contribution to the sunken, rural character of that section of the lane. The 2015 appeal decision stated:

The CACAMP states that although the driveways of more recent developments have occasionally interrupted the bordering banks and hedges, the intimate atmosphere of this narrow sunken lane has survived for most of its length. A significant portion of this would be replaced with an access road and grassy banks which would be required in part to provide visibility splays to accompany the new access.

It is considered that the harm that would have arisen from this new opening alone was sufficient to merit a refusal.

6.4 To address the potential impact on the importance of the sunken lane character, two new access points are now proposed. The house to the north will be served by an entrance adjacent to the access to the modern bungalow at No. 19, within an area that is of clear suburban character and where the lane does not have the important sunken character. There are no views of importance from within the conservation area which will be impacted by the proposed development. Whilst the development will be visible through the new access, the current view to the landscape is not of high value – it is to a field where little

more than the scarp of the change in level between the lower northern part of the site and the rest of the level field can be seen, and little of the landscape beyond can be seen.

- 6.5 The second new access is to be formed will widen the existing access to No. 29 by c.2.0m where there is only a relatively minor change in level from the road to the plot behind the hedge (c. 0.50m) so there will be no impact on the significant section of the sunken lane to the south (Figure 24). A new hedge will be planted perpendicular to the road between the two drives serving No. 29 and the proposed development so as to create two smaller openings rather than one wide gap in the frontage. The creation of the new access will involve the removal of the leylandii on the boundary, the section beyond the enlarged opening being replanted with native species hedging. It is possible that the leylandii closes a once wider access into the property, based on a Highways map which shows a larger opening at this point. The presence of a collapsed wall in this area also suggests that there was a larger opening than is currently the case. It is considered that amending the existing access where there is no significant bank or hedgerow creating the important sunken lane character, means that this minor change will not harm the general character and appearance of this part of the conservation area, and any harm identified will be at the lowest end of less than substantial. Given the presence of the existing vehicular access to No. 29 opposite No. 44, it is considered that the alteration of the access will not impact negatively upon the setting of No. 44 to the west side of Ball Road. The proposal also allows for enhanced parking for No. 29, moving parked cars further from the street and also removing untidy sheds which represents positive changes to the appearance of the conservation area. The replacement of the leylandii is a positive change for the character and appearance of this section of Ball Road.



Figure 24 The view south along Ball Road adjacent to Nos. 27 and 29 on the left. The proposed opening will remove the leylandii beyond No. 29 which will partly be replaced by native species hedging. At this point there is only a slight bank to the roadside.

- 6.6 The proposed development is for three houses, one to the north and two to the south. The lower scale of development than previously submitted, and the informal character of the entrances will mean that the development does not have a 'cul-de-sac' character, and so will not appear overtly suburban. It is considered that the proposed approach overcomes the objection relating to the cul-de-sac form of development.
- 6.7 To address the objections relating to the scale and impact of development, the scheme has been reduced to three houses which are not grouped together in a block, there being a large open area between the northern and southern parts of the site. It is considered that the single northern house having some visibility from Ball Road will not result in harm to the overall character of the conservation area. Whilst the area to the east of Ball Road is a largely undeveloped field, it has very limited visibility from Ball Road itself and does not provide an important visual relationship with the adjacent agricultural landscape. With appropriate landscaping the presence of a new house in the area adjacent to No. 19 will not result in harm to the designated heritage asset and may also be considered to offer an opportunity to 'soften' the rather stark appearance of No. 19 as seen from the east where the built form abuts the property boundary, so representing an aesthetic improvement to this aspect of the conservation area.

6.8 The two houses to the southern part of the field will be substantially screened from view from Ball Road by the existing hedge along the bank on the east side of the road. Again, it is considered that minor glimpsed views to houses of appropriate design and materials will not result in harm to the designated heritage asset.

6.9 Previous refusals have partly relied on the argument that the land to the east of Ball Road is an important element contributing to the rural character of this part of Pewsey Conservation Area – even though the conservation area appraisal states:

‘Open agricultural land to the east of the lane is largely hidden from view within the lane.’

This clearly indicates that this area is not a strong contributor to the character of the conservation area, but rather is part of the setting of the conservation area. It is notable that the boundary of the conservation area is an undefined line through the field, taking in a relatively small area of agricultural land. The wider landscape to the east will continue to provide a rural, agricultural setting to the conservation area.

6.10 It is argued that utilising a rural character or setting argument as a way of preventing green field development on the edge of or adjacent to a conservation area simply because it is an open green field area at present is an overly restrictive approach to development in and around rural settlements, effectively attempting to restrict change. A finding of harm should be based on clearly defined impacts where change would demonstrably result in an impact upon the ability to experience the designated area and to understand or appreciate its significance, for example, where the landscape provides important views to key buildings within the conservation area, or where the landscape forms an important backdrop to such buildings or features within the conservation area. The proposed development site does not fall into either of these categories – as the development of this area will not harm important views out of the conservation area – the Council’s own document makes it clear that there are no important views across this area from the conservation area.

6.11 It is notable that the Landscape comments on the 2013 scheme for seven houses on this site found no objection to the principle of development within this area. The present proposal includes the reinstatement of historic field boundaries within the area to the east of Ball Road including a boundary to the rear of the proposed development plots and the central paddock

area which is to be left open. Additionally, new hedgerows will be planted alongside the public footpath that runs to the east, and along the north – south section of the footpath further east of the development. These new boundaries will both enhance the character of the agricultural land and significantly reduce the visibility of the proposed development as seen from the east. The low density of the development and the planting will mean that it will not have an urbanizing effect on the views from the landscape to the east as may have been the case with the previous seven house scheme, and it is considered that the proposal will not result in harm in the quality or character of the views towards the conservation area. In fact, the improvements offered by the proposals will mean that the modern bungalow, No. 19 Ball Road, which is highly visible in views from the east will be less prominent which is considered to be an aesthetic improvement to these views.

- 6.12 An argument presented in relation to previous schemes is the sense of separation between Ball and King's Corner. Whilst historically there may have been a sense of separation between these areas of settlement (although the historic maps show intermittent development along Ball Road with no significant gap to define the two areas) in reality today there is no definition between these areas as there is near continuous development along the west side of Ball Road. Given that the proposed development area is accepted as being largely screened from the conservation area, this area does not really contribute to any sense of separation – the housing to the west of the road is the dominant characteristic.
- 6.13 In relation to the setting of the Coopers Arms, the principal area from where the listed building is experienced is from Ball Road and from within the grounds of the public house. Whilst the rear roof slope of the public house can be seen above the hedge to the north of its plot from the footpaths across the fields to the east of Ball Road, the character or significance of this building cannot be appreciated or understood and so it is considered that this area of its wider setting makes no meaningful contribution to the significance of the listed building. The proposed development will not harm the special interest of the listed building. This opinion reflects the conclusions drawn in previous applications.
- 6.14 In relation to the non-designated buildings that have been identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, it is considered that the proposed development will not have a harmful impact on the ability to experience these historic buildings or appreciate their significance to the conservation area as the principal

area of setting is along Ball Road, and the long distance views from the east will be subject to limited change – and it should be noted that there is no right to these incidental views.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The area of land to the east side of Ball Road makes a minimal contribution to the character of the lane and the special character and appearance of the Pewsey Conservation Area – the Conservation Area Appraisal document specifically notes that this area is largely hidden from view. Ball Road itself has sections of quite markedly different character. The northern part is suburban in character with historic houses generally set close to the street frontage and modern houses set back from the street with high levels of car parking along the road. The southern part of the lane where it descends the slope, has a strong rural character, becoming increasingly sunken with mature hedges creating a sense of enclosure. This section of the lane is of particular significance in terms of the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 7.2 The proposed development is for three houses, one to the north part of the site and two to the south. The northern house will be accessed by a new entrance which is within the area of suburban character where there is no significant bank or hedge to the roadside whilst the access to the two southern houses will be an enlargement (c. 2.0m) of the existing opening to No. 29 Ball Road at a point where the lane is barely lower than the adjacent land to the east and the adjacent hedge consists of leylandii growing out of a partly collapsed wall which will be removed. The retained section of boundary will be replanted with native species hedgerow plants. It is considered that the proposed openings overcome the justified objections to openings that were proposed in previous schemes for this land which would have caused considerable harm to the rural character of the sunken lane. Any harm found associated with the southern entrance will be minimal – at the lowest end of less than substantial which will need to be considered against the overall public benefits of the proposals, not solely the heritage-related public benefits.
- 7.3 The lower density of development now proposed will not create a sense of urbanization, and with appropriate design and landscaping, can maintain a rural character and reflect the local vernacular so that there will be minimal impact on the significance of this part of the designated heritage asset.
- 7.4 There are no important views towards the conservation area from the agricultural landscape to the east and it is considered that the proposed new houses will not be harmful to the

appearance of the conservation area from the east and north-east. The visibility of the proposed development will also be partly screened by the substantial new planting to re-establish historic field boundaries, particularly alongside the public footpaths, which will represent a positive change to the quality of the landscape setting of the conservation area.

7.5 The proposed development will have no impact on the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II listed Coopers Arms or the non-designated heritage assets along Ball Road through change within their settings as there will be no impact on the ability to experience these heritage assets or to understand or appreciate their significance. The improvement to car parking for No. 29 is a positive change to the setting of this non-designated heritage asset as it will minimise the visual impact of parking adjacent to the house as seen from the road, and the replacement of the leylandii is also a positive change in an area adjacent to the most important section of Ball Road in terms of its rural character.

7.6 Accordingly, I find that the very low level of less than substantial harm that may be identified is balanced by the public benefits of the new housing and improvements offered by the proposed planting in relation to both landscape and biodiversity, and the removal of visible car parking and sheds from immediately adjacent to No. 29 such that the proposed development accords with the statutory duty in Sections 66 and 72 of the Act, National Policy in the NPPF or Policy CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted January 2015 (CS) and Policy 99 of the Draft Local Plan Review: Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and conclude that the application should be allowed.