
TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (INQUIRIES
PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) RULES 2000**

**SECTION 78 APPEAL
SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE**

**BY CHRISTOPHER REYNOLDS, BA, MA, MSc, IHBC
11th July 2023**

Appeal by: Woolbro Group and Morris Investment

Appeal Site: Land at The Old Cottage, Station Road, Lingfield, RH7 6PG.

Appeal Against: Non-determination of planning permission for:

“Outline application with all matters reserved except for access and layout for a residential development of 99 dwellings (40% affordable) with associated access, formal open space, landscaping, car & cycle parking and refuse. (The application site is located within Lingfield Conservation Area and affects the setting of Listed Buildings and Structures).”

LPA REF: TA/2022/685

PINS REF: APP/M3645/W/23/3319149

CONTENTS

Summary

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Planning Policy

3.0 Designated and Undesignated Heritage Assets

4.0 Impact of the Proposal

5.0 Conclusion

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This inquiry relates to the non-determination by Tandridge District Council of an application for planning permission for the proposed development referenced TA/2022/685. Had the Council determined the application, it would have been refused.
- 1.2 Reason 2 of the Reasons for Refusal within the Officer Report stated that “The Proposal would fail to preserve [the] character and appearance of Lingfield Conservation Area and would be harmful to the setting and significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets. The application fails to set out clear and convincing justification to outweigh the harm. Therefore, the proposal fails to accord with the above identified national, regional and local policies and legislation, in particular DP20 of the Tandridge Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies (2014), and section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).”
- 1.3 My Proof of Evidence relates solely to the impact of the Proposed Development on the significance of the designated and undesignated heritage assets affected by the scheme referenced in 1.2, including any contribution made by their setting. This is taken into account in the overall assessment of the scheme in the Proof of Evidence provided by Clifford Thurlow of Tandridge District Council.

2 PLANNING POLICY AND LEGISLATION

- 2.1 The proposal conflicts with the following policies in the Development Plan which relate specifically to the historic built environment:

CORE STRATEGY (ADOPTED 2008)

- CSP18: Character and Design

LOCAL PLAN PART 2: DETAILED POLICIES 2014-2029 (ADOPTED 2014)

- DP20: Heritage Assets

- 2.2 I also consider the application of Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 within my Proof of Evidence.

3 DESIGNATED AND UNDESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

3.1 My Proof of Evidence sets out the following heritage assets would be affected by the Proposed Development:

- Lingfield Conservation Area (Church Town and New Place)
- Grade I listed St Peter and St Paul Church
- Grade I listed Pollard Cottage and Pollard House
- Grade II* listed New Place
- Grade II* listed Church House and Star Inn Cottages
- Building of Character New Place Farm (non-designated heritage asset)

3.2 My Proof of Evidence assesses the significance of the aforementioned heritage assets and the contribution made by their setting in line with national legislation, planning policy and guidance.

3.3 As part of my Proof of Evidence I conclude that the application site makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Church Town character area of the conservation area. This is because it reveals the origins of the village as an isolated rural settlement in the High Weald. The location of the fields close to the edge of Church Town demonstrates the historic development of Lingfield and its subsequent decline following the Reformation.

3.4 I also consider the importance of the application site to understanding the New Place character area of the conservation area. Not only do the fields form an important separation between New Place and the village, but they also inform the historic and architectural interest of New Place Farm which is a former farmstead associated within the site.

3.5 Within my Proof of Evidence, I identify the application site also makes an important contribution to the semi-rural setting of St Peter and St Paul Church, Pollard House and Cottage, Church House and Star Inn Cottages and New Place.

4 IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 As set out in greater detail in my Proof of Evidence, I consider the scheme will result in a high degree of harm to the character and appearance of Lingfield Conservation Area. The scheme will have a direct impact on the conservation area as it will see the loss of fields which make an important contribution as an open space.
- 4.2 Within the Church Town character area of the conservation area, the scheme will have an urbanising impact. This will see the loss of views of the conservation area from Town Hill and Station Road which are framed by the open fields and reveal the semi-rural character of the area. There will also be harm to views from Church Road within Lingfield Conservation Area where the proposed development will be visible behind the Star Inn, again leading to the loss of the semi-rural character of the area. This is specifically from views behind the existing single storey marquee, but also in views from the pub garden. I consider this to contribute to a high degree of harm to Lingfield Conservation Area.
- 4.3 There will also be harm to Lingfield Conservation Area within the New Place character area. The scheme will see the loss of the open space which separates New Place as a small country house from the Church Town as a village. Most significantly the Proposed Development will see the entire loss of the fields which reveal the raison d'être of New Place Farm. The illustrative scheme includes a very large block of flats close to the boundary of this building which have a strong urbanising impact on its setting. This will contribute to the high degree of less than substantial harm.
- 4.4 There will also be harm to the setting of the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Pollard House and Pollard Cottage, Church House and Star Inn Cottages and New Place. This harm is specifically from the loss of the semi-rural setting of these buildings evident in views from and to these heritage assets. Such harm would be a low level of less than substantial harm.
- 4.5 The appellant has argued that the scheme would result in heritage specific public benefits which would, as part of an internal heritage balance, reduce the overall level of harm. I have taken into account this argument but can only see very limited heritage specific benefits from the scheme. As such, I am of the opinion that the aforementioned levels of harm are correct.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 As outlined above I consider the scheme will result in a high degree of less than substantial harm to Lingfield Conservation Area and a low degree of less than substantial harm to the Grade I St Peter and St Paul Church, Grade I Pollard Cottage and Pollard House, Grade II* New Place and Grade II* Church House and Star Inn Cottages. Having considered any heritage specific public benefits, I consider this to still result in the same degree of harm.
- 5.2 In line with paragraph 199 of the NPPF, great weight should be applied to the impact of the Proposed Development on the significance of the designated heritage assets. Greater weight should be applied to the listed buildings because they are all Grade II* or Grade I and are considered more important.
- 5.3 Paragraph 202 of the NPPF sets out where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. This balancing exercise is carried out by Clifford Thurlow on behalf of Tandridge District Council.
- 5.4 Owing to the levels of harm identified to the aforementioned heritage assets, the Proposed Development would conflict with Development Plan policies CSP18 and DP20.