

Heritage Statement

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Proposed residential development of 24 dwellings, new access from High Street, associated parking, drainage, amenity space and landscaping

Land To The North of Milksey Lane, Graveley SG4 7LA

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.0 This heritage statement has been prepared to support a planning application for residential development of 24 dwellings, new access from High Street, associated parking, drainage, amenity space and landscaping on land to the north of Milksey Lane, Graveley.
- 1.1.1 The purpose of this Heritage Statement and impact assessment, is to inform and support the application for planning permission. As the southern-most part of the application site includes the northern margin and boundary of the designated conservation area, this statement will provide the description of significance of the Graveley Conservation Area, together with an assessment of any possible impacts or harm to the settings nearby listed buildings and, in particular, Graveley House, as a non-designated heritage asset, closest to the proposed development.
- 1.1.2 The statement responds to the heritage-related issues and points raised in the pre-application submission and response, dated 19 April 2024 (NHDC reference 23/02923/PRE).
- 1.1.3 The assessment of the impact of the proposals on this northern part of the conservation area and the settings of nearby listed buildings, together with Graveley House, will seek to fully justify the proposed development and explain how the proposals would preserve the essential character of this area in total. The assessment will demonstrate that there is no appreciably adversely impact of any significance and the proposal would actually enhance the character, appearance and special interest.

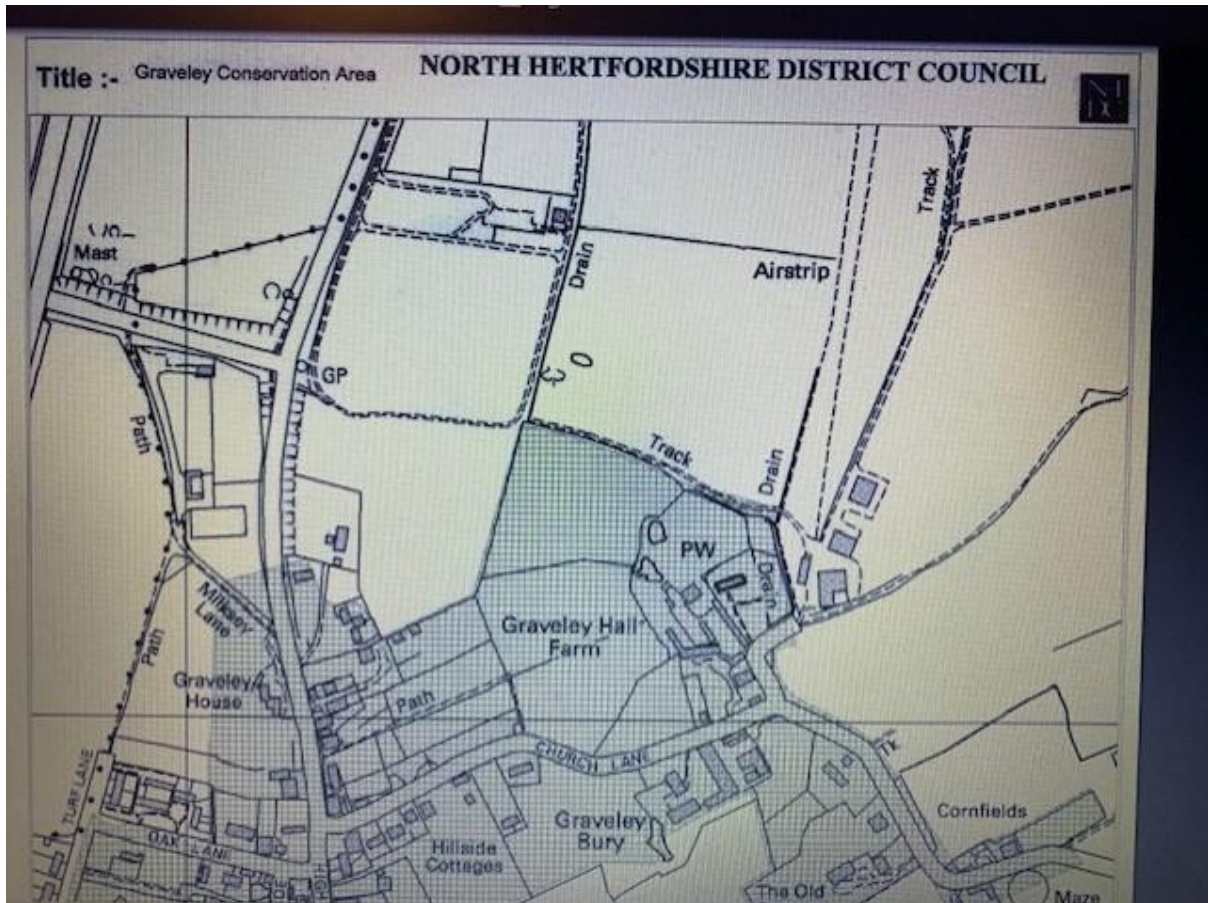
2.0 SITE & SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The site for the proposed residential development is to the north of Milksey Lane and the line of the public footpath which defines the west boundary. Milksey Lane is a track and public footpath from High Street, B 197, to the south-east, linking north-westwards to the national cycle route 12 footpath. The north boundary is formed by the residual land and Graveley Lane, which links High Street (via a bridge under the A1 motorway) to Great Wymondley. South of Milksey Lane is a substantial detached house, Graveley House with a former stable block. To the rear (west) of Graveley House is a rough field, now the site for future residential development (23/00186/FP).
- 2.2 The designated Graveley Conservation Area includes the southern triangular extremity of the application site.
- 2.3 To the west of Graveley House, the conservation area boundary runs almost north- south, nearly parallel to the axis of High Street, from a point approximately halfway along the southern edge of Milksey Lane to a point roughly halfway along the north edge of Oak Lane. That boundary line is an imagined line, with no geographic or topographic definition.
- 2.4 The undefined boundary line then extends eastwards beyond Milksey Lane, across High Street to include nos. 46, 44, 40 and the other houses to the south.
- 2.5 The Graveley Conservation Area Character Statement (NHDC/Wood, 2020) provides a thorough assessment and well-informed appraisal of the essence of the village historic core, identifying Graveley House as a non-designated heritage asset, suitable for recommendation as a locally listed building (see paragraph 3.2.2).
- 2.6 Beyond Milksey Lane the conservation area extends only a short distance into the application site field, then continues east of High Street to form the larger part of the conservation area, concentrated around Church Lane, towards Graveley Hall Farm (Grade II listed buildings), Graveley Bury (Grade II listed buildings) and the medieval Parish Church of St Mary (Grade I).
- 2.7 Within the conservation area, this eastern part focused on Church Lane, forms a separate identity area, quite rural and distinct to the western part of the conservation area, around the relatively busy and rather more urban character and feel of High Street, Pondside & Oak Lane.
- 2.8 This western part of the conservation area lies to the south of the application site and Graveley House but also includes those listed buildings to the east side of High Street- The White House (Grade II, 17th century or older, 2-storey, timber framed, roughcast render,

steep old tile roof) and the former terrace of 4 houses, now a row of 3 houses, nos. 24, 26 & 28 High Street (Grade II, c.1840, low 2-storey, red brick, slate roofs).

- 2.9 The wider settings of these listed buildings at the east side of High Street, together with that of Fife House could, possibly, be considered to include the road entrance junction to Milksey Lane, in that there is some, albeit limited, restricted degree of inter-visibility within wider distant views.
- 2.10 The other nearby listed buildings, to the south of Fife House are all beyond any intervisibility with the application site.
- 2.11 Graveley House, 35 High Street is located on the west side of the former Great North Road (now the B197), at the north end of the village. The A1(M) is approximately 300m to west of the house, beyond the public footpath (also national cycle route 12), also running roughly north- south (parallel to the A1(M), linking Milksey Lane to the north and Turf Lane to the south).
- 2.12 A neglected rough, scrubby, uncultivated area of land is immediately beyond the garden boundary of Graveley House (to the west) and an agricultural field, further west, lies between the public footpath and line of the A1 motorway.
- 2.13 Three dwellings were converted and extended from the former coach house of Graveley House (nos. 37, 39 & 41 High Street).
- 2.14 Graveley House, defined as a non-designated heritage asset, viewed or glimpsed from the High Street, has the appearance of a mid- late Victorian, 2-storey detached house but the pale yellow brick, in Flemish bond, of the parapeted frontage and part side walls encases an earlier steeply pitched roof, to a likely timber-framed or possibly red brick structure. The frontage is rather grand, symmetrical 5-bays wide, with gauged and rubbed brick window arches, double hung vertical sliding 3/3 (though with large central pane & slim margin lights) sash windows, set in reveals and with a heavily corbelled and modelled projecting cornice to the parapet and a parapeted brick porch, with a pointed arch entrance opening, formed of gauged rubbed bricks.
- 2.15 The house has a double rear range of extensions, in red brick, with a M-shaped gabled rear roof and tall chimney stacks also in red brick but with yellow brick tops. The main roof of the house, the rear additions and of the coach house and the newly constructed weatherboarded ,barn-like, extensions are all of dark slate.

- 2.16 The main house and the 2-storey former coach house are of local architectural and historic interest and are considered to be non-designated heritage assets.
- 2.17 The shaded area shows the extent of the designated Graveley Conservation Area. The small triangle of the application site is formed by Milksey Lane, High Street and an undefined boundary line at the north.



- 2.18 Graveley House is the closest building as a heritage asset but is non designated. The conservation area boundary is an arbitrary line in the field west of Graveley House and then across the application site north of Milksey Lane.



Graveley House from High Street



Graveley House- former coach house and extensions- now nos. 37, 39 & 41 High Street

3.0 **POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 This Heritage Statement has special regard to sections 66(1) & 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as the surroundings and context of the site includes listed buildings, their settings and is located within the designated conservation area; and is to satisfy the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 chapter 12- Achieving well-designed places and in particular chapter 16- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Statements of Heritage Significance- Analysing significance in heritage assets- Historic England Advice Note 12 (October 2019); Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008- as amended- Historic England); and NHDC local planning policy- North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011- 2031- especially policies HE1 and NE1; and NHDC Design Special Planning Document 2011 as also taken into account.
- 3.2 This Heritage Asset Statement concentrates specifically on the heritage assets and historic environment involved and is to be read alongside the Design & Access Statement, the Planning Statement and other relevant supporting information, which gives the general background to the site, surroundings and full detail of the proposed development, and the detailed design drawings.

4.0 **PROPOSALS AFFECTING HERITAGE ASSETS**

- 4.1 The proposed residential development site for 24 dwellings, new access from High Street, associated parking, drainage, amenity space and landscaping, comprises the enclosed field to the north-east of Milksey Lane, roughly in the shape of a stretched-out triangle, with the sharp point at the south end, at the junction of Milksey Lane with High Street.
- 4.2 The proposed new vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is at approximately the midpoint along the eastern boundary to High Street, beyond the north boundary of the conservation area.
- 4.3 The proposed new landscaping is intended to integrate sympathetically with the retained existing sound mature trees and planting, that define much of the site edge, with particular care taken in the design of the conservation area south triangle.

5.0 ASSESSMENT

- 5.1.0 The location of the proposed dwellings, pedestrian and vehicular access roads, amenity space and associated hard and soft landscaping, including the attenuation basin and additional indigenous tree and under-storey planting, is recognized in the pre-application response, as being of an appropriate and sympathetic layout design that will recognize and respond to the conservation area constraints and sensitivity.
- 5.1.1 The discrete layout of the proposed new buildings, parking spaces and access roads carefully avoids the most sensitive part of the site, the triangle of the application site at the south, within the conservation area. Please refer to the detailed layout design drawings and the Planning and Design and Access Statements.
- 5.1.2 The key impacts and considerations for any possible, less than substantial, harm to the significance (in terms of NPPF paragraphs 215 and NHDC local planning policies) of designated heritage assets relate especially to this part of the Graveley Conservation Area and Graveley House (as a non-designated heritage asset) and, though to a far lesser extent, to the nearby listed buildings far to the south of the application site.
- 5.1.3 With regard to the designated conservation area, great weight should be given to the conservation of the special architectural and historic interest that justified the identification, inclusion and valuing of the area (NPPF paragraph 212). The development of the site needs clear and convincing justification (NPPF paragraph 213).
- 5.1.4 The settings of the nearby listed buildings & their contribution to the overall character & appearance of the conservation area will be evaluated.



View from north, downhill to High Street (B 197) approaching Milksey Lane, to the right, with village houses in the distance. The carriageway and footway is in a shallow cutting with banks to each side.

5.2.0 **Conservation Area Impact**

5.2.1 Little mention is made of the application site, Milksey Lane or to this northern part of the western side of the conservation area in the Graveley Conservation Area Character Statement although Graveley House is identified as a future potential locally listed building (paragraph 3.2.2). The site and surroundings are not mentioned as being of special interest or importance in any way.

5.2.2 The defined boundary (on the designation map extract) is an arbitrary imaginary line, set some 100m or so back from the junction of the Milksey Lane track with the carriageway of High Street to create, perhaps, a sense of separation or protection.

5.2.3 Such zones of separation are, inherently, often difficult to fully evaluate any impact in terms of effectiveness, as a means to actually protect a sensitive setting or valued view and realistically have to be carefully weighed and assessed against the proposed developments and any perception of what might constitute harm. In this situation, any possible potential for harm is considered to be minimal. The preserved triangle would, though, provide a continued sense of some openness close to the junction.

5.2.4 The existing site is somewhat scruffy and neglected. NPPF paragraph 220 states that not all elements of a conservation area . . . will necessarily contribute to its significance. The contribution of this site is at best neutral merely as a small separation space. The key positive features are those retained edge of site trees which are to be a focal point of the proposed housing development.

5.2.5 The part of the site within the conservation area will remain open and be carefully and thoughtfully landscaped.

5.3.0 **Justification for the development**

5.3.1 The enhancement of the whole site by means of the provision of an appropriate density and mix of sympathetic housing to accord with the requirements of local planning policy, to thoughtfully respect the sensitive conservation area setting location and with associated landscaping and planting is fully explained and set out in the Planning Statement and other supporting information with the application. This would amply satisfy the requirements of NPPF paragraph 215 of weighing any possibility of, what might be perceived as, less than substantial harm against the clear public benefits and achieving an optimum viable use for this vacant neglected site as accepted in the pre-application response.

5.4.0 **Setting of Graveley House, Nearby Houses and Listed Buildings**

5.4.1 As noted above, Graveley House (non-designated heritage asset), nos. 37, 39 & 41 & Fife House (Grade II listed) are at some distance from the development site boundary and mostly

at a lower level, as ground levels rise appreciably from High Street/ Milksey Lane junction and north boundary of the site (beyond the conservation area) at the junction of High Street with Graveley Lane, from approximately 97.5m to 106.4m AOD. These settings are, effectively, much restricted and limited by distance and the topography and landscaping of the site and context.

- 5.4.2 The wider, more distant context, settings of The White House and nos. 24, 26 & 28 High Street extend, for the most part, little beyond the line of the High Street. Any impact, if any and thus any resulting harm, is therefore considered to be highly limited and would not amount to any level of concern.
- 5.4.3 The houses within the conservation area to the east side of High Street, nos. 40- 48, are conclusively separated from the application site by earth banks, the lines of mature trees and the carriageway and footway and are thus not directly or detrimentally affected to any significant degree by the proposed development.

6.0 SUMMARY

- 6.1 The development site, to the north-east of Milksey Lane, is peripheral to the core parts of the Graveley Conservation Area, tucked away and embanked at the west side of High Street, the former Great North Road, at the northern edge of the conservation area. The key prominent character areas of the conservation area, that really define the sense of place and high significance, are focused on Church Lane, to the east, and around Pondsides, to the south. They, and the many listed buildings in the village, are unaffected by the proposed development.
- 6.2 There is no specific identified conservation special architectural or historic interest in the application site other than being the wider edge setting at the approach to the conservation area from the north, down the hill.
- 6.3 The nearest listed buildings that could potentially come into consideration and that could possibly be considered to have some degree of impact to their settings are, but, for the reasons set out above, in such locations that any such impact would be wholly restricted and inconsequential. The same is applicable to the other houses, nos. 37, 39 & 41 and Graveley House due to separation distance and landscape screening.
- 6.4 The small part of the conservation area directly affected by the proposed development would, on balance, be enhanced by thoughtful, appropriate landscaping, together with a discrete boundary definition, such as estate railing, with carefully considered residential development in the adjacent setting of the conservation area.
- 6.5 It will include high quality design, with traditional materials & locally distinctive detailing, providing a positive change in the village, preserving the features that contribute to its special interest (the mature ivy-clad trees and screening planting around the edges of the site) and enhancing, by sympathetic new dwellings, spaces around and a new entrance, enriching the character and positively adding to the appearance of this part of the Graveley Conservation Area.

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