

Grow Walkies Ltd

**Land to the West of High Street, Graveley, Stevenage, Herts,
SG4 7LE**

Heritage Assessment

Part Retrospective Application For Change of Use from Agricultural Land to a Dog Walking Field including Access, Fencing and Visitor Parking Area.

Prepared by:

**Stephen Rice BSc Hons (Agric) MRICS Assoc RTP1
SBRice Ltd**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage assessment has been prepared in support of a part retrospective application for full permission for the change of use of agricultural land at land to the west of High Street, Graveley, Stevenage, SG4 7LE to a dog walking field (“the site”) including the improvements to an existing access, erection of fencing and the creation of a visitor parking area.

2.0 ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 The site lies partially within the Graveley Conservation Area and in close proximity to three Listed Buildings. Policy HE1 of the Adopted Local Plan requires that an appropriate assessment must be carried out where a proposed development has potential to impact on a designated heritage assets which includes Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.
- 2.2 The field to be used for dog walking is itself located some distance from the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings, it is only a small section of access track that lies within the Conservation Area and in proximity to the Listed Buildings.
- 2.3 To the north of the development and separated by a 6 foot wooden fence, public footpath and mature vegetation lies a Grade II Listed property known as the Wagon and Horses Public House.
- 2.4 To the immediate east of the access track lies the George and Dragon, a Grade II Listed Public House. The property fronts onto the High Street with pub garden located to the rear with a large tarmac car park to the south.
- 2.5 To the west of the field through which the access track passes lies Pondside Cottage, a Grade II Listed residential dwelling. This is located on the far side of the watercourse and is separated by a substantial block of mature vegetation and trees.
- 2.6 Only a section of the access track lies within the Conservation Area.
- 2.7 The proposed parking area and dog walking field will not be visible from the Listed Properties.
- 2.8 Under the provisions of section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990), Chapter 16 of the NPPF and policies SP13 and HE1 of the Local Plan special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of designated

heritage assets.

- 2.9 With respect to the setting of heritage assets the site potentially falls within the setting of the Listed Wagon and Horses, George and Dragon and the Conservation Area but beyond the setting of Pondside Cottage.
- 2.10 This section of the Planning Statement assesses the potential impact of the proposed development on the significance of these heritage assets due to the formation of the access track, car parking and development within their settings.
- 2.11 This report has already described in some detail the proposed development.
- 2.12 The setting of a heritage asset is defined as ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
- 2.13 The NPPG reiterates that the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach. Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. An important consideration should be whether the proposed works adversely affect a key element of the heritage asset’s special architectural or historic interest. Additionally, it is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development, that is to be assessed. The level of ‘substantial harm’ is considered to be a high bar that may not arise in many cases. Essentially, whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgement for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the NPPF. Importantly, harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and may be more extensive than the curtilage. An assessment of the impact of proposals upon setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it. It is with these principles of guidance in mind that we have considered the proposed development in the context of its potential impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.
- 2.14 We have consulted and considered the official list entries for the Listed Buildings as published on

Historic England's database. We have noted that the properties are Listed for their architectural and historic merit, the Listing does not extend to features within their immediate surroundings.

- 2.15 The setting of the two Listed public houses comprises the High Street which is a busy road located immediately to the east of each property, residential properties located on the eastern side of the High Street and large tarmacked car parks located to the north of the Wagon and Horses and to the south of the George and Dragon. Apart from the grass field lying to the south of the Wagon and Horses and to the immediate west of the George and Dragon the setting for both properties could be described as semi-urban.
- 2.16 The heritage significance of both properties lies primarily in their proximity to the High Street as the George and Dragon was used historically as a coaching inn which relied on the highway for its passing trade. Both properties have been significantly affected by C20 development and it is also likely that the George and Dragon at least has been parted from land originally forming part of its setting to the rear which would have provided grazing and stabling for horses which would have been an essential part of its role as a coaching inn.
- 2.17 Both properties nevertheless retain their architectural value.
- 2.18 The proposed development involves the creation of a short section of hardcore track over part of an agricultural field that has previously been used for agricultural access, creation of a small area of car parking constructed of permeable hardcore which is located in extremely close proximity to the existing tarmacked car parking for the George and Dragon along with the erection of a wire fence which is agricultural in nature.
- 2.19 The development itself is barely visible from either Listed Building with only a short section of hardstanding track visible from the George and Dragon Public House.
- 2.20 The nature of its use being for the purposes of walking dogs is not dissimilar to the existing agricultural activity carried out on the land which involves the keeping and managing of livestock. This involves the use of vehicles in the field for management and agricultural activity.
- 2.21 It is also noted that the construction of the hardcore access track could be carried out under agricultural permitted development rights and the 1.8 m fencing could be erected for agricultural

purposes without the need for any planning permission.

- 2.22 As a result, for the purposes of the NPPF the proposed development will cause no harm to the heritage assets.

3.0 SUMMARY

- 3.1 We have considered the potential impact of the development on designated heritage assets due to development within their settings through the prism of design and development principles set out under Chapter 16 of the NPPF and policies SP13 and HE1 in the Local Plan. The development when seen in the light of these principles has not been found to be harmful in its effect on the designated heritage assets and for the purposes of the NPPF the proposed development will not be harmful.
- 3.2 Even if it were considered under Paragraph 202 of the NPPF that the proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, the significant public benefits of the proposal which provide safe secure dog walking facilities which are greatly in demand would be sufficient to outweigh any less than substantial harm if it were considered to exist.