

Heritage & Conservation

Application consultation response

Application reference:	24/02652/fp
Site:	Old School House Park Lane Old Knebworth Hertfordshire SG3 6PR
Proposal	Erection of five single storey terraced dwellings with associated landscaping, boundary fencing and cycle storage.
Action required prior to determination:	Yes (see below)

Summary

In principle there are no objections to the proposal as it would not cause harm to the nearby listed buildings, Manor House and Crom Cottage but some revisions may be appropriate to reflect the current building typology and character of the conservation area. See discussion below.

Heritage Assets

Listed Building (neighbouring)
Conservation Area

Discussion

Old Knebworth Conservation area is predominantly residential in character with high number of listed buildings of varying building types dating from 17th to 20th centuries.

Overall, the spatial character is open. However that is diminished when travelling along Old Knebworth Lane where the lane turns sharply west where stand a group of buildings comprising listed building, buildings of local interest and two positive buildings.

The proposed development will sit west of Little Hyde which is identified as a positive building in the appraisal document. Currently the site is open with view to the fields beyond but is located on edges of village development and more built form is not considered harmful.

The proposal in principle would not have an overly detrimental impact on both designated and non-designated heritage assets as identified in the appraisal document. However, the continuous front range could be broken up particularly the central projecting element so that a view through to the fields beyond is still present.

If this were to be accommodated the application would receive full support in terms of impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Heritage Policy Assessment

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 26H of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 or Sections 16 (1) & 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and as supported by the aims of the NPPF.

The Local Plan and NPPF

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and the policies contained within it i.e., Policy HE1. The plan was adopted November 2022.

The relevant paragraph numbers at Section 16 of the July 2021 version of the NPPF have been changed as follows:

197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.....

202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) – December 2017

At para 14 under the sub-heading 'Landscape Assessment and Amenity' it states that "*Analysis of setting is different from landscape assessment. While landscapes include everything within them, the entirety of very extensive settings may not contribute equally to the significance of a heritage asset, if at all. **Careful analysis is therefore required to assess whether one heritage asset at a considerable distance from another, though intervisible with it – a church spire, for instance – is a major component of the setting, rather than just an incidental element within the wider landscape.***"

At para 17 it states (my emphasis in bold): "*All heritage assets have significance, some of which have particular significance and are designated. The contribution made by their setting to their significance also varies. **Although many settings may be enhanced by development, not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate it.** This capacity may vary between designated assets of the same grade or of the same type or according to the nature of the change. It can also depend on the location of the asset: an elevated or overlooked location; a riverbank, coastal or island location; or a location within an extensive tract of flat land may increase the sensitivity of the setting (i.e. the capacity of the setting to accommodate change without harm to the heritage asset's significance) or of views of the asset. This requires the implications of development affecting the setting of heritage assets to be considered on a case-by-case basis.*

Conclusion

There is an **OBJECTION**. The scheme will not as submitted satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

From	Tricia Craggs
Date	23 January 2025