



Historic England

EAST OF ENGLAND OFFICE

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Our ref: P00488792

21 December 2015

Dear Mr Rand

Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2015 & T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

**GREAT WILSEY PARK, WILSEY ROAD, LITTLE WRATTING, SUFFOLK
Application No DC/15/2151/OUT**

Thank you for your letter of 1 December 2015 notifying Historic England of the above application.

Summary

The development is in relatively close proximity to the scheduled monument that is the moated site at Great Wilsey Farm. Historic England is of the opinion that the development as set out in the documents accompanying the application would result in harm to the significance of this monument. Whilst the level of harm would be below the threshold of substantial harm as set out in the NPPF, it would nevertheless be a high level of harm. In our opinion there is further scope to mitigate at least some of that harm and we recommend the Local Planning Authority seeks refinements to the parameter plans to deliver greater mitigation of the harm. The residual harm that cannot be mitigated would then need to be weighed against the wider public benefits delivered by the proposal.

Historic England Advice

The Design and Access Statement identifies that *'the Great Wilsey moated site is the heritage asset with the greatest potential to be affected by the proposals as development will occur in relatively close proximity to both the west and east of the Monument.'* Historic England agrees with this assessment, especially as the land adjacent to the assets at Claford Green is to be left open.



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The Cultural Heritage chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) identifies in paragraph 14.5.14 that *'the setting of the scheduled Monument will change significantly from the existing open landscape to one where the majority of the land will be developed with buildings.'* Again, Historic England agrees with that assessment. We also accept that much of its original setting has changed over time, and the original manor house that once stood within the moat is no longer extant. But we do not agree with the statement that *'the scheduled monument itself is now significantly overgrown and is no longer the prominent feature in the landscape that it would have originally been.'*

Furthermore, when assessing the degree of harm to an asset resulting from development in its setting, it is necessary to first assess the contribution that setting makes to the assets significance. In this instance we consider the undeveloped nature of the surrounding rolling landscape makes a very important contribution to the significance of this moated site, and while that landscape will have changed over time, it remains an agrarian landscape, and the changes reflect changes in farming practice. The existing built forms that are in close proximity to the monument are all associated with agriculture. The change to its setting that is now proposed is something fundamentally different that would result in the introduction of urban built forms into its setting, changing it from an agrarian setting to essentially a suburban setting.

The site boundary is cut back on the southwest side of the monument, thereby retaining the existing open field outlook on this side. The existing outlook to the northeast would also remain unaltered, and it is therefore to the southeast and northwest where that the greatest change would occur. Whilst the application is in outline, with all matters apart from access reserved for future determination, the application includes a number of parameter plans. Amongst other matters, these parameter plans set out the locations for the blocks of development, their densities and the location of principle landscape buffering. Mitigation of the harm to the scheduled moated site arising from the development currently comprises a reduction in the density of the development in blocks A3, A5 and A10 and the introduction of tree screens to both the southeast and northwest sides of the monument. The reduced density to the adjacent blocks will still be in the range of 20 -25 dwellings per hectare, and therefore will remain suburban rather than rural in character, whilst the landscape belts are of only modest depth and in winter months in particular are unlikely to afford much screening.

Furthermore, the NPPF defines setting as *'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced...'* At Great Wilsey that experience includes experiencing the moated site within an open and rolling landscape. Enclosing it between blocks of linear woodland to screen the encroaching housing would itself change that experience and cause a degree of harm.



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In conclusion, Historic England is of the opinion that the development currently proposed would result in harm to the significance of the scheduled moated site at Great Wilsey. That harm would be less than substantial harm, as set out in the NPPF, but would nevertheless, be towards the upper end of the spectrum of harm.

Recommendation

Historic England considers that there is the potential to further mitigate the harm arising from this development to the scheduled monument at Great Wilsey. That mitigation might include cutting back the housing in proximity to the moated site and thickening the planting belts (to at least that illustrated in the diagram attached to the concept statement in the appendix of the Haverhill Vision). If it is necessary to compensate for the reduction in housing numbers in the vicinity of the monument, there might then be scope to increase some of the housing densities in other blocks.

Once the harm to the scheduled monument has been fully mitigated, it will then be necessary for the local planning authority to weigh the residual harm remaining against the wider public benefits arising from the development. In the event that the application is to be approved, Historic England would further request that conditions are including requiring all landscape planting belts to be planted in the first season after commencement of the development, and for the development to commence with those blocks to the southwest of the stream that flows between Great Wilsey Farm and Haverhill. This will enable the new planting to become established ahead of the construction of new houses northeast side of the stream, ensuring the screening reaches maturity at the earliest possible date.

Yours sincerely

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