

From: Claire Shearing
Sent: 01 March 2021 09:39
To: Planning Comments
Subject: FW: FH comments

Please could these comments be added as the Conservation Officer response to 19/05000/HYB.
Thanks, Claire

From: Rebecca Lamb <Rebecca.Lamb@sevenoaks.gov.uk>
Sent: 26 February 2021 16:51
To: Claire Shearing <Claire.Shearing@sevenoaks.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: FH comments

Amendments in terms of significance:

I've had a look at the significance of the buildings in the previous 2015 report and there are some changes I'd suggest;

Para 458 - Building Q14 and its immediate setting will be altered. In an amendment to this application, two of the contemporaneous surrounding structures (Q1 and Q12) that are considered to form an important part of its setting will be demolished. Q13 will be retained as per the previous scheme. The substantial demolition of the entire site will have a negative impact on the significance of all the designated heritage assets on the site because of the functional relationship and context. They have historic significance based on their role in weapons research and this role is intrinsically linked to the wider site. Q14, located outside of the Fort is part of a group of contemporary buildings and the impact of the demolition of the wider site will also have a visual impact on its setting. The development of the wider site was low level, organic and sporadic and was developed as a need arose. The loss of Q1, identified as a non-designated heritage asset and Q12 are considered to impact on the setting of the designated heritage asset. However, the masterplan has been developed in order to retain the elements that make the greatest contribution to the setting and also to create a vibrant, new sustainable community and a long term sustainable use for Fort Halstead. The wider development will also retain a similar use of weapons research, light industrial and housing. In terms of the NPPF it is considered to be of less than substantial harm.

My comments:

The current application has been the subject of extensive pre-application discussions and the scheme has evolved to address the issues raised regarding the setting of the designated heritage assets and the non-designated heritage assets.

The extant character of the site represents an evolving military site. The history is wide-ranging and its activity is represented in the utilitarian materials, plain and also 'house' military architectural styles and the functional grid layout.

The site is being decommissioned and the principle of creating a mixed use development estate was established in the 2015 permission. Creating a publically accessible non-military site changes the character of the area but also allows for public access to the historic buildings previously not accessible. The scheme retains many other buildings adjacent to and in the vicinity of the designated assets, from a variety of eras, which help to demonstrate the evolution of the site and provide context to the Fort and the Penney Building.

The applicant has proposed a revised location for the village centre, adjacent to the Fort and this is welcomed. Efforts have been made connect the entrance to the Fort with the core buildings in this area. The location of a landmark building in the village centre helps to establish a sense of place and is welcomed. The building is adjacent to the Penney Building (listed) and across the road from the Fort (scheduled). Whilst the setting and use of the assets is altered and the redevelopment of the site changes the character from military and functional to residential, the need to create a sustainable and vibrant new community which is a public and economic benefit has been designed in a way to mitigate the harm to the heritage significance and given meaningful heritage benefits.

Particularly vulnerable is the Fort and the associated listed structures within, that lends itself less easily to reuse. The principle of reuse has been established but more considered detail needs to be submitted as to how this will be carried out.

The proposals are considered to cause less than substantial harm to the heritage significance of the site. In order to meet the requirements of the NPPF in terms of justifying harm and demonstrating the public benefit, the applicant has submitted a Conservation Management Plan for the site. However, as Historic England have detailed in their response, more work needs to be done to ensure that this document is financially viable and achievable. The guidance provided by the HE should be followed in the production of the detailed Conservation Management Plan and be included within the Section 106 agreement and with safeguards and milestones in place as suggested by Historic England's submission.

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Strategic Planning

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This advice is without prejudice to the decision making processes of the local planning authority and in no way prejudices any future determinations or decisions made by the local planning authority.

You are advised to seek your own independent advice on any issues raised in this email.