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NEPTUNE
PLANNING

Heritage Statement

RE: ERECTION OF ESTATE FENCING ADJACENT TO EXISTING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

LOCATION: AVENUE HOUSE, CHURCH ROAD, ELFORD, B79 9DA

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA) sets out the principal statutory provisions which must be considered in the determination of any application affecting either listed buildings or conservation areas.

- 1.2 Section 66 of the LBCA 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 1.3 Section 72 of the LBCA 1990 states that with respect to buildings or land within a conservation area, special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

National Planning Policy

- 1.4 The revised National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are policies protecting the historic environment throughout the revised NPPF. Section 12 highlights the importance of good design as a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 127c draws attention to the importance of the design being *"sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)"*. In addition, paragraph 127d points out that planning policies and decisions should ensure that *"developments establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit"*.
- 1.5 Section 16 of the revised NPPF deals specifically with *"conserving and enhancing the historic environment"*. Where changes are proposed, the NPPF sets out a clear framework to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance.
- 1.6 The NPPF sets out the importance of being able to assess the significance of heritage assets that may be affected by a development. Significance is defined in Annex 2 as being the *"value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic."* Significance is not only derived from an asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. The setting of a heritage asset is also defined in Annex 2 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."*
- 1.7 Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Similarly, there is a requirement on local planning authorities, having assessed the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal; to take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset (paragraph 190).
- 1.8 Paragraphs 193 to 197 of the NPPF introduce the concept that heritage assets can be harmed or lost through alteration, destruction or development within their setting. This harm ranges from less than substantial through to substantial. With regard to designated assets, paragraph 193 states that the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is irrespective of the level of harm to its significance as a result of any proposals. In paragraph 194, a distinction is made in respect of those assets of the highest

significance (e.g. Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings) where substantial harm to or loss of those assets should be wholly exceptional.

- 1.9 In instances where development would cause substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated asset, planning permission should be refused unless that harm or loss is “*necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss*” (paragraph 195). In instances where development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including its optimum viable use (paragraph 196).
- 1.10 Paragraph 197 states that “*the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset*”. Distinction is made between those non-designated assets of archaeological interest which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments as they should be considered against policies for designated heritage assets (footnote 63).
- 1.11 The NPPF therefore recognises that a balance needs to be struck between the harm caused to heritage assets and the delivery of public benefit.

2. AIM AND METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 This assessment aims to identify all known heritage assets potentially affected by the proposed development. A heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Annex 2) as ‘a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest’.
- 2.2 Both discrete features, and extensive landscapes defined by a specific historic event, process or theme, can be defined as heritage assets; and assets may overlap. Some heritage assets are designated as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, World Heritage Sites, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, or locally designated through policies in the Local Plan. Undesignated assets may be recorded in Historic Environment Records, while other assets may be currently unrecorded.
- 2.3 The aim of this Heritage Statement is to collate the key findings of the desk based study of the site and its context, to reflect on key constraints and assess any impacts arising from the proposals with a view to establishing whether an opportunity exists to mitigate or offset any potential harm arising.
- 2.4 The following sources have been consulted to assess the historic records and context of the site, applicable constraints and archaeological potential:
 - a) The online Heritage Gateway
 - b) Staffordshire Historic Environment Records search records
 - c) Elford Conservation Area Appraisal

3. SITE CONTEXT

- 3.1 The conservation area of Elford is significant as it is situated on the banks of the river tame, surrounded by fertile agricultural land and close to a strategic crossing point. The unique character of Elford is formed by the use of formal landscaping as well as an informal scattering of houses in the majority of the conservation area. The concentration of historic buildings both listed and unlisted is an integral part of the significance of the conservation area.



Figure 1: Photograph of Elford Hall

- 3.2 Elford was home to the Howard family of which the members were Earldoms and Suffolk and Berkshire. The Hall has now been demolished however remnants of the great estate form an important part of Elford's significance.



Figure 2: Front elevation of Avenue House



Figure 3: Modern satellite imagery showing immediate surrounding development taken from © Google Earth

4. SEARCH FINDINGS

- 4.1 The site is located in the centre of Elford, surrounded by a number of significant buildings such as St Peter's Church and neighbouring listed buildings.

Heritage Gateway Search Extent

- 4.2 Using a 100m search radius around the site, the online Heritage Gateway search area was as shown in Fig 5.

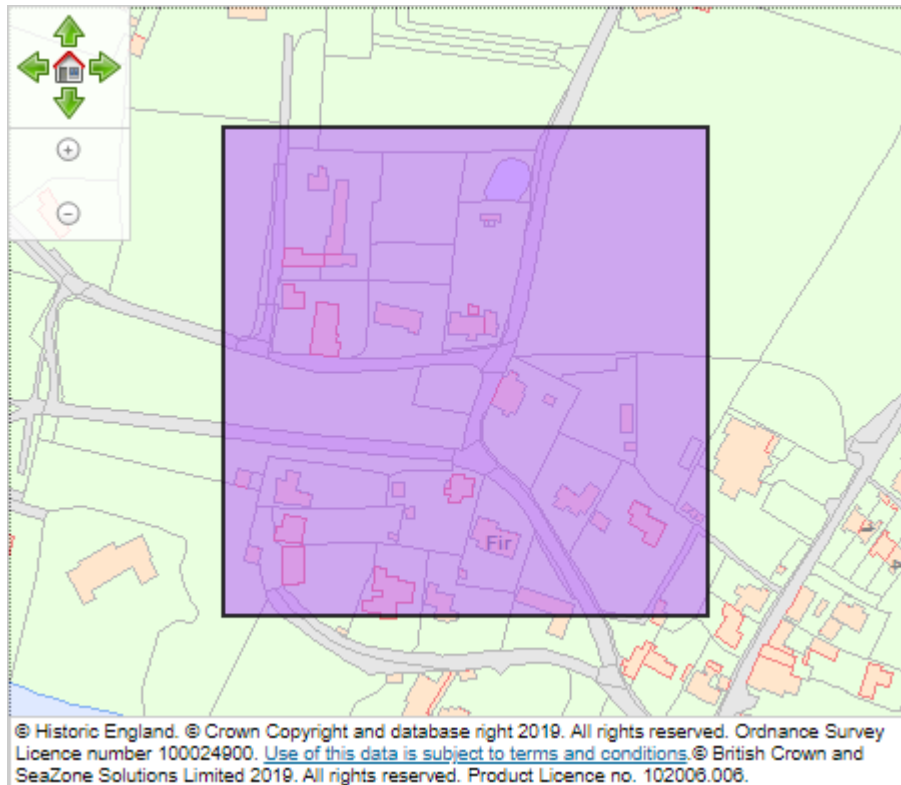
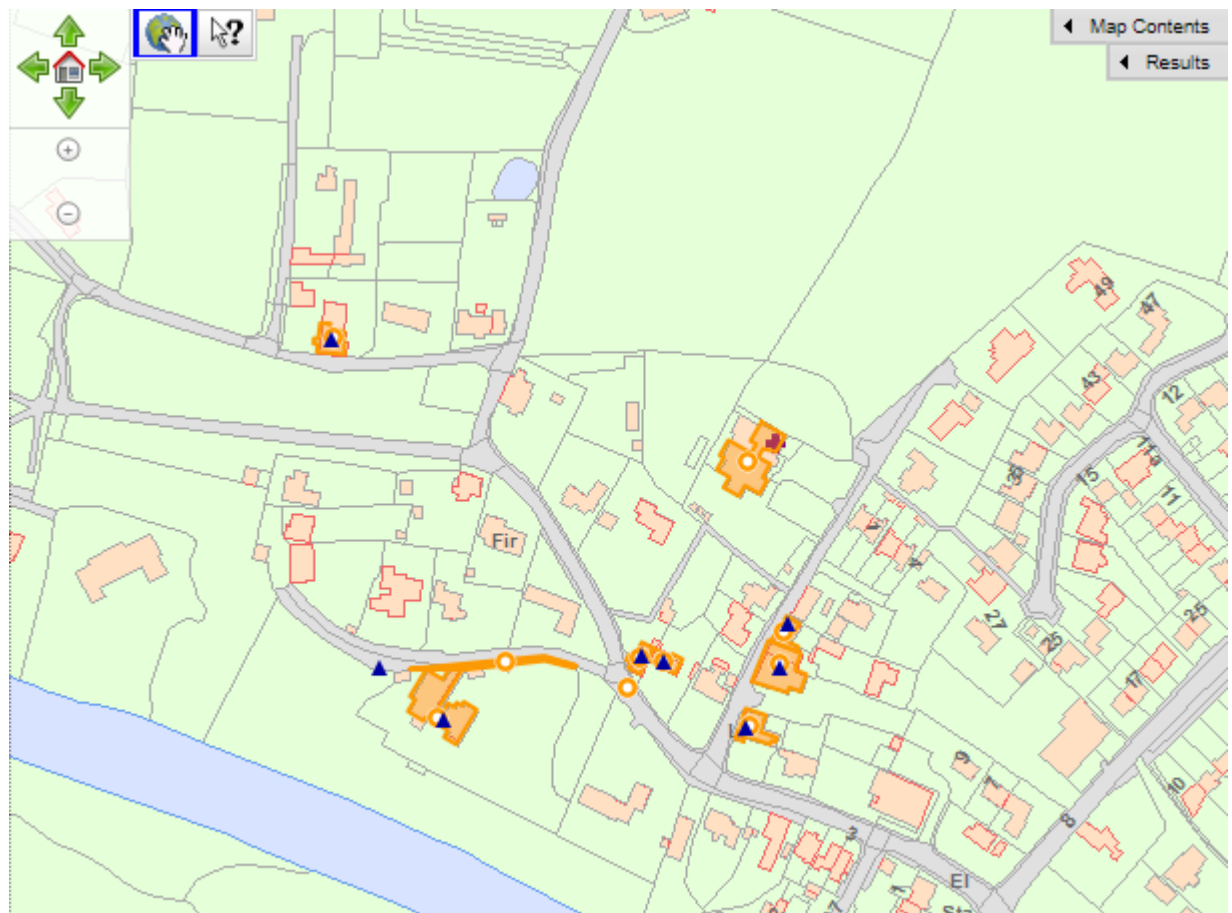


Figure 4: Heritage Gateway Search Area Extent utilised in site data analysis

Search Results



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Legend

- | | |
|---|---|
| ▲ Listed Building (NHLE) | ■ Scheduled Monument (centre point) |
| ■ EH PastScape | ■ Registered Park/Garden (centre point) |
| ○ Local HER record points | ■ Registered Battlefield (centre point) |
| ▲ Local HER record polygons | ■ Protected Wreck Site (centre point) |
| ○ National Trust HBSMR | ■ World Heritage Site |
| ■ Building Preservation Notice | ■ Certificate of Immunity |
| ◆ Designation Decision Records De-listed | ✱ Designation Decision Records Non-designated |
| ● Parks and Gardens (Non Statutory Data) | ✱ NMR Excavation Index |
| ✱ Church Heritage Record (Non Statutory Data) | |

Figure 5: Heritage Gateway Search Results Returned © Historic England ©Crown Copyright

- 4.3 A total of 8 No. Listed Buildings within 100m, 2 No. archaeological results and 10 No. Staffordshire Historic Environment Records (HER) were returned.
- 4.4 It is clear the setting of the application site exists in the context of a number of highly significant heritage assets such as:
- a) Black and White Cottage (Grade II Listed)
 - b) The Cottage (Grade II Listed)
 - c) Crown Cottage (Grade II Listed)
 - d) Elford Post Office (Grade II Listed)
 - e) The Crown Inn (Grade II Listed)
 - f) The Old Rectory (Grade II Listed)
 - g) The Garden Wall On North Boundary Of Garden Of The Old Rectory (Grade II Listed)
- 4.5 Given the substantial number of results returned and the 'Boundary Treatment' nature of the proposal within the current application, it seems proportionate to examine only the records of direct relevance to the building concerned as part of the site data gathering process. Therefore, these records include:

List Description for Avenue House

- a) SK 1810-1910 ELFORD C.P. ELFORD 10/74 - Avenue House - II

House. Late C18. Red brick; plain tile roof with raised verges; brick integral end stacks. Formerly L-shaped in plan, principal range aligned east-west facing south and rear service wing aligned north- south, later extensions to the rear. 3 storeys, reduced proportions to the second floor; 3 windows, casements with segmental heads; central part-glazed door with rectangular overlight. Interior: central full height dog-leg staircase with turned balusters. Dining room to the west has a former wall cupboard, now alcove, with segmental head and raised and fluted key; several C18 panelled doors; 2 fireplaces on second floor with corbelled mantelpieces and cast iron grates; kitchen in the rear wing has a large open fireplace and stopped ceiling beams.

Elford Conservation Area Appraisal

- 4.6 The Elford Conservation Area Appraisal highlights the location of the village essentially adjacent the River Tame. The village is quiet, the historic core retains much of its 'English Village' characteristics making it a desirable place to live.
- 4.7 The key significance characteristics highlighted within the Conservation Appraisal include:
- a) *The location of the settlement is highly significant, situated as it is on the banks of the River Tame, surrounded by fertile agricultural land and near to a strategic crossing point.*
 - b) *There has been continuous human habitation in this location since the Neolithic period. Neolithic and Roman archaeological remains have been excavated and there are cropmarks and linear features with possible dates from all periods from the Neolithic through to the post medieval period*
 - c) *Elford was home to the Howard Family whose titles included the Earldoms of Suffolk and Berkshire. While the Hall has long been demolished the remnants of this great estate form an important part of Elford's significance.*
 - d) *Areas of dense tree cover, groups of and individual trees as well as hedges are an important part of the character of the conservation area. They provide a green background to the buildings; they define spaces and frame views.*
 - e) *The combination of formal landscaping predominantly to the west side of the conservation area and an informal scattering of houses in much of the rest of the conservation area gives Elford a unique character.*
 - f) *The concentration of historic buildings, both listed and unlisted is an integral part of the significance of the conservation area.*

5. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.1 Noting the above findings it is clear the Conservation Area has agricultural origins, some significance in archaeological terms from the Neolithic period and a particular English character that contribute to the sense of place. Avenue House itself has a characterful architectural frontage, bay window and rear outbuildings all completed in a traditional style with what appear to be original windows and an open gravelled driveway area to the side of the property.

6. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The proposed development in this case relates to the erection of 1.2m high estate fencing adjacent to existing residential property with a 4m wide opening electric gate.

Direct Heritage Implications

- 6.2 There are no direct heritage impacts as a consequence of the development. There are no proposed changes to the main architectural frontage of the building or the buildings on the wider plot.

Character and Setting Implications

- 6.3 The approval via Prior Notification for the removal of an existing tree adjacent the site entrance has already been granted by the Council and as such does not form part of these proposals.
- 6.4 The erection of the gate/fencing does not impact hedgerows in the context of the site or have any effect on trees on the main green opposite. The fencing is designed to reflect the character of fencing in the immediate vicinity of the site (See fig.



Figure 6: Galvanized Estate Fencing adjacent application site (image taken from Google Earth (c))

- 6.5 The design is aimed to be agricultural in style with some ornate details to reflect the intricacy of the design apparent in some aspects of the main house so as to reflect the higher status of the house. The fencing in this case is proposed to have a black powder coated finish. In addition it will serve to avoid unauthorised access and egress from the applicant's land. In the past car theft has occurred to the applicant on one occasion from the property opposite within which he previously resided. Hence a more self contained yard will assist in preventing any such occurrence again.

7. CONCLUSIONS REGARDING EFFECT ON SIGNIFICANCE

- 7.1 The application seeks formal planning consent and listed building consent for the erection of a 1.2m high estate style fence with electric gate.
- 7.2 The proposals have no direct effect on the main historic fabric of the building or its architectural appearance. We have examined the heritage significance of the building and surrounding Conservation Area. We consider the fencing proposed adopts a style and design that is

characteristic of the area, would be in keeping and would not impact the key heritage significance that gives the area its sense of place (i.e. agricultural origins, English Village Character, Neolithic Archaeological Interest – as referenced in the Elford Conservation Area Appraisal).

7.3 Accordingly the application should be approved without delay.