

November 2023

Corner Cottage, The Street, Long Sutton. Hampshire. RG29 1ST

Heritage Impact Statement

for the installation of a timber retaining wall (retrospective).

Introduction;

This statement relates to a proposal to provide a curved retaining wall formed of vertically placed timber sleepers at the front of corner cottage at its boundary with Cope Lane and The Street in Long Sutton.

The property, known as Corner Cottage, lies set back on the west side this junction as shown on the plan below. This property is a semi-detached family house, is Grade II Listed and lies within the village's conservation area.

Its front garden sits elevated from the adjoining roads and has previously sloped down thereto.

This bank between the garden and hedge level down to the highway level, was slowly spilling into Cope Lane and then being eroded backwards by traffic and high volumes of water run off down the road (possibly exacerbated by new development at Cope Lane).

In order to provide for a more robust interface here between the road edge and the garden to Corner Cottage a low retaining structure of natural materials and with associated planting has been installed. (See photographs overleaf).



Street view - Corner Cottage showing the garden 'spillage' into Copse Lane prior to installation of the new retaining structure



Photos of new retaining structure and associated planting.



Photo showing finished edge to the Lane. Completed by highway engineers.



Policy and determining Issues.

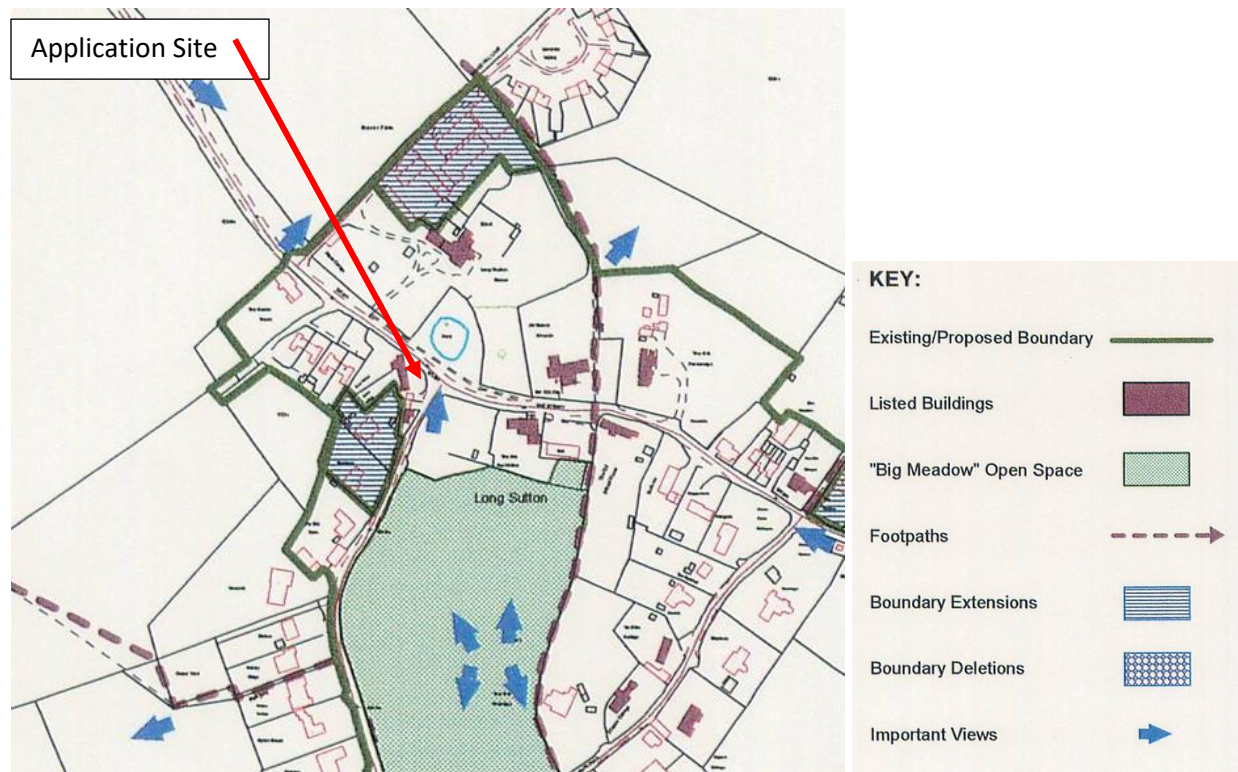
As the property is identified as a heritage asset with its curtilage within the Conservation Area - (which includes certain (permitted) development restrictions known as Article 4 Directions) - it has been assessed that consent is required for these works.

These 'Article 4 Directions' are issued by the Council where specific control over development is required where the character of an area of acknowledged importance would be threatened.

New developments are allowed within such areas and within Conservation Areas generally but require that special consideration be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the designated area.

The site does lie within the urban settlement boundary of Long Sutton where there does exist a presumption in favour of development subject to compliance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) objectives and the relevant saved Local Planning Policies.

The extract from the villages Conservation Area Appraisal map is shown overleaf.



The Conservation Area Appraisal does include reference to a nearby 'important view' recognised towards the village pond from adjacent to the application site, and in relation to the adopted Article 4 Direction the appraisal specifically says;

11.4 **Article 4 Directions**

In January 1998 a direction was made under article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 removing permitted development rights in respect of the following forms of frontage development in the Long Sutton and other conservation areas in the district:-

- e) The erection, alteration or demolition of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure within the curtilage of dwelling house. (This covers all built boundary treatments including those of under 1 metre in height);

Accordingly, Permission is now sought retrospectively for the installed retaining structure.

Impact Assessment

The extent of the proposed change is not significant enough to be classified as a 'notifiable' set of works that requires the assessment of the proposals by Historic England.

The proposals do not involve the loss or removal of any features of particular or unique 'Historic' significance or interest.

Similarly, no views, trees or landscape features are affected by the proposal.

The important views of the village pond that contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area here are not adversely impacted in any way by the proposal but rather the works offer a visual improvement over the pre-existing condition here.

The Government's overarching planning policy framework (NPPF) provides a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It makes it clear that for decision taking (on applications for planning permission) this means:

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay;*
- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - i. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - ii. *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.*

The presumption is that planning permission should be granted unless there are good reasons in an up- to-date plan to resist such.

Of key importance here also is guidance which goes on to confirm that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles.

The NPPF does however seek to protect heritage assets, stating that:

" 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification...."

In considering applications for works affecting heritage assets therefore, the Local Planning Authority must consider the effect of an application on the significance of the asset weighing applications in a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The adopted Hart Local Plan reflects these objectives at Policy NBE 9 which states that development proposals should conserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings, taking account of their significance.

Proposals that would affect a designated or non designated heritage asset must be supported by a heritage statement (proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and the potential impact of the proposal) that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, identifies the nature and level of potential impacts on the significance of the heritage asset, and sets out how the findings of the assessment has informed the proposal in order to avoid harm in the first instance, or minimise or mitigate harm to the significance of the asset.

Proposals which would lead to the loss of, or harm to, the significance of a heritage asset and/or its setting, will not be permitted unless they meet the relevant tests and assessment factors specified in the National Planning Policy Framework.

There will always remain development opportunities within such locations and where materials are chosen and used sympathetically and local details are fully understood and respected then it is possible to take an informed and creative approach, and to ensure that the quality of new building work will complement both its host location and its neighbours whether it is of contemporary or more traditional design, or a combination of both.

In this case there are two heritage assets to be considered. The listed cottage itself and the conservation area generally.

The relative small scale of the proposed works, does not detract from or adversely impact the cottage itself or the features thereof that merited its listing in 1987.

The new retaining structure is of a scale and materials sympathetic to its rural / village setting and includes planting that will in time further soften its visual appearance.

The structure does not detract from public realm view and will not materially alter the established character set by the host property in this part of the conservation area.

In the light of this it is contended that those practical improvements presented by the new installation of significant public benefit to the users of the adjoining lanes here and the resultant lack of significant harm caused is sufficient to allow for the development to remain.

This in turn will thus preserve the characteristics of the conservation area in the vicinity of the application site.

CONCLUSION;

The proposals will have no adverse impact upon the character or quality of the property itself or the wider Conservation Area in accordance with Government planning guidance and the retained policies of the adopted Local Plan.

The proposal addresses NPPF guidance which requires that LPA's set a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment ...in a manner appropriate to their significance, putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation and the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring.

The proposal has considered the available evidence and has assessed the impact of the proposed works upon the heritage assets - in this case the listed cottage itself and Long Sutton Conservation Area.

The proposed works avoid conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and the identifiable need to improve the functionality of the existing property's curtilage where it meets the public highway.

For all of these reasons we look forward to the support of the Local Planning Authority.