

Church Gate, Southam.

Planning Statement:



ERIC COLE ARCHITECTURE

Context:

The site has been inherited by the family of the previous occupants.

The site comprises a substantial modern but dated dwelling that has been extended, along with an older lodge adjacent to the highway. Both buildings are independent dwellings in their own right and the site is split approximately in half as shown on the Ordnance Survey maps.

Site Location:



Image Accessed on Google Earth, May 2022

Planning History

In 1992 an application to erect a new dwelling on the site was refused. This was appealed under T/APP/G1630/A/92/204546/P7. The Inspector dismissed the appeal on the following grounds:

- The adjacent listed church and tythe barn are vulnerable to development and it was considered that building around the church would be harmful to the heritage asset.
- Given the harmful impact on the church which is considered vital to the village scene, building in close proximity to the church would adversely affect the appearance and character of the locality.

This refused proposal accessed the site via the existing private drive, and sited a building in close proximity to the listed church. Whilst there was some logic in siting the new dwelling behind the dense planting that surrounds the church, the inspector notes that the deciduous trees would reveal the church in longer views at certain times of the year.



Site Location, three-dimensional view:



Image Accessed on Google Earth, May 2022

Historic England mapping confirms the presence of heritage assets surrounding the site. The planning history for the site confirms that the Tithe Barn and Church of the Ascension are the key issues, but regard should be had to all nearby assets:



Image Accessed on Historic England Website, May 2022



Heritage:

Under the submitted pre-app The LPA's conservation officer commented the following:

"The scale, design, details and materials of the proposed buildings emulate a pair of modest cottages in the Cotswold vernacular. It is likely that such a design would assimilate well with the surrounding architecture.

The location of the two proposed dwellings is logical and would form part of the street frontage. It is likely that such a layout would assimilate well with the existing context.

The location of the parking is close to the church, and although not built form the appearance of multicoloured vehicles and glinting from reflective glass generated by the vehicles could be an issue. Some gentle screening may be required.

The proposed of development of this land and its impact upon the heritage assets cannot be established without a site visit therefore the principle of this development in regard to heritage constraints is unknown."

The previous application for a new dwelling on this site was refused due to the heritage impact and therefore the impact on the surrounding heritage assets is key to the success of the proposal. The LPA's conservation officer was largely supportive of the proposed design and location of the new dwellings, but also noted that a site visit would be required to assess the impact on the nearby listed buildings.

With heritage being a major constraint, we consulted Natalie Fenner, an independent Heritage Consultant and former Conservation Officer with the aim of establishing any detrimental effects on nearby heritage assets and designing them out of the scheme prior to submission.

The impact on surrounding heritage assets has been assessed and the proposal is considered to have no detrimental impact on the character, setting, or significance. The development is considered to have an overall neutral impact. Please refer to the submitted Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment for further detail.

Given that the proposed design is generally considered to be appropriate, and the impact assessment confirms that neutral harm is caused, the proposal has successfully mitigated the concerns raised in previous applications.



Flooding:

In the pre-app response, the LPA raised no concerns over flooding.

The Flood Maps for Planning confirm that flooding is not a concern for this site:



Flood Mapping: the site is within Flood Zone 1.

Planning Policy:

The Development Plan consists of a Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and the Tewkesbury Borough Plan (TBP)

LPP SD5: Green Belt:

The Green Belt policy SD5 is effectively section 13 of the NPPF. There are 5 stated aims of a Green Belt:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.



The proposal addresses these aims as follows:

1. The proposal does not result in the sprawl of a large built-up area.
2. The application site is within the settlement and therefore cannot result in merging.
3. As the site is within the settlements, the proposal cannot encroach on the countryside.
4. Southam is a rural settlement with historic elements, but under the TBP settlement hierarchy it is not defined as a "Town".
5. Urban regeneration is not applicable to this proposal.

It may be claimed that aim 4 which concerns the impact on historic towns is applicable to this site given that Southam is historic. As stated above, Southam is not defined as a town. Had this policy been intended to apply to any settlement, then the word "settlement" would have been used.

It should also be noted that under the previous refusal for a new dwelling, neither the LPA's reason for refusal nor the inspector's decision cited the green belt as an issue for small-scale infill at this site. The issue has always been the historic context and impact on nearby heritage assets, which has been suitably mitigated in this proposal and confirmed to result in neutral harm.

On that basis, we find no conflict with policy SD5 of the JCS. The proposal is modest, continues established patterns of development, and does not conflict with any of the stated aims above.

Policy SD10: Residential Development:

As the site is outside of a development boundary then SD10 (4) and (6) apply:

- 4. Housing development on other sites will only be permitted where:**
 - i. It is for affordable housing on a rural exception site in accordance with Policy SD12, or;*
 - ii. It is infilling within the existing built up areas of the City of Gloucester, the Principal Urban Area of Cheltenham or Tewkesbury Borough's towns and villages except where otherwise restricted by policies within District plans, or;*
 - iii. It is brought forward through Community Right to Build Orders, or;*
 - iv. There are other specific exceptions / circumstances defined in district or neighbourhood.*

- 6. Residential development should seek to achieve the maximum density compatible with good design, the protection of heritage assets, local amenity, the character and quality of the local environment, and the safety and convenience of the local and strategic road network.**

The proposal qualifies as infill given that it fills a gap between two existing residential properties. In terms of density, we believe the proposal to be compatible with the character of the site whilst suitably respecting the setting of nearby heritage assets. This has been confirmed by our Heritage Consultant.

Given the above we find no conflict with the JCS.



Tewkesbury Borough Plan:

Southam is outside of any defined settlement boundaries and therefore policy RES3 is relevant which states:

Outside of defined settlement boundaries the principle of new build residential development will be considered acceptable where development being proposed consists of:

- 1. The reuse of a redundant or disused permanent building (subject to Policy RES7) The subdivision of an existing dwelling into two or more self-contained residential units (subject to Policy RES8)*
- 2. Very small-scale development at rural settlements in accordance with Policy RES4*
- 3. A replacement dwelling (subject to Policy RES9)*
- 4. A rural exception site for affordable housing (subject to Policy RES6)*
- 5. Dwellings essential for rural workers to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside (subject to Policy AGR3)*
- 6. A site that has been allocated through the Development Plan or involves development through local initiatives including Community Right to Build Orders and Neighbourhood Development Orders.*

The proposal qualifies as small-scale development at a rural settlement and therefore must be assessed under Policy RES4. In the reasoned justification for RES3, accordance with NPPF 79 is referenced.

NPPF 79:

79. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

It should be noted that NPPF 79 requires local planning policies to identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive. Policy RES3 states that a “restrictive” approach is required in accordance with NPPF 79. The wording above from the NPPF is not overtly restrictive and encourages local planning authorities to promote sustainable development in rural areas and identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, the focus being on locating housing where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

The proposal places two new dwellings within an existing residential area at the heart of a rural community. Therefore, accordance with NPPF 79 can be demonstrated and the proposal qualifies as very small-scale development under RES3.



RES4:

To support the vitality of rural communities and the continued availability of services and facilities in the rural areas, very small-scale residential development will be acceptable in principle within and adjacent to the built-up area of other rural settlements (i.e. those not featured within the settlement hierarchy) providing:

- a) it is of a scale that is proportionate to the size and function of the settlement and maintains or enhances sustainable patterns of development;*
- b) it does not have an adverse cumulative impact on the settlement having regard to other developments permitted during the plan period; as a general indication no more than 5% growth will be allowed;*
- c) it complements the form of the settlement and is well related to existing buildings within the settlement;*
- d) the site of the proposed development is not of significant amenity value or makes a significant contribution to the character and setting of the settlement in its undeveloped state;*
- e) the proposal would not result in the coalescence of settlements*
- f) the site is not located in the Green Belt, unless the proposal would involve limited infilling in a village, limited affordable housing for local community needs (in accordance with Policy RES6) or any other exceptions explicitly stated within the National Planning Policy Framework.*

In all cases development must comply with the relevant criteria set out at Policy RES5. Particular attention will be given to the effect of the development on the form, character, and landscape setting of the settlement.

The proposal addresses the requirements of RES4 in the following ways:

Criterion (a)

The site is located on the main road through Southam which is a 30mph road. Both sides of this road are lined with dwellings. On the northern side of the road the dwellings on either side of the site are set relatively close to the road with no pavements. Visibility for pedestrians and cyclists is generally good and the road has a low speed limit.

On the south side of the road is a good quality kerbed footpath that provides a direct route from the site to the nearest bus stops 350m away. There are 6 bus stops within 8 minutes walk where there are buses into Cheltenham every 15 minutes.

The location is sustainable and the dwellings slot neatly into an established pattern of development. Therefore, the requirement to maintain or enhance sustainable patterns of development has been met.

Criterion (b)

Census data to 2011 indicates that there were circa 237 dwellings in Southam and therefore a 5% increase would be an additional 12 dwellings. These are to be allowed over the plan period 2011-2031. Given that the plan has only just been adopted with only 9 years remaining of its 20-year lifespan, a view must be taken by officers on how this is to be interpreted in real terms.



A review of the planning file indicates that since 2011 only 3 new dwellings have been approved, along with some approvals for holiday accommodation which whilst technically C3 dwellinghouses, should not, in our view, be deemed to be the approval of housing given that holiday lets cannot function as open-market dwellings. In addition, the amalgamation of 2 houses occurred under a Certificate of Lawful Development, resulting in the loss of one dwelling.

Therefore, under the plan period Southam has seen the settlement increase by 2 dwellings. This leaves plenty of scope for additional dwellings to be permissible under RES4.

Criterion (c)

The proposal has been located to integrate with the existing pattern of development by infilling a gap between two existing dwellings on Southam Lane. The new properties address the street and are accessed via a shared driveway which is consistent with dwellings on the north side of the road.

The property to the west, Monk's Rest, is sited to the western end of its plot, whereas Priory lodge to the east is sited at the easternmost side of its plot. Therefore, by siting the new dwellings in the western corner of the application site, sufficient separation between buildings is provided to maintain the extant character of properties in this area.

Criterion (d)

The wording of this new policy is questionable as it states that development will be permitted providing the site:

“makes a significant contribution to the character and setting of the settlement in its undeveloped state”.

We assume that the policy intended to state:

*“the site **does not make** a significant contribution to the character and setting of the settlement in its undeveloped state”.*

We have based our assessment on the assumption that the LPA does not seek to direct development to sites that significantly contribute to the character and setting of settlements in their undeveloped state.

The site is privately owned garden land. Whilst the green space is a pleasant feature on Southam Lane the public are not able to access or use it in any way, so its amenity value is limited to visual amenity only.

Looking at the site in detail it is obviously a domestic garden with mown grass, a few trees and some hedging and other vegetation. The view into the site is terminated by Church Gate, a substantial modern property of no historic or aesthetic value. Similarly, a range of domestic sheds and other structures are visible across the site. The land provides a pleasant outlook for a few properties over the road and any passers-by. However, given that its contribution is limited to visual amenity and what is visible is essentially a large domestic garden with associated domestic paraphernalia we do not find its contribution to be significant.



In autumn and winter, it may be possible to access glimpses of the church through the trees. This is an important visual connection and so has been maintained in the proposal. However, we must also note that at any point this land could be enclosed by fencing or planting which would effectively block any visual amenity provided by the land, or views through to the heritage assets.

We must also consider the views across the site from the heritage assets to the north. From the church the view of the location of the dwellings is limited due to the significant planting on the southern boundary. From the other buildings to the north the view is dominated by Church Gate itself and so views of the new dwellings would be limited to glimpses beyond the existing building and between the vegetation. Due to the change in ground levels these glimpses would be of an appropriate roofscape adjacent to a residential street. We do not consider this to be harmful given the prominence of Church Gate itself and the fact that views from the public realm through to the church are preserved.

Taking the Church Gate site as a single consideration in its entirety undoubtedly results in a need to suitably preserve the setting of the heritage assets and therefore new development near those assets has the potential to cause harm. However, the new dwellings sit lower in the topography and are separated from the heritage assets by a considerable distance. The Church and the Tithe Barn are both separated from the new dwellings by circa 60 metres, Monk's Rest is a little closer at circa 35 metres but is screened by dense planting, trees sheds and a fence.

In the southern half of the site the distance to the heritage assets combined with the preserved visibility of the church in the autumn, suggests that this area can accommodate a suitably designed and sited development. The additional access for vehicular traffic and enhanced landscaping provides a conservation benefit.

Criterion (e)

The location within the middle of the settlement cannot result in the coalescence of settlements.

Criterion (f)

The site is located in the Green Belt but qualifies as limited infilling in a village.

RES4 Summary:

The principle is consistent with all requirements under RES4. The key issue is preserving the setting of the heritage assets to the north, which the submitted Impact Assessment confirms is achieved by the proposal.

This proposal presents an opportunity to secure a development within the bounds of policy RES4 and carefully manage the historic site constraints to produce something genuinely worthwhile.



Policy RES5 New Housing Development

In considering proposals for new housing development regard will be had to the following principles, as appropriate. Proposals should:

- be of a design and layout that respects the character, appearance and amenity of the surrounding area and is capable of being well integrated within it;
- be of an appropriate scale having regard to the size, function and accessibility of the settlement and its character and amenity, unless otherwise directed by policies within the Development Plan;
- where an edge of settlement site is proposed, respect the form of the settlement and its landscape setting, not appear as an unacceptable intrusion into the countryside and retain a sense of transition between the settlement and open countryside;
- not cause the unacceptable reduction of any open space (including residential gardens) which is important to the character and amenity of the area;
- provide an acceptable level of amenity for the future occupiers of the proposed dwelling(s) and cause no unacceptable harm to the amenity of existing dwellings;
- make provision for appropriate parking and access arrangements and not result in the loss or reduction of existing parking areas to the detriment of highway safety;
- incorporate into the development any natural or built features on the site that are worthy of retention;
- Make provision for the delivery of efficient and effective high-quality household waste collection services that supports the implementation of the waste hierarchy and encourages the practice of resource efficiency and waste reduction;
- address any other environmental or material planning constraints relating to the site.

The first thing to note is that RES5 requires proposals to have regard to these principles, where appropriate. The LPA conservation Officer, Planning Officer, and the independent Heritage Consultant all consider the design of the dwellings to be appropriate and therefore consistent with RES5.

Scale of the Proposal:

Southam Census Data indicates that most of the existing dwellings are detached and that in terms of occupancy, most dwellings have only two occupants. This suggests an older population, which is confirmed by the age group data that shows 50% of the population are aged between 30 and 60 whereas the lowest figures are represented by people aged 15-30.



This suggests that smaller, less expensive properties are needed to attract younger people to the area. This accords with NPPF 79 which seeks opportunities for villages to grow and thrive. The village is lacking smaller terraced properties but given that a terrace requires a minimum of 3 dwellings and in our preliminary assessments we determined that two dwellings would be the appropriate amount for the site, it was agreed that two demi-detached family homes would be a good fit for the village.

Therefore, the modest scale of the proposal relative to the site area is considered appropriate and consistent with RES5.

Design & Layout:

The dwellings are designed as stone built 1.5 storey buildings with some variation in the principal elevation to avoid the overly uniform appearance of most new build properties.

Looking along Southam lane there is no specific overriding style. Some general themes can be extracted such as properties sitting on higher land are generally single or 1.5 storeys, whereas dwellings on the lower side of the road tend to be 2-storey. The use of artificial stone and UPVC windows is widespread, and there are a mixture of gable ends and hipped roofs. Some properties are rendered, some feature modern cladding. Overall, there is a mixture of styles and materials that do not indicate a style or character that typifies properties in Southam.

On the north side of Southam lane where the site is located, we find the historic properties. These are generally stone with gable ends, but there are also timber framed buildings with thatched roofs, and modern buildings built from artificial materials. Again, there are a mixture of styles, but the proposal shows a gable ended stone building as this seems appropriate for the context and should integrate well.

The dwellings are set close to the road to emulate the layout of Priory Lodge and to provide an access which is consistent with those on the north side of the road. Individual access points and driveways would be inappropriate in this location and result in too drastic a change to the established character of well spaced-out driveways, often serving multiple properties.

All parking and amenity space is located behind the dwellings to maintain the open character of the site. Garages are shown for the new dwellings which are aligned with Church Gate and set behind the new dwellings, again to maintain the sight lines through to the orchard.

Priory Lodge can take advantage of the new access, providing parking to the side/rear of the building. This is vastly superior to the current undersized pull-in off the main road.

In design terms the new dwellings and alterations have been specifically arranged to maintain privacy and amenity, and to integrate into the existing pattern of development. The advice received under the pre-application enquiry confirms that the proposal achieves this aim.



Reduction of Open space:

RES5 considers the reduction of open space, including residential gardens. This differs slightly from RES4 where it is only land that is of significant amenity value that must be avoided. The green space that the site provides is of course part of the character in this area and contributes to the amenity of surrounding dwellings. However, the policy concerns the “unacceptable reduction” of open space that is “important” to the character and amenity of the area. Therefore, the task at hand is to determine whether the land is important and if so, what an unacceptable reduction might be.

Importance:

At present the site is garden land and is a pleasant green space with a few trees dotted about the site. As there are views through to modern dwellings and other structures, this site could not be assumed to be at the edge of the settlement or misconstrued as open countryside. The site has the appearance of a maintained private property.

The historic buildings to the north of the site and The Church of the Ascension are only partially visible during the autumn and winter but these views should be maintained. In addition, views from the church out into the surrounding land must be taken into account to ensure the setting of the Listed Building is preserved.

The general character of the north side of the road as experienced from the public realm, is a fairly loose-knit collection of dwellings with significant planting and hedging and no clear property boundaries. To the east this becomes more formal with higher density dwellings set back from the roadside with shared driveways.

The land is of course pleasant and contributes to the general character and amenity, but in terms of general amenity the open nature of the site benefits the handful of properties opposite and passers-by with some importance in terms of visual links to the church, but these are limited and generally not available for much of the year.

We must also consider the value of the land as experienced from the designated heritage assets nearby. The land shares a boundary with the Church of the Ascension and Monk’s Rest. Both buildings are accessed via Church Lane with the buildings themselves sited some distance from the boundary with the Church Gate site. Whilst from the south the land that borders the road is of limited importance and amenity value, the contribution that the northern half of the site makes to the setting of the nearby heritage assets is a factor to be considered.

Unacceptable Reduction:

The insertion of two dwellings unavoidably “reduces” the open space. However, the question is not whether a reduction occurs but whether that reduction is unacceptable. The proposed dwellings are located in one corner of the site to properly address Southam Lane and to leave such views through the site to the Church, when available.

The new dwellings will present appropriate stone dwellings to the public realm. The enhanced landscaping will be visible through the retained gap between the dwellings and Priory Lodge. This will result in the enhancement of the amenity value for the nearby heritage assets, the public, and the new and existing dwellings.



We acknowledge that in principle the open space is reduced, but this reduction is not unacceptable and is mitigated by the proposed improvements, which ensure that the site remains open and can continue to contribute towards the general amenity and character of the settlement.

Parking & Access:

The site is currently accessed via a private drive which is a long established and single vehicle width access where vehicles cannot pass. Adjacent to Priory Lodge is an existing access which is inadequate as it requires users to reverse out into traffic.

The proposal includes a new access off Southam Lane which replaces the access to Priory Lodge and provides for the two new dwellings. Access to church gate remains as existing.

Suitable technical advice has been sought on the type of access that should be provided. Please refer to drawing AMANT/D01 which details the new access and demonstrates that the necessary visibility splays can be provided.

Boundary treatments are shown at heights not exceeding 600mm to maintain visibility. There have been zero accidents recorded in this location on Southam Lane. However, this is based on the occasional occupation of Priory Lodge in recent years, and it is anticipated that if the site is sold and the dwelling permanently occupied, the extant access and parking poses an unnecessary risk which is easily resolved via the formation of the proposed access.

The proposal improves safety and visibility and is therefore acceptable.

General Amenity:

The considerable gaps between dwellings and the substantial boundary planting ensure no loss of amenity to the existing dwellings. The new dwellings are provided with substantial gardens and private sitting out space.

Below are the shortest distances between the new dwellings and surrounding properties, which confirm that the proposal is suitably located:

Priory Lodge	15 metres
Church Gate	20 metres
Manor Cottage	26 metres
The Gallops	29 Metres
Southam Lodge	30 Metres
Monk's Rest	35 Metres
Monk's Well	55 Metres
Tithe Barn	60 Metres
Church	65 Metres



RES5 Summary:

The proposed dwellings do not result in a loss of amenity to nearby dwellings and serve to substantially improve access and parking for existing dwellings, whilst providing a conservation benefit for the heritage assets.

The design respects the character and quality of the settlement, and the development as a whole is of an appropriate scale, providing only a 0.8% increase in dwellings.

Whilst the proposal results in a reduction of open space, the open space is not lost to the development and the important visual link to the church is maintained.

On that basis, we believe the proposal has regard to the aims stated under RES5.

Planning Policy – Pre-App

The pre-application advice received is as follows:

The site falls within the Green Belt. The Paragraph 149 of the NPPF advises that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt.

Exceptions to this are:

(a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;

(b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

(c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

(d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

(e) limited infilling in villages;

(f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and

(g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or

not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

The proposed dwellings would constitute ‘infilling’ so the overall principle of two houses on this area of land is considered to be acceptable.

The officer advising on the application confirms that our interpretation of green belt policy is correct and therefore the principle of development on this site is acceptable.



Biodiversity:

The only risk to wildlife habitat in the proposal is the loss of the hedge that runs along Southam Road. This alteration is not an intrinsic feature of the scheme, but at the same time it is a hedge that borders a residential site and can be removed at any time without consent.

The land that is to be developed is a domestic garden with maintained grass. Building on this area will not result in the loss of important habitat or have any other adverse impact on wildlife.

Policy NAT1 states that proposals that will conserve, and where possible restore and/or enhance, biodiversity will be permitted.

NAT1 also states that proposals will, where applicable, be required to deliver a biodiversity net gain.

The proposal has a negligible impact on biodiversity considering that the hedgerow can be removed at any time. The proposed creation and enhancement of the landscaping on the site will result in a biodiversity net gain, which weighs in favour of the proposal.

Under the pre-application enquiry, no biodiversity constraints were identified, and no ecological assessments requested. We sought the advice of a registered ecologist who confirmed that for a maintained garden in the middle of a populated village, immediately adjacent to the main road, the ecological concerns were minimal and therefore a PEA or PRA was unnecessary.

Heritage & Listed Building Policy:

Policy HER2 Listed Buildings

- Alterations, extensions or changes of use to Listed Buildings, or development within their setting, will be expected to have no adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest, including their settings.
- Any proposals which adversely affect such elements or result in the significant loss of historic fabric will not be permitted.
- Any alterations, extensions or repairs to the Listed Buildings should normally be carried out using the
- traditional materials and building techniques of the existing building.

The proposed access means that all activity associated with the new dwellings will be concentrated around Southam Lane, preserving the character and setting of the private drive to the church. In terms of the new buildings, these are located circa 60 metres from the Tithe Barn and the Church. Typically, 50 metres is taken as the distance beyond which a proposal is less likely to impact the setting of a heritage asset but obviously this can vary depending on the site constraints and context.

The proposal seeks to maintain important sight lines from Southam Lane to the church, preserving the contribution the heritage asset makes to the settlement. The new dwellings are not considered to adversely impact the character or setting of the heritage assets given the distance between them, and the proposed form and materials in the draft dwelling designs are appropriate for an historic context. The addition of a second access to Church Gate would, as noted above, reduce activity on



the private driveway. Therefore, the significance of the heritage assets is preserved, and their setting enhanced.

Policy HER2 requires there be no adverse impact on the elements which contribute to the special architectural or historic interest or setting of the assets. Given the above, we believe the proposal accords with this requirement.

The pre-app consultation and advice from our heritage consultant confirms that the proposal has a neutral impact and is therefore acceptable.

Green Belt Policy:

The TBP Green Belt policy is effectively the same as the JCS policy. Accordance with this has been demonstrated and confirmed by the LPA.

Policy GRB4 addresses development in the Green Belt. GRB4, 2 lists forms of development that are not inappropriate, providing they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with its purposes. Criterion (a) is relevant to this proposal:

“a) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land;”

The proposal qualifies as limited infilling and preserves the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, the proposal qualifies as “not inappropriate” under GRB4 2.

Trees:

The pre-application advice stated the following with regard to the trees on the site:

The proposal will need to be in accordance with the above policies.

The topographical survey shows there will be a hedgerow and trees impacted by this proposal.

To accompany an application, we would require the following information as per our validation checklists:

Tree Survey/ Arboricultural Assessment

All sites with trees and hedges growing within or bounding them, with a stem diameter greater than 75mm when measured at 1.5m above ground level, where the proposals affect the trees/hedges.

The tree survey should be undertaken by a competent arboriculturist and should follow the guidelines set out in BS5837:2012 “ Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – recommendations” or any subsequent revisions.



Following the tree survey, and depending upon the size and scale of the proposals, an Arboricultural Impact Assessment will be required and shall include a tree protection plan, plan indicating trees for retention and removal, an evaluation of impact of proposed tree losses, any specialist issues that may need to be addressed by an arboricultural method statement.

Full guidance on the survey information, arboricultural impact assessment, and method statement that should be provided with an application is set out in in BS5837:2012 "Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – recommendations" or any subsequent revisions.

In response to this advice, we have commissioned a tree survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment. Please refer to the submitted Impact Assessment which confirms that the impact of development within the site is minimal, but includes various recommendations for ensuring that root protection areas for trees in proximity to the proposed development are suitably protected during construction.

As no major arboricultural constraints were identified it is not thought that specific mitigation is required.

Summary:

The pre-application advice provided by the LPA confirmed that the principle of development is acceptable, subject to confirming no adverse impacts on nearby heritage assets or trees.

In response to this we have sought the advice of specialist consultants who have assessed the proposal and its impact, concluding that it has a neutral impact on heritage assets and minimal impact on existing trees.

The historic context has been carefully considered, as has the viability of the proposal and the need to upgrade the existing accommodation. The proposed access off Southam Lane provides suitable access and parking for the new dwellings, but also replaces the inadequate access to Priory Lodge which improves highway safety. Priory Lodge is a potential non-designated heritage asset and therefore the improved access and parking ensures the continued use and maintenance of the property, which is a heritage benefit.

The submitted proposals have been through the LPA's pre-application advice process and the outcome is that this proposal has merit. The potential issues identified by officers have been investigated by qualified specialist consultants who confirm that no detrimental impacts will result from the development.

Given the above, it is considered that this proposal meets all requirements under Government and Local Policy and can therefore be safely approved.

Prepared by Eric Cole Limited, on behalf of the executors.



Appendix:

Planning search showing Southam applications for residential use from 2011 onwards:

11/01297/FUL | Erection of residential dwelling and 3 No. office unit building | Manor Farm Courtyard Southam Lane Southam GL52 3PB - Refused

2/00647/FUL | Erection of 3 dwellings with associated garages and parking following the demolition of existing car sales showroom/office and MOT repair workshop. | Cleeve Hill Garage Cleeve Hill Southam GL52 3PX – withdrawn

12/01156/FUL | Change of use of former public conveniences to provide holiday accommodation, including extensions and alterations to building (Revised Scheme). | Public Conveniences Cleeve Hill Southam. – Approved

12/01254/FUL | Change of use to single live/work unit and complete refurbishment with alterations and restoration of Grade II* Listed Tithe Barn including new extension with planted sedum roof and demolition of existing 20th Century modern extensions. | Southam Tythe Barn Southam Lane Southam GL52 6QE – Approved

17/00928/FUL | Conversion of the shelter shed to a holiday let. | Southam Tithe Barn Southam Lane Southam Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL52 6QE – Approved

19/00682/FUL | Erection of 3no. infill dwellings, new vehicular access and landscaping | Land At Cleeve Hill Southam Cheltenham Gloucestershire – Refuse (AONB)

20/00598/FUL | Proposed erection of a single dwelling, associated parking and landscaping. | Land Adjacent Springbank Old Road Southam Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL52 3NN – Approved

20/01059/FUL | Change of Use of Office / Overnight Accommodation Building to Three Bedroom Dwelling | Malvern View Care Home Cleeve Hill Southam Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL52 3PW – Approved

21/01459/CLP | The proposal is for an amalgamation of the two units to form a single dwelling house to retain the existing C3 (residential) use. | Greenway Lodge And Stonefields House Cleeve Hill Southam Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL52 3PR – Approved – loss of a dwelling.

21/01540/FUL | Erection of dwelling, detached garage and associated works. | Land At Heather Chase Cleeve Hill Southam Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL52 3QE – Refused.