



Historic England

Ms Liz Harrison
Eastleigh Borough Council - Planning
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Direct Dial: 020 7973 3739

Our ref: P01545782

21 December 2023

Dear Ms Harrison

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**THE AGEAS BOWL, MARSHALL DRIVE, WEST END, SOUTHAMPTON
Application No. F/22/93194**

Thank you for your letter of 6 December 2023 regarding further information on the above application for planning permission. On the basis of this information, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

The significance of the adjacent heritage assets, impact of the proposals and relevant policy considerations were outlined in a previous letter dated 12 October 2022 (attached for your convenience). I have also attached two further advice letters, dated 16 August 2023 and 5 October 2023, in response to the submission of additional information.

This response concerns the applicant's submission of a Scheduled Monument Management Plan for Hickley Wood Hillfort and the reduction of housing units within the proposed development.

Setting of Hickley Wood Hillfort

The applicant maintains that the construction of a modern housing development c.60-70m from the northern boundary of the Scheduled Monument would have a 'neutral' impact on its significance. They base this view on the fact that the land is already utilised for car parking and that the site of the hillfort is bounded by tree cover.

As it clearly set out in the Good Practice Advise Note: The Setting of Heritage Assets, the setting of a site can be articulated through the surroundings within which it is experienced. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in



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which we experience an asset is also influenced by other factors, such as the use of adjacent land. Our understanding of the historic relationship between places is also vital and elements that are in close proximity, but not visible, can still have a connection. This would be the case in the setting of this hillfort whereby its immediate environs were important in its initial siting as a defensive settlement during the Iron Age. The current tree cover, as such, which cannot be assumed as permanent, is therefore not a factor in considering the impact on the setting of the monument. Furthermore, the assertion that use of the area as a car park equates its proposed use as a housing development, is unconvincing as the visual impact between the two site types obviously differs.

As the governments advisor regarding matters concerning the historic environment, Historic England is confident in its assessment of the level of harm such development can cause designated heritage assets of this nature. This is also borne out in recent appeal decisions which upheld the importance minimising development within the setting of similar prehistoric Scheduled sites and were a key factor for their refusal. See -

2019 - Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/19/3226286
Land north of Goddards Lane, Sherfield on Loddon RG27 0EG

2019 Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/W/18/3210287
Land adjacent to Bury Hill, Red Rice Road, Upper Clatford, Andover SP11 7PU

2021 Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/W/21/3267489
Garage Block Rear of 25 Albury Road, Merstham, Surrey RH1 3LP

Level of harm

We note that quantum of housing proposed within the latest amendment has reduced slightly. This has allowed for some minor redesigns to the plan form, permeability and density of housing, including along the southern edge which borders Hickley Wood. It is our view that, although offering a small improvement, the change in massing does go a little way to alleviating the level of harm caused.

Taking all of the above points into consideration, it is our position that the level of harm caused by the development would be around the middle of the less than substantial harm range.

Balancing with benefits

It is for your authority to decide whether sufficient public benefits have been delivered that can justify the harm caused to the designated heritage asset under the terms of the NPPF.



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Despite their assertions on the lack of harm the proposals would cause, the applicant wisely offers some specific heritage benefits in the form of a Management Plan for the Scheduled hillfort. This responds to previous comments that we have made and some brief discussion with the applicant's heritage consultants.

The proposals include:

- Interpretation signage within areas adjacent to the Scheduled Monument to raise awareness and provide information on its significance;
- The establishment of a programme of routinely scheduled maintenance works including vegetation management and rubbish removal to better reveal the extant earthworks;
- Improved definition of existing footpaths not on the monument so to ensure these are utilised by visitors, reducing the risk of informal path use which would erode the monument. The latter would also be addressed with the installation of low level non-intrusive fencing (or natural barriers) to discourage access to archaeologically sensitive areas.

These specific heritage benefits could be considered positively as part of the balancing process, when considering the harm that will be caused by the development.

The Management Plan included in the recent submission notes potential ecological constraints in achieving some of these works and these still need to be ironed out, as if any element of the work is problematic then it would lessen the benefit provided.

It is also noted that the proposals within the Management Plan are simply that, proposals. There is no concrete commitment to undertake these works. As such it is problematic to consider them as part of the balancing process if they may not take place.

To this end it is recommended that the works outlined within the Management Plan are robustly secured by condition or that a revised Management Plan is submitted which contains clear commitments that can be upheld by condition. This would need to include a commitment to funding the initial works and the ongoing maintenance costs.

Any proposed works on or affecting the monument may require Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC). Where these would benefit the monument, it is likely that this would be granted, but we would need to be engaged to agree the nature and scope prior to any undertakings.

Recommendation

Historic England has no objection to the application on heritage grounds, however this



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on the basis that the heritage benefits proffered by the applicant are robustly secured and ultimately delivered.

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

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Inspector of Ancient Monuments

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