



Historic England

Mr David Kenyon
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Direct Dial: 0117 975 0725

Our ref: P01156590

11 February 2020

Dear Mr Kenyon

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

**LAND AT MANOR FARM, COMBE HILL, TEMPLECOMBE, SOMERSET
Application No. 19/03416/OUT**

Thank you for your letter of 9 January 2020 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

Significance of affected heritage assets

This is an outline application for up to 80 units with all matters reserved except access. Historic England's interest lies in the grade II* listed Manor House. The Manor House is a linear 17th century building located on a much earlier medieval site and likely to contain earlier fabric within its construction. The manor site was as a Preceptory of the Knight's Templar until the end of the 13th century. A Preceptory was the name given to a manor or estate owned and run by an order of knights and governed by a preceptor. After the 13th century, the site was then owned by the Knights Hospitallers until 1540s, following which it fell into private ownership. During the 17th century, significant works were undertaken on the site, the evidence of which is the current building.

The former complex associated with the site is understood to be much larger than the surviving standing building and maybe evident as belowground archaeology. The heritage statement suggests that the most significant remains of the site's history are likely to be preserved on and around the site of either the farmhouse or manor house. However, this does not preclude the potential for further archaeological remains being found within the setting of the complex. 17th-19th century earthworks have been identified within the application site associated with the garden of the Manor House. There is still potential for below ground archaeology to positively contribute to our understanding of the designated asset and therefore, the significance it holds. This



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has not been considered within the submitted Heritage Statement by Heritage Collective although the archaeological potential of the site is assessed in its own right in the submitted Desk Based Assessment by CgMs (Para 189, NPPF).

The complex has sat outside the boundaries of the Templecombe settlement until the expansion of the village during the 20th century. During this period, the green rural setting was significantly eroded by modern development. The last link held by the property to the rural landscape is the north-west corner of the application site. It provides views down the valley to the surrounding countryside. Although there is a significant hedge along the boundary of the site, this landscape still forms a clear element of the experience and appreciation of the asset, the last vestiges of its rural setting and therefore due to its rarity holds greater value in terms of the contribution it makes to the significance of the asset.

Assessment of proposals within the setting of grade II* listed Manor House

The application is for up to 80 units with all matters reserved except the point of access. Development is proposed up to the northern boundary of the site and extending into the green setting of the house to the west. Steps have been taken to address the impact of development into the green setting of the Manor House by retaining a small strip of land, which will allow for restricted views out to the surrounding countryside. In our view, this further encroachment of modern development into this green setting, will create a more prominent feature eroding the last section of the grade II* listed Manor House's rural significance. This is a key component in understand the former position and relationship of the historic complex with its former surrounding landscape. Consequently, this will result in harm.

Due to the impact being harmful, the proposal fails to preserve or better reveal the significance of the affected heritage asset (Para 200, NPPF). In that respect, it also fails to ensure that the new development makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness of the area and the associated heritage assets (Para 192, NPPF).

As the asset affected is grade II* listed, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation when considering the impact of proposals. As the building is grade II*, it forms the top 8% of all listed buildings in England and consequently has been designated due to its more than special interest (Para 193, NPPF).

We are convinced that a less harmful layout can identified within the application site that will allow for a more meaningful buffer to be created to the grade II* listed Manor House. In our view, alternative layouts, avoiding development in the north-west section while retaining views through the wider countryside, would significantly minimise the impact to the highly designated asset (Para 190, NPPF). We appreciate that this is outline only, but as harm has been identified the NPPF requires that any identified harm should be clear and convincingly justified (Para 194, NPPF). As part of that





justification, the council should explore whether an alternative scheme could be accommodated on the site that avoided the harmful impact identified.

Assessment of the proposals on potential below ground archaeology

In terms of the archaeological implications, given the close proximity and pattern of settlement development it is likely that any archaeological remains preserved on the development site have the potential to make a positive contribution to the significance the manor house derives from its setting (NPPF 190/194). Consequently, whilst the submitted documentation indicates that the remains are not thought sufficiently significant to preclude development (NPPF 197) some areas may nonetheless warrant consideration for preservation.

We would recommend that your authority are guided by the advice of your specialist archaeological adviser at South West Heritage Trust in this regard and in all other matters pertaining to the investigation and treatment of archaeological remains on the site.

Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

In our view, the application has not provide sufficient clear and convincing justification for the level of harm proposed to the grade II* listed Manor House through the development in its last remaining link to the rural landscape (Para 194). We consider that a less harmful scheme that better reveals the significance of the affected assets could be achieved on the site (Para 200). It is therefore for you as the local authority, in consultation with your conservation officer and the applicant to identify a less harmful solution to the significance of this highly important listed building as derived through its setting (Para 190).

The council should also be mindful of the positive contribution that could be made by the below-ground archaeology. They should seek the advice of the archaeological advisor at the SW Heritage Trust pertaining to the investigation and treatment of archaeological remains on the site.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

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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Historic England


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