

Addendum Report to South Area Planning Committee

Application Number: PL/22/3562/FA

Proposal: Demolition of open sided barn; conversion, alteration and change of use of existing buildings to Use Class C3 to provide 7 residential units and construction of 5 new residential units; hard and soft landscaping, attenuation pond, bin and cycle stores, car parking, infrastructure and associated works.

Site location: Boveney Court Farm Boveney Road Dorney Buckinghamshire SL4 6QG

Further representations have been submitted by Dorney Parish Council, since the publication of the committee report, and it is understood that these have already been circulated to Members. Along with commenting further on matters relating to Access and Employment, the main issue and comment raised by the Parish Council is the lack of consideration of the 'Boveney Conservation Area Appraisal' document in the assessment of the proposals by both the applicant and the Local Planning Authority.

In response to this concern, Officers have sought clarification and comment from the Councils Heritage team. A full copy of their response is attached to the end of this Addendum Report. In summary, the Heritage team have advised that it is unlikely that the Boveney Conservation Area Appraisal would have been taken into account in the assessment by the Heritage Officer dealing with the matter, as a result of its lack of availability.

However, the Heritage Officer has clearly considered the character of the Conservation Area within her comments, advising that the proposals would preserve its character and appearance.

Further to this, they advise that whilst the 'Appraisal'(page 3) may indicate that 'The District Council would therefore not want to see further development...', this is a document that is nearly 30 years old, and the current pressures to provide housing require this kind of statement to be carefully balanced against current need and current policies.

The NPPF para 206 states that: *'Local Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas ... to enhance or better reveal their significance. ... Proposals that preserve those elements of setting that make a positive contribution... should be treated favourably'*.

Additionally, Historic England's Advice Note 1 'Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management' published Feb 2019 states that: *Change is inevitable, but requires careful management and that Local distinctiveness can inspire well designed new development.*

The Heritage Team consider that the Council have properly taken into account the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and that even if the 'Appraisal' document had been taken into account, when balanced against more up to date policies and guidance, the recommendation and acceptability of the scheme would remain unchanged from that which has currently put forward.

The applicant has been provided with a copy of the further representations from the Parish Councils and in response to this specific concern, they have advised that they consider that the Heritage Statement prepared by Turley Associates, and submitted in support of the application, provides a full assessment of the significance of the listed buildings affected by the application proposal and the impact of the scheme on them and Boveney Conservation Area. They advise that the methodology used in the submitted Heritage Statement has not been criticised by the Council's Conservation Officer, and the assessment undertaken is considered to be robust.

Richard Regan

From: Joanna Horton <Joanna.Horton@buckinghamshire.gov.uk>
Sent: Monday, July 24, 2023 6:51 PM
To: Richard Regan <Richard.Regan@buckinghamshire.gov.uk>
Cc: Morwenna Breen-Haynes <Morwenna.Breen-Haynes@buckinghamshire.gov.uk>; Eliza Alqassar <eliza.alqassar@buckinghamshire.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Parish Council concerns that Conservation Area Appraisal not taken into account

Dear Richard,

Please find further comments below:

It is not my intention to provide a further assessment on the acceptability of the proposal at this late stage. This has been provided by other Officers and as such I have confined my comments to refer to our knowledge of the 1996 CA Appraisal document and how we would approach a document of this age in the light of current policies and guidance.

As background – we are very aware that the information passed onto us as a Unitary Authority in respect of Conservations Areas for the legacy CSB areas is patchy, largely out of date and often poor in quality. As a Heritage Team we are currently carrying out a prioritisation exercise for review of the Counties 179 CAs including Boveney. As resources are exceedingly limited efforts are being focused on the larger towns which will potentially be impacted by allocated development sites coming forward as part of the new Plan for Bucks and those impacted by Regen projects.

With regard to Boveney CA – the Council hold a map of the designated CA boundary which is available on the website and which would have been accessed by Fiona West when making her comments on the application and by the previous Conservation Officer who contributed to Pre-app discussions. None of the current team were aware of additional paper records or a CA appraisal document for Boveney as far as I can gather, and it is therefore unlikely that Fiona (who is no longer acting as a consultant for the Council) would have had the benefit of access to this.

That said, there is no publication or adoption date on the version of the document included in your email and as such I can only assume it dates to 1996 (the date the CA was designated). Legally CAs can be designated without an appraisal document so it could have been prepared /adopted later - the rear cover may provide further clues. Although the copy document included in the Parish submission appears to be the definitive document on the character of the CA, the age of the document highlights the problem we have in relation to so many of the appraisals being out of date and potentially inconsistent with the current situation on the ground in respect of both the special character and condition of the CA (which is the aspect protected under legislation), and also that these old documents were prepared under now superseded policy frameworks.

Fiona has clearly considered the character of the CA in her comments and states: *'In particular, the orientation and distance of the new units from the group of former farm buildings would not challenge the traditional farmstead arrangement grouped around a yard. The legibility of the historic farm use and character would retain the setting of the nearby listed buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area, would be preserved.'* FW comments 22.11.2022

She confirms in her assessment that *'The proposals would preserve the character and/or appearance of the conservation area and therefore complies with section 72 of the Act.'* In her comments dated 24.02.2023.

I note that the CA Appraisal document states that *'The District Council would not want to see any further development or any intensity in the use of the settlement by visitors.'* I would suggest that the current pressures to provide housing require that this kind of statement would need to be carefully balanced against need and current

policy. The NPPF para 206 states that: *'Local Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas ... to enhance or better reveal their significance. ... Proposals that preserve those elements of setting that make a positive contribution... should be treated favourably'*. Additionally, Historic England's Advice Note 1 'Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management' published Feb 2019 states that: Change is inevitable, but requires careful management and that Local distinctiveness can inspire well designed new development.

I have not looked in detail at the application due to the limited time available to me following your request this morning and the need to balance other workloads, but my understanding is that while 12 new dwellings are proposed only 5 of these are created through new construction and that Fiona has identified heritage benefits to securing the long term preservation of listed barns that could otherwise fall into disrepair and disuse. Fiona is a highly qualified and well respected professional who has undertaken an assessment of the application and the character of the designated CA based on the information made available to her and has drawn her conclusions on that basis. She is always thorough in her assessments and regularly tends towards a cautious approach in her recommendations.

It is highly unfortunate that the CAA is not available on line and we would be very keen for the Parish to provide an original copy of the document to us so that it can be properly scanned and uploaded for future reference and consideration.

I hope this helps to clarify scenarios where we might perhaps take a different view than that identified within a CA appraisal document of this age, and I do apologise on behalf of the Heritage team for the incomplete information that is currently available online to the public and Planning staff.

Best regards

Jo

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