GEORGE F.WHITE

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Heritage Statement

Vacant Formerly Boldon CE Primary School
Rectory Bank
North Road
West Boldon

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 George F. White (Planning, Architecture and Development) have been instructed by Mr Telford (the 'Applicant') to prepare a heritage statement in support of a full planning application for the change of use of grassland to residential curtilage.

1.2 This Heritage Statement is prepared in line with the provisions of the NPPF, paragraphs 194-208.

1.3 The purpose of this statement is to assess the proposed development and potential impacts on the setting of the conservation area and nearby heritage assets.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site ('the Site') is an existing area of grassland located to the west of permitted application ST/0139/22/FUL which enables the provision of 5no. dwellings. in the settlement of West Boldon.

2.2 The site is within the built-up area of West Boldon within close proximity to services including supermarkets, pubs and restaurants, a church, post office and Schools.

2.3 The site is further detailed on the submitted Location Plan.

2.4 The site is bound by:

- The approved development site ST/0139/22/FUL to the east, with North Road and residential properties beyond.
- Vegetation and grassland to the north and west, with residential dwellings beyond; and
- Residential properties to the south.

2.5 The Environment Agency flood risk map for planning illustrates the site is located within flood zone 1 and is therefore considered to be at low risk of flooding.

2.6 A review of the Historic England map has identified that there are no listed buildings on or near the site, however the site is located within the West Boldon Conservation Area.

2.7 The South Tyneside Site-Specific Allocations Development Plan Document Proposals Map (adopted April 2012) illustrates that the site is designated as Strategic Recreational Open Space and Playing Fields.

PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 The South Tyneside Council public planning portal has identified the following past planning applications on the site.

- ST/0139/22/FUL – Development of 5no. dwellings, with associated access, amenity space, landscaping and car parking – Approved July 2023
- ST/0676/19/FUL – Erection of 14 no. 3 and 4 bed residential units including associated access, infrastructure and landscaping – Withdrawn
- ST/1087/18/FUL – 16 no. residential dwellings, associated access, infrastructure and landscaping – Appeal Dismissed November 2019

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Full planning permission is sought for the change of use an existing area of grassland to residential curtilage.

4.2 The change of use is associated with the adjacent development site which benefits planning permission under application ST/0139/22/FUL, for the development of 5no. residential dwellings. The change of use will provide additional garden space for the adjacent dwellings.

4.3 The land was previously associated with West Boldon C of E Primary School, which closed in 2009 and was subsequently demolished.

PLANNING POLICY POSITION

5.1 The legislative framework has regard to Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building and its setting.

5.2 This Heritage Statement seeks to assess the proposed development and the potential impact on the conservation area.

5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a significant material consideration. The magnitude of impact upon a heritage asset can be identified by the level of effect from the proposed development upon the baseline conditions of the site. Section 16 ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’ (Paragraphs 199-202) discusses the concept and degree of ‘harm’ that can be caused by development that potentially affects the setting and significance of heritage assets. Degrees of harm are identified in the NPPF as ‘total loss’, ‘substantial harm’ or ‘less than substantial harm’.

5.4 It is considered the concept of harm is a sliding scale as developments which result in a less than substantial harm can still be considered to have varying degrees of harm within the confounds of this definition. As per paragraph 202 proposals which result in a less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use.

5.5 The significance of the assets and the potential harm is assessed as part of this Heritage Statement.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

6.1 Paragraph 194 of the NPPF requires an applicant to 'describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including a contribution made by their setting'. It states that the 'level of detail should be proportionate to the assets importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'.

6.2 This assessment considers the potential impact of the development on the setting of the conservation area.

Assessment of Significance

6.3 The significance of a heritage asset can be derived form a number of interconnected values based on the evidence on site and available resources. The basic principle is to understand the interest or value of a place or building. Historic England advises the following themes should be considered to determine the significance of a heritage asset:

- Historic Value – the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected though heritage assets to the present, such as connection often being illustrative or associative.

- Communal Value – this derives from the meanings of a heritage asset for the people for whom it features in the collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical, particularly associative, and aesthetic values, along with educational, social or economic value.

- Architectural Value – this derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from the heritage asset, taking into account what people may have said or written.

- Evidential Value – the potential of the physical remains to yield evidence from past human activity. This might take into account date, rarity, state of preservation, diversity, supporting documentation, collective value and comparative potential.

6.4 The potential impact on the heritage asset is addressed in turn below:

- Historic Value – The asset serves as an interpretation of the history of the local area.

- Communal Value – The asset is likely to have local value to nearby properties and the surrounding settlements.

- Architectural Value – The West Boldon conservation area is centred on the medieval village, the layout of which is preserved in modern boundaries and roads. The area includes a variety of architectural influences and building materials and is dominated by the Grade I listed 13th century Church of St. Nicholas. The proposed development area is sited within the conservation area's Don Gardens Character Area , which is a secluded, private residential road with north-west views down to the River Don. The views into the character area from the north are of open ground and trees, which form the natural setting.

- Evidential Value – The site is located within the conservation area which is designated due to its appearance, setting and historic significance to the area. The earliest evidence for prehistoric activity in the area around West Boldon derives from Neolithic flints. Further evidence for prehistoric occupation in the area is provided by a Neolithic stone axe (HER 17545) found to the south of West Boldon. The evidence for Roman occupation in the West Boldon area is scant. However, reused Roman stones (HER 5189) have been found in the Church of St. Nicholas suggesting activity in the vicinity.

6.5 It is our assessment based on the above values that the conservation area is of local significance.

Assessment of Impact

6.6 The overarching character of the conservation are is describes in the Character Area Appraisal document which states that *the conservation area is based on the historic hilltop settlement and includes open countryside below to the north and west which is important to its setting*. Further reference is given to the need to protect the long distant views from the hill over open countryside, and the need to protect the '*grassy hillside setting'* to the north.

6.7 The proposed development is situated to the west of the approved residential development and former school site which was noted in the management plan to have detracted from the residential character of this area. The development is situated at the base of the hilltop immediately adjacent to the open countryside. The application site forms part of the wider developed land parcel and as such will be viewed in association with the permitted residential development and playing field to the north.

6.8 The land is generally separated from the open fields beyond with by dense tree cover which will provide screening to the development as no trees are to be removed to accommodate the proposed development.

6.9 This part of the conservation area is generally characterised as *green, open countryside banks of River Don Valley, with signature views of domed hillside with the church spire above, limestone boundary walls, and the entrance to the village core at the top of North Road.* The development is not considered to impact the special characteristics of the area nor does it impinge on the understanding of the conservation area or its significance.

6.10 Upon review of the proposed development it is considered there will be a negligible impact on the setting of the conservation area.

CONCLUSION

7.1 It has been assessed and confirmed that the conservation area is considered to hold local significance.

7.2 The proposed development has been assessed as having a negligible impact on the setting of the conservation, therefore proposed development can be considered acceptable.

7.3 It has been demonstrated that there are no adverse heritage impacts resulting from the proposed development which would be sufficient to enable refusal of the application, when assessed against the relevant planning policy.

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