

The Hadleigh Society

Caring for Hadleigh – yesterday, today and tomorrow

Senior Planning Officer
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Corks Lane, Hadleigh
IP7 6SJ

Margaret Woods, Chair
The Hadleigh Society
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25th September 2017

Dear Sir or Madam,

Response from the Environmental & Planning Group of the Hadleigh Society to

DC/17/04239 – Full planning Application

Erection of detached, two-and-a half storey dwelling with detached cart lodge and storage building, construction of access and parking area and associated landscaping on land adjoining Hadleigh Hall, Pound Lane, Hadleigh

These comments are submitted on behalf of the Hadleigh Society one of whose aims is: *to protect and enhance Hadleigh's heritage and environment by supporting and promoting high standards in planning, conservation, regeneration and development of features deemed to be of historical and environmental significance within the town.*

To paraphrase the applicant's own submission, the application site is an important green feature within the designated Hadleigh Conservation Area and is a significant contributor to the setting of adjoining and nearby listed buildings. The site's importance derives from its situation at the northern end of the St Mary's churchyard, a major open space visually dominated by the church at its centre and by the Deanery Tower, the Deanery and the Guildhall. Such buildings must be regarded as being highly sensitive to any change.

This manorial enclosure can be dated back to before AD991 when it was the manor house within the messuage of a most important Anglo-Saxon nobleman – Ealdorman Bryhtnoth (Refs: CCA-DCc-Reg B f96r & CCA-DCc-Reg P f25v). The southern boundary to which this application applies has been the same since that time with a confirmatory statement in a 1273-74 Hadleigh Account noting: *In the stipend of the carpenter making the wall between the hall porch and the postern gate on to the cemetery - 6s 6d.* (Ref: CCA-DCc-Hadleigh6). Additionally, the precise application site has never been developed with buildings within that thousand plus year period; it has only ever been used as open garden grounds; it does not therefore fall into the definition of a *previously developed land* or a *Brownfield* site.

The applicant's submission places great emphasis upon their subjective Heritage Impact Assessments, as espoused by ICOMOS in relation to World Heritage Sites.

This is not a World Heritage Site and Historic England has found that such heritage statements, which merge the assessment of significance with an impact assessment, is rarely of much use in the decision-making process; the exposition of the significance can become skewed in anticipation of justifying the proposed changes.

It is considered that the submitted Heritage Impact Assessment falls into such a compromised state and uses predominately transient treed features to suggest that the development will have a negligible effect upon the special historic and visual character of the site's setting both in the short and long term.

Accordingly the Society objects to the principle of the development on the site, on the grounds that:-

1. Loss of Historic Green Open Space

Historically the application site has always been undeveloped and was originally formal garden grounds to Hadleigh Hall and its predecessors at least from the 10th century. The treed and green character of the site has therefore been an important and constant feature for many hundreds of years in the historic character of Hadleigh Conservation Area and the setting of St. Mary's Church, Hadleigh Hall, The Deanery Tower and several other Listed Buildings. Additionally the site does not fall within the definition of an infill site and thus the site's development is not in accord with policy HS28.

(Contrary to intent of Policy CN03-loss of important open space and CN08 adverse effect upon Conservation Areas)

2. Damage to Treed Setting

The site is well treed and the proposal requires the removal of 6 trees of which the applicant's tree specialist indicates four are of Moderate to High Visual Amenity (para.4.11.1 of Tree Survey & Arboricultural Impact Assessment). In addition roots to nine trees are potentially adversely affected by ground works and five will require pruning and lopping. The Holm Oak, which is the largest and most prestigious tree on the site and which the applicant seeks to keep and which he promotes as an important screening to the proposed building, is in poor condition and will need further remedial works. Other trees to be retained, due to past neglect, will also require future remedial works. All these works diminish significantly the effectiveness of the screening which the applicant relies upon to argue a mitigating impact of an inordinately large building.

(Contrary to intent of Policy CN08 adverse effect upon Conservation Areas and CN01 retention and integration of trees in Conservation Areas)

3. Prejudice to long term Retention of Trees

Apart from the felling, lopping and ground disturbance to numerous trees on site during construction there will then be the added presence of residents in the new dwelling where it is known there will be conflict with the trees due to shade, damp, leaf fall and nuisance which will require further lopping, topping and felling, diminishing further the green background to the churchyard and resulting in greater prominence of the new dwelling. Of particular concern is the retention of the large Holm Oak, which is evergreen, and set within one metre to the south of the windows

to the kitchen lounge and three bedrooms of the dwelling. There is bound to be conflict between the residents and the tree's retention due to loss of light etc from such a mature tree so close-by. Loss or significant reduction of the tree's size will result in the dwelling clearly impinging upon the current treed character of one of the most pleasant areas within Hadleigh.

(Contrary to intent of Policy CN08 adverse effect upon Conservation Areas and CN01 retention and integration of trees in Conservation Areas)

4. Adverse impact upon Hadleigh Hall

The new dwelling and garage are close to the boundary with Hadleigh Hall and only about 15m (45ft.) from the actual Hall. The rather indifferent designed garden store, garage and the end elevation of the proposed dwelling are considered to distract and detract from the view of the main elevation to Hadleigh Hall. The visual separation between the new structures and the Hall is unhindered apart from a laurel hedge along the boundary, and so the visual impact and intrusion upon the surroundings and character of the current Hadleigh Hall cannot be said to be negligible or un-harmful to the ancient setting of that Grade II Listed Building.

(Contrary to policy CH06 safeguarding setting of listed buildings)

5. Inappropriate size, layout and siting of dwelling

The building is inordinately large providing 342 sq. m (3420 sq. ft) of floor-space on three floors. It is designed with a long rectangle footprint, which restricts its siting and dictates the subsequent positioning of access, parking and service buildings resulting in the dwelling's poor relationship with Hadleigh Hall and extreme closeness to the large Holm Oak on the site. The design is a facsimile of 48 Storey's Way, a dwelling built in Cambridge in 1913 to the designs of M. H. Baillie Scott, a famous Arts and Crafts architect of that time. The original dwelling was sited within a conventional Avenue location which allowed a wide footprint and traditional front and rear garden areas. No rationale is, however, given in the Access and Design statement as to why this particular design was chosen, nor how its design, siting and mass was evolved to fit sympathetically within the environmental constraints of the site. Instead the applicant's Planning and Heritage Statements seeks to justify the imposition of this imported design by a pretence that it will have a limited impact upon the setting, whilst clearly, by its size, siting and tree clearance, it will dominate the site excessively.

(Contrary to intent of Policy CN08 adverse effect upon Conservation Areas and CN01 regarding appropriate scale, form and design)

6. Introduction of domestic paraphernalia

The change of use of the land to a residential dwelling brings a right to install on the land a multitude of small and not so small garden and domestic structures, together with other domestic paraphernalia which individually and collectively would radically alter the calm and serene green treed character to the churchyard and the setting of the nearby listed buildings. Such structures and related uses could seriously erode the special character of the area and where the Planning Authority has limited powers to control. It is considered that this situation is aggravated by the proposed dwelling's principal 'sit out and play' areas being set between the house and the churchyard and thus open to extensive public view.

(Contrary to intent of Policy CN08 adverse effect upon Conservation Areas)

Conclusion

Historically and visually the site most emphatically ought to remain a green, undeveloped area, unspoilt by buildings, particularly those in a residential use.

Should planning permission, however, be granted, and without any significant amendments to address our objections to safeguard the green backdrop to Hadleigh's most important historic buildings and heritage centre, the Society will expect the imposition of rigorous planning conditions and / or obligations to:

- Strictly control the erection of any domestic structures in the grounds, fences, walls and / or enclosures in the grounds
- Require the planting, establishment and retention of an evergreen hedge along the frontage to the churchyard
- Require the proposed fence shown in the application to be erected and retained thereafter
- Ensure no vehicular access be made at any time from the site to the roadway serving the churchyard, church and deanery
- Require the use of the highest quality of traditional external materials in the construction of the building.

We thank you for your attention in this most important matter.

Yours faithfully,

Margaret Woods
Chair, The Hadleigh Society