
From: Emily Wade
Sent: 04 October 2022 12:47
To: Joanne Fisher
Subject: DM/22/2416 Land South of Henfield Road

Hi Jo

Comments on the above planning application.

The application site is a parcel of land comprising open fields and hedgerow located to the west of Albourne village. There are a number of heritage assets within close proximity, including:

- The Albourne Conservation Area, located adjacent of the south east boundary of the site, and centred on the southern part of The Street
- Listed buildings along the western side of The Street, to the east of the southern part of the site, including Hunters Cottage, a Grade II listed 17th century or earlier cottage, Bounty Cottage, a Grade II listed 17th century or earlier house; Finches, a Grade II listed early 17th century timber framed former farmhouse and Souches, a 17th century or earlier timber framed building.
- Further to the south on Spring Lane, opposite the southern boundary of the site, is Spring Cottage, a Grade II listed 17th century or earlier timber framed building.
- To the north east of the site, on the opposite side of Henfield Road, is Inholmes Cottage, a 17th century building.

The current application is for outline planning permission for the erection of up to 120 residential dwellings including 30% affordable housing, public open space and community facilities. All matters are reserved except for access. According to the indicative site plan, the proposed residential development would be concentrated within the northern part of the site, located to the west of the primary school and to the south of Henfield Road. The southern part is shown as 'green infrastructure' to include *'public open and amenity space (including equipped children's play areas); associated landscaping and ecological enhancement works, footpaths, cycleways, drainage, utilities and service infrastructure, green infrastructure may also include crossing points of roads.'*

- o Albourne Conservation Area is located a short distance to the north west of the appeal site. The Council has not published a Conservation Area appraisal, but a brief description of the Area and some of the features which contribute to its character is found in the Council's document *'Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex'*.

The ancient parish of Albourne consisted of two adjacent manors running north- south, that of Albourne to the west and Bishopshurst to the east. The parish church was sited between the two manors at some distance south west of the village at the end of Church Lane and does not appear to have ever been the centre of a nucleated settlement. The village of Albourne historically had two centres, Albourne Street to the south and Albourne Green to the north, which became one settlement only during the 20th century as new houses were built between the two. The name Albourne Street was in use by the 16th century. The fact that this street lies parallel to the then existing main road (now the London Road), and the regular layout of the houses and plots, all of which were in the 17th century occupied by tenants of Broadhurst Manor, suggests that Albourne may have been originally a planned settlement laid out by the lord of Bishopshurst.

The local economy was until recently heavily reliant on agriculture, an early predominance of arable increasingly giving way during the 19th and 20th centuries to dairy farming. Also important locally were market gardens- there were four in the parish in 1845 and by the 1870s twelve.

Albourne Conservation Area, which was designated in 1989, is relatively modest area centred on the historic nucleus of development along the southern part of The Street and its junction with Church Lane. It contains a number of listed buildings including those mentioned above. This southern part of The Street has an enclosed, intimate character with the houses set back from the lane, sometimes raised on banks, and with

hedges and trees also lining the road. However even within the core of the Conservation Area the close connection with the surrounding landscape is apparent, derived from attractive glimpsed views between buildings to the west of The Street of fields and trees beyond, which would include the application site. To the south of the area, from the gardens of the properties on Church Lane, and to the west, from the rear gardens of the houses to the west of the Street and from the adjacent PROW which runs along the west boundary of the Conservation Area, there are clear views over the adjacent open countryside which again include the proposed development site occupying the foreground. A further PROW runs west to east through the site and along the northern boundary of the Conservation Area to meet The Street north of Hunters Cottage.

The abrupt and clearly defined boundary between the village settlement (which to the west side of The Street apparently still reflects the 17th century layout and extent of the planned development) and the open countryside beyond is another key feature of the village and the Conservation Area.

In my opinion, the significance of the Albourne Conservation Area lies in its character as a small rural Sussex settlement, possibly originally laid out by the local lord of the manor, which has developed over many centuries in close relationship with the surrounding countryside- the brief history of the village given above demonstrates the importance of farming and market gardening to the local economy which will have financed the construction of the majority of the buildings within the village, many of which are now listed. Some, such as Finches (a former farmhouse), have an obvious historical functional relationship with the adjacent farmland.

The Council's document '*Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex*' gives a high level review of key features which contribute to the character of the Albourne Conservation Area, including the attractive countryside views to the west and south, also noted above.

In my opinion the setting of the Conservation Area includes the fields to the north west, west, south west, south and south east, which contribute to the countryside views identified in '*Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex*'. The proposed development site lies to the west and north west of the The Street and there are clear views looking from this part of the Conservation Area looking across the site, in particular from the rear gardens of the buildings to the west of the road. The site is also prominent in views looking north from Church Lane including from Spring Cottage and the lane to the west of this. These existing views, which include the application site, have a strongly rural character, with little development visible outside the village other than the row of cottages further west along Church Lane.

The site also has a significant impact on the character of the approaches to the Conservation Area along the PROWs which run along the western edge of the site and from the direction of Albourne Church to the west. It features prominently in views or vistas from these PROWs which include the southern part of the Conservation Area.

The clearly defined boundary between the rear gardens of the properties to the west of The Street and the open countryside beyond (i.e. the site) is also, as above, a key feature of the Area.

For these reasons the proposed development site is considered to make a strong positive contribution to the setting of the Albourne Conservation Area, its special character and the manner in which this is appreciated, including views from and towards the Conservation Area, and the character of the approaches to it along Church Lane and the PROW which runs parallel to the north through the centre of the site.

- The listed buildings along the west side of The Street, according to their list descriptions, date from the 17th century or earlier. They would be likely to be considered to possess historical evidential and illustrative value as good examples of rural Sussex buildings of their type and period, aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed against a backdrop of the landscape from which they were drawn, and possibly group value based on the buildings being components of a planned development by the then Lord of the Manor. Finches is recorded in the West Sussex Historic Farmsteads and Landscape Character Assessment as a historic farmstead of the post medieval period. A number of buildings survive to the south

of the former farmhouse which would appear to be agricultural in their original function, and would be likely to be regarded as curtilage listed.

In all cases, given the nature of the buildings and the close relationship between their historical function and/or development and the surrounding countryside, as well as the possibly planned nature of the settlement (discussed in more detail above in relation to the Conservation Area), the surviving rural setting to the west, north west and south west (which includes primarily the application site) would be considered to make a strong positive contribution to the special interests of the buildings and the manner in which these are appreciated, in particular those parts of those special interests which are drawn from historical illustrative or aesthetic values.

- Spring Cottage is a Grade II listed 17th century or earlier listed building located to the southern side of Church Lane, opposite the site. It is likely that the building would be considered to possess historical illustrative and evidential value as a good example of a rural Sussex cottage of its type and period, as well as aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the landscape from which they were drawn.

As such, the surviving rural setting surrounding the cottage is considered to make a strong positive contribution to its special interest and the manner in which this is appreciated, including in particular its historical illustrative and aesthetic values.

The site makes up the rural setting of the cottage to north of Church Lane. Although the cottage is set somewhat lower than the site and on the opposite side of lane, there are views from the building and its immediate setting looking up the hill in which the southern part of the site is particularly close and prominent. The northern part forms the backdrop to these views, at the crest of the hill. The site therefore currently makes a significant positive contribution to the setting and special interest of the listed building.

- Inholmes Cottage is a Grade II listed building located a short distance to the north east of the site at the edge of Albourne village. From the list description it dates probably from the 17th century. It is likely that the building would be considered to possess historical evidential and illustrative value as a good example of a rural Sussex village house of its type and period, as well as aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials.

Although the setting to the north, east and south of Inholmes Cottage has been altered in modern times by the spread of development around and within Albourne village, the broader setting to the west and south west in particular remains open and rural in character. This setting, which includes the application site, represents the principle surviving connection between the cottage and the countryside by which it was until relatively recently largely surrounded, and makes a positive contribution to its special interest and how this is appreciated, including in particular that part of this interest which is drawn from historical illustrative and aesthetic values.

The impact of the proposed development on the application site would be to fundamentally alter its character. This is particularly true of the northern part of the site, which would become a suburban enclave. However the character of the southern part will also be impacted by the imposition of 'green infrastructure' and the semi-formalisation of the space as a type of 'natural' parkland with footpaths, picnic tables and benches- therefore although this part of the site would apparently remain largely open and verdant it would no longer have the rural/agricultural character which it has now. The proposed access to the new housing development would be to the north eastern corner of the site, close to the junction between Henfield Road and The Street.

This would result in a very significant impact on the positive contribution which the site currently makes, through setting, to the above mentioned heritage assets:

- Albourne Conservation Area: The proposed development will effectively sever the Conservation Area from its existing direct countryside setting to the west- although the built form would be largely concentrated to the northern end of the site, the semi-formalisation of the field to the south would also result in a loss of rural/agricultural character. Furthermore, the development including the new housing to the north in

particular will have a significant impact on the character of views from the Conservation Area to the west of The Street, and on the context within which the Area is appreciated in views from Church Lane, and the various PROWs approaching or passing the Area from the west. This will have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35. In terms of the NPPF I would place the degree of harm at less than substantial, at the high end of that scale, such that paragraph 202 will apply.

- The listed buildings along the west side of The Street: These buildings enjoy a similar relationship to the site as the Conservation Area (within which they are located), and the proposed development will have a similar affect of severing them from their existing countryside setting to the west, as well as impacting on views from and towards the buildings, and the character of the approaches to them along adjacent PROWs. This will detract very significantly from the positive contribution which setting currently makes to their special interests and how these are appreciated, as identified above. This will be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34. In terms of the NPPF I would regard the harm caused as less than substantial, at the mid-high range of that scale.
- Spring Cottage: The semi-formalisation of the open field directly above the Cottage will have quite a marked impact on the currently rural character of the setting of the building. There is also the potential for the built development to the northern part of the site to impact on views looking towards the crest of the hill- as far as I am aware we do not have visuals at this point which would confirm this but based on the indicative site layout, views from Church Lane shown in the LVIA, and the visibility of the existing buildings at Inholmes Farm and Albourne School in these views, it would be my assumption that at least the new dwellings closest to the PROW would be clearly visible. Cumulatively, these impacts will detract significantly from the currently rural character of the setting to the north of Spring Cottage, to the detriment of its special interest and the manner in which this is appreciated. This will again be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34. In terms of the NPPF I would place the harm caused at the mid range of that scale.
- Inholmes Cottage: The proposed residential development at the northern end of the site will, as above, have a fundamental impact on its currently rural character. This will detract from the positive contribution which the site makes to the broader setting of Inholmes Cottage, including views from the Cottage and its immediate setting, and the character of the approach to it along Henfield Road. The position of the site access at its north western corner close to the junction between Henfield Road and The Street is likely to render the residential development beyond more visible. This will be detrimental to the special interest of the listed building and the manner in which this is appreciated, contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34. In terms of the NPPF I would consider the harm caused to be less than substantial, at the mid range of that scale.

Thanks,

Emily

Please note that this advice is given at Officer level only and is without prejudice to the formal decision of the District Council.

Submit your planning application online.
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

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