

Our ref: JCH01131

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GE HAMBLE APPEAL - HERITAGE PROOF OF EVIDENCE

Introduction

1. This Heritage Proof of Evidence has been prepared by Thomas Copp BA (Hons) MA AssocIHBC of RPS Heritage in response to a refused application on land and buildings at GE Aviation, Kings Avenue, Hamble-Le-Rice, SO31 4NF ('the Site'). The Site was recently subject to an outline application (O/18/84191) comprising:

"Outline application with all matters reserved (except means of access) for the construction of up to 148 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with new vehicular access to Hamble Lane, alterations to Kings Avenue and Coronation Parade, new car parking for existing sports facilities, employment use and residential properties, landscaping, improvements to existing bowls and football facilities on site and other associated works. Demolition of non-original extensions to Sydney Lodge (Grade II Listed Building) and redundant factory buildings"*

2. Associated Planning and Listed Building Consent applications (F/18/84621 and L/19/85126) for the demolition of the extensions to Sydney Lodge, together with internal and external works, is currently being determined by Eastleigh Borough Council.
3. The Outline application was refused on the 16 January 2020 following consideration at Committee on the 19 December 2019. It was refused with 6 reasons for refusal. None of these reasons related to heritage. However, the proposed redevelopment includes heritage enhancements which comprise public benefits relevant to the determination of this Appeal. This was detailed in the Officer's Report which recommended that the application be approved.

Scope of Evidence

4. I am a Director of Built Heritage at RPS Heritage, having been at RPS for more than 6 years. I hold a first degree (Bachelor of Arts with Honours) in History from the University of Leicester and a postgraduate degree (Master of Arts with Distinction) in Urban Conservation from the University of Leicester. I am an IHBC Associate, accredited in conservation practice that evaluates change in the built and historic environment, and have experience of acting for various clients in the private, public and charity sectors, alongside experience in the public sector. In my current position I have appeared as a built heritage expert witness at Examinations in Public, Appeal Hearings, Public Inquiries and in the Magistrates Court.
5. This Proof has been prepared to summarise the heritage considerations relevant to this Appeal and quantify the heritage benefits stemming from the proposed development. A detailed Built Heritage Statement (CgMs Ref. JCH00054; **CD.78**) was prepared in September 2018 and submitted as part of the original application. The Built Heritage Statement contained a detailed appraisal of the Site and relevant heritage assets, an assessment of their significance and an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on their significance. A summary of this assessment is presented below.

Policy

6. The following legislation and policy is relevant to the heritage enhancements. The policies are provided in full in the Built Heritage Statement.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- Section 66

National Planning Policy Framework

- Section 16, particularly paragraphs 189-196

Planning Practice Guidance

- Paragraph 20 states that public benefits include heritage benefits, for example: “*sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting*”

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011)

- Policy 174LB

Site Assessment and Heritage Assets

7. The Site includes a single, Grade II* listed building identified as “Sydney Lodge including Stable” (NHLE 1111924). Sydney Lodge was built between 1789-98 by the renowned architect Sir John Soane for the Yorke family. Sydney Lodge and much of its wider estate were purchased by British Marine / Folland Aircraft Ltd (later Hawker Siddeley Aviation Ltd) in 1936. Following this a large aircraft works was established and the landscaped grounds of the listed building were radically reshaped. This commercial use within the Site was intensified later in the 20th century, with large extensions constructed to Sydney Lodge which contrast with its original composition and architectural quality.
8. The Site today comprises Sydney Lodge, the large-scale 20th century extensions, 20th century commercial development, recreation playing fields and surface level car parking.

Assessment of Significance

9. Sydney Lodge is an exceptional example of a late eighteenth century villa which was used as a secondary home by the Yorke family and is likely to have been a summer retreat. Its significance is strongly drawn from its architectural and historic interest, notably its association with Sir John Soane. The Grade II* listed status of the building means it is in the top 8% of listed buildings in England and is defined as a heritage asset of the ‘highest significance’ by the NPPF.
10. The well-preserved interior to the main house constitutes a virtually complete example of an unconventional type of family residence which, although adapted and extended over time, maintains a very strong degree of legibility within the primary construction.
11. The building also possesses historic interest through its association with the British aviation industry.
12. The significance of the building, particularly its architectural interest, has, however, been diminished by the extensive 20th century extensions, together with limited internal and external alterations to the main building. These have undermined Soane’s original architectural composition and restrict the ability to appreciate and experience the significance of the listed building.

13. The setting of the building has been comprehensively altered during the 20th century. The wider landscaped grounds, including associated structures, have been lost and replaced by a combination of formal recreation grounds and large-scale 20th century commercial development, which detracts from the significance of Sydney Lodge. Its historic landscaped grounds, which would have capture sea views, and sense of isolation have been removed.

Impacts of the Appeal Scheme

14. The Built Heritage Statement submitted as part of the application concluded that the development would 'preserve' the special architectural and historic interest of Sydney Lodge, in accordance with section 66 of the P(LBCA)A 1990. However, it went on to emphasise that the significance of the building, including its historic interest and integrity, would be better revealed by the demolition of later extensions, the demolition of other nearby commercial buildings and landscaping works. This would preserve and better reveal those elements of highest significance, while preserving the overall special interest of the listed building, providing heritage benefits.
15. There would also be beneficial changes within the wider setting of the listed building which would include the removal of 6 large, 20th century industrial buildings and the reinstatement of the listed building's historic parkland setting to the west. This will provide a large wedge of carefully managed green space that will enhance the building's artistic and historic interest through improvements of important views of the listed building from the west, north and north east.
16. The Appeal scheme will also provide public open space within the surroundings of the listed building allowing the general public to view and appreciate the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.
17. Historic England were statutory consultees for the application and provided their consultation response on 13th November 2018 (**CD.81**). They stated that:
"Developing this area [the open space to the north discussed in the Built Heritage Statement] would therefore slightly erode the significance of Sydney Lodge. There is potential elsewhere to make significant improvements to the setting and significance of Sydney Lodge through the removal of some modern extensions and buildings which creates the opportunity to restore elements of the immediate setting of the house. This would be a heritage benefit".
18. They concluded by stating:
"Historic England has no objection to the application on heritage grounds. We consider that the application meets the requirements of the NPPF, in particular paragraph numbers 191-194 and 196".
19. The Council's Heritage Advisor commended the quality and completeness of the Built Heritage Statement and commented that there were opportunities to:
"enhance quite considerably the setting of this most important heritage asset that will be exposed to the general public's gaze for the first time in its history".
20. Both representations stated that a Listed Building Consent application would be required for the demolition of the extensions to the listed building and to agree the scope of any remediation works or future development. This was submitted in 2019 and reported to the 25 July 2019 Committee with a resolution to grant subject to Historic England's comments.
21. The Councils' Heritage Advisor has, however, commented on the application and stated that:
"Clearance of the majority of nearby industrial type buildings and removal of the 'warehouse', now gym building attached to the back of the service wing together with the reinvigoration of the landscaping will greatly improve the setting of this most important heritage asset".
22. The Case Officer, in their report to Committee, summarised the heritage impacts of the Outline Application at paragraph 104 stated that:

“The scheme has the support of the Borough Heritage advisor and the proposals demonstrate special regard for the desirability of preserving and enhancing Sydney Lodge and Netley Hospital Chapel and their setting in line with saved policies 168.LB and 174.LB, Section 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Act and Paragraph 192 of the NPPF”.

23. All parties are therefore agreed that the proposed development offers significant and important opportunities to enhance the setting of Sydney Lodge, better revealing its significance and enhancing the ability of visitors to understand and appreciate its significance. The proposals also offer the opportunity to enhance public access to this highly significant listed building.
24. Some minor adverse impacts would be caused by the development of the more open land to the north. However, this element of the building’s setting has been substantially altered and any impacts would remain extremely limited and clearly outweighed by the wider heritage enhancements and public benefits provided by the proposed development.

Response to the Council’s Case

25. The Council have agreed that the proposals offer the opportunities to enhance the setting and significance of the listed building. However, in their Statement of Case at paragraphs 3.6-3.8 and 15.12 the Council have stated that there may be some difficulties in delivering these heritage benefits. Following the preparation of the Statement of Case, the Appellant has held further discussions with the Council and agreed that the heritage benefits, including the making good of the listed building following the demolition of the extensions to the listed building, can be secured via appropriately worded conditions attached to this application and the relevant planning and listed building consent application. This will ensure the benefits associated with the demolition of the extensions will be secured.
26. In addition, the wider heritage benefits including the demolition of the large industrial buildings within the setting of the listed building, the provision of a landscaped park and public access to the listed building’s setting, are all integral parts of the appeal scheme which do not rely on the listed building consent application. They will therefore be delivered by the appeal scheme, will provide beneficial changes within the setting of the listed building and will enhance the ability to appreciate the significance of Sydney Lodge.
27. The Council have also stated at paragraph 15.12 that *“there is no evidence that the Appeal proposals are necessary to deliver improvements to the listed building”*. However, the improvements to the setting of the listed building are an integral part of the appeal scheme and include the demolition of large-scale unsympathetic industrial buildings within its historic setting. In addition, whilst the demolition of the extensions to the listed building could be achieved by other means, they form part of the appeal scheme and will deliver clear heritage benefits that should be weighed in the planning balance.

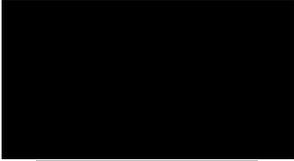
Heritage Benefits

28. The benefits of the proposed development therefore comprise:
 - Demolition of the later extensions to better reveal the south-east elevation of the listed building
 - Demolition of surrounding structures to open new views of the listed building from the south-west
 - Landscaping works to better reveal the significance of the building
 - Creation of a formal landscaped area to the south-west

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Conclusion

29. I therefore consider that the appeal scheme provides important heritage benefits to a Grade II* listed building associated with a renowned architect. This provides public benefits that stem directly from the proposed development. These heritage benefits should be given considerable importance and weight, as they provide enhancements to a Grade II* listed building, and should be considered alongside the other public benefits associated with the appeal development.



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