



Historic England

Ms Sarah Smith
St Albans City and District Council
District Council Offices
St Peter's Street
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL1 3JE

Direct Dial: 01223 582751

Our ref: P01362250

2 March 2021

Dear Ms Smith

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**BURSTON GARDEN CENTRE, NORTH ORBITAL ROAD, CHISWELL GREEN, ST
ALBANS, HERTFORDSHIRE, AL2 2DS
Application No. 5/2020/3022**

Thank you for your letter of 26 January 2021 regarding the above application for planning permission. Due to current COVID-19 restrictions we have been unable to visit the site but, on the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

The land associated with this planning application lies to the south east of Burston Manor. This house dates to first half of the 12th century. Although altered and extended in the 15th and mid 17th century and encased in brick and weatherboard in the 19th century, the building retains much of its original fabric which can be appreciated from the interior. The site contains the remains of a moat which partly encircles the building on the south and west sides. The building was listed grade II* in 1953.

Historic maps of the site indicate that Burston Manor has historically been situated within a rural location with St Albans to the north and Park Street and Frogmore to the east. In 1896 Burston Manor is marked as Burston Manor Farm and is supported to the north by a range of outbuildings while to the south east, a wide expanse of open, agricultural land is between the Manor and Birch and How Woods. A network of footpaths connect Burston Manor across the countryside to other outlying properties.

Burston Manor has historically been an important building. It is shown as being set within its own gardens, surrounded by agricultural land that it is likely it had control of. Footbridges across the moat indicate that it had become a garden feature at this time and none of the readily available historic maps show any significant vegetation



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along the southern edge of the immediate gardens, indicating a designed visual link between the immediate garden setting and the agricultural land beyond. Views towards How Wood and Birch Wood could of been possible. The agricultural setting provides a contrast to the more formal landscaped grounds that provide the immediate setting to the listed building. This is a typical convention of english gentry houses where parkland or, the wider rural landscape forms an intrinsic part of the experience of its setting.

It is clear that the wider setting of the manor has altered in the present day with residential developments filling the former agricultural lands between the site and Frogmore and the Northern Distributor Road to its north but, the manor has retained much of its former open setting to the south east. The existing greenhouses are unobtrusive and their height is low retaining the sense of open space beyond the garden land. This land is the former wider setting of the Burston Manor House, the reason for its existence and therefore integral to its character and significance.

The proposed development would negatively impact upon this open connection from Burston Manor to the landscape beyond. Viewpoint E in the LVIA shows this clearly, what was open views to woodland beyond, would become chimneys and rooflines. Burston Manor would become one building in the suburban sprawl, and would lose its intrinsic significance as a Manor Farm set within its agricultural setting. This would have a negative impact upon the significance of the grade II* listed building.

Policy Context.

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF indicates that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be)

Paragraph 194 states that any harm to, or loss of, significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Historic England's Position

Historic England consider that this proposal would intrinsically alter the relationship between Burston Manor its is setting. The agricultural and open character of the land have been shown through historic maps to form part of the wider setting of the building and part of its significance. The visulisations of the site show that the development would not be designed to give great weight to the conservation of the grade II* listed building by developing fully within the open land that contributes to the buildings



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significance and divorcing the historic building from the surrounding landscape. The scheme would not therefore be in accordance with paragraphs 193 and 194 of the NPPF.

Historic England considers that there is the potential for less than substantial harm, moderate in scale to the setting and significance of the grade II* listed Burston Manor though development within its setting. We therefore consider that it is for your local authority to undertake the planning balance as required by paragraph 196 of the NPPF.

Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 193, 194 and 196 of the NPPF.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

Lynette Fawkes

Inspector of Historic Building and Areas

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cc:



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