

Consultation Response (Heritage Assets)

From: Russell

Reference: WA/2020/02708

Date: 15 June 2022

Case Officer: Tracy Farthing

Address: LAND AT CHERRIMANS, LIPHOOK ROAD, HASLEMERE

Proposal: Outline application for the erection of 2 dwellings

Heritage asset(s) potentially affected:

- Cherrimans: grade II
- Boundary wall at Cherrimans (considered curtilage structure)
- Brookbank and Middlemarch: grade II
- The Staff of Life: grade II

Significance of heritage assets:

Cherrimans: House of various builds. Single surviving bay of possible hall house. Two distinct builds of 18th century. Romanticised in 19th century with gothic window casements and doorways.

Boundary wall: Possibly 19th century. Could it have been constructed in the late 1850s as a retaining wall to accommodate a lowering of the highway to afford headroom beneath the new railway bridge? The levels here would clearly have presented the engineers with a problem. A roughly parallel shorter length of wall, higher up the bank, relates more closely to Cherrimans and appears to be earlier.

Middlemarch and Brookbank: Right hand side timber framed 17th century with later brick cladding. Left hand side 18th century with some Victorian prettification. Formerly a single dwelling with the older part forming the service wing. George Eliot lived in the house and is believed to have written Middlemarch here.

The Staff of Life: Eighteenth century with later alterations and additions. Prominently sited on elevated ground above a retaining wall, thereby making a dramatic contribution to the streetscene.

Comments with regards to impact of the proposal on the heritage asset's significance (taking into account paragraphs 190-192 of the NPPF:

A scheme for six houses on this site (WA/2018/1432) was dismissed on appeal on 3rd December 2019. Waverley's assertion that the wall is a curtilage structure is consistent with the Inspector's own on-site observations. She stated that: "...the stone walling...makes a significant positive contribution to the street scene and forms part of the settings of Cherrimans, Brookbank and Middlemarch."

My main concerns were twofold and fundamental – and both remain valid for the present proposal.

The stone retaining wall, which I consider to be part of the historic curtilage of Cherrimans, makes a telling contribution to the streetscene here. Not only does it relate visually and historically to

Consultation Response (Heritage Assets)

Cherrimans, contributing to its significance as a dwelling of some social status, it also responds to other retaining walls on both sides of Liphook Road. I cannot be certain, but these other walls may relate to a lowering of the highway level to allow headroom beneath the railway bridge in the late 1850s. This interplay between the levels of the road and the buildings that line it, lends a special quality to the area immediately to the north of the railway bridge.

The applicant seeks to assert that the site does not form part of the curtilage of the Cherrimans. He refers to an OS map, but does not state its date. My examination of the OS 25 inch maps of both circa 1898 and 1913 show the northern half of the site as being within one single parcel, along with Cherrimans, of 1.355 acres. This was clearly then an area of domestic garden land, having been reduced from the much larger parcel shown on the OS of circa 1871.

The need to breach the retaining wall to create a safe access, will destroy the contrast between the unbroken boundary of rural quality, stretching from Cherrimans to the railway bridge, and the more built up frontage opposite. Moreover, the introduction of a suburban cul-de-sac will further intrude on the distinctive quality of the group of buildings.

Turning, now, to the indicative design of the proposed houses:

The design presents (at least on plot 1) a low-eaved front elevation towards the street, but this returns to more suburban form to the flank and rear. Both dwellings display dormers on the front elevation, but those of plot 2 are spurious, being just unnecessary decorative small roofs above window set entirely beneath the eaves line.

The relationship of the illustrated houses towards the road is, despite the qualities of the site, conventional and suburban. Such a scheme would dilute the felicitous and intriguing nature of the streetscape on the descent towards the bridge.

I do not believe that this site, with its distinctive context and difficult configuration, is one where an outline application is appropriate.

In summary, I consider that a breach in the continuity of the boundary wall, and loss of open outlook would be detrimental both to the setting of the listed buildings and to the wider streetscape. This will be especially so with the proposed development based on a suburban cul de sac.

I believe a more inventive design approach, whilst not avoiding damage, could prompt a development with more affinity with its setting. If the principle of development here would offer a planning benefit sufficient to warrant breaching the boundary retaining wall, I would wish to see a much better and more individual design.

The proposal would result in:

No harm to the heritage asset(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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Consultation Response (Heritage Assets)

Less than substantial harm to the heritage asset(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Significant to the setting of the principal listed buildings and to the retaining wall, which I consider to be curtilage listed and streetscape feature.
Substantial harm to the heritage asset(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><i>If harm is identified then this must be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal. Great weight should be given to the asset's conservation irrespective of the scale of harm identified.</i></p> <p><i>If substantial harm is identified then permission should be refused unless the benefits are substantial or all of the provisos in paragraph 195 of the NPPF apply.</i></p> <p><i>If less than substantial harm is identified then it should also, where appropriate, be weighed against securing its optimum viable use.</i></p> <p><i>For non-designated heritage assets a balanced judgment will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.</i></p>		
Are there any heritage public benefits?	<input type="checkbox"/>	

If permission is granted the following condition(s) is/are suggested:

INFORMATIVE: The illustrated scheme is not considered appropriate to the site in terms of either its design or siting.

If permission is refused the heritage reason(s) for refusal should be:

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For Planning Projects team

Date visited:

Condition of listed building:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Not at risk
<input type="checkbox"/>	Low Risk

Consultation Response (Heritage Assets)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Vulnerable
<input type="checkbox"/>	At Risk