



FAO: Planning Department,
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Ref: 6/2018/2768/OUTLINE
Date: 30/01/2019

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION ADVICE

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: *Hatfield Business Park, Hatfield, AL10 9SL*

These comments pertain to an outline application for a large-scale mixed use development including 1,100 new homes and supporting infrastructure including a primary school, local centre and open space with all matters reserved.

The site is located to the east of Hatfield, beyond the Hatfield Business Park, and incorporates open land known as Ellenbrook Fields which was formerly occupied by part of the Hatfield Aerodrome. As depicted within Figure 11.2 *Landscape Related Designations* (Environmental Statement Chapter 11 – Appendix 11.7), both the Grade II Registered Park and Garden of Brocket Hall (north) and the Grade I Registered Park and Garden of Hatfield House (east) partially fall within the identified 3km Study Area, despite the assertion that no designated landscapes fall within the Study Area (para. 2.2.3 of Environmental Statement – Chapter 2: Site and Surroundings). Although these Registered Parks and Gardens are located at a reasonable distance from the proposal site and with development in between, they should still be assessed. Views from Hatfield House (grade I) over the Registered Park and Garden towards the site should also be considered. The high vantage point from the roof of Hatfield House affords views to the north-west of Hatfield Business Park and the undeveloped land beyond (including the proposal site).

A high number of listed buildings also fall within this 3km Study Area, however, those which are perhaps worthy of further consideration are: Astwick Manor (grade II); Flight Test Hangar and Control Tower (grade II*); Popefield Farmhouse, barn and granary (individually listed at grade II). Ellenbrook Fields forms part of the settings of the listed buildings of Astwick Manor and Popefield Farm.

The potential impact of the proposal on the above assets has not been assessed. Chapter 6 of the Environmental Impact Assessment suggests that the proposal will not have a significant effect on Cultural Heritage therefore no assessment is provided. Given the proximity of Astwick Manor to the site, the proposed development will have an impact on its setting, but without any assessment the degree to which the proposal could harm the significance of the building through development within its setting cannot be understood. It has been stated that vegetation offers a buffer between Astwick Manor and the proposal site, however, its relatively undeveloped landscape setting and its historic



links with the former Hatfield Aerodrome once occupying part of the site, and the land before its use as an aerodrome, have not been discussed.

The grade II listed Popefield Farmhouse and its listed outbuildings are located to the south of the proposal site and at a reasonable distance from it. However, the aspect to the north of the cluster of former farm buildings is the open landscape of Ellenbrook Fields which could be interrupted by the proposed development. The potential impact, or lack of, of the proposal on the setting (and significance) of these listed buildings has not been assessed.

The Flight Test Hangar, Offices and Control Tower (grade II*) are located to the east of the site and are physically and visually separated from the proposal site by modern development to the east of Mosquito Way. Despite this, there is a clear historic link between the site, occupying part of the former Aerodrome, and the listed building. The setting of the building has already been heavily eroded by new development, but there is a relationship between this building, the site and Astwick Manor beyond given their interconnected use in association with the Aerodrome.

As per paragraph 189 of the NPPF, applicants are required to describe the significance of heritage assets affected, including their settings, in order to understand the potential impact of a proposal on this significance. The omission of an adequate Cultural Heritage assessment has failed to address the requirements of this part of the NPPF and therefore no comments can be made on the suitability of the proposal in regards to minimising harm to heritage assets. I recommend an adequate assessment is undertaken, this assessment should consult Historic England's guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets*.

Yours sincerely



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Place Services

Note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter