



Historic England

Miss Tessa Hampden
Mendip District Council
Cannards Grave Road
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BA45BT

Direct Dial: 0117 975 0725

Our ref: P01452786

10 February 2022

Dear Miss Hampden

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

**BELL HILL GARAGE BELL HILL NORTON ST PHILIP FROME SOMERSET BA2
7LT**

Application No. 2021/2928/FUL

Thank you for your letter of 14 January 2022 regarding the above application for planning permission. 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

Historic England has concerns regarding the proposed development. These concerns relate to the erosion of Lyde Green and Old Orchard, which would result in the loss of an important open and green space within the Norton St Philip Conservation Area. The proposals result in the erosion of the town's relationship to its rural hinterland, while also eroding our appreciation of the town's historic evolution. However, it is recognised that the brownfield Bell Hill Garage site does present some opportunity for positive sensitive redevelopment to occur within the conservation area.

Significance

The medieval settlement of Norton St Philips grew up around two historic cores. The first focused around the Church of St James and St Philip (grade I listed) at the bottom of the hill, while the second focused on the marketplace and the George Inn at the top. Bell Hill linked the two with incremental historic development being built along the lane. Norton St Philips is in part characterised by the important green spaces left by this distinctive historic development, notably Church Mead and Lyde Green and the associated Old Orchard. These contribute to our understanding of the evolution of the town.

Lyde Green and the Old Orchard are located to the north of Bell Hill behind the current



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garage site. The north and west boundaries of the open space are enclosed by small narrow back lanes with sporadic development forming the interface with the rural landscape beyond. The survival of this historically enclosed open space provides a visual connection, acting as an area of transition between the urban core of the village and its green rural hinterland.

Lyde Green has been included into the Norton St Philips' Conservation Area and is recognised for the positive contribution it makes to the character and appearance of the area. The site is highlighted as being of landscape value within the appraisal due to the important contribution it makes as an open green space. It also forms a key component of the Ringwell Lane, The Barton, Lyde Green and Chever's Lane, which has been recognised for its low density and rural character.

The Bell Hill Garage forms a largely open site along Bell Hill part of the urban core of the village. The challenging feature of the forecourt canopy has now been removed allowing the opening character of the site to be more readily appreciated. A historic stone-built barn survives on the site and this again reinforces the link between the village and its agricultural surroundings. These features contribute to our appreciation of the conservation area's evolution.

Impact

The current scheme is a full application for 29 units and includes the redevelopment of the garage site including the Lyde Green and Old Orchard open space. The development consists in a mix of housing types, 2 to 3 storeys set out in two linear rows.

The site has been the subject of a previous application seek outline consent for 33 units (2013/2217/FUL). It was refused with impact on the conservation area sited as one of the reasons for refusal.

Bell Hill Garage has historically been a relatively open site; however, it does form a brownfield site that could accommodate sensitive redevelopment. Careful consideration will need to be given to the design and layout to ensure that it responds sympathetically to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Historic England interests lies in the proposed development of Lyde Green and the Old Orchard. This will introduce of dense urban development of a suburban character into an area of open green space recognised for its landscape value and its important contribution to this part of the conservation area. The development will erode the rural character, open spaces and appreciation of the sporadic development that helps to articulate the evolution of the village and its relationship to its rural hinterland. The addition of planting offers only limited mitigation.



Historic England's Position

Historic England has concerns as the proposed development would erode the contribution this important open green space makes to the rural character of the Ringwell Lane, The Barton, Lyde Green and Chever's Lane Character Area. In addition, it would erode our appreciation of the development and evolution of Norton St Philips, which is characterised by important green spaces. While finally, it would also eroding our appreciation of the relationship between the historic core and the rural hinterland. The loss of this feature would result in harm to the conservation area (NPPF, Para 207).

The NPPF recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (NPPF, Para 189). It also highlights that great weight should be given to the significance of the heritage asset as part of council's determination of an application, the more important the asset the greater the weight (NPPF, Para 199). New development should also look to respond to the local character and distinctiveness (NPPF, Para 197(c)). Any harm requires clear and convincing justification in line with Para 200 (NPPF).

The redevelopment of the brownfield site associated with Bell Hill Garage provide some development opportunities that could positively respond to the conservation area (NPPF, Para 195 and Para 206).

Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

These concerns relate to the harm caused through the erosion of this important green open space and the contribution it makes to both the rural character of this part of the Norton St Philip Conservation Area but also our appreciation of the settlement's historic evolution.

The council should determine the application in line with National Legislation and a policy, ensuring that they give great weight to the significance of the affected heritage assets.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

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.



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Yours sincerely

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