

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION – THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER BROOKLANDS CHRISTIAN CARE HOME SITE ON COOMBS ROAD, AND THE CREATION OF 4 DWELLING HOUSES ON THE SITE AT THE BROOKLANDS, COOMBS ROAD, BAKEWELL (NP/DDD/0523/0495/MN)

APPLICANT: MR PETER HUNT

Summary

1. The application relates to proposals redevelop the site of the care home at The Brooklands, Coombs Road, Bakewell. The application has a number of elements:
 - the conversion of the main building from a residential care home to a single dwelling, with the refurbishment of the listed building, together with a replacement single storey extension and earth-sheltered garage;
 - the conversion and extension of former garden and agricultural buildings within the curtilage to a dwelling;
 - the demolition of an existing cottage and the erection of a new dwelling;
 - the demolition of ancillary accommodation and the erection of a dwelling.
2. This report concludes that the proposals would result in some harm to the heritage significance of the listed buildings, but the development is generally sensitively designed and it is concluded – on balance – that the arising harm is outweighed by the public benefits of bringing the listed buildings back in to viable use, securing their long-term conservation.
3. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

Site and Surroundings

4. The Brooklands lies off Coombs Road, a short distance to the east of Bakewell town centre. The site occupies a prominent location on sloping land overlooking Bakewell Showground and Agriculture Business Centre. The Monsal Trail is to the east of the site. The site comprises Brooklands, its associated access, landscaped gardens, outbuildings and former walled kitchen garden. The application site also includes a small group of former farm buildings, a two-bedroom house (Bethcar), and a staff accommodation bungalow. Access to the site is via a narrow drive which has an acute angled junction with Coombs Road. The gates at the junction between the drive and Coombs Road, and the associated boundary walls are Grade II listed structures.
5. The Brooklands is a Grade II listed building and was formerly a dwelling house which was last in use as a care home with 19 bedrooms. It was run as a Christian Residential Home for the elderly. The site contains three separate grade II listed buildings. These comprise:
6. The Brooklands including service range and linking wall. The building was included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest in January 1970;
7. Entrance gateway and attached garden wall at The Brooklands. The gateway and walls were placed on the statutory list in 1974;
8. Kitchen garden walls with attached potting sheds at The Brooklands. These structures were included on the statutory list in 1974.

9. All other structures are considered to be curtilage listed.
10. The submitted Heritage Statement explains that The Brooklands was formerly a residence and bleaching works and that around 1827 it was enlarged for use as a small country house. In 1954 it was converted to a residential care home, which it was until its closure in 2019.
11. The majority of the application site lies within Bakewell's Development Boundary, as shown in the Development Management DPD. However, the wooded area to the north east of the Brooklands is outside of the development boundary (DMB1, see inset map).
12. The entire application site lies outside of the designated Bakewell Conservation Area. To the south of Brooklands there is a grade II listed former coach house which has been extended and converted to a dwelling. To the west of the site there is a small estate of detached houses and bungalows. A public footpath runs from Coombs Road, through the Outrake, to the Monsal Trail and through the woods beyond. The rear of the site is visible from this footpath.

Proposal

13. The application is for the creation of four dwellinghouses on the site, two by conversion of existing buildings, and two by new build replacement dwellings.
14. In addition to the detailed plans, the application is accompanied by a Design, Access and Heritage Impact Assessment which also includes an assessment of landscape impact and the setting of the heritage assets. The application also includes a Planning Statement which sets out planning policies and addresses the key planning issues. The submission also includes an energy statement with reference to policy CC1 and CC2, and a full ecological report and a tree survey.
15. In more detail, the proposal is for four open market dwellings comprising:

Plot 1

The principal listed building and former residential home for the elderly: change of use to form a seven bedroomed dwelling. Repair, alterations, renewal of services with associated landscaping, and a detached subterranean garage. Repair and reinstatement of the historic entrance gates. The subterranean three car garage is proposed adjacent to Brook Lodge, the former stables to The Brooklands. The garage would be accessed via walled ramp.

Plot 2

The kitchen garden walls and former potting shed, cartshed, cowsheds, pigsties and kennels: conversion and extension to form a single 5-bed dwelling, including repair, consolidation and alterations to existing structures.

Plot 3

Demolition of Bethcar, an existing 2 storey dwelling with associated external ancillary structures, and erection of a single storey 5-bed dwelling over a semi-subterranean basement/garage

Plot 4

Demolition of staff accommodation bungalow, built in 1987, and erection of a two storey 5-bedroomed dwelling with garaging.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

- 1 3-year time limit
- 2 In accordance with amended plans and details
- 3 Scheme of archaeological recording and monitoring
- 4 Conversion of buildings only with no demolition other than shown on plans
- 5 Design and repair details, to include amongst other things window retention, works to floors, and roof alterations
- 6 Recommendations of the ecological assessment to be implemented.

Key Issues

16. Whether the development would conserve the significance of the listed buildings.

Relevant planning history

17. 1985: Planning permission granted for conversion of stable block to dwelling
18. 1987: Planning permission granted for extension to care home
19. 1987: Planning permission granted for extension of outbuildings to form dwelling
20. 2004: Planning application seeking planning permission for conversion of the Brooklands to 10 flats, a 40-bed care home and erection of two assisted living units (plus demolition of kitchen garden walls and outbuildings) and associated application for listed building consent. WITHDRAWN prior to determination.
21. 2005: Application REFUSED for planning permission for conversion of residential home to five apartments and the erection of a 40-bed care home, assisted living accommodation amenity block and access and associated application for listed building consent.
22. 2006: Planning permission and associated listed building consent GRANTED for conversion of the Brooklands to two dwellings and the construction of a 40-bed care home. A legal agreement was attached to the planning permission restricting long term occupancy of the care home to local people or dependents of local people
23. 2007: Listed building consent GRANTED for works to the listed buildings within the current application site to facilitate conversion of the Brooklands to two dwellings and construction of a 60-bed residential nursing home (NPIDDD/1007/0970). This scheme was a revision of that granted consent in 2006 and was approved taking into account that the revised scheme better preserved the listed structures.
24. 2008: Planning permission GRANTED for conversion of 'The Brooklands' to two dwellings and the construction of a 60-bed residential nursing home (NP/DDD/1007/0969). This scheme was a revision of that granted consent in 2006 and was approved taking into account the revised scheme better preserved the listed structures within the current application site and the proposed new build care home was considered to be of better design than that previously consented. A section 106 legal agreement was attached to the 2008 planning permission restricting long term occupancy of the care home to local people or dependents of local people. The plans approved in 2008 show a free-standing building with two three-storey stone-built buildings and a glass atrium, which would lie between them, arranged around a court yard on a horseshoe. A single storey wing would run off the east facing elevation of the

second stone-built building. The single storey wing would be mainly constructed from stone but would also be provided with a significant amount of glazing. The design of the three-storey stone-built buildings broadly reflected the character and appearance of The Brooklands, the remaining elements of the care home were more contemporary in style.

25. 2011: Planning permission and listed building consent GRANTED for an extension to the time limit for implementing the planning permission granted in 2008 for the conversion of the Brooklands to two dwellings and the construction of a 60-bed care home (NP/DDD/1007/0969). The permissions were implemented by the demolition of a glass house. Although the works were very small, the Authority accepted that this constituted a commencement so the permissions (NP/DDD/1110/1185 and NP/DDD/1110/1186) were therefore saved in perpetuity.
26. 2021: Pre-application advice given on a draft masterplan which was submitted to prompt discussion about the key principles of redeveloping the site to allow for a large holiday let within the main house; a new house within the walled gardens; conversion and extension of the farm buildings to form a dwelling; and three new build dwellings to the north.
27. 2022: Planning permission and listed building consent REFUSED for the redevelopment of the former Brooklands Christian Care Home site on Coombs Road, and the creation of 5 dwelling houses on the site; two by conversion of existing buildings, and three by new build. This was refused on the grounds of harm arising that was not demonstrated to be required to, or achieve, the conservation or enhancement of the principal listed building, that it failed to provide enough heritage assessment for impacts to be properly considered, that the proposed dwellings in some instances gave rise to adverse landscape impacts, and matters of surface water drainage remaining unresolved.

Consultations

28. District Council – No response.
29. Town Council – No objection overall to this application subject to the following;
30. The Development Boundary Breach disclosed must be addressed either by redesign by the developer or classed as an exception by the Planning Authority if not confirmed as a permitted development extension within a curtilage.
31. A Section 106 Agreement for Affordable Housing must be made, as this a major development of resultant high net value open market properties. Affordable Housing would not be reasonably expected to be provided on this heritage site and may affect viability of the project within this unique setting, whereas a Section 106 agreement would offset this.
32. The detached property built in 1897 show as “Bethcar”, represents a historical link to the whole estate, being built as a farm workers cottage. Although in a poor state of neglect, this property should be saved and sympathetically developed retaining an important heritage link to the history of the former estate as well as being a noticeable house within the current landscape.
33. PDNPA – Conservation – Advise that the scheme would result in less than substantial harm, largely caused by harm to the setting of Brooklands and the contribution this makes to the significance of the listed buildings. They state that furthermore, the scheme to the house has been amended to respond to their concerns, but that the risk is that the amended scheme does not comprise a full scheme of conservation which

would provide the public benefits to outweigh the harm to the buildings' significance. They note the importance of ensuring that the heritage benefits of enabling development are realised after an approval. The full response can be viewed on the Authority's website.

34. PDNPA – Archaeology – Advise that the works have the potential to uncover or remove some features of archaeological significance, most notably the loss of Bethcar. Advise that if the planning balance supports the proposals as scheme of archaeological monitoring and recording should be secured. The full response can be viewed on the Authority's website.
35. PDNPA – Ecology – Advise that the mitigation measures set out in the submitted ecological assessment should be adhered to, and that a lighting plans should be secured.
36. Historic England – No comments.
37. The Victorian Society – the Victorian Society objects to these works due to the harm they represent to the setting and understanding of a listed building. The demolition of Bethcar is unjustified and would result in the complete loss of an important aspect of Brooklands setting and character. Secondly, the proposed designs for the site are wholly inappropriate for the Conservation Area of the National Park. They do not respect the historic nature of the site and would negatively impact the listed building and readability of its history. The Society recommends more appropriate architectural choices that would complement and enhance the historic character of the site, not challenge and disrupt it. The full response can be viewed on the Authority's website.
38. The Georgian Group – Conclude that the Georgian Group has considerable concerns about the impact of the proposed new development within the grounds of Brooklands on the setting and significance of the listed structures. The proposed development may also prejudice the future viability of the mansion as a single private dwelling. The full response can be viewed on the Authority's website.

Representations

39. One letter of representation has been received, seeking to bring the following matters to the Authority's attention:
 - i) *Plot 3 Bethcar. We note it is intended to demolish the existing building and replace with a new build within the curtilage of current wall around the existing house (Bethcar). Having looked at the submitted plans it is clear that the proposed new dwelling extends well beyond the current wall on the west side of the development. In the previous planning application for the erection of a nursing home on the Brookland Christian Care home site there was a commitment to create a 'wildlife' buffer zone and bat run between the border of our property and the proposed care home – the west elevation of this proposed building was aligned to the current stone wall. Having stated that the proposed new building will be within the curtilage of the existing wall around Bethcar we are unclear why the plans show that this is not the case.*
 - ii) *We remain concerned (as outlined in our feedback on the previous planning application) with the impact of extensive evacuation of land required for the footings of the new build on the roots of the very tall preserved trees, rain water run-off and nearby springs. Please note, prior to the current owners, a spring (behind Bethcar) fed the pool/pond. This is no longer the situation and the pool/pond is empty of water. We would like reassurance that the impact on land drainage and feed to the swimming pool have been thoroughly considered prior to the commencement of any building.*

Statutory Framework

40. National Park designation is the highest level of landscape designation in the UK. The Environment Act 1995 sets out two statutory purposes for national parks in England and Wales:
41. Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
42. Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public
43. When national parks carry out these purposes they also have the duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the national parks.
44. In the National Park, the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy and the new Development Management Policies (DMP). These Development Plan Policies provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. This application must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
45. Relevant Core Strategy policies: L3.
46. Relevant Development Management policies: DMC3, DMC5, DMC7
47. The Authority has adopted three separate supplementary planning documents that offers design guidance on householder development, namely the Building Design Guide (1987), Design Guide (2007) and the Detailed Design Guide on Alterations and Extensions (2014).

National Planning Policy Framework

48. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) should be considered as a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. In the National Park the development plan comprises our Core Strategy 2011 and the Development Management Policies 2019. Policies in the development plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. There is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the development plan and the NPPF and our policies should be given full weight in the determination of this application.
49. Paragraph 189 states that "*great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.*"
50. Paragraph 221 sets out that local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

Peak District National Park Core Strategy

51. Policy L3 'Cultural heritage assets of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance' states that:

Development must conserve and where appropriate enhance or reveal the significance of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic assets and their settings, including statutory designations and other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest;

Other than in exceptional circumstances development will not be permitted where it is likely to cause harm to the significance of any cultural heritage asset of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance or its setting, including statutory designations or other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest;

Proposals for development will be expected to meet the objectives of any strategy, wholly or partly covering the National Park, that has, as an objective, the conservation and where possible the enhancement of cultural heritage assets. This includes, but is not exclusive to, the Cultural Heritage Strategy for the Peak District National Park and any successor strategy.

Development Management Policies

52. The most relevant development management policies are DMC3, DMC5, and DMC7.
53. Policy DMC3A says where development is acceptable in principle, it will be permitted provided that its detailed treatment is of a high standard that respects, protects and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape, including the wildlife and cultural heritage that contribute to the distinctive sense of place.
54. Policy DMC3B sets out various aspects that particular attention will be paid to including: siting, scale, form, mass, levels, height and orientation, settlement form and character, landscape, details, materials and finishes landscaping, access, utilities and parking, amenity, accessibility and the principles embedded in the design related SPD and the technical guide.
55. Policy DMC5 provides detailed advice relating to proposals affecting heritage assets and their settings, requiring new development to demonstrate how valued features will be conserved, as well as detailing the types and levels of information required to support such proposals. It also requires development to avoid harm to the significance, character, and appearance of heritage assets and details the exceptional circumstances in which development resulting in such harm may be supported.
56. Policy DMC7 relates to listed buildings. It states that planning applications for development affecting a Listed Building and/or its setting should be determined in accordance with policy DMC5 and clearly demonstrate: (i) how their significance will be preserved; and (ii) why the proposed development and related works are desirable or necessary. Applications will not be considered if they do not contain sufficient information to assess impact on significance. Proposals that adversely affect the listed building will not be permitted, particularly if they lead to a loss of original fabric or seek unnecessary alterations to key features. DMC7 also resists the loss of curtilage features which complement the character and appearance of the building. Consistent with the NPPF, the policy allows for properly justified impacts that are less than substantial or that have a public benefit. Where change to a Listed Building is acceptable, an appropriate record of the building will be required.

Assessment

Whether the development would conserve the heritage assets at the site

Main House

57. The Planning Statement explains that the house was first brought into use as a single, family dwelling following a period of development after 1832, and reversion to its original use would represent the optimum use of the asset. Inappropriate modern partitions to facilitate the care home use will be removed and the proposed layout will closely follow the original layout of the property whilst ensuring the house is attractive and functional as a modern dwelling.
58. National guidance recognises that ensuring heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time. The conversion into a single dwelling would not require significant changes to the building's form. The proposed interventions to facilitate the conversion are set out in detail in the Heritage Statement, which concludes that they will ensure conservation and enhancement of the asset and are required for the future conservation of the asset which has been neglected in recent years. The change of use and restoration of Brooklands back to a single dwelling is proposed as a positive enhancement through the removal of inappropriate alterations which harm the heritage asset and through its overall restoration and repair.
59. The Authority's conservation officer raises some concerns regarding matters of detail in relation to the works to the house, including proposed window replacements, potential works to floors, extent of roof damage and queries regarding services installations. The applicant's agent has since agreed to retain all but 2 (modern) windows, with others to be repaired. This is welcomed, and other matters could be controlled by planning condition.
60. The demolition the 1987 extension and construction of a garden-room in structural glass and stainless-steel columns is considered to be a positive enhancement as the 1987 extension is of poor design and detailing. The replacement garden room would be a modern structure but its transparency which would reveal and enhance the elevation, and the significance of the heritage asset and contribute towards the conservation of the asset.
61. In addition to this, there would be other restoration works, including the aforementioned replacement of unsympathetic windows and the dismantling and rebuilding of the curved garden wall to the original geometry. The remaining section of retaining wall to be locally consolidated repaired. The original wall was straight with orthogonal steps and a gap, but this was reconstructed as a curve, abutting the east elevation of the house. This created an inaccessible, saturated and unmaintained lightwell to the east elevation of the house. It is therefore proposed to reinstate the original wall geometry and provide access to the lightwell for maintenance and access.
62. The proposals also include the erection of a subterranean, 3 car garage on land to the immediate south of the main house, in close proximity to the boundary of the neighbouring property. Whilst this is outside of the curtilage of the listed building, the proposals have been developed to ensure no adverse landscape impact. By virtue of its design and siting, it would not have a harmful impact on the setting of the listed building

or on the wider landscape.

63. Overall the works are considered to be positive and would substantially contribute towards the conservation of the heritage asset, according with policies HC1, L3, DMC3, DMC5 and DMC7.

Plot 2 (Walled Garden)

64. It is arguable whether the proposals at Plot 2 amount to conversion with extension, or to a new build dwelling. Whilst the area of new footprint is large, it is less than half the footprint of the overall dwellinghouse proposed. Given this, and that the development seeks to utilise rather than replace or substantially alter the existing historic buildings comprises the majority of its volume, we are satisfied that it should be treated as a scheme of conversion.
65. In design terms, the scheme as a whole takes a different approach to the 2021 application, which was refused – amongst other reasons – on the grounds that the proposed new-build dwellings were not appropriate in their context.
66. Plot 2 is the dwelling proposed in the former kitchen garden area to the west of the main house, and would include the agricultural building and kennels north of the wall as an annexe as part of the same dwellinghouse. The proposals also include the listed potting shed abutted against the garden walls. The proposal is to convert the historic buildings, repair the walls, and to construct part of the new dwelling within the garden immediately south of the walls. The house would have five bedrooms, including two in the annexe, and a double garage. The potting sheds would be converted for use as a bathroom, plant room, a utility room and a home office.
67. The Planning Statement says that the concept of a house in the walled garden is based upon the conversion of the potting sheds, the stabilisation of the listed walls, and the development of a new house on the footprint of previous historic glasshouse structures. This part of the building has been reduced in scale at the request of officers to reduce its encroachment towards the principal listed building and to reduce its dominance within the wider site.
68. In terms of its materials and form this section of new build development seeks to respond to both the historic development within the walled garden, and to integrate the building in to its setting. It has some success in doing so. Whilst seemingly occupying a much larger footprint than any historic glasshouses in this position, the use of extended glazed walling nods to that previous development, and the proposed use of brick walling reflects the parallel listed walling behind, both respecting and blending the new development with the historic fabric it sits alongside. It would however still obscure areas of the existing historic garden wall and affix to it, resulting in a degree of harm.
69. The former stone built agricultural buildings located just north of the existing wall that severs plot 2 consist of pig sties, a dairy, an abattoir, a cart shed and kennels, plus a later red brick estate office. These buildings would have formed a 'home farm' and, together with the kitchen gardens, would have supplied fresh produce to the main house. As such they were integral to the use and function of the household and make an important contribution to the significance of the site. They are in a very poor state of repair, having clearly been out of sustainable use for many years. These would be converted largely within their shells without extension (in stark contrast to the aforementioned 2021 proposals), and as such their significance would be largely maintained. The only notable exception was a previously-proposed forwards extension of a cartshed to become a garage, which the Authority's conservation officer objected to on the grounds that historic fabric, form and layout would be harmed. The applicant's agent has since submitted amended plans to address that matter.

Plot 3

70. This part of the development proposes the demolition of the existing dwelling in the north-west corner of the site, known as Bethcar, and its replacement with a new single storey five-bedroomed dwelling over a semi-subterranean basement/garage.
71. The Statement of Heritage Significance attributes a 'Neutral' significance to Bethcar, which was constructed in 1897 as an estate workers' cottage. It notes that no original fenestration survives, and that the building has been heavily altered. The Heritage Statement also says that Bethcar is in a poor condition, with decayed roof timbers, holed ceilings, and offers limited potential for an energy efficient refurbishment. It has no internal sanitation.
72. The responses of consultees – the Authority's conservation officer, the Georgian Society, and the Victorian Society – all place greater heritage value on Bethcar than the submitted statement does. There is, however, disagreement on its value with the Authority's Archaeologist describing it as being of low/local interest, the Georgian Society describing its significance as 'modest' whilst the Victorian Society indicate that its value to the heritage interest and understanding of the site is much greater.
73. It is noted that permission was previously granted for the demolition of Bethcar under the extant permissions for the site (NP/DDD/1110/1185 and NP/DDD/1110/1186), which must be afforded some weight. However, the planning balance for that scheme was different, with different considerations. Whilst that permission may still be extant, and Bethcar could therefore be demolished, it does not necessarily justify the demolition of the house as part of an alternative scheme with a different planning balance.
74. This matter, and the planning balance more generally, is considered in its own section following this discussion of each plot and their heritage implications.
75. Coming back to the proposed replacement dwelling on Plot 3, the dwelling has been significantly reduced in length by 7m at the request of officers. The overall massing of the replacement dwelling is remains large, although it's single storey design would mean it does not protrude higher within its setting.
76. The proposed materials are gritstone walling and glazing to the visible elevations and windows and doors would have narrow frames, recessed into the stonework, breaking the wide mass with shadow lines to some extent. This form and these materials would have an impact within the site, but less so than a taller or more traditionally designed building that would appear more prominent and draw greater attention. Given its scale, it is considered that the building would appear relatively recessive within its setting.

Plot 4

77. This involves the demolition of a staff accommodation bungalow, built in 1987, and erection of a two storey 5-bedroomed dwelling with garaging. This is located to the north of the main house on the site of the existing staff bungalow. Previous, extant permissions allow for the demolition of the existing building.
78. The new house would have five bedrooms, and a double garage.
79. As with the replacement house at Bethcar, the overall approach is contemporary, with extensive zinc cladding/roofing on the first floor of the building, with stone walling across the ground floor. This approach serves to break up the massing of the building and the reduction of scale across the first-floor area minimises the additional impacts

on the setting of the principal listed building. Some such impact still arises, but is offset to some extent by the replacement of the unsympathetic bungalow with a new dwelling of higher quality design.

80. The proposed house sits on the boundary of the Bakewell Development Boundary and there would be minor encroachment beyond the boundary, but still within the curtilage of the site. This is not, however, detrimental to the integrity of the Development Boundary and does not represent a significant encroachment into open countryside, particularly given that its proposed footprint does not project any further east than the main house. The replacement house would not have an adverse landscape impact so it would accord with Core Strategy policy L1.

Overall design conclusions

81. Each of the dwellings is large in scale, necessitated by viability considerations.
82. However, they do respond to their positions and settings, seeking to respond with forms and designs that are unobtrusive, and materials that harmonise with those around them.
83. In these regards, they are considered to accord with adopted policies GSP1, GSP3, DMC3, and DMH9.
84. However, matters of impact on setting do arise, as discussed below.

Impacts on setting

85. Whilst the new buildings proposed are considered to generally respond well to their settings in terms of their designs there is, perhaps inevitably, an impact on the historic setting of the principal listed building.
86. The large, contemporary buildings would be visible within – and change – the setting in which The Brooklands is appreciated. There would be erosion of the relationship between the existing historic outbuildings and the main house, both visually and in terms of their historic function – through the subdivision of the site and the changes to their character and appearance.
87. As identified by each of the heritage specialists consulted on the proposals, these changes would result in harm to the setting – and therefore the significance – of The Brooklands as a Grade II listed building.
88. Therefore, when taken as a whole, the proposed development would give rise to a degree of harm to the significance of the affected heritage assets by virtue of the impact of the new development within the setting of the principal listed building, and through the loss of some elements of heritage significance – most notably the property of Bethcar.
89. That harm must therefore be weighed against the public benefits arising from the development, as required by policy DMC5 and the heritage provisions of the NPPF.

Public benefits

90. It is noted that the applicant argues that the proposed scheme would have a lower impact on the setting of the heritage assets at the site than the previously-approved (and extant) replacement care home development; that is not in contention.
91. However, that previous and extant decision was based on a different planning balance

that included the retention/replacement of a community care home. That development was found to be acceptable in its own right and – whilst it would certainly result in greater adverse heritage impacts than the current proposals – the two developments cannot be directly compared based on that consideration alone. The public benefit of effectively expunging that previous decision with a development giving rise to lesser heritage harm is therefore one that is afforded only limited weight.

92. On its own merits however, the proposed development would provide some significant public benefits.
93. Most notably, it would bring all of the remaining listed and historic buildings back in to active use. Providing that phasing of the development was properly secured – and it would need to be to ensure that any permission granted was in accordance with adopted policy – then the restoration of the principal building would be a significant benefit, returning it to its original and optimal use as a dwelling. Whilst some consultees have queried the impacts of the development on the appeal of the principal building as a single dwelling we have no evidence to suggest that it would cause difficulties with sale or occupation; it would remain a large dwelling in a sizeable and private location.
94. Overall, officers do not dismiss or undervalue the views of specialist consultees in their concerns regarding the heritage impacts of the development – indeed, we broadly agree with them. However, the applicant has objectively demonstrated that the extent of development proposed is necessary in order to outweigh the conservation deficit arising from the works required to restore the house and to return it to its optimal use. Within those constraints, our view is that the design approach adopted is appropriate and sympathetic, and that harm arising has been minimised.
95. On balance, our view is that the public benefits of the proposals as set out above outweigh the arising harm and the resultant conflicts with adopted policies, and on that basis the proposals are supported, subject to being found acceptable in other regards.

Ecology

96. The application is accompanied by a protected species survey that concludes the buildings support bat roosts, and mitigation measures are proposed to protect those bat interests. The Authority's Ecologist recommends that those mitigation measures are secured by condition and raises no objections to the proposals. They also recommend that a scheme of external lighting is secured to protect bat interests – that could be done by condition.
97. The development raises no further ecological matters or concerns.

Conclusion

98. This report concludes that harm would arise to the significance of the listed heritage assets at the site, primarily due to the extent of development proposed within the setting of the principal Grade II listed building. However, that harm is concluded to be outweighed by the public benefits of restoring said building and bringing it back in to its optimal use – and also bringing the other retained historic buildings across the site in to such use and halting their decline.
99. There are no other policy or material considerations that would indicate that listed building consent should be refused, and the application is therefore recommended for approval.

Human Rights

100. Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

101. Nil
102. Report Author: Mark Nuttall, South Area