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10 March 2015

For the attention of: Mr. Paul Sexton

Dear Paul,

RE: Consultation Joint Response to Planning Application Ref S/2822/14/OL
Outline application for development of up to 95 houses on land off Shepreth Road, Foxton.

Please see below our response to the comments identified by the Consultancy Unit consultation response of 3rd March 2015 and the Council's Design Enabling Panel.

Setting of Foxton House

Foxton House originally stood in 18 hectares of land which included the proposal site, this should have been considered more in the assessment

The setting of Foxton House has changed over time and currently its setting and curtilage is within its own grounds of 1.646 hectares, not within the historic 18 hectares. Heritage assets and their settings change and evolve over time and it is clearly indicated by the historic maps that a clear delineation of Foxton House from the site has taken place since 1887. Foxton House can no longer be said to be 'immediately set in a parkland'. Its wider setting comprises the parkland, which is now agricultural grazing land, but this land no longer belongs to Foxton House and therefore it is distinctly separate from it.

The almost total retention of its historic fabric, adds substantially to its significance

The Heritage Statement clearly identifies the significance and historical importance of Foxton House which is listed as Grade II in terms of the weight that should be given to its conservation, as set out in Paragraph 132 of the NPPF. English Heritage, in listing the building, has allocated Foxton House as of special interest only. It has not listed it as Grade I, of exceptional interest or Grade II*, a particularly important building of more than special interest. Therefore, although retention of historic fabric can add to the significance of a heritage building, in this case its significance is Grade II. Figure 27 (in the submitted heritage statement), showing the two garden frontages of Foxton House indicate that the site has had little intervention during its lifetime. Figure 27 (in the submitted heritage statement) is a very recent photograph of Foxton House and cannot possibly indicate how the gardens were originally and if there was any intervention since they were constructed.

The group of Leylandii has a negative contribution to the significance of Foxton House; this group of trees is not within the control of either the applicant or the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The screening was not a feature of the original formal garden design and could be removed

The historical maps indicate a clear delineation of Foxton House from the site since at least 1887. An earlier title map of 1839, illustrated 4 below, shows that delineation is of trees. Leylandii may not have been the original variety of trees planted by the owner, however, an owner chose to plant trees in 1839, 14 years after the construction of Foxton House. One can suppose that this was to enclose the house and its gardens in order to provide a degree of privacy due to passage through the adjoining lands and/or, as the land was sold off, to separate the premises as the parkland no longer belonged to Foxton House.

Regarding the point on the removal of ornamental trees along the boundary of Foxton House, Gladman consider this irresponsible. In response, Gladman will be planting an 'instant' hedge on this boundary in the coming weeks to take boundary treatment with Foxton House back firmly within the control of the landowners.

The situation on the ground does not support the applicant's main premise that Foxton House is, and should continue to be, contained within an 'inclusive' setting', as a country residence, comprising only the formal garden and remnant of a paddock.

The setting of Foxton House has changed over time and currently its setting is within its own grounds of 1.646 hectares. As stated in point 4, above, it appears that previous owners, from a very early stage, planted trees around Foxton House to provide separation from the parkland. If the first trees were planted in 1839, as indicated by the historical maps, it can be supposed that this trend continued, particularly as the adjoining land was sold off. If this is the case, there have been trees containing Foxton House for a far greater period of time than not. Why should this inclusive setting not continue and be added to if it has been in existence for such an extensive period of time? If any owners had wanted to have views over the parkland, the trees would have been removed; this can then be surmised as the owners of Foxton House enjoying their privacy, particularly as the adjoining parkland is no longer in their ownership. Changes brought about by property owners, also reflect the history and use of heritage buildings and should also be included as an aspect of the special character of an historic property

The applicant has disregarded any assessment of the historic curtilage and extent of setting in order to indicate the land available for the building of dwellings.

We disagree that the historic curtilage has been disregarded, the heritage statement assessed Foxton House and its setting and clearly stated that Foxton House has changed over time and currently its setting and curtilage is within its own grounds of 1.646 hectares, not within the historic 18 hectares. It is clearly indicated by the historic maps that a clear delineation of Foxton House from the site has taken place since 1887. Foxton House can no longer be said to be immediately set in a parkland. Its wider setting comprises the parkland, now agricultural grazing land, but this land no longer belongs to Foxton House and therefore it is distinctly separate from it. Further, the application site has been the subject of intensive agriculture which has changed the nature of the site, along with buildings and an A Road (the A10). The land on this elevation is no longer part of the functional setting.

Foxton House will not be enhanced by the addition of buffering

As indicated by photos of the site and historical maps, Foxton House and its setting do not have interaction with the site and apart from the paddock area, do not have open visibility to the proposed site. Notwithstanding this, buffering has been proposed by the developer in order to provide additional screening which is felt to add to the privacy and enhancement of Foxton House and its setting, but which is not essential to mitigate any material harm. We do believe that advice by officer which would seek to encourage the removal of trees on third party land is inappropriate and misguided.

The Omission of a small red dot indicating that Foxton House is a heritage asset, Fig. 3 on Page 6 of the Heritage Statement has prevented the Council from having sufficient information in order to understand the issues involved.

This omission was a technical error and as Foxton House was described at great length in the document, it cannot be claimed that it was not obvious that it was the principle heritage asset involved. Due regard is paid to Foxton House by the provision of a full Heritage Statement, which clearly and methodically assesses the significance and setting of all relevant heritage assets, in particular Foxton House.

The National Policy, Local Policy and English Heritage documents in the Heritage Statement are supporting the proposal and not balanced enough to provide the Council with sufficient information in order to understand the issues involved.

We disagree with this statement. The heritage statement clearly and methodically assesses Foxton House and policy in respect of this application at length on pages 7-16 and again on pages 31-35.

It is also worthy of note that, despite being included in the evolution of the scheme and part of the Consultancy Unit's review meeting, English Heritage have decided not to raise a specific objection to the scheme.

Character of the proposed development

Whilst we welcome the input of the Council's Design Enabling Panel as Gladman are keen to promote high quality sustainable developments, we are disappointed with the written response received and lack of any positive enabling advice, which we could use to progress our scheme.

Explanation was given to the location of the main access point and the design considerations taken into account with regard to this location. The access design has responded to this location by providing a new woodland edge to the village. Development has also been restricted in this location to ensure that a new suitable boundary to the village could be established. The result of which has ensured that the landscape visual impact of proposed development is slight/ negligible in the longer term.

Connectivity has been a key component of the design and consideration has been given to maximizing connectivity both within the site and to the village centre and railway station. As acknowledged a new pedestrian and cycle route to the station will provide a 5-10 minute walk to the station. A new footpath/cycle route is to be provided along Royston Road. Pedestrians and cyclist can also use this path to connect back into the village as well as using the main access that will have a public footway.

Consideration was given to an additional pedestrian route to the village centre but third party land interest do not make this feasible.

This layout has also reduced the number of dwellings to 95 units rather than the 140 units that was proposed as part of the consultation.

A number of comments were made about the scale and grain of proposed development. The design and access statement has included examples of the density of development found within the village and at 28.5 dwellings per hectare other examples within the village of this density can be found. It is accepted that this is not the same density as can be found in the immediate vicinity of the site. Discussion on how this could be addressed were discussed in the meeting and the idea of having larger houses with long back gardens backing onto existing residential development may be a solution to addressing the issue of scale and grain but this was absent from the design panel letter. This proposal is for outline consent and opportunity does exist to refine proposals as part of a detailed reserved matters application.

It is disputed that no consideration of the development has been given to the historic importance of Foxton House and its setting. The design has responded by providing a significant offset to Foxton House and its curtilage. A significant area is purely open space including a new drainage pond is located to the north of Foxton House. Where

development is situated close to Foxton House a green buffer is provided and the layout has included a site line to and from the house along a new street that leads to the village green.

Conclusion

Accordingly we considered that after assessment, Paragraphs 132 to 134 of the Framework are not engaged. There is no physical connection from our client's site to Foxton House. The setting of Foxton House has changed over time, it is already unrecognisable from a country house in its own grounds with view over surrounding countryside. Any historical features have been eroded due to intensive agricultural methods and the piecemeal sale of over 90% (18 hectares to just 1.6 hectares) of land surrounding Foxton House. This erosion has been further exacerbated by the erection of large modern agricultural buildings and the construction of the elevated A10 bypass. Therefore it is clear that Foxton House is now inwardly looking property not a dominating country manor style residence.

We also believe that the illustrative layout demonstrates that the development will: -

- Create a new extension to the village focused around a new village green;
- Provide a significant green buffer to Foxton House and existing residential;
- Ensure that the proposals will not impact on the wider landscape context;
- Protect existing mature trees and landscape features;
- Provide a density similar to other densities found in Foxton; and
- Provide a framework for a scheme that identifies architectural detailing and materials that can be found in the village centre to ensure it had relevance to Foxton and are not generic.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to respond to the points raised by the Consultancy Unit and Council's Design Enabling Panel, we hope you find our comments useful and take them into account when coming to your recommendation and balancing up the significant planning benefits of our scheme.

If you have any further questions or need any additional clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Laurie Lane

Planning Manager

Gladman Developments