

SOUTHERN PLANNING COMMITTEE – 3rd April 2024

UPDATE TO AGENDA

APPLICATION NO.

19/5211N

LOCATION

Land South of Monks Lane and West of Chester Road, Acton

UPDATE PREPARED

Landscape Officer Comments

The proposal would forever alter in a negative way the appearance/setting of the conservation area, open countryside, the setting of various heritage assets including a scheduled ancient monument, Grade 1 listed church and other listed properties, the existing village character, the wider landscape character areas.

The radical change from what is a present a typical edge of village rural countryside character into a housing estate would present an unacceptable change in this particular sensitive village setting, especially in this location so close to very sensitive heritage assets. The proposal would have major effects on the setting of the Grade 1 listed church, something not considered to be very well explored in the Landscape Visual Appraisal.

The Landscape Visual Appraisal seems to have reference to plans which have since been revised and thus 'the proposal' assessment is out of date. The selected viewpoints do not conform to the recommendations of the landscape institute. The viewpoints should be located to show the worst-case views towards the proposal, especially from sensitive elements such as Schedule Ancient Monument (Monks lane Moat to the North East), the Grade I listed building and the conservation area.

Any Landscape Visual Appraisal that has not included a viewpoint, rendering before/after of a view from several locations, from the ground level of a Grade I listed building adjacent to the site, (whether there are impacts or not) within its viewpoint selection, is not considered to be sufficient. Therefore, Councils Landscape Officer considered the rational for the whole document is a weak formatted assessment which does against the recommendations of the Landscape Institute.

Similar comments regarding the above also apply to the setting of the conservation area and the scheduled ancient monument and other sensitive elements close to the site which at present have either none or poorly chosen viewpoint assessments.

Regarding Illustrative View 03 Comments, the Councils Landscape Officer is not convinced as to the spatial and visual accuracy of this photo montage in relation to the church tower, the rear properties seem a touch smaller than one would expect in this view. He is required to assess the full 'back of house' information regarding this view, including lens size used in rendering environment and used on the camera, a full levels existing and proposed plan including proposed key building heights, positions and the survey information for the church tower and how this has all been used within the 3D environment.

A comparison of 'existing' view alongside this image would also be helpful. One thing this illustration does show is the very hard faced, blocky, wall of development especially to the right of the church, possible due to poor landscape design in this area to help sit, filter, screen elements of the proposal more sensitively into the countryside. Similar concerns also apply to Views 01 and 02.

The landscape design does not conform to a plethora of recommendations by the CEC Design Guide, street tree and avenue planting is very weak. boundary planting is also adhoc.

As a result the Councils Landscape Officer objects to the proposal given the significant and harmful landscape impacts resulting from the proposal.

Appraisal

Comments of the Landscape Officer are noted and agreed.

Recommendation

No change to initial recommendation as set out in the main report.