



Planning Technical Officer
Planning Department
Maidstone Borough Council
Maidstone House
King Street
Maidstone
Kent ME15 6JQ

Our ref: EEH/13055

18 October 2018

Dear Sir or Madam,

BOUGHTON MOUNT, BOUGHTON LANE, BOUGHTON MONCHELSEA

We write on behalf of our clients, KCC, to seek pre-application advice for a residential redevelopment proposal on the Boughton Mount site in Boughton Lane, Boughton Monchelsea.

Site Description

The site was originally the location of a large country house, but it is now predominantly previously developed land comprising a complex of buildings last used as a Special Education facility and formerly as a KCC central nursery for horticultural purposes. The country house was lost in a fire shortly after the Second World War. The entire estate was gifted to KCC in 1948 with a covenant restricting the use of the site to 'the education of delicate children', although this restriction was broadened in the 1960s. Special educational services were provided on the site from the late 1940s until 2010. The restrictive use covenant has since been lifted from the site.

The northern half of the site consists primarily of disused educational and horticultural buildings as well as hardstanding areas used for associated car parking.

The southern half of the site consists of the overgrown private gardens associated with the former residence.

Of note are the historic elements of the site that include a Grade II listed ha-ha and folly, historic walled gardens, landscaped gardens (now overgrown), and a prominent 20th century water tower.

planning transport design environment infrastructure

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The site is in an extremely poor state of repair. KCC has no community, educational or other use for the land and it is surplus to requirements. In the absence of any new development, the site will continue to deteriorate, as will its heritage value.

SHEDLAA (2016)

The site was originally put forward to the 2009 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 'call for sites'. The site was rejected at that time due in part to a site review being undertaken by KCC.

The site was put forward again in 2014 during the 'call for sites' when it was concluded by the Council that whilst the site has some sensitivity from an ecological and archaeological point of view, its fairly isolated and contained location would reduce to some degree the visual impact of development. Suitable planting could be secured to provide additional screening and the necessary road improvements could be achieved and secured through suitable S106 agreements. Therefore, the Council concluded that the site was suitable for development in principle. Its availability conclusion was also positive.

The SHEDLAA assessment was made on the basis of a potential yield of 75 dwellings.

The site was recommended for allocation and was included in the Regulation 19 Consultation 2016 on the Local Plan with an indicative yield of 25 units.

Adopted Local Plan – Policy Context for the Site

The site now benefits from an allocation in the newly adopted Maidstone Local Plan (Policy H1 (52)), thus confirming the principle of residential development at the site.

Policy H1 (52) is worded as follows:

Boughton Mount, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for development of approximately 25 dwellings at an average density of 14 dwellings per hectare. In addition to the requirements of policy H1, planning permission will be granted if the following criteria are met.

Design and Layout

- 1. Built development will be restricted to the currently developed area (approx. 1.8ha) north of the Ha-Ho and Folly and will exclude the area of the existing pond.*



2. *The layout shall show the retention and restoration of the Ha-Ha, The Folly, the water tower and barn, the walls surrounding the former walled garden and other ragstone walls within the site.*
3. *The layout shall show the restoration of the parkland/garden associated with the former house containing The Folly and Ha-Ho as publicly accessible open space.*
4. *Any application should be accompanied by a detailed viability assessment and appraisal showing that the development proposed is the minimum necessary to secure criteria 2 and 3 above.*
5. *An appropriate legal mechanism is entered into to secure the completion of the restoration/ renovation works comprised in criteria 2 and 3 at an agreed point in the delivery of the development together with payment of a bond that will be repaid in stages once scheduled works are completed.*
6. *The proposed layout will retain and reinforce the existing woodland and planting along the sites northern boundary.*
7. *Development proposals will be of a high standard of design and sustainability incorporating the use of vernacular materials.*

Access

8. *Vehicular access to the development shall only be from Boughton Lane.*

Heritage Impact

9. *Any application is accompanied by a detailed Heritage and Archaeological impact Assessment that addresses the elements included in criteria 2 and 3 above and also addresses the archaeological impact/implications of the retained former cellars of the previous house.*

Landscape/Ecology

10. *The development proposals are designed to take into account the results of a landscape and visual impact assessment undertaken in accordance with the principles of current guidance.*
11. *The development proposals are designed to take into account the results of a detailed arboricultural survey, tree constraints plan and tree retention/protection plans.*



12. *The development proposals are designed to take into account the result of a phase 1 habitat survey and any species specific surveys that may as a result be recommended, together with any necessary mitigation/enhancement measures.*

Contamination

13. *The development will be subject to the results and recommendations of a land contamination survey.*

Drainage and Flood risk

14. *The development will be subject to the results of a detailed flood risk assessment and a surface water drainage strategy that demonstrates that surface water run-off from the site will not lead to an increased risk of flooding along the River Loose at The Quarries and downstream from The Quarries.*

Open Space

15. *Provision of 0.15ha of natural/semi-natural open space in accordance with policy OS1 (14) together with additional on/off-site provision and/or contributions towards off-site provision/improvements as required in accordance with policy DM 19. Open space should be sited to maximise accessibility to new and existing residents.*

Strategic Highways and Transportation

16. *Highway improvements at Boughton Lane and at the junction of Boughton Lane and the A229 Loose Road, as proven necessary.*

Utility Infrastructure

17. *A connection is provided to the local sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity, in collaboration with the service provider.*

Background Studies/Technical Reports

As noted above, the SHEDLAA was based on a potential yield of 75 units on the Boughton Mount site, however the allocation in the Local Plan refers to approximately 25 units at an average density of 14 dwellings per hectare to be accommodated on the site.

Early feasibility work prior to the allocation of the site in the adopted Local Plan and as part of the preparation for the site representation on the Council's 'Call for Sites' exercise



in 2014, DHA undertook detailed site feasibility work to look at potential site options and unit numbers on the site. This feasibility exercise has identified a yield of between 33-46 units as being appropriate and deliverable.

It is recognised that the Boughton Mount site has a number of constraints in the form of heritage interest, trees and ecology in particular, all of which require careful consideration in developing a more detailed masterplan for the site.

Therefore, in order to move forward with the site, and to inform the pre-application advice, KCC has instructed the following reports/plans to be produced:

- Visual Structural Survey (August 2018) by Frankham Consultancy Group Ltd
- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Assessment GCN HIS Survey (July 2018) by Tim Moya Associates
- Heritage Assessment (June 2018) by Heritage Collective

These documents are attached to this letter for information.

The Visual Structural Survey looks in detail at the Water Tower building on the site and the associated garden wall. The aim of the survey was to establish the existing structural condition of the building elements and provide advice on the potential for redevelopment.

The survey suggests that there are no signs of water ingress or decay to the roof structure of the water tower, and no obvious signs of cracking was detected on the walls. It is noted that the existing building structure has the integrity to support additional dead and live loads and that the weight of the brick tower and water tank when filled would have been quite substantial. However, to determine if the existing foundations of the water tower are 'as built' or have been improved in some way, trial pits would be required to determine if enhanced foundations and a geotechnical investigation would be needed.

With regard to the associated garden wall, the wall appears to be in good order with no obvious signs of historic remedial works. The defects which were noted during the survey were loose or de-bonded bricks and damage to mortar bed joints caused by the foliage of the adjacent shrubs.

The Extended Phase 1 Habitat Assessment looks at the ecological value of the site at Boughton Mount. It assesses the habitats found within the site and the likely impact of the proposed development on habitats of ecological value and protected and notable species.

In terms of key results, the Assessment notes that the proposed development footprint contains suitable habitat for a variety of protected and notable species including great crested newt, bats, reptiles, dormouse and nesting birds. Buildings within the site, particularly the historic Folly, are considered suitable for use by roosting bats.



The report contains a number of recommendations including the following:

- A landscape scheme to include the management of the woodland and pond;
- Retention and management of grassland areas as wildflower meadow;
- Flowering plants and long and brash piles incorporated in the landscaping for the site;
- Retention of ferns and other vegetation plus cracks/crevices in the ha ha;
- Inclusion of bird nest boxes;
- Environmental DNA (eDNA) analysis of pond 1 required to establish if GCN are present or absent;
- Reptile surveys to be undertaken;
- Bat surveys to be undertaken including a full Bat Scoping Assessment;
- Dormouse surveys to be undertaken; and
- Restricted lighting on the site.

The Heritage Assessment provides initial advice on the quality and heritage value of the existing buildings, the contribution made by the buildings as existing to the character of the area and key heritage considerations in this case.

In terms of heritage value, the site retains some features which speak of its earlier history as a prominent estate in the area. These are the grade II listed early 19th century folly and ha ha, the somewhat neglected garden and woodland, surviving walls to walled garden and stone barn with circa early 20th century water tower.

With regard to key heritage considerations, only the folly and ha ha are recognised as having sufficient architectural and historic interest to warrant inclusion as statutory designated heritage assets. The setting of these assets, within the garden and the woodland of the original estate, is important in appreciating their significance. The other structures including the remaining walls to the walled garden and stone barn are of local interest and reinforce the understanding of Boughton Mount's past as a prominent estate. The main 1970s educational building, and other 20th century buildings on the site are of no local heritage value and make a negative contribution to the setting of the designated heritage assets.

The two designated heritage assets are sensitive to change, but it is noted that their context has been altered with the removal of the original main estate building and replacement with a large educational facility, which is considered to make a negative impact to their setting.

The Heritage Assessment concludes that considered replacement buildings could be of benefit to the setting of the listed structures on the site, improving upon the negative impact that the existing 1970s building has upon the designated heritage assets. It is further concluded that the other remaining ancillary buildings of the original Boughton



Mount Estate, including the remaining walls of the walled garden and stone barn with water tower are of local heritage interest, and help to inform the history and form of the site. New or replacement buildings on the site would ideally be confined to the northern part of the site to avoid harm to the setting of the ha ha and folly and the important connection to the gardens and woodland which they have.

Layout Option Plans

As set out previously in this letter, DHA has looked in detail at the feasibility of options for the site's redevelopment.

The enclosed Pre-Application Document by DHA Urban Design is a visual summary of the context of the site, its historic context, constraints and opportunities, the proposed buildings for retention and demolition, and sketch design concepts for the new build elements. Prior to the allocation of the site in the adopted Local Plan, various layout options have been sketched out. The two feasibility options enclosed in the accompanying Pre-Application Document which are intended for further discussion incorporate 33 or 46 dwellings on the site.

The options incorporate a mix of unit types and sizes including 1 or 2 bed flats in the existing water tower and barn, as well as 2 to 3 bed terraced units, 3 to 4 bed semi-detached and detached dwellings, and 4 to 5 bed link detached units. Each scheme also incorporates a courtyard mews as well as dwellings respecting the front boundary ragstone wall/reinstatement of gateway house.

In the options, development is predominantly confined to the northern section of the site. In the southern area of the site, the historic gardens would be restored with the historic lines of sight reinstated and the historic building line preserved. The listed features (the folly and the ha ha) together with the fountain and pond would be restored, and the historic layout of the walled garden would be reinstated, together with the reinstatement of a gateway house. For feasibility option 1, development around the pond area is proposed.

It is intended that the southern part of the site will be restored as publicly accessible open space in line with the policy requirements of Policy H1(52), with the woodland buffer and screen to Boughton Lane retained. Early discussions are ongoing with the Parish Council as to whether it would be interested in managing the open space as part of the Parish Council's country park vision for this part of the Parish.

The current access point onto Boughton Lane will be utilised for the proposed development.



Way Forward

Given the heritage aspects of this particular project, we would very much appreciate a meeting on site with yourself and the Conservation Officer to discuss the proposals. The pre-application fee of £720.00, which covers the cost of a planning officer and the Conservation and Design Officer attending a one hour meeting on site, will be forwarded to you separately by KCC.

We trust that the above is of interest and I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Emma Hawkes'.

Emma Hawkes
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Enc: DHA Urban Design Pre-Application Document
Visual Structural Survey
Extended Phase 1 Habitat Assessment and GCN HSI Survey
Heritage Assessment