

MEMORANDUM

From:	Built Heritage Officer		
Service	Green Infrastructure	App No:	253113
Address:	Clear View Cottage, Whistley Green, Hurst, Wokingham, RG10 0DU		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling following demolition of the existing dwelling, plus erection of a detached car port with first floor storage, a front wall and gate, associated landscaping and installation of PV panels on an existing outbuilding.		
Heritage Asset:	Clear View Cottage – NDHA Setting of: Village Centre Hurst: Area of Special Character (AoSC)– identified by the Council and is classed as a non-designated heritage asset, one which holds a degree of historic and architectural merit in the traditional buildings within it (several of which are listed buildings) and the character of the area. Whistley Green Farmhouse – NDHA Huntsman’s Cottage – Grade II listed building Listed building along with Conservation areas are classed as designated heritage assets under the NPPF (2024) and in the Council’s Local Plan policies.		
Site Visit Made:	Yes, external only.		

Summary Of Recommendations

Objection

Comments On Proposal

The application proposes the demolition of Clear View Cottage, an 18th century building located at Whistley Green with the parish of St. Nicholas Hurst, with the subsequent construction of a new dwellinghouse on the same site. By virtue of its age, historic and architectural interest, as well as the positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, Clear View Cottage is identified as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA). The WBC Historic Environment Topic Paper (2024) identifies the building as an un-designated heritage asset positively contributing to the character and appearance of the AoSC. Clear View Cottage is within the Whistley Green area of Hurst, and historically formed part of Whistley

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Farm. The neighbouring Whistley Farmhouse is a fine late 18th / early 19th century farmhouse which post dates Clear View Cottage. Given the relationship, differential age and scale, it is possible that the building we now know as Clear View Cottage was the original farmhouse for Whistley Farm. It is not uncommon for new farmhouses to be constructed either adjacent to, or to entirely replace, an older building as the farmstead's fortunes increase, coupled with a desired increase in accommodation and changing architectural fashions. The 'old' farmhouse then becomes relegated to worker's cottages or similar – this may well have been the case here.

Whilst no internal inspection has been undertaken, from the external characteristics the building dates from the early 18th century. Given the form and typical historical development of such buildings, it may be the case the building holds an earlier core. This, coupled with the positive contribution with the character and appearance of the area (not withstanding the lack of recent maintenance, vegetative growth etc.) results in a building which makes a strong contribution to the historical significance of the area.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and that the effect of proposals upon the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application.

Given that the building is identified as heritage asset, located within the setting of other heritage assets, a planning application is mandatorily required to be accompanied by a heritage statement, as set out in paragraph 207 of the NPPF. At the present time the application does not contain an appropriate heritage assessment and thus is devoid of appropriate information in this respect.

The application does not assert sufficient justification for the proposed demolition of the non-designated heritage asset. The DAS states: *"The dwelling has been vacant for several years and appears to be mostly victorian (sic) with perhaps an original part before this. It is not of any particular architectural merit, and with signs of subsidence. The house provides only small rooms in an unusual layout with a partially connected two storey element at the rear, it is not feasible to retain it to achieve the client's brief."*

It is acknowledged the building requires repair and general refurbishment. However, as para. 209 of the NPPF (Dec 24) states: *"Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision."* Lack of appropriate maintenance in this regard is considered deliberate neglect. No evidence has been submitted as part of this application – the form of a structural assessment – to demonstrate any structural deficiency in the building that would render it unsafe or technically unfeasible to repair.

Further to the loss of Clear View Cottage in itself, the proposals would seek to harm the hierarchical relationship between Whistley Farmhouse and the application site. As noted above, Clear View Cottage once formed part of the farmstead, and it is possible it was the original farmhouse. Whilst now separated

the interrelationship between the buildings, and thus wider settlement remains legible, such legibility and group value would be eroded through the loss of the building, resulting in harm to the significance of Whistley Farmhouse.

In terms of the replacement new dwelling, whilst it is noted the proposed design has sought to be traditional in form and appearance, and thus sympathetic with the context, due to the scale, varied styles and proportions, it results in a disjointed and confused aesthetic. The primary elevation may be considered politely as 'neo-Victorian', but fails in the details such as the ill-proportioned Palladium window and oversized flat-roofed porch. The western elevation is formed of an attempt to reflect a 'Tudor revival' timber framed element, however results in creating a confused and artificial developmental narrative. The overall scale of the building is vast, being by far the largest dwelling in the vicinity, and greatly oversized for the narrow and longitudinal plot form.

Given the above, the proposed demolition of Clear View Cottage would result in the highest level of harm to the non-designated heritage asset, that of total demolition. This harm would be akin to 'substantial' or 'total loss' in NPPF terminology (in reference to a designated heritage asset) through the permanent demolition of the building. Harm would also occur to the significance of Whistley Farmhouse and the Village Centre Hurst Area of Special Character, both identified as non-designated heritage assets, through the erosion of the historic character and appearance and of a building which positively contributes to their significance through their setting. Furthermore, through the convoluted and contrived design, the proposed new dwelling fails to respond to the historic context and would further seek to harm the setting of the identified assets.

Given the identified harm, the proposed development would conflict with Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy and Policy TB26 of the Managing Development Delivery local plan, which requires that: *"Planning permission will only be granted for proposals to or affecting Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character where they demonstrate that they retain and enhance the traditional, historical, local and special character of the building or area and its setting."* Furthermore, the application conflicts with Principle G1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD which requires that: *"Development must respond positively to its site and local context, including; Heritage assets and their settings, for instance archaeological features, listed buildings, historic parks and gardens and conservation areas;"*

As such, an objection is raised against the application.

Conditions			
N/A			
Date:	16/01/2026	Signed:	Roderick McDonald Built Heritage Officer