

Former Sawmill Site, Bearwood Park, Sindlesham Heritage Technical Note

Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Technical Note has been commissioned by Feltham Construction Limited and considers the potential effects that minor amendments to the approved design and site layout of the former sawmill site in Bearwood Park, Sindlesham, Wokingham may have on designated and non-designated heritage assets in the vicinity. The application site is located to the east of Mole Road and adjacent to the base of the dam retaining Bearwood Lake.
- 1.2 The redevelopment of the sawmill site received planning permission (F/2014/2119) in 2014 which, along with the redevelopment of many other parts of the wider area, formerly the Bearwood Golf Course, permitted *"The refurbishment/ rebuilding of existing housing and farm/ industrial buildings to provide 26 residential units (net increase of 18 residential units) with associated parking, landscaping and access. Demolition of ancillary buildings plus garden wall to be made good and associated works relating to Bearwood Lake dam"*. Consequently, these revisions constitute a non-material amendment to the existing planning permission relating to the redevelopment of the wider sawmill site.
- 1.3 A site visit was undertaken on 27th April 2026 when the conditions were cloudy and visibility was clear.
- 1.4 The remaining buildings and structures of the sawmill complex are not statutorily listed, nor are they on any local list. However, they lie within the western part of Bearwood College Registered Park and Garden (GII*, NHLE 1000414). As such, any amendment to the approved scheme has the potential to impact on the significance of the registered park as a whole. In addition, there are a number of listed buildings in the vicinity of the sawmill site which could also be indirectly affected by the proposals. However, due to the topography of this part of the park, along with the screening effect of mature trees and built form, there is no meaningful intervisibility between the extant buildings and structures and any listed buildings. Consequently, this amendment to the consented proposals will have no effect on the significance of those listed buildings in the vicinity.
- 1.5 The consented proposals allow for the refurbishment of the existing dwellings along the east and west sides of the complex (Units 1 – 5, 9 and 10 and 14), the construction of new dwellings behind the surviving outer walls of former industrial ranges (Units 6 – 8 and 15 – 17) and the construction of a new range of dwellings across the centre of the complex in the location of a demolished industrial building (Units 11 – 13).
- 1.6 The non-material amendments are illustrated on drawing 297-W001-Site Plan as Proposed_RevO and in summary seek to modify the approved designs as follows:
 - The inclusion of roof lights on the east-facing pitch of Units 15 – 17 (1 per unit)
 - The addition of external steps with handrails to the western elevation of Units 7 and 8
 - Raising of the ridge height of Units 11 – 13 by c.1.0m
 - Reconfiguration of the parking spaces and central, planted 'island' within the courtyard to the south of units 11 – 13
 - The addition of air source heat pumps to the exterior of each unit and a heat source heat pump enclosure to the south of the sawmill building.

- The addition of low retaining walls to address changes in ground levels
- 1.7 The inclusion of rooflights into the eastern pitch of Units 15 -17 will result in a minor change the appearance of the dwellings on this side of the complex when viewed from the top of the dam to the east. However, this would have an imperceptible effect on the significance of the registered park above that resulting from the redevelopment of the sawmill site which already has consent. As this element of the sawmill complex lies at a lower level than the designed elements of the registered park, at the base of the dam retaining Bearwood Lake, the roof of these units would not be visible in views across the lake. Consequently, views inside the registered area in which the landscape design is apparent would be unaffected and the significance of the park, as a whole, preserved.
- 1.8 The raising of the ridge height of Units 11 – 13 would similarly have a negligible effect on the significance of the registered park. The special interest of the designation principally lies in the design of the park to the north, east and south of the lake and while the sawmill complex lies within the registered area, it is the views through the park above the dam which contribute to its overall significance. the modest increase in the ridge height of these units would mean that it became apparent above the dam in these views and accordingly, the significance of the registered park would be preserved.
- 1.9 For the same reasons, effects on the significance of the registered park would not differ from those arising from the approved design as a result of the other low level alterations including the reconfiguration of the parking spaces and central, planted 'island' within the courtyard to the south of units 11 – 13, the addition of air source heat pumps to the units and the inclusion of associated enclosure south of the sawmill building, changes to the bin and cycle stores, the addition of steps with hand rails to the western elevation of Units 7 and 8 and the addition of low retaining walls.
- 1.10 In conclusion, the proposed non-material amendments set out above will not result in a detrimental effect on the setting of nearby designated or non-designated heritage assets in the vicinity. Nor will it have a detrimental effect on the significance of the Grade II* Registered Bearwood Park. Furthermore, it should be noted that the scheme will have a significant positive effect on the park as a whole through the repair, reuse and maintenance of the currently derelict buildings and structures.

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