

Heritage Proof of Evidence – Summary

Land West of Church Hill and Land Off Butts Close and Schoolhouse Lane, Marnhull

Tobias Carleton-Prangnell – Conservation Officer (Dorset Council)

1. For the purpose of this proof of evidence designated assets comprise:

- 2 listed buildings:
 - Church of St Gregory (Grade 1, 1172545)
 - Senior’s Farmhouse and Attached Barn (Grade II*, 1172057)
- Marnhull Conservation Area

2. **Affected assets: Site A - Northern parcel development (Tess Square)**

2.1. The village’s open farmland to the west of Church Hill has been adopted for agricultural use since the C19 based on the evidence of historical maps. The network of PRoW’s crossing this area are also considered to represent important routes that connect the village with its history of land use. The extent proposed for the application site currently separates two parts of the village which promote a dispersed settlement pattern and sense of separation considered of principal importance to the setting of the Conservation Area. This distinct, historic settlement reference is currently well maintained despite the modern, postwar development connecting the village to the east of Church Hill. The proposed scheme comprising a food store, business units, and parking would occupy much of the currently unbuilt land, west of Church Hill, which we perceive would directly, negatively challenge the clear relational legibility and presentation between the two sections of the Conservation Area.

2.2. Impact to the significance of:

- Church of St Gregory (Grade 1, 1172545)
- Senior’s Farmhouse and Attached Barn (Grade II*, 1172057)
- Marnhull Conservation Area

3. **Affected assets: Site B – Southern parcel development (Residential)**

3.1. Proposals to build 120 houses, occupy the full extent of agricultural land bordered by Chippel Lane and Schoolhouse Lane. From the north approach to the village, St Gregory's Church is clearly presented as a key landscape

feature at the convergence point of Chippel Lane and Schoolhouse Lane. This section offers easily obtainable views of the asset across, subtly elevated open farmland, north, toward the foreground of the village's south boundary. Therefore, we consider development would fundamentally alter the historic relationship between the Church and its setting by introducing a densely developed foreground to key views, north, towards the Conservation Area and Church. We acknowledge a degree of mitigation, by way of the scheme's design format, however, perceive that the proposals will negatively challenge and diminish the visual prominence of the tower which further serves to erode the historically open, rural setting of the Church

3.2. Impact to the significance of:

- Church of St Gregory (Grade 1, 1172545)
- Marnhull Conservation Area

4. Harm is mutually identified to multiple aspects of each asset's heritage asset's significance arising from the proposed development. Harm consists principally of impacts to an identified asset's evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values resulting in a conclusion of less than substantial harm.

4.1. Based on the proposed intent of the scheme and relational proximity to the Conservation Area, overall, impact is considered likely by way of negative challenge (harm) to unique attributes which positively contribute to the setting and, therefore the significance of encompassing designated assets. Subsequently, para. 215 of the NPPF is engaged in address of less than substantial harm.

4.2. *When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance*
NPPF, Section 16, para. 212

4.3. In accordance with para. 212 the following assets should be proportionately weighted accordingly:

4.3.1. The Church of St Gregory (G1) – Awarded the highest designation status representing a building of *exceptional interest*. Approximately 2.5% of listed buildings nationally are classified Grade I.

- 4.3.2. Senior's Farmhouse and Attached Barn (II*) – Awarded the second highest designation status representing an *important* building of *more than special interest*. Approximately 5.8% of listed buildings nationally are classified Grade II*.
- 4.4. Where development seeks to impact upon the historic setting of a G1 and GII* designated asset, very great weight should be applied where assets are considered of the *highest significance* and are thus of the highest importance.
5. Where both red line extents, associated with the application site, are considered to contribute toward the immediate setting of identified designated assets, Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is engaged.
- 5.1. *In considering whether to grant planning permission [or permission in principle] for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.*
Section 66 of the 1990 Act
6. Where both red line extents, associated with the application site, are considered to contribute toward the immediate setting of identified designated assets, located within the Marnhull Conservation Area, Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is engaged.
- 6.1. *The Council has a statutory duty under section 72 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.*
Section 72 of the 1990 Act