



Heritage Impact Assessment

Bridge Fields,
Bridge, Canterbury

February 2026 | Project Ref 11184A



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App. 1 Scale of Harm table (HCUK, 2019)

App. 2 GPA3 Assessment: Historic England's Guidance on Setting

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been prepared by HCUK Group on behalf of Occasia Developments. It relates to an allocated site northeast of Bridge, a village south of the A2 within the Canterbury City Council local authority area (CCC). This HIA appraises the impacts of the proposal for the development of 40 houses with associated private amenity space and parking. The proposal includes the development of a new village hall with an associated car park and the provision of recreation grounds and public open space within the red line boundary.

The Site and Context

- 1.2** The site is c.6.8ha in area and is currently occupied by the Bridge Recreation Ground, Bridge Health Centre and fields to the north. The red line boundary abuts Patrixbourne Road to the south, with the Nailbourne (watercourse) and the existing housing of Bridge to the northeast. The Bridge and Patrixbourne Church of England Primary School abuts the northwestern edge of the site. The north and eastern part of the red line is not defined by existing landscape features but crosses existing pasture and arable fields. Further northeast is the A2, on higher ground with embankments and treed boundaries enclosing the site from the area to the north of the A2.
- 1.3** The site lies within the Bifrons Park Conservation Area. The conservation area extends over land north of the A2, taking in what would have been the historic parkland associated with Bifrons Park, a 19th-century country house, demolished in 1948. The primary designated heritage asset under consideration in this assessment is this conservation area.
- 1.4** The Bridge Conservation Area is located a short distance to the southwest of the site. Within this conservation area there are many listed buildings. All of these buildings front the High Street and have no visual relationship with the site. The only exception being the Church of St Peter, grade II*, c.200m southwest of the site which has a tall spire visible in glimpsed views from areas of the site. The closest historic building to the site boundary is the former schoolhouse on the south side of Patrixbourne Road, now converted to residential use.



2. Relevant Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1** The decision maker is required by section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building and its setting when exercising planning functions. The decision maker must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the significance of the listed building, and there is a strong presumption against the grant of permission for development that would harm its heritage significance.¹
- 2.2** There is a broadly similar duty arising from section 72(1) of the Act in respect of planning decisions relating to development within conservation areas.
- 2.3** For the purposes of this statement, preservation equates to an absence of harm.² Harm is defined in paragraph 84 of Historic England's Conservation Principles as change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset.³
- 2.4** The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as being made up of four main constituents: architectural interest, historical interest, archaeological interest and artistic interest. The assessments of heritage significance and impact are normally made with primary reference to the four main elements of significance identified in the NPPF.
- 2.5** The setting of a heritage asset can contribute to its significance. Setting is defined in the NPPF as follows:
- The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.*
- 2.6** Historic England has produced guidance on development affecting the setting of heritage assets in The Setting of Heritage Assets (second edition, December 2017),

¹ Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited v East Northamptonshire District Council and others [2014] EWCA Civ 137. This principle has recently been confirmed, albeit in a lower court, in R (Wyeth-Price) v Guildford Borough Council.

² South Lakeland v SSE [1992] 2 AC 141.

³ Conservation Principles, 2008, paragraph 84.

better known as GPA3. The guidance encourages the use of a stepped approach to the assessment of effects on setting and significance, namely (1) the identification of the relevant assets, (2) a statement explaining the significance of those assets, and the contribution made by setting, (3) an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the setting and significance of the assets, and (4) consideration of mitigation in those cases where there will be harm to significance.

2.7 The NPPF requires any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset⁴ to be considered in terms of either “substantial harm” or “less than substantial harm” as described within paragraphs 214 and 215 of that document. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) makes it clear that substantial harm is a high test, and case law describes substantial harm in terms of an effect that would vitiate or drain away much of the significance of a heritage asset.⁵ The Scale of Harm is tabulated at Appendix 1.

2.8 Paragraphs 214 and 215 of the NPPF refer to two different balancing exercises in which harm to significance, if any, is to be balanced with public benefit.⁶ Paragraph 18a-020-20190723 of National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) online makes it clear that some heritage-specific benefits can be public benefits. Paragraph 18a-018-20190723 of the same NPPG makes it clear that it is important to be explicit about the category of harm (that is, whether paragraph 214 or 215 of the NPPF applies, if at all), and the extent of harm, when dealing with decisions affecting designated heritage assets, as follows:

Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.

2.9 Paragraphs 212 and 213 of the NPPF state that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset when considering applications that affect its significance, irrespective of how substantial or otherwise that harm might be.

⁴ The seven categories of designated heritage assets are World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Park and Gardens, Registered Battlefield and Conservation Areas, designated under the relevant legislation.

⁵ Bedford Borough Council v SSCLG and Nuon UK Limited [2013] EWHC 4344 (Admin).

⁶ The balancing exercise was the subject of discussion in City and Country Bramshill v CC SLG and others [2021] EWCA, Civ 320.

- 2.10** Paragraph 219 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas, and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance and further, that proposals that preserve *“those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably”*.

Local Framework

- 2.11** Local heritage policy has been taken into account in the preparation of this assessment. The development plan for the area is the Canterbury District Local Plan 2011–2031, adopted in July 2017 by Canterbury City Council (CCC). The Local Plan sets out the strategic and development management policy framework for the district. Policies relevant to the consideration of heritage assets and their setting include those relating to the historic environment, design quality and place-making, which collectively seek to ensure that development conserves and, where appropriate, enhances heritage significance and local character.
- 2.12** In addition, the Bridge Neighbourhood Plan 2022–2037 forms part of the statutory development plan and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies relating to local character, design quality and the protection of heritage assets, reinforcing the importance of development responding sensitively to the historic environment and village context.
- 2.13** The application site is specifically dealt with in Policy C2 of the Neighbourhood Plan which states:

“Land to the north of Patrixbourne Road, Bridge totalling 7.44 hectares, as defined on the accompanying site plan, is allocated for the development of up to 40 new dwellings, including affordable housing units, a new village hall, additional sports pitches, tennis courts, a children’s play area, the designated Local Green Space and car parking to serve these facilities and the adjoining Bridge and Patrixbourne C of E Primary School. The development of this site, which is within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Bifrons Park Conservation Area must be undertaken in compliance with all relevant policies of the adopted Canterbury District Local Plan and of this Plan,

and in accordance all other relevant guidance. The development of the site shall also secure Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) at a level of at least 10% above the baseline position, in accordance with the national policy requirements contained in the Environment Act 2021 and its accompanying policy guidance.”

2.14 The Bridge Village Design Statement (2023) further supplements this policy framework by providing detailed guidance on the distinctive built form, materials, landscape setting and spatial character of the village. Together, these documents emphasise the need for proposals to respect the historic grain, architectural detailing and rural setting of Bridge, ensuring that change is carefully integrated and proportionate.

2.15 This report has been informed by the following additional guidance:

- **Historic England: Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 – Managing Significance in Decision Taking (2015)**
Sets out the process for understanding and assessing heritage significance at the outset of design. Advises applicants to consider a site’s historic, architectural and setting values early, seek expert advice, and provide proportionate information to explain how a proposal affects that significance.
- **Historic England: Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd ed., 2017)**
Provides a staged approach to assessing the setting of heritage assets and how development can affect it. Clarifies that setting is about what contributes to an asset’s significance — including townscape, views and relationships — and that well-designed change can sometimes enhance compromised settings.
- **Historic England Advice Note 12 – Statements of Heritage Significance (2019)**
Advises how to prepare proportionate heritage significance statements to inform planning decisions. Stresses that significance should be understood before design work progresses and that the level of detail provided should match the asset’s importance and the scale of impact.

3. Background and Development

Development of Bridge and its Landscape Context

- 3.1** The village of Bridge is an historic settlement located to the southeast of Canterbury, whose origins lie in the medieval period. Its development was shaped by its position along historic routeways linking Canterbury with Dover and the Kent coast, and by the presence of the Nailbourne, a seasonal chalk stream that has long influenced settlement patterns and land use in the area.
- 3.2** The historic core of Bridge developed linearly along the High Street, where the majority of listed buildings within the Bridge Conservation Area are concentrated. These buildings reflect the village's historic role as a small rural settlement serving the surrounding agricultural landscape. This historic core lies to the southwest of the application site and is physically and visually separated from it by later 20th-century residential development.
- 3.3** Beyond the village core, the surrounding landscape was historically characterised by farmland and, from the late-18th and 19th centuries onwards, by the establishment of designed parkland estates.

Bifrons Park and the Evolution of the Estate Landscape

- 3.4** The application site lies entirely within the Bifrons Park Conservation Area, which encompasses land historically associated with Bifrons Park, a country estate established and remodelled during the 18th and 19th centuries. The parkland was laid out as a designed landscape, characterised by pasture, scattered tree planting, boundary belts and managed views, forming the setting for the principal house.
- 3.5** According to B.M Thomas⁷ the first house at Bifrons was built by John Bargrave c.1610-15. Bargrave lived in Bridge and was the eldest son of Robert Bargrave who died in 1600 and is buried at Bridge church. The original house in its landscape was captured between 1695 and 1705 by Jan van der Vaart, a Dutch artist (although

⁷ 'A HISTORY OF BIFRONS MANSION HOUSE', B.A Thomas, Kent Archaeological Society, 2017 accessed at: <https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/search?q=bifrons> on 26.02.2026

this is not certain). It was sold to John Taylor, a politician, in 1694 who likely commissioned the painting⁸. The name Bifrons comes from its two “faces” or wings.



Figure 3: 'Bifrons Park', c.1695-1705

3.6 Bifrons was inherited by the Rev. Edward Taylor in 1767 at the age of 33 when he ordered the house to be demolished and rebuilt in a Georgian, classical style. Subsequent alterations to the house took place over the 19th century. It appears the stable block, which survives in a highly altered date may originate from this period.

3.7 The 19th-century Bifrons Park house occupied elevated ground in the northern part of the now designated conservation area, beyond the line of the modern A2. Although the house itself was demolished in 1948, elements of the former parkland survive in the wider landscape, including areas of pasture, tree belts and the general spatial relationship between the former estate core and its surrounding land.

⁸ Yale Centre of British Art <https://collections.britishart.yale.edu/catalog/tms:425> Accessed on 26.02.2026



Figure 4: Postcard Image of former Bifrons House (garden elevation) pre 1094 (Historic England Image Archive)

- 3.8** The application site was once part of the southern extent of this wider historic parkland. It was not the location of the principal house or its immediate pleasure grounds, but rather part of the wider estate landscape, likely used as pasture or agricultural land as indicated by the historic maps.

Historic Use and Development of the Site

- 3.9** Historic mapping from the 19th and early-20th centuries indicates that the land within the application site remained undeveloped and agricultural in character. Field boundaries evident on early Ordnance Survey maps reflect historic patterns of enclosure and estate management.
- 3.10** A southeast to northwest footpath crossed the site as well as a track running southwest to northeast, as shown on the 1838 Tithe Map but the entire site was not mapped in full. These two routes persist to some extent today but the small, rounded wood in the northern part of the site has not survived and the number of parkland trees has significantly reduced over time as the land was given over to communal recreational facilities and grazing.



Figure 5: 1838 Tithe Map (Genealogist)

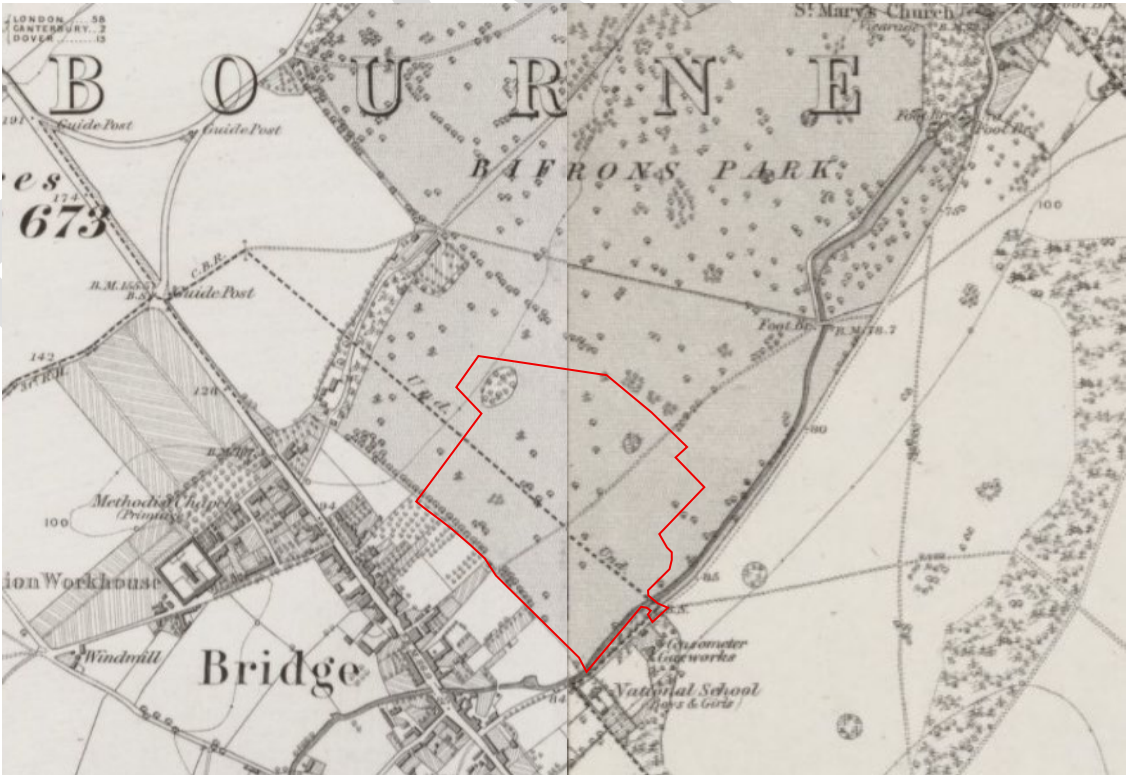


Figure 6: Ordnance Survey Map of 1872

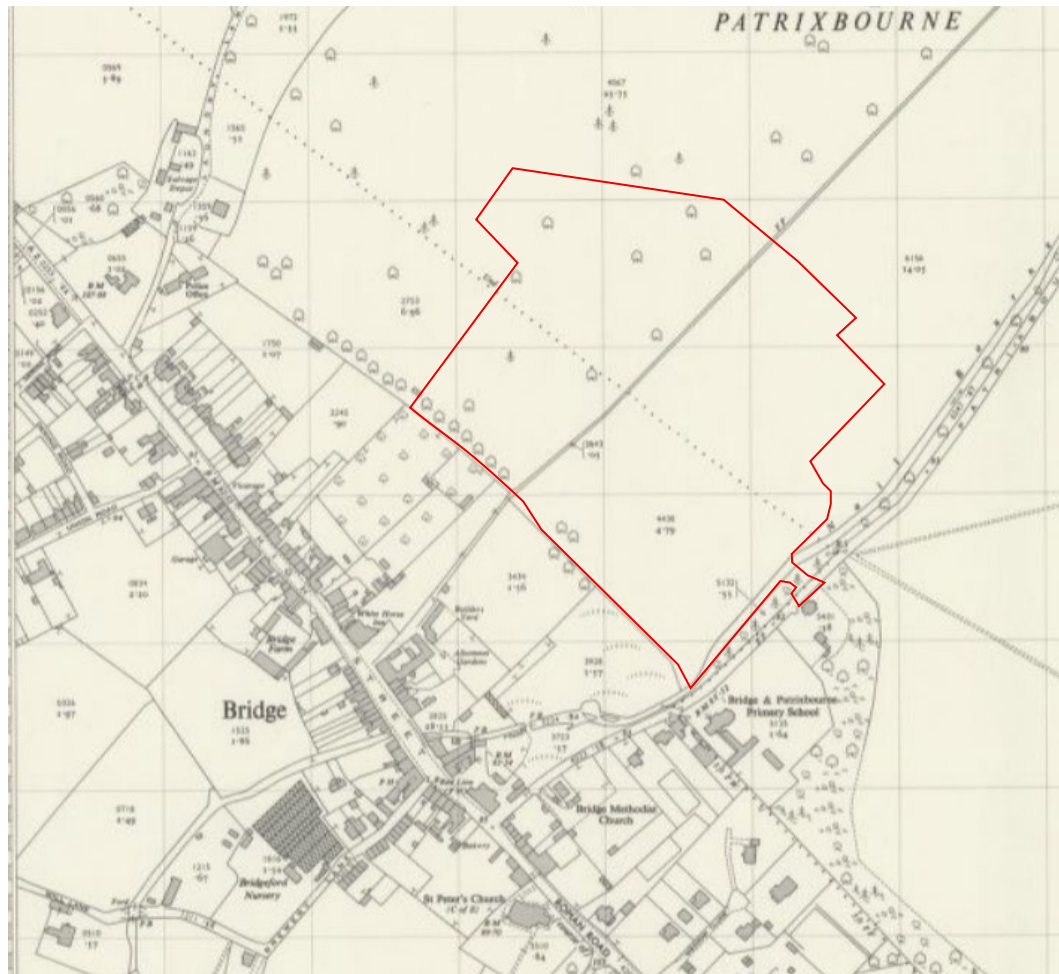


Figure 7: Ordnance Survey Map of 1956

- 3.11** During the mid to late-20th century, following the demolition of Bifrons Park house and the decline of the estate system, the wider landscape experienced gradual change. The construction of the “Bridge Overpass” section of the A2 in the late 1970s introduced a major piece of infrastructure right through the middle of the historic parkland, altering historic access routes and visual relationships while also creating a degree of physical separation between the former estate core and land to the south.
- 3.12** Within this context, parts of the application site were adapted for community and institutional uses, including the establishment of the Bridge Recreation Ground and the Bridge Health Centre. These uses reflect a broader pattern of post-war change, whereby former agricultural or estate land on the edges of villages was repurposed to serve expanding local populations.



Relationship to Surrounding Heritage Assets

3.13 The Bridge Conservation Area lies a short distance to the southwest of the site and encompasses the historic High Street and its associated listed buildings. These listed buildings are oriented toward the High Street and have no direct visual or spatial relationship with the application site. The southern boundary of the application site abuts the boundary of the Bridge Conservation Area on the southeast and southwest sides of the tennis courts and south of the Nailbourne.

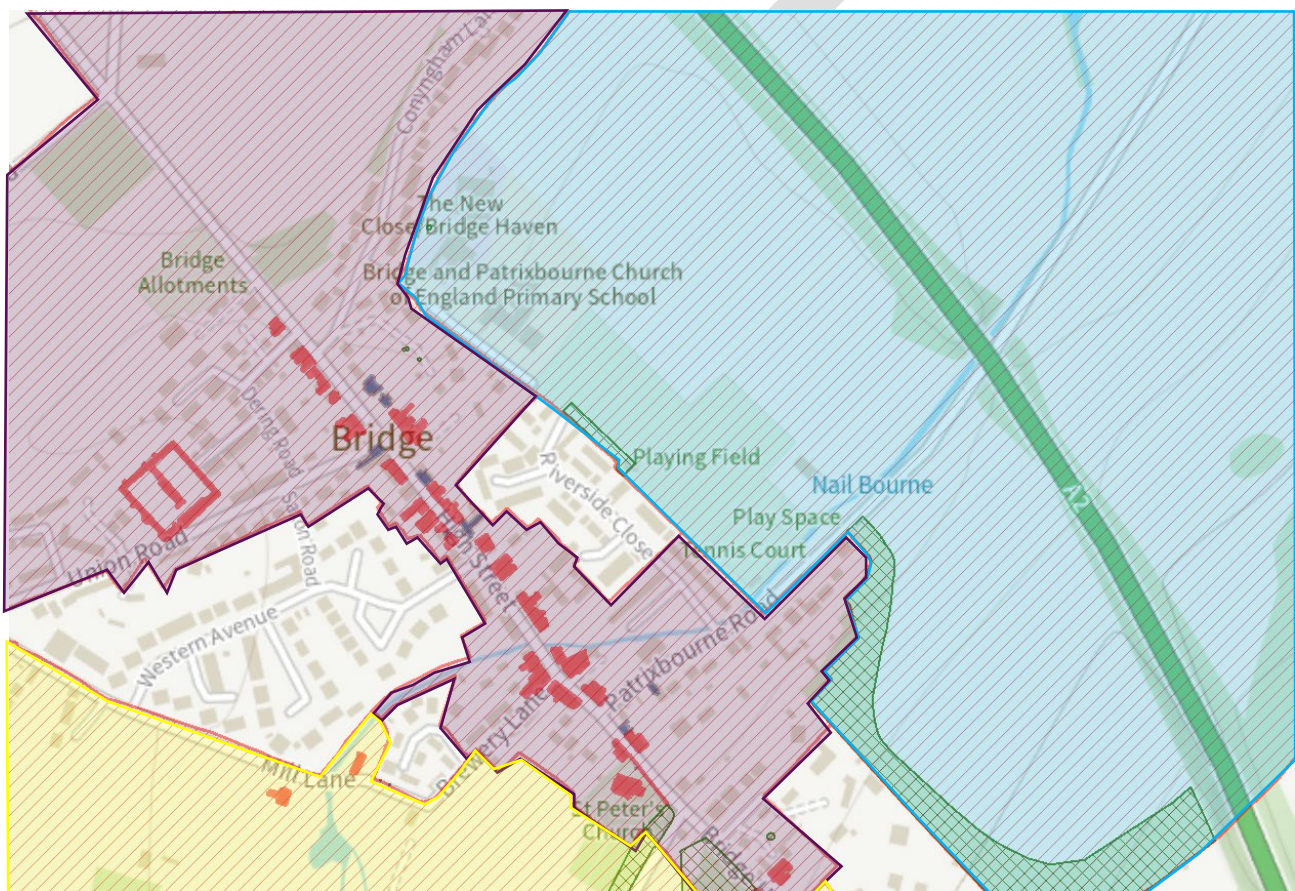


Figure 10: Canterbury City Council Planning Map. Bifrons CA in blue. Bridge CA in purple. Bourne Park CA in yellow. Listed buildings in red. Locally listed buildings in grey.

3.14 The Church of St Peter, a grade II* listed building, lies approximately 200 metres to the southwest of the site. Its tall spire is visible in limited, glimpsed views from parts of the site, forming a distant landmark rather than a feature of direct spatial enclosure or setting.

- 3.15** The closest historic building to the application site is the former schoolhouse on the south side of Patribourne Road, now in residential use and forming part of the Bridge Conservation Area. It is not locally listed.

Summary

- 3.16** The application site has historically formed part of the rural and parkland landscape associated with Bifrons Park. It has no direct visual relationship to the historic core of Bridge village. Its development has been characterised by long-standing agricultural use, followed by incremental adaptation to community and institutional functions in the 20th century. This pattern of change reflects wider post-war shifts in land use and the evolving relationship between Bridge village, its former estate landscapes and modern infrastructure.

4. Statement of Significance

Assessment of Significance

- 4.1** This section provides an assessment of the significance of the relevant heritage assets recognised as having the potential to be affected by the proposed development of the Site. It establishes the significance of the relevant heritage assets in the terms set out in the NPPF, and it comments on the contribution of setting to significance. The identification of the heritage assets equates to Step 1 of GPA3, and the assessment of significance equates to Step 2 of GPA3. Steps 2 and 3 of GPA3 are closely connected, so this chapter should be read in conjunction with Chapter 5 (Heritage Impact Assessment).
- 4.2** The determination of the significance of the relevant heritage assets is based on statutory designation and/or professional judgement against the four headings of 'interest' identified within the NPPF / NPPG: architectural, historical, archaeological, and artistic interest. In addition to its physical presence the significance of a heritage asset can also be derived from its setting.
- 4.3** It is recognised that not all parts of a heritage asset will necessarily be of equal significance. In some cases, certain aspects or elements could accommodate change without affecting the Government's objective, which includes the conservation of heritage assets, and which seeks to ensure that decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of significance of heritage assets.
- 4.4** Change is only considered to be harmful if it erodes an asset's significance. Understanding the significance of any heritage asset affected (paragraph 208 of the NPPF) is therefore fundamental to understanding the scope for and acceptability of change.

Bifrons Conservation Area (Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne)

- 4.5** As of February 2018, no conservation area appraisal or management plan has been prepared for the Bridge or Bifrons Park Conservation Areas. The assessment of significance therefore relies on designation descriptions, historic mapping, site analysis and an understanding of the historic development of the area.

4.6 The Bifrons Conservation Area was designated in 1995. It encompasses land historically associated with Bifrons Park, a former country estate whose origins lie in the 18th century and which was substantially remodelled during the 19th century. Although the principal house was demolished in 1948, the conservation area designation reflects the continued legibility of the historic parkland landscape and its contribution to the character of the surrounding area.

4.7 The heritage significance of the Bifrons Conservation Area derives principally from its historic and landscape value, as a remnant of a designed estate landscape characterised by pasture, tree belts, boundary planting and a general undeveloped character. The conservation area illustrates the historic relationship between a country house, its parkland and the surrounding agricultural land, notwithstanding later change and fragmentation. The designated area is relatively large with most of the architectural interest contained to the northern areas where the stable block of Bifrons Park survives and various lodges and cottages survive. Architectural interest can also be ascribed to the landscape features such as the stone bridge over the Nailbourne.



*Figure 11: Views from within the Bifrons Conservation Area,
<https://willturnstone.wordpress.com/tag/bifrons-house/>*

4.8 The application site lies within the southern part of the conservation area and historically formed part of the wider estate landscape, rather than the core of the designed park or the immediate setting of the principal house. Its significance therefore lies primarily in its contribution to the broader character of the former parkland and its role within the rural fringe between Bridge village and the former

estate lands to the north. The site has changed in character over time from former estate parkland with multiple estate trees to a more managed community open space abutting the settlement of Bridge. The western half of the site is defined by the village hall, playing fields and tennis courts whereas the eastern half has a greater agricultural character with parkland trees surviving in the northern corner of the site only. The site is also visually broken up by the existing tree belt dividing the areas, which visually encloses the playing fields from the agricultural fields to the east and north.



Figure 12: View looking west toward centre of the site and edge of Bridge (May 2025)



Figure 13: Similar view to Fig. 12 in winter (Feb 2026)



Figure 14: View looking northeast from existing village hall toward dense treed barrier around the primary school (May 2025)



Figure 15: Similar view looking northeast as Fig 14 in winter (Feb 2026)



Figure 16: View looking southeast from northern edge of the site outside primary school towards the higher ground south of Nailbourne (May 2025)



Figure 17: Similar view at Fig.16 in winter (Feb 2026)



Figure 18: View looking north into agricultural field with remnant parkland trees in the foreground (May 2025)



Figure 19: Same view as Fig. 18 in winter (Feb 2026)



Figure 20: View looking east along Patrixbourne Road toward the site from Bridge (May 2025)



Figure 21: View looking east along Patrixbourne Road toward the site (Feb 2026)



Figure 22: View looking toward pedestrian bridge onto the site from Patixbourne Road (May 2025)



Figure 23: View looking towards road bridge to Bridge Health Centre over the Nailbourne (May 2025)



Figure 24: View looking north along the Nailbourne in winter (Feb 2026)



Figure 25: View looking back toward application site along footpath crossing Riversie Close (May 2025)

The Bridge Conservation Area

- 4.9** The Bridge Conservation Area was designated in 1995 and covers the linear historic core of Bridge village, focused on the High Street. Its boundary extends northeast from the High Street up Patricbourne Road to meet the boundary of the Bifrons Conservation Area, covering the detached houses on the north and south sides of Patricbourne Road. To the north the conservation area covers land at a fair distance from the High Street, north and south with the boundary meeting both the Bifrons CA and the Bourne Park CA to the south. The areas excluded from conservation area status thus are Riverside Close and Western Avenue, both modern housing developments either side of Bridge High Street.
- 4.10** The heritage significance of the Bridge CA is multilayered and derives from its strong sense of historic continuity, high concentration of listed buildings, and well-preserved village streetscape reflecting medieval and post-medieval development. Its linear settlement pattern is an integral part of its character and historic interest with the volume of listed buildings lining its High Street demonstrating the wealth and status of the historic settlement.
- 4.11** From the application site the only parts of the Bridge Conservation Area which are appreciated include the houses on Patricbourne Road, immediately south of the Nailbourne and the spire of the Church of St Peter. The tall spire of this church is visible in limited, glimpsed views from parts of the site. This visibility reflects the church's role as a landmark within the wider village context, rather than a direct setting relationship with the application site. At present the houses facing onto Patricbourne Road are a mixture of historic and modern detached properties, including the Old School House, which contributes to the historic and architectural character of the Bridge CA. The land immediately north of the road (the application site) is defined by the tennis courts, the pedestrian and road bridge over the watercourse and the playing fields, playground and doctors' surgery. The trees on the site also form part of the setting of the Bridge CA.



Figure 26: Views from within the Bridge Conservation Area, Bridge Village Design Statement, 2013

Nearby Listed Buildings and Locally Listed Buildings

4.12 As noted, within the Bridge Conservation Area are many listed buildings. All these buildings front Bridge High Street and have no visual relationship with the site. They are oriented toward the historic street frontage and are separated from the application site by intervening modern residential development. As a result, the proposed development would not affect the setting, significance or appreciation of these listed buildings, and no heritage impact would arise in relation to them.

4.13 The only exception being the Church of St Peter, grade II*, c.200m southwest of the site which has a tall spire visible in glimpsed views from areas of the site.

4.14 The identified locally listed buildings within Bridge are also located along the High Street and will not be affected by the development of the application site given the spatial and historic relationships between the street and surrounding listed buildings would be entirely unchanged.

Church of St Peter (grade II*)

- 4.15** The Church of St Peter is of high architectural and historic significance, forming a key landmark within Bridge village, with its tall spire contributing to its prominence in the local townscape.



Figure 27: Church of St Peter

- 4.16** The church's significance is derived primarily from its architectural form, historic fabric, ecclesiastical function and its relationship with the historic High Street and village core. While the spire is visible in limited, glimpsed views from areas of the site, the church does not have a direct spatial, functional or designed relationship with the application site.
- 4.17** The site does not form part of the church's immediate setting, nor does it contribute to the appreciation or understanding of its significance. Any visual connection is incidental and distant in nature.

5. Heritage Impact Assessment

- 5.1** This chapter of the report assesses the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets identified in the previous chapter, including effects on the setting of those assets. It equates to Step 3 of GPA3, which has a close connection with Step 2. This chapter should be read in conjunction with the preceding chapter, and the tabular GPA3 assessment in Appendix 2.

Proposed Development

- 5.2** The proposed scheme comprises the delivery of 40 new homes, arranged across a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced units. The residential development would be located within the area of existing arable land forming part of the application site (the northeast quadrant). The housing parcels would be enclosed within a generous framework of retained and new landscape planting, including trees, scrub and areas of wildflower grassland, intended to reinforce the rural character of the site and provide visual containment. The surviving estate trees in this part of the site, numbering 4, would be retained with generous surrounding land and will provide important focal points to views up and down the streets.
- 5.3** Vehicular access to the residential development is to be separate from the existing access to the Bridge Health Centre, with a new bridge further north from the existing bridge serving the Health Centre over the Nailbourne. This will necessitate the removal of two trees on the south side of the Nailbourne to enable the visibility splays to work. The existing pedestrian footbridge is to be upgraded with a formal Public Right of Way (PRW) created giving direct access northward into the centre of the site. The existing west to east PRW will be enhanced into a green corridor.
- 5.4** In addition to the residential element, the scheme includes the provision of a new Village Hall, located to the south of the northern field within the existing Recreation Ground. The Village Hall would be supported by approximately 54 car parking spaces. A further 30 parking spaces are proposed to serve staff at the Bridge and Patrixbourne Church of England Primary School. These parking areas would be accessed via the existing private road leading to the school from Conyngham Lane to the north-west.

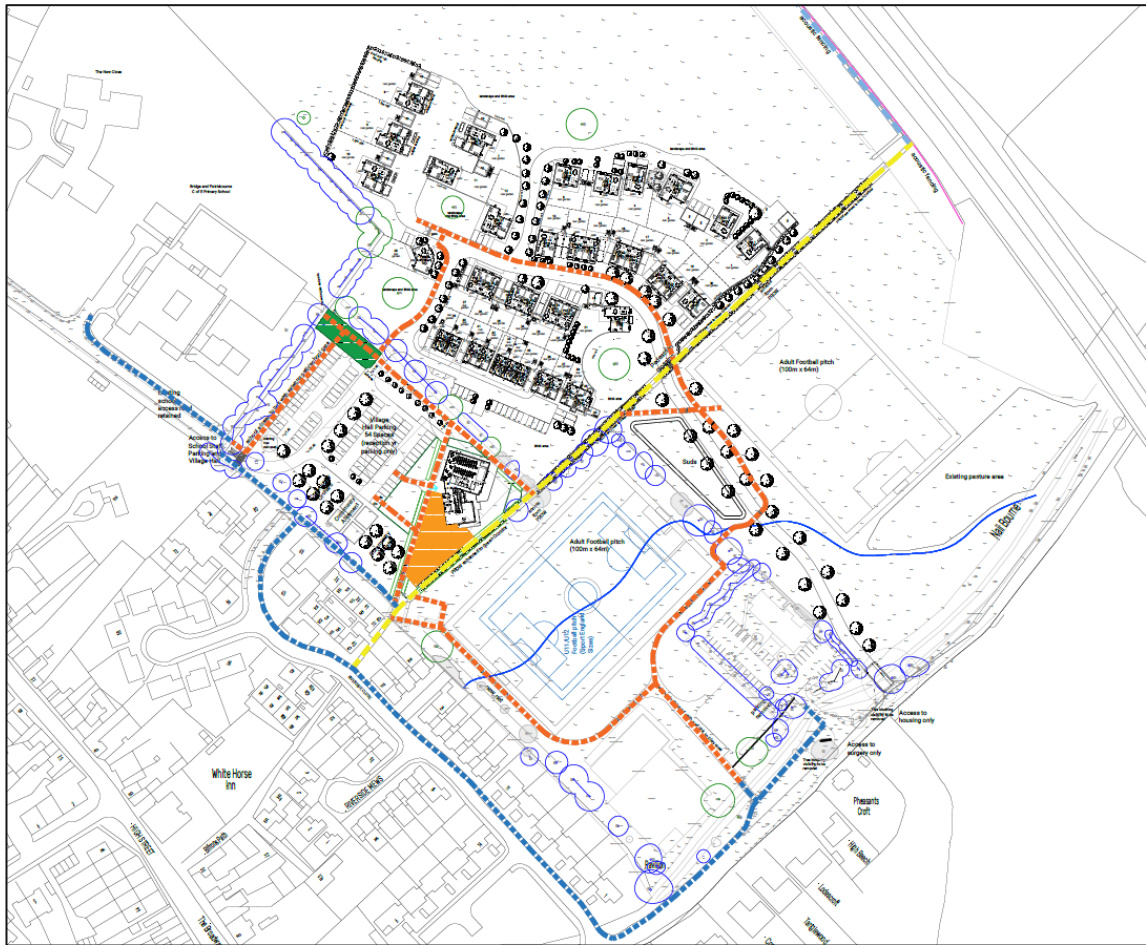


Figure 28: Proposed Site Plan, OSG Architecture



Figure 29: Village Hall, Proposed Elevations, OSG Architecture

Figure 30: Proposed Village Hall Site Plan, OSG Architecture

Figure 31: Proposed 3D views, OSG Architecture

Figure 32: Proposed 3D Views, OSG Architecture

- 5.5** A pedestrianised, tree-lined parent waiting area is proposed in the northern corner of the site, with footpath connections provided along the northern and eastern edges of the field. Pedestrian access to the school would continue from the south, with a new area of public open space provided across the southern half of the northern field, enhancing community access and recreational provision.
- 5.6** The existing football pitch currently located within the northern half of the Recreation Ground would be provided within the pasture field to the east of the Bridge Health Centre, within the eastern part of the site. This would include the creation of a Junior Football Pitch and a Mini 7-a-side pitch. The southern half of the Recreation Ground, which is designated as a Local Green Space under Neighbourhood Plan Policy F4, would be retained in its current form and function.
- 5.7** The village hall design has been through several iterations, with pre-application advice from CCC being taken on board together with the input from the local community. A contemporary, high quality brick building is proposed for the hall which is to be low rise in nature and accompanied by open space to the southwest and parking to the north. Its design is simple, elegant and robust, it will age well and does not try to ape the 'Kentish barn' style. The design has been a truly collaborative approach with the local authority, with the parish councils input ultimately shaping the proposal. The local built form surrounding the application site is made up of a wide variety of materials, forms and scales such that there is no set precedent to take for a building of this kind. An honest, contemporary approach was reached enabling a village hall building which will highlight the quality of the surrounding development and an ability to blend into the site and forms an important anchor between the school and the sports facilities.

Impact on the Bifrons Park Conservation Area

- 5.8** As set out in the Statement of Significance, the significance of the Bifrons Park Conservation Area derives principally from its historic and landscape value as a remnant of a former country estate, characterised by open land, tree belts, boundary planting and a generally rural character. The application site lies within the southern part of the conservation area and historically formed part of the wider estate landscape rather than the designed core or immediate setting of the former house. Today, half of the application site has already been given over to maintained

community open space and lacks the parkland character it once may have had. The northeastern quadrant of the application site and the southeastern parts of the site are the most sensitive to change given they retain the rural, agricultural and parkland characteristics of more heritage value than the community spaces.

5.9 The proposed residential development would introduce built form within part of the arable land currently contributing to the open character of this area of the conservation area. This change would alter the land use and introduce modern built form and a degree of enclosure where the site is presently experienced as open farmland. This would result in less than substantial harm to the heritage values of the conservation area.

5.10 The NPPG asks the assessor to quantify the level of harm and Appendix 1 provides that more granular assessment. Taking the whole conservation area into account and its relative sensitivities the proposal would likely cause a 'Low level harm that does not seriously affect the significance of the designated heritage asset.' This is due to the fact the area take for the housing development and sports pitches is quite limited given how large the designated asset is and because this area of the designation is less sensitive to change than the land on the northern side of the A2, having already been degraded and changed over time because of its location and village edge location. This area does not, for instance form an important aspect of historic viewpoints toward or from Bifrons House which the parkland is centred on, it is peripheral in terms of its contribution to significance.

5.11 In addition, the design and layout of the scheme respond directly to the significance of the conservation area by confining built development to a defined parcel and retaining substantial areas of open space, not just extending the housing from Bridge out from the site. This was a deliberate design choice to enable the community spaces to be integrated and workable for residents and to put the school and village hall at the heart of the site rather than out on the edge.

5.12 The residential development would be contained within a generous landscape framework of retained and new planting, including tree belts, scrub and wildflower grassland. This approach reflects historic patterns of estate boundary planting and helps to maintain the perception of a landscaped, rural setting when experienced from within and beyond the site. The retention of open land, particularly within the

Recreation Ground and areas of public open space, ensures that the broader spatial character of the former parkland remains legible.

5.13 The provision of community uses, including the Village Hall and enhanced recreational facilities, represents a continuation of the site's 20th-century evolution away from purely agricultural use and does not conflict with the historic character or significance of the conservation area. The re-provision of sports pitches within the eastern part of the site maintains the established recreational function of the land.

5.14 Overall, while the proposals would result in change and ultimately a low level of less than substantial harm within the conservation area, this change would be carefully managed, landscape-led and limited in extent. The attributes that principally contribute to the significance of the Bifrons Park Conservation Area - its landscape character, sense of openness at a broader scale, and historic association with former estate land - would largely be preserved. Public benefits are set out elsewhere within the submission.

Impact on the Bridge Conservation Area

5.15 The Bridge Conservation Area derives its significance from the historic linear development of the High Street, its concentration of listed buildings, and its cohesive village streetscape. As established, for the most part the conservation area lies a short distance to the southwest of the application site and is separated from it by intervening modern residential development. The southeastern corner of the area does extend to the edge of the application site boundary and views from the Bridge Conservation Area will change as a result of the proposed development. At present the edge is defined by the Nailbourne, the pedestrian footbridge and views over tennis courts and the health centre with the backdrop in winter being the more agricultural land, but in summer, the trees form a dense visual barrier to the proposed housing area.

5.16 The proposed development would not introduce built form within the Bridge Conservation Area, nor would it affect views into or out of the historic High Street. The listed buildings within the conservation area are orientated toward the street and have no visual, spatial or functional relationship with the application site.

- 5.17** While there would be changes to incidental views one edge of the conservation area, the change would not erode the heritage values of the Bridge Conservation Area. The proposals would not affect the character, appearance or significance of the Bridge Conservation Area which would sustain a cohesive streetscape with a setting defined by modern housing development and some open space.

Impact on Nearby Listed Buildings

- 5.18** There are numerous listed buildings within the Bridge Conservation Area, all of which front the High Street and are separated from the site by distance, orientation and intervening development. These buildings derive their significance from their architectural interest and contribution to the historic streetscape, none of which would be affected by the proposed development.
- 5.19** The only listed building with any visual connection to the site is the Church of St Peter (grade II*), whose spire is visible in limited, glimpsed views from parts of the site. The church's significance is derived primarily from its architectural form, historic fabric and relationship with the village core. The application site does not form part of its immediate or wider setting in heritage terms, and the visual connection is incidental and distant.
- 5.20** The proposed development would not obstruct, compete with or diminish the prominence of the church spire as a local landmark, nor would it alter the way in which the church is experienced within its historic village context. Consequently, the proposals would result in no harm to the significance or setting of the Church of St Peter.

Summary of Impact

- 5.21** The proposed development has been assessed against the significance of the designated heritage assets affected. While the scheme would introduce change within part of the Bifrons Park Conservation Area, this change would be landscaped, limited in extent and consistent with the site's historic role within the wider estate landscape and its later 20th-century evolution.
- 5.22** A low level of less than substantial harm would come about as a result of the development of the site for housing, car parking and other community uses. The

significance of the Bifrons Park Conservation Area would not be seriously affected because the land changing contributes a limited amount to the heritage significance of the conservation area. This low level of less than substantial harm is to be taken not the overall planning balance.

- 5.23** There would be no impact on the Bridge Conservation Area or on nearby listed buildings, including the Church of St Peter. Accordingly, the proposals would result in no harm to these designated heritage assets and would comply with statutory duties and national planning policy.

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6. Conclusions

- 6.1** This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by HCUK Group on behalf of the applicant in support of proposals for residential development, community facilities and associated infrastructure on land at Bridge, Canterbury. The proposals include the delivery of 40 homes, a new Village Hall, reprovion of recreational facilities, parking and public open space, together with landscape and access works. The assessment has been prepared with reference to the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF and relevant local planning policy.
- 6.2** The principal designated heritage asset affected by the proposals is the Bifrons Park Conservation Area, within which the site is located. The assessment has also considered the Bridge Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings, including the Church of St Peter (grade II*).
- 6.3** The assessment concludes that the proposed development would result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the Bifrons Park Conservation Area because it would introduce development (including buildings, roads and parking) into a currently open space which has surviving remnants of parkland features (specifically parkland trees, footpaths, field boundaries). the proposals would introduce change within part of the former estate landscape that historically lay beyond the designed core of the park and formed part of its wider agricultural and rural setting. While the development would alter the use of a limited area of arable land, the scheme has been shaped by a landscape-led approach that retains substantial areas of open space, reinforces boundary planting and reflects historic patterns of enclosure and estate management. The broader landscape character and the key attributes that contribute to the significance of the conservation area would be preserved, hence only a low level of less than substantial harm is assessed.
- 6.4** There will be no harm to Bridge Conservation Area or to the setting or significance of listed buildings within it. These heritage assets are physically and visually separated from the site by distance, orientation and intervening modern development, and the proposals would not affect their setting, appreciation or historic character.

- 6.5** The proposals for community and recreational uses, including the Village Hall, public open space and re-provision of sports pitches, respond to the site's established 20th-century evolution and do not conflict with the historic character or significance of the conservation area. The design, layout and access arrangements have been developed to minimise visual intrusion, maintain a clear distinction between built form and open land.
- 6.6** Throughout the evolution of the scheme, potential heritage impacts have been considered and addressed in accordance with the staged approach set out in Historic England's GPA2 and GPA3 guidance. Harm has been minimised through careful site planning, landscape strategy and the retention of key areas of open space.
- 6.7** In accordance with paragraphs 212–215 of the NPPF a low level of less than substantial harm has been identified. There are no specific heritage-related benefits but there has been mitigation designed into the scheme to limit the effects on the conservation area. The wider public benefits are an important component to the decision making process and will be weighed by the local planning authority against this low level of harm.

Appendix 1

Scale of Harm (HCUK, 2019)

The table below has been developed by HCUK Group (2019) based on current national policy and guidance. It is intended as simple and effect way to better define harm and the implications of that finding on heritage significance. It reflects the need to be clear about the categories of harm, and the extent of harm within those categories, to designated heritage assets (NPPF, paragraphs 214 and 215, and guidance on NPPG).⁹

Scale of Harm	
Total Loss	Total removal of the significance of the designated heritage asset.
Substantial Harm	Serious harm that would drain away or vitiate the significance of the designated heritage asset
Less than Substantial Harm	High level harm that could be serious, but not so serious as to vitiate or drain away the significance of the designated heritage asset.
	Medium level harm, not necessarily serious to the significance of the designated heritage asset, but enough to be described as significant, noticeable, or material.
	Low level harm that does not seriously affect the significance of the designated heritage asset.

HCUK, 2019

⁹ See NPPG 2019: "Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated." Paragraph 018 Reference ID: 18a-018-20190723.

Appendix 2

GPA3 Assessment: Historic England's guidance on setting

In assessing the effect of the proposed development on the setting and significance of the Bridge Conservation Area and its designated and non-designated heritage assets, it is relevant to consider how the following factors may or may not take effect, with particular reference to the considerations in Steps 2 and 3 of GPA3. The following analysis seeks to highlight the main relevant considerations.

<i>Relevant Considerations</i>	Bridge Conservation Area (and LBs)
<i>Proximity of the development to the asset</i>	App site boundary adjacent to boundary of CA, separate from all listed buildings by existing built development, no views toward or from listed buildings would change.
<i>Proximity in relation to topography and watercourses</i>	Topography relatively flat with the Nailbourne forming an important stream defining the edge of the conservation area.
<i>Position of development in relation to key views</i>	No keys views toward or from the Bridge Conservation Area would be affected. Those views from the site toward the conservation area are dominated by modern housing on the edge of the settlement.
<i>Orientation of the development</i>	No relevant in this case.
<i>Prominence, dominance and conspicuousness</i>	Open space is maintained in the vicinity of the boundary of the Bridge CA, the greatest change is much further north and west, away from the Bridge CA. It will not be conspicuous when enjoying the heritage values of the Bridge CA.
<i>Competition with or distraction from the asset</i>	The proposed development will not compete with the built form within Bridge as it will be entirely separated and relate more to the modern built development on the edge of the settlement.
<i>Dimensions, scale, massing, proportions</i>	The proposed housing and village hall are no higher than two storey and entirely in keeping with the massing and scale of other forms of development within Bridge.
<i>Visual permeability</i>	This will be maintained as a result of the proposed layout, existing treescape and retention of public rights of way across the site.

<i>Materials and design</i>	All appropriate given the eclectic use of materials within the conservation area.
<i>Diurnal or seasonal change</i>	There will be seasonal change in views across the site from the edge of the Bridge CA due to the tree cover being less dense in the winter months and the housing being more visually obvious. This change would not however result in harm to the conservation area given the distance between it and the housing.
<i>Change to built surroundings and spaces</i>	The change would be limited because the area closest to the conservation area is already public open space with sports pitches and pavilion, this will not change.
<i>Change to skyline, silhouette</i>	n/a
<i>Change to general character</i>	No change to general character of the Conservation Area or the listed buildings.

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