



THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (INQUIRIES PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) RULES 2000

APPEAL BY ROSCONN STRATEGIC LAND & T E BAKER AND S R HALL, THE EXECUTORS OF MR E C BAKER & MRS J BAKER

AGAINST REFUSAL OF OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF UP TO 233 RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS INCLUDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING, WITH PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, LANDSCAPING, SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEM (SUDS) AND ASSOCIATED WORKS, WITH VEHICULAR ACCESS POINT FROM RADWINTER ROAD. ALL MATTERS RESERVED EXCEPT FOR MEANS OF ACCESS.

ON LAND SOUTH OF (EAST OF GRIFFIN PLACE), RADWINTER ROAD, SEWARDS END, SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX, CB10 2NP

LPA REF: UTT/21/2509/OP

PINS REF: APP/C1570/W/22/3296426

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE FOR CORRIE NEWELL BA(ARCH)HONS RIBA ARB IHBC

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Qualifications and Experience	2
2. Scope of Evidence	2
3. Legislation	3
4. National Planning Policies	4
5. Local Planning Policies	4
6. Appraisal	6
7. Heritage Assets and their significance	7
Saffron Walden Conservation Area and LBs	7
Historic Settlement Pattern	11
Commons (Castle Green)	12
St Marys Church Saffron Walden	13
Saffron Walden CA Highways changes	17
Pounce Hall	22
8. Conclusion	27

1.0 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

1.1 I am Corrie Ann Newell. Since January 2014 I have been in private practice as Principal of Corrie Newell Historic Buildings Consultancy. I am a full member of the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Architects Registration Board and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation.

I was employed as Senior Historic Buildings Adviser by Essex County Council from August 1999 to October 2008 and as Principal Conservation Officer and Historic Buildings Team Leader by South Cambridgeshire District Council from October 2008 to January 2014. Prior to that I was in private practice for over ten years in Devon and specialised in work with Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, National Parks, country estates and for English Heritage, the National Trust, the Landmark Trust and Exeter Diocese. I am currently also Listed Building Adviser for the Eastern Region of the United Reformed Church.

1.2 I carried out a number of Conservation Area Appraisals for Essex County Council, Chelmsford Borough Council, Maldon District Council and Brentwood Borough Council and jointly led a programme of Conservation Area Appraisals and Supplementary Planning Guidance for South Cambridgeshire District Council, including SPDS on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas and the District Design Guide. I wrote a series of articles with Ann Holden on listed buildings and conservation for the Period House magazine during the mid-2000s, including articles on settings and legislation. More recently, I was independent design and heritage consultant for Brentwood Borough Council for the development of the Garden Village at Dunton Hills.

1.3 I am employed as independent heritage witness by the Rule 6 Party Saffron Walden Town Council and Swards End Parish Council.

1.4 I am familiar with the appeal site and the surrounding area as well as the Planning Policies guiding development in Uttlesford, Essex and the East Anglia, relevant to the appeal.

2.0 SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

2.1 The proposal is for up to 233 houses, together with an access to Radwinter Road. Matters are reserved other than for the access.

2.2 In summary my evidence deals with the effect of the proposed development on Saffron Walden Conservation Area and its wider setting, and also on the settings of selected specified Listed Buildings and on non-designated heritage assets in Saffron Walden and Swards End.

2.3 My evidence includes the heritage element of deemed reason 2 for refusal of UTT/21/2509/OP, being highlighted below:

“2 It cannot be determined from the submitted application that the residual, cumulative impact is on the road network is acceptable as it has not sufficiently been demonstrated that the Page 3 of 6 mitigation proposed in the application will be deliverable or effective for the following reasons:

a. It is not clear that the deliverability of the schemes has been considered adequately.

b. Church Street High Street

i. The deliverability of this scheme has not been adequately demonstrated it will be difficult to add control to due to the narrow footways and carriageway. Position of the equipment and maintenance bay, the presence of street furniture and cellars have not been taken into account.

- ii. *Any signal placed in this location would have to be linked to the existing signals on the high street, which may require refurbishment of the whole system.*
- iii. ***Although not a highway matter it is not clear that the impact on the historic buildings has been taken into account which stop the delivery of the scheme.***

c. Sustainable Transport

i. There is not sufficient information in the submitted application to demonstrate that effective mitigation to promote sustainable transport and help limit the impact of the development on the town highway network which has been demonstrated to be over capacity number at a number of junctions impacted by traffic from this development.

The proposal is therefore contrary to the Highway Authority's Development Management Policies DM1, DM9, DM11, DM15 adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011, and the Policy GEN 1 of the Uttlesford District Council Local Plan and the NPPF 2021."

2.4 This proof of evidence is illustrated by a number of appendices as follows.

CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN1 Maps

CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN2 LIDAR

CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN3 Photographs

CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN4 Saffron Walden Highways Impacts

CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN5 List Entries

CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN6 St Marys Saffron Walden Church Guide (extracts)

CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN7 C18 etching from Audley End

CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN8 Historic Towns Assessment report – Saffron Walden (extracts)

CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN9 Tetra Tech Draft Local Plan *Saffron Walden Baseline Review* of March 2022

CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN10 Appeal Land off Finchingfield Road, Steeple Bumpstead

CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN11 Local Plan 1983 (extracts)

2.5 It also refers to *SWTC/SEPC Appendix 5 Heritage* and illustrations relevant to heritage assets and setting. I will also refer to documents, illustrations and photographs by others where I am confident that they provide an accurate depiction of effect.

2.6 It is intended that various matters of agreement will have been set out in the Scott Schedule (Rule 6 SS) and Statement of Common Ground (SCG). These include a description of the site and surroundings, and the relevant Local Plan and National guidance.

3.0 LEGISLATION

3.1 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 describes a statutory duty to *'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 72 of the same Act describes a statutory duty to exercise planning functions to the *‘desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.’*

- 3.2 The *Barnwell Manor* Court of Appeal¹ held that decision making regarding the settings of listed buildings should recognise the statutory duty and go beyond consideration whether there would be some harm, giving instead *“considerable importance and weight”* when the decision-maker carries out the balancing exercise. I agree with the Appellant’s Heritage Statement para 2.2 that the statutory duty for a Conservation Area should by implication likewise be afforded considerable importance and weight.

4.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 The National policies that are relevant to the cultural heritage aspects of the proposal are within the National Planning Policy Framework (latest version 2021). This is supported by Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and English Heritage guidance notes including *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance, Statement of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 12* (October 2019) and *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3* (2017 Second Edition).

- 4.2 The statutory duty is now recognised by NPPF Paragraph 199, which requires:

“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.”

- 4.3 Section 16 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment, in paragraphs 189 to 208. The NPPF places much emphasis on heritage *‘significance’*, which it defines in Annex 2 as:

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”

- 4.4 The setting of a heritage asset is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as:

“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.”

5.0 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 The Local Plan policies relevant to the proposal within the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) are as

¹ *Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v E. Northants DC, English Heritage, National Trust & SSCLG* [2014] EWCA Civ 137

follows:

“Policy ENV1 - Design of Development within Conservation Areas

Development will be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the essential features of a Conservation Area, including plan form, relationship between buildings, the arrangement of open areas and their enclosure, grain or significant natural or heritage features. Outline applications will not be considered. Development involving the demolition of a structure which positively contributes to the character and appearance of the area will not be permitted.”

“Policy ENV2 - Development affecting Listed Buildings

Development affecting a listed building should be in keeping with its scale, character and surroundings. Demolition of a listed building, or development proposals that adversely affect the setting, and alterations that impair the special characteristics of a listed building will not be permitted...”

5.2 *“Policy ENV4 Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance.*

..The preservation in situ of locally important archaeological remains will be sought unless the need for the development outweighs the importance of the archaeology. In situations where there are grounds for believing that sites, monuments or their settings would be affected developers will be required to arrange for an archaeological field assessment to be carried out before the planning application can be determined thus enabling an informed and reasonable planning decision to be made. In circumstances where preservation is not possible or feasible, then development will not be permitted until satisfactory provision has been made for a programme of archaeological investigation and recording prior to commencement of the development.”

5.3 Relevant Policy context within the Local Plan includes:

Paragraph 5.1 Policy objectives on the built and natural environment, including

- *To safeguard the character of Uttlesford’s historic settlements.*
- *To conserve and enhance the historic buildings in Uttlesford and their setting.*

Further objectives to protect the natural environment for its own sake include agricultural, visual and environmental qualities. These related objectives reflect those within the above Historic England guidance and are relevant to support the understanding, historic, functional and visual significance of heritage assets and their use and viability.

5.4 Paragraph 5.2 gives context that Uttlesford District contains about a quarter of the listed buildings within Essex, itself ‘one of the most richly endowed of all English counties’.

5.5 Paragraph 5.4 emphasises that ‘This rich heritage is one of the key elements in the quality of the local environment. It is important that the development pressures on the district are managed in ways that enable the built environment to be protected and enhanced and inappropriate development to be avoided.’

5.6 Paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8 confirm that archaeological sites are an unknown, finite and non-renewable resource and therefore “it is important to ensure that they are not needlessly or thoughtlessly destroyed” and “The desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its

setting is a material consideration in determining planning applications whether the monument is scheduled or unscheduled”.

- 5.7 Paragraph 5.4 The paragraph then goes on to describe supplementary guidance to support the management of the development pressures. Supplementary guidance relevant to this proposal includes the *Saffron Walden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals (Adopted 2018)*. The document was provided as SWTC SEPC Appendix A5.7 – Heritage.
- 5.8 The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (currently Referendum issue) is also material.

6.0 APPRAISAL

Application Study

- 6.1 The application was accompanied by an *Archaeology and Heritage Statement* by BSA Heritage dated July 2021. Paragraphs 1.6 and 1.8 confirm that this comprised a desk-based assessment with one site walkover in December 2020. A geophysical survey by followed in January 2021 at the request of Essex County Council.
- 6.2 The NPPF policy references within the BSA Statement are to the version prior to July 2021, but for consistency my comments are based on the closest equivalent within the current NPPF.
- 6.3 The closest designated heritage asset was identified in paragraph 3.4 as Pounce Hall (HER 27190) and paragraph 3.6 noted that the spire of the Grade I parish church St Mary’s, Saffron Walden, was also visible from parts of the site during the site visit. I agree that these two listed buildings are the main designated heritage assets directly connected with the site but the extent of visibility is greater than that stated as, for instance, the photograph 4.4.5 page 6 of the Tree Impacts and Tree Protection Method Statement shows that much of St Mary’s is visible, not only the C19 spire (and it is relevant to significance of the long views that the C19 spire replaced a previous timber spire likewise defining the building from afar). The assessment therefore does not assess the setting and significance in a manner proportionate to the assets’ importance as a Grade I building and as the Parish Church (NPPF 194).
- 6.4 I agree that the other designated heritage assets named (Tiptofts, Hopwoods Farm Farmhouse and Workhouse) have limited intervisibility and can reasonably be discounted from the study.
- 6.5 The application study does not assess the designated heritage assets affected by the highways junction changes. These are within the Saffron Walden Conservation Area and settings of Listed buildings, and a number of these buildings have cellars.
- 6.6 The study also assumes that all boundaries (and therefore screening of views to and from heritage assets) will be maintained (see paragraph 4.3). Instead, the plan *Proposed Means of Access – CTP-20-1142 SK01 Rev D* shows the entire north boundary of the frontage field (Saintfoine Meadow on the 1758 map) is removed for visibility splays and access, as depicted in the two lower frames of the drawing. This is intended as an approved drawing and Access is not a reserved matter. It is therefore inherent in the proposal that the (protected) hedging and trees along the roadside are to be lost, along with their screening and heritage qualities.
- 6.7 The views used within the report are from the site to an asset, and from the asset to the site, but not any material side views. Instead, *HE Settings* paragraph 10 page 6 defines Views and Setting as:

“The contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset is often expressed by reference to views, a purely visual impression of an asset or place which can be static or dynamic, long, short or of lateral spread, and include a variety of views of, from, across, or including that asset.”

Those side views, such as the principal elevation of the grade II listed building Pounce Hall from Pounce Hall Meadow, are significant and assessment of this and functional setting of this former manor and farmhouse would be proportionate to the assets’ importance (NPPF 194).

Methodology

6.8 The assessment of significance has been carried out using information provided by the Appellant, Saffron Walden Town Council and Swards End Parish Council, observations made on numerous site visits/inspections during the scoping, application and appeal processes, and research undertaken online and at archives, including:

- Ordnance Survey and earlier maps
- Historic aerial and satellite photos
- Heritage Gateway records and Historic England List Entries
- Local Planning Authority Appraisals, Planning History and Neighbourhood Plan
- Saffron Walden Town Council Archive
- Historic England Archive
- Essex Record Office
- Victoria County History and Pevsner
- Local sources and histories of the settlements and buildings

6.9 I provide analysis of the significance of the asset and its setting, the effect and impact in accordance with NPPF and the Historic England guidance cited above.

7.0 HERITAGE ASSETS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Saffron Walden Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

7.1 The Introduction to the 2007 Essex County Council Historic Character Assessment (HTA) states:

“Saffron Walden is a fine example of a market town. It is of the highest environmental quality with pleasant shopping streets, open spaces and numerous historic buildings of the very highest quality which attract many visitors.”

7.2 The Historic England and Essex County Council *Historic Towns Assessment* (1999) states:

“The historic town of Saffron Walden is of major archaeological and historical importance. It is an example of a medium-sized market town, with clear examples of deliberate town planning. In the later medieval period it became the main centre of the saffron industry in England. The quality of its built environment is outstanding.” (Page 23).

“Saffron Walden is a remarkable small town, the best surviving Market Town in Essex and a town of national importance.” (page 10).

“In Saffron Walden it is all the layers of architectural history, one on top of the other, that make it special and it is this that is its most valuable feature.” (page 12).

7.3 This exceptional significance is reflected in its statutory designations. Its Conservation Area contains 3 Scheduled Monuments, 2 Registered Parks and Gardens and over 320 listed buildings / groups of listed building entries (totalling over 400 individual listed buildings). 6 listed buildings are Grade I including the Castle and St Mary’s Church and a further 25 are Grade II*.

7.4 The Saffron Walden Conservation Area was first designated in 1968 and revised in 1991. It has a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAA) adopted in 2018. (SWTC SEPC Appendix A5.7)

7.5 The CAA assesses significance as general character in Paragraphs 1.40 - 1.49, including:

“Nikolaus Pevsner’s Buildings of England series, Essex, describes Saffron Walden as being ‘a town of exceptional interest’ that has ‘managed to preserve much of its medieval character’. This largely remains the case regarding the Conservation Area despite major expansions elsewhere in the town during the 20th century.” (Paragraph 1.40)

“Essex County Council’s document ‘Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project’ 2009 considers that the town has the finest surviving collection of timber framed buildings in Essex. The same document notes that ‘In the late medieval period, Saffron Walden became the major English centre for the production of the saffron crocus which was used to produce dye...It also played an important role in the East Anglian wool industry. (Paragraph 1.41).

“A high proportion of buildings are listed Grade I or Grade II.”* (Paragraph 1.43).

“The Conservation Area contains high quality buildings representative of all periods from the Norman Conquest to modern times. Many of these buildings have evolved over time to meet changing fashion and economic necessity. However such change has generally added to the quality of the Conservation Area. Despite some inappropriate modern development, the Conservation Area represents an historic townscape most worthy of retention and improvement.” (Paragraph 1.49).

7.6 Paragraph 1.58 of the CAA confirms:

“Of greatest visual historical relevance is the town as we see it today. An analysis of the age of the existing Listed Buildings by location indicates that the greatest concentrations from the 13th to 16th centuries are to be found principally on Castle Street and Church Street followed by those located on High Street, Bridge Street, Market Hill, Freshwell Street and King Street. Thus the medieval town was focused in streets around the church before expanding to the south and east at later dates.”

7.7 The visual characteristics of the town compared with the historic maps sequence from the earliest map of 1758 in CDF4 Appendix CN1 show that Saffron Walden still retains its narrow streets and medieval road layout. The significant open spaces contrast with closely set built form, narrow town plots and strong frontage building lines.

7.8 The significant open spaces and trees are described in paragraphs 1.46 – 1.48 of the CAA, including:

“Within the existing Conservation Area there are a number of high quality open spaces whose retention and upkeep that properly respects their historical and visual importance is of the greatest importance. The most important of these spaces are The Common, Bridge End Gardens, St. Mary’s Churchyard, the open space around the Castle remains and the Museum, Jubilee Gardens, open space associated with Walden Place and open spaces associated with the Friends School at Mount Pleasant Road. As previously stated open spaces in urban areas can be particularly important so this Appraisal will see if others should be identified.” (Paragraph 1.46).

Throughout the Conservation Area, trees, either as groups or as individual specimens add to its diversity.” (Paragraph 1.48).

- 7.9 The narrow streets, changes of level, narrow green verges and rectilinear junctions are characteristic of Saffron Walden’s medieval layout. Many of the historic buildings have overhanging jetties and projecting architectural detailing and many of the historic centre buildings have roadside cellars below pavements, particularly along the High Street. These inherent details are of high sensitivity and vulnerable to damage from vehicles.
- 7.10 The *Historic Towns Assessment* (1999) page 17 notes that many of the cellars are cut into the chalk and lined with flint, and may be medieval in date. It adds that watching briefs at the beginning of the 20th century established the additional presence of numerous masonry foundations within the medieval town area that probably represent either the top of further flint-lined cellars or masonry plinths for timber-framed houses (referred to in manorial court rolls of 1381). The plan on page 46 shows these early cellars are below a number of the buildings at the Church Street / High Street junction².
- 7.11 The Conservation Area Appraisal aims to reduce the effect of highways on the historic centre, simplify signage and improve the appearance of the highways elements consistent with highway safety. It identifies highways clutter as the elements that detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and in Paragraph 1.130 seeks opportunities to *“Discuss potential of reducing impact of highway signs in various locations.”* Picture 1.13 shows typical signage that detracts at the corner of the High Street and Castle Street, and both railings and signs show evidence of vehicle damage on this typical tight junction into a reduced single lane. Within Zone 6, Paragraph 1.284 Page 70 identifies that *“Traffic and parking can be difficult, particularly on West Road”*.

The summary of the CAA repeats that *“Traffic signage detracts in a number of locations and discussions need to take place with the Highways Authority and others with an objective of identifying improvements that can be made, consistent with highway safety.”* (Paragraph 1.313).

- 7.12 Paragraph 1.39 of the Conservation Area Appraisal states:

“The main part of the Conservation Area lies in the Slade valley and the visual importance of the historic core is enhanced by its varied topography and sloping streets. St Mary’s Church, located on a strategically elevated position, dominates the town when viewed from view points within the historic core and beyond.”

- 7.13 As set out in NPPG Historic Interest paragraph 006, significance derives from archaeological

² Historic England and Essex County Council *Historic Towns Assessment Report – Saffron Walden* (1999).

interest, architectural and artistic interest, and historic interest, summarised as follows:

Archaeological interest

- The Conservation Area comprises the historic town centre and significant buildings from the C12 to C20. The key assessments of the historic town have all identified that it is exceptionally good and of a very high archaeological interest. The Historic Towns Assessment report (1990) confirms this is both above and below ground.
- The best of the visible heritage is from the C13 to the early C20 century. The HTA report confirms the evidence of the layers of interest in the town are valuable and what makes it special.
- The C13 castle and St Marys Church within the castle grounds are the earliest buildings and very highly significant, as is the development of the medieval market, layout and buildings.
- The CA identifies highly significant buildings of all periods, large numbers of which are statutorily listed and that the timber frame buildings are considered the best group in Essex.
- The HTA report confirms the locations of the chalk and flint cellars which have been identified as being medieval, below standing buildings, which are highly significant.

Architectural and artistic interest

- Saffron Walden is identified as being very highly significant as a planned medieval town.
- The castle and church are sited strategically and with great presence on the castle promontory, which provides highly significant architectural and artistic views in urban and countryside settings.
- The narrow planned medieval streets lined with historic buildings are highly significant and provide many high quality scenic views. The town has many parts of tourist interest.
- The town is complemented by historic landscapes, parkland, countryside and panoramic views, including from the long distance trail Harcamlow Way.

Historic interest

- Saffron Walden has been central to national events and royal patronage, especially during the medieval and Tudor periods and as members of the Guild of the Holy Trinity.
- The town's role and history at the centre of the saffron trade is of high historic interest and highly significant for the funding and wealth of the town, alongside wool and (later) brewing.
- The town's written record, charters and maps are of very high quality and interest, and complement the built evidence.

7.14 Saffron Walden has all the Values of Significance described in Historic England's *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008)*, summarised as follows:

Evidential Value

- The Conservation Area demonstrates a high level of architectural evidence, design and details from the C13 onwards.

- Saffron Walden is the most complete market town in Essex, evidencing the continuous development of the market from at least early medieval times to the present day. This is very highly significant.
- The medieval street layout, individual statutorily listed buildings and significant historic open spaces including the castle grounds, common (castle green), are of high significance.

Historical Value

- The value of Saffron Walden as a rural historic town is high.
- Its form, design and fabric demonstrate the evolution of architectural and construction techniques over some 8 centuries.
- Its history includes important periods within national, regional and county events, including the Guild and Sir Thomas Audley.
- The quality of historic buildings in the CAA demonstrates the wealth of Saffron Walden founded on the wool and saffron dye and spice trades.

Aesthetic Value

- Saffron Walden has very high aesthetic value. There are many high quality views throughout the town and Conservation Area, especially along Castle Street, Church Street, High Street, Gold Street, The Market Place and the Common. There are high quality views from many of the approaches to the CA, into, out of, and across the Conservation Area.
- The location of the Conservation Area within the Slade valley provides numerous long distance views of the town, and the Registered Gardens of Audley End provide a setting of high aesthetic value.

Communal Value

- St Mary's Church remains at the centre of the community. The CA has numerous historic buildings with public community functions such as town hall, churches/chapels, market hall (now library), museums, public houses and schools.
- A number of the buildings that are statutorily listed and identified within the CAA are community buildings. The CA was expanded to include additional community architect-designed buildings of high quality of the C19 and early C20, which include community buildings and buildings donated to the town, mostly by Quaker residents.

Historic Settlement Pattern

- 7.15 Saffron Walden's name is attributed to its location, weala-denu meaning 'the valley of the Britons or of the serfs', and from saffron, the source of much of its wealth.³
- 7.16 The name reflects the location of the town within a hollow at the junction of the river valleys of the Slade and its streams leading to the Cam. The valley still largely defines the extent of the

³ Reaney, P.H., *The Place Names of Essex* (1935)

old town and its later expansion, which is substantially screened from the surrounding countryside by the valley slopes and prevailing tree line. The name of the town and the topographical reason for the name is highly significant to Saffron Walden's historic interest.

- 7.17 The Historic Towns Assessment describes the development and phases of the town. The early Norman castle was strategically positioned on a chalk promontory within the Slade valleys, rising to 68 metres AOD which is significantly higher than the rest of the town. St Marys Church was built in the C13 within the castle enclosure, giving it likewise great dominance within the valley.
- 7.18 The historic maps show a distinct townscape form from the C13 and C14 that was set out as a planned grid incorporating St Marys Church and the castle bailey on the northern edge and a C14 market which developed southwards across the southern stream of the Slade. The town was very prosperous in the late medieval period, from trade in wool and saffron crocus used for dye, as a spice and as a medicine. This wealth was reflected in the magnificent church.
- 7.19 The decline in these trades in the C18 and C19 resulted in the town layout being essentially unchanged before C19, when the town developed as a centre for brewery. The railway limited physical expansion and it is only recently that the town has expanded significantly beyond this.
- 7.20 The castle is ruinous but St Marys remains prominent within the town and the wider countryside; its dominance emphasised by its great size and the height of its spire.
- 7.21 The proposed development site is significantly higher than the church and the houses of Linden Homes, the highest of the new estates on Radwinter Road. The lowest part of the site starts at the valley floor at 78 metres AOD, rising 27 metres up the slopes to 105 metres AOD. The change of use from agriculture to residential is proposed for the entire site. Indicative plans show the highest ground as a landscape buffer, with the housing zone rising some 20 metres from 78 metres AOD to approx 98 metres AOD.
- 7.22 The development would not reflect Walden's characteristic settlement pattern as it rises out of the valley and above the prevailing tree line.

Common (Castle Green)

- 7.23 The Common is within Zone 4 of the Conservation Area Appraisal. Picture 1.34 shows that the whole Common is within the CA.
- 7.24 Paragraph 1.211 of the CAA describes the Common as "*an open space of great quality*" and Paragraph 1.245 states:
- "The Common is traversed by a well used footpath linking Ashdon Road and Common Hill. Its key environment quality is its large expansive open nature being enclosed by native tree planting to its four boundaries. It is properly identified on the adopted Local Plan as being a Protected Open Space of Environmental Value and for Informal Recreation."*
- 7.25 The maps of 1758 on Pages 1 and 2 of CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN1 show that it was called 'Castle Green' and was substantially in its current configuration at that time. Common Hill was evident as a track in its current position to the left of the Green, a line of trees ran along the outside of the northern boundary, and the Slade (Kings Ditch) ran close to the southern boundary, as it now does.

- 7.26 From the northern boundary and the footpath along Ashdon Road, the roofs of Linden Homes can be seen on the skyline, weakening the “native tree planting to its four boundaries” and encroaching upon the wooded skyline. The proposed development is likely to extend higher and further along the treeline to the left in the typical views C1 and C2 (Figures 5 and 6 of CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN3 – Photographs).
- 7.27 The impact would be low “less than substantial”, on this key open historic communal space within the Conservation Area.

St Marys Church, Saffron Walden

- 7.28 St Marys (1196237) was added to the statutory list on 28 November 1951, at Grade I and with Group Value. The introductory summary is as follows and the rest is within CDF4 Appendix CN5:

“Parish church. Aligned NE-SW. Chancel and crypt late C13, rebuilding of nave and tower 1485-early C16 by Simon Clerk and John Wastell. Upper stage of tower rebuilt and spire added in 1831 by Rickman and Hutchinson. Restoration and new E window by Butterfield in 1876. Major repairs in the mid 1970's. Walling variable, of ashlar, flint, field stones and ashlar offcuts, lead roofs.”

- 7.29 Pevsner noted that *“With a total length of nearly 200 ft Saffron Walden is one of the largest parish churches of Essex. It is also one of the most lavishly designed ... There are indeed certain features which make connexions with Kings’s College Chapel and Great St Mary more than likely. The whole church was re-built between c.1450 and c.1525, with the exception of ..crypt.. and ..arcades... A contract exists with Simon Clerk and John Wastell. Clerk was master mason at Eton c.1460 and at Kings College Chapel c.1480; Wastell succeeded Clerk at King’s College Chapel and was one of the most distinguished English masons of his generation.*

The tall octagonal stone spire with crockets and two tiers of dormers...was added in 1831 to the design of Rickman and Hutchinson, the architects, at the same time, of New Court, St John’s College Cambridge...

The church lies indeed in such a commanding position, on a hill, higher than the surrounding streets, that it can be seen as prominently from the N and the S.”⁴

- 7.30 The C19 church tower is a significant phase of the building and is the tallest tower and spire in Essex, totalling 193 ft⁵. This spire replaced a previous stone and timber lantern shown on Page 13 Picture 1.1 and Page 23 Picture 1.6 of the CAA and Page 6 of the St. Mary’s history and guide⁶ (CDF4 Appendix CN6). The guide describes that the lantern shortly predated 1696 as it was used as the prototype for Henry Winstanley’s Eddystone lighthouse of that date. A print of 1793 from the west at Audley End shows that it also had considerable presence within the wider landscape (CDF4 Appendix CN7). The intentional building of a taller spire in 1831-1833 is described on page 19 of the guide and shows the value attributed by the community to the ongoing dominance and landmark quality of the building.

- 7.31 The photograph 4.4.5 page 6 of the Impacts and Tree Protection Method Statement shows the

⁴ Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England – Essex* (Second Ed 2003). Pages 331-333.

⁵ Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England – Essex* (Second Ed 2003). Reference to height on page 332.

⁶ Dixon, Dr Kenneth. *St. Mary’s, Saffron Walden A history and guide* (2000). Pages 6 and 19.

views of St Marys from the Appeal site are typically of the Church rising above the old town within a backdrop of undulating countryside. The views are of the whole length of the Church and the entire tower. From the countryside forming the backdrop there are likely to be similar reciprocal views of the Church with the Appeal site field as its backdrop.

7.32 Historic England's *Setting* Page 6 Paragraph 11 identifies that views which contribute more to understanding the significance of a heritage asset include those "*where the composition within the view was a fundamental aspect of the design or function of the heritage asset*". For BSA to dismiss the taller tower as being of a later date is to miss a key element of the design character, function and importance of St Marys.

7.33 As set out in NPPG Historic Interest paragraph 006, significance derives from archaeological interest, architectural and artistic interest, and historic interest:

Archaeological interest

- St Marys displays the highest level of archaeological interest, from the late C13 onwards.
- The rebuild by the King's masons between c.1450 and c.1525 is of national and international interest and is significant for the understanding of the evolution of their work and of Tudor church architecture of the highest quality.
- The differences between this church and of contemporary vernacular churches of the C15 and early C16 is of interest.
- The evolution of the tower as a part of the overall composition is of high interest.
- The raised site and setting of the church and its historic enclosure is of high interest.
- The role and evidence of the church as part of the castle complex is also of high interest.

Architectural and artistic interest

- St Marys is a substantial landmark building of the highest level of architectural and artistic interest.
- The strategic location of the building can be appreciated from numerous vantage points, including the hillsides, valley floor, town streets and parkland. The characters of these settings in which it is experienced vary but are harmonious.
- Its exceptional size as a Parish Church is complemented by its form, design and detailing, which emphasise its dominance. This includes the height and form of the spire and crockets.
- The architectural design of this church has been at the highest level and the design and details of the phase between c.1450 and c.1525 are exceptional.

Historic interest

- The input of the King's masons during a break from work at Kings College Chapel Cambridge is of exceptionally high interest.
- Funding for the church from the C15 onwards came through the Guild of the Holy Trinity and the direct royal patronage and Charters of Henry VIII and Catharine of Aragon.
- Leading members of the Guild were of significant national and local importance.

- Walden Abbey, a Benedictine monastery started by Geoffrey de Mandeville in the early C12, had the right to appoint a vicar to the church.
- The first tower of St Marys was used by Henry Winstanley as precedent for the design of the first lighthouse.
- Thomas Audley, Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor, and descendants of his family including Lord Braybrooke, owned much of Saffron Walden and surrounds from the mid C16, and were closely connected with the church and town from their estate at Audley End.

7.34 St Marys has all the Values of Significance described in Historic England's *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008)*, as follows:

Evidential Value

- St Marys is a church of the highest significance, recognised by its Grade I listing. Historic England confirms this applies to buildings "*of exceptional interest*" and comprises only 2.5% of listed buildings.
- It demonstrates a high level of architectural evidence, design and details from the C13 onwards.
- The input of royalty and the King's masons in the C15 and C16 provides key evidence of the highest quality architectural design of the period.
- The survival of important architectural evidence internally and externally is complemented by significant fixtures such as memorials, providing evidence of the evolving use of the building.
- St Marys provides significant visual evidence of the historic settlement within the wider landscape.

Historical Value

- St Marys is the Parish Church and one of the major buildings of Saffron Walden, a rural historic town.
- Its form, design and fabric demonstrates the evolution of architectural and construction techniques over some 8 centuries.
- Its history includes important periods within the evolution of church building, with the input of leading mason architects and architects of the time.
- The church demonstrates the wealth of Saffron Walden founded on the wool and saffron dye and spice trades.

Aesthetic Value

- St Marys is of the highest aesthetic value. It overlooks the town and is identified as a key building featuring in key views within the CAA.
- The prominent position of the church on high ground, together with its form and the visibility of the tower, provides intended and unintended views of high value within the built-up settlement and beyond.

- The design of planned landscapes at Audley End and the planned and natural valley landscapes of the Slade are enhanced by the presence of the church.

Communal Value

- As the Parish Church, St Marys has been at the centre of the community since at least C13.
- It is open every day and is host to numerous events, both civic and religious.
- The building is treasured and valued by the community and attracts many visitors to the town.
- Its visual prominence within the Conservation Area and wider settlement reflects its central position in the community.

7.35 St Marys is therefore of the highest significance and value. The Poplar Inspector's analysis of St Mary's Comb is material⁷. St Mary's Saffron Walden's Grade I listing recognises its '*exceptional interest*' (paragraph 24) as '*one of only 2.5% of all listed buildings which are given grade 1 status*' (paragraph 33). The building meets the four key values and the interests described by the Inspector in paragraph 24 and is an '*irreplaceable resource*' to be '*conserved in a manner appropriate to its significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.*' (NPPF 189).

7.36 Its visual and architectural dominance and its setting within the rural countryside is a key contributor to that significance.

7.37 The conservation of the listed building and its setting should therefore be appropriate to that highest significance (NPPF 189).

7.38 The setting of St Marys Church varies according to the surroundings in which it is experienced (NPPF Annex 2). The church has a functional, strategic, architectural and visual setting within open countryside, parkland, valley and streets and the extents of each setting varies respectively.

7.39 The proposed development will be visible in views where currently St Mary is the dominant building at the centre of a rural agricultural town surrounded by open countryside. Photograph 4.4.5 page 6 of the Impacts and Tree Protection Method Statement is an example, where the development will block the views of St Marys. This view is reproduced for convenience as Heritage Appendix CN3 – Photographs CDF4 Figure 1.

The views affected are those from east to west across the church (the direction of the photograph), and reciprocal views from west to east, the latter where the development site forms the rural backdrop to the church.

7.40 The constraints plans allow for an indicative open public space on the highest ground as a landscape exclusion zone. This proposed open space is likely to contain lighting and paraphernalia and to be of a more engineered character than the current farmland.

7.41 The indicative plans show a retained view westwards to the church, but this is along a street between blocks of housing development of up to 3 storeys, and therefore provides minimal appreciation of an open rural setting. Other than through the limited urban gap, the development substantially blocks the views across the church from the south-east. When

⁷ Poplar Hill, Stowmarket IP14 2EJ (2018) APP/W3520/W/18/3214324.

considering the reciprocal view from the north-west to east across the church, the Appeal site is likely to make up a substantial proportion of the remaining visible countryside above the church. The scale and spread of proposed development combined with 3-storey parameter heights is likely to be jarring and to block most of that open backdrop.

- 7.42 The harm from position 4.4.5 is significant in that this position provides the view of the Church with nave, chancel and tower at their most extensive and dominant against the surrounding townscape and landscape. The reciprocal view towards the Appeal site provides the opposite example where this occurs (i.e. the opposite side of the church), and as concluded above, it is likely this would also be harmed by a backdrop of urban / suburban housing.
- 7.43 From position 4.4.5, the Linden Homes site can be perceived below the view of the church and does intrude, although it is clearly separate and is screened by mature boundary trees. The design of the Linden development is one of standard house types and a layout dominated by roads that pays little heed to that of the historic context but that is not a good reason to exacerbate harm⁸.
- 7.44 The photographed 4.4.5 view is taken from a position relatively low on the southern boundary. As there is some 20 metres difference in ground level within the proposed housing zones and some 27 metres difference overall across the site, the extent St Marys is currently visible varies significantly as the viewer moves around the site.
- 7.45 Whilst Linden Homes is clearly a detractor, comparison between Views A and C of Richard Morrish's evidence (Rule 6 Landscape Document B Appendix I) shows that, when viewed from lower ground, Linden Homes intrudes across views of St Marys, leaving only the tower and spire, resulting in a view that is significant because the tower identifies the core of the settlement, but is of Low heritage significance because there is no context to the spire. It therefore provides limited understanding of the heritage asset.
- 7.46 On higher ground, the nave as well as the tower and spire can be seen to all or most of its extent, with the town's tree line providing a significant line of visual separation. In these views, the dominance of St Marys and its complementary historic setting of open countryside and Audley End parkland can be appreciated in a similar manner to the 4.4.5 view. This is of at least Medium heritage significance, and High if there are views on site where Linden Homes does not intrude. Together the variety of views across the site have cumulative interest.
- 7.47 The blocking of the views onsite are likely to be substantial and entire, as the proposed parameter heights within the building zones are above eye level of a viewer at the highest AOD on the site. Taking the typical views as those seen, with Linden Homes being perceived to some extent, the loss would result in **Moderate less than substantial harm**. The proposal therefore *does not have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting*.
- 7.48 Richard Morrish's View A shows the rising ground beyond Audley End, from which the site can potentially be seen within the backdrop to St Marys and the Audley End parkland. This is a more sensitive and significant setting as it is less affected by modern development and much of the newer development would be screened below the town's tree line. This is beyond the Appellant's study area.
- 7.49 This occurs in typical side views looking south east from Harcamlow Way, a national trail which is described in the Public Rights of Way section of the Referendum Saffron Walden

⁸ CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN10. Land off Finchingfield Road, Steeple Bumpstead (2017) APP/Z1510/W/17/3173352

Neighbourhood Plan (pages 82 – 84). Paragraph 11.3.16 describes it as “an especially important trail” and “passing many places of historic interest, crossing low hills, woods and arable land”. Paragraph 11.3.17 states that “it is possible to enjoy views stretching clearly over the whole of Saffron Walden”. It provides two photographs and the lower one includes a significant characteristic view of St Marys rising above the town with a foreground and background of farmland and trees. Policy SW18 states that

“1. Development that will be clearly visible from a public right of way should consider the appearance of the proposal from the right of way and incorporate substantial green landscaping to reduce any impacts.

This Policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4,5”

Objective 4 is that *“Saffron Walden’s heritage assets, high quality landscape and conservation areas will be protected or enhanced”*.

- 7.50 The Appeal scheme seeks to incorporate landscape buffer zones and tree screening alongside the proposed housing. Screening undesirable impacts to ‘reduce’ harm is an admission that there is harm, and is not the same as ‘protect or enhance’.
- 7.51 NPPF 199 requires *great weight to 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.”*
- 7.52 As the greatest of weights is concluded for St Mary’s Church, the *less than substantial harm* to its setting should be given disproportionately greater weight than the simple facts of the matter would suggest. (Poplar Inspector paragraphs 34, 82-83)⁹.

Saffron Walden Conservation Area Highways changes

- 7.53 The proposed mitigation for the increase of traffic through the Air Quality Monitoring Area (AQMA) involves proposals to revise the functioning at three road junctions. A Preliminary drawing proposal 2206-01/TS-01B has been provided for comment and public consultation on one of these (Junction 13 High Street/Church Street) in response to Reason 2 of the refusal. These mitigation proposals are not supported by assessment of the buildings and significance.
- 7.54 In general the proposals to deal with additional traffic have not been considered holistically across the town and approaches. The findings and recommendations of relevant Highways studies of the town centre such as Draft Local Plan *Highway Impact Assessment to 2031* and Draft Local Plan *Saffron Walden Baseline Review* of March 2022 should have been taken into account (CDF4 Appendix CN9).
- In accordance with NPPF194, the cellars referred to in the Reason for Refusal should have been assessed.
- 7.55 In CDF4 Appendix CN4 Figure H1, I have identified the key junctions of the Rosconn Transport Assessment and plotted them within the Conservation Area and the AQMA. The majority of the junctions are either within or partly within the Conservation Area. Two of the three proposed revised junctions to mitigate harmful effects on the AQMA are within or partly within the

⁹ Poplar Hill, Stowmarket IP14 2EJ (2018) APP/W3520/W/18/3214324

Conservation Area, and these are assessed within Appendix CN4 and summarised as follows:

Junction 4 – Radwinter Road/Thaxted Road/East Street/Chaters Hill.

- 7.56 This junction is partly within the Conservation Area. Radwinter Road, East Street and Chaters Hill are within the CA, and the boundary extends to the walls and property boundaries on the southern sides of Radwinter Road and East Street. Thaxted Road is outside the CA.

The junction changes are to provide a short filter lane to turn from Radwinter Road into Thaxted Road. There are no drawings to confirm the extent and detail, but the corner affected is currently occupied by a grassy raised bank and tall mature trees. No assessment has been provided about the trees, but they form the boundary to the CA and if the Council considers they are within the CA, Conservation Area consent is likely to be required for their removal. The trees are not described within the CA Appraisal, but it is clear that this document rarely considers the trees on boundaries and in the setting of the CA and paragraph 1.19 states “Other trees not specifically identified may still be suitable for statutory protection.”

These trees are opposite Chaters Hill, a narrow street lined with trees at the entrance to the Common, the largest of the open spaces in the town and CA. The Junction 4 trees therefore contribute to the tree lined character and settings of these two highly significant spaces and their loss will not preserve or enhance the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

Junction 13 – High Street / Church Street

- 7.57 This junction is entirely within the Conservation Area, within one of the most highly designated parts of town. All the buildings at the junction are listed. Those whose settings and (in some cases) structure are potentially affected are numbers 10, 12, 14 and 16 on the East side of the High Street and numbers 17, 19 and 21 on the West side of the High Street. Number 21 is listed at Grade II* and therefore a high level of great weight is to be applied to its conservation under NPPF199. The rest are listed at Grade II. They are listed in addition for Group Value.

This is currently a priority junction and the proposal is to install traffic signal lights and pedestrian crossings. As the pavements are extremely narrow, the proposal includes to narrow part of Church Street in order to widen its pavements to install the lighting fixtures. There is no evidence that the resulting effects of the narrowing Church Lane and the proximity of these proposed lights to lights at Junction 12 have been considered.

The heritage assets are all listed as historic buildings and their dates range from the C14 to the early C19. They all contribute positively to the streetscene and are generally able to be seen as a continuous group of unobstructed frontages. Most have been commercial buildings and have cellars, either visible from the street, or less obviously recorded in the list entries.

- 7.58 As part of the core of the Conservation Area described above, their heritage interests and values are as set out in the Conservation Area section, with the addition of:

Archaeological interest

- The buildings at the Church Street / High Street junction are within the C13 expansion of the village southwards from the castle, which is one of the phases with highest interest.
- They also demonstrate the very narrow plots and buildings of the later medieval period.
- They also demonstrate a significant later period of wealth in the town after the opening of the Stort Navigation in 1769, when Saffron Walden became a major centre of the Essex malt industry (page 19 para 2 of the Historic Towns Assessment CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN8). The buildings at this junction were mostly rebuilt or refurbished at this date.
- The group has one of the highest concentrations of historic cellars, described in list entries and plotted on page 46 of the Historic Towns Assessment in the positions of numbers 10-12, 14, 16 and 19-21 High Street. These are described in the HTA page 17 para 4 as:

“cellars cut into the chalk and lined with flint that maybe medieval in date”.

The key study of the cellars has made link with C14 documentary records of town building.

Architectural and artistic interest

- The buildings numbers 14 and 16 High Street show a designed townscape phase of the Early C19. They are of similar gault brick and proportions and frame the entrance to Church Street with quadrant curved corners. These draw the eye around from the High Street to Church Street, and the shopfront to number 14 emphasises the curve around the corner. A subtle alignment of the Church Street elevations is seen on survey plans, which creates a distinctive narrowing of the street at the corner, which may also be deliberate emphasis of the ‘entrance’. This composition is of high interest.
- The views along this part of the High Street and Church Street are of high interest and feature on tourist photographs of the old town.

Historic interest

- The buildings are mostly historic shops, with residential use on upper and rear parts of the building. Numbers 10-12 evolved into a public house and hotel at the same Early C19 period.
- Number 16 was the former Registry Office and has a complementary interior.

7.59 The High Street / Church Street buildings have all the Values of Significance described in Historic England’s *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008)* as follows:

Evidential Value

- The statutory listing of all the individual buildings at the junction shows they are of high value. Number 21 is the Grade II* listed building of the group and therefore Historic England confirms it is *“a particularly important building of more than special interest”*, as one of only 5.8% of listed buildings.
- The importance of the group as a whole is enhanced by the designation for Group Value.
- The most significant architectural design of the group is complementary in a vernacular late Georgian style which fronts earlier buildings or shows a rebuild of the period. In the case of numbers 14, 17 and 19, closer inspection of streetfronts show the composition is not truly

symmetrical as it is adapted to suit earlier buildings. The added layers of complexity enhance value.

Historical Value

- The 7 buildings at the junction range in date from C14 onwards and include all significant phases of the town's development until the mid C19. This shows the evidence of the layers of interest that the HTA assessment confirmed is "*valuable and what makes it special*".
- Number 19 is one of the "*number of buildings which merit special mention*" according to page 11 of the HTA. It "*was probably also a shop, and is a fine example of the Essex plan-type.*" It is also therefore of very high value.

Aesthetic Value

- The variety of architectural design and detail at this junction is of interest. The exceptional C17 plaster frontage of number 21 is of high aesthetic value and described in its list entry as "*plaster panels, the best example of C17 work of its kind in Essex*".

Communal Value

- As the former Registry Office, number 16 has a high level of communal value.

7.60 The High Street / Church Street buildings therefore show enhanced levels of significance as a group. This is best appreciated in views along the High Street and down Church Street.

Proposals

7.61 The proposals should be read in conjunction with CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN4. In the following, I describe effects and likely impacts.

Numbers 10 and 12 (Saffron Hotel) – a 4.5M swanneck pole with two signal heads is to be located approximately 0.3M from the face of number 12 and its projecting bay window. The lights block the hotel hanging sign. Queueing traffic at the junction will block the entrance to the hotel courtyard the lights obscure the hotel hanging sign. The impact on appearance and amenity will not preserve the setting and function of these buildings. The signal pole is very close to the front shared wall and likely harm the recorded chalk/flint cellar.

Number 14 – This shares the 4.5M pole with number 12 and has a further 4.3 metre pole app and a 2M stub pole with puffin crossing. The pavement is at its narrowest on this corner and it appears that the 4.3 metre pole (which is only approx. 0.2M from the face of the building) will collide with the projecting entablature of its distinctive curved shopfront. It is also very close to the plinth above a likely projecting footing and the recorded chalk/flint cellar, which it is likely to harm. Both this building and Number 16 frame the entrance to Church Street and are intended to be seen in the round, which will be disrupted by the proposals.

Number 16 – This is shown with two 4.5M poles which are both swannecked with a lighting head and puffin crossing. As the pavement is widened into Church Street, the poles are able to be approximately 1.2 to 1.5M from the building which is likely to avoid the cellars but will interrupt views of its Georgian frontages. There is what appears to be a substantial control box unsympathetically located against a ground floor window, and underground works are likely to harm the recorded early chalk/flint cellar.

Number 17 has an almost-symmetrical grand façade with giant pilasters. It is shown with two lighting heads, one at each end of the façade. A 4.5M swannecked pole and lighting head is approximately 0.3M from the northern corner pilaster and a 4.3M pole with 2 heads is located prominently and centrally on the junction.

Number 19 is a low modest building potentially affected by the 4.3M pole in views looking along the street. Its recorded cellar is unlikely to be affected.

Number 21 is the Grade II* building, highly designated because of its completeness as a C16 and C17 building and the rarity of its high quality plasterwork frontage. The proposed 4.5M swanneck traffic signal and puffin crossing will obscure this frontage in the street views. Its recorded cellar is unlikely to be affected.

- 7.62 I have provided indicative overlays in CDF4 Appendix CN4 for Church Street / High Street Junction 13, showing visual effects on facades using the positions and key to the proposed fixtures on drawing 2206-01 TS-01 Rev B. They show that the proposed works would not preserve the appearance and setting of the listed buildings, and of this part of the Conservation Area.
- 7.63 The drawing 2206-01 TS-01 Rev provided on 26 July 2022 shows pavement grilles to cellars have been plotted and generally avoided in order to overcome reason 2 for refusal.
- 7.64 However, the visible streetside grilles do not represent the full extent of cellars. The chalk/flint cellars from the cited medieval period predate the above-ground buildings so may not align with the existing external walls. The Historic Towns Assessment (CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN8) describes the cellars on page 10 and 17 and that indicates a thick wall in two parts which exceeds the likely thickness of the above-ground gault brick walls of the Early C19.
- 7.65 The key cellars likely to be affected are of Numbers 10-12 (Saffron Hotel) and 14, where the post is to be installed very close to the building plinth at the cellar recesses of both (Appendix CN4 page 6 lowest photograph). There is insufficient information to establish whether the “ELV signal controller” proposed against the wall of Number 16 would preserve the fabric of the early chalk/flint cellar below. No cellar has been identified at number 17, but that does not mean there is no cellar present close to the corner pilaster.
- 7.66 On Number 14, the post is so close to the face of the building that it is likely to collide with the projecting entablature of the shopfront. It is unlikely this can be moved away from the building without compromising the viable width of pavement and road as it is already narrowed at the point that vehicles start to turn the corner, and architectural elements of the building and shopfront project significantly into the pavement zone.
- 7.67 There are also unsympathetic visual impacts. The key views of the listed buildings are along both the High Street and Church Street, where the continuity of the historic frontages is appreciated. The proposed posts and highways clutter would detract significantly from that setting. They would also interrupt the appreciation of the architectural entrance to Church Street and the high quality design of the shopfront of Number 12.
- 7.68 The interest and value of the listed building group is of the highest, and NPPF directs that the weight to be given to their conservation is therefore required to be proportionate to that significance.
- 7.69 Taking into account both likely harm to fabric and likely harm to appearance and setting for the

group as a whole, the impact of these traffic and AQMA mitigation proposals is likely to be harmful and substantial.

- 7.70 The scale of traffic in Saffron Walden has been of concern in planning documents over the past 40 years. The Saffron Walden Conservation Study of 1979 which informed the 1983 Local Plan then evidenced “*damage to individual buildings particularly in Bridge Street and High Street*” and “*pointed to the general detraction from the quality of the townscape which road traffic causes*” (Local Plan 1983 page 5 CDF4 Appendix CN11). Having considered the options, the conclusion then was that “*in relation to Saffron Walden that the emphasis must be on planning for Conservation*”.

Pounce Hall

- 7.71 Pounce Hall (1297745) was added to the statutory list on 1 November 1972, at Grade II. The summary is as follows and the full description is in Appendix CN5:

“House. Early C17 with later C17 wing and early C18 extension. Timber frame and plaster, peg-tiled roofs, red brick stacks. Plan, L shaped. 2 storey and attics...”

- 7.72 Pevsner noted the C17 Pounce Hall as one of the two most important houses in Swards End.

- 7.73 Pounce Hall was named after Albold Pouncyn, grandson of Siward, to whom the Manor of Pouns was granted in the 12th Century. It was part of the lands of Geoffrey Mandeville who founded Walden Abbey and built the castle at Saffron Walden. It was owned by the Abbey¹⁰ until the Dissolution of the Monasteries and was then awarded by Henry VIII to Thomas Lord Audley, Lord Chancellor in 1539¹¹. Lord Audley listed Pounces in his will of 1545¹². The estates map of 1758 by John Eyre for John Griffin Griffin, the first Baron Braybrooke, confirmed that the Appeal site was part of Pounce Hall Farm and still in the Audley End Estate (Appendix CN1 page 3). Nearly a hundred years later, the Schedule of the 1842 Tithe Map confirmed the Site was still part of Pouns Hall, owned by Lord Braybrooke and occupied by Isaac John Norris (Appendix CN1 pages 12 - 16). The maps and documents show a historic ownership link between Pounce Hall and the lands of the Abbey in Saffron Walden for some 700 years, and a longstanding ownership and functional connection between Pounce Hall manor and farm and the Site, including during significant periods of building of Pounce Hall from C17 to C19.

- 7.74 Historic England’s *Setting* Page 6 Paragraph 11 identifies that views which contribute more to understanding the significance of a heritage asset include those “*where the composition within the view was a fundamental aspect of the design or function of the heritage asset*”. This includes farmsteads and manors. Other views of greater significance include those “*where the composition within the view was a fundamental aspect of the design or function of the heritage asset*” and “*where town- or village-scape reveals views with unplanned or unintended beauty*”.

- 7.75 The 1758 Eyre Map shows the setback entrance to Pounce Hall as ‘The Chace’, which leads behind the roadside buildings to Pounce Hall. The formal garden front faces west along the

¹⁰ Essex Record Office D/B 2/MAN3/1

¹¹ Royal Grant of Deed Essex Record Office D/DBY T2/1

¹² The Will of Thomas Lord Audley 1545. Essex Record Office D/DBe T21

valley and the meadows, in the direction of St Mary's Church Tower. In c1690s, when Pounce Hall was substantially rebuilt by Lord Thomas Audley¹³, the tall distinctive Church tower lantern was also built. The Chace is traditionally attributed to a hunt, and the landform and topography along the valley is suited to the purpose. LIDAR indicates historic water features within Long Meadow which would complement the historic view. (CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN2)

- 7.76 Photographs of Pounce Hall are available on the internet as it is available as a letting through *Booking.com*. These are referred to in CDF4 Appendix CN3 Figures 11-14 and show that the formal garden front faces St Mary's in such a way that the church is part of a fine composition viewed centrally from the primary chamber and that the central path of the formal garden shown on the 1758 map would have led the eye directly to it. On that basis, it would appear that the subtle alignment of the house slightly differently to the direction of the road and valley is intentional and that this relationship is a planned view.
- 7.77 They also show, that from the primary chambers of the south-west corner, views through the largest windows are in both the west and south-west directions – encompassing both the valley and church, and the hillside on which the Appeal development is located. Trees may have grown between the house and hillside screening the ground floor views of the site in summer, but the evidence of location of the primary windows remains, as likely do views from the upper floor and lesser screening in the direction of the site from Pounce Hall and its garden in winter.
- 7.78 The photographs also show that the house is earlier than the listing description of C17. Although it was substantially rebuilt by Lord Thomas Audley, the main chambers incorporate the "massive timbers" of 1460 identified by the Essex County Council Historic Buildings team.¹⁴
- 7.79 The significance of Pounce Hall derives from:

Archaeological interest

- Pounce Hall is the site of a significant early manor and settlement since the saxon period or earlier. LIDAR indicates substantial earthworks and the probable location of the recorded roman settlement immediately to its north. This continuous occupation is of very high interest.
- The house is a good example of a C17 lobby entry timber framed house on an L shaped plan with stair tower. It also incorporates a medieval building of high quality from c1460.
- The surviving layout, fabric and architectural features are very complete and of high interest. They include high quality timber frames of C15 and C17, fireplaces of C17 and doors and windows of C17 and later.
- The evolution of a C15 manor house connected with the Abbey, through its rebuilding in two stages in lateC16/early C17 and later C17 as an Estate manor, to a farmhouse with a complementary C18 and C19 farmstead is of high interest. The complementary documentary map and field evidence, and the visible evidence of historic meadows, fields and boundaries (including the Appeal site) is also of high interest.

¹³ Joyce Harper. *Sewards End Past and Present* (2002). Pages 34-5.

¹⁴ Joyce Harper. *Sewards End Past and Present* (2002). Page 34 *Living at Pounce Hall* By Dorothy Hopkins para 2.

- The layout of the building and hierarchy of chambers, uses and views can be identified from the fabric and design of the building. The typical C17 symmetrical garden layout within a natural valley landscape shown on the 1758 map and LIDAR complements this.

Architectural and artistic interest

- Pounce Hall is a substantial vernacular farmhouse with symmetrical garden elevation, substantial tall chimneys and good architectural detail. The variety within the elevations of strong forms, such as the garden front with large C17 windows, the C17 stair tower facing east, the lower entrance block and the subservient ranges at the back, all create a harmonious whole.
- The setting of Pounce Hall adds to its interest and appreciation. Elements of significance include the flint walling, the gardens and trees, Slade tributary and valley, lakes and ponds, and particularly long views along the valley to St Mary's church. The views from the landscape to the house and from the house to the landscape are equally of high significance.
- The wider views of Pounce Hall, especially from the PROW to its west, north and north-east, show it is of significant visual interest and that the character of the house changes with the landscape it addresses. The layers of complexity add to interest. These include CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN3 Figure 10.

Historic interest

- The connection between the manor and Walden Abbey is of high interest. The height and 'massive timbers' of the c1460 phase show this was an important and desirable building within their holdings. Like the current building, the key view from the medieval building was of St Mary's rising above the town and the Abbey's landholdings. At that period, the castle would also have been prominent alongside St Marys.
- The house is also a good example of an Estate manor and there is some evidence that manorial courts were held there¹⁵.
- The names of the fields provide valuable indicators of their management, former uses, crops grown and visible features. The C18 and C19 names on the Appeal site comprised Saintfoine Meadow (a medieval grass), Sheep Cote Common, Sheep Cote Pightle (small enclosure) and Mill Field (the site of a pre 1700 i.e. likely Abbey windmill at 560 380¹⁶).

7.80 Pounce Hall has all the Values of Significance described in Historic England's *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008)*, as follows:

Evidential Value

- Pounce Hall is of national importance as recognised by its listing.
- It demonstrates a good level of architectural evidence, design and details, mainly from the C17 to C19 and including an earlier C15 building.
- The separation of the hamlet of Pounce Hall from the rest of Swards End shown on the maps provides evidence of its origins as a separate manor.

¹⁵ Joyce Harper. *Swards End Past and Present* (2002). Pages 34-5.

¹⁶ Farries, K.G.. *Essex Windmills, Millers and Millwrights*, vol 5, p.79, Saffron Walden.

Historical Value

- The relationship of Pounce Hall to the Abbey and Audley End Estate is of high historic value.
- There is a good level of documentary evidence that supports understanding of the building and its setting, as well as the former function of the building and building group as a farmstead.

Aesthetic Value

- Pounce Hall is a landmark building within the river valley and has a highly significant visual relationship with the river valley landscape, which the garden front faces, the hillside above the house, from where good views of Saffron Walden can be obtained.
- The design of the building generally and the fenestration of the garden front with large C17 windows is aesthetically pleasing and demonstrates the function of the various parts of the house.

Communal Value

- The historic record indicates that the hall was used for the manorial court.
- The river valley landscape around Pounce Hall is a valued space crossed by well-used public rights of way.

7.81 Pounce Hall is of high significance and value proportionate to its national designation. It meets all four key values and the three heritage interests.

7.82 The development results in the encroachment from Saffron Walden towards the separate grouping of Pounce Hall, as shown in the views from the PROW to the north and north-west of the hall. Richard Morrish's CDF6 Landscape Views V5, V6 and V7, as well as CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN3 Figure 10 show some potential views where that encroachment would be visible and the separation of the settlements of Saffron Walden, Swards End and Pounce Hall would no longer include an open agricultural field.

7.83 The encroachment of housing into the meadow and field long associated with the house, former farmhouse and manor will harm the understanding and character of the setting of Pounce Hall. The position of the bay window facing the direction of the site indicates that views from the key chamber were intended in this direction, even if in summer it is now limited. This is shown in CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN3 Figure 14.

7.84 Whilst in plan, there are two fields between, these are small triangular fields as evidenced by the name 'Pightle' (i.e. small enclosure). CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN3 Figure 10 shows that the Site extends beyond these and in comparison, they do not have the scale to provide significant open green separation. LIDAR provided in CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN2 shows that the landform once cleared would be of tight valleys each side of a small ridge, so would not contribute significantly to views of high ground, and not in the expansive open way the current field does.

7.85 Like Linden Homes, the development on high ground will look over the river valley, where the Long Meadow provides a tranquil setting and views between Pounce Hall and St Mary's. The photographs of View SWTC SEPC 4 show some intrusion into the river valley setting of Pounce

Hall. The relevant views for setting include side views and also views likely from the interior of the garden elevation of Pounce Hall. The impact of the Appeal site is likely to be greater than Linden Homes, being on higher ground and closer to Pounce Hall. Development will encroach across the gap CDF4 Heritage Appendix CN3 Figure 9 and be more evident within Long Meadow because of removal of the hedging and trees along the Saintfoine Meadow road frontage to provide visibility splays. (View SWTC SEPC 4).

- 7.86 The presence of a housing estate in these views does not reflect the character and appearance of the former manor and farmstead, and leads to a conclusion of *less than substantial harm*. The proposal therefore *does not have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting*.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposals do not conserve and enhance designated heritage assets as required under the 1990 Act, Local Plan Policy ENV1, NPPF20(d) and NPPF Section 16. They do not preserve or enhance the setting or surroundings as required under the 1990 Act, ENV2 and NPPF Section 16.

- 8.2 Retaining Saffron Walden's identity through protection of its heritage and natural assets is also identified as the first objective of the Referendum Neighbourhood Plan, which states:

"Saffron Walden will retain its unique identity as a visually beautiful market town with its rich heritage, a large number of listed buildings and a number of historic green spaces within the town and across the parish.

- 8.3 The proposals include preliminary design for traffic signals at the junction of the High Street and Church Street in order to try to address Reason 2 regarding likely impact of S106 works on heritage assets and historic (medieval) cellars. Harm to cellars is still likely in at least one location and a number of instances of visual harm and some physical harm have been identified to the listed buildings 10, 12, 14, 16 High Street. Harm to settings have been identified to the above and also to the listed buildings 17, 19 and 21 High Street. These are significant buildings within the Conservation Area.
- 8.4 Harm is identified to the settings of the listed buildings St Marys Church and Pounces Hall, and to the setting of the Commons within the Conservation Area.
- 8.5 There is no heritage benefit identified to weigh against the identified heritage harm.

Corrie Newell

8 August 2022