

Ward:	Woodcote Ward
Site	Woodcote Grove, Ashley Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5BW
Development:	Development of 98 apartments/dwellings, including conversion of the Grade II* Listed Woodcote Grove and Grade II Listed Stable Block, with parking, access, landscaping and other associated works, following the demolition of the existing reprographics centre and conference centre (Listed Building Consent)
Contact Officer:	Ginny Johnson

1 Plans and Representations

- 1.1 The Council now holds this information electronically. Please click on the following link to access the plans and representations relating to this application via the Council's website, which is provided by way of background information to the report. Please note that the link is current at the time of publication, and will not be updated.

Link: <http://eplanning.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>

2 Summary

- 2.1 This application seeks Listed Building Consent for the internal refurbishment, external alterations and conversion of the Grade II* Listed Woodcote Grove and Grade II Listed Stable Block to residential use.
- 2.2 A Full Planning Application has been submitted in tandem with this Listed Building Consent application, under ref: 19/00999/FUL.
- 2.3 The refurbishment and conversion of the Grade II* Listed Woodcote Grove and Grade II Listed Stable Block to residential use is considered acceptable in principle. The internal refurbishment is considered acceptable and the exterior alterations are considered to preserve the special historic interest of the buildings.
- 2.4 The proposal seeks a coherent layout that opens up the link between the two Listed buildings, achieved through sensitive design, the orientation of new buildings and careful landscaping. The architectural character of the development is considered to respond to the Site's surroundings, but with a more contemporary and sustainable context.
- 2.5 The proposed development is considered to deliver an optimum viable use for the Listed Buildings, helping to secure their longer-term future. The proposed adaptations and alterations are considered suitably sensitive, preserving the special historical and architectural character of these buildings and their setting.
- 2.6 It is recommended that the scheme is supported and referred to the Secretary of State as Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) has raised concerns regarding the application, which are addressed within this report.
- 2.7 The matter of planning permission for the use and associated Section 106 Agreement is the subject of a separate assessment.

3 Site description

- 3.1 The Application Site ('Site') measures 1.29 hectares in size and comprises five buildings, including a Grade II* and Grade II Listed building. The Site presently forms part of the wider Atkins campus, but is considered surplus to requirements since Atkins consolidated its office requirements on the adjacent Site (application ref: 14/01150/FUL).
- 3.2 The Site is immediately bound by the Atkins Office building, which is nearing completion, and its associated car park to the north-east. It is bound by woodland and horse paddocks to the south-east and by a Listed wall to the south-west and north-west.
- 3.3 To the south-west of the Site is Chalk Lane, which comprises a hotel (benefiting from planning permission to accommodate 21 dwelling units, application ref: 17/01275/FUL), residential properties and a pub. To the north-west of the Site is Worple Road, which typically comprises residential properties. The Site is located approximately 1.8 kilometres from Epsom Town Centre.
- 3.4 The Site is currently accessed from Ashley Road, to the north-east. The proposal seeks an underground car park (beneath proposed Block F), which is accessed via the existing access off Ashley Road. The proposal also seeks a new vehicular access along Chalk Lane.
- 3.5 The Site is designated as a Built up Area and is within the Chalk Lane Conservation Area. As above, the Site comprises a Grade II* Listed building, Grade II Listed building and a locally Listed wall. The surrounding area also comprises the following Listed buildings:
- Chalk Lane Hotel. Grade II Listed.
 - Maidstone House. Grade II Listed.
 - 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14 Chalk Lane. Grade II Listed.
 - Woodcote Green House. Grade II* Listed.
 - South East Boundary Wall to Woodcote Mews. Grade II Listed.
 - South East Boundary Wall to 1 Woodcote Mews. Grade II Listed.
- 3.6 Descriptions and details of the Listed buildings is provided below:

Woodcote Grove

- 3.7 Woodcote Grove (otherwise referred to as "Mansion House") is a Grade II* Listed building. It is four storeys in height, including a basement and attic and comprises office floor space.
- 3.8 Woodcote Grove is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest. The listing details are provided below:

Late C17. Two storeys, basement and attic. Plain brick with red dressings. 1 - 3 - 1 sashes, the centre slightly projecting under pediment. Flight of steps with iron rails leads to central fluted Corinthian columned doorcase with rusticated surround, panelled frieze and dentilled cornice. Glazed double doors and rectangular leaded fanlight. Carved and dentilled eaves cornice, round window to pediment. Slate roof with four large (? modern) pedimented sashed dormers, inner ones with segmental pediments. To North and South are two storey and attic similar style wings added circa 1895. Flat roofs with parapets. Rear elevation, similar, but no doorcase to centre. The house was

built by J Diston. A portrait of Charles II in the hall bears an inscription that it was painted by Lely at the command of and as a present from him to Diston. The house was originally called Mount Diston and there is a mount in the garden. Interior: Hall paved with white marble, and black and white marble mantelpiece. Staircase, screened by Doric colonnade, is of stone with wrought iron scrolled balustrade and ribbed barrel ceiling. Pine panelling to library with two mid-C18 carved wood fireplaces with rococo ornament. 3 bedrooms with C17 bolection moulded panelling, one with original marble fireplace and C18 hob grate

Stable Block to Woodcote Grove

- 3.9 Stable Block to Woodcote Grove (otherwise referred to as "Stable Block") is a Grade II Listed building. It is two storeys in height and comprises office floor space.
- 3.10 The Stable Block is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest. The listing details are provided below:

Late C18. Yellow stock brick. Hipped slate roof. 2 storeys. Ashlar parapet. 6 bays and frontispiece, divided by pilasters without capitals or bases. 1 range of segment-headed C19 windows in 3 right hand bays, others blind. Frontispiece breaks forward. Round arch with moulded inposts and panelled double doors, flanked by Tuscan columns which take attic storey with 3 blind panels, moulded cornice and blocking course.

4 Proposal

- 4.1 The Site presently forms part of the wider Atkins campus. Planning permission was granted on 26.01.2015, under application ref: 14/01150/FUL, for a new office building. This is located immediately adjacent to this Site in question. Due to the new office building, which is nearing completion, the buildings located on this Site in question, are considered surplus to requirements. In essence, Atkins has consolidated its office requirements on the adjacent Site.
- 4.2 The proposal seeks to demolish the existing office buildings and redevelop the Site to provide 98 flats/dwellings.
- 4.3 Condition 3 of the 2015 Planning Permission (application ref: 14/01150/FUL), for a new office building at Woodcote Grove. required existing office blocks to be demolished within 6 months of first occupation of the new building. The four storey Atkins office block (located at the south-eastern part of this Site) was identified for removal. The proposal seeks to demolish this building and replace it with residential accommodation (proposed Block F).
- 4.4 The proposal includes the conversion of a Grade II* Listed building (Woodcote Grove, often referred to as 'Mansion House') and a Grade II Listed building (Stable Block) to residential use. Parking, access, landscaping and other associated works are also proposed.
- 4.1 A Full Planning Application has been submitted in tandem with this Listed Building Consent application, ref: 19/00999/FUL.
- 4.2 Proposed Site Plan (drawing ref 011 Rev O) shows the proposed layout of the scheme. The following is development is proposed:

Building A (plots 1-8)

- 4.3 The existing print room, proposed to be demolished, measures 4 metres in height, from the surrounding courtyard. Building A is proposed in this location.

- 4.4 The general height of Building A is 8.275 metres, measured from surrounding site level (the existing ground level has been excavated by 500mm as part of the proposed development).
- 4.5 Building A is located at the north-western end of the Site. This comprises an irregular shape and is two storeys in height, with an eaves height of 63.55 metres AOD and a ridge height of 66.44 metres AOD. This building would provide eight flats: four flats at ground floor level and four at first floor level. The below table provides a breakdown of the housing mix for building A:

Building A			
Floor	2B4P	3B5P	Total
Ground Floor	3	1	4
First Floor	3	1	4
Total	6	2	8

Building B (plots 9-12)

- 4.6 Building B seeks the conversion of the Grade II Listed Stable Block to residential use. This building seeks the provision of four flats: two flats at ground floor level and two flats at first floor level. The below table provides a breakdown of the housing mix for Building B:

Building B	
Floor	1B2P
Ground Floor	2
First Floor	2
Total	4

Buildings C and D (plots 13-26)

- 4.7 The existing conference building, proposed to be demolished, measures 6.02 metres in height, measured from ground level to roof apex.
- 4.8 Buildings C and D are two identical rows of terraces. Each row comprises seven dwellings, totalling 14 dwellings in total. These comprise two-bedroom, four person houses.
- 4.9 The general building height for proposed Buildings C and D is 8.2 metres. Building C is two-storeys in height, with an eaves height of 64.27 metres (AOD) and a ridge height of 66.8metres (AOD). Building D is two-storeys in height, with an eaves height of 64.05metres (AOD) and a ridge height of 66.94metres (AOD).

Building C and D		
Building	C	D

2 storey House (2B4P)	7	7
Total	7	7

Building E (plots 27-22)

- 4.10 Building E seeks the conversion of the Grade II* Listed Woodcote Grove. This seeks the provision of seven flats:

Building E					
Floor	1B2P	2B4P	3B5P	3B6P	Total
Basement			2		2
Ground Floor	1	1			2
First Floor		1	1(DUPLEX)	1(DUPLEX)	3
Second Floor					
Total					7

Building F (plots 34-98)

- 4.12 Building F is a new build, replacing the existing office building at the south-eastern end of the Site. This comprises a basement, with a vehicular access ramp leading to Ashley Road. This building seeks the provision of 65 flats.
- 4.13 The height of the existing office building is as follows:
- 11.8 metres to ridge (measured from Garden Square level)
 - 15.2 metres to top of lift overrun (from Garden Square level)
- 4.14 The proposed general building height of Block F is 15.4 metres (from Garden Square level to ridge).
- 4.15 The below table provides a breakdown of the housing mix for Building F:

Building F					Finished Floor Level (FFL)
Floor	1B2P	2B3P	2B4P	Total	FFL (AOD)
Ground Floor	6	1	7	14	59.63 (AOD)
First Floor	4	5	7	16	62.63 (AOD)

Second Floor	4	5	7	16	65.63 (AOD)
Third Floor	6	1	6	13	68.63 (AOD)
Fourth Floor	2	2	2	6	71.63 (AOD)
Total	22	14	29	65	Ridge: 74.88 (AOD)

- 4.16 The proposed basement of Block F comprises 52 car parking spaces, 10 disabled spaces, totalling 62 car parking spaces. It also comprises 5 motorcycle spaces and 164 cycle spaces.

5 Comments from third parties

- 5.1 A Site Notice was displayed and the Listed Building Consent application was advertised in the local paper and neighbouring notification letters were sent to 151 properties.
- 5.2 52 letters of objection have been received regarding:
- Density, massing and design
 - Adverse visual impact
 - Adverse impact on historical significance of Listed buildings, Listed wall and the character of Conservation Area
 - Impact on neighbouring amenities
 - Loss of light/overbearing
 - Loss of outlook
 - Noise
 - Traffic/Parking implications
 - Flood risk
 - Ecology and biodiversity

6 Statutory Consultations

- 6.1 The statutory consultees responded as follows :
- Historic England: no objection (representation annexed)
 - Design and Conservation Officer: no objection
 - The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings: (11.03.2020): concerns raised within objection, considered within body of Committee Report
 - The Georgian Group (20.09.2020): Does not wish to formally comment
 - The Victorian Society (24.09.2020): No comments to make
 - The Ancient Monuments Society: no response received
 - The Council for British Archaeology: no response received
 - The Twentieth Century Society: no response received

7 Relevant planning history

- 7.1 The below table sets out principle recent and relevant planning history relating to the Application Site and the adjacent Atkins Site. For clarity, it does not include minor full planning applications approval of non-material amendment applications, approval of details applications or tree applications.

Application number	Decision date	Application detail	Decision
18/01009/REM	Granted	Application to vary Condition 27 of planning permission 14/01150/FUL as varied by planning permission 15/01097/REM and planning permission 16/01591/REM to enable a final plant solution to be implemented	15.02.2019
16/01591/REM	Granted	Variation of Condition 27 of planning application reference: 14/01150/FUL and 15/01097/REM to enable the erection of a fixed guard railing to the main office building	28.04.2017
15/01097/REM	Granted	Variation of Conditions 2 (Phasing), 5 (Materials), 9 (Construction traffic management plan) and 13 (Soft landscaping) of planning permission 14/01150/FUL. Changes to the wording of the conditions is required to revise the overall phasing of the development and to allow some conditions to be discharged in a phased manner	14.12.2015
14/01150/FUL	Granted	Proposed new office building (use class B1) of 9924m GIA with associated revised access and parking, demolition of existing blocks A, B and C with the reinstatement of land and landscaping of site	26.01.2015

8 Planning Policy

National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) 2019

- Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Core Strategy 2007

- Policy CS5 The Built Environment

Development Management Policies Document (2015)

- Policy DM8 Heritage Assets
- Policy DM9 Townscape Character and Local Distinctiveness
- Policy DM10 Design Requirements for New Developments (including House Extensions)

9 Planning considerations

Design and Heritage

9.1 This section of the Committee Report is split into distinct sections:

- Planning policy
- Historical background and the Site's significance
- The proposal
- Listed Buildings
- Conservation Area

Planning policy

9.2 Chapter 12 of the NPPF relates to achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 124 sets out that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this.

9.3 Paragraph 127 sets out that planning decisions should ensure that developments (inter alia) function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term, but over the lifetime of the development. Developments should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. Development should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environmental and landscape setting, establish or maintain a strong sense of place and optimise the potential of a Site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development. Furthermore, places should be created that are safe, inclusive and accessible, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

9.4 Paragraph 128 sets out that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the Local Planning Authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests.

9.5 Paragraph 130 sets out that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.

9.6 Paragraph 131 sets out that in determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs, which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

9.7 Chapter 16 of the NPPF relates to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Paragraph 189 sets out that in determining applications, Local Planning Authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

9.8 Paragraph 190 sets out that Local Planning Authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

- 9.9 Paragraph 192 sets out that in determining applications, Local Planning Authorities should take account of:
- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 9.10 Paragraph 193 sets out that 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.
- 9.11 Paragraph 194 sets out that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:
- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
 - b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.
- 9.12 Paragraph 195 sets out that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, Local Planning Authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:
- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
 - b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
 - c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
 - d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
- 9.13 Paragraph 196 sets out that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 9.14 Paragraph 200 sets out that Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. 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

- 9.15 Policy CS5 sets out that the Council will protect and seek to enhance the Borough's heritage assets including historic buildings and conservation areas. The settings of these assets will be protected and enhanced. The policy also sets out that high quality and inclusive design will be required for all developments. Developments should (inter alia) create attractive, functional and safe environments, reinforce local distinctiveness and complement the attractive characteristics of the Borough and make efficient use of land.
- 9.16 Policy DM8 sets out that the Local Planning Authority will resist the loss of Heritage Assets and every opportunity to conserve and enhance these should be taken by new development.
- 9.17 Policy DM9 sets out that planning permission will be granted for proposals that make a positive contribution to the Borough's visual character and appearance. In assessing this, the following is considered
- compatibility with local character and the relationship to the existing townscape and wider landscape;
 - the surrounding historic and natural environment;
 - the setting of the proposal site and its connection to its surroundings; and
 - the inclusion of locally distinctive features and use of appropriate materials
- 9.18 The Chalk Lane Conservation Area Map recognises Woodcote Grove as a Grade II* Listed building and a focal building. The Stable Block is identified as a Grade II Listed building and the wall running around the perimeter of the Site (off Chalk Lane and Worple Road) is identified as Grade II Listed. There is a historic street light at the Site and an important view, to the south-east of Chalk Lane. Furthermore, the Atkins Office Building is identified as a negative building.

Historical background and the Site's significance

- 9.19 A Heritage Statement accompanies this application, which assesses the significance of the Listed Buildings on the Site and its historical surroundings. The Heritage Statement refers to the Grade II* Listed Woodcote Grove as "Mansion House".
- 9.20 The Mansion House was originally constructed as a single-family residence, within ample grounds. To the south, north and east of Mansion House was a large formal garden, creating long views over Epsom Downs, to the south of the Site. Later works included the addition of two small wings to the main building, as well as the Stable Block, which appears on mapping by the 1840s.
- 9.21 In the 1950s the Site was sold to Atkins. The earliest complete set of plans of Woodcote Grove date from this period, showing the intention to alter Mansion House to office use, resulting in the subdivision of much of its historic space. The purchase of the estate by Atkins also saw the creation of a large office block to the South of Mansion House, as well as to the south and north of the Stable Block. These works severely altered the formal setting of Mansion House and saw the loss of visual connection between the Mansion House and the Stable Block.

- 9.22 The Mansion House remains the principle building within the Site, set on raised ground and set back from the entrance off Chalk lane, meaning that it benefits from glimpsed views from the road only. To the north-west and south of the Site, modern ancillary office buildings mar the garden setting of the Mansion House. The largest of these office buildings is the late twentieth century 'S' shaped office building, which has a utilitarian appearance, contrasting with the ornate façade of the Mansion House. This office building diminishes an appreciation of the original grounds that surround Mansion House, as well as eroding its domestic character.
- 9.23 The Heritage Statements assesses the significance of the Listed Buildings and Listed wall. The findings are summarised below, with additional comments from the Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer.
- 9.24 The setting of the Site is mixed, making only a limited contribution to the significance of Mansion House, due to the mid and late twentieth century building works within the grounds.

LPA Design and Conservation Officer comment: Except that the gates and walls are of significance to the entrance, but will not be affected at any point near the main Listed Building

- 9.25 The Site is relatively sheltered from its surroundings by the boundary wall, which encloses the western and northern boundaries. The wall is believed to have been repaired and potentially rebuilt in the twentieth century, although it retains a nineteenth century character. The wall and Mansion House possesses a group value and each inform an appreciation of the significance of the other. The overall significance of the wall is considered to be moderate.

LPA Design and Conservation Officer comment: Agreed and not substantially harmed

- 9.26 There are clear views of Mansion House on entering the Site through the southern gateway. Despite alterations to this over the years, the Mansion House and side wings have retained a cohesive appearance. The overall significance of the building is high, as this is the primary building on the Site, reflecting eighteenth/nineteenth century design and aesthetics.

LPA Design and Conservation Officer comment: Agreed

- 9.27 The Stable Block retains its raised central parapet and arched central opening, formally known as an open carriage way. Both the northern and southern elevations have been constructed of different brick stock resulting in a contrasting appearance. Repairs to the northern elevation are less sympathetic. The infill of the central opening in particular is detrimental to the appearance of the building.

LPA Design and Conservation Officer comment: Agreed

- 9.28 The conversion of the Stable Block into an office has resulted in alterations to the original openings and brickwork, as well as the interior. Views from the southern façade of the stable block would have looked directly towards the Mansion House. This relationship has been interrupted by the creation of additional office buildings between the two buildings. Therefore, while the building dates to the period when the Mansion House remained in residential use, this is no longer appreciable. This overall significance of the building is therefore moderate.

LPA Design and Conservation Officer comment: the orientation of the building towards the Mansion House does remain of some significance, especially if the central doors facing the Mansion House are retained, as they should be, and a view between the two listed buildings is reopened as is proposed

- 9.29 Chapter 10 of the Heritage Statement assesses the significance of interior spaces of Mansion House. The findings are summarised below, with additional comments from the Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer.

- 9.30 The basement of Mansion House has very limited fabric of interest because of its office fit out. Modern partitions have disrupted the historic circulation of the space and suspended ceilings result in the division of window openings. Volumes that appear to correspond to secondary circulation spaces, such as the circular stair and servant's passageway should be preserved.

LPA Design and Conservation Officer comment: The interior of this level is not of great significance except for the stairs, but the outer wall may also be some of the earlier fabric, especially where doorways open to the vaults under the landscape to the east and to the tunnel from Mansion House

- 9.31 The ground floor of Mansion House comprises the principle rooms, including the main entrance hall, library and staircase. Largely this floor has avoided unsympathetic subdivisions. The ground floor comprises some of the most significant internal spaces, with their original volume best preserved

LPA Design and Conservation Officer comment: Agreed

- 9.32 The first floor retains a residential quality, due to the retention of wooden panelling and glazing details. The northern wing extension and the western room within the southern wing extension appear to be the most altered.

LPA Design and Conservation Officer comment: Agreed, though many or even most of the alterations are pre-1948 and therefore of significance

- 9.33 The second floor is the most altered within the Mansion House, with the full extent of the floor plan subdivided following the office conversion. There is very little historic fabric of interest at this floor.

LPA Design and Conservation Officer comment: Agreed, this floor probably never had any features of great historic significance as it would have been the servants quarters.

The Proposal

- 9.34 Representation has been received setting out that the proposal represents an overly dense development, adversely impacting the historic significance of the Site and the character of the area.
- 9.35 This section explores the design of the scheme and notes the comments received by Historic England, the Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer and The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).
- 9.36 Officers undertook a Site Visit with Historic England on 30.09.2019. Following this, Historic England formally responded to the originally submitted scheme on 10 October 2019 (referred to as 'initial' advice). Historic England had concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds and considered that the issues and safeguards outlined in its advice needed to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 190, 193, 194 and 195 of the NPPF.

9.37 The applicant sought to revise the scheme, taking into consideration the views of Historic England. A Design and Access Statement Addendum was prepared and submitted, which sets out the key changes made to the scheme. Historic England provided an updated response to the revised scheme on 18 March 2020. It sets out that overall, the revised scheme is capable of meeting the requirements of paragraph 190 of the NPPF, to avoid or minimise harm to significance. The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer formally commented on the revised scheme on 16 April 2020. The comments are referred to below.

9.38 The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) commented on the application on 11 March 2020. The comments are referred to below.

Mansion House

9.39 Proposed external alterations to Mansion House include repair to the main façade, introduction of a glazed balustrade above the bay windows of the side wings and a lightweight frame.

9.40 Proposed internal alterations to Mansion House comprise:

- At basement level, the proposal seeks to remove partitions and remove thicker masonry. The proposal seeks to retain the small circular staircase and jack arches above the corridor.
- At ground floor level, the proposal seeks to remove the modern WC adjacent to the stairs and subdivide the side wings to create two apartments.
- At first floor level, the proposal seeks a secondary stair and partition walls, to create a division between the three separate apartments.
- At second floor level, the proposal seeks the removal of partitions and subdivision.

9.41 Historic England's initial comments acknowledged that internal demolition and subdivision had been concentrated to the areas of lesser interest at Mansion House, such as the second floor, basement and the nineteenth century wings. But, the degree of change to the principal rooms through subdivision was considerable. Particular concerns were raised about the degree of subdivision to the rear boardroom on the ground floor and the ground floor wing rooms, both of which would cause harm.

9.42 The applicant sought to address the comments made by Historic England and reduced the internal partitioning within the Mansion Block (see Heritage Statement Addendum). Parking spaces adjacent to Mansion House were also removed, with an area of hardstanding retained as existing.

9.43 Historic England's formal comments on the revised scheme (18 March 2020) set out that it is content that the revised ground floor plan for the Mansion House retains the principle rooms in their historic form, reducing the harm to the significance of the Grade II* Listed building.

9.44 The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer acknowledges that Woodcote Grove is the most historically important building at the Site and has a very substantial impact on Chalk Lane and the land and buildings to the north of the Site. The alteration of the room plans of the interior of this building has some benefits and some drawbacks. The partition of the back room on the upper ground floor is perhaps the most harmful and results in a large reception room being subdivided into a single flat.

- 9.45 The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer sets out that there are a number of minor changes to the first floor, but these do not significantly alter the room plan. The most significant change is in levels, which resolves some of the anomalies in this floor resulting from several changes made in the past. An additional change is made to this level by the introduction of a new stair well to the second floor. This unfortunately requires a subdivision in the large northeast room but enables the occupation of flats on the second floor. At present, the second floor is only accessible via the spiral stair, which is neither practical nor safe.
- 9.46 The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer sets out that subject to planning permission being granted, a Condition is recommended, seeking a historic building survey with photographs, to more accurately survey and assess the significance and history of the building's fabric. The Historic building Survey must be submitted to the local authority and to be recorded at Bourne Hall.
- 9.47 SPAB raises concerns regarding the glazed balustrading on the wing terraces, which are retained. SPAB would prefer to see simple metal balustrading utilised here – with a narrow steel handrail and vertical spindles - as this would be more sympathetic to the existing house. Glass will not be invisible in this location as reflections catch the eye and a tint to the sky behind the glass would distract from the more solid historic materials that the building is constructed from. Glass balustrades are therefore considered inappropriate for a listed building at roof level when visible from the ground.
- 9.48 The applicant provided a response to Officers on 03 June 2020, to address SPAB's comments. The applicant is content to agree the above, which, subject to Listed Building Consent being granted, will be subject to a Condition.
- 9.49 SPAB further commented that it was unable to find any further reference to the enclosure of the main stair and the suggested necessary incorporation within a unit referred to on page 39 of the DAS (bullet 2 key feedback from pre-app meeting 3, 23rd May). SPAB is concerned about this element and would therefore like confirmation that the principal staircase balustrade is not going to be altered in any way, and that enclosure of the landing of the first floor is not being proposed.
- 9.50 The applicant provided a response to Officers on 03 June 2020, to address SPAB's comments. The applicant is content to agree the first point above. At pre-application stage, it was acknowledged that a residential flat is proposed and that obscure glazing would be required to enclose this area, otherwise the proposed flat would lack privacy and would be visible to visitors. The applicant has confirmed that the obscure glazing could be removed at a later date, if required.

Stable Block

- 9.51 Proposed external alterations to the Stable Block include opening up the passageway underneath the central arch. The proposals also include improvements to the setting of the Stable Block, re-establishing the visual link with the Mansion House, so that the historic functional relationship between the two buildings is appreciable.
- 9.52 Historic England's initial response considered the residential conversion of the Stable Block as suitable and raised no concerns about the principle of the works.
- 9.53 The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer raises no objection to the conversion of this building. The most sensitive and significant features of this building will not be harmed, which includes the roof structure and the archway.

- 9.54 The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer does wish to see the heavy timber double doors in the archway retained. The applicant team confirmed this and subject to Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent being granted, this is secured by Condition.

Listed wall

- 9.55 The wall is believed to have been repaired and potentially rebuilt in the twentieth century, although it retains a nineteenth century character. The proposals seek the retention of the wall, with the introduction of a pedestrian opening. This is to offer convenient access to this part of the Site and glimpsed views to passing pedestrians.

- 9.56 The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer does not have an objection to the proposed pedestrian entrance. The section of the wall is not independently listed, though it is curtilage listed. An opening would be acceptable and subject to p Listed building Consent being granted, a Condition is recommended, to ensure good design that respects the wall.

Boundary treatment

- 9.57 The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer sets out that the proposed steel fence acting as boundary treatment is a good solution, provided that this boundary is not added to by dense planting of hedges and trees. The view across the landscape should retain the dominance of the Listed Building and its place in the landscape.

Building A

- 9.58 Building A has been designed to respond to its surroundings, specifically drawing on the materiality and massing of the Stable Block. Building A comprises a prominent gable end design with a pitched roof, and is predominantly brick faced. The building incorporates pronounced chimney stacks, referencing eighteenth century building styles. Window voids and a central parapet break the massing of this building over the central entrance on the southern façade.

- 9.59 In its initial response, Historic England recommended lowering the height of Building A, as this would be visible from outside the Site and would sit rather awkwardly with the boundary wall, interrupting the sense of seclusion of the Site within the Conservation Area. The applicant responded to this comment and reduced the height of Block A by 500mm, which was achieved by a sunken courtyard (see Heritage Addendum). The Heritage addendum sets out this reduces the building's perceived massing onto Worple Road and Chalk Lane.

- 9.60 The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer raises no objection to the demolition of the existing print room building, as it has no architectural interest. The proposed building is two storeys in height and should have relatively little impact on the Conservation Area, which typically comprises two-storey dwelling houses. It will be separated from the Listed buildings surrounding the Site by the Listed wall. The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer confirms that the design of building A is acceptable.

Buildings C and D

- 9.61 Buildings C and D comprise two rows of terraces, which have been designed to reference historic cottage rows, typical of eighteenth century estate design. The terraces open views between the Mansion House and the Stable Block, reinstating the historic visual relationship between these two buildings. The design of these buildings draws on traditional building materials and proportions, using a pitched roof, with chimney stacks on each dwelling. But, these buildings also comprise a contemporary character.

- 9.62 Within its initial response, Historic England welcomed the removal of the conference building, which was considered to have a negative impact on the Grade II* Listed building. But, Historic England cautioned against taking a formal, axial approach to any housing development, which might replace it. This has been pursued and Historic England note that its form is not particularly historically appropriate, though it was acknowledge that the impact of this discrete part of the scheme is an improvement on the present situation.
- 9.63 The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer acknowledges that the terraces are small two-bedroom homes, with limited outlook and rear gardens that are little more than small yards. But, the buildings are well laid out, creating positive vistas along the axis of the Site, with views from Woodcote Grove to the Stable Block.
- 9.64 The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer sets out that the outlook and private amenity space can be compensated for by shared amenity space and well laid out landscape.

Building F

- 9.65 On submitting the application, building F comprised a part 4, 5 and 6-storey building.
- 9.66 In its initial response, Historic England set out that it considered that the baseline scenario was not the present office building, but empty landscaped ground, which was the benefit included in application ref: 14/01150/FUL.
- 9.67 Historic England's initial response considered that flanking the Grade II* Listed building with a taller residential block with a greater overall massing would weaken its status. In combination with the recently built office building to the rear of the Site, the Grade II* Listed building would be confronted by dominant structures in most views. Although the present office block should not be considered the baseline for comparison, it is notable that the proposed building would be two storeys higher than the current post-war building (the conservation area's most prominent detractor) and includes an eye-catching roof form. The proposed building was not considered to respond to the scale, character and design of the Listed building and was considered discordant and conspicuous in key views from in front of the Grade II* Listed building and across the one remaining area of open land to the rear. It would therefore cause harm to the Grade II* Listed building.
- 9.68 Following Historic England's initial comments, the fifth floor of the proposed building was removed and the fourth floor set back on the northern elevation (adjacent to Mansion House) to reduce its massing. A recessed central section sought to reduce the scale of this building. A contrasting fenestration approach of flint at ground floor providing a plinth to the building and varying transparencies of glazing seeks to create a visual break in the front elevation. These are framed by two bookend brick pavilions, which are detailed with projecting brick courses. The recessed section has a reduced ridge height and the eastern wing sees a reduction from four storeys to three, matching the western wing. The wing has also been reduced in plan to allow space for the pedestrian access ramp from Ashley Road.
- 9.69 In its updated response, Historic England acknowledged that the scale of building F has been reduced by one storey with a set-back top storey and recessed central bays. Historic England concluded that this reduces the prominence of Building F in key views of Woodcote Grove and thus also the harm to the Grade II* listed building.
- 9.70 The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer sets out that the reduction of height and setting back of the top floor of this building has significantly reduced its dominance on the Site and its massing should no longer compete with the Listed building. The comment also sets out that brick is an appropriate material. This heavier materials gives the building a lower centre of gravity, with the lightweight fourth floor.

- 9.71 The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer sets out that the entrance to the Site from the northeast remains an unfortunate and confined relationship with the vehicle traffic, parked cars and pedestrians sharing a relatively narrow route. It should be noted that there are no objections from a safety perspective, from SCC Highways.
- 9.72 SPAB commented on the revised design of Block F. SPAB welcomes the reduction in height and bulk of this building and consider it to be more acceptable than the previous design for this building. The introduction of symmetry about a central recessed element, with brick bookend pavilions is a more appropriate design response in this setting. The removal of the two-storey mansard roof treatment and replacement with a visually lighter-weight set-back top storey reduces the dominant character of this building which is a positive change. As a consequence the impact of this block on the Listed Mansion House has been reduced.

Conservation Area

- 9.73 The Heritage Statement sets out that the proposals seek to better reveal the historic character of the Site, opening up the views between the Mansion House and the Stable Block, as well as replicating a small terrace cottage typology. This helps to understand the age of the Site as well as enhancing a sympathetic appearance between the Site and its surroundings.
- 9.74 The proposals will alter the existing views of the Site from along Chalk Lane. The introduction of new buildings, which are more responsive in terms of massing and material character is considered a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
- 9.75 The Listed buildings surrounding the Site derive their significance from their material character and vernacular historic style, as well as their shared group value. The contribution of the Site to the significance of the surrounding heritage assets is presently undermined by the late twentieth century additions to the site, including the office buildings to the north and south of the Stable Block. The replacement of these buildings with more sensitively designed buildings, responding to the location, hierarchy, materials and massing of the historic buildings within the Site are considered to enhance the wider setting of the Listed buildings.

Harm and public benefits

- 9.76 Paragraph 190 of the NPPF sets out that Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 9.77 Paragraph 194 of the NPPF sets out that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.
- 9.78 Historic England considers that the revised scheme is capable of meeting the requirements of Paragraph 190 of the NPPF to avoid or minimise harm to significance. Officers are required to decide if the remaining harm, which Historic England think is less than substantial, has clear and convincing justification as required by paragraph 194 of the NPPF before weighing it against the public benefits of the proposal in the manner described in paragraph 19 of the NPPF.
- 9.79 The Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer provided further comments on 29 June 2020, to those referenced above. This summarises the harm to the historic significance of the scheme:

- Block A replaces a post-war large building with no historic or special architectural interest. The proposal will result in little to no harm. This is considered to cause very much less than substantial harm
- The proposed works mainly affect the interior parts of the Stable Block, which has been subject to previous alterations. The proposal is considered less than substantial harm. The external setting of the building also is attributed less than substantial harm, due to the opening of the landscape and the reduced scale of adjacent buildings.
- Buildings C and D have little or no impact on the historic significance of the Site. These comprises a reduced height and bulk than the existing building and should detract less from Woodcote Grove. These buildings will have a better alignment, complimenting the Stables Block. These two buildings are on balance considered beneficial and not harmful to any significance of the building.
- Woodcote Grove should be caused no substantial harm by this proposal, provided that the existing main central doors are retained. Subject to planning permission and Listed Building Consent being granted, a condition secure this.
- Block F is a larger, but better designed building than existing. Its impact on the Site should result in very much less than substantial harm.

9.80 Together, the Local Planning Authority's Design and Conservation Officer concludes that the harm to the heritage significance of the whole Site is regarded as less than substantial.

9.81 In considering the above, the harm to the significance of the heritage assets at this Site is considered less than substantial. It is necessary to consider the public benefits of the proposal. In this case, the public benefits comprise the provision of new housing and affordable housing, bringing buildings into viable use that are otherwise considered surplus to requirements and a contribution to improve the pedestrian facilities and junction improvements at Worple Road and Chalk Lane. The scheme benefits are considered to outweigh the harm caused.

Summary

9.82 The harm to the significance of the heritage assets at this Site is considered less than substantial. The proposal has been subject to a thorough design process, to present a scheme that is considered acceptable from a design and heritage perspective. It proposes various public benefits, which are considered to outweigh harm. As such, there are no robust grounds to refuse this application on this aspect.

9.83 The proposal is considered to comply with policies CS5, DM8 and DM9.

10 Conclusion

10.1 The refurbishment and conversion of the Grade II* Listed Woodcote Grove and Grade II Listed Stable Block to residential use is considered acceptable in principle. The internal refurbishment is considered acceptable and the exterior alterations are considered to preserve the special historic interest of the buildings.

10.2 The proposal seeks a coherent layout that opens up the link between the two Listed buildings, achieved through sensitive design, the orientation of new buildings and careful landscaping. The architectural character of the development is considered to respond to the Site's surroundings, but with a more contemporary and sustainable context.

- 10.3 The proposed development is considered to deliver an optimum viable use for the Listed Buildings, helping to secure their longer-term future. The proposed adaptations and alterations are considered suitably sensitive, preserving the special historical and architectural character of these buildings and their setting.
- 10.4 It is recommended that Listed Building Consent is granted. The matter of planning permission for the use and associated Section 106 Agreement is the subject of a separate assessment.

11 Recommendation

- 11.1 It is recommended that the scheme is supported and referred to the Secretary of State.

Part A: Refer to Secretary of State with a recommendation to Grant Listed Building Consent, subject to proposed conditions

Part B: Following confirmation from the Secretary of State that the matter is not to be called in, delegation be given to the Head of Planning to determine the application securing:

Condition(s):

- (1) The works hereby granted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: To comply with Section 18 (1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 52 (4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2005.

- (2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

LOC – Site Location Plan – Rev B – dated 19.05.2019
BLOC – Proposed Block Plan – Rev A – dated 31.07.2019
001 - Existing Site Plan – dated 26.07.2019
002 - Existing Coach House – Rev B – dated 30.07.2019
003 - Existing Conference Centre – Rev A – dated 26.07.2019
004 - Existing Woodcote Grove – Plans – Rev A – dated 26.07.2019
005 - Existing Woodcote Grove – Elevations – Rev A – dated 26.07.2019
006 - Existing Atkins Office Building – Ground Floor Plan – Rev A – dated 26.07.2019
007 - Existing Atkins Office Building – Typical Floor Plan – Rev A – dated 26.07.2019
008 - Existing Atkins Office Building – Elevations - Rev A – dated 26.07.2019
009 - Existing Atkins Office Building - Elevations - Rev A – dated 26.07.19
010 - Existing Reprographics Centre – Floor Plans and Elevations - Rev A – dated 26.07.2019
011 - Site Layout – Rev O – dated 05.02.2020
020 – Block A - Floor Plans – Rev D – dated 18.12.2019
021 – Block A – Elevations – Rev D - dated 27.03.2020
022 – Block B - Floor Plans & Elevations – Rev B – dated 30.07.2019
023 – Block C and D – Ground Floor Plan – Rev B – dated 31.07.2019
024 – Block C and D – First Floor Plan – Rev B – dated 31.07.2019
025 – Block C – Elevations – Rev B - dated 31.07.2019
026 - Block D – Elevations – Rev B - dated 31.07.2019
027 - Block E - Floor Plans – Rev C – dated 30.10.2019
028 - Block E – Elevations – Rev B – dated 31.07.2019
029 - Block F - Lower Ground Floor Plan – Rev D – dated 29.11.2019
030 - Block F - Upper Ground Floor Plan – Rev G – dated 05.02.2020
031 – Block F - First & Second Floor Plan – Rev H – dated 05.02.2020
032 - Block F - Third Floor Plan – Rev G – dated 27.01.2020

033 - Block F - Fourth Floor Plan – Rev E – dated 17.12.2019
035 – Block F - Elevations Sheet 1 – Rev G - dated 27.01.2020
036 – Block F – Elevations – Rev G – dated 27.01.2020
037 - Block F - Detailed Bay Sections– Rev A – dated 27.01.2020
038 - Block F - Detailed Bay Sections - Rev A – dated 27.01.2020
039 - Block F - Detailed Bay Sections– Rev A – dated 27.01.2020
040 - Site Sections AA-FF – Rev E – dated 27.01.2020
041 - Site Sections– Rev E - dated 27.01.2020
042 - Block E - Site Boundary Treatment – dated 05.02.2020
050 - Bin Stores - Plans and Elevations – dated 31.07.2019
J4/01030 – Fence Standard Install Details – dated 04.01.2017

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans to comply with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007)

- (3) All works of making good and repair associated with the proposed works shall match the existing adjacent fabric in material details, finish and design detail, unless otherwise agreed in the plans approved in this planning consent

Reason: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the listed buildings and in the interest of the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM8, DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015

- (4) Prior to the commencement of works, a survey of the Grade II* Listed Woodcote Grove including a photographic survey shall be prepared to record its condition prior to development and shall show all areas associated with the approved works including exposed historic fabric. The said report shall be submitted to the local the planning authority for approval and copies sent to the borough library at Bourne Hall

Reason: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the listed buildings and in the interest of the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM8, DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015

- (5) Prior to commencement of works, specifications of works with section drawings through the Grade II* Listed Woodcote Grove, showing proposed changes in floor levels around introduced steps and stairs and their existing materials altered by those changes shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. No works shall commence until these specifications are approved and shall carried out in accordance with the approved specifications.

Reason: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the listed buildings and in the interest of the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM8, DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015

- (6) The timber double doors in the archway of Grade II Stables Block shall be retained and maintained accordingly.

Reason: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the listed buildings and in the interest of the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM8, DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015

- (7) The existing main central doors of Grade II* Listed Woodcote Grove shall be retained and maintained accordingly.

Reason: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the listed buildings and in the interest of the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM8, DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015

- (8) Prior to commencement of works, specifications of works showing changes to provide metal balustrading with a narrow steel handrail and vertical spindles to the wing terraces of Grade II* Listed Woodcote Grove shall be submitted. No works shall commence until these specifications are approved and shall be carried out in accordance with the approved specifications.

Reason: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the listed buildings and in the interest of the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM8, DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015

- (9) Prior to the commencement of works to the Chalk Lance boundary wall a method statement with detail drawings (at a scale 1:10) is required to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, showing the exact location and detail design of the entrance, with an assessment of the historic significance of those parts of the wall to be removed. No work relating to this entrance shall commence until the local authority has approved these documents.

Reason: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the listed buildings and in the interest of the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM8, DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015

Informatives

1. In dealing with the application the Council has implemented the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way. We have made available detailed advice in the form of our statutory policies in the Core Strategy, Supplementary Planning Documents, Planning Briefs and other informal written guidance, as well as offering a full pre-application advice service, in order to ensure that the applicant has been given every opportunity to submit an application which is likely to be considered favourably.
2. Your attention is drawn to the need to comply with the relevant provisions of the Building Regulations, the Building Acts and other related legislation. These cover such works as - the demolition of existing buildings, the erection of a new building or structure, the extension or alteration to a building, change of use of buildings, installation of services, underpinning works, and fire safety/means of escape works. Notice of intention to demolish existing buildings must be given to the Council's Building Control Service at least 6 weeks before work starts. A completed application form together with detailed plans must be submitted for approval before any building work is commenced.