

FAO:
Planning Department,
Mid Devon District Council

Ref: 24/00045/MOUT
Date: 15/02/2024

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION ADVICE

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: Tidcombe Hall, Tidcombe Lane, Tiverton, EX16 4EJ.

Built Heritage Advice pertaining to the Outline application for the erection of up to 100 dwellings to include the conversion of Tidcombe Hall and outbuildings, provision of community growing area, public open space, associated infrastructure and ancillary works with all matters reserved except for access.

The application site contains Tidcombe Hall and outbuildings, the site is also that of open agricultural land. The site is partly located within the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area to the north, it is also bounded by the historic farmstead of Tidcombe Farmhouse to the east, residential dwellings along Warnicombe Lane to the south and agricultural land to the west with access from Tidcombe Lane. The proposed development of the site has the potential to affect the settings and significance of several heritage assets, in line with Historic England's *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (GPA Note 3). The following heritage assets are considered to potentially be affected by the proposals:

- The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area,
- Tidcombe Farmhouse, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1384974),
- Tidcombe Bridge, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1384969),
- Tidcombe Hall, non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), and
- Knighthayes Court, Grade II* listed Registered Park and Garden (list entry number: 1000487).

Tidcombe Hall is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset due to its historic and architectural interest, it is a large nineteenth-century house and the Tithe Map and Apportionments record the building as 'Tidcombe Rectory'.

As shown by the historic mapping included within the submitted Historic Environment Assessment, the application site has historically remained that of open agricultural land. Tidcombe Hall is set in large grounds with outbuildings and has historically been located within a rural landscape, which contributes to a sense of tranquillity. With regard to Step 2 of *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, the application site is considered to share several of the listed attributes which help to elucidate its contribution to significance, this being *topography, surrounding landscape character, green space, openness, the little degree of change over time, functional relationships, tranquillity, views (to and from the assets)* and *land use*. The application site being part of the agrarian and rural landscape

positively contributes to the setting of the heritage assets, our experience and understanding of their significance.

The application site is understood to share a historic ownership and functional association to Tidcombe Farmhouse, which is immediately adjacent to the site. The proposed development of the site would result in prominent built form in close proximity to the designated heritage asset and would result in a fundamental change to the character of the historically open agrarian land, which shares a functional association to the asset. Tidcombe Farmhouse has views across the site and other environmental factors such as light pollution, noise and disturbance should be considered. The proposed development would result in the urbanisation of the site and Tidcombe Farmhouse would be experienced as being upon the edge of a new urban development. The proposals are therefore considered to fail to preserve the setting of Tidcombe Farmhouse resulting in harm to its significance, I suggest that the level of less than substantial harm would be at the middle of the spectrum.

With regard to the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area, the historically open rural landscape positively contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, its setting and rural character. It is acknowledged that the northern portion of the site, within the Conservation Area, is planned as parkland however this would result in a fundamental change in land use and character. Furthermore, the proposed development of the site would result in prominent built form in close proximity to the Conservation Area and associated environmental impacts (light spill and noise) should also be considered as these would have an adverse urbanising effect. There is also an area of courtyard housing planned within the Conservation Area, this would be visible from the towpath of the Canal as would the majority of the site. The proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area and its setting. The harm to its significance would be less than substantial and I suggest that this is towards the low end of the spectrum.

For that of Tidcombe Hall (NDHA), the proposals will have an adverse impact upon the setting of the heritage asset. It would be experienced at the entrance to the new urban development and would share an access road. There would also be built form introduced in close proximity to the asset, which has historically been located and experienced in an isolated position. The development would have an adverse urbanising effect to the character and experience of Tidcombe Hall, Paragraph 209 of the NPPF being relevant. Details of Tidcombe Hall and the restoration of the asset is not fully known at this stage, being a reserved matter.

For Tidcombe Bridge, the application site makes a limited contribution to our understanding of the architectural or historic interest of the listed building and its significance. Therefore, I do not consider the principle of development to be harmful. There is the potential for harm to the significance of the heritage asset through the erection of additional signage or highway improvements which may be a requirement. The details of this should be agreed in order to preserve the special interest and significance of the heritage asset.

The proposed development is likely to be visible in views (Church Path View) from the Registered Park and Garden of Knighthayes Court, however the site is considered to make a limited contribution to the setting of the asset. Therefore, due to distance and intervening development I do not consider there to be an adverse impact to the significance of Knighthayes Court and how it is understood. Tidcombe Hall should remain a prominent feature and details of layout, scale and appearance are a reserved matter.

To conclude, the proposed development would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building, Tidcombe Farmhouse, contrary to Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It would also fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting, contrary to Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings

and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The harm to the designated heritage assets would be less than substantial, Paragraph 208 of the NPPF being relevant. There would also be harm to a non-designated heritage asset, Paragraph 209 being relevant.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Muston BA (Hons) MSc
Conservation Officer
Mid Devon District Council

Note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter