

Conservation Officer Comments
Amended Plans or Further Details

**Architectural & Historic
Buildings Consultants**

Mob: 07909 544908
Email: info@dgc-consultants.com
Web: www.dgc-consultants.com

Application Number:	AWDM/0009/26 & AWDM/0010/26
Location:	Thatch Cottage Pond Lane Worthing West Sussex
Proposal:	Subdivision of existing dwelling plot to provide 2no. 2-storey, semi-detached house to west side garden, repair of fire damaged Listed building (including reinstatement of thatch roof), enlargement of existing car parking to east side accessed off Pond Lane to provide shared parking area with bin/cycle store (AWDM/0009/26)
	Application for Listed Building Consent to repair fire damaged Listed building including reinstatement of thatch roof and associated internal and external restoration works. (AWDM/0010/26)
Case Officer:	Jo Morin

	Further Information Required
	Design Review Required
	No objection - no harm
	No objection - harm is negligible or mitigated
X	Objection - less than substantial harm
	Objection - substantial harm
	Objection – Total Loss

Site and Surroundings:	Thatch Cottage is a small building set over 2 storeys. The traditional thatched roof is hipped on the western end and gabled at the eastern end. The elevations of the property are a combination of flint and brick finished in a magnolia paint. The building is a Grade II Listed Building, listed in 1976, and is described as follows: <i>POND LANE 1. 5406 Durrington TQ 10 W 23/223 Durringmere In the above entry:</i> <i>Durringmere shall be amended to read Thatched Cottage</i> <i>----- POND LANE 1. 5406 Durrington Durringmere TQ 10 NW 23/223</i> <i>II 2. Probably C18, possibly with earlier interior features. Painted flint with brick dressings. Thatched, hipped at west end. 2 storeys. Irregular fenestration. One window in east end. North front: left-hand porch with thatched gable and small windows in sides. One window in upper floor, 4 below (including to extension under roof slope at right end). Small chimney at top of hip. All windows are modern casements.</i> Thatched Cottage was subject of a fire on the 1st of February 2023. The extent of damage to the building was considerable involving: • The total loss of the roof • Considerable internal damage • External walls remain standing
-------------------------------	--

	A pre-application was submitted on 23.09.2023 (PREAPP/0076/23) for division of the site and houses to be built on the land. Concerns were raised during this regarding the condition of the building and measures for protection needing to be put in place. The first enforcement case was opened in 2024 due to fly tipping on the land, this matter was resolved, and the council were advised a planning application would be forthcoming that would address the condition of the listed building. Throughout much of 2025 discussions with the building owner and family members have occurred where the council have been informed that the property was not insured. Thatched Cottage still lies in a state of dereliction though the council are actively considering other enforcement and emergency powers in respect of the site. The proposal forms two aspects firstly the planning permission which proposes subdivision of the existing dwelling plot to provide 2no. 2-storey, semi-detached houses to west side garden, repair of fire damaged Listed building (including reinstatement of thatch roof), enlargement of existing car parking to east side accessed off Pond Lane to provide shared parking area with bin/cycle store under application AWDM/0009/26, and the listed building consent application for the repair fire damaged Listed building including reinstatement of thatch roof and associated internal and external restoration works under AWDM/0010/26. It should be noted that the 2 applications differ as listed building consent has no power in respect of wider development beyond what is either attached to the building or situated within the curtilage prior to 1948. Listed Building Consent is only concerned with the preservation of architectural and historic interest. Planning permission addresses wider planning matters and the impact of development upon the setting of heritage assets or the character of conservation areas, it does not deal with preserving architectural and historic interest of the building. As such the council will address each case on the basis of the remit of each regime and avoid confusion in respect of the 2 systems/processes. <u>Planning permission</u> Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 confers a statutory duty to LPAs when considering whether to grant planning permission, 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." The property and site lies outside of the nearby Durrington Conservation Area. The LPA's duties are reinforced within Section 16 of the NPPF, Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner
--	---

	appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. As such, 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. Other elements held within Section 16 will also be considered as will Local Policy. The proposal seeks Planning Permission for the construction of 2no semi detached dwellings with associated off road parking and the reinstatement of Thatched Cottage. The proposed semi detached pair of cottages are located to the west of thatched cottage and are considered to be of excessive scale and utilise inappropriate materials. In relation to context, it is accepted that the wider vicinity has been subject to considerable late 20th century urban development. However Pond Lane retains a degree of vernacular character seen in the more rural areas of the borough and into the SDNP. The presence of red brick and flint, not only on thatched cottage but also the farmhouse opposite, boundary treatments and neighbouring modern addition promote a sense of rural character. The verdant surroundings and spacing of buildings do much to convey that character and the small parcel of rural heritage that is otherwise situated in an urban environment. To develop 2no dwellings will erode that sense of place, utilising open space for the development and eroding the semi rural verdant character. Sensitive design utilising appropriate massing, scale and materials could result in a complimentary development that would also see the restoration of a listed building. It is fully accepted as detailed in the previous pre-application advice that the council support the principle of development and the restoration of a significantly deteriorated listed building. However the footprint of the proposed is excessive which creates further massing issues in relation to the height of the roof, exacerbating the massing of the proposed and frankly dwarfing thatched cottage beside it. The heritage statement refers to less than substantial harm being caused by the proposed development of previously undeveloped land, that harm being described as at the lower end of impact. However, it is considered that where development would cause a lower degree of harm, that harm is intensified by the massing and scale of the proposed and the materials proposed. Resulting in a significantly higher degree of harm. In respect of materials, whereas flints and handmade bricks are accepted the use of UPVC windows will cause a deterioration in quality and close boarded fencing will erode rural character that is contrary to policy DM24 of the Worthing Plan. DM24 also requires development to be of a high quality, respecting its context and
--	---

	demonstrating a strong sense of place. It also goes on to state Planning permission and/or Listed Building consent will only be granted provided that the appearance, significance, or historic character of the Listed Building is not adversely affected. Whereas the NPPF allow for harm to be mitigated on the basis of justification or public benefit under paragraphs 213 and 215 respectively, it is considered that the public benefit is appropriate to allow a development to take place, but it is not sufficient to mitigate the additional harm to setting brought about by the excessive scale, massing and materiality proposed. The listed building is considered to be overwhelmed and the modest rural context eroded by a development of such size. Although it is understood that the development is required to fund a restoration it would be contrary to the requirements of policy DM24 to grant permission. It would also be illogical to depart from heritage policy to enable development as those policies ensure positive heritage outcomes. Having regard to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it is considered the proposal by virtue of massing, scale, design, boundary treatments, materiality and appearance would have a detrimental impact upon the setting of the Grade II Listed Thatched Cottage and conflict with local policies DM5 and DM24 of the Worthing Local Plan and paragraphs 135, 213 and 215 of the NPPF. Listed Building Consent The proposed works to restore the listed building and the justification held within the structural engineers report is considered sufficient to justify the less than substantial harm caused. It should be noted that substantial harm has been caused by the fire and subsequent period of dereliction, this proposal therefore will stop further erosion and is therefore welcomed. It should however be noted that acceptability of restoration works to thatched cottage does not relate to the acceptability of the wider scheme proposed under planning permission. Consideration of that scheme is not a matter for listed building consent. In considering the OUTLINE RESTORATION PROPOSALS, SPECIFICATIONS AND METHOD STATEMENTS document and the listed building repair and reinstatement schedule detailed within appendix 1 of the heritage statement, the detail though a general overview is generally acceptable with the exception of widespread proposed use of plasterboard, gypsum plaster and dulux (latex based) paints. This should be reviewed or clarified as to why non-vapour permeable modern materials are proposed. More detailed aspects of joinery details, material specifications and samples, specific repair drawings etc will be controlled by condition It is also noted that a number of works in order to make the building safe are proposed. I remind the applicant that emergency works to make a listed building safe can be carried out under Section 9 of the Act in advance of consent providing the steps and extent of the
--	--

	works are in accordance with Section 9 At this stage in respect of LBC the applicant should clarify the areas of repair and the materials being used. The applicant should also be aware that should a consent be recommended it will most likely have a significant number of conditions attached to it to ensure the quality of the development.
Further comment:	Amended plans have been received that propose a shallower roof form finished in slate in order to attempt to address the massing issue. Although slate is present on buildings in the immediate vicinity it is noted that the proposed, due to excessive depth of the building possesses an excessively shallow roof pitch. The use of slate is due to the angle of the proposed roof being too shallow to allow a tiled roof, the use of slate allows lower pitches, although a lower pitch utilising slate is achievable it does not equate to such a low pitch being acceptable, particularly when compared to the immediate surrounding environs. Where slate or indeed clay tile are a feature of roofscape in the immediate vicinity the pitch of the hosting roof structure is generally consistent. The proposed roof pitch is a significant departure from a vernacular styling that would typically involve roof pitches at around 40 degrees. The introduction of partial dormers that occupy both roof space and a portion of the roof are not particularly successful, though it is noted that they are present on the new development to the west, it is not a design style that is particularly complimentary, and on this proposal adds further complication by the use of hips to the front. The cumulative aesthetic impact of the proposed roof form is not reflective of local vernacular and considered to be a product of a poorly conceived compromise where no aspect in isolation is particularly successful and in combination exacerbates the failings in the design. The amendments show the floor plan or depth of the buildings have not been reduced to address the underlying form issue, windows remain as uPVC and 2no units are still proposed, presenting a sense of compression as previously discussed. Turning to the requirements of the act, the proposed by virtue of appearance, form, overall bulk and footprint (due to the unit number and size) and roof pitch would not preserve or compliment the setting of the Grade II Listed Thatch Cottage. Although materiality upon roof forms varies, the pitch and depth of buildings (that informs the pitch) is largely consistent and is reflective of vernacular building characteristic, the proposed is a significant departure from this. Having regard to Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the proposed development, by virtue of its excessive scale, depth, incongruous roof form and poor articulation, fails to respond to the established

	vernacular and results in a dominant and competing form that neither preserves nor enhances the setting of the Grade II listed Thatched Cottage. The amended design, whilst seeking to address earlier concerns, represents a poorly resolved compromise in which the fundamental issues of form and massing remain unaddressed, leading to a development that is not reflective of local character or building traditions. As such, the proposal conflicts with the requirements of the NPPF in particular paragraphs 135 and 139 which require development to be sympathetic to local character and to be refused where design quality is poor, as well as Chapter 16 which affords great weight to the conservation of heritage assets. At the local level, the proposal is contrary to Policies DM5, DM23 and DM24 of the Worthing Local Plan.pdf, which require high quality design and the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. In the absence of overriding public benefits sufficient to outweigh the identified harm, the proposal is considered unacceptable and planning permission should be refused.
Further comment 11/6/26	A revised scheme has now been submitted which proposes a single dwelling in place of the two dwellings previously proposed. The reduction in the number of units is welcomed in principle, as it lessens the intensity of development within the plot. However, the amended proposal does not resolve the fundamental concerns previously identified in respect of the setting of the Grade II listed Thatched Cottage, the semi-rural character of Pond Lane, or the design quality of the proposed new building. The immediate area is characterised by modest, predominantly linear forms of development, simple traditional roof forms, restrained building depths and legible frontage relationships. Traditional elements, including chimneys, vernacular roof pitches and the use of flint, brick and clay tile, contribute positively to the architectural rhythm, visual grain and townscape quality of this small traditional streetscape. These qualities are also evident within the wider locality, including nearby areas such as Salvington Road and Durrington Lane. They are not incidental details, but important components of the established character and setting within which the listed building is experienced. The revised design departs from these characteristics. The proposed plan form adopts a projecting cross-wing arrangement to the western end, moving away from the more linear forms seen in the vicinity. The application of a catslide-style roof arrangement to the front elevation is also uncharacteristic, as such features would more typically be found to the rear of traditional buildings. Although the roof form has been reduced when compared with the previous iteration, it remains of appreciable mass. The use of a full hip to the eastern side reduces, to some extent, the sense of dominance over Thatched Cottage; however, the half-hip to the western side undermines the overall balance and coherence of the building and results in a roofscape that appears contrived rather than rooted in local precedent. It is accepted that the constraints of the site present a challenging design environment. Nevertheless, the amended scheme appears to have lost a significant degree of architectural coherence. Its form, massing and material expression read as a response to accommodation of those constraints rather than as a coherent design concept derived from the particular qualities of Pond Lane or the setting of the listed building. The result is

a comparatively complex and assertive building which does not adequately reflect the simplicity, modest scale or traditional compositional qualities that define the immediate context.

The National Design Guide is material to this assessment. It identifies context, identity and built form as core characteristics of well-designed places, requiring development to be based on a sound understanding of the site and its surroundings, to respond positively to local history, culture and heritage, and to draw upon local character, including built form, roofscape, façade treatment, proportions, materials and detailing. It also makes clear that high quality design is not achieved by appearance alone, but through the relationship between layout, form, scale, appearance, landscape, materials and detailing.

In this case, the proposal does not convincingly demonstrate that its design has been informed by the established character of the area or by the significance and setting of the heritage asset.

Particular concern remains in respect of the proposed materials and detailed treatment. The continued use of uPVC windows would be unacceptable within the immediate setting of a listed, traditionally detailed cottage, as such fenestration lacks the refinement, depth, texture and longevity expected in this sensitive context. Similarly, overly suburban boundary treatments, including close-boarded fencing, would introduce a visually harsh and domestic edge that is at odds with the softer, more traditional boundary character that contributes to the semi-rural qualities of Pond Lane. These elements would further dilute local distinctiveness and reinforce the sense that the scheme does not respond positively to its heritage context.

Accordingly, while the reduction from two dwellings to one is welcomed in principle, the amended design remains unacceptable in heritage and design terms. It fails to respond sufficiently to the established character, roofscape, materiality and built form of the locality, and would not preserve the setting of the Grade II listed Thatched Cottage. The harm remains less than substantial; however, giving great weight to the conservation of the designated heritage asset, the public benefits associated with the restoration of Thatched Cottage do not outweigh the additional harm arising from the proposed new dwelling in its current form.

The proposal therefore remains contrary to Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies DM5, DM23 and DM24 of the Worthing Local Plan, the relevant design and heritage provisions of the NPPF, and the principles set out in the National Design Guide concerning context, identity, built form and the positive integration of heritage into new development.

Simon Richard
Conservation Consultant for and on behalf of Adur and Worthing District Council
Date of Comment 11/6/26