

Conservation Officer Comments
Amended Plans or Further Details

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Application Number:	AWDM/0810/26
Location:	Land And Barns New Salts Farm, New Salts Farm Road, Lancing
Proposal:	New development comprising the erection of 10 no. dwellings following the demolition of existing agricultural barns
Case Officer:	Giles Holbrook.

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

Site and Surroundings:	The application site comprises an existing agricultural barn complex at New Salts Farm, accessed from New Salts Farm Road and set within the low-lying coastal plain between Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea. The site contains modern agricultural barns, associated hardstanding, gravel access areas, grass and scrub, and forms part of a wider agricultural landscape which remains perceptibly open despite the presence of nearby residential and transport infrastructure. The barns are set back from New Salts Farm Road and are experienced in association with the dispersed built form along the road, including nearby dwellings and former agricultural buildings. The wider setting is characterised by flat, relatively open farmland, pasture, scrubby hedgerows, drainage ditches, meandering watercourses and marshy scrapes, reflecting the estuary-edge character of this part of the Adur coastal plain. The site lies within the New Salts Farm landscape character area and the Local Green Gap between Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea, where the open fields on either side of New Salts Farm Road contribute to settlement separation, the perception of openness between the South Downs and the coast, and the semi-rural character of the area despite urban-fringe influences from Shoreham Airport, the railway, the A259 and nearby residential development. The landscape is visually sensitive in both local and longer-range views. From the A259, the New Salts Farm farmland forms part of the foreground to views northwards towards the Downs, while from elevated viewpoints such as Lancing Ring and Hoe Court Farm the open land contributes to the perception that undeveloped green space extends from the South Downs towards the sea. In these views, the buildings at Shoreham Airport, the railway corridor, New Salts Farm Road and the existing barn complex are read as components within a varied landscape where openness, settlement separation and visual permeability remain important characteristics. In heritage terms, the site is not within a conservation area and does not contain any listed buildings. However, the wider area contains heritage assets and buildings of historic and local architectural interest which are relevant to the assessment of setting. The Grade II* listed Shoreham Airport terminal building and associated aviation structures lie to the north-east and are recognised local landmarks within the landscape. More immediately, Old Farm Court comprises a traditional and formally arranged former farmstead development, converted to residential accommodation some considerable time ago, which possesses a strong vernacular character. Its typology, form, scale and materiality are
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	indicative of agricultural building traditions associated with the wider South Downs area, including the South Downs National Park, with flintwork, brick detailing and barn-like architectural forms contributing positively to its character and appearance. The materiality, form and scale of this collection of buildings give it considerable architectural merit as a group of former agricultural buildings, while its immediate setting responds positively to the buildings' typology, planned arrangement and historic interest. On this basis, Old Farm Court is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset, and its setting and contribution to local character should be properly assessed as part of the consideration of the proposed development. The proposal seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing agricultural barns and the redevelopment of the site to provide 10 residential dwellings, comprising a mix of detached and semi-detached three- and four-bedroom houses. The dwellings would be arranged around an internal access road taken from the existing access onto New Salts Farm Road, with associated private parking, garages, cycle storage and visitor spaces. The scheme adopts a contemporary interpretation of agricultural and rural building forms, using brick, flint and timber-effect cladding, with flat or mono-pitched sedum roofs intended to reduce apparent massing and assist the integration of the development within wider elevated views. The layout is presented as landscape-led, with new native hedgerows, scrub planting, tree planting, swales, meadow areas, an attenuation pond, green roofs and ecological enhancements intended to soften the site edges, provide a transition to the surrounding open fields and deliver biodiversity and drainage benefits. 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." Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires consideration be given in considering planning applications involving non designated heritage assets and their setting. 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 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.
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Drawing Errors:	
Comments:	An objection is raised to the proposal on heritage, design and setting grounds. While the existing buildings on the application site are modern agricultural structures of limited architectural quality, the site forms part of the immediate wider setting of Old Farm Court, which is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. Old Farm Court is a traditional and formally arranged former farmstead development, converted to residential use some considerable time ago, and possesses a strong vernacular character derived from its agricultural typology, form, scale and materiality. Its use of flint, brick detailing, ordered built form and barn-like architectural character is indicative of agricultural building traditions associated with the wider South Downs area, including the South Downs National Park. The legibility of Old Farm Court as a historic farmstead group is therefore appreciable not only in its buildings, but also in the way those buildings are experienced within a semi-rural, agricultural edge-of-settlement setting. It is further noted that, while the surrounding context clearly includes heritage assets, both designated and non-designated, the submitted information does not appear to include a dedicated Heritage Statement or a proportionate assessment of setting prepared in accordance with Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets. In the absence of such assessment, the application does not adequately identify the significance of affected heritage assets, explain the contribution made by their settings, or assess the likely impact of the proposed development upon that significance. The proposed development would introduce a materially different and competing character into this setting. Although described as landscape-led and incorporating flint, brick, timber-effect cladding and sedum roofs, the scheme is arranged as a planned residential estate rather than a sensitive farmstead-related development. The internal access road, individual plots, private gardens, driveways, garages, visitor parking, boundary treatments, play space and associated residential paraphernalia would urbanise the site and erode the agricultural character which contributes to the appreciation of Old Farm Court and the wider New Salts Farm landscape. The architectural approach is also not considered to respond sufficiently to the identified significance of Old Farm Court. The repeated two-storey forms, regular fenestration, domestic entrances, garages and parapet or flat-roofed profiles read as contemporary suburban housing with applied rural materials, rather than as a convincing contemporary interpretation of an agricultural group. The proposal therefore fails to draw adequately from the typology, hierarchy, massing and spatial informality that characterise traditional farmstead development.

	The proposal is also not considered to respond adequately to the National Design Guide. The Guide identifies context, identity and built form as key characteristics of well-designed places and confirms that successful development should be based on a sound understanding of local heritage, landscape character, prevailing patterns of built form, local vernacular, scale, materials and views. It makes clear that good design is not achieved through appearance and materials alone, but through the combined consideration of layout, form, scale, landscape, materials and detailing. In this case, the development adopts selected surface characteristics of the local vernacular but retains the underlying layout, grain and built form of a conventional residential estate. It would not reflect the form, hierarchy or spatial qualities of a traditional farmstead, nor would it preserve the semi-rural agricultural setting which contributes to the character and significance of Old Farm Court. The design response is therefore superficial rather than contextual, and would fail to achieve the distinctive, locally grounded and coherent sense of place sought by the National Design Guide. For these reasons, the proposal would cause harm to the significance and setting of Old Farm Court as a non-designated heritage asset. This harm would fall to be considered under paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of harm and the significance of the heritage asset. In this case, the harm is considered to be clear and avoidable. The proposal would also fail to satisfy Section 12 of the NPPF, which identifies the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places as fundamental to the planning process. In particular, the scheme would not meet the requirements of paragraph 135 insofar as it would not be sufficiently sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, nor would it establish or maintain a strong sense of place through an appropriate arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials. Paragraph 139 is also relevant, as development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design. The proposal would also conflict with the objectives of Adur Local Plan Policy 16, which seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment and character of Adur, including historic buildings, features and their settings. Policy 17 is also of relevance insofar as it reflects the Council's broader objective of ensuring that development affecting heritage assets and their settings is appropriately designed and does not cause harm; however, the principal local policy basis in relation to Old Farm Court as a non-designated heritage asset is Policy 16, alongside paragraph 216 of the NPPF. The proposal would also fail to achieve the level of contextual design quality required by Policy 15 of the Adur Local Plan. In conclusion, the proposal is not considered to represent an appropriate design or layout response to the site, its landscape context, or the nearby vernacular built form. It would introduce a domestic and suburban estate character into a location whose interest and
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	sensitivity derive from its agricultural edge-of-settlement character and its relationship with the former farmstead at Old Farm Court. While the proposed palette of flint, brick, timber-effect cladding and green roofs references local materials, this does not overcome the more fundamental concern that the layout, grain, massing and architectural language do not respond convincingly to the typology, hierarchy or spatial qualities of traditional agricultural buildings or farmstead development. Any development of the site, if considered acceptable in principle having regard to wider planning considerations, would need to demonstrate a significantly greater contextual response to the landscape and vernacular qualities which define this part of the Local Green Gap. Such a response should be informed by the agricultural character of the site, the open and semi-rural qualities of the surrounding landscape, the material and architectural traditions of the wider South Downs area, and the formal farmstead character of Old Farm Court as a non-designated heritage asset. It should also clearly distinguish the site from the more typical urban and suburban identities associated with Shoreham-by-Sea and Lancing, rather than importing an estate-based residential form into a sensitive agricultural setting. In the absence of such a response, the proposal would result in unacceptable harm to the character and setting of the non-designated heritage asset and would fall short of the contextual design quality required by national and local policy.
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Simon Richard

Conservation Consultant for and on behalf of Adur and Worthing District Council

Date of Comment 13/8/26