

FAO Bethan Wallington
Basingstoke and Deane Borough
Council
Civic Offices,
RG21 4AH
Sent via email only

Our Reference: ETP210402
Your Reference: 22/01669/OUT
Date: 20 July 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Application reference 22/01669/OUT: Outline planning application for the erection of up to 26 dwellings and associated infrastructure (with access only for consideration, with all other details for Reserved Matters) at Land at Cranesfield, Sherborne St John, Hampshire.

I am pleased to enclose a response from Sherborne St John Parish Council in relation to application reference 22/01669/OUT at Land at Cranesfield, Sherborne St John, Hampshire, which proposes:

"The erection of up to 26 dwellings and associated infrastructure (with access only for consideration, with all other details for Reserved Matters)"

It is noted that a decision on whether to grant planning permission relates to an assessment of whether the scheme is in accordance with the relevant policies in the development plan, unless there are material considerations which indicate otherwise.

The conclusion of this letter is that the proposed development is harmful for a multitude of reasons, as well as undermining the emerging Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan processes, and therefore must be refused without delay.

We object to the proposed development for the following reasons, which will be explored in detail in this letter:

- Prejudicing the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan processes
- Site allocations for the Local Plan Update
- What is considered to be suitable levels of development in Sherborne St John?
- Heritage impact
- Landscape
- Important Views
- Rural Character
- Neighbouring amenity
- Ecology
- Water Quality
- Impact on existing facilities (cemetery)
- Highways

It is noted that after only 3 weeks into the process, there have already been over 200 letters of representation received. There is very strong local feeling against the proposed development.

Prejudicing the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan processes

Planning Policy context

We will firstly explore the policy context and why the proposed development is flagrantly circumventing the plan-led process.

Paragraph 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires the planning system to be plan-led, whereby plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area, a framework for addressing housing needs and other priorities.

The current Local Plan for Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) was adopted in May 2016. Subsequently, the Local Plan is now over five years old. BDBC have undertaken a review of their adopted Local Plan 2011-2029, to determine whether it is still relevant, and have now commenced work on their Local Plan Update (LPU). A non-statutory Issues and Options consultation exercise was undertaken in late 2019. The current Local Development Scheme (LDS) which was updated in June 2022 states that consultation on the regulation 18 Local Plan is expected later this year, in Autumn/Winter 2022, with adoption of the new LPU expected in Autumn 2024.

It is important to note that the development plan policies (which are not related to housing delivery) should still be afforded full weight, as per paragraph 11 d) of the National Planning Policy Framework, despite the Local Plan being over 5 years old.

The Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan (SSJ NP) forms part of the Development Plan, alongside the adopted Local Plan. It was adopted in May 2017 and allocated a site for 18 dwellings at Cranes Road (policy SSJ3). Subsequently the NP qualified for the additional protection given to neighbourhood plans as per paragraph 14 of the NPPF. This additional protection ended on 5 May 2017. The SSJ NP site allocation (16/04110/OUT) has now been completed with new residents now living within these homes.

Whilst there is no requirement in law for a neighbourhood plan to be reviewed, the Parish Council, as qualifying body, will commence a review of the SSJ NP. It is intended that the NP update will be undertaken in line with BDBC's progression of the Local Plan Update and will include a number of new and revised policies for the Parish. It is therefore important that the neighbourhood plan process is not undermined via the approval of a significant windfall sites within the parish which do not meet the policies contained within the development plan. Furthermore, it should be noted that the impact of windfall development on smaller settlements is far more obvious than the larger villages and towns in the borough. This is particularly pertinent when given the proposed number of dwellings for the outline application is 26 dwellings. This is well above the recommended levels of windfall allowance for smaller settlements to qualify within policy SS5 of the ALP which recommends developments of 10 or more dwellings outside but adjacent to the SPB for settlements which have not met

their Policy SS5 requirement. Within the policy levels of dwellings of 10 or more outside the SPB are considered to be strategic and unsuitable for the smaller settlements listed within the policy when compared to the larger settlements in the policy who have been given development levels varying between 50-200 dwellings.

It is also important to note that the land to the north of the site is also in the same control and it is likely that if this application is approved then the site to the north would also come forward. The site plan submitted in the application documentation has also been designed to enable this, with the road toward the north of the site providing the option to extend the site in the longer term.

Principle of development in the countryside

Whilst the council's current lack of five-year housing supply is noted. It is helpful to set out the context regarding the most relevant policies related to housing delivery if the policy were to be fully engaged.

Policy SS1 sets out the spatial strategy for the borough and defines settlement policy boundaries, it notes that any land outside of the SPB is considered to be located in the countryside.

Policy SS6 of the ALP (new housing the countryside) is linked to the council's spatial strategy (as set out in policy SS1) and sets out the exceptional circumstances in which residential development would be allowed in the countryside. The only relevant criterion for this site would be criterion d), which permits small scale residential proposals that meet a locally agreed need provided the relevant criterion within the policy are met. However, this proposal exceeds the threshold which the policy defines as small-scale development (being for four dwellings or fewer (net)), furthermore, no evidence of locally agreed need has been submitted and therefore the proposal would fail to meet the requirements of the policy and therefore be in conflict with the development plan.

Site Allocations for the Local Plan Update

The application site has not been previously allocated through any Development Plan Document (DPD) despite the landowner promoting it over a number of plans. For example, the site has been promoted through the call for sites process for both the Local Plan Update and Neighbourhood Plan.

The site is contained within the council's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), the most recent of which was published in December 2021. As part of the SHELAA, the site includes a larger parcel of land to the north. The relevant reference for this site within the SHELAA is SSJ001. The site proposed is located outside of any Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) and therefore in designated countryside. The most recent SHELAA proforma published in December 2021 states *'the general principle of development in this location is therefore not supported by the council's current planning framework'*.

As part of the NP site selection process a call for sites was initiated in May 2014. The Cranesfield site was shortlisted as one of the six potential sites for allocation. As part of the NP process, residents were asked to vote for their preferred development site for allocation within the NP, of which Cranesfield scored the lowest, only receiving 9% of the overall vote and hence was not

included as a site allocation within the Plan as this would not have reflected the requirements of Policy SS1 or SS5 of the Local Plan and the Localism Act.

What is considered to be suitable levels of development in Sherborne St John?

At the council's Economic, Planning and Housing (EPH) Committee in November 2021, a figure of 15 homes had been recommended for Sherborne St John as evidenced by a Settlement Study that the LPA had undertaken.

At EPH in June 2022 further work in relation to site allocations had been undertaken into the spatial strategy and site selection for the regulation 18 plan. Within the papers presented to the Committee, eight strategic sites and six smaller sites are currently proposed to be included in the regulation 18 Plan. Two sites are proposed within or close proximity to the parish (land West of Marnel Park, SSJ004, for 240 homes and Weybrook Park Golf Course, SSJ011, for 220 homes).

It should be noted that the application site has not been proposed to be included as a site allocation, instead BDBC have recommended that the requirement for 15 new dwellings in Sherborne St John Parish is removed. Paragraph 6.4 of the Committee Report¹ by BDBC states: *'Further consideration has therefore been given to the impact of the proposed allocations on affected settlements in close proximity to future development. At this stage it is therefore proposed that no specific additional housing requirement be given to nearby settlements through Policy SS5, namely Old Basing, Oakley, **Sherborne St John** and Sherfield on Loddon. It should be noted that development within the SPBs of these settlements will continue to be supported where suitable and policy compliant, as will exception schemes that meet other policies outlined in the Plan, such as the exceptions policy for self- build homes and small-scale affordable housing schemes.'*

The Council have therefore identified that as the Parish have allocated housing to meet their previous policy requirement through the NP and due to the proposed future housing in the LPU they should not receive any additional development which is not compliant with the development plan.

Therefore, this speculative development is in breach of local policy SS1 and SS5 which states the delivery of new housing will be supported through neighbourhood planning. The proposed development is circumventing both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan processes and should be refused for this reason alone.

Heritage impact

The proposal will have a significantly detrimental impact on the conservation area of Sherborne St John. The impact on character, setting and views into and out of this conservation area is in conflict with Basingstoke Local Policy EM11.

A Heritage Statement, produced by Forum Heritage Services, was commissioned by local residents to review the Heritage Statement which accompanies the

¹ <https://democracy.basingstoke.gov.uk/documents/s28416/report.pdf>

planning application. The Heritage Statement can be viewed in full at **Appendix 1**.

In summary, it finds that:

- **The harm to heritage assets from the proposed development would over-ride the presumption in favour of sustainable development (i.e. the tilted balance within the NPPF should not apply to this proposal) as per footnote 7 of paragraph 11 of the NPPF.**
- The submitted heritage statement prepared by Orion does not assess the importance of setting in line with Historic England guidance.
- Accordingly, the Orion report fails to consider the importance of the church: manor farm group and its position in relation to the historic area of settlement.
- The report does not discuss the importance of the pond north-west of the church and the important view across the pond which allows a view to open countryside beyond.
- The importance of the cemetery as a public open is not discussed and issues such as impacts on tranquillity are ignored.
- The importance of the relationship between the historic settlement as defined by the conservation area, and its rural setting is not considered.
- The importance of the relationship between Manor Farmhouse and the agricultural landscape visible to the north-west from the rear of the listed building is not considered.
- The impact of introducing suburban development into the important views to the conservation area from the public footpath to the north on the setting of the conservation area is not adequately addressed.
- These failures mean that the low levels of less than substantial harm identified in the Orion represent an under-estimation of the potential impacts of the proposals.
- The assessment as set out in this report, following Historic England guidance on understanding the importance of setting, finds that the proposed development will result in harm to the significance of the two nearby listed buildings: Manor Farmhouse and the Church of St Andrew.
- The proposal will result in change to the setting of the Sherborne St John Conservation Area, impacting on the relationship between the conservation area and its rural landscape which will cause considerable harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset.
- The proposal will harm the ability to appreciate the fact that the church and manor farm group, a highly significant aspect of the character and appearance of the conservation area, lies on the edge of the historic core of settlement, thereby causing harm to the special interest of the conservation area.
- The proposal will harm an important view across Farm Pond.

Accordingly, the Heritage Statement find that the proposed development conflicts with the statutory duty in Sections 66 and 72 of the Act, National Policy in the NPPF Policy EM11 of the Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan 2011-2029. In line with statute and the NPPF, great weight should be given to the protection of the significance of these designated heritage assets. The Heritage Statement (in para 6.3) finds that the harm to heritage assets from the proposed development

would over-ride the presumption in favour of sustainable development (i.e the tilted balance should not apply) as per footnote 7 of paragraph 11 of the NPPF and the proposal would therefore be in conflict with the development plan and should be refused accordingly (para 6.4).

Landscape

The proposal contravenes policy SS6 which makes clear that development should respect the local landscape and be sympathetic to its character and visual quality, together with respecting the character, form and appearance of surrounding development and respect the amenities of the residents of neighbouring properties.

The council have commissioned various pieces of evidence base documents to inform their site selection process. This includes a Landscape Sensitivity Study in April 2021 which was undertaken by Hankinson Duckett Associates (HDA), the larger SHELAA site was assessed as part of this work and found to have a **high landscape sensitivity** score, making it unsuitable for significant housing development. The site scored highly on the visual value impact (in line with the views identified within the NP) and landscape character and sense of place among other factors. Therefore the site has already had its landscape impact assessed (as part of a wider site) and it failed based on its high landscape sensitivity.



View from public right of way along the north-eastern edge of the site, looking south-west across the site.

In addition, BDBC are proposing to retain the existing strategic gaps and are also proposing to amend these through the LPU. The revised boundaries of these gaps have not yet been published and therefore we are unclear if the site would fall within a strategic gap. The application is premature for this reason also.

In summary, the proposed development will have a detrimental impact on the landscape. As has already been demonstrated through the Local Plan evidence base, this is an inappropriate location for growth. Sites has already been selected for the Parish to meet their housing need, in locations where there is less landscape harm. In addition, the specifics of the proposals would be harmful by reason of the quantum, scale, design and location of the proposed development. It would erode the rural setting of the village. The development is therefore contrary to Local Plan Policies EM1, Neighbourhood Plan Policy SSJ2 and section 12 & 15 of the NPPF.

Important Views

Linked to the previous chapter on landscape harm, the proposed development is not considered to respect visual amenity by protecting important views out of, or into the village. This is particularly true of views from footpath 14a to the north of the site (fig 1) highlighted the SSJ Neighbourhood Plan to the Grade I Listed church and Conservation Area. In addition, the views from the heritage area and village public footpaths by the village pond will be destroyed.

This is in contravention of Local Plan policy EM1 and EM10 and SSJ Neighbourhood Plan policy SSJ 2, due to the proposed development being detrimental to the visual amenity and scenic quality of the setting of the settlement.

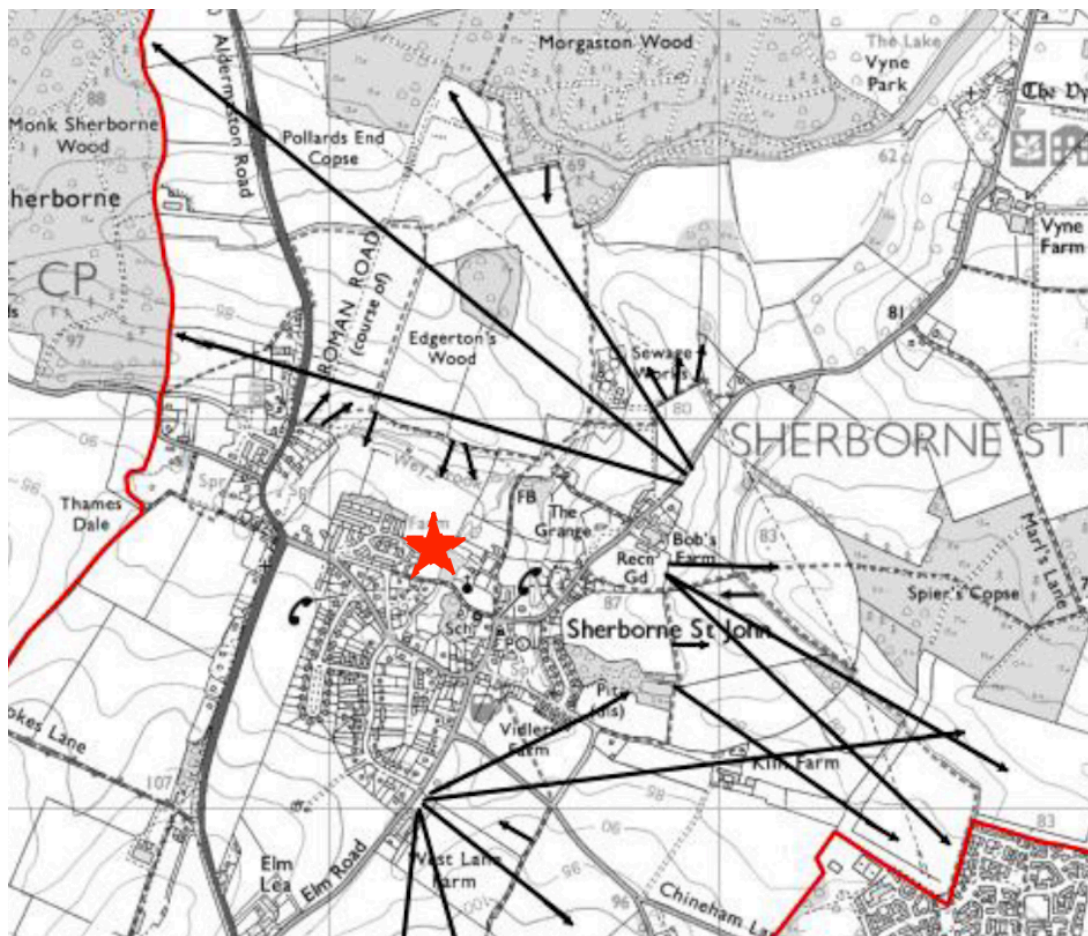


Fig 1: Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2029, Map 5, Important views out of and towards the Village

Rural character

When the Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan was being formulated, the 'village feel' of Sherborne St John was identified as having a high level of importance amongst respondents during the course of the consultation process. Factors which characterise the village feel include – the green spaces in and around the village which provide for a low density form of development that is green in character; the level of tranquillity afforded to the village and most of the Parish due to low levels of noise and light pollution; and the abundance of flora and fauna both within the village and throughout the rural area. The Sherborne St John Village Design Statement also cites a number of important

views out from and back towards the village, which are referred to in Map 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan (see Fig 1).

The proposals do nothing to respect these identified features of the village. In contrast, they will cause significant harm to the villages rural character. The proposals represent a cramped form of development, in a sensitive edge of village location with high landscape sensitivity in close proximity to heritage assets. In this context, 26dph across the 1ha site (net) is considered too dense.

Development would encroach beyond the established building line of development to the west, and would be out of character with the low density form of development to the south and east (shown visually in fig 2 below). Development would therefore have the appearance of being shoe-horned into the site, and would jar with surrounding development in the village.

Part 2 of the Council’s Settlement Study notes that Sherborne St John has a population of 760 (SAPF, 2019) with approximately 353 dwellings. The additional 26 houses proposed on site would result in a 7% increase in the total number of dwellings, having a considerable impact on the character of the village.

The proposal results in an unsustainable pattern of development by reason of the creation of a new unplanned large housing estate on a greenfield site in the countryside outside of settlement limits. The development is contrary to the spatial objectives of the development plan and policies – the made NP makes one allocation in Sherborne St John and emerging Local Plan already seeks to make two housing allocations in Sherborne St John and there is no residual housing requirement for the village.



Fig 2: Submitted illustrative layout, produced by Sigma Planning Services (red dashed line added by ET Planning to show established building line, and blue line to show edge of low density area

Therefore, as well as being harmful, the proposals represent an unnecessary development (much larger than the likely requirement that SSJ will be required to deliver from the emerging Local Plan). The proposals are contrary to Local Plan policies EM1 and EM10, which require new development to respect the character and visual quality of the area concerned. It is also contrary to SSJ Neighbourhood Plan policy number SSJ 2, in that the proposals are harmful to the rural character of the village and surrounding countryside and there is no justification for additional housing above that required by the made Neighbourhood Plan and emerging Local Plan.

Neighbouring amenity

BDBC published a Design and Sustainability SPD (DaS SPD) in August 2018, following relevant public consultation. Section 10 (Residential Amenity) of the DaS SPD includes three key principles relating to residential amenity, principle RA2 requires that minimum garden sizes for 1 and 2 bedrooms should be 50 sqm, for 3 bedrooms or more this should be 60 sqm. An assessment has been undertaken on the amount of amenity space submitted, these show that a number of these are just above the minimum standards – for example plot 1’s garden has an area of 73.6sqm and plot 9 73.9sqm. To provide garden sizes just above the minimum is not considered acceptable for this highly sensitive, edge of village location where houses in the surrounding character typically have much larger gardens in excess of the SPD standards.

Furthermore, the minimum back-to-back requirements are 20m for 2 storey development and 28m for 3 storey development (principle RA6). This is to ensure adequate privacy for new and existing residents living adjacent to the site. We consider that the back-to-flank relationship of the following proposed plots (with existing properties) to be a problem (it is deemed relevant to apply principle RA6 of the Design & Sustainability SPD in these scenario’s):

- The distance between plot 20 and No 26 Cranesfield is 14m
- The distance between plot 20 and No 27 Cranesfield is 17.5m
- The distance between plot 1 and No 37 Cranesfield is 15.8m

Therefore, the proposed development does not have due regard to the relationship with existing buildings or have regard to issues such as overlooking, overbearing and loss of light. This is contrary to policy EM10 in the Local Plan which highlights those schemes should positively contribute to the sense of place, and respect the local environment and amenities of existing properties.

The applicants Planning Statement in paragraph 2.4 notes *‘The site boundaries are marked with thick hedge and trees along the eastern and southern boundary gradually decreasing in density to the west’*. The application documentation also includes a tree removal plan which proposes the removal of the tree belt to the south of the site. Paragraph 175 of the NPPF includes a presumption against development that would result in the loss of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists. The NPPF defines an ancient or veteran tree as: *‘a tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient, but*

are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage'. It is suggested that further clarification is sought by the Planning Officer in relation to the age and impact of development upon existing trees. Furthermore, given that trees need to be removed shows that the development site will result in a cramped layout.

Ecology

The ecology and abundance of wildlife will be adversely impacted. In particular (Kingfishers, Deer, Herons, Egrets, Bats, Snakes, Owls, Stag Beetles, a host of amphibians including some national and European protected species have been recorded and spotted in or on the edges of site). The ecological damage of this development to the biodiversity and the interconnected wildlife corridors of the watercress meadows, village pond and cemetery will be significant and will be contrary to Local Plan policies EM4 and EM5.

No buffer zones from hedgerow and pond/river/lake habitats are included as part of the proposals. For wildlife corridors (such as the corridor between the water meadows, the village pond and the cemetery) and for tree lines (such as that along the cemetery) a 20 metre buffer should be required. It is important to note that private gardens count as part of the development so must also be outside of the buffer areas. Furthermore, it is not clear how 10% biodiversity net gain will be achieved on site.

Water Quality

The proposal has a detrimental effect on water quality of the unique chalk streams of Sherborne St John that are adjacent to the site. The waste water run-off will run directly into these unique and protected streams which run on into the River Loddon. The proposal will have a detrimental effect on nutrient neutrality affecting the water quality. This would be contrary to local plan policy EM6. In section 6.4.1 of this policy, it specifically describes the importance of protecting chalk streams and the River Loddon water quality.

The recent Water Cycle Study forming an evidence base document for the LPU was published in May 2022 and is due to be discussed at EPH Committee on 18th July. In relation to Sherborne St John, the accompanying report² notes: *'The lack of recent sampling data for the Vyne Stream limits the conclusions which can be drawn for Sherbourne St John WwTW but recent improvements to treatment at the works appears to have reduced watercourse phosphate concentrations and the effects of future development could be mitigated by further reducing the phosphate discharge limits.'*

The site is also located within upstream of a critical drainage area (as defined in policy EM7 of the ALP). The ALP glossary defines a critical drainage area as: *'For the purposes of this document, a critical drainage area is an area where the drainage system has limited capacity and floods from surface water. Upstream of a critical drainage area is a casual area that may impact on surface water flooding elsewhere. These are as defined and identified in the Council's SFRA'*.

² <https://democracy.basingstoke.gov.uk/documents/s28815/EPH%20paper%20on%20LPU%20-%20WCS%20and%20transport%20impact%20review.pdf>

Impact on existing facilities (cemetery)

The proximity of the proposal to the current cemetery which is reaching capacity and the likely need for the extension of the cemetery into the field that has been proposed for development. This is contrary to policy CN7 which describes the importance and sense of place of facilities and that developments should not be detrimental to existing facilities.

Highways

The proposal does not take into account traffic ingress and egress on the junction between Cranes Road and Cranesfield. The increase in traffic in the village on what is already a dangerous junction is contrary to local policy CN9 and the NPPF which states that development should be refused if the impacts on the highway network are considered severe. The addition of 26 dwellings will lead to a substantial increase in traffic movements and lead to a severe impact on the junction between Cranes Road and Cranesfield.

Conclusion

The application is for the erection of up to 26 dwellings and associated infrastructure (with access only for consideration, with all other details for Reserved Matters) (22/01669/OUT) in Sherborne St John Parish.

This representation has considered the harm caused by the following proposed development in relation to a number of matters including the principal of development and impact upon:

- Heritage
- Landscape
- Important views
- Rural Character
- Neighbouring amenity
- Ecology
- Water Quality
- Impact on existing facilities (cemetery)
- Highways

Fundamentally the Heritage Statement (Appendix 1) finds that the harm to heritage assets from the proposed development would over-ride the presumption in favour of sustainable development (i.e the tilted balance should not apply) as per footnote 7 of paragraph 11 of the NPPF. The application is contrary to the development plan (with no material considerations which outweigh this) and this application should be refused without delay.

Yours sincerely,



Emily Temple BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Director | ET Planning

**Appendix 1 - Heritage Statement, produced by Forum Heritage Services
- July 2022**

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT
CRANESFIELD,
SHERBORNE ST JOHN, HAMPSHIRE**

Heritage Statement



FORUM
Heritage
Services

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT
CRANESFIELD,
SHERBORNE ST JOHN,
HAMPSHIRE**

Heritage Statement

Bob Edwards

BSc. (Hons.) PG Dip. IHBC MCIfA

July 2022

**FORUM
Heritage
Services**

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PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT CRANESFIELD, SHERBORNE ST JOHN, HAMPSHIRE

Heritage Statement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rydon Homes has submitted an outline planning application to build up to 26 new homes at Cranesfield on the northern edge of the village of Sherborne St John, Hampshire. The site lies immediately north of the cemetery and abuts the Sherborne St John Conservation Area. To the east of the proposed site is Manor Farm, a Grade II listed building and to the south-east is the Church of St Andrew, a Grade I listed building. The application is supported by a heritage statement produced by Orion Heritage Ltd.

1.2 Forum Heritage Services has been commissioned by local residents to make an assessment of the extent and importance of the setting of the designated heritage assets and its contribution to their significance, and to consider the potential impact of the proposed development upon the significance of the heritage assets and to prepare a Heritage Statement in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This report will also review the submitted heritage statement. Bob Edwards BSc (Hons) PG Dip IHBC MCIfA, Director of Forum Heritage Services visited the site in June 2022 and subsequently prepared this report.

1.3 This report will present:

- A brief background to the proposed development site using historic mapping
- A description of the setting of the northern edge of the Sherborne St John Conservation Area and Manor Farmhouse
- Policy and guidance background
- An assessment of the importance of the setting of the heritage assets and the potential impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets following Historic England guidance on assessing the importance of setting in *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2nd edition, December 2017)
- Conclusions

1.4 This report concludes that:

- The submitted heritage statement prepared by Orion does not assess the importance of setting in line with Historic England guidance.
- Accordingly, the Orion report fails to consider the importance of the church : manor farm group and its position in relation to the historic area of settlement.

- The report does not discuss the importance of the pond north-west of the church and the important view across the pond which allows a view to open countryside beyond.
 - The importance of the cemetery as a public open is not discussed and issues such as impacts on tranquillity are ignored.
 - The importance of the relationship between the historic settlement as defined by the conservation area, and its rural setting is not considered.
 - The importance of the relationship between Manor Farmhouse and the agricultural landscape visible to the north-west from the rear of the listed building is not considered.
 - The impact of introducing suburban development into the important views to the conservation area from the public footpath to the north on the setting of the conservation is not adequately addressed.
 - These failures mean that the low levels of less than substantial harm identified in the Orion represent an under-estimation of the potential impacts of the proposals.
- The assessment as set out in this report, following Historic England guidance on understanding the importance of setting, finds that the proposed development will result in harm to the significance of the two nearby listed buildings: Manor Farmhouse and the Church of St Andrew.
- The proposal will result in change to the setting of the Sherborne St John Conservation Area, impacting on the relationship between the conservation area and its rural landscape which will cause considerable harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset.
 - The proposal will harm the ability to appreciate the fact that the church and manor farm group, a highly significant aspect of the character and appearance of the conservation area, lies on the edge of the historic core of settlement, thereby causing harm to the special interest of the conservation area.
 - The proposal will harm an important view across Farm Pond.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Sherborne St John Tithe map of c. 1840 shows that the plan of the village was an irregular agglomeration, a plan which shows very little regularity in its layout of either the structural elements (roads and tracks) or in the position, size or shape of the individual property plots (Figure 1). The village was served by roads from the north-east, south-east and south-west with a further track approaching from the west, the routes converging at a point near the south-east corner of the churchyard. The main area of development within the village in the mid-19th century was the area to the south-east of the church. The church and Manor Farm, the two high status buildings, were adjacent to each other forming a church – manor group and, of particular importance in considering the current proposals, they lay slightly detached from the main area of settlement on the periphery of the village with open countryside to the north and west.

2.2

The village did not begin to expand in any notable way until the later 20th century when housing estates were built that infill the area between the historic core of Sherborne St John and West End to the west. These residential developments are of varying architectural quality.

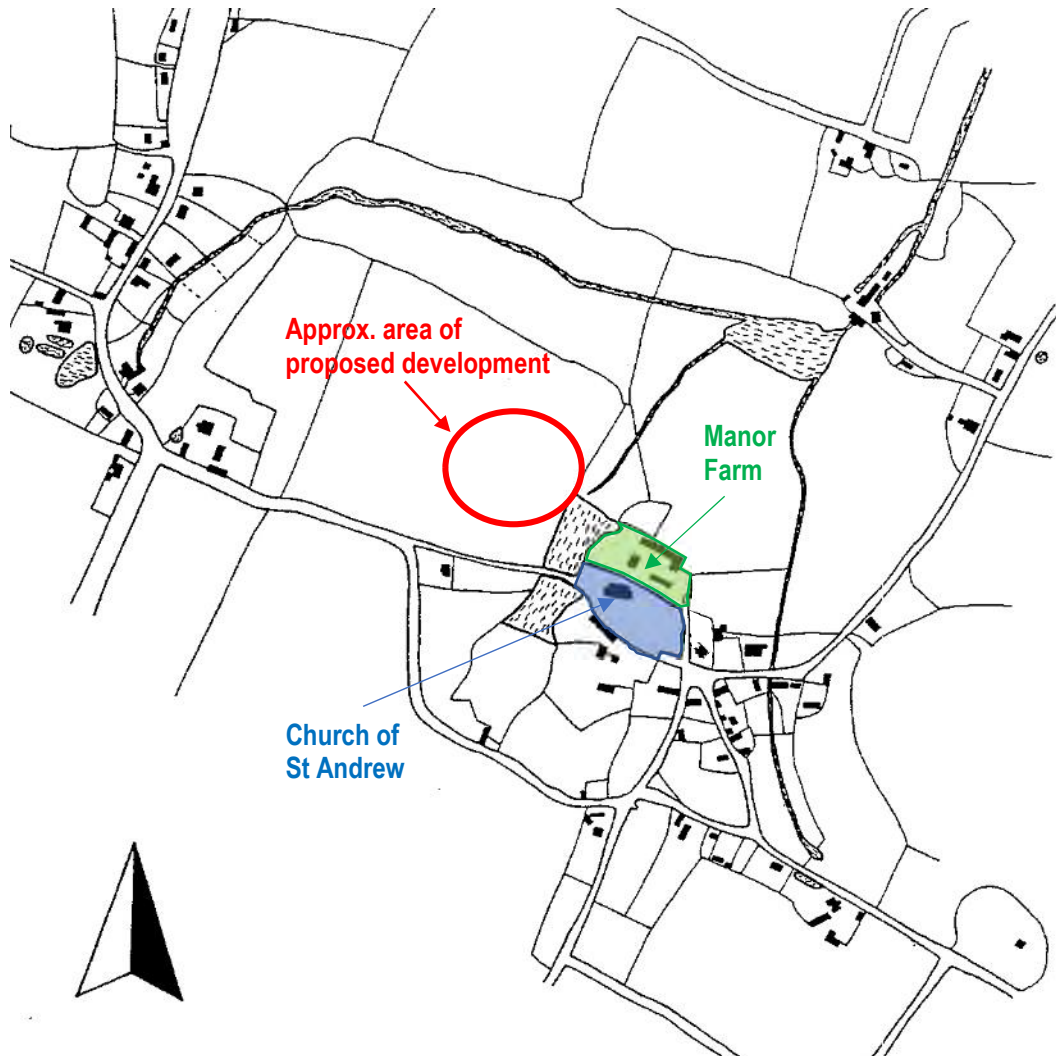


Figure 1 A copy of the Sherborne St John Tithe map, c.1840 with the Church of St Andrew, Manor Farm and the approximate area of the proposed development highlighted.

2.3

The Church of St Andrew was added to the *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic interest* at Grade I in 1957. The building is described as:

Circa 1150, C13, C14, C16, C19. Norman nave, chancel of 1300 with windows (replacements of lancets) of about 1340, Brocas Chapel on north side of chancel of 1420, north aisle of 1834 (with re-used C15 windows), west tower of about 1250 raised/restored 1834, south porch of 1533. Between the chancel and chapel is an altar tomb with 2 carved figures (of about 1535) beneath a 4-centred panelled archway. The chapel is richly furnished with floor slabs, several C15 brasses, an east window fitted with stained glass of different periods and origin, and a metal helm. There are several wall monuments, hatchments and large Royal Coat of Arms of 1660. The pulpit is dated 1634 and has a tester.

The font is original, having a square bowl on a circular shaft and 4 corner shafts, with a C17 cover. King-post roof. Externally, the church has a tile roof, the eaves being raised in the C14. Walling is flint with some plasterwork, and stone dressings, the porch being of red brickwork in English bond with a Tudor doorway. Windows are mostly of 2 lights, cusped or with tracery (one reticulated), the upper parts being original. The tower has fine stone ashlar features of the restoration period, with the upper parts of the diagonal buttresses carried out in red brickwork, the restored spire being topped with a golden ball.

- 2.4 Manor Farmhouse, which stands to the north of the church was designated at Grade II in 1984, the list description reading:

Early C19. A symmetrical front (east) of 2 storeys and attic, 1.1.1 windows. Steep tile roof, with raised verges, coved plaster eaves, and gables to the slightly-projecting centre. Red brick walling in Flemish bond, rubbed flat arches, plinth; small lancet to the attic (in the gable) and 4-centred Tudor arch to the open porch. Upper casements and ground-floor sashes of 3-lights. Half-glazed (tracery) door within the porch, with pointed form to fit the Tudor arched opening.

- 2.5 The Sherborne St John Conservation Area was designated as an area of special architectural or historic interest in 1983 with two separate areas covering the historic settlement foci near the church (Figure 2) and at West End.

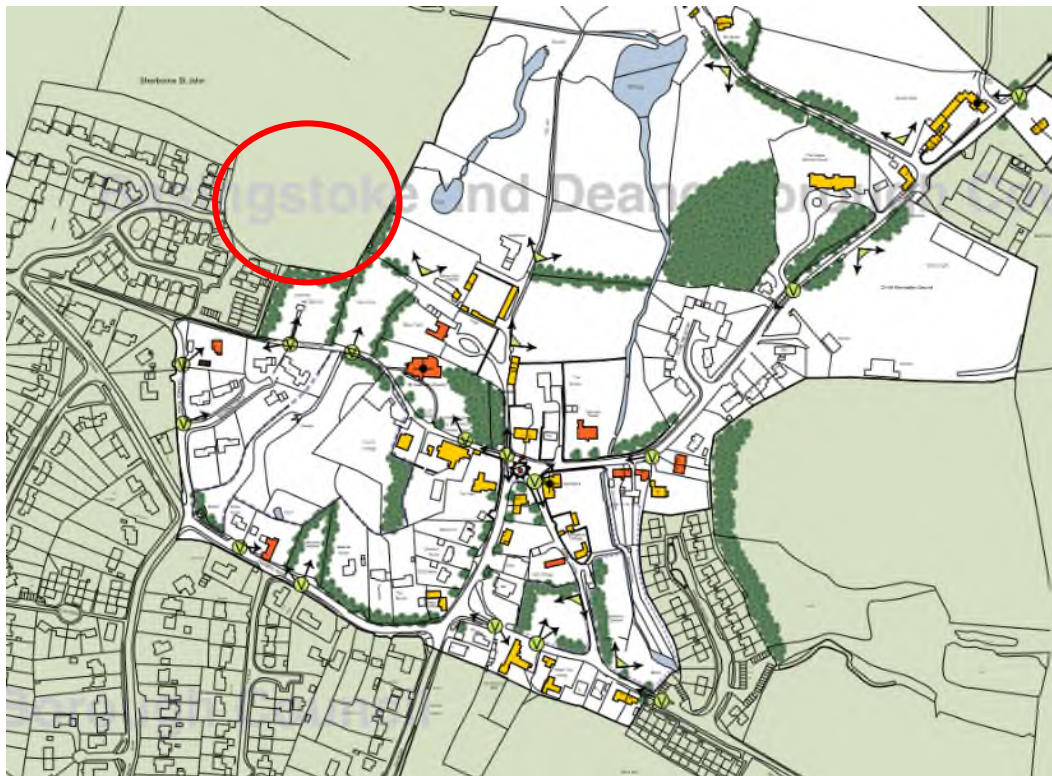


Figure 2 The Conservation Area Appraisal map showing the area including the church and Manor Farm with the approximate area of the proposed development ringed.

3.0 DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The area of the proposed development is a part of a L-shaped field currently laid to pasture. The part of the field, where the development is proposed is bounded on its west side by Cranesfield, an area of late 20th century housing, to the south is the village cemetery, and to the east the site is bounded partly by the large pond north-west of the church and Manor Farm. The area of the proposed development is relatively flat but to the north the land slopes down gently into the valley of the Wey Brook before rising again on the north side of the valley along which is a public footpath. Along the southern boundary there is a relatively tall hedge separating the proposed development area from the cemetery and there is also a substantial, wooded boundary along the east side of the area. These boundaries mark the edge of the conservation area.
- 3.2 The Church of St Andrew stands within a relatively large irregularly shaped churchyard with School Lane running along its south side, which continues west giving access to the cemetery and leading onto West End. The churchyard itself is enclosed on its northern side by a substantial boundary and there is little visual connection between the church and the proposed development site on the ground.
- 3.3 Manor Farm consists of the Grade II listed farmhouse with its former farm buildings to the north. The house is set within its own curtilage and is approached from the east, with its rear elevation looking out over a lawn and the large pond, beyond which is the proposed development area. Whilst there is a relatively substantial boundary between the two, there are gaps in this boundary where views to the open countryside are possible (Figure 3).



Figure 3 The view from the rear of Manor Farmhouse to the west across the pond to the agricultural landscape beyond.

- 3.4 The cemetery on the north side of School Lane is an important open public space within the village within which is the war memorial. The war memorial itself can be seen from the gate into the cemetery off Church Path, but views are contained within the cemetery by yew hedges to the west, north and east of the memorial. However, within the northern part cemetery, although there is a substantial hedge to the northern boundary, there are glimpsed views out to the open countryside across the area of the proposed development (Figure 4). These glimpsed views are more open in winter and spring. There is a similarly substantial hedge on the west boundary the cemetery, but here the modern housing of Cranesfield rises above the hedge and creates a sense of suburban enclosure in what is otherwise a very rural and tranquil part of the village (Figure 5).
- 3.5 The pond north-west of the church and west of Manor Farm is an important feature of the conservation area. The conservation area appraisal identifies an important view from Church Path northwards across the pond which includes a view out to the landscape beyond in a gap between trees on the western side of the pond (Figure 6).
- 3.6 Within Cranesfield, there is a small open area with some seating and a small play area which is open to the proposed development site with views across to the boundary alongside the pond and Manor Farm. The church tower is visible above the treed boundary between this area and Farm Pond.



Figure 4 Glimpsed views to the area of the proposed development to the north of the cemetery.



Figure 5 Modern housing and garaging in Cranesfield to the west of the cemetery as seen from within the cemetery.



Figure 6 A view across the pond towards the proposed development site.

- 3.7 A public footpath runs from the centre of the village along the east side of Manor Farm with a further footpath leading west of this path running along the north side of Wey Brook to the north of the L-shaped field. This latter path allows views back to the village. In autumn, winter and early spring the church tower can be seen through the trees (Figure 7) but is largely screened in summer (Figure 8). The modern development of Cranesfield is conspicuous in the views south from this path (Figure 9).



Figure 7 The view in winter from the footpath to the north of the proposed development looking to the south-east. The church can be seen through the trees.



Figure 8 A view from the public footpath to the north of the proposed development site looking towards the village taken in summer when the church is hidden by the large trees to the left.



Figure 9 A view south from the public foot path to the north looking across the proposed development site to the boundary of the cemetery, with the modern housing of Cranesfield visible to the right of the picture.

4.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the statutory approach to the management of historic buildings and areas and requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses, and its setting, under Section 66 – a matter the Courts have held should be afforded considerable importance and weight. Section 72, relating to Conservation Areas requires that ‘special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’.
- 4.2 The statutory approach is reflected in Policy EM11 of the Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 4.3 Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) says when considering the impact of development on the significance of a listed building, great weight should be given to its conservation whilst para. 195 states 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 assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 4.4 Whilst the NPPF supports sustainable development (para. 11), it also notes that the policies relating to, for example, heritage assets are a valid reason for refusing permission (footnote 7 to para. 11 meaning that the tilted balance does not apply).

4.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (Annexe 2 Glossary) defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'

4.6 The Historic England Guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2nd edition, December 2017) states that:

'Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate that significance' (p.4)

4.7 The HE guidance sets out a staged approach to the assessment of understanding the significance of setting:

- 1 Identification of heritage assets and the extent of their settings
- 2 Assess whether, how and what degree the settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage assets
- 3 Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful on the significance
- 4 Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm
- 5 Record the process

4.8 The guidance also states that views which particularly contribute to the significance of heritage assets include those where the relationship between the asset and other historic assets or places or designed views.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SETTING TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LISTED BUILDINGS

5.1 Whilst the heritage assessment submitted as part of the application refers to the Historic England guidance, it fails to apply the methodology – instead it lists the heritage assets in the environs of the proposed development site and then discusses the impacts, omitting any credible assessment of the importance of the settings of these heritage assets. This assessment will follow the approach as set out in the Historic England guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets* to identify the importance of the setting of the listed buildings before assessing the potential impact of the proposed development on their significance.

Step 1: Identification of heritage assets

5.3 The heritage assets to be considered in relation to the proposed development within their settings are:

- Church of St Andrew
- Manor Farmhouse
- Sherborne St John Conservation Area

Step 2: Assessment of contribution of setting to the significance of the heritage assets

Church of St Andrew

5.4 The most important aspect of the setting of The Church of St Andrew is the churchyard wherein there are the memorials to generations of parishioners who have worshipped at the church were buried within its churchyard.

5.5 The church served the community and so the wider village context may be considered to also be an important part of the setting of the church and, in common with most villages, the present-day village has grown from its historic form of a small irregular cluster of houses and cottages to the south-east of the church to a settlement that has extended west to link up with the historic settlement at West End. The wider village may, therefore, be considered to form part of the setting of the listed building and to contribute to its historic and communal values, the relationship between the church and the historic core of the village holding a higher level of importance than the areas of modern development.

5.6 The relationship between the church and Manor Farm is also of importance which contributes to the historical significance of the church, churches and manor houses often being closely associated. In this case, the peripheral position of this church – manor group from the core of the historic settlement is a notable aspect of the setting. This can particularly be appreciated from the eastern edge of the modern housing in Cranesfield – this area of field allowing a clear understanding of the peripheral position of the church in the settlement.

Manor Farmhouse

5.7 Manor Farmhouse was clearly an important farmstead within the parish and its relationship with the church is almost certainly of medieval origins, if not earlier. The physical relationship between these two buildings, although there is little inter-visibility between them because of the substantial boundary along the northern edge of the churchyard, has a high level of importance in terms of the historic interest of Manor Farmhouse.

5.8 The relationship between the Manor Farmhouse and its farm buildings to the north is also of high importance in terms of its contribution to the historic interest of the farmhouse in that

these buildings allow the understanding that this was historically a working farmstead – without these buildings, the architectural character of the house does not readily convey the fact that it was a farmhouse.

- 5.9 The sense of detachment from the core of the historic settlement area and its relationship with the open agricultural landscape around it is also a key aspect of the setting of the Manor Farm group which contributes to the significance of the listed building. The view across the pond to the open agricultural land to the north-west, as illustrated in Figure 3, is of considerable importance in terms of the setting of the listed building. The submitted heritage assessment fails to consider the value of views to the landscape from the rear of Manor Farmhouse, considering that replacement of the present view with ‘fragmented development’ represents harm at the lower end of less than substantial. It is considered that the level of harm, though less than substantial would be much greater than the Orion report suggests.

Conservation Area

- 5.10 The Sherborne St John Conservation Area covers almost all of the area of the historic settlement as shown on the Tithe map and extends north to include the paddocks and fields north of Manor Farm as far as the site of the former Sherborne Mill and along the road to the north-east as far as a former farmstead at what is now Kestrel Court (formerly Bob’s Farm). The village of Sherborne St John has grown extensively during the 20th century with large areas of housing being built, particularly to the west of the historic core. Modern developments largely surround the historic core as defined by the conservation area boundary, (and also to the north-east in the area of Vyne Meadow) so that the main settlement area of the village, including Manor Farm and the church, has been largely hemmed in by modern housing, leaving only relatively short sections of the boundary of the conservation area maintaining a relationship between the historic village and its surrounding landscape. As a once relatively small, rural settlement, it is considered that the remaining areas where the conservation area retains a relationship with the open countryside are of high importance in terms of the setting of the heritage asset and contribute to the experience of the designated area.
- 5.11 As discussed previously in relation to the setting of both the Church of St Andrew and Manor Farmhouse, this high-status group, slightly detached from the main core of the historic village to the south-east, is a distinct and important part of the character the conservation area. The fact that the church and Manor Farm were peripheral to the village core and, thus, had a direct relationship to the open landscape to the west and north, also means that this relationship, which still survives within this part of the conservation area although marked by a boundary including numerous tall trees, still makes an important contribution to the experience and understanding of this part of the village and the conservation area. The submitted heritage statement shows no understanding of the plan form of the village or the relationships between the elements of the settlement. It therefore fails to recognize the

importance of the peripheral position of the church and Manor Farm and so cannot consider this contribution to the special interest of the designated heritage asset or the importance of its setting. The views across the proposed development site from Cranesfield are of importance in allowing an appreciation of this relationship.

- 5.12 The pond to the north-west of the church is an important feature of the conservation area which has public access along its southern edge where there is a bench for people to sit and relax. The conservation area appraisal identifies an important view across the pond to the north. There is a gap in the planting to the western edge of the pond which allows views to the open countryside, allowing a visual link to the rural landscape to the north of the settlement. The importance of this feature in the conservation area, the important view that is identified in the conservation area appraisal, and the fact that this is a publicly accessible space of value to the community is not discussed in the submitted heritage statement. This is a significant omission which undermines the conclusions of the assessment.
- 5.13 The cemetery is an important publicly accessible space which borders the proposed development site. The cemetery is a quite tranquil space and for part of the year at least, the hedge to the northern boundary allows glimpsed views out to the fields beyond. The harm of housing set close to the cemetery can be appreciated to the west where the present houses of Cranesfield provide a suburban character to the setting of the conservation area. Again, the importance of the cemetery as a public space is not adequately considered in the submitted heritage statement which refers only the views – aspects of setting such as tranquillity are not discussed.

Step 3: Assess impact of the proposed development on significance

- 5.14 The proposal is for outline planning permission for up to 26 new homes to be accessed of the existing Cranesfield and bounded on the south side by the cemetery and to the east by the pond and Manor Farm.
- 5.15 Taking the NPPF definition of setting as set out in 4.5, above, it follows that the test for whether a development within the setting of a heritage asset will affect significance must be based on the impact on the ability to experience the heritage asset or to appreciate or understand its significance. A further potential aspect of potential impact on setting is whether the proposed development would be harmful aesthetically when seen in combination with or adjacent to a heritage asset or have other impacts on setting such as impacts on tranquillity, light pollution or smells.
- 5.16 The proposed development would destroy one of the remaining sections of the conservation area boundary which has a direct relationship to the surrounding agricultural landscape, further diminishing the relationship between the small rural village and its working landscapes. This represents a harmful change within the setting of the Conservation Area which will cause harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. The importance

of the relationship between the historic area of settlement and its rural landscape is not discussed in the submitted heritage statement.

- 5.17 The cemetery is an important publicly accessible space (as noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal, p.11) which, although enclosed by a substantial hedge along the northern boundary, is not totally separated visually from the landscape beyond which can be seen through gaps in the hedge. When within the cemetery, the glimpses of the countryside beyond contribute to the tranquillity of this important communal area. It is considered that the loss of this link to a rural, peaceful landscape to be replaced by the back gardens of approximately 5 houses based on the draft layout provided in the exhibition material would have a detrimental effect upon the experience of this part of the conservation area. The impact of development adjacent to the cemetery can already be experienced through the modern housing of Cranesfield to the west of the cemetery which imposes itself on the cemetery and creates a highly suburban character which strongly conflicts with the otherwise strong feeling of privacy and peace within this area. There is no doubt that the construction of further housing to the north of the cemetery will further impinge upon the valuable experience of people visiting the cemetery which lies within the conservation area. Therefore, as a key public space within the designated area, the proposed housing within the setting of the conservation area will cause harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. This element of the conservation area is not discussed in the submitted heritage statement.
- 5.18 The proposed development will also impact on the important view across the pond from Church Path in which the presence of open countryside to the north-west is discernible. This visual link to the open countryside is important to the significance of the conservation area. Development in this area would impact negatively upon the experience of the conservation area from this point. This important area of the conservation area is not discussed in the submitted heritage statement and the impact of the proposals is not considered.
- 5.19 In terms of views into the conservation area from the surrounding landscape, the fields to the north of the cemetery and west of Manor Farm provide important views towards the village where the historic settlement retains a relationship with the rural landscape. Whilst the majority of the buildings of the village are largely screened by the boundaries along this edge of the conservation area, the presence and understanding of the presence of the historic village is marked by the tower of the church which rises above the trees. It must be remembered that the conservation area is not simply about the buildings within it, but also includes its general character and the spaces, trees and boundaries. In the views from the north-west and north from the public footpath the views are to the boundaries of the historic area of settlement. The harmful impact of the development of the proposed area can be immediately illustrated by the visual impact of Cranesfield to the west of the proposed development area (Figure 9). Whilst the documentation provided as part of the public consultation presents an illustrative view across this area from the north and north-west claiming that the development will be well screened by new planting, the illustration

demonstrates that the experience of the conservation area from the north and north-west will be radically altered by the presence of modern housing, which will be clearly visible from what is a well-used public right of way. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development will have a substantial negative impact upon the experience of the conservation area as seen from the landscape to the north and north-west, and this will cause harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. Again, the submitted heritage statement does not adequately discuss the importance of the publicly accessible views from the footpath to the north in which the proposed development will destroy the rural setting of the conservation area by introducing suburban housing development.



Figure 9 An illustrative view of the proposed development as provided within the exhibition material submitted by the developers.

- 5.20 The addition of new housing within the proposed development area will not directly impact upon the ability to experience the church as in views from the eastern edge of Cranesfield the church tower will remain visible above the trees. However, the presence of the development will have a major impact on the ability to appreciate the peripheral position of the church : manor farm group which makes a very high contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. This represents harm to the designated conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings.
- 5.21 Manor Farmhouse was a high-status farmstead located adjacent to the church in a position slightly detached from the main core of settlement. The farmhouse at present, with its historic former working farm buildings to the north, largely retains its historic setting. The proposed development will impinge on the setting in terms of the relationship between the farmhouse and the landscape to the north-west. Whilst the views to the west are partly screened by the substantial boundary running along the west side of the pond, views out to the landscape are possible and it is considered that the relationship with the farmhouse with the agricultural landscape contributes to the significance of the listed building. Therefore, the proposed housing development will have a negative impact upon the significance of the listed Manor Farmhouse. Screening to partly block views will not adequately mitigate the loss of the visual link to the open countryside.

5.22 The church lies on the periphery of the settlement, lying between the village core to the south-east and the manor farm to the north with farmland, beyond. The addition of new housing within the proposed development area will not directly impact upon the ability to experience the church as the church tower in views from, for example, the eastern edge of Cranesfield, as it will remain visible above the trees but the impact on the sense of the peripheral position of the church : manor farm group will be impacted. Therefore, the proposed development will result in a degree of harm to the significance of the Grade I listed Church of St Andrew.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 The submitted heritage statement fails to adequately describe or assess the importance of the setting of the designated heritage assets that may be affected by the proposed development. Therefore, it cannot draw informed conclusions as to the potential impacts of the proposals and the low levels of less than substantial harm identified in the Orion report are considered to be mis-leading.

6.2 Having assessed the importance of setting in line with Historic England guidance, it is considered that the proposed development at Cranesfield, Sherborne St John, will cause harm to the significance or 'special architectural or historic interest' of the Sherborne St John Conservation Area through development within its setting. The proposed development will harm the experience of the designated heritage asset both through its impact on views to the conservation area, and in relation to the experience of the conservation area from within the cemetery and thus, fails to *conserve or enhance the quality of the borough's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance* as required by Policy EM 11.

6.2 The proposed development will also result in harm to the setting of Manor Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building, the proposed housing impacting upon the sense of detachment of the manor farm from the settlement and reducing its association with the surrounding agricultural landscape, also failing to *conserve or enhance the quality of the borough's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance* as required by Policy EM 11.

6.3 Accordingly, I find that the proposed development conflicts with the statutory duty in Sections 66 and 72 of the Act, National Policy in the NPPF Policy EM11 of the Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan 2011-2029. In line with statute and the NPPF, great weight should be given to the protection of the significance of these designated heritage assets and, as set out in footnote 7 to paragraph 11, the harm to heritage assets which will result from the proposed development over-ride the presumption in favour of sustainable development, (i.e. the tilted balance does not apply, as was the case in an appeal where harm to a heritage asset was identified (APP/X0360/W/21/3278243)).

6.4 It is concluded that the outline planning application should be refused due to the harm to the designated heritage assets.