
CENTRAL AND EASTERN BERKSHIRE – JOINT MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN

HISTORIC MATTERS: POLICY DM7

EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC MAIN MATTER 7 – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement is prepared by Berkshire Gardens Trust in support of our request for some amendments to policy DM7.
- 1.2 The Gardens Trust (GT) in its role as Statutory Consultee with regard to proposed development affecting sites listed by Historic England (HE) on their Register of Parks and Gardens was consulted in September 2020. The Berkshire Gardens Trust (BGT) is a member organisation of the GT and works in partnership with it in respect of the protection and conservation of historic sites (both national and local), and is authorised by the GT to respond on GT's behalf in respect of such consultations within Berkshire. The Berkshire Gardens Trust would like to make the following submissions with regard to Policy DM7.

2. Policy DM7 (Conserving the Historic Environment)

7.13 Should the policy be expanded to include a list of the categories of assets and their relative importance to be consistent with national policy?

- 2.1 BGT would like to see a list of categories of all historic assets included in the policy (as found under DM3 for Habitats and Species) to emphasise the regard to be given to all assets including historic landscapes and non-designated assets. NPPF 189 and the NPPF glossary makes this point clearly.
- 2.2 We suggest the following wording: The following assets will be protected in accordance with their relative importance:
- a) Scheduled Monuments;
 - b) Listed buildings;
 - c) Conservation areas;
 - d) Registered parks and gardens;
 - e) Registered battlefields;
 - f) Sites of archaeological importance; and
 - g) Other locally recognised assets: buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes.
- 2.3 We suggest that the wording for Item g) should be wider than just 'locally listed assets' as we have found that there are many parks and gardens of historic interest that have yet to be assessed by a local authority or added to the HER or a local list. These are often investigated through an application for development or by other parties and their significance may be greater than originally thought.

- 2.4 We are not however convinced that the relative importance of each category of asset needs to be set out in the Plan as the relative importance is set out in NPPF and Historic England's documentation.
- 2.5 The text under Implementation still places a good deal of emphasis on archaeological assets which, although a significant concern, underplays the regard to be given to other categories.

7.14 Is the policy effective with regard to the measures which could mitigate harm to the historic environment?

- 2.6 The text under Implementation to guide policy DM7.4 places a good deal of emphasis on mitigation with regard to archaeological assets. Mitigation may also be required to a potential impact on an historic landscape and/or its setting. Such measures may include limits on working areas, buffer zones, screen planting, controls on visual impacts, protection of water sources for historic water features, and restoration of landscape and built features. The proposed sites in the Joint Plan do not affect any known historic parks and gardens but should sites within the safeguarded areas be put forward, these may give rise to adverse impacts. A current example of this is the existing minerals site at Riding Court Farm, Slough which lies to the immediate south of Ditton Park, a Grade II Registered Park and Garden, and where mitigation measures to conserve landscape features in the Park were necessary.
- 2.7 BGT therefore request that the supporting implementation text on mitigation be expanded to cover the specific needs of other historic assets.
- 2.8 For example Policy DM5.2 specifically includes that development is *expected to meet the highest standards of design, operation and restoration*. The highest of standards also applies where a development would have an impact on an historic asset or its setting, where the asset is not lost but affected by the development. The significance of an asset could be badly eroded through a poor standard of design, operation and restoration. Restoration schemes should to be guided by Heritage Statements to ensure conservation and enhancement of the historic assets.

7.15 Should the policy include a requirement to record all assets to be lost and the recording to be deposited in the public archive to be consistent with national policy?

- 2.9 BGT are aware that lost archaeological finds can include historic landscape features. NPPF 205 highlights the importance and value of recording historic assets and make the information publicly available. Although policy DM7 requires an assessment of historic assets and their significance, there is no requirement to ensure that this information is added to the Historic Environmental Records. As the Plan covers a number of local authorities, information on where it should be made publicly available might be useful.
- 2.10 GT and BGT rely on publicly available information to enable us to undertake research and respond to planning matters. The need for publicly available records is all the more important for non-designated assets, local listings and other assets identified through the planning process.

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- 2.11 Proposals for interpretation and enjoyment of the heritage assets such as information boards and permissive access should be encouraged where practical and possible to meet NPPF 190 b).

7.16 Is the policy consistent with national policy on heritage assets in relation to how to weigh harm?

- 2.12 The Policy and its supporting text is missing the emphasis set out in NPPF 199: *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.* This sends a clear message to potential minerals and waste operators on the great weight to be given to the conservation of assets (whatever they are, with greater weight to those of greater importance) and to the weight to be given to all types of harm from the outset. We suggest that this should be added into the Preamble before the policy.

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Chair
Berkshire Gardens Trust

9 September 2021