

SECTION '1' – Applications submitted by the London Borough of Bromley

**Application No :** 12/00793/FULL1

**Ward:**  
**Darwin**

**Address :** High Elms Country Park Office Shire  
Lane Farnborough Orpington BR6 7JH

**OS Grid Ref:** E: 544603 N: 163416

**Applicant :** Mr Nick Hopkins

**Objections : NO**

**Description of Development:**

Installation of sunken wall to mark location of former mansion house

Key designations:

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Birds  
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area  
Green Belt  
London City Airport Safeguarding  
London Loop  
Local Nature Reserve  
Local Distributor Roads  
Sites of Interest for Nat. Conservation  
Sites of Special Scientific Interest  
Proposed World Heritage Site

**Proposal**

- The proposed wall will be positioned at grass level and will not alter any elevational detail of the site.
- The proposal will include a ground level line of brickwork which will be 0.5m wide to mark out the corners of the site of the former mansion house following the receipt of lottery funding.
- The outline created by the brickwork will mark out the outline of the building, indicating a total length of the mansion house which was approximately 40m with a width of 35m. The total length of brickwork proposed will be 24m. A section of the outline of brickwork will extend over an existing area of hardstanding to the north of the site.
- The materials to be used will be engineering bricks with slate inlay.

The application has been submitted with a Biodiversity Statement, a Heritage Statement, and a Tree Survey in light of the special interest of the site.

## **Location**

The site is located in the middle of the High Elms Country Park and is served by a pathway which leads to the car park to the north. The site is bound to the south by the High Elms Golf Course and the Beech Centre of the park is to the north east. The site falls within the Green Belt, a local nature reserve, a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the proposed World Heritage Site.

## **Comments from Local Residents**

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and no representations were received.

## **Comments from Consultees**

The Countryside Manager visited the above site and considers that it would be advantageous to show where the previous High Elms Mansion stood but there is a balance to be made with the current site which consists of lawn merging out to the wider countryside of meadows, golf course and trees. This openness and almost seamless greenness should be maintained but would be threatened by the installation of 150 metres of brickwork. A compromise could be for the mansion to be marked not by the full footprint but by brickwork only at the corners/changes of direction. This could reduce the amount of brickwork by at least 2/3rds and yet visitors would still be able to trace the footprint. If the full footprint were to be marked by bricks there could be a tendency for children to walk along it whilst parents/family walked on the grass immediately adjacent. This would cause trampling leading to a muddy area on each side of the brickwork. However if only the corners were marked by bricks people would make their own routes from corner to corner, reducing the trampling impact. It is further suggested that the room names were not placed in the centre of each space but could be placed on the external brickwork, perhaps with an arrow towards the relevant room. An Archaeological Method Statement is also suggested. Amended plans have been received to this effect dated 11/04/12, and further comments will be reported verbally at the meeting.

English Heritage (Archaeology) raises no objection to the proposal, and has not requested an Archaeological Method Statement. No archaeological requirement is necessary in this case.

Natural England raises no objection to the proposal.

At the time of writing the report, no comments had been received from the Parks department. Any late comments will be reported verbally at the meeting.

## **Planning Considerations**

Policies relevant to the consideration of this application are BE1 (Design of New Development), BE8 (Statutory Listed Buildings), NE1 (Development and SSSI), NE2 (Development And Nature Conservation Sites), NE5 (Protected Species),

NE6 (World Heritage Site), NE7 (Development And Trees) and G1 (Green Belt) of the adopted Unitary Development Plan.

## **Planning History**

Planning permission was granted under ref. 84/02055 for a walled garden, a detached wooden building and an apiary.

Planning permission was granted under ref. 94/00560 for a change of use of the first floor of the stable block to a countryside ranger's office.

## **Conclusions**

The main issues in this case are the effect of the proposals on the character of the surrounding area, the impact on the setting of the nearby statutory listed buildings, the impact on the openness of the Green Belt, the impact on the special interest of the Site of Special Scientific Interest, nature reserve, the Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and proposed World Heritage Site.

The proposal site falls within several constraints such as the Green Belt, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and the proposed World Heritage Site. It is considered that the proposal would add no bulk to the site and would not result in a harmful visual impact as the brickwork will all be at ground level on this flat site. The impact on the openness of the Green Belt would therefore be negligible.

The impact of the development amounts to the loss of a small section of grassland and although this does not harm openness as such, its impact must be assessed in terms of the character and appearance of the nature reserve and special interest of the site. The brickwork proposed will leave the majority of the grassed area unaltered. The accompanying biodiversity statement states that the proposal site does not provide a vitally important habitat for any grassland species, including reptiles and amphibians. It is considered that the loss of part of this grassland would not be detrimental to grassland species and there is ample similar habitat retained at the site and elsewhere at High Elms Country Park. The proposed brickwork is also considered to provide a potential new habitat for moss and lichen species.

The proposal will be sited a significant distance from the Statutory Listed Buildings (which comprise the Ice Well and Eton Fives Court to the north, and the Grotto and the Stone Garden Shelter to the south) and is not considered to harm their setting. The nearest of the listed buildings is approx. 40m away. The proposal will not add bulk to the site and will not result in any elevational changes that could be considered harmful to the setting of the buildings. The application has been submitted with a heritage statement and this concludes that the impact would be minimal.

It is considered that the proposal would not harm specific and special interest of the site, the open countryside or the setting of the nearby listed buildings and therefore Members may consider that the proposal is acceptable.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on file ref. 12/00793, excluding exempt information.

as amended by documents received on 11.04.2012

## **RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION**

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1      ACA01      Commencement of development within 3 yrs  
          ACA01R      A01 Reason 3 years
- 2      ACC07      Materials as set out in application  
          ACC07R      Reason C07
- 3      ACK01      Compliance with submitted plan

**Reason:** In order to comply with Policies BE1, BE8, NE1, NE2, NE5, NE6, NE7 and G1 of the Unitary Development Plan and in the interest of the visual amenities of the area and the special interest of the site.

### **Reasons for granting permission:**

In granting planning permission the Local Planning Authority had regard to the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan:

- BE1    Design of New Development
- BE8    Statutory Listed Buildings
- NE1    Development and SSSI
- NE2    Development and Nature Conservation Sites
- NE5    Protected Species
- NE6    World Heritage Site
- NE7    Development and Trees
- G1     Green Belt

The development is considered to be satisfactory in relation to the following:

- (a)    the impact on the character of the surrounding area
- (b)    the impact on the visual amenities of the area
- (c)    the impact on the setting of the nearby statutory listed buildings
- (d)    the impact on the special interest of the local nature reserve, the Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, protected species and the Site of Special Scientific Interest
- (e)    the impact on trees
- (f)    the impact on the proposed World Heritage Site

and having regard to all other matters raised.

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