

Essex County Council Pre-Application Planning Advice

Planning Ref: CC/BTE/28/21/PRE

Site Address: Finchingfield Bridge, The Green, Finchingfield, CM7 4JS

Proposal: Reconstruction of Finchingfield Bridge

Introduction

The following officer advice is provided in accordance with Essex County Council's Pre-Application Planning Advice procedures. Council officers, with requests for pre-application discussions, endeavour to provide proactive advice. However, it should be recognised that all planning applications are subject to formal consultation, to enable third parties and statutory consultees to make representations. This process may introduce new material considerations and therefore the right to alter any opinions expressed within this letter, should such material issues come to light, is reserved. Furthermore, any advice given is that of the named officer and does not bind the Council in determining any subsequent planning application that may be submitted.

Proposal

The proposal to which this pre-app relates is the demolition of the existing Finchingfield bridge and the construction of a replacement, slightly wider, bridge.

The applicant has suggested that the existing bridge has been assessed as 'weak' and accordingly needs improving to ensure it is capable of carrying the full range of vehicles which legally are permitted to use it. Consideration has been given to introducing weight and/or width restrictions on the bridge and leaving it as. However, due to the relative strategic importance of the B1053 and B1057 roads it has been suggested that this is not desirable. The bridge is also narrow and the parapets and the adjoining building are often damaged by vehicles and on occasions this damage has been significant and posed a safety hazard to road users and the general public.

The proposed bridge would be designed to current structural standards, but with a form, appearance and waterway cross-section similar to the existing bridge. In respect of this it is proposed that reinforced concrete with the abutments, retaining walls and parapets faced with good quality red bricks in lime mortar (specification to be agreed) would be used with the buttress and patters plates from the existing bridge incorporated.

The new bridge is proposed to accommodate a single lane carriageway which traffic would negotiate on a give-and-take basis (as per existing). However, raised verges would be provided on both sides of the carriageway to provide some protection to the bridge parapets and the adjoining Unit 1-The Stores building (currently the Greedy Duck). This would require widening of the highway along the north edge of the Village Green and pond.

To facilitate construction of the replacement bridge, sections of The Manse boundary wall would need to be taken down and the building currently occupied by the Greedy Duck would need to be underpinned.

During construction, to avoid a lengthy diversion, a temporary road and bridge crossing is also proposed across the southern part of the pond.

The scheme requires deregistration of some sections of the Village Green with land along The Pightle, south of St. John the Baptist Church, identified for exchange.

Site Designations

The area to which this application relates is located within the Finchingfield conservation area. The existing bridge is not listed however the majority of buildings surrounding it are or at least part of the local list. In respect of this, the below extract from the map facility on Historic England's website shows the number of listed buildings (blue triangles) within close proximity of the bridge and area of works.



With regard to this, and for added reference, the status of the buildings located within the closest proximity to the bridge and the area proposed for the temporary bridge are:

- The Manse – Grade II
- The Fox Inn – Grade II
- Bridge House – Grade II
- Brick House – Grade II
- Stowes and Mildmay – Grade II
- Saxons – Grade II
- North House and the Picture Pot – Grade II
- Greedy Duck – Local List

The existing bridge is located within flood zone 3.

Finchingfield Green is also a registered Village Green.

Planning Policy Context

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended)
- North Essex Authorities' Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan (adopted 2021)
- Braintree District Council – Core Strategy Plan (adopted 2011)
- Braintree District Council – Local Plan Review (adopted 2005)

Consultee comments

On receipt of this request, officers sought to invite informal comments on the proposal from Braintree District Council, Finchingfield Parish Council, Historic England, the Open Spaces Society, the Highway Authority, the Council's urban design, landscape, ecology, arboricultural, historic building and archaeological consultants (Place Services) and the County Councillor for Three Fields with Great Notley (Cllr Butland). Copies of comments received from Historic England, the Highway Authority and Place Services are provided as an appendix to this response.

Appraisal

As a 'weak' structure, the principle need to resolve this issue from a highway safety perspective is understood. However, as part of any planning application coming forward, it would be expected that appropriate evidence would be provided to confirm how weak the bridge is, especially as there is currently no weight restriction on the bridge and there appears no urgency to introduce this (even temporarily). As replacing the bridge is not therefore the only potential option available (e.g. a permanent weight or width restriction on the bridge could be introduced) it would be expected that an appropriate optioneering study is submitted to support the preferred or chosen intervention in context of the main aims/objectives of the works. Commentary as part of this should be clearly provided around the pros and cons of each option. This optioning study is considered important in this case, given the sensitive location, and that the justification for the intervention and any temporary works proposed to support this will need to firmly stand up to scrutiny to be able to be concluded to be sustainable development as per the NPPF definition.

With regard to this and the justification advanced for a replacement bridge, it is acknowledged that as existing the bridge is a connection for all traffic between the B1053 and B1057. If a weight limit or width restriction was to be permanently introduced it would mean that some vehicles would need to divert some 15 miles (loop route via the B1054) to cross Finchingfield Brook and this is a factor which supports a different intervention. It is not considered that a second permanent bridge would be viable option given the sensitive nature of the site and likely impact such a structure would have on the appearance of the conservation area and also the setting of a number of nearby listed buildings. However, acceptance of a replacement of the bridge, from a planning perspective, would be reliant on the evidence submitted to support the suggested 'weak' status and that the intervention proposed is the optimum solution.

Supporting text within the Local Plan Review notes that Braintree includes a large rural area and whilst a number of villages lie on the main road routes, many are more isolated and served only by a network of country lanes. Expanding on this, as proclaimed in support of this pre-app, it is suggested that many structural weaknesses have been identified in bridges that serve these rural areas and the simple introduction of restrictions on their use is not necessarily appropriate. This is due to the problems such restrictions would have on local residents and services.

In context of this no policy objections are raised in-principle to the concept of replacing the bridge. That said, this area (the bridge included) is considered a chocolate box scene of an Essex village and any development proposal coming forward is likely to be sensitive and to some degree controversial. Whilst the bridge itself is not listed, the bridge is within the Finchingfield conservation area and is surrounded by many heritage assets (the setting of which is affected by the bridge) and the 'new' bridge would therefore be required to be of appropriate design and quality.

In view of the proposed nature of this pre-app enquiry, the level of information and design detail provided and that suggested in terms of this being tendered as a design and build contract – this response seeks to focus on the in-principle acceptability of the different elements of the proposal. It is not considered appropriate, at this stage, to provide detailed commentary on the suggested design details, as this is likely subject to change. That said, given the conservation area designation and setting, as per the policy position portrayed in the Local Plan Review and Core Strategy, it would be expected that the finalised designs for any replacement bridge would be of the highest possible standard. Further to this, issues which will be relevant to any finalised proposals such as flood risk and ecology are also not discussed with the predominate focus of this response being heritage.

Bridge Construction

It is noted that to facilitate the bridge replacement, the Greedy Duck would need to be underpinned. The submitted Heritage Impact Assessment suggests in this regard that subject to a sensitive scheme, and appropriate construction mitigation, no adverse impacts are anticipated to this building or its features which positively contribute to its significance.

As a non-designated heritage asset, paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

As a proposal it is considered that this development, on paper, poses many risks to the Greedy Duck as an adjoining building. That said, the proposed underpinning should prevent potential structural failure as a result of the proposed works to the bridge. Given the proximity of the bridge to the Greedy Duck, and its construction/existing foundations, it is considered any intervention to the bridge

would likely have the potential to cause direct damage or harm to the Greedy Duck building. In context of the accepted need for intervention to resolve the 'weak' bridge status, that the underpinning proposed should reduce the impact risk and in itself this (the underpinning) would not be harmful to the character of the building, on balance, no objection is raised to the development from an impact perspective to the Greedy Duck.

In addition to the works needed to the Greedy Duck, part of the front boundary wall to The Manse (Grade II Listed) would need to be demolished and there is the potential loss of lathe and plaster wall/ceiling due to vibration during construction; exacerbation of cracks; and the potential loss of a brick arch over a gate at this property.

Paragraph 197 of the NPPF with regard to heritage assets details that local planning authorities, when determining applications, should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Expanding paragraph 199 details 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.

Paragraph 200 confirms that any substantial harm to or loss of grade II listed building should be exceptional; and paragraph 202 confirms that development that will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals.

The less than substantial harms identified to The Manse are a direct consequence of the proposed works to the bridge. That said, it is not considered that alternative designs for the replacement bridge could seek to further reduce this impact, as The Manse boundary wall is effectively part of the bridge approach. Whilst there is an unknown with regard to this project and the damage that may eventually result, from for example vibration, the justification put forward for the project and the public benefits which would be realised in the long term are considered to acceptably outweigh the envisaged harms to this property.

No fundamental objections are therefore raised to the proposed re-construction of Finchingfield bridge in terms of impact to listed buildings. As alluded, it is considered that the design of the replacement bridge will need to be sensitive and, as has been raised within the consultation responses received, that conditions covering scheme of monitoring of nearby building both during and post construction would also likely need to be secured. However, the public benefits to the scheme in the long term are considered to suitably outweigh the actual harms which would result to the Greedy Duck and The Manse. Furthermore, in the long term, subject to an appropriate

bridge design coming forward it is also not considered that the proposal should have a detrimental effect on the conservation area designation.

There would be a negative impact on the area, the conservation area and setting of a number of listed building during the construction period – principally in view of the likely plant and machinery and construction compound(s) which would be required. That said, these would only be in situ temporarily and it is considered that this impact could to some degree be minimised through securement of a sensitive construction management plan.

Temporary Bridge

To assist in reducing the impacts associated with closing the existing bridge, the proposals include provision of a second, temporary bridge to maintain east west vehicular connectivity. This bridge, which is proposed across the southern part of the pond, is proposed to be constructed first/before any works to the existing bridge occur and would be in place for the complete construction period which has been suggested as between six and nine months.

As a temporary structure/use the impacts resulting to the conservation area would only be limited (as the bridge would be removed when the permanent works are complete). As such in a paragraph 202 balance it could likely be justified and accepted that the benefits to the bridge and the inconvenience which would otherwise be felt locally from the diversion would outweigh this temporary harm.

Assessment of the proposed location of the temporary bridge has however identified additional specific potential impacts or harms to Bridge House and Brick House (both Grade II Listed) as a result of vibration from installation and road activity on the temporary bridge. Whilst temporarily the impacts to the conservation area from the provision of a temporary bridge may be neutralised or outweighed by benefits, the potential for permanent or actual harm to Grade II Listed Buildings is considered significant, especially in context that the benefits being proclaimed are only short term. Accordingly, it is considered that the balance or assessment of public benefits may be given much less weight for the temporary bridge than for the permanent bridge work. This view is qualified by the statutory presumptions in sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the policy guidance in paragraph 134 of the NPPF.

Section 66(1) of the Act states that when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the LPA shall 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. Section 72 of the Act contains similar requirements with respect to buildings or land in a conservation area. In this context, “preserving”, means doing no harm.

A document has been submitted in support of this pre-app which seeks to identify the economic, social and environment benefits the temporary bridge would bring. On review of this, officers are however unconvinced that for a period of six to nine months the impacts to Finchingfield residents and businesses would however be greater or more severe than the potential harms which could result to nearby

heritage assets (as a result of the temporary bridge). It is accepted that the works and a diversion would be an inconvenience for all. However, the provision of a temporary bridge is not likely to be supported, in its proposed location, given the harms (or potential for harms) resulting solely from this.

It is accepted that this conclusion will not be popular locally. However, with appropriate consideration of the construction programme, clear communication as to the aforementioned with the public and an appropriate diversion route it is considered that a temporary closure of the road and severance of Finchingfield could be managed to the point that only real benefit to the temporary road would be the avoidance of the diversion.

With regard to this, and a few of the benefits put forward, the argument put forward about passing traffic/trade for business is acknowledged. That said it is noted that the diversion route would still bring people into both ends of Finchingfield. The document furthermore places a significant emphasis on local views. Whilst, for the avoidance of any doubt, the view of the local community is exceptionally important in the planning process, this in isolation is not a reason that a proposal could or should be viewed as sustainable. Finchingfield has won awards for its traditional picturesque setting and is described on the Visit Essex's website 'as the most photographed village in Essex' so there is no doubt that a lot of people have and will continue to visit the area. What the document submitted fails to consider is whether people will however continue to visit, in the same numbers, whilst works to the bridge are on-going. It is officers view that those looking to visit the area are likely going to be less concerned about a potential diversion being in place and more concerned about the fact that construction works are on-going to the bridge where they wanted to take a photo. It is officers view that the provision of a temporary bridge would further heighten rather than reduce this perception. In terms of vehicle miles, again that suggested is not questioned. However, the carbon impact from construction of the temporary bridge and its removal is not suggested and weighed in the same assessment.

To confirm, officers are not denying that there are benefits to the temporary bridge. It is just not considered, on balance, that as proposed the benefits associated outweigh the potential harms to nearby heritage assets in accordance with paragraphs 134 and 202 of the NPPF as well as the Act.

Village Green

It is noted that the proposals would, irrespective of whether the temporary bridge is included or not, include use of Finchingfield Village Green. It is understood that an application to de-register the Green has been or will be made with land along The Pightle, south of St. John the Baptist Church proposed in exchanged. The de-registration and registration process of the Village Green is separate to any application for planning permission. However, that proposed, together with the stage at which this is at, should be confirmed as part of the planning application for clarity.

Planning Application Process & Validation Requirements

Planning applications can be submitted to the Local Planning Authority in a number of ways. The Council promotes the use of the Planning Portal in this regard which allows the appropriate application form to be completed online and associated documents submitted electronically.

In terms of the actual determination process, once a planning application is received by the Local Planning Authority, the application will be checked by a planning officer to make sure everything is in order to allow determination. If everything is in order, the application will be registered as valid and this date will be the date on which the target determination date will be calculated.

Once an application is validated, as part of the determination process, the Local Planning Authority will seek to consult statutory and also notify adjoining and adjacent properties to ascertain if any such individuals or business have any concerns to the development coming forward. The County Councillor will also be notified at this stage. Anyone is entitled to submit comments on a planning application and all comments received will be appraised within report produced by officers in due course.

After the aforementioned consultation period has expired, the planning officer will consider comments received and professionally assess the proposal in context of relevant planning policy and guidance. The planning officer will then write a report recommending that planning permission be approved; planning permission be approved subject to conditions/legal agreement; or planning permission be refused. Should two or more letters of objection be received from the public, an objection from a statutory consultee or the application be called-in by the Local Member, you should bear in mind that should officers still recommend planning permission be granted that this would need to be presented to the Council's Development and Regulation Committee for determination.

The Council's validation requirements for planning applications can be viewed here: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/make-planning-application>. A detailed list of validation requirements can be supplied if required.

Case Officer: [REDACTED]

Reviewed for issue by:

24/11/2021

X [REDACTED]

Signed by: [REDACTED]

APPENDIX - CONSULTATION RESPONSES RECEIVED



[REDACTED]
Essex County Council
Minerals & Waste Planning
County Hall
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1QH

Our ref: PA01155606
Your ref: CC/BTE/28/21PRE

1 April 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

Request for Pre-application Advice

RECONSTRUCTION OF FINCHINGFIELD BRIDGE, THE GREEN, FINCHINGFIELD , BRAINTREE, ESSEX CM7 4JS

Thank you for contacting us on 25 March 2021 seeking our pre-application advice on proposals for the above site.

On the basis of the information provided, the proposal would not lead to an application for which Historic England would be a statutory consultee therefore it is not necessary for us to engage in pre-application discussions in this instance. You do not need to consult us again on this proposal unless any material changes are made that would bring it within our remit for consultation. Our criteria for consultation can be found at www.HistoricEngland.org.uk/services-skills/our-planning-services/charter/when-we-are-consulted/proposals-for-development-management

If you have questions regarding any of the above, please do contact me.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

RECONSTRUCTION OF FINCHINGFIELD BRIDGE, THE GREEN, FINCHINGFIELD , BRAINTREE, ESSEX CM7 4JS Request for Pre-application Advice



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We respect your privacy and the use of your information. Please read our full privacy policy for more information
<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/terms/privacy-cookies/>

From: [REDACTED] - Strategic Development Engineer

Sent: 05 May 2021 14:16

To: Minerals and Waste DM

Subject: Planning Application CC/BTE/28/21/PRE

Hello

Apologies for the late response but we have not comments to make on this pre app proposal

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Strategic Development Engineer

Strategic Development



SAFER / GREENER / HEALTHIER

Place Services
Essex County Council
County Hall, Chelmsford
Essex, CM1 1QH
T: 0333 013 6840
www.placeservices.co.uk



14 April 2021
F.A.O. [REDACTED]
Essex County Council

Dear [REDACTED]

Application No: CC/BTE/28/21/PRE.

Proposal: Reconstruction of Finchingfield Bridge

Location: Finchingfield Bridge, The Green, Finchingfield, CM7 4JS

With reference to the above named application and submitted documents received by Place Services on the 25/03/2021, asking for comments from Ecology, Historic Buildings, Historic Environment, Landscape, Trees and Urban Design. As per the agreed timescale, our comments on the Planning Application as submitted are made below:

Ecology [REDACTED]

There is no ecological report accompanying this pre-application. The bridge is located within the rural village of Finchingfield. It crosses Finchingfield Brook, which feeds into the River Pant, and is adjacent to the village green pond. There are some large trees immediately adjacent to the bridge. Google imagery appears to show that the pond is walled around its perimeter with little emergent vegetation. Part of the village green will be used for the construction. A separate area of exchange land will be used to compensate the loss of part of the village green. It is unclear if or how this exchange land will be altered for its new purpose. This information should be provided with the application and any impacts upon it should also be included in the ecological assessment.

As for any proposal, the planning application will need to be supported by adequate, proportionate, up-to-date ecological survey & assessment -as defined by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)- to enable the Planning Authority to determine the application submitted in line with national and local policy and its statutory duties. This will include likely impacts on designated sites (international, national and local), Protected species and Priority habitats and species - not just significant ones. It should be ensured that all habitats and watercourses are not adversely affected by the proposals, whether they are located on-site or off-site. Due to the proximity of the proposals to the water course, it will be extremely important to demonstrate that there will be no adverse effects upon the Brook.

Ecological assessments should take data search records & survey information and use professional judgement to come to reasoned conclusions as to the likelihood of species and habitats being present and affected by the proposed development. All surveys must be undertaken by suitably qualified ecologists at the appropriate time of year using standard methodologies.

Place Services is a traded service of Essex County Council





Where potential impacts (on-site or off-site) upon protected sites, species, or priority species / habitats are identified, the proposed mitigation must be set out prior to determination. Wherever impacts occur, mitigation should be applied in accordance with Paragraph 175 of the NPPF, including all impacts on priority habitats and species, regardless of their significance as the Planning Authority needs to demonstrate it is meeting its statutory biodiversity duty under s40 of the NERC Act (2006). You should seek to avoid harm to biodiversity, before considering mitigation or compensation (as a last resort) for any losses, through the mitigation hierarchy. Where a development cannot satisfy the requirements of the mitigation hierarchy, planning permission should be refused.

Effective and robust measures, in line with the mitigation hierarchy, must be also proposed which have a high degree of certainty for their deliverability in the long term. If there are residual impacts, these will need to be compensated for on site or offset and appropriate enhancements included to ensure Biodiversity Net Gain from development.

Ecological reporting:

Any reporting accompanying a planning application should follow CIEEM guidelines (these also comply with BS42020). Guidelines include Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report, Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment and Ecological Report Writing.

Designated sites:

According to the MAGIC website, the closest Site of Special Scientific Interest is West Wood, Little Sampford, which is approximately 5.5 km from Finchingfield. No impacts are identified through the Impact Risk Zones provided on the MAGIC website for this location. We are therefore satisfied that the proposed development will not require measures for any statutory sites, or trigger consultation with Natural England.

There are no Local Wildlife Sites within 1km of the bridge. It is considered that there are no likely impacts upon LoWS.

European Protected Species

Considerations should be made in regard to European Protected Species such as bats and otters. The ecological assessment should identify if any European Protected Species are present on site or are likely to be affected by the development. It should also identify any mitigation and enhancement measures required. It is possible that bats may be using the bridge for roosting.

The applicant may be interested to know that Natural England's District Level Licensing for great crested newts is now available in Essex – please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-crested-newts-district-level-licensing-schemes> - where sites can be registered to be covered by this strategic mitigation scheme. Guidance for developers and registration forms to join the scheme are available and the LPA will need a countersigned agreement with Natural England as evidence of site registration prior to determination where this European Protected Species is likely to be present and affected by development.

UK Protected species:

Species such as breeding birds, water voles, reptiles and badgers are protected under UK legislation (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended and Badgers Act 19 1992). A



preliminary survey of the suitability of the site to support all UK protected species should be undertaken to identify if any are to be affected by the proposal and to identify if appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures are considered necessary.

Priority Habitats and Species (s41 NERC Act):

There are a number of Priority species and habitats in the UK identified in section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), e.g. hedgehogs, toads and hedgerows. A survey should be undertaken to identify if the development will affect any Priority habitats and species and identify appropriate mitigation and enhancement strategies where necessary.

Invasive Species

Note should also be paid to any non-native invasive species (Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) or risks posed by the development to native species present in the locality. These should be disposed of appropriately.

Biodiversity Enhancements and Net Gain:

We recommend that, to secure measurable Biodiversity Net Gain, as outlined under Paragraph 170[d] & 175[d] of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019, reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures will need to be provided. Biodiversity Net Gain is development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before (CIEEM, 2016). It is also an approach where developers work with local governments, wildlife groups, landowners and other stakeholders in order to support their priorities for nature conservation. The ten principles set out in CIEEM's paper *Biodiversity Net Gain - Good practice principles for development, 2016* should be used together to demonstrate net-gain in this development.

Essex Biodiversity Validation Checklist

As the development is classed as a major development the [Essex Biodiversity Validation Checklist](#) will need to be submitted with the application.

Historic Environment ([REDACTED])

The proposed works will have a significant impact not only on the existing bridge but on the surrounding historic landscape. The potential for remains of earlier bridges or crossing points is highly likely and the probable waterlogged deposits that will be disturbed may contain well preserved organic and environmental remains. The Chapman and Andre map of 1777 depict settlement around the former rectangular green which is likely to be medieval in origin. The construction of temporary roads across these areas may impact on settlement remains.

A desk based assessment should be completed which will take into account the nature of the proposed works and the likely impact on archaeological remains. A historic building record of the bridge should be completed to inform on the origin and evolution of the structure. Should this be completed in advance of the application it may help inform the design of the proposed new bridge.

Historic Buildings ([REDACTED])



The application site lies at the centre of the Finchingfield Conservation Area, designated in 1969. The Conservation Area Appraisal (2009) considers the Green and the pond to be one of the series of natural and built landmarks that define the character of the Conservation Area, providing a focal point for the Village and valuable open space. The Green and the pond provide an important contrast to the dense piecemeal development and irregular street pattern within the village's historic core. The open area enables important views within the Conservation Area, where its unique character and many of its important buildings can be appreciated. The widening of the bridge is intended to reduce the occurrence of vehicular strikes to the structure, commonly caused by large vehicles.

The green and pond also enhance the setting of numerous designated heritage assets within the conservation Area. The setting a large number of Finchingfield's listed buildings will be impacted by the proposed scheme, albeit only temporarily and to varying degrees. The impact will come from works traffic, diverted non-works traffic, increase vibration, along with the visual impact of the temporary crossing and the site compound, with offices and portacabins.

The settings of the listed buildings cited below are most likely to be impacted by the scheme, although there may be other impacts on designated and non-designated heritage assets

- Finchingfield House, Grade II Listed (List UID: 1122695)
- North House and The Picture Pot, Grade II Listed (List UID: 1122701)
- Saxons Grade II Listed (List UID: 1115437)
- Bridge House Grade II Listed (List UID: 1122702)
- Brick House Grade II Listed (List UID: 1115444)
- Stoves and Mildmay Grade II Listed (List UID: 1122728);
- The Guildhall, Grade I Listed (List UID: 1115594);
- St John the Baptist Paris Church Grade I Listed (List UID: 1122729);
- Causeway Cottage, Grade II Listed (List UID: 1115651);
- Vine Cottage, Grade II Listed (List UID: 1338172);
- Number 4, The Causeway, Grade II Listed (List UID: 1115625);
- Number 5, Jasmine Cottage and 6, The Causeway, Grade II Listed (List UID: 1122726);
- The Manse Grade II Listed (List UID: 1122700);
- The Fox Inn, Grade II Listed (List UID: 1122699);
- Bosworths Tearooms and Finchingfield Antiques Centre, Grade II Listed (List UID: 1122698);
- Numbers 1 and 2, Sunnyside, Grade II Listed (List UID: 1122697);
- Prospect House, Grade II Listed (List UID: 1122696).

In an ideal scenario, this impact on setting resulting from the three phases of works would be temporary and only last for the duration of the works. It is presumed that after the temporary crossing over the pond had been removed, the green and the pond would be restored to their existing state and any damage made good. With a limited duration of harm and were there to be no lasting impact on the designated heritage assets, in principle, the proposed scheme could be acceptable, although the form of any fencing, hoarding and site access



would need approval by condition. However, there are issues arising from the scheme which would require detailed consideration.

The works would need to be of the shortest possible duration, so as to limit the detrimental impact. The duration of the project would need to be established and agreed as part of the planning application and strictly adhered to, were the application to be approved.

The nature of the temporary bridge and the roadway over the Green would require clarification. The submitted drawings show the temporary roadway constructed on a raised bank, but the type of surface or hard standing is not shown. It will need to be demonstrated that the Green can be speedily returned to its original state after the works, with no permanent impact. The appearance of the temporary bridge and its abutments would also require greater clarity.

The existing bridge and in particular its southern elevation, make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and the setting of the heritage assets. Although it is unlisted, the date of the bridge's construction, its age and significance would need to be established and presented in a Heritage Statement accompanying any application. Further details on the bridge's construction would also be useful. For example, it is not clear if the concrete finish to the arch in the southern elevation indicates that the span is fully formed of concrete, or if this is a concrete render over a brickwork arch.

In general, the proposed alterations to the bridge width, and the similarity in the overall appearance of the new bridge would not necessarily have a detrimental impact and I would have no objection in principle to the widening of the bridge and its reconstruction along the lines proposed. However, the appearance and details of the new bridge would require further consideration. The use of handmade Olde Horsham bricks is proposed, although the salvage and reuse of bricks from the existing bridge, alongside newly sourced bricks should be considered. This will help to avoid an overly homogenous appearance to the new bridge. Consideration should also be given to pointing profile and coping bricks. The details of the appearance of the new bridge and the materials to be used could be approved via a condition for an acceptable scheme.

The impact of the new-routed traffic on Listed buildings adjacent to the Green, in particular Bridge House, Brick House and Stowes And Mildmay (all Grade II Listed), is a concern and this would require robust assessment and mitigation. These buildings are situated directly adjacent to Bridge Street, where there is no pavement and two of them are timber framed structures. A detailed structural assessment of the buildings and the physical impact of the scheme would be required, in order to demonstrate that there would be no movement or harm to the fabric of these buildings, resulting from the increase in traffic. While timber framed buildings move over time, the potential for damage to the buildings historic fabric resulting from increased traffic vibration is a serious concern. In addition, the vibration resulting from the demolition of the existing bridge could have an adverse impact on the adjacent Listed buildings, such as the Manse and the Fox Inn.

Any application would need to demonstrate that a robust assessment of this issue has been carried out and that the appropriate safeguards have been set in place against any movement resulting from the works, affecting a Listed building. If there were any remaining



doubt about the impact on the structural integrity of the Listed buildings it would not be possible to support an application. Therefore, at present I am unable to confirm our support for the proposed scheme as this is dependent on the resolution of the issues outlined above, particularly that of movement resulting from traffic and demolition works.

Landscape ([REDACTED])

The bridge is located within the Finchingfield conservation area, adjacent to the Green and pond, which provide a focal point for the Village and are seen as visually important open spaces. The main concern from a landscape perspective is therefore ensuring that there is no significant adverse harm to landscape character and visual amenity.

In principal, the proposed alterations to the bridge width and appearance of the new bridge would not necessarily have a significant impact on the landscape character. However, we would echo the Urban Design comments and request full elevation drawings, visualisations and material samples are provided as part of any application to ensure the suitability.

In contrast, the temporary bridge and construction compound will have a greater adverse impact on the character and visual amenity of the area. Although temporary, the type of surface treatment has not been provided, and it will need to be demonstrated that the Green, street furniture and landscape features can be returned to their original condition after the works, with no permanent impact.

For these reasons we would recommend that any application is accompanied by a landscape and visual appraisal. This appraisal should follow the principles set out on the third edition of "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment"(GLVIA3) and should include details on; landscape and visual context, baseline condition and visual and landscape impact both during construction and after completion.

Arboriculture ([REDACTED])

We do not object to the proposal for bridge widening at this location, a need for which has been displayed through numerous bridge strikes, particularly in recent years.

However, several mature trees are located within very close proximity to the work zone and are likely to be impacted. Given the very constrained site with buildings, carriageway and bridge all in very close proximity to one another and where the potential failure of a tree could result in damage to them as well as a loss of visual amenity within the Conservation Area, it is strongly recommended that a BS5837 2012: Trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction is provided together with an Arboricultural Method Statement in the event of a full application being made.

Urban Design ([REDACTED])

The bridge is located within the Finchingfield conservation area, therefore the main concern from an urban design perspective is ensuring that the character of the important village



feature is maintained. The submitted proposals show a replication of the existing bridge style and materials. Original features such as the parrass plates are to be refurbished and featured in the new construction, new materials such as the north parapet with steeple coping to be manufactured in concrete finishes to match the Old Horsham brick colour and texture, and using of brick works in traditional materials to replicate the existing style. To ensure that the proposed style and material choices are a good match we would request full elevation drawings and material samples included within the application, including justification to ensure the suitability of the material choice.

The temporary bridge will impact the character of the area, however, given that this is temporary in nature we are not concerned by this. However, we would request restoration of the green and impacted street furniture back to its original condition.

I trust the above comments will be of use to you, should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me, or the named specialists detailed.

Yours sincerely,

██████████
Junior Consultant, Place Services
██████████@essex.gov.uk



BUILT HERITAGE PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE REQUEST

Application No: CC/BTE/28/21/PRE
Date: 26/10/2021

Proposal: Reconstruction of Finchingfield Bridge
Location: Finchingfield Bridge, The Green, Finchingfield, CM7 4JS

Since the previous consultation a Heritage Impact Assessment has been undertaken by Place Services to assess the impacts resulting from the proposed scheme on the built heritage of Finchingfield. This has been informed by the results of the Structural Assessment Reports undertaken by the Morton Partnership, which found the potential for direct impact on three Grade II Listed buildings, The Manse, Bridge House and Brick House. The impacts on Bridge House and Brick House were resulting from the temporary works, while those affecting The Manse would result from the permanent works. According to the findings of the survey by the Morton Partnership, the impacts on all three Listed buildings include the potential for damage to the buildings' fabric, due to vibrations. This damage would not be consistent with the conservation of the Listed buildings. There is therefore a conflict between the heritage assets' conservation and this aspect of the proposal, which could potentially result in high level of less than substantial harm to the heritage assets.

In addition, further impacts were found to affect the Finchingfield Conservation Area. The temporary works would considerably detract from its character and appearance, while the harm would be temporary for the duration of the works and presumably reversible. The temporary works can be considered to result in a level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area.

Works to the Greedy Duck, a non-designated heritage asset, are limited to underpinning. Subject to a sensitive scheme, and appropriate construction mitigation, no adverse impact is anticipated to this building.

The existing bridge is thought to be of limited heritage significance, although the monitoring of the demolition works has been recommended in the archaeological assessment. The removal and appropriate reconstruction of the bridge would have a neutral impact on the Conservation Area.

Further to the direct impacts, the Heritage Impact Assessment found that the scheme would have an indirect, albeit temporary impact on numerous Listed buildings (given





on pages 12 and 13 of the HIA), due to the intrusive nature of the works within the setting of the Listed buildings. This temporary harm would be less than substantial.

Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably. Overall, the scheme would not result in an enhancement of the Conservation Area and the setting of the heritage assets.

Paragraph 197c of the NPPF states that when determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. The temporary works would fail to make a positive contribution, with the resulting permanent bridge making a neutral impact on the Conservation Area.

Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. The harm resulting from the proposed scheme will therefore need to be balanced against the public benefits.

As stated in Paragraph 199 of the NPPF, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight is given to the asset's conservation. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight should be, irrespective of whether the potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Due to the impact on the structural integrity of the Listed buildings mentioned above and the less than substantial harm to numerous heritage assets resulting from the temporary works, I would be unable to support an application for this scheme as proposed. I agree with the findings of the Heritage Impact Assessment, which concludes with the following recommendations:


- Much of the harm from this scheme results from the temporary bridge construction and use. As such it is recommended that other alternatives are considered to remove this item from the scheme.
- The permanent bridge will need to be designed in detail (with material samples) to ensure it is aesthetically appropriate.
- A construction management plan should be undertaken to mitigate and limit harm to listed buildings, particularly from vibration.



Place Services
Essex County Council
County Hall, Chelmsford
Essex, CM1 1QH
T: 0333 013 6840
www.placeservices.co.uk
@PlaceServices



Yours sincerely


Historic Buildings Advisor

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