



Heritage Statement

Proposed erection of a detached dwelling house on land adjacent to at Ashcroft, Slip Lane, Old Knebworth, Knebworth SG19 6QG



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The statement is structured as follows:

- 1.0 Introduction/ Background
- 2.0 Statutory Constraints
- 3.0 Methodology
- 4.0 Significance of the Heritage Assets
- 5.0 Planning Policy
- 6.0 Assessment
- 7.0 Conclusion

1.2 This Heritage Statement has been prepared to support an application for planning permission for the erection of a single dwelling house within the side garden to Ashcroft a semi-detached dwelling house within the settlement at Nup End which forms part of the village of Old Knebworth.

1.3 The site is bounded by dwellings to the east, west and south. An agricultural field is located to the north on the opposite side of Slip Lane from the application site.

1.4 This Statement identifies the significance of heritage assets and describes the implications of the proposal upon these assets. In this instance the designated heritage assets are Old Knebworth Conservation Area, Knebworth Park and Gardens and nearby listed buildings.

1.5 This assessment provides information to address the requirement of paragraph 189 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework), which requires:

“an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made to their setting”.

- 1.6 To inform an assessment of the development in the planning balance, in relation to the historic environment, any harm or impact upon the historic environment is described including impacts to significance.
- 1.7 Regarding the setting of listed buildings, case law has indicated what factors should be considered in the assessment of effect upon setting, which includes historic relationship and views of and from the listed buildings (inter-visibility). The character of this part of Old Knebworth Conservation Area includes dwelling houses along Park Lane and Slip Lane and the proposal would fall within the character of this part of the Conservation Area.
- 1.8 The proposal was subject to pre-application consultation with the Council, and this statement addresses the comments of officers as far as they relate to the historic environment.

2.0 STATUTORY CONSTRAINTS

- 2.1 The site lies within the Old Knebworth Conservation Area. Therefore, there is a statutory duty under the provisions of Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to give special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.
- 2.2 The site lies within the setting of a nearby listed building – Park Gate House and to a lesser extent. Therefore, there is a statutory duty under the provisions of Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses. Principally, officers recommended that the Knebworth Registered Park and Garden be included within the assessment upon heritage significance.

3.0 REVIEW OF KNOWN DATA

Methodology

3.1 This assessment concentrates upon a review of historical information located within approximately 500 metres of the site. This information is obtained from the following sources:

- ❖ The Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER);
- ❖ The National Heritage List for England,
- ❖ The National Monument Record (NMR), Swindon.

The Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) shows 9 entries within a 500m search area and the National Heritage List for England identifies 14 listed buildings.

Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER)

3.2 The entries on the HER are set out in the table below.

HER No.	Entry	Summary Description
2701	Village of Knebworth	Small post medieval estate village at the gates of Knebworth House some distance from the largely 20 th century settlement around the railway station.
11017	Manor Farm (Home Farm), Park Lane	Post -medieval farmstead built as a 19 th century model farm layout, used as stables as the gates to Knebworth Park
18538	Nup End Farm, Nup End Green	Grade II listed post medieval Farmstead
30337	Knebworth War Memorial	Grade II listed village war memorial
30338	Lytton Almshouses, Park Lane, Knebworth	Grade II listed almshouses built in 1836
30339	Inn Cottage, Park Lane, Knebworth	Grade II listed 17 th century timber-framed house enlarged in the early 19 th century
10298	Linear Earthworks at Knebworth House	Straight and parallel linear ditches within the registered Knebworth Park.

18535	19 th Century milestone at Nup End	Grade II listed milestone at the junction of Drivers End and Park Lane
5292	Letter Box Knebworth Old Village	Brick letter wall box

National Heritage List for England

3.3 There are 14 Listed buildings in the study area, some of which have entries on the HER. The nearest listed buildings are Park Gate House and Mulberry Tree Cottage.

3.4 Park Gate House is a Grade II listed building and located to the northwest of the site on the opposite side of Park Lane from the application site. The listing description is as follows:

“House. Early-mid C18 with c.1890 alterations and rear extension. Chequered red brick. Plain tile steep-pitched roof with coped, parapeted gable ends. 2 storeys and attics, 3 glazing bar casements, those of outer ground floor as square window bays Floor band. Formerly a gabled central porch and central 1st floor window. 2 hipped dormers. Road gable end with c.1890 canted 1st floor window. Rear wing repeats the outlines of the front block and has glazing bar casements. Circa 1960 front garage extension.”



Park Gate House

- 3.5 Mulberry Tree Cottage on Park Lane is a Grade II listed building across a field some 170m to the northeast of the application site. The listing description is as follows:

“House. 1910 by Sir Edwin Lutyens. Long asymmetrical range built of whitewashed brick, the roof machine tiled. 1 storey and attics. Glazing bar casements and brick mullioned windows with leaded lights. Slight central projection with a door on right in a 2-storey gabled bay, extended on right with a later lean-to addition. Left of door is a 6-light brick-mullioned leaded window band. Bracketed eaves. Left end of range has gabled garage projection with tile creasing corbels and to the right of this a through passage with a chanelled brick centre pier. 2 hipped dormers. Large glazing bar casements to rear elevation. (Lutyens Arts Council Catalogue, 1981).”

- 3.6 In addition, Knebworth Park and Garden is a Grade II* Park and Garden (List Entry Number 1000255). This asset consists of a landscape park and woodland of about 300 hectares, with formal gardens occupying about 2 hectares.

- 3.7 The gardens and parkland are set within a 17th century deer park and woodland and landscaped in the early 19th century. They surround Knebworth house, which is a 16th century house that was altered in the 19th century. The gardens were laid out in Victorian times in the Italianate style and remodelled by Edwin Lutyens in 1908 along with his remodelling of the interior of the house.

- 3.8 The effect upon the setting of nearby listed buildings and Knebworth Park and Garden is addressed at Section 6 of this statement.

Assessment of Significance

- 3.9 Heritage significance is defined at Annex 2 of the Framework as *“the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”*

- 3.10 In the articulation of value, Historic England have produced planning notes. Planning Note 2 (PN2) addresses managing significance in decision taking in the Historic Environment and Planning Note 3 (PN3) addresses the setting of heritage assets.

4.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSETS

4.1 This section considers the significance of the heritage assets.

4.2 **The Old Knebworth Conservation Area** is a designated heritage asset. There are numerous listed buildings within the Conservation area and II* registered Knebworth Park. Conservation areas are designated for their special architectural or historic interest. As a conservation area which includes Grade II* Listed buildings, a Grade II* Registered Park as well several Grade II Listed buildings, Old Knebworth Conservation Areas is a designated heritage asset of the highest significance.

4.3 Old Knebworth Conservation Area was designated on 6th October 1969 and first amended on 5th July 1990. The Council produced the Old Knebworth Conservation Area Character Assessment on 27 September 2011.

4.4 The Character Assessment indicates that the Conservation Area derives its significance from several architectural, historic, and environmental facts. It is a small settlement of Saxon Origins, comprising a large country house and grounds, including parish church within its parkland, Old Knebworth Village and the hamlet of Nup End. Knebworth House is listed grade II*. Nup End is described as a tiny historic settlement containing four listed buildings around one of the 'greens'. Prevalent use of timber framing, local red brick, clay tile and weatherboarding.

4.5 **Knebworth Park** which is Grade II* registered park and gardens of Special Historic Interest. The Framework defines registered parks or gardens as designated heritage assets and given the grading is a heritage asset of highest significance.

4.6 The significance of the park is derived from its historical value.

4.7 **Park Gate House** is a Grade II listed building. The Framework defines listed buildings as designated heritage assets and given the grading this building is a designated heritage asset of less than highest significance. The significance of the Park Gate House is derived from its historical and architectural values.

- 4.8 The historic interest of the Park Gate House is primarily evidential being part of the historic layout of Knebworth House and Park, it is of importance in terms of being part of the history of development of Old Knebworth.
- 4.9 The architectural interest of the heritage asset derives primarily from its form and design as a prestigious gate house built of red brick with distinctive plain steep-pitched roof with coped, parapeted gable end and square bay windows.
- 4.10 The site is to the southeast of the listed house with intervening boundary wall to the listed building, former garage building built circa 1960 (now a separate house - The Paddock) along with trees and hedge within the application site along the boundary with Park Lane.
- 4.11 Mulberry Tree Cottage is a Grade II Listed building. It is located across a field from the application site fronting onto Park Lane some 170m to the northeast. The application site is some distance from that property with limited effect upon setting due to intervening distance and limited intervisibility due to existing landscaping. As a Grade II listed building it is of less than highest significance as a designated heritage asset. The architect was Sir Edwin Lutyens, and the building derives its significance from its historical and architectural values including association with Lutyens.
- 4.12 **Archaeological remains** are generally considered as non-designated heritage assets, although they can be of sufficient importance that they should be assessed as designated heritage assets. Scheduled ancient monuments are designated heritage assets.
- 4.13 There is no evidence of occupation in the vicinity before the Medieval period. There is evidence of a medieval deer park and ridge and furrow in Knebworth as well as a bank of uncertain function. Nup End Farm to the southwest may have medieval origins.
- 4.14 The HER data for the area mostly refers to the Post Medieval Period including the post-medieval estate village of Old Knebworth.

- 4.15 Therefore, from an assessment of the HER it is considered that the site has potential for archaeological remains.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY RELATING TO THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1 Section 16 of the Framework sets out policies for development affecting heritage assets.
- 5.2 Paragraph 189 states *“in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.”*
- 5.3 Paragraph 190 states *“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 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.”*
- 5.4 Paragraph 192 sets out three matters that local planning authorities should take account of when determining planning applications. These are:
- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - The positive contribution that conservation and heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

- 5.5 Paragraph 193 indicates that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.
- 5.6 Paragraph 194 stipulates that substantial harm or loss of grade II listed buildings or grade II registered parks or gardens should be exceptional. Substantial harm or loss of assets of the highest significance such as grade I and II* listed buildings should be wholly exceptional.
- 5.7 Paragraph 195 confirms that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.
- 5.8 Paragraph 196 states that *“where a development proposal would 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.”* It is therefore necessary in the balance to consider the degree of harm of a development to significance and weigh this against public benefits. This exercise is undertaken in the submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement.

The Development Plan

- 5.9 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan includes the saved policies of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan no. 2 with Alterations.
- 5.10 There are no policies within the development plan that address listed buildings and conservation areas.

Submission North Hertfordshire District Local Plan 2011- 2031 (October 2016)

5.11 The policies of the emerging local Plan set out below relate to the historic environment. These have recently been amended by Main Modifications. Further hearings were scheduled for March 2020 but have been cancelled and took place on-line in September 2020.

5.12 **Policy SP13; Historic Environment**

The Council will balance the need for growth with the proper protection and enhancement of the historic environment. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, the more important the heritage asset the greater the weight that will be given to the conservation of the asset and the management of the its setting. We will pursue a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment through:

- a. Maintaining a strong presumption in favour of the retention, preservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their setting according to their significance;
- b. Identifying sites on the national register of Heritage at Risk or the Council's 'At Risk' register;
- c. Periodic reviews of Conservation Areas and other locally designated assets; and
- d. Publication of detailed guidance.

5.13 **Policy HE1: Designated Heritage Assets**

Planning applications relating to designated heritage assets shall be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment/Justification Statement that:

- i. Assesses the significance of heritage assets, including their setting;
- ii. Justifies and details the impacts of any proposal upon the significance of the designated heritage assets(s); and
- iii. Informs any necessary mitigation measures to minimise or mitigate against any identified harms.

Planning permission for development proposals affecting Designated Heritage Assets or their setting will be granted where they (as applicable)

- a. Enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance;
- b. Incorporates a palette of materials that make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, where it is appropriate and justified; and
- c. Will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designate heritage asset, and this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the development, including securing the asset's optimum viable use.

Where substantial harm to, or loss of significance, of a designated heritage asset is proposed the Council shall refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is necessary to deliver considerable public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.

5.14 **Policy HE4 – Archaeology**

Permission for development proposals affecting heritage assets with archaeological interest will be granted provided that: where

- a. Developers submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where justified, an archaeological field evaluation
- b. It is demonstrated how archaeological remains will be preserved and incorporated into the layout of that development, if in situ preservation of important archaeological remains is considered preferable; and
- c. Where the loss of the whole or material part of important archaeological remains is justified, appropriate conditions are applied to ensure that the archaeological recording, reporting, publication and archiving of the results of such archaeological work is undertaken before it is damaged or lost. Where archaeological sites have been assessed to meet the criteria for inclusion on adopted registers or maps of locally important heritage assets these shall be treated in the same way as archaeology areas of archaeological significance.

Areas of as yet, unknown archaeology may be identified during research, or through the planning or making process. These sites or areas should be treated in the same way as archaeology areas and areas of archaeological significance

6.0 EFFECT UPON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HERITAGE ASSETS

6.1 The Historic England guidance suggests that the first step in any assessment is to identify which heritage asset may be affected by a proposed development, then consider the significance of the heritage asset and the effect of development upon that significance.

Old Knebworth Conservation Area

6.2 The site lies within Old Knebworth Conservation area. It is therefore necessary to address whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

6.3 Any new development within a conservation area, of a scale such as a single dwelling, cannot cause substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset. A development of this scale could cause less than substantial harm to its significance as a heritage asset. However, if it is considered that the development would neither harm nor enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the effect would be neutral, and paragraph 196 of the Framework would not be engaged.

6.4 Different elements within a conservation area have varying degrees of importance in terms of their contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

6.5 Old Knebworth Conservation Area principally derives its significance from the architectural and historic interest of its associated Listed buildings and other historic buildings and Knebworth Park and Garden. There are spaces 'greens' within the Conservation Area that are important to its history. The application site is not such a space.

6.6 However, it is the narrow lane and hedgerows and the listed building opposite the application site on Park Lane that contribute to that value. Overall, there would be

little impact upon the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area, which is a country lane, with dwellings along it.

- 6.7 The design of the proposed dwelling would be of a traditional, Georgian style. This is a highly variable style but is characterised by balance and symmetry. There is no predominant style within the conservation area. The scale and symmetrical characteristics of the proposal would reflect the appearance of Ashcroft and adjoining house, Berek Cottage.



Front elevation of the proposed dwelling



Ashcroft and Berek Cottage viewed from Slip Lane.

- 6.8 The introduction of this dwelling would have limited impact to the heritage significance of the conservation area. With a high-quality design and materials, it is considered that the character and appearance of the conservation area would be preserved.

Listed Buildings

- 6.9 The site is within the setting of the nearby Grade II listed building - Park Gate House.



Park Gate House viewed from Park Lane

- 6.10 There is no known historical functional relationship between the land within the site and nearby listed building.
- 6.11 There is limited intervisibility between the listed building and the application site due to the presence of landscaping, boundary wall to the listed building and detached circa 1960s garage building that has been converted into a separate dwelling house. Moreover, the existing character of the site is a residential garden. The residential appearance of the site and the residential context of the listed building on the opposite side of Park Lane from the application site would be retained.



View of the application site from Park Lane

- 6.12 The introduction of this dwelling would have limited impact to the heritage significance of this listed building because of the development within its setting, given the limited inter-visibility. Overall, the setting of the listed building would be preserved, and paragraph 196 of the Framework is not engaged.

Knebworth Park and Garden

- 6.13 The house and garden stand on high ground to the north east of the application site. The park and woodland extend around the gardens including up to Park Lane. They are extensive covering about 300 hectares.
- 6.14 The setting is largely rural, with long views north and north-east from the house and adjacent parkland. There are several entrances and approaches. The earliest entrance to the park may have been from the southern corner a Park Gate House.
- 6.15 The gardens are some distance from the application site. The application site is within the setting of the park on its southern periphery within a residential but semi-rural setting formed by the houses at this part of Nup End, fields, and park.

6.16 Overall, the setting of the registered park and gardens would remain, and the significance of the heritage asset preserved. Therefore, paragraph 196 of the Framework is not engaged.

Archaeology

6.17 From a review of the HER and given the modest scale of the proposed development, it is considered that the effect upon any remains that may be present can be adequately addressed by condition in this instance.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Archaeology

- 7.1 The site has limited potential for archaeological remains, which if present would be likely to be of local significance. The effect upon archaeology can be adequately addressed by planning condition and this matter is for consideration in the balance against the provisions of emerging Local Plan Policy HE4 and paragraph 197 of the Framework.

Conservation Area

- 7.2 The site is within the Old Knebworth Conservation Area. The proposal is for a single dwelling set within a spacious garden, which would reflect the grain of development in the immediate area. It does not offer open views within the Conservation Area and towards nearby listed buildings.
- 7.3 The design of the dwelling would reflect the character of the conservation area, where there is a mix of styles and size of dwellings.
- 7.4 The proposed development would have a limited impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area and with careful design and choice of materials would have a neutral impact upon the conservation area as a designated heritage asset.

Setting of Listed Buildings and Registered Park and Gardens

- 7.5 The significance of nearby listed buildings and registered park and gardens was assessed in relation to the proposed dwelling house. Although the adjacent listed building (Park Gate House) is on the opposite side of Park Lane from the application site, the limited level of inter-visibility due to landscaping, and modest scale of the proposal would limit the effect upon the setting of the listed building, to the extent that its heritage significance would be unharmed. The site is peripheral to the registered park, beyond its southern corner and not prominent within its setting.

- 7.6 There is no known historical functional relationship with the listed building or park and gardens.
- 7.7 In the circumstances, the proposed dwelling house is considered to have a very small impact on the setting of the listed building and Knebworth park and garden to the extent that its significance would be unharmed.
- 7.8 The Planning Balance is considered in the Planning, Design and Access Statement, which identifies the public benefits of the proposal and confirms that when applying the balance advocated by Submitted Local Plan Policies SP13 and HE1, the test set out at paragraph 196 of the Framework, is not engaged.