

David Buckley MA MRTPI IHBC
Historic Environment Team
Place Services
Three Rivers Council

27 March 2025

Dear David,

RE: Land to North of Little Green Lane Croxley Green WD3 3SP (24/2073/OUT)

I write in response to your comments with regard to the above-named scheme (dated 19th February 2025).

Regarding Durrants House you acknowledged that there was no known association between the land within the site and the asset beyond their relative proximity and intervisibility with the land acting as an agrarian backdrop and concluded that the proposed development would:

'... result in less than substantial harm to the setting of Durrants House. The degree of less than substantial harm would be at a low-mid level. The degree of harm could be mitigated to some extent by increasing the width of the green corridor, reducing the height of development along the corridor and moving formal elements including hard landscaping, LEAP and main road to more distant areas. However, due to the scale of the proposal and the fundamental change in land use and character, the harm would not be removed.'

With regard to Cassiobury Park you noted the proposed green space and planting would:

'... mitigate the harm to the setting of the RPG to the extent that it would result in less than substantial harm at the lowest end of this spectrum.'

The project team has considered the viability of altering the design to accommodate your suggestions with regard to the setting of Durrants House but we do not believe any amendments can be delivered. We believe that despite this the development, as proposed, has already been carefully considered to balance the delivery of a high-quality development whilst seeking to minimise the adverse effects of the proposal upon the setting of the two adjacent heritage assets.

The green corridor, as proposed, is c. 50m wide at its narrowest point and c. 55m at its widest point. The LEAP is deliberately located near to the proposed Local Centre on the basis of community benefit and is situated near to the southern edge of the site as this means it is effectively screened from Durrants House by the existing hedgerow on the north side of Little Green Lane.

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The introduction of tree planting in the vicinity of the LEAP was conceived of as a direct design response to a small parcel of orchard recorded at this location on historic Ordnance Survey maps.

The height of the development flanking the green corridor was discussed with the independent Design Review Panel, during the scheme development. It was felt that having the buildings at this location framing the view would reinforce the link between the rear of Durrants House and Whippendell Wood (including the views from PRoW 17) as they would lead the eye along the green corridor.

The adverse effect upon the setting of Durrants House was flagged in the Heritage Assessment as being Less than Substantial Harm at the lower end of the spectrum as the contribution of the site to the significance of the asset is very limited. I still believe this consideration of harm to be an accurate assessment of the impacts of the proposed development as the elements of the asset's setting that would have contributed more firmly to its significance have been removed through numerous phases of development of the park and gardens that it was once associated with, and which lie exclusively outside of the area of the proposed development.

Furthermore, the principal elevation of Durrants House faces south, away from the site, with the stable-yard and service wing to the north, being the closest elements of the asset and screening the main house from the land within the site. The ground floor windows within the northern elevation of the service wing are screened from the site by the hedge which will be retained meaning there will only be limited visibility of the site from first floor windows (as recorded in Plate 28 of the heritage assessment).

I trust that the above consideration reassures you that the project team has considered the potential effects of the proposed development upon the historic environment and has ensured that this has been fed through the entire design process.

Yours sincerely

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