Bramshill House & Gardens

Key Issues –
Bramshill House is a Grade 1 listed Jacobean House that sits within a Grade 1 Historic Park & Garden. The house is considered to be among the most important Jacobean mansions in the country and has been described as 'one of the glories of English architecture'. It has had a varied history of occupancy and was most recently used for the National Police Training College before being purchased by a private developer.

The new owners sought to develop the house through the provision of residential units by converting the house together with new build properties in the surrounding gardens.

The main constraints to development are:
- The heritage listings, to the house, curtilage buildings and structures;
- The heritage listing of the surrounding gardens;
- The adjacent SPA and 2 SSSIs;
- Ecological constraints, including:
  o 56 bat roosts, including maternity roosts
  o Populations of Great Crested Newts
  o Locally important for reptiles
  o Badger setts
  o Breeding and wintering bird populations

Purpose of the project
The project sought to find a viable development, which gave cognisance to the historic importance and value of the site and achieved two main aims:
- The renovation, restoration and maintenance of the Grade 1 listed mansion, other listed buildings and the historic landscape; and
- The delivery of additional housing to enable the restoration and enhancement required to the historic mansion and gardens.

Description of the project
The development proposals were split into 6 separate applications, 3 of which concerned proposals for the main house and 3 for areas of new build within the surrounding land. The 3 proposals for the house were:
- Single residence
- Multi-residences
- Offices

The new build was divided into three distinct areas each of which was subject to its own planning application although all three areas of new build are required to make for a viable development.
Lessons learnt
It was recognised that a combination of the 6 applications would be required to deliver a viable scheme and there were therefore 3 options considered by the EIA. The challenge was to ensure that the EIA assessed the whole development for each option, the cumulative assessments reported the interactions between the developments and that the conclusions of the EIA were for the whole development and not limited to any one application, which may have otherwise led to accusations of ‘salami slicing’.
For clarification, the following Options were assessed by the EIA:
Combination Option 1; Conversion of the Mansion and ancillary buildings for multi-residential use and the maximum extent of new build.
Conversion of the Mansion and ancillary buildings for single-residential use and the maximum extent of new build.
Conversion of the Mansion and ancillary buildings for Office use and the maximum extent of new build.
The only differences between the Options related to the proposed use of the existing Mansion, Stables, and Nuffield and Newsam buildings which are located within the TBH 400m exclusion zone

Lessons learnt cont. –
This approach is considered to be consistent with relevant EIA guidance which outline two judgements regarding the treatment of EIA in relation to cumulative effects.
In the case of R v Swale BC ex parte RSPB [1991] 1PLR 6, it was found that “an application should not be considered in isolation if, in reality, it is an integral part of a more substantial development” and it has since been found that “In such cases, the need for Environmental Impact Assessment must be considered in the context of the whole development”. In Candlish [2005] EWHC 1539 and Baker [2009] EWHC 595, it was identified that “it is appropriate to establish whether each of the proposed developments could proceed independently”
The financial viability the Bramshill House proposals requires the delivery of all three development proposals for the park and gardens. The EIA considered the maximum amount of development and therefore all likely significant effects for a worst-case. It assumed that no new significant effects would occur as a result of a lesser combination of development.

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