

Natural & Built Environment Team

Consultation Response

Application No:	P/24/0258/2	
Address:	Brand Hill House, Brand Hill, Woodhouse Eaves, Leicestershire, LE12 8SX	
Description:	Installation of track and use of existing vehicular access point and the track for access to existing dwellinghouse with associated works (Retrospective)	
Comment on:	Built Heritage	
Officer:	Penny McKnight	Date: 2/10/24

Revised Plans

Further to comments dated 26/6/24, revised plans were submitted on 15 August 2024, and more detailed comments have been requested.

Revisions:

1. A 'Curtilage Plan' has been submitted confirming a mixed use of *'residential, forestry and for access to the paddock'* for the first 25m of the track from the road to the new additional section of track for residential access. The plan also confirms that there is no proposal to extend the residential curtilage to include the paddock or the land around the track.
2. A Landscaping Plan has been prepared and the Site Plan has been amended. This shows the blocking up of the existing roadside residential access adjacent to the gates to the paddock, and some supplementary planting.

Site Plan and Landscaping:

Removal of existing gate: The existing metal gate is considered to be a feature that contributes to the special character and appearance of the Woodhouse Eaves Conservation Area (WECA). It appears to date from the late 19th century when the grounds to Brand Hill House (then Oak House) were first laid out, and is of decorative cast iron in an Arts and Crafts style. It is paired with the residential access gate further to the northwest, which still serves the drive to the house. The removal of this feature from the street scene of the WECA would harm its character and appearance, and there would be a dilution of the legibility of the historic plan form of the gardens to Brand Hill House.



c.1901

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The removal of the associated driveway would be an unwelcome alteration to the historic plan form of the gardens of Brand Hill, but in isolation would not be considered to harm the character or appearance of the WECA

New Residential Access from existing track

The Woodhouse Eaves Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) sets out the character of the Brand Hill part of the conservation area: *'The road runs straight, dropping gently through woods with openings and scattered houses, some very large and important, though most of them hidden in the woods'* (p.11) and *'a pleasant alternation of dense woodland which comes up to the edge of the highway with open clearings of meadows and openings to private gardens'* (p.12). Brand Hill itself is *'effectively hidden in the woods'* (p.25). The proposed access would not affect these characteristics and would not be readily visible from any public vantage point. There is no proposal to remove any trees or alter the boundary between house and paddock, although some were removed for the new access point.

Notably, when the gardens were laid out to the house, at some point between 1901 and 1928, an access from the gardens to the then meadow was included. Although this may have been pedestrian rather than vehicular, it does demonstrate some historic interconnection, which is reinstated by the new access.



c.1928

The previous application (P/22/0771/2) was refused and subsequent appeal dismissed. Partly due to the lighting, which introduced a clear domestic character outside of the residential curtilage of Brand Hill House and in the area described in the CACA as 'meadow' and now used as a paddock. The timber gate was also raised as out of character with the area, but has now been deemed to be Lawful Development, albeit not for residential use and without the intercom and automation of the gates.

With these elements of the application variously removed or deemed lawful, there would be no further impact on the 'appearance' of the WECA or loss of the characteristics set out in the CACA. There would, however, be some change to its 'character' due to the introduction of domestic vehicle movements outside of the established domestic curtilage. The extent or frequency of these vehicle movements is not clear, particularly given there is no proposal to close up or remove the existing gate and access to the northwest.

Conclusion

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

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Policy CS14 requires development proposals to protect heritage assets and their setting, and for development to be informed by and reflect Conservation Area Character Appraisals, Landscape Character Appraisals and Village Design Statements.

Subject to the retention of the existing historic metal gate to Brand Hill, and removal of any existing lighting to the track (not part of the current application), there would be no harm to the appearance of the Woodhouse Eaves CACA. There would be some slight change to the character of the access due to the encroachment of residential vehicle movements outside of the curtilage of Brand Hill House and within the woodland, but this would not conflict with the wider character of the WECA.

There is no conflict with the heritage policies of the Woodhouse Eaves Village Design Statement, or Neighbourhood Plan which introduces policies to protect identified non-designated heritage assets, views, and ridge and furrow, none of which would be affected by the development.

In NPPF terms, some slight 'less than substantial harm' is identified, and would need to be weighed against any public benefits of the scheme in accordance with NPPF 209.