



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 May 2025

by **F Cullen BA(Hons) MSc DipTP MRTPI IHBC**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/W/24/3352560

Southfield, Guyzance Hall Estate, Acklington, Northumberland

Easting 421063 / Northing 603907

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Jonathan Dodd, Guyzance Hall Estate, against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/03532/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as, build 2 No 3 bedroom detached houses on land currently used for agricultural purposes on Guyzance Estate and within Guyzance village itself.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The details of the address, appellant and description in the heading above are taken from the application form.
3. As part of the appeal, the appellant has submitted an additional drawing and documents which did not form part of the application, and were not considered or consulted on by the Council in its decision¹. These include a District Heating System (DHS) Infrastructure Plan V1 Ref: 26680 1200 P03²; Guyzance Estate: Strategic Plan and Addendum³; and a Boundary Wall Structural Assessment⁴.
4. Mindful of guidance⁵ and caselaw⁶ concerning amendments to schemes in the appeal process, the additional drawing and documents do not involve a substantial difference or fundamental change to the development proposed. Rather, they clarify aspects; provide context; and offer additional information and justification, in support of the scheme. Moreover, the Council and any interested parties have had the opportunity to comment on them as part of the appeal process. On this basis, I exceptionally accept the additional drawing/ documents and have taken them into account in determining the appeal.
5. Also submitted with the appeal is a signed and dated Unilateral Undertaking and Title Plan (UU)⁷. The Council was given the opportunity to comment on the UU but

¹ As listed in 'New Appeal Information Schedule'.

² Revision of Drawing Ref: 26680 1200 P02 – 'Guyzance Infrastructure' added (on line of 'basic infrastructure' on Rev P02).

³ Strategic Plan: Guyzance Hall Estate Ltd, Purcell Architecture Ltd, Harry Shipley Planning and Sustainable Development Consultants, Dated March 2022; and Addendum: Nicolson Nairn Architects, Dated August 2024.

⁴ BMC Bell Munro Consulting: Boundary Wall Structural Assessment, Dated April 2024.

⁵ Procedural Guide: Planning Appeals – England. Dated 1 December 2025. Section 16, Paragraph 16.1.

⁶ *Holborn Studios Ltd v The Council of the London Borough of Hackney* (2018), which refined the 'Wheatcroft principles' set out in *Bernard Wheatcroft v Secretary of State for the Environment* (1982).

⁷ Dated 18 November 2024.

no response was received. Part of the UU provides a contribution towards the Council's Coastal Mitigation Service (CMS) to address the second reason for refusal⁸. The contribution is required because the appeal site (the site) falls within the 'zone of influence' for coastal sites designated at an international level, namely the Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site, and the North Northumberland Dunes Special Area of Conservation.

6. Contribution to the CMS enables a conclusion of no adverse effect on site integrity to be reached when a planning application/ appeal is subject to an appropriate assessment, without the applicant/ appellant having to commission any survey or mitigation work.
7. From the information before me, the UU meets the tests set out in Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 and Paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the Framework); and the requirements of the CMS. As such, it addresses the Council's second reason for refusal. I also note the Council's acknowledgement that, if a UU is submitted then the need for this reason for refusal would fall away.
8. Bearing the above in mind, as well as that I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons and that this provision relates to mitigation as opposed to constituting a benefit, it is not necessary for me to consider this matter any further. I have therefore not included it as a main issue, nor referenced it in the planning balance. I am satisfied that the parties' interests are not prejudiced by this approach.
9. The UU also includes provision of an 'offer' to 'Benefiting Properties'⁹ of a connection to a District Heating Network (DHN)¹⁰. I deal with this matter in my reasoning below.
10. The site is located within the Guyzance Conservation Area (the GCA) and is proximate to Grade II listed buildings, primarily, No 6 Guyzance Village¹¹ (No 6) and Nos 7 and 8 Guyzance Village¹² (Nos 7 and 8). The site also includes a stone boundary wall, the status of which is a matter of dispute between the parties. The Council submit it is listed Grade II, forming part of Roadside Walls on South of Street¹³ (Roadside Walls). This is challenged by the appellant, citing the absence of a statutory listings map defining 'Roadside Walls'; the omission of the boundary wall on the Statutory Charges Register of the Land Registry; and differences between the site's boundary wall and the list entry in terms of height and detailing.
11. Nonetheless, it is not within the scope of this appeal to assess the validity or legality of the listing. The site's boundary wall corresponds with the 'statutory address' in the list entry; and the structure is clearly of some age and displays characteristics consistent with the listing description, including squared rubble and pitched copings. I also note that Historic England refer to it as being 'listed' in its consultee comments. In the absence of substantive evidence to the contrary, I have proceeded on the basis that the wall forms part of the Grade II listed building, Roadside Walls, and is a designated heritage asset. As the appellant's evidence

⁸ A contribution to the Council of £1,230 for two residential units at £615 each, payable prior to commencement of the development.

⁹ Para 1.3 in UU – the 'Benefitting Properties' are Nos 6, 7 and 8 Guyzance.

¹⁰ Also referred to as the District Heating System (DHS).

¹¹ National Heritage List for England, List Entry Number: 1371132.

¹² National Heritage List for England, List Entry Number: 1041889.

¹³ National Heritage List for England, List Entry Number: 1371133.

has, for the most part, assessed it on this basis, this approach does not prejudice their interests.

12. Further to the above, the proposal involves the deconstruction and re-build of the boundary wall, which it is reasonable to conclude 'would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.' As set out in section 7(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), these works would require listed building consent. For the avoidance of doubt, the appeal before me relates solely to an application for planning permission for proposed development and I have determined it on that basis.
13. Accordingly, as required by sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Act, I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed buildings or their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess; and paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.
14. In March 2025, during the course of the appeal, the Acklington Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2036 (the NP) was made. Following this, the Council advanced conflict of the proposed development with Policies ANP2, ANP5 and ANP6 of the NP. The parties were given an opportunity to comment on these matters and to set out their respective cases in the form of a statement of common ground (SOCG)¹⁴.
15. Policy ANP2 concerns Principal Residency Dwellings and confirms that, 'Within the Guyzance Conservation Area, proposals for new housing... will only be supported where occupation is restricted in perpetuity to ensure that each new dwelling is occupied only as a Principal Residence. This restriction will apply unless the percentage of second homes, holiday homes and holiday lets within the Guyzance Conservation Area falls below 20% and will be secured through a planning condition or an agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 section 106.'
16. As part of the SOCG both parties undertook an assessment of the number of second homes, holiday homes and holiday lets within the GCA. The parties differ in their conclusions on this matter, with the appellant calculating 11.1% and the Council calculating 17.65%. There is limited supporting evidence before me to definitively confirm either of the figures stated. Even so, it is common ground that, at present, Policy ANP2 is not triggered by the percentage of holiday homes, second homes and holiday lets within the GCA. Moreover, I am satisfied that, had I been minded to allow the appeal, this matter could have been secured through an appropriately worded condition. Therefore, I have not included this matter as a main issue.
17. Policy ANP5 concerns Local Green Spaces (LGS). Its wording reflects Paragraph 108 of the Framework¹⁵. Listed as designated LGS within ANP5 is LGS5: Open Space in Guyzance Village, which includes the appeal site.
18. Policy ANP5 and the Framework are clear that the designation of land as LGS is just that. It is not the designation of the land as Green Belt (my emphasis). Rather,

¹⁴ Agreed and Signed Statement of Common Ground dated 19 April 2025.

¹⁵ Policies and decisions for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts set out in chapter 13 of this Framework. (Excluding provisions relating to grey belt and previously developed land set out in chapter 13). This wording is similar to the equivalent paragraph in the 2023 version, in place when the NP Examiners Report was published.

it confirms that designated areas of LGS will be protected in a manner consistent with the protection of land within the Green Belt, and that planning applications will be determined in accordance with Green Belt policy.

19. There is no equivalent policy within the Northumberland Local Plan 2016-2036 (2022) (the LP). As a non-strategic policy in the NP, ANP5 does not take precedence over strategic policies within the LP relating to the Council's spatial strategy and Green Belt. As directed by Paragraph 108 of the Framework and reflected in Policy ANP5, I have assessed this issue of the appeal consistent with national policy for Green Belts set out in Chapter 13 of the Framework, and LP Policy STP 8 concerning Development in the Green Belt (Strategic Policy).
20. The appellant submits that Policy ANP5 should be given reduced weight on the basis that it conflicts with strategic Policy STP 4 of the LP concerning climate change mitigation and adaptation, which the proposal would support and provide resilience to in the form of connections to a DHN to the new dwellings and the offer of connections to a DHN to 'benefitting properties' in Guyzance.
21. However, the two policies relate to two different matters, and any support from them, or conflict with them, is as a result of the specific details and circumstances of the proposal and the site, not an inherent lack of conformity between the two. The perceived benefits or harm arising from the proposal and the weight they carry in the planning balance are matters of planning judgement. Consequently, I give both policies full weight.
22. Policy ANP6 concerns the GCA and is considered as part of the second main issue.

Main Issues

23. Having regard to the above, the main issues in this appeal are:

- Whether the proposal would comply with the Framework and relevant development plan policies concerning the management of development in Local Green Space; and
- Whether the proposal would i) preserve the Grade II listed building, Roadside Walls on South of Street; ii) preserve the settings of adjacent Grade II listed buildings, No 6 Guyzance Village and Nos 7 and 8 Guyzance Village; and iii) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Guyzance Conservation Area.

Reasons

Background

24. The site is a roughly 'L-shaped' and approximately level, piece of agricultural rough grazing land that sits on the south side of the public highway which passes through the small built core of Guyzance. It is bound to the north by a dwarf stone wall and hedging/ vegetation, and to the other sides by a combination of stock fencing and hedging/ vegetation. No 6 and Nos 7 and 8 lie either side of the site, and to the south are open fields. The site forms part of the Guyzance Hall Estate which covers a much wider area.

Local Green Space

25. As designated LGS, the site is demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance. Paragraph 153 of the Framework sets out that, substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness, and by inference to LGS. Paragraph 154 of the Framework states that development in the Green Belt, and by inference LGS, is inappropriate unless one of a number of exceptions applies. Of these, and referenced by both of the parties in the SOCG, is 154 e) limited infilling in villages. This exception is included within Policy STP 8 of the LP.
26. Assessing a proposal against 154 e) requires consideration of whether it would be in a village; whether it would represent infilling; and, if so, whether that infilling would be limited. These matters are a question of fact and planning judgment for the decision maker.
27. In assessing whether a settlement is a village or whether a site is in a village, regard should be had to the situation 'on the ground', such as the number of buildings or properties that are grouped together, their inter-relationship and spacing, the facilities and services available and the juxtaposition of the site with surrounding buildings and any open land beyond, as well as any relevant policies.
28. The evidence refers interchangeably to Guyzance as both a hamlet and a village. Guyzance is not identified as being a 'small village' in terms of the settlement hierarchy under Policy STP 1 of the LP. Additionally, on site I observed that although there is a grouping of properties in the built core of Guyzance, these are fairly low in number, of low density, and are set within an expansive open landscape. Also, there are no public/community services and facilities available within the settlement, such as public transport, shop, public house or church.
29. I acknowledge that the newly made NP refers to Guyzance as a 'village'. However, having regard to the above, it is reasonable to conclude that this reference is drawn from local expression, rather than the findings of a robust assessment against the situation on the ground and relevant LP policies. This all points to Guyzance not being a 'village' for the purposes of applying policies in the Framework and the development plan.
30. That said, I note the parties' comments on this matter in the SOCG, where there is general agreement that the settlement should be treated as a village in terms of the Framework's references to villages. I have therefore done the same.
31. The terms 'infilling' and 'limited' for the purposes of 154 e) are not defined in the Framework, although Policy STP 8 of the LP does expand on what is considered to constitute 'limited infilling'. A commonly accepted definition of infilling is the 'development of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage'. Given the site's size and position within the built core of Guyzance, it is reasonable to conclude that it comprises a small gap within a built up frontage between the properties of Nos 6 and 7; and that the introduction of the proposed development within it would 'infill' that gap.
32. The final test under exception 154 e) is whether this infilling would be 'limited'. The two plots would take up practically all of the northern width of the site, with the associated patio areas, bicycle and wood stores, vehicular access/ parking and domestic garden areas extending into the depth of the site. Bearing in mind the size

of the site in the context of this small built core, as well as the significance of this open space to both the local community and the character of Guyzance, I am not persuaded that the infilling would be 'limited'. This finding is supported by part 2c of Policy STP 8 of the LP. Consequently, the proposal does not meet the exception of 'limited infilling in villages'.

33. Additionally, in terms of openness, the proposal would introduce permanent built form of a moderate size in both footprint and volume, vehicular access/ parking and associated domestic paraphernalia, onto land and into space where presently there is none. It would also give rise to an enduring intensification of activity within the site which does not currently exist. These outcomes would conspicuously reduce the visual and spatial aspects of the LGS's openness in this location. On this basis, the proposal would cause substantial harm to the openness of this part of LGS5: Open space in Guyzance Village.
34. Accordingly, the proposal would not comply with the Framework and relevant development plan policies concerning the management of development in LGS. It would conflict with Paragraph 108 of the Framework and Policy ANP 5 of the NP referred to above.

Listed buildings and conservation area

Special interest and significance

35. The list entry for Roadside Walls states that they date from probably mid-19th century. They are constructed from squared rubble with cut dressings and pitched copings. From the evidence before me and relevant to the appeal, the special interest and significance of Roadside Walls are mainly derived from their value as part of a group. Their use of local stone, traditional method of construction and configuration, when taken with other listed assets within Guyzance, provide a degree of coherence to the historic built fabric and street scene of the settlement.
36. The appellant submits that the boundary wall within the site is later, possibly dating from the late-19th century. Additionally, it is shorter¹⁶ and does not incorporate some of the features present in other boundary walls that front residential properties on the south side of the street. It is in very poor condition, mainly due to a combination of hedge root mass and retained soil behind it. Even so, I agree with the appellant that it is a key feature of the site¹⁷. The factors above do not wholly undermine its heritage merit as part of a listed building or, importantly, the asset's value as part of a group.
37. No 6 is a detached, single-storey cottage which sits adjacent to and facing the highway, with a small garden frontage enclosed by a low, stone, boundary wall. It dates from the 18th century and was remodelled in the mid-19th century. The building is constructed of local carboniferous sandstone with a pantile roof. Nos 7 and 8 are a row of single-storey cottages which, similar to No 6, sit set back from and facing the highway with a small frontage enclosed by a low, stone, boundary wall and hedge (in part). The asset dates from the 18th century and was remodelled/ altered in the mid-19th and 20th centuries. It is constructed of local carboniferous sandstone with a Welsh slate roof.

¹⁶ Between 300mm and 500mm in height, rather than 800mm.

¹⁷ Design and Access Statement p 6. Nicholson Nairn. Ref: 26680, dated March 2021.

38. From the evidence before me, the special interest and significance of these listed buildings stem, in part, from their illustration of 18th century, rural estate domestic architecture; modest architectural form and style, using traditional materials and construction methods; and their value as part of a group. Relevant to the appeal, special interest and significance are also derived from their open and verdant settings, which allow their heritage merit, both individually and collectively, to be experienced and appreciated. The buildings' immediate settings include the site, which forms a break in built form on the south side of the street. The historic undeveloped nature and continued agricultural use of this land has resulted in it becoming a recognised integral feature between the listed buildings, providing a link to the settlement's rural context. In these respects, the immediate settings of No 6 and Nos 7 and 8, including the site, contribute in a meaningful and positive way to their significance, as well as provide the ability to appreciate that significance.
39. The GCA is focused around the built core of Guyzance, Guyzance Hall, and Barnhill Farmhouse and Cottages, but also takes in the wider pastoral setting of these buildings. The special interest and significance of the GCA as a whole predominantly stem from the groupings of heritage assets at its core and at the Hall complex and their surroundings. Relevant to the appeal, along the street through Guyzance, the buildings and intervening spaces, including the site, result in a low-density, loose pattern of development, which permits an understanding of the settlement's simple rural character and countryside context.
40. Moreover, the largely consistent, modest scale and form, set-back, orientation and materials of the properties and boundary treatments, provide a degree of cohesiveness to the streetscape which has been sustained over time. Together, these qualities create a strong sense of place. Whilst boundary walls and hedges to the properties and spaces provide some screening, these characteristic and positive traits are still highly discernible.
41. By virtue of their individual heritage merit as well as their value as a group, Roadside Walls, No 6, and Nos 7 and 8, including their open settings, add considerably to Guyzance's special interest and local distinctiveness. In doing so they notably contribute to the character and appearance of the GCA as a whole and thereby to its significance as a designated heritage asset.

Effects

42. Paragraph 212 of the Framework states that 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. Paragraph 213 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or from development within its setting and that this should have clear and convincing justification.
43. As confirmed by the appellant, the proposal would involve the deconstruction and re-build of the existing boundary wall within the site¹⁸. Given the wall's very poor condition, this would ensure its long-term conservation, reusing the existing fabric and employing appropriate construction techniques and materials.

¹⁸ Option 3 set out in the Appellant's Grounds of Appeal and Boundary Wall Structural Assessment.

44. However, the re-build would include the wall's reconfiguration and a likely loss of historic fabric to accommodate the proposed development¹⁹. The formation of a repositioned opening with curved walls into the site to allow vehicular access, and additional openings to allow footpath access, would weaken the intrinsic simplicity of the boundary wall and alter the authenticity of how it is experienced as part of both the listed building and the group. This would lessen the contribution it makes to the heritage merit of Roadside Walls and thus the wider grouping of heritage assets.
45. The proposal, as shown, would not affect the historic fabric of No 6 and Nos 7 and 8, and would not disturb some of the immediate settings and most of the wider settings of these assets. Additionally, the frontage alignment, orientation, scale, form, design and materials of the proposed dwellings, are sensitive to, and largely compatible with, those of the existing properties within Guyzance; and I am satisfied that they would be built to a high standard.
46. Nonetheless, the introduction of substantial built form, along with vehicular access/parking, would markedly diminish the undeveloped, open and verdant qualities of the site. Moreover, it would result in a change in the nature of the land to, likely, more manicured domestic gardens, with associated paraphernalia. As development within the immediate settings of No 6 and Nos 7 and 8, it would affect how the assets are experienced within Guyzance, and fundamentally alter the ability to appreciate their heritage merit, individually and as part of a group. Consequently, the proposal would notably lessen the positive contribution that the settings of these assets make to their significance, as well as reduce the ability to appreciate that significance.
47. The changes to the boundary wall and effective loss of a space which is integral to the historic and current layout and composition of this small rural settlement, would also undermine recognised positive traits which underpin the character and appearance of the GCA as a whole.
48. The modest size of the built core of Guyzance, combined with the removal of the hedge next to the boundary wall, mean that the identified harmful effects would be highly perceptible and keenly felt when viewed from the adjacent public route.
49. Historically, buildings and land within the core of Guyzance have changed and evolved²⁰. I accept that change is inevitable, and that conservation is a process of managing that change, not preventing it. However, of itself, previous change does not justify the proposal. The incremental loss and/or alteration of identified key elements, which would be highly apparent within such a small settlement, would not conserve these heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
50. Overall, the proposal would fail to preserve the Grade II listed building Roadside Walls; fail to preserve the settings of the Grade II listed buildings, No 6 and Nos 7 and 8; and fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the GCA as a whole. As such, the significance of these designated heritage assets would be harmed.

¹⁹ As shown on Proposed Site Plan Ref: 26680 1100 P21 (Proposed Site Plan v4).

²⁰ Evolution of Guyzance Plan Ref: 26680 0500 P03.

Public benefits and balance

51. In finding harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG) require the magnitude of that harm to be assessed. The proposal would affect only part of the assets of Roadside Walls, No 6 and Nos 7 and 8 (by virtue of development within their setting), and the GCA. Nonetheless, bearing in mind the size of the core of Guyzance as well as the 'group' interrelated nature of the assets, I find that the totality of the harm would be a moderate level of 'less than substantial'. This harm carries considerable importance and weight. The Framework requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing the asset's optimum viable use.
52. The PPG is clear that public benefits could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the Framework. They should flow from the proposed development and should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit²¹.
53. The proposed development would contribute two dwellings to the local housing mix and supply. There would also be some, time limited, economic benefits generated by the construction of the dwellings, and further economic and social benefits arising from their occupation and future occupiers supporting services and facilities in the area. However, the weight this carries in support of the appeal is moderated by the very modest amount of development proposed. Additionally, I have not been presented with any evidence which supports the appellant's claim that it would provide much needed family housing in the area; and there is no suggestion that the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply.
54. Heritage benefits would arise from the deconstruction and re-build of the boundary wall, safeguarding its future as a free-standing structure. Even so, this benefit could be achieved without the proposed development, whilst also maintaining its existing configuration. In this regard, I note the appellant's stated commitment to the ongoing management/ maintenance of the Estate. These factors limit the weight this benefit carries in the balance.
55. Environmental benefits would be gained by the connection of the proposed dwellings to the Estate's DHN, a renewable energy source produced by the Estate's carbon neutral hydroelectric generation plant. This would provide environmentally sustainable net-zero carbon homes within Guyzance. Additionally, the proposal includes the installation of DHN 'Guyzance Infrastructure'²² and the submitted UU provides for the 'offer' of a connection to 'benefitting properties'²³, namely Nos 6, 7 and 8 Guyzance. The connections would remove the need for oil or gas heating at all of the properties on the south side of the street.
56. The connections to the DHN would clearly accord with national and local policies²⁴ and guidance in meeting the challenge of climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy; and the aims of the appellant in this regard are to be commended. That said, although the connections to the new dwellings and any

²¹ Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723.

²² As shown on District Heating System (DHS) Infrastructure Plan V1 Ref: 26680 1200 P03.

²³ Para 1.6 of UU District Heating Network – a system installed by the owner to afford heating piped to the boundary of the land to heat it and which would be offered under the terms of this agreement to others and if accepted, pipe a heating supply to the accepting properties as set out in further detail in the application.

²⁴ Chapter 14 of the Framework and Policy STP 4 of the LP.

associated environmental/ public benefits would be guaranteed through the proposal, there is no certainty that the 'benefitting properties' would take up the opportunity to be connected to the DHN, which the UU indicates would be in the form of a single, time-limited, offer. Even if the offers were accepted, the provision as part of this proposal would be limited to the south side of the street, with the appellant being the beneficiary of any financial recompense. On this basis, it could not reasonably be described as a community facility.

57. I am mindful of the need to give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings as set out in Paragraph 167 of the Framework. However, where proposals would affect conservation areas and listed buildings, Paragraph 167 also requires the application of policies in Chapter 16 relating to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. No details, indicative or otherwise, of the connections to the listed benefitting properties located within the GCA have been provided. Therefore, I cannot be certain that this element of the proposal would preserve their special interest and not harm their significance.
58. Furthermore, the provision of a DHN to the wider Estate, which is stated to be 'approved and well underway', is separate to the appeal proposal. Having regard to guidance in the PPG, any public benefits which would accrue in this respect cannot form part of the balance for this appeal. All of the points above reduce the weight I attach to this aspect of the scheme.
59. Environmental benefits would also arise from the provision of accelerated electric car charging points at the new dwellings; as well as any additional landscaping with associated bio-diversity net gain. Given the amount of development proposed, these benefits carry little weight.
60. The appellant submits that the proposal is an essential element of the overall Development Strategy for Guzyance Estate, and that any financial benefit generated by it will contribute towards meeting the Estate's strategic objectives. However, no substantive evidence has been provided which demonstrates how the proposal would feed back into the safeguarding and management of the Hall and/ or the Estate, including the maintenance of other heritage assets and trees; or that the Development Strategy for the Estate would not be viable if the appeal scheme is not allowed. Importantly, even if I accepted the appellant's claims, there is no mechanism before me that would secure this contribution. This considerably moderates the weight these stated benefits carry in the balance.
61. That the proposal would, as advanced by the appellant, secure access by the occupiers of Nos 7 and 8 to the sewage treatment plant (STP) within the site, is a neutral consideration. This is because it is understood that the occupiers of Nos 7 and 8 are allowed to cross the land to maintain the STP²⁵; and in any event, this is a private matter between the appellant and neighbours and is not determinative in the planning/ heritage matters before me.
62. In all of the above respects, clear and convincing justification has not been provided for the identified harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets. On balance, the totality of the public benefits which would accrue from the proposal is not sufficient to outweigh the considerable importance and weight that I attach to the identified harm to the assets' significance.

²⁵ As confirmed in a letter from the appellant to PINS dated 26 Sept 2024.

Overall conclusion on heritage assets

63. Drawing all of the above together, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the Grade II listed building Roadside Walls; fail to preserve the settings of the Grade II listed buildings, No 6 and Nos 7 and 8; and fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the GCA as a whole. There would be harm to the significance of these designated heritage assets, which would not be outweighed by the public benefits that would accrue from the proposal.
64. This would fail to meet the statutory presumptions set out in sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Act and the provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. It would also conflict with Policies ENV 7 and ENV 9 of the LP and Policy ANP6 of the NP which, together and amongst other things, require proposals to conserve and enhance the significance, quality and integrity of Northumberland's heritage assets and their settings; and preserve or enhance the special interest of the conservation area.

Other Considerations

65. In determining the appeal consistent with Green Belt policy, national policy for Green Belts sets out that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations²⁶.
66. The 'public benefits and balance' section of the second main issue above sets out the benefits of the proposal. In summary these are, the delivery of two dwellings; time limited economic benefits from the construction phase; heritage benefits from the re-build/ safeguarding of the boundary wall; environmental benefits from the connection of green energy to the new dwellings and a commitment to offer green energy to 'benefitting properties'; and economic, social and environmental benefits from the dwellings' occupation, occupiers using local services and facilities, electric car charge points, and additional landscaping with associated bio-diversity net gain. Together, these carry moderate weight in favour of the proposal.
67. Support for the principle of development on the site is advanced by the appellant in citing a previously consented planning application Ref: 91/A/355 (lapsed). Nonetheless, this permission was for one dwelling and was made over 30 years ago. The national and local policy context against which that decision was made has undergone material change. Moreover, it was prior to Guyzance being designated as a conservation area and the site being identified as LGS.
68. The conclusions of the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment in 2018 are also referenced by the appellant. These stated that the site was 'suitable, available and achievable'. However, the constraints of the site have materially changed since that assessment and are not analogous to those before me now.
69. My attention has been drawn to planning application Ref: 18/02936/FUL. However, the form and extent of development in that scheme and the one before me are not fully comparable.

²⁶ Paragraph 153 of the Framework.

70. I am also aware that there was a similar space on the opposite side of the road to the site which was infilled by two dwellings. However, that development is stated to have been granted and undertaken approximately 30 years ago, during which time, as set out above, the national and local policy context and the status of the settlement and the site have materially changed.
71. That the Council concludes the proposal to be acceptable, subject to conditions, in relation to other matters as set out in the Officer Report is a neutral consideration.
72. The site is near to a number of other listed buildings including 1, 2 and 4 Guyzance Village²⁷ which the Council has referenced. From the information before me the special interest and significance of these assets mainly stem from their historic and/or architectural interests and group value, but also from their mostly spacious and verdant rural settings.
73. Given the location and extent of the proposal in relation to these other listed buildings, I consider that the settings of these designated heritage assets would be preserved and their significance would not be harmed. This would meet the statutory presumption set out in section 66(1) of the Act; the provisions in the Framework regarding the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment; and Policy ENV 7 of the NLP, referred to above. Nonetheless, a lack of harm in this regard weighs neither for nor against the appeal.

Overall Planning Balance

74. In summary, the proposal would not comply with the Framework and relevant development plan policies concerning the management of development in LGS. It would also fail to preserve the Grade II listed building Roadside Walls; fail to preserve the settings of the Grade II listed buildings, No 6 and Nos 7 and 8; and fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the GCA as a whole. There would be harm to the significance of these designated heritage assets, which would not be outweighed by the public benefits that would accrue from the proposal. Together, these carry substantial weight against the appeal.
75. I have had regard to the other considerations cited in support of the proposal and find that, collectively, these carry moderate weight in favour of the appeal.
76. On balance, in determining this appeal consistent with Green Belt policy, I find that the other considerations in this case do not clearly outweigh the harm identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist.

Conclusion

77. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

F Cullen

INSPECTOR

²⁷ National Heritage List for England, List Entry Number: 1153753.