

of the emerging plan since it was placed on second deposit. Accordingly, the weight I attach to it is necessarily limited in accordance with the advice in Planning Policy Guidance 1: General Policy and Principles (PPG1). I note, however, that the aims and objectives of adopted policies to which I have referred are carried forward in draft Policies L13 (Conservation Areas), L14 (Listed Buildings), L1 (Landscape Protection and Enhancement) and D1 (Achieving good quality design in new development).

4. I am given no information on corresponding adopted policies for other relevant emerging policies, which are cited in the refusal reasons. These draft provisions do not, however, appear to be contrary to national advice in Planning Policy Guidance Notes. Draft Policy H4 sets out the criteria for acceptable development within residential curtilages. These include that proposals respect the design and character of the existing property, the character of the surrounding area, and that highway safety would not be prejudiced. Draft Policy L12 includes a provision for an archaeological assessment and if necessary a field evaluation. Draft Policy T12 sets out the criteria for new development in terms of transportation, which include safe access.
5. National guidance on design is provided in paragraphs 13-20 and Annex A of PPG1, which also advocates good neighbourliness and fairness among the yardsticks against which development can be assessed. Planning Policy Guidance 3: Housing (PPG3) explains the Government's commitment to the efficient use of previously used land, in sustainable locations. Local planning authorities are encouraged to promote such developments but ensure that considerations of design and layout are influenced by the wider context: local character should not be compromised. Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport (PPG13) promotes safe access. Detailed guidance on development in conservation areas or within the setting of listed buildings is found in Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15), which stresses the Government's commitment to protecting the historic environment.

Reasons

Issue One: Effect on the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area and the Setting of Listed Buildings

6. The historic core of Chipping Sodbury is designated a Conservation Area. It is characterised by areas of considerable architectural merit and townscape value, which result from grouping of buildings and a wide variety of well-designed buildings which combine to create a harmonious but varied streetscape, enclosure of space or the views through or over a group of buildings. These are the essential ingredients to the town's character. The appeal site is south of the High Street within a surviving unit of burgage plots. The survival of the burgage plots and their influence in defining the historic market place adds to the town's distinctiveness. Whilst the burgage plots are important in understanding and enjoying the town's character, interspersed are more modern developments some of which pay little respect to the traditions of the area or the large number of dignified listed buildings along both sides of the main street. Nos 18, 20 and 22 High Street are listed under grade II whilst Nos 24 and 26 are listed under grade II*.
7. Although in principle development is not in dispute as a sustainable use of previously used land within the town, it would lie within an historic environment, which the Council for British Archaeology lists as a town with an historic centre meriting