

preservation. Great care would be needed if the proposal were to successfully integrate with these surroundings. I can understand, therefore, the Council's concern about the possible impact. I cannot take issue with that. Following my inspection of the site and its surroundings, I too have come to the view that the proposed houses would be unacceptably intrusive, thereby seriously detrimental to both the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the listed buildings. I have come to that conclusion because:

- the existing openness of the burgage plots is part of the essential character of the Conservation Area and an important setting for the listed buildings;
 - the setting of the listed buildings and their contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area depend on the retention of the overall character of the burgage plots, which would be compromised by a form of development that would not respect the distinctive nature of the immediate locality;
 - the visual balance between the existing built form of High Street and the prevailing characteristics of the burgage plots would be compromised to the extent that the proposals would diminish the Conservation Area as a sequence of interesting townscapes and spaces;
 - the overall nature of the site and its surroundings would be harmed by the proposed form of development which, although largely retaining the long narrow shape of the surviving pattern of burgage plots, would be particularly noticeable given its location, detached from the buildings on High Street;
 - where the proposed development would be seen from High Street, glimpsed through the access, its incongruity would be further apparent given the bland design of the houses, in particular the unvaried disposition of windows aimed at achieving a regular façade, which would be at odds with the dignified design of the majority of buildings in the town centre, where massing, changing roof levels and attention to detail combine to create the harmonious mixture of many styles.
8. In arriving at this view I have taken into account other developments, which the Appellant has identified. I have seen some of these properties but none appear to me to reflect precisely the circumstances that apply at the appeal property. In any event, it is a well-established principle that each case is determined on its merits. My conclusions flow from these considerations, having in mind national advice and development plan policies. I have also taken note that the Conservation Area is undergoing a review during which the former burgage plots will be looked at in detail as part of an appraisal. This review is intended to lead to supplementary planning guidance being prepared for the burgage plot area, in the wider historic context. Such considerations strengthen my conclusions on this issue.
9. I have concluded on the first issue that the proposed development would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of Chipping Sodbury Conservation Area or preserve the settings of the listed buildings to which I have referred. To find otherwise in these circumstances would be to disregard my statutory duties and the guidance in PPG 15, which is reflected, in part, in the policies and emerging development plan policies to which I have referred.