

# Devon Gardens Trust

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Your ref 12/1450/FUL  
Our ref 12/0301

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Dear Sirs

Retention of shed, greenhouse, paving, oil tank and flue and formation of Devon bank, site of Venning House, Rousdon.

Thank you for consulting The Garden History Society on the above application which affects Rousdon, an historic designed landscape of national importance, which is included by English Heritage on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II.

The Devon Gardens Trust is now working in partnership with The Garden History Society in responding to consultations. This new working structure allows us to utilise our detailed local knowledge, together with the support of The Garden History Society, to ensure that your Council, as the local planning authority, receives authoritative specialist advice on planning and conservation matters

regarding applications affecting historic parks and gardens and their setting.

The Devon Gardens Trust, formed in 1987, is one of the earliest county gardens trusts to have been established and has considerable knowledge, expertise and experience of developments affecting historic designed landscapes. One of its roles is to help safeguard the heritage of historic landscapes within the County of Devon by advising local planning authorities on statutory and non-statutory parks, gardens and designed landscapes of importance and ensuring that planning policies provide adequate protection for these sites.

We have visited the site in response to the above application. We have viewed the English Heritage Register entry, the OS Map of 1880 and have studied the Planning and Design Brief for The Rousdon Estate, the planning application and supporting documents on your web site. We would ask you consider the following comments:

The Planning and Design Brief for The Rousdon Estate states:  
3.14 The open setting of the Mansion will need to be preserved. Any sub division of space to define the cartilage of ownership, and the intrusion of paraphernalia of external features such as washing lines, garden sheds and fencing would be inappropriate.

The planning consent removed the 'permitted development rights' so the residents have to apply for planning permission for sheds, greenhouses and garden fences. Unfortunately this requirement does not appear to have been fully understood by some of the new residents or perhaps the sales particulars did not make this clear.

The Planning and Design Brief for The Rousdon Estate also states:  
8.7 The Council's Objectives ....  
There are a number of objectives that the Council would wish to achieve, given the subdivision of ownership of the Estate.....  
The retention, intact, of the soon to be Registered garden area secured from any damaging sub-division or features  
The retention of publics access through the Estate '

The final National Planning Policy Framework, published on 27 March 2012, states a presumption in favour of sustainable development in

both plan making and decision making, but recognises that there is a need to balance any adverse impacts against the benefits. The NPPF sets out 12 core planning principles that should underpin both plan making and decision making.

Principle 10 states that planning should “conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.”

NPPF para 126 states that “heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource...and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.” It reiterates the previous advice of PPS5 that LPAs, in determining applications, should require the applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

Good conservation practice indicates that where a planning application affects the historic environment, the applicant must demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the affected heritage asset, and that the proposed development will not adversely affect its historic significance. We would suggest that the applicant has not satisfied this criteria as it is clear that that the proposed development would adversely affect the historic significance of Rousdon. The Devon Gardens Trust, together with The Garden History Society, advise that development which adversely impacts upon the historic environment should not be permitted.

The Society has seen no justification, in terms of the historic designed landscape, for the retention of the shed, greenhouse, paving, oil tank and flue and formation of Devon bank on the site of Venning House and the land adjoining which we consider detract from the character and appearance of this historic designed landscape. The development is inappropriate and the Devon bank planted with laurel is clearly an alien feature in the open landscape and is contrary to the Council’s stated objective to preserve the open setting of the Mansion. We would advise that if planning permission were to be granted it would set an unfortunate precedent for further sheds and greenhouses on the Estate.

In conclusion, The Society is concerned about the adverse visual impact of the proposed development on the historic designed landscape of Rousdon and its setting. We recommend that your authority should refuse consent for this proposal as it clearly conflicts with national planning policy with regard to the conservation of the historic environment and take the necessary legal action to restore the historic landscape and the setting of the listed buildings.

Yours faithfully  
John Clark  
Conservation Officer