opun
design east midlands

Awsworth

Opun Design Review Panel workshop

10.10.16

Executive Summary

The Opun Panel judged the issues detailed below to be of particular importance. Any additional work suggested should be undertaken as part of the design development of the site in support of forthcoming planning applications. It is important to note that the recommendations for additional work made here do not preclude or prevent the allocation of the site. Key points are:

- Creating a new vehicular access to the site off Shilo Way. Considering potential options for pedestrian-only access to the site from the existing residential areas to the east.
- Creating a network of pedestrian and cycle routes across the site and connecting into existing footpaths outside of the site. Opening up the site to pedestrians and cyclists from Newtons Lane, Barlow Drive North, and Park Hill, as well as from the Shilo Way cycle route.
- Protecting and enhancing of the landscaping buffer adjacent to Shilo Way, to both reduce the visual impact of the development and also to reduce the traffic noise from this bypass.
- Protecting key hedgerows, mature trees and other areas of landscaping within the site, especially within the area around The View and White House Farm.
- Promoting connections between the site and the newly-opened Ilkeston railway station.

Introduction

Opun are working with Broxtowe Borough Council in providing design support and advice on a number of sites within the district for potential residential development. The Opun Panel members involved in the workshop for Awsworth provided a mix of built environment disciplines including urban design, planning, landscape architecture, highways, heritage and conservation.

The purpose of the workshop was:

- To identify key issues for resolution and development, and
- To agree a set of design principles for the site in an illustrative form, which,
- Sets out an indicative schedule of follow-on work that will need to be undertaken by applicants should this site be developed.

Awsworth

The site is located in Awsworth in Broxtowe Borough. The site is long and ellipse shaped, located adjacent to the existing residential area of Awsworth. The site is bounded to the north by a roundabout on Shilo Way (A6096) and Gin Close Way, and beyond by the A610 which connects to the M1 motorway and Giltbrook Retail Park, to the east by the residential area of Awsworth, to the south by Newtons Lane and Cossall Common, an area of open fields. Newtons Lane, a residential street to the south of the village, connects to the east, to The Lane/ Awsworth Lane (this route runs north to south through Awsworth) and extends to the west over Shilo Way / A6096 as a pedestrian and cycle connection only. The site is bounded to the west by Shilo Way / A6096 which is a busy highway to the entire boundary of the site, the route is surrounded by mature trees and includes a scrap yard and animal boarding clustered to the west of the route. Beyond this highway is the Nottingham Canal (which is disused although forms part of a recreational route), Erewash River and Bennerley Viaduct which is a Grade II* wrought iron disused railway viaduct, prominent within the immediate and wider landscape.

The southern part of the site itself is predominantly open landscape with the exception of a cluster of residential properties (including The View & White House Farm), accessed from Newtons Lane. The site is separated by hedgerows. Within the north western part of the site is an area of woodland, a play area and sports pitch and to northeast, residential development and commercial uses including open storage (including ad hoc storage containers). Access to the site from the north east is from Barlow Cottage Lane and Park Hill which connect to the play and sports facilities and there is an access from Newtons Lane to the existing house, from the south. The topography of the site falls from east to west within the site. There are also long views from the site to the Erewash Valley. The proposal is to develop the southern part of the site for circa 250 dwellings, which retains the existing houses and vehicle access points from Shilo Way, Park Hill and Newtons Lane.

Discussion Points and Actions

Masterplan

Action: Any planning application for the site should include the provision of a robust and comprehensive framework for the whole site based on an in-depth understanding of the site character and features. The framework should clearly identify and map key routes to / from and within the site including pedestrian desire lines, key views to and from the site, specifically to the viaduct, and an overall landscape strategy including integrating existing landscape features etc.

Shilo Way / A6096

The barrier and detrimental effects of Shilo Way / A6096 (speed limit of 50mph), were recognised as being significant issues in providing connection points to the site. Initial research supports the view that Shilo Way is a hostile highway environment. Open source data over a five year period to 2015 shows: there were 10 injury accidents recorded at the junction with Newtons Lane, four of which involved motorcycles; three serious accidents, one involving a pedestrian at the access to the canal towpath to the north; six of the accidents between the Newtons Lane junction and the roundabout junction with Gin Close Way involved motorcycles. The high number of single vehicle accidents coupled with the original design of the bypass as a three lane route is an indication of high vehicle speeds being a contributory factor to the road safety issues.

Overall, the total of 22 accidents between the Newtons Lane junction and the roundabout junction with Gin Close Way over the five-year period, six of which resulted in serious injuries, indicates that further and more detailed investigation of road safety issues relative to pedestrian and cycle connectivity to new development is required to identify measures to improve the highway environment for all road users.

Access through the existing residential area was considered to be undesirable.

Action: An investigation into changing the character of Shilo Way / A6096 in collaboration with Nottinghamshire County Highways, the aim to lower the speed limit to 40 mph which would also assist in addressing the significant noise levels i.e. undertake physical interventions which narrow the route. These could be low-key features to change the appearance of the road to that more consistent with a 40mph route and positioning new access points / gateways at locations which could include features to encourage lower driving speeds on Shilo Way and the provision of, for example, new or improved facilities/features at pedestrian crossing desire lines at Newton Lane.

Pedestrian and Cycle Connections

The aspiration to restore Bennerley Viaduct as a cycle and pedestrian route was considered to be an excellent opportunity in improving and providing pedestrian and cycle routes from Awsworth to Bennerley Viaduct, the canal and Erewash Valley. It was considered essential for any proposals to provide a 'gateway' at this location and for the route to be future proofed within the internal layout.

The environment of the existing pedestrian crossing at Newtons Lane was considered to be very poor in particular the speed of traffic and the access to the crossing from the site which involves pedestrians using a route that is hidden and twisted to accommodate the site levels.

Action: Any future planning application for the site should include a 'Design Vision and Strategy' to ensure robust, legible, identifiable and well positioned gateways to the site which connect with the Bennerley Viaduct and Newtons Lane.

The Bennerley Gateway should be located on the historic line of the viaduct including the area to the west (scrap yard and animal boarding) as well as east (within the site) of Shilo Way. It should provide connections to the Canal e.g. a long ramp, designed to assist in improving the environment and lowering vehicle speeds on Shilo Way and as a navigable area of open space within the development.

The Newtons Lane gateway should also be designed to assist in improving the environment and lowering vehicle speeds on Shilo Way and should include a wider area which provides an opportunity to address the site levels more appropriately i.e. an attractive landscaped, well surveyed space to and from the crossing.

Bennerley Viaduct

The Grade II* listed Bennerley Viaduct and the disused canal (non-designated) were recognised as important heritage assets that reference Awsworth's industrial coal mining past. The area to the west of Shilo Way (the Erewash Valley) was considered to be sacrosanct, forming part of the setting of the viaduct and should not be developed. With regard to the site, the location of the viaduct station was considered to be noteworthy and the opportunity to reference the station within the development as part of the wider restoration of the viaduct and history of the area should be taken. The historic relationship between the viaduct, disused canal and station was also considered important and should be strengthened as part of the proposals.

Action: Recognition of the importance of the disused canal as a non-statutory heritage asset and the relationship with Bennerley Viaduct and station.

Action: Provision of robust visual and physical connectivity from Bennerley Viaduct to the disused canal and station as part of the proposals for the site and restoration of the viaduct.

Action: Identification of views of the Bennerley Viaduct from within the site and Awsworth

Green and Blue Infrastructure

The attractive landscape features within the site, in particular the areas of woodland, mature trees and hedgerows to the fields provide a green character and identity to the site. The opportunity to fully integrate and connect with the existing landscape features to create a development which draws character from existing green infrastructure and setting is encouraged.

The green infrastructure was recognised as an important landscape and navigational feature within the site, the retention and enhancement of which is strongly recommended i.e. physically and visually connecting the existing hedgerows with the landscape buffer to Shilo Way, utilising the landscape to strengthen the street hierarchy / pattern within the site.

Action: Any future planning application for the site should include an open space strategy for the site including both hard and soft landscaping i.e. proposed gateways, play space and green corridors.

Action: Recognition of the importance and value of the existing landscape and to utilise these features within any development i.e. green corridors / routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

Sustainable Urban Drainage System SuDS

Incorporating SuDS into the site, especially at this stage of the development project, was considered to be prudent. Providing an opportunity to create meaningful and robust swales / SuDS and bringing water attenuation into the development is recommended i.e. undertaking an integrating rationale for the SuDS by utilising the existing landscape features specifically the hedgerows / field pattern.

Action: Within any future planning application for the site, there should be the identification and provision of a SuDS strategy which provides an integrated drainage strategy from source control to surface water drainage including a set of design principles for SuDS i.e. an integrated approach with the SuDS as accessible, attractive features that contribute to place making and strengthen the street hierarchy and the maintenance of these features.

Conclusions

Following the workshop and the key issues raised the recommendations are as follows:

1. Any future planning application should include the provision of a robust and comprehensive masterplan for the whole site based on an in depth understanding of the site character and features.

2. A wider strategy for civilising and changing the character of Shilo Way / A6096 in conjunction with Nottinghamshire County Highways including lowering the speed limit and narrowing the route, positioning new access points / gateways at locations which promote lower driving speeds and new / improved pedestrian facilities to improve access across the route.

3. Any future planning application should include the provision of a 'Design Vision and Strategy' to ensure robust, legible, identifiable and well positioned gateways to the site which connect with the Bennerley Viaduct and Newtons Lane.

4. Recognition of the importance of the disused canal as a non-statutory heritage asset and the relationship between Bennerley Viaduct, the canal and station.

5. Provision of a robust visual and physical connection from Bennerley Viaduct to the disused canal and station as part of the proposals for the site, and restoration of the viaduct. This should include the identification of views of the Bennerley Viaduct from within the site and Awsworth.

6. Any future planning application should include the provision of an open space strategy for the site including both hard and soft landscaping including proposed gateways, play space and green corridors.

7. Recognition of the importance and value of the existing landscape and utilising these features within the development, e.g. the potential location for SuDS and green corridors / routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

8. Any future planning application should include the identification and provision of a SuDS strategy which provides an integrated drainage strategy from source control to surface water drainage, including a set of design principles for SuDS.

Issues and proposals diagram