

Chetwynd Barracks

Opun Design Review Panel
workshop

23.09.16

Executive Summary

The Opun Panel judged the issues detailed below to be of particular importance. Where we have suggested additional work, it is envisaged that this will be carried out by an applicant as part of a planning application. 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:

- Clarifying the role of the Chetwynd Barracks site as part of the development opportunities in the Chilwell / Toton as well as wider area.
- Provision of a development which positively responds to the site context and has a strong sense of identity including an assessment of the historic and landscape assets within the site and detailed site analysis i.e. identifying and mapping character areas, key routes, connection points, movement pattern, key views to and from the site etc.
- A Masterplan for the site which should include a connectivity and movement plan, green infrastructure plan, identification of statutory and non-designated heritage assets and land ownership and a supporting landscape strategy linking connectivity and open spaces.
- A Connectivity and Movement Plan which focuses on promoting and achieving sustainable transport i.e. a network of robust, safe and legible pedestrian and cycle routes connect with key facilities and bus & tram stops (including potentially a route to the north of the site, to connect with the Park & Ride facility and onwards to George Spencer Academy).
- Open up the Chetwynd Road entrance to the site to create a new route through the site from the east incorporating tree planting.
- Opening up existing and creating new pedestrian and cycle links between the site and the surrounding area (including potentially with the surrounding streets of: Field Lane, Stapleford Lane, Welbeck Gardens, Swiney Way, Ayton Gardens, and other routes to the south.
- A detailed brief for the listed Grade II War Memorial including an assessment of the non-designated heritage assets within the site for example, redevelopment of existing buildings for residential use.
- A comprehensive assessments of the landscape assets within the site i.e. tree survey, woods, green space, open spaces, memorial gardens, relationship of the open spaces with the buildings.
- As well as identifying the assets, the information should be utilised in informing a tree hierarchy and open space hierarchy for the site to ensure important existing landscape features are protected and enhanced as part of the overall proposals such as Hobgoblin Wood, the reservoir, and the sports ground key facilities and public transport stations / stops.

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 Chetwynd Barracks 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
- Set out an indicative schedule of follow-on work that will need to be undertaken should this site be developed.

Chetwynd Barracks

Chetwynd Barracks is a Ministry of Defence site that has been identified as surplus to requirement and will no longer function as a MOD site from 2021. The site is located in Chilwell. It is bounded to the north by residential use and beyond by the A52 - a key route into Nottingham - and the newly constructed tram route which connects the Queens Medical Centre Hospital, Nottingham University, Nottingham City Centre and continues to Hucknall. The site is bounded to the east and south by residential areas and to the west by residential areas and beyond by Toton sidings – the location for the (East Midlands Hub) HS2 station.

The site itself includes a number of buildings and features, including a Grade II listed War Memorial, and associated Memorial Gardens, a range of MOD buildings, of varying ages and sizes predominantly to the south of the site, residential properties within the centre and to the north of the site, mature landscaping including Hobgoblin Wood, (including reservoir), groups and avenues of mature trees, and a range of open spaces including a sports ground, formal gardens and informal landscaped areas. Access to the site is limited, with access points at Swiney Way, Chetwynd Road and Field Lane. Within the site, there is an established network of streets and footpaths. The topography of the site varies significantly. The southern part of the site is generally level at an elevation of about 29m, rising to an elevation of 74m at the highest point of the site (at the reservoir). Some of the roads within the site (including Highfield Road, in particular) rise very steeply to the north.

Vision and Supporting Information

The opportunity to create a development with a strong sense of identity and vision is considered to be crucial to the success of the scheme. To ensure development is acceptable it was considered essential that site promoters undertake further work / studies to ensure a robust and comprehensive understanding of the site including an assessment of the buildings / features within the site.

Action: The provision of a robust vision and narrative for the development to ensure a strong sense of identity and a distinctive character. The 'Vision' should be informed by a thorough understanding of the site to ensure a well-considered, distinctive development that is truly responsive to its context i.e. a statement which identifies the intention, aims and ambition of the development, this should also include defining the character of the development as well as a sense of how the development will contribute to Chilwell, Toton and wider area.

Action: The provision of supporting information which should include undertaking comprehensive assessments of the historic and landscape assets within the site i.e. tree survey, woods, green space, open spaces, memorial gardens, buildings of all ages, relationship of the buildings with open spaces and streets etc. As well as identifying the assets, the assessments should rank these in levels of importance, potentially a traffic light system. In addition to the above, a detailed site analysis should also be undertaken including identifying and mapping the different character areas, including landscape character areas, within the site, key routes, connection points, movement pattern, key views to and from the site especially from ridgelines.

Comprehensive strategy for Toton

The importance of Chetwynd Barracks to the wider site context which comprises of significant development opportunities including large scale residential development to the land west of Toton Lane, potential HS2 railway station and proposed extension to the tram network were highlighted. The role of the site should be clarified within the wider Chilwell and Toton area and to maximise opportunities to meaningfully connect to new public transport infrastructure i.e. the provision of a robust, direct and attractive route to the proposed HS2 station and tram stop.

The current constraints of the site ownership have resulted in the residential area on the northern boundary of the site not forming part of the development proposal. The Panel considered that the exclusion of this land may, to some extent, create some challenges to the comprehensive development of the site. Further work was encouraged in preparing a robust and comprehensive masterplan for the site which should clearly demonstrate how the scheme would integrate the 'missing' parcel of land and an option if it were to form part of the site ownership.

Action: Provision of a strategic comprehensive masterplan for Chilwell, Toton, and the wider area and to clarify the role of the Chetwynd Barracks site within the masterplan. This should include identifying the location of strategic connections to existing and potential public transport infrastructure to ensure residents are able to access these facilities as quickly and easily as possible.

Action: Provision of a masterplan for the Chetwynd Barracks site which should include a connectivity and movement plan, green infrastructure plan, identification of statutory and non statutory heritage assets, and land ownership.

Action: Produce a Design Code for the site. The Design Code should be a short, punchy and concise document which includes key design principles for the site, identification of character areas, street hierarchy supported by a green infrastructure, a tree hierarchy, open space network / hierarchy, phasing plan.



Connectivity and Movement

The proposals for the Chetwynd Barracks site have a particular role to play in connecting the new community with the existing communities of Chilwell / Toton and wider links to Beeston and Nottingham to ensure the development does not become an isolated or a car dependent suburb. Therefore, the provision of a well-connected, genuinely permeable development with strong linkages is considered to be fundamental.

The need to create strong gateways/entrances and routes into and through the site to achieve the above was recognised. The existing east – west routes of Chetwynd Road (which is lined by mature trees) and Hillside Road within the site were considered to be strong, direct routes that should be retained and developed as primary bus / cycle routes through the site, the routes also allow for connections with the existing network i.e. Swiney Way / Banks Road and Woodstock Road to the west and Chetwynd Road to the east.

NB. Banks Road was considered to be the most suitable route to connect with the potential HS2 station by foot / cycle.

With regard to north – south routes these were considered to be problematic due to the issue of site ownership issues to the north which restrict links to the tram and the A52, and the design of the adjoining streets with properties backing onto the site and limited access points to the south. Within the site Readman Road provides a key north- south connection as well as connecting with Chetwynd Road.

Action: Provision of a Connectivity and Movement Plan which focuses on promoting and achieving sustainable transport i.e. a network of robust, safe and legible pedestrian and cycle routes and bus routes that connect with key facilities and public transport stations / stops. The plan should make the best use of existing infrastructure within and outside of the site, identify existing and new desire lines and clarify how the routes would work with the topography of the site especially where site levels change very steeply.

Action: Provision of a Framework Travel plan. The site is very well placed to take advantage of the good existing and future public transport connections. Initial masterplanning of the site should include a Framework Travel Plan which clearly identifies opportunities to promote use of public transport, cycling and walking. Specific Travel Plan initiatives should be included with individual development proposals which, in view of the size of the site, are likely to come forward over a number of years. The Framework Travel Plan would assist in managing the development of an overarching Travel Plan for the whole site as development progresses.

Action: Undertake design work to strengthen the access/gateways to ensure the above is achieved; suggestions include robust links to the west to connect with HS2 and Toton, exploring opportunities to connect with existing routes to the south specifically Sandhurst Drive, Ayton Gardens, Grayson Mews and Swiney Way and to the north, Northfield Crescent and Field Lane, and future proofing routes to the north of the site which may not be an option at this stage. Not all access points will necessarily be for vehicular access; opportunities for pedestrian and cycle access should be maximised. The overriding principles for all access points are that they should be well located, safe and attractive. This increased access provision will improve site permeability, create activity at the key interfaces and assist in avoiding concentrations of vehicular movements by dispersing traffic more widely.



Grade II listed War Memorial and Memorial Gardens

The Grade II listed War Memorial is recognised as an important, historical and emotive feature within the site and should be valued as a significant asset. The immediate setting of the Memorial within the curtilage of a low boundary wall and bound by a main route was considered constrained and proposals should seek to enhance the immediate and wider environment, setting and contextual understanding of the Memorial.

The adjoining Memorial Gardens were considered to form part of the wider setting of the Memorial and opportunities exist to strengthen the relationship between the gardens and Memorial including the provision of a quality urban park potentially linked with the primary school.

Action: Provision of an in-depth and detailed brief for the listed Memorial which should accompany a planning application for the development i.e. hybrid application. The brief should include the restoration of the memorial i.e. cleaning and potential re-engraving of names to ensure these are legible and spelt correctly, integrating the Memorial with the wider setting including the Memorial Gardens i.e. exploring the opportunity to remove a part of the existing boundary wall (which was not considered to be sacrosanct) to link the site levels, careful consideration as to how the Memorial will be experienced by residents and visitors, and the treatment of Chetwynd Road in front of the Memorial i.e. extending the setting / environment to the area in front of the Memorial i.e. provision of a public realm / square that will accommodate through traffic but at a reduced speed, achieved through the design of the space. Works to the Memorial and boundary walls may require a separate application for Listed Building Consent.



Non-designated heritage assets

In addition to the Listed Memorial a number of buildings within the site were considered to be important non-designated heritage assets providing a strong sense of character and identity to the site. These include building 102, Building 130 (Sargent's Mess), building 125, the cluster of buildings 98,100,101, plus remnants / fragments of the former shell filling factory which, as a tangible remnant of the building where the 1918 explosion took place, provides context and informs the significance of the War Memorial, and cabin, substation, and cast iron gates. See Existing Buildings plan in this document for further details.

Action: Undertake a character assessment including the identification of non-designated heritage assets in particular existing 20C buildings (the importance of which at present is not fully recognised) to ensure the development recognises and appreciates the status of these buildings from the onset.

Existing Landscape Infrastructure

The existing landscape and landscape features within the site were admired, in particular the mature green corridors within the site, mature trees, woodland, open spaces, boundary treatments i.e. hedges which help create a strong green character and sense of identity for the site. The specific landscape character of different areas was noted and how this may support/inform design. The opportunity to fully integrate and engage with the existing landscape features to create a landscape led development was actively encouraged.

Action: The provision of supporting information (as stated earlier) which should include undertaking comprehensive assessments of the landscape assets within the site i.e. tree survey, woods, green space, open spaces, memorial gardens, relationship of the open spaces with the buildings. As well as identifying the assets, the information should be utilised in informing a tree hierarchy and open space hierarchy for the site to ensure important existing landscape features are protected and enhanced as part of the overall proposals. The information should also strengthen and identify additional green routes to connect open spaces, provision of a range of open spaces i.e. formal and informal and utilising the landscaping proposals to support the street hierarchy.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Incorporating SuDS into the sites especially at this stage of the development project was considered to be prudent. Creating meaningful and robust swales / SuDS and bringing water attenuation into the development should be explored i.e. pavements to one side of a street and drainage on the other, this would also strengthen the legibility and street hierarchy within the development.

Action: The provision of a General SuDS strategy which provides an integrated drainage strategy from source control to surface water drainage, the strategy should include 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.

Community facilities

With regard to the proposed Primary School, the importance of designing school buildings that positively contribute to, and address the street frontage and public realm and are conveniently located for new and existing residents, i.e. a building within a block and located on a main route. Consideration should also be given to co-locating the local/district centres and school buildings to create a vibrant community hub within the development.

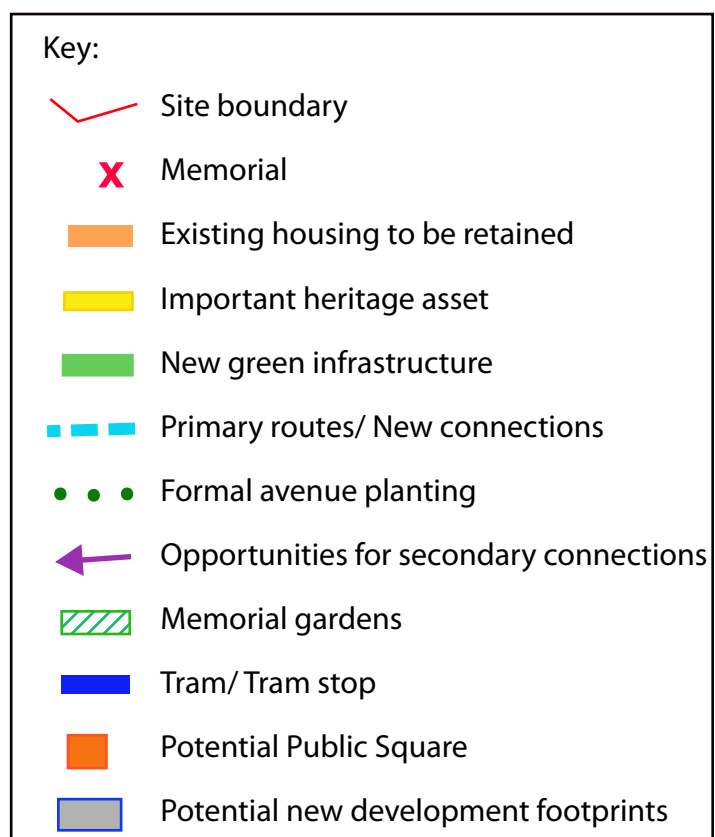
Action: Pursue a community hub combining the local/district centre and primary school which is located on a main route and accessible to new and existing residents.

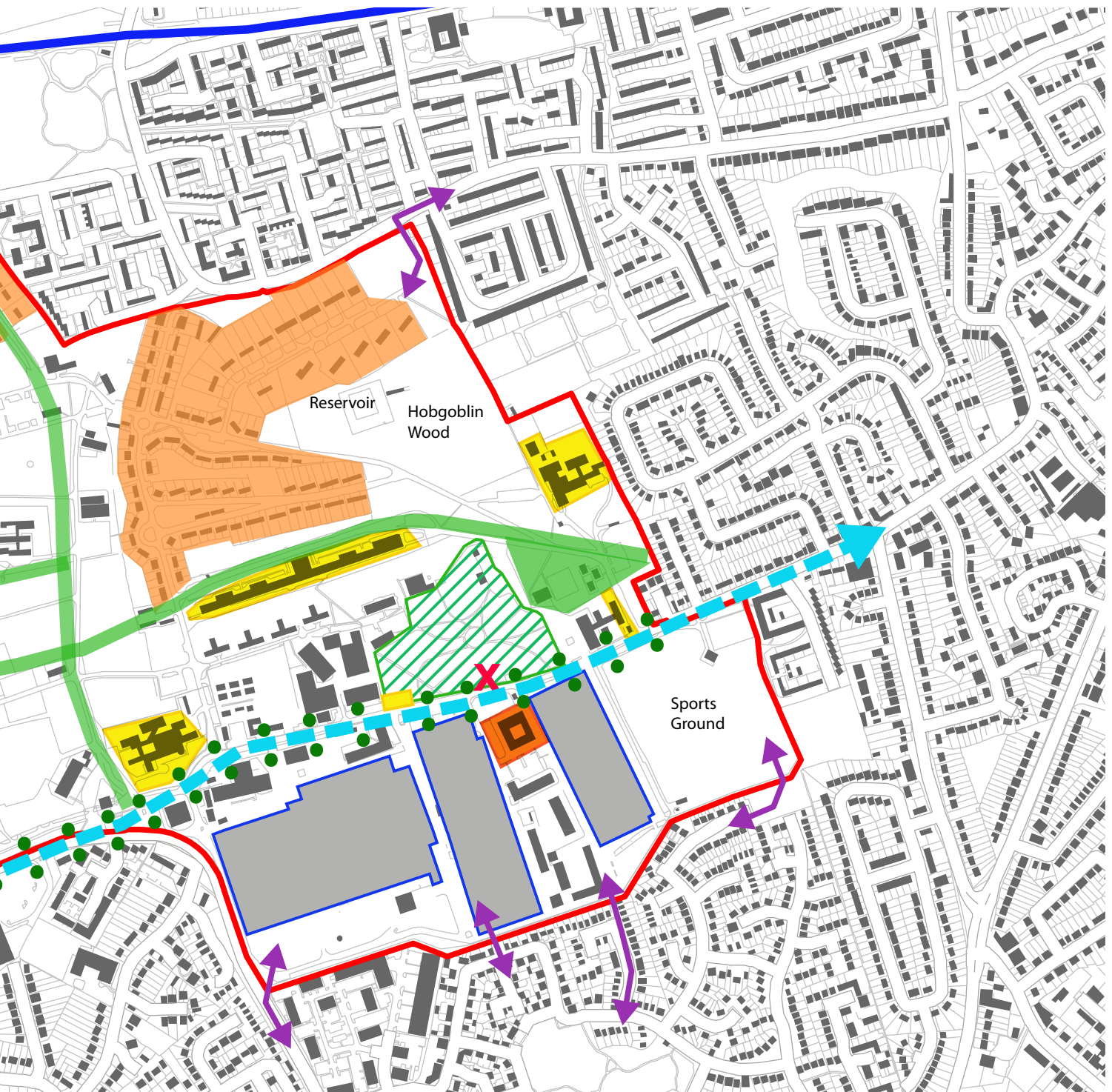
Conclusions

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

1. The production of a robust vision and narrative for the site to ensure a strong sense of identity and a distinctive development.
2. A comprehensive assessments of the historic and landscape assets within the site, as well as a detailed site analysis i.e. identifying and mapping character areas, key routes, connection points, movement pattern, key views to and from the site.
3. The role of the Chetwynd Barracks site as part of the wider area - Chilwell / Toton need to be established.
4. Any masterplan for the Chetwynd Barracks site should include a connectivity and movement plan, green infrastructure plan, identification of statutory and non-designated heritage assets and land ownership, a supporting landscape strategy linking connectivity and open spaces
5. A Design Code for the site should be conditioned should the site be developed.
6. A Connectivity and Movement Plan which focuses on promoting and achieving sustainable transport i.e. a network of robust, safe and legible pedestrian and cycle routes and bus routes that connect with key facilities and public transport stations / stops.
7. An in-depth and detailed brief for the listed War Memorial.
8. A character assessment including the identification of non-designated heritage assets within the site.
9. Comprehensive assessments of the landscape assets within the site i.e. tree survey, woods, green space, open spaces, memorial gardens, relationship of the open spaces with the buildings etc.
10. A SuDS strategy which provides an integrated drainage strategy, and
11. A community hub combining the local/district centre and primary school which is located on a main route and accessible to new and existing residents.

Issues and opportunities diagram





Existing Buildings Plan

