

Eastwood

**Opun Design Review Panel
workshop**

03.10.16

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:

- Prioritising development to the east of the site to protect and enhance the setting of the Hall Farm listed building and minimise the impact upon the Conservation Area.
- Accessing the site off A680 Mansfield Road to the west of the site, if possible by utilising the existing footpath / lane.
- Retaining and enhancing existing rights of way and other footpaths / cycle ways across the site and to fully integrate the routes as part of any development.
- Creating a new public footpath / green infrastructure route along the northern boundary of the site.
- Develop an open spaces strategy for the site including clarifying the form, function and the interconnectivity between the existing spaces on site i.e. cricket ground, Brinsley Brook etc.
- Ensure existing trees and hedgerows are fully integrated into proposed developments which retains and enhances their function i.e. green corridor to Brinsley Brook, key mature trees to the western of the site, the former railway line etc.



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 Eastwood 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.

Eastwood

The site is located to the north of Eastwood in the Parish of Greasley. It is bounded to the north by hedgerows and mature trees, with open landscape beyond, to the west by Brinsley Brook which also includes a belt of mature trees, Mansfield Road (A608) a key route into Eastwood, and Eastwood Hall a Grade II listed building set within generous grounds, to the south in part by an established residential area including houses backing onto the site and public footpath to the east of Coach Drive, and to the east by Lamb Close Drive which connects to Moorgreen Industrial Park.

The site itself is farmland which is divided into fields bounded by hedgerows and individual trees. A public bridleway runs east – west through the site to the rear of the existing properties. Cockerhouse Road runs from Mansfield Road to the west of the site to Eastwood Hall Farm buildings, which are listed Grade II. Access to the site is from Mansfield Road and the public footpath to the east of Coach Drive, and there is also a network of routes. The topography varies throughout the site.

Connectivity and Movement

There are connections to the southern edge of the site via existing residential streets (from Thorn Tree Gardens). However, the existing streets are narrow with on street parking and the routes from more major local access roads are tortuous. Although these are not viable options for accessing large areas of new development, proposals should include connections for cycle and pedestrian access.

Although there appears to be a potential connection point for motorised traffic through Moorgreen Industrial Park to the site from Engine Lane (connecting to Lamb Close Drive via Engine Road), the highway environment coupled with the type of industries make this a far from desirable access route for residential traffic.

Changing 'public rights of way' to highways. Research suggests that the existing rights of way which could become vehicular accesses are either public footpaths or bridleways:

- From Greenhills Road a footpath skirts the eastern boundary of the cricket ground leading to the footpath to the east of Coach Drive;
- From Lower Beauvale a bridleway leads north to intersect the footpath to the east of Coach Drive/Lamb Close Drive footpath; beyond the intersection the bridleway continues north to Coney Grey Farm Shop (signed from Lower Beauvale). Further investigation of the available width of this route would be required to determine its suitability for the construction of an access route.
- Bridleway connecting to the A608 Mansfield Road. This route is already providing access for motorised vehicles to a residential development around 250 metres from the A608; evidently the property has a right of access for motorised vehicles. New properties have been/are under construction either side of the junction with Mansfield Road and although these do not appear to impinge on the visibility from a future adopted road junction this should be checked.

The value of pedestrian links and the nature and character of these to the countryside beyond was recognised as was the framework within which they sit. It is important that these are respected in any development and opportunities or features maximised. From observations the public rights of way across the site are popular for local walking. It should be anticipated that changing the use of restricted rights of way to public highways for all modes will be a locally emotive issue.

Action: Investigate the potential to re-purpose existing bridleways for access onto the site, with a view to making as many connections for pedestrians and cyclists as possible.

Action: Ensure that any existing rights of way across the site are retained and integrated into any layout for this site to minimise the loss of locally important routes.

Heritage Assets

Historically there would have been a strong functional relationship between the Grade II listed building of Eastwood Hall Farm including the land and stream, with the movement of livestock / farm animals from at least the western part of the site to and from the extant farm buildings. In the 20th century, Hall Farm was part of a larger agricultural complex, with the principal farm being Greasley Castle Farm. In the early 20th century the Noon family acquired Greasley Castle Farm from the Barber family. The Noon's, and subsequent generations, rented land from the Coal Board, including Hall Farm and several acres on the other side of Mansfield Road, including all or part of the study site. Hall Farm benefited from the land immediately around the farm buildings, Eastwood Hall and across the road, totalling in all approximately 60 acres. The listed farm buildings have recently been converted into residential units.

- Therefore, at the very least the western part of the application site forms part of Hall Farm's historically meaningful setting. As such, development on the western part of the study site could potentially result in harm to this listed building's significance and mitigation should be considered, including the retention of open space in this area.
- There are views of the application site from parts of the Eastwood Conservation Area. These views have been identified as 'key views' in the Conservation Area Appraisal. Therefore, consideration needs to be given as to how such views are protected and managed. A Conservation Area Management Plan will assist with such an exercise.

Action: Carry out an assessment of the impact on the listed heritage asset as part of any masterplanning exercise, and ensure that the design references and capitalises upon the proximity to such an important and impressive structure.

Action: Develop visual impact evidence relating to the adjacent conservation area so as to minimise the harm any development on this site has on the setting of the conservation area.

Landscape - Green and Blue Infrastructure

The north-south green corridor would need to be respected to ensure Brinsley Brook, its character and setting is protected and a broad 'green' rural edge required within which it could sit. Any crossing facilities provided here would need to be treated sensitively.

The importance and value of the green corridor (the land between Lower Beauvale and the footpath to the east of Coach Drive/Lamb Close Drive) was recognised. This includes mature trees, hedges, garden vegetation and Beauvale Brook and its context. Any access through this green corridor would need to consider carefully the impact on the Brook and adjoining vegetation.

The bridleway from Lower Beauvale is rural in character, running over the Beauvale Brook and where it extends into the fields to the north beyond the footpath east of Coach Drive, it is bounded by hedgerows. Access here needs to consider the impact on vegetation, associated hedgerows/ boundaries, the rural nature of the bridleway and pedestrian use.

Whilst vehicular access here may minimise the impact and problems associated with widening the bridleway from Mill Road, this could result in the open space being separated from the footpath. Opportunities to visually open out the cricket ground to improve the character of the edge may help enhance perception of open space, maximising its contribution to the open space framework.

There are a number of distinctive large mature trees within an open setting, characteristic of the western site area. The design approach would need to be expressed and signals taken from the associated character and field patterns of Hall Farm and Eastwood Hall.

The importance of Brinsley Brook and its landscape setting would need to be respected with consideration given to the impact of increased use of any open space ensuring it sits within a broad landscape context.

Action: Ensure that any masterplanning exercise for this site is 'landscape led', with the existing trees and hedgerows fully integrated into the layout in a way that retains and enhances their function as green corridors etc.

Action: Develop an open spaces strategy that among other things deals with the cricket ground and Brinsley Brook, covering their form, function and the interconnectivity between spaces on site. Their management should also be considered.

Site Parcels

The site was identified as being two distinct triangular parcels, parcel one to the west of the site (fronting Mansfield Road) and parcel two to the east of the site. It was considered prudent to resist development of parcel one which includes the listed farm buildings, blocks / groups of mature trees, Brinsley Brook and the more pronounced topography of the site. Parcel two (to the east) which is less sensitive was therefore considered to have high capacity. Good quality design is critical to the success of both parcels however, even if they do have different characters.

Action: Carry out a capacity study to fully explore the potential of the site to deliver development without harming the adjacent listed buildings. This exercise should seek to make the most of existing site assets to help give the new development a distinctive character drawing on its wider setting.

Conclusions

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

1. Investigate the potential to re-purpose existing bridleways for access onto the site, with a view to making as many connections for pedestrians and cyclists as possible.
2. The most appropriate access would be from the A608 Mansfield Road via the existing bridleway. The form of junction to Mansfield Road could be a simple priority junction (space restricted for widening) and this may limit the quantum of development.
3. An alternative worthy of further investigation is the existing bridleway from Lower Beauvale. Any access from through the Beauvale corridor to the footpath to the east of Coach Drive would need sensitive landscape treatment
4. In both cases the available width of these routes should be checked to ensure that a carriageway plus foot/cycleways to a suitable width, and junctions to the appropriate standards to serve the proposed quantum of development can be provided.
5. The setting of the Grade II listed Hall Farm requires consideration as at least the western part of the site forms part of the historically meaningful setting of this building.
6. Develop visual impact evidence relating to the adjacent conservation area so as to minimise the harm any development on this site has on the setting of the conservation area.
7. The north south green corridor would need to be respected to ensure Brinsley Brook, its character and setting is protected.
8. Any access through the green corridor (Lower Beauvale and the footpath to the east of Coach Drive/Lamb Close Drive) would need to consider carefully the impact on the Brook and adjoining vegetation.
9. Any access from the bridleway at Lower Beauvale would need to consider the impact on vegetation, associated hedgerows/boundaries and rural nature of the bridleway.

Issues and proposals diagram





