

Nuthall

**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:

- Careful consideration on whether an access from Dabell Avenue through a business / industrial park would be desirable and appropriate for a residential development in particular the environment and safety of pedestrians.
- Careful consideration on whether an access from Dabell Avenue through a business industrial park would be desirable and appropriate for a residential development in particular the environment and safety of pedestrians.
- Future proofing the site to accommodate HS2 railway line including the provision of a landscape buffer / green corridor to the route.
- Provision of a landscape strategy which reinforces the landscape corridors within and outside of the site including a green infrastructure corridor central to the site.
- Recognition of the railway underpass as a non-designated heritage asset.
- Creation of footpath links to the surrounding residential areas to the east of the site, including potentially, through Seller's Wood.

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 Nuthall 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.

Nuthall

The site is located in Nuthall in Broxtowe Borough. The site is bounded to the north in part by the Blenheim Disused Railway Local Wildlife Site (a former railway line embankment). To the north of this is the Blenheim Industrial Park, which includes a number of storage containers that back onto the other side of the disused railway line embankment and New Farm, which includes a building identified as a building of local interest, (the farm is accessed from New Farm Lane) and beyond by a former Rolls Royce site (within Ashfield District) which is to be developed for residential (circa 900 homes) and business use. To the east, the site is bounded by Sellers Wood, which is an SSSI and Local Wildlife Site and beyond that a residential area. To the south, the site is bounded again by part of Sellers Wood, the New Farm Wood Local Wildlife Site and open landscape including fields. The M1 motorway is located to the west of the site and beyond that, Watnall and Kimberley.

Immediately to the north of the site is a former railway line, which is densely planted and includes a former tunnel (now 'uncovered'), allowing access under the railway embankment. The rest of the site consists of open landscape with a number of individual trees to the field boundaries. In terms of topography, the site slopes gently up from Sellers Wood to the M1. There is no vehicular access into the site and pedestrian access is through Sellers Wood only, to the east of the site.

The High Speed 2 rail route is proposed to run across the western edge of the site.



Site Access from Dabell Avenue

At present connections to the site are limited. With regard to vehicles the only option would be to provide an access to the north of the site through Blenheim Business Park from Dabell Avenue. Technically it would be possible to create a route in and out of the site at this location, however the environment of the business park with large lorries using the route on a regular basis and manoeuvring/parking on-street would result in conflict between residents (pedestrians and cars) and industrial traffic. Although there are morning and evening peak period bus services connecting to Nottingham City, overall Dabell Avenue is not an appropriate access route for all modes of transport associated with residential development. In terms of an integrated street hierarchy, the highway environment of Dabell Avenue is incongruous with a residential access route / street layout and would not be encouraged.

The function, role, and treatment of Dabell Avenue would need to be significantly altered to accommodate the development by providing a safe and attractive pedestrian environment. It should cater for children using the route to walk to and from school, pedestrians using the route in the evening when the businesses are closed, and the provision of public transport to connect the development with neighbouring areas and local facilities etc. In turn, such alterations may be to the disadvantage of the existing industrial use of the road.

Action: Careful consideration on whether an access (pedestrian and vehicle) from Dabell Avenue through a business /industrial park to a new residential development is desirable/appropriate.

HS2 Line

The HS2 line proposed to the western edge of the site was highlighted and the development would need to be future proofed to accommodate the route.

Action: Future proof the site to be able to accommodate the potential HS2 line.

Green infrastructure

The sensitive setting of the site bound by an ancient woodland which is identified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, mature landscape to the disused railway line, and New Farm Wood Local Wildlife Site. Long views of the site, especially from the west / M1 motorway, were highlighted.

Any development would therefore need to respect and reinforce the existing landscape including the provision of robust, generous, green infrastructure corridors that connect to areas of landscape outside of the site, provision of a substantial buffer to the proposed HS2 line and utilise the landscape to ensure the views / perception of the countryside from the west are retained.

Action: Recognition on the importance and sensitivity of the landscape setting of the site adjoined by a Site of Special Scientific Interest / Sellers Wood / New Farm Wood, and the provision of a landscape strategy which respects and reinforces the green corridors within and outside of the site.



The Railway Underpass

The stone railway underpass was recognised as a potential non-designated heritage asset within the site and its significance should be carefully considered as part of any development.

With regard to the local interest building / farm it was considered that the development of the site would have a negligible impact on the building. Paragraph 135 of the NPPF notes that: 'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, 'a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.' Historic England (2015) states that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset. Therefore, non-designated heritage assets have a low level of significance and changes in their wider settings should be accorded appropriate weight.

Action: Recognition of the railway underpass as a non-designated heritage asset.

Blenheim Farmhouse

Blenheim Farmhouse and attached barn and a stable are both Grade II listed which are located to the north of Blenheim Industrial site. The site does not form part of these listed buildings' settings as they are visually and physically separated from the site by distance, topography, and intervening vegetation and buildings. Therefore, development on the site is not considered to harm their significance.









Conclusions

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

1. Access to the site is limited and careful consideration needs to be given on whether an access from Dabell Avenue through a business / industrial park would be appropriate for a residential development in particular the environment and safety of pedestrians.
2. Ensure that the site is future proofed to accommodate HS2 including the provision of a landscape buffer / green corridor to the route.
3. Recognition on the importance and sensitivity of the landscape setting of the site adjoined by a Site of Special Scientific Interest / Sellers Wood / New Farm Wood, and the provision of a landscape strategy which respects and reinforces the green corridors within and outside of the site.
4. Recognition of the former tunnel under the railway embankment as a non-designated heritage asset.



Key

- Site boundary 
- Business park 
- Building of local interest 
- Underpass 
- HS2 approx location 
- Dabell Avenue access 
- Green corridors 
- Wildlife site extension 
- Proposed/exisiting footpaths 