

LAND WEST OF RUSHDEN ROAD, WYMINGTON**HERITAGE TECHNICAL NOTE****1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This Technical Note has been prepared by Barton Willmore LLP on behalf of IM Land to inform its promotion of Land West of Rushden Road, Wymington, Bedfordshire ("the Site"). The purpose of this Note is to understand the significance of the Site to the setting of a number of heritage assets located within its proximity to understand what, if any, contribution the Site makes to the setting of nearby heritage assets.
- 1.2 Listed Buildings and their settings are afforded statutory protection through the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This protection is reinforced in local and national planning policy.
- 1.3 Paragraph 190 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) guides that plan-making should set out a positive strategy for conservation of the historic environment, recognising 'the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits' conservation can bring as well as the 'opportunities the contribution the historic environment can make to the character of a place'. This Note follows the guidance set out by Historic England in The Historic Environment in Local Plans (GPA1, 2015), The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3, 2017) and Site Allocations in Local Plans (HEAN3, 2015).
- 1.4 This Technical Note has been informed by a site visit undertaken in August 2021 and desktop research. Weather conditions during the site visit were fair with good visibility.

2.0 Site Context

- 2.1 The Site is located to the west of the Rushden Road, Wymington and to the south of Rushden. It extends from the rear of properties along Rushden Road westwards towards the county border and southwards to the Public Bridleway which forms the southern boundary of the Site. The Site is currently open agricultural land.
- 2.2 The Site is located within Wymington Parish in the Bedford Borough Council administrative area; however, it abuts East Northamptonshire to the north and west. To the north, within East Northamptonshire, is the town of Rushden, and to the east is the former hamlet of Knuston which lies within Irchester Parish. To the south lies the Midland Railway line and Leicester and Hitchin extension.
- 2.3 There are no designated heritage assets within the Site. However, there are several within proximity that have the potential to be affected by virtue of the development within their setting.
- 2.4 A desktop review of the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) identified five designated heritage assets within a 750m study area from the Site boundary. These are:
- Parish Church of St Lawrence, Wymington (Grade I)
 - Manor House, Wymington (Grade II)
 - Poplars Farmhouse, Wymington (Grade II)
 - Nos. 5 and 7 Church Lane, Wymington (Grade II)
 - Knuston High Farm and attached Barn (Grade II)

- 2.5 The Grade II Listed Knuston Hall is located over 1km to the northwest of the Site. Given the intervening distance and natural environment this has been scoped out of this Note.
- 2.6 Bedford Borough Council and East Northamptonshire Council do not currently have an adopted "Local List" of non-designated heritage assets. An online search of the Historic Environment Record for both boroughs did not identify any potential non-designated heritage assets within the Site itself but does record a number of archaeological find spots and buildings within the wider vicinity of the Site, including surviving historic buildings within Wymington.
- 2.7 Historically, the Site has formed part of Wymington Parish, however it is bordered to the north by Rushden and west by Knuston in Irchester Parish both of which lie within Northamptonshire. The expansion of Rushden and creation of Little Wymington in the 20th century has significantly altered the experience of the Site, reducing the rural character of the area, as shown in the historic Ordnance Survey maps illustrated below.



Figure 1 1901 Ordnance Survey Map (NLS).



Figure 2 1952 Ordnance Survey Map (NLS).

3.0 Heritage Significance

- 3.1 The NPPF defines the significance of heritage assets as “The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting”.
- 3.2 Historic England’s ‘Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets’ (GPA3, 2017) makes it clear that setting is not a heritage asset and can only contribute towards the significance of a heritage asset. The document sets out a series of attributes that it may be appropriate to consider when assessing significance: the physical surroundings of the assets, including the relationship with other heritage assets; and the way that the asset is experienced.



Figure 3 Parish Church of St Lawrence

1) Parish Church of St Lawrence

3.3 The heritage significance of the Grade I Listed Church of St Lawrence is derived from its architectural and historic interest as a 14th century parish church. It is constructed of limestone rubble with some Northamptonshire ironstone. It comprises a nave with north and south aisles, chancel, west tower, south porch and north chapel. Architecturally, the building is constructed in the Decorated style.

3.4 The Church is located within the centre of the village and has a clearly defined church yard. This provides a green and tranquil place in which to experience the building. The church tower acts as a local landmark in the area, however its reach is limited by the topography of the wider landscape such that it is not visible to the west of Rushden Road.

2) Manor House, Wymington

3.5 The Grade II listed Manor House is located to the north of the village. Its heritage significance is derived from its 17th century origins and use of vernacular building materials. The immediate surroundings of the Manor House have been developed during the latter 20th century for residential development. As such, its setting now contributes little to the heritage significance of the listed building.

3) Poplars Farmhouse, Wymington

3.6 Poplars Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building. Its heritage significance is identified in the list entry as being a mid-17th century lobby farmhouse with significant survival of historic fabric. Its immediate surroundings comprise the farmstead to the north and east of the listed building and open land beyond. Whilst the farmstead and its setting has evolved over the years, when comparing historic maps, it may still be experienced as a historic farmstead with agricultural surroundings which contributes to the significance of the listed building.

4) Nos. 5 and 7 Church Lane, Wymington



Figure 4 Nos. 5 and 7 Church Lane

3.7 Nos 5 and 7 Church Lane is located immediately east of the Church. It is listed at Grade II. Its heritage significance is derived from its mid-17th century date and use of vernacular materials. It is built from coursed limestone rubble with a Welsh slate roof presumably replacing a traditionally thatched roof when the 20th century box dormer windows were added to the attic storey. The building has a close relationship with the church and is

understood to have formerly been the rectory. The church therefore contributes to the significance of the listed building along with the immediate surroundings forming the private gardens of the property.

5) Knuston High Farm and attached Barn



Figure 5 Knuston High Farm, viewed from the Public Right of Way (zoomed and cropped image)

3.8 Knuston High Farm and attached Barn is located c.575m to the northwest of the Site. The heritage interest of the farm relates to its mid-18th century date of construction with later additions and alterations, and its historic association with Knuston Hall following the Enclosures Act in 1769. The immediate surroundings of the farmstead comprise modern agricultural buildings and associated arable land. Historic research suggests that the boundary of the Knuston estate extended up to the Northamptonshire boundary and did not extend into Bedfordshire and the parish of Wymington.

4.0 Contribution of the Site to Heritage Significance

4.1 There are no heritage assets within the Site. Whilst the land is considered to contribute to the wider agricultural surroundings of the identified heritage assets, it does not directly contribute to their inherent heritage significance.

4.2 The four designated heritage assets within Wymington are located within its historic core over 400m from the Site. The heritage significance of these assets is derived from their architectural and historic interest as part of the 17th century development of the village, utilising local building materials. The surroundings of these listed buildings have changed significantly over the years due to the expansion of the village from the 1870s to the present day as the shoe industry in nearby Rushden developed. Whilst historically, these buildings formed a coherent group with other buildings in the village (as identified by the HER) they now provide evidential value of the post medieval development of Wymington. The Site does not contribute to their significance other than forming part of the intervening landscape surrounding the village.



Figure 6 View facing westwards along the Public Right of Way to the north of the Site, the farmstead at Knuston High Farm is outlined in red on the horizon.

- 4.3 Knuston High Farm lies 575m to the west of the Site. As noted above, its significance is derived from its architectural and historic interest as a farmstead historically associated with Knuston Hall. The farmhouse was constructed in the mid-18th to early 19th century which coincides with a change in ownership of the Knuston Hall estate. The Site is in the most part, physically and visually separate from the farmstead as a result of the topography of the land and intervening mature planting, however views may be gained from limited viewpoints along the public rights of way. Historic research has found no associative or historic link between the Site or the farmstead. As such, the Site is considered to make no contribution to the heritage significance of the farm and instead forms part of its wider landscape, within which residential development forms the backdrop to views to the north and northeast of the farmstead. The development of the Site would bring residential development closer to Knuston High Farm, however as the concept layout shows mitigation can be designed into the scheme to reduce any perceived heritage impact.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.1 The setting of the identified heritage assets is largely confined to their immediate surroundings. As noted above, the Site is considered to form part of the wider landscape context to the heritage assets but does not contribute to their inherent heritage significance.
- 5.2 The future development of the Site would incorporate mitigation measures that would further reduce any perceived impact, as illustrated in the Concept Masterplan. These would include the stepping back of development from the south and western edges of the Site to create a landscape buffer and area of open space to sustain a sense of the rural

character of the area. This also has the potential to create a formal north-south access between the public rights of way and recreational space – something which is only informal at present.

- 5.3 It would be recommended that any proposals for the Site should demonstrate that they have sought to consider the historical context of the Site and incorporate local vernacular building materials such as limestone and ironstone to sustain the local distinctiveness of the area.
- 5.4 In principle, it is therefore proposed that the Site could be developed, subject to detailed design and landscaping proposals, in a manner that would preserve the special interest of the identified heritage assets, with minimal harm being caused to their setting. The heritage assets detailed within this Note would not preclude the allocation of the Site for residential development, and as such, the allocation would accord with the statutory duty set out in the 1990 Act and the principles contained within the NPPF.