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LAND WEST OF WIXAMS

Bedford Borough Council Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan Strategy Options and Draft Policies Heritage Technical Note

The Bedford Borough Council Sites Assessment for the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan Strategy Options and Draft Policies call for sites. In relation to Land West of Wixams, the site assessment states the following:

"The proposal has the potential to cause harm to heritage assets. This harm may range from low to high. There may be options to avoid, reduce or mitigate this harm and where sites have not been ruled out altogether for other reasons, further assessment will be undertaken to more fully explore impacts on significance and options for harm reduction and mitigation. This further assessment may ultimately lead to the conclusion that the site should not be allocated."

The site has been the subject of a historic environment desk-based assessment by Orion Heritage (March 2020). This was undertaken in accordance with the ClfA Standards & Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessments (2017) and included a site survey to assess the potential survival of as yet unrecorded archaeological non-designated heritage assets as well as the potential effects on the significance of nearby designated heritage assets.

Built Heritage

This assessment established that there are no designated heritage assets within the site.

There are three designated heritage assets that could potentially be affected by the development of the site. These are The Vicarage Farmhouse (NHLE 1114196), The Parish Church of All Saints (NHLE 1321582) and The Little Church Farmhouse (NHLE 1114206). The assessment considered the potential effects of the proposed development of the site in the significance of these three assets. It concluded that while the site forms part of the wider rural landscape of these assets, the contribution that the site makes to the significance/experience of these assets is negligible to minor. The development of the site would consequently not harm the significance of the Vicarage Farmhouse, the Parish Church of All Saints and the Little Church Farmhouse.

The Bedford Borough Council Sites Assessment also mentions that there is the potential for listed buildings within the wider area, such as in Ducks End, to be impacted. The proposed development site is beyond the setting of these designated assets, as well two grade II buildings at Chapel End listed buildings. The Ducks End listed buildings are both relatively distant from the site and are also separated by the later houses of the built-up area of Ducks End. Consequently, the proposed development would not result in any adverse harmful effects to the significance of these designated heritage assets.



Archaeology

The assessment considered the archaeological potential of the proposed development site. It established that the site had the potential for the following non-designated archaeological remains:

- There are no prehistoric, Roman, Saxon or post-medieval archaeological remains recorded within site.
- The cropmarks of a possible medieval/post-medieval moated farmstead have been recorded in the north-east corner of the site. The eastern part of the proposed roundabout for the proposed development will occupy the western part of the field within which this feature is located. The construction of this roundabout will not impact upon these remains.
- Although there are no Iron Age or Roman remains recorded within the site, based on the results of previous archaeological investigations to the east, west and north of the site, it is considered that there is a moderate potential for Iron Age to Romano-British remains. Should such remains be present, they are considered unlikely to be of more than local significance and therefore, will not be a design or a planning constraint. However, it is possible that no such remains are present within the site. In accordance with Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 policy 42S clause ii, a programme of archaeological evaluation comprising geophysical survey and evaluation trenching will be undertaken to support a future planning application. Should these investigations have positive results (i.e. reveal archaeological remains), the layout of the scheme could be designed to avoid impacting upon them should the significance of the remains merit preservation or a programme of archaeological excavation and recording can be agreed with the Borough Council in accordance with policy 42S clause vii where such remains are considered to not merit preservation.
- The site of a former WWII military camp has been recorded in the south of the site. This is within the extensive area of proposed open space and so should remains associated with this camp survive, they will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Conclusions

In light of the conclusions of the historic environment desk-based assessment, the proposed development of the site will not result in adverse impacts on the significance of designated built heritage assets. The two areas of the site where archaeological remains have been identified as surviving on site will not be impacted upon by the proposed development. The site has a theoretical potential to contain Iron Age and/or Roman non-designated archaeological remains. Should such remains be present, they are considered unlikely to be of more than local significance and therefore not be a design constraint. A programme of archaeological evaluation will be undertaken to inform the design of a future planning application and to inform the scope of any necessary archaeological mitigation works. Consequently, the potential impact on built heritage and archaeology is not a reason for the site to not be allocated for development.