

LAND AT BIRCHFIELD ROAD, GREAT BARFORD

Bedford Borough Local Plan Review 2020



Local Plan Review

Have Your Say on the Future of Your Borough

12 August 2020

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Optimis Consulting has prepared this supporting evidence on behalf of our client who owns the land at Birchfield Road, Great Barford. This supporting evidence responds to the Bedford Borough Local Plan Review 2020 and the submission of land at Birchfield Road, Great Barford under the Call for Sites Exercise.
- 1.2. The supporting evidence is accompanied with the following appendices:
 - Appendix 1 Site Location Plan
 - Appendix 2 Proposed Indicative Layout
- 1.3. The site is approximately 0.4ha in size and can deliver 4 residential dwellings alongside associated benefits to the local Conservation Area. Optimis views it as a suitable, available, and achievable site for residential development and advocate that it should be allocated for small scale residential development.

2. The Surrounding Area

- 2.1. Great Barford is a settlement and civil parish in Bedfordshire, England, approximately 5 miles northeast of Bedford. The settlement is situated on the River Ouse and is designated a key service centre with a population of 2,003.



Figure 1: Settlement Location

- 2.2. Great Barford is designated key service centre, which contains a good range of services and is well connected to larger town centres by regular public transport. It provides a strong service role for the local community and surrounding area. The distances to key services and facilities within Great Barford are outlined in the table below:

Local Facilities

Doctors	Primary School	Public House	Village Shop	Post Office	Village Hall	Butchers	Bus Stop
Yes	Yes	Two	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1200m	1200m	600 - 1600m	750m	700m	350m	950m	500m

Land at Birchfield Road, Great Barford



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- 2.3. The site is situated 700m from the settlements centre, within walking distance to the local facilities.
 - 2.4. Great Barford is located 4km to east of Bedford Town and 5km from Sandy, both of which provide a wide range of further services and facilities typically associated with a town centre.
 - 2.5. Great Barford is in the catchment of Sandy Secondary School, a secondary school which is 14km away in the adjacent settlement of Sandy. A school bus service runs through Great Barford which stops within the settlement.
 - 2.6. The settlement is situated 4.5km from the A1 and therefore sits within the A1 corridor, providing links into London, the Midlands and the North.
 - 2.7. In addition, the site is located 11km from Bedford train station and 8km from Sandy train station, both provide direct routes to London's Kings Cross train station.
 - 2.8. The village is serviced by a range of bus routes, the closest stop being less than a 2-minute walk from the site. This bus stop provides services to Bedford, Milton Keynes, Oxford via the X5, a regular coach service.

3. The Site

- 3.1. The site is situated in the north western area of Great Barford. The site measures approximately 0.4ha in size and is located to the west of Birchfield Road. The sites topography is flat with the landscape rising away from the site to the north west.



Figure 2: Site Location

- 3.2. The site sits inside of the Great Barford Green End Conservation Area. To the south of the site, approximately 15m away, is a Grade II Listed building called Greenlands. There is limited inter-visibility between the site and Greenlands as a mature hedgerow provides screening. Within the setting of the listed building a number of buildings and barns provide a built context and provide further screening, creating a very contained site.



Figure 3: Site Location in relation to Greenlands

- 3.3. The site is very contained it abuts residential dwellings on the northern and southern boundaries. The western boundary is lined with a thick tree belt and beyond this sits open countryside. To the east is Birchfield Road and Great Barford Park.

Potential Constraints

- Flood Zone 1, low probability of flooding
- Residential and agricultural abutting land use
- Inside Great Barford Green End conservation area
- No heritage assets within the site boundary
- Grade II listed Greenlands is 15m to the South
- Relatively flat topography
- No public rights of way crossing the site

Land at Birchfield Road, Great Barford

4. Current Use

- 4.1. The site is currently used as a Builders Yard, primarily for the storage of materials and machinery. The site is an overgrown and underused space within a residential context.
- 4.2. Areas of hardstanding partially cover the site; an unused derelict building is situated on the northern corner of the site and another building is located on the southern border as shown in figures 4 and 5.



Figure 4: Existing buildings



Figure 5: Derelict building to north of site

4.3. Planning history

- **98/00219/OUT** – Erection of two detached dwellings and garages. Application refused 14th April 1998.

4.4. Surrounding planning history

Since 1998 there has been a history of applications being approved in similar situations, creating a precedent of appropriate small-scale development in appropriate locations. Please note that all applications listed below at Green End Road were consented within the Great Barford Green End Conservation Area.

- **Land to the rear of 51 – 53 Green End Road, Great Barford: 14/02194/FUL** – Construction of two new detached dwellings and on detached garage, ancillary parking and shared private access. Approved 10th June 2015.
- **42 Silver Street, Great Barford: 14/02919/FUL** - Demolition of existing bungalow and garage, erection of two 1.5 storey semi-detached houses with attached garages and all ancillary works. Approved 15th February 2015.
- **61 Green End Road, Great Barford: 07/00245/FUL** - Erection of two storey detached dwelling with integral garage. Approved 19th March 2009.
- **61 Green End Road, Great Barford: 07/01104/FUL** - Erection of two detached dwellings and associated garages; conversion, alterations and extension of coach house to dwelling and erection of detached double garage for no 61. Approved 6th July 2007.

5. The Proposed Allocation

- 5.1. Optimis propose that this site is allocated for small scale residential development.
- 5.2. Optimis have taken the gross area of land and assumed a density of 10 dwellings per hectare, mirroring the density of existing development within the conservation area. At this stage Optimis propose that the site can deliver approximately 4 dwellings.
- 5.3. The site abuts the Settlement Policy Area to the south, the development of the site would constitute infill development between two existing residential properties and its inclusion into the Settlement Policy Area would be robust in geographical terms. A revised settlement boundary would also be robust in physical terms due to the contained nature of the site.
- 5.4. The client is willing to consider a range of house types and an appropriate design in keeping and respecting the surrounding area. The proposed indicative layout (appendix 2) shows four dwellings with the existing building to the south retained as garage space for plot 1.



Figure 6: Proposed Indicative Layout

Land at Birchfield Road, Great Barford

- 5.5. Current access into the site is shown in figures 7 and 8, this is directly from Birchfield Road to the east. The indicative layout shows a proposed in-out access along Birchfield Road. This solution is proposed to minimise damage to the existing hedge row and limit impact on traffic flow along Birchfield Road. This is subject to consultation with highways consultants.



Figure 7: Location of Access



Figure 8: Existing Access Gate

6. Proposal Benefits

- 6.1. The proposed development would be able to deliver a range of benefits for the local community. These could possibly include:
- Enhanced identity of the Great Barford Green End Conservation Area
 - Contribution to community facilities
 - Biodiversity Net Gain
 - Provision of much needed family housing
- 6.2. Development at this location within the Great Barford Conservation Area offers an exciting opportunity to enhance the identity of the Conservation Area, reinforcing Birchfield Road's identity as a residential street.
- 6.3. The Great Barford Green End Conservation Area lacks a cohesive identity and does not have a conservation area appraisal defining what is important in terms of character, appearance, and key characteristics. The Conservation Area encompasses several listed buildings but has no unified, recognisable form.
- 6.4. It is envisaged that the existing character of the listed properties within the area will be drawn upon for design inspiration and local materials will be used to ensure the properties reflect the local vernacular, enriching and enhancing the Conservation Area.
- 6.5. At present the site offers a low biodiversity value, the proposed development will seek to provide a biodiversity net gain. Existing hedgerows will be retained and enhanced by planting gaps with native hedgerow shrubs. Native trees could be planted throughout the development, along with a flowering grass mix on green areas.
- 6.6. Holes could be provided in boundary features to maintain routes for hedgehogs and bird nesting or bat roosting opportunities could be incorporated into the dwellings.

7. Community Engagement

- 7.1. The client is keen to engage with the Bedford Borough Planning team and the site has been put forwards for consideration to the Great Barford Neighbourhood Planning Group. The landowner is keen to provide a development that is commensurate and meets the needs of the settlement and people of Great Barford. This would include engagement with local people and the Parish Council to establish benefits to be brought forward by the scheme and ensure that the design and housing mix are appropriate.

8. Availability and Deliverability

- 8.1. The site is considered suitable, deliverable, and available. It relates well to existing development and gives the opportunity to enhance the Great Barford Green End Conservation Area. The site is in close proximity to the settlement centre and well linked to larger, local settlements.
- 8.2. Great Barford is a complex settlement with two distinct conservation areas, the town has organically grown over time and will benefit from small scale residential allocations that will maintain its character and identity.
- 8.3. Once allocated within the emerging Local Plan, which is predicted to be adopted in 2023, Optimis envisage that this site will be delivered by 2024.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1. This site is in a sustainable location with no known constraints and could deliver a residential development of approximately 4 dwellings, alongside benefits to the local community. Optimis believe that this site should be allocated within the Bedford Borough Local Plan review.
- 9.2. Residential redevelopment of this site will form a natural and logical expansion to Great Barford on a small-scale, commensurate with the existing population with the benefit of enhancing the identity of the Great Barford Green End Conservation Area.