

**Placemaking Plan Hearing Session - Local Green Space
Land at Lower Road, Hinton Blewett**

Heritage response to key points raised:

Key point 1:

Can it be agreed as common ground that the land shown as Local Green Space (LGS) on the plan in B&NES evidence PMP/DM/12/5, page 74, be removed from the designation?

Response:

The primary reason for designating the land as LGS was due to its particular local historic significance. This meets the requirement of paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that such designation should only be used:

“where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”.

The designated land is considered to have particular local historic significance. It makes a significantly important contribution to the setting of this part of the Hinton Blewett Conservation Area, which is a heritage asset (HA). The NPPF Glossary defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

It is concluded that the entire area of land makes a significant contribution to the character and setting of the conservation area (CA) and no part should therefore be removed from the designation, as elaborated on below.

Key point 2:

Matters raised on the historic significance assessment (page 74 of PMP/DM/12/5)

a) There is no reference to historic field pattern

Response

There is no direct reference to the historic field pattern in the assessment but it does cross-refer to the Conservation Area Character Appraisal which summarises the special interest of the CA on page 3, including *‘the medieval field patterns that provide a key part of the setting of the CA’*

b) Reference to the Area of Outstanding Natural beauty is not relevant to historic significance

Response

Agreed

c) The land in question is not adjacent to the conservation area. Other adjacent land is not proposed for designation.

Response

The land forms the western part of the proposed LGS designation, further from the CA boundary than the remaining land to the east which directly abuts the CA boundary. Nevertheless, the contextual role of the land in terms of the CA setting is highly significant. It forms an important part of the character of the wider open landscape setting to the south of the CA. This open and undeveloped landscape bordering Lower Road on the western approach to the historic settlement has been established since the medieval planned village first developed, as identified in the Built Heritage Assessment by CgMs, which supported planning application ref: 14/02403/OUT.

Furthermore, its positive contribution to the significance of the heritage asset in terms of setting is confirmed by guidance in Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning : 3 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' (July 2015). The guidance also makes reference to "Appreciating Setting" and states in paragraph 9 *"because setting does not depend on public rights or ability to access it, significance is not dependent on numbers of people visiting it (the HA); this would downplay such qualitative issues as the importance of quiet and tranquillity as an attribute of setting....."*

- d) Reference to 'front of stage' depends on viewpoint and is also relevant to other land. This land is not demonstrably special.**

Response

Important views are identified in the Hinton Blewett Conservation Area Appraisal. Those looking towards the CA from the landscape beyond are limited to the south and east, due to the locally distinct topography. The village is located on a plateau which drops away to the valley of the River Cam to the south and east. This provides long distance views to and from the village. Important view no 3 from the public footpath in the river valley looks north towards the village skyline, including the church tower and the CA. This view is enhanced by the green space on the valley side proposed for designation. The space combines with the grassed area of The Barbury fronting the public house to create a significantly high value green setting for this part of the historic settlement.

Elsewhere, on the other sides of the village, the plateau landscape setting gently undulates and views towards Hinton Blewett are short distance, curtailed and foreshortened by tree and hedgerow belts. No key views from this direction are therefore identified in the conservation area character appraisal, emphasising the special value of those from the south.

- e) This green space together with the adjacent farmland is only nominated because of the decision on planning application reference 14/02403/OUT**

Response

Notwithstanding the previous proposal for development and planning decision, the land must now be considered on its existing heritage value. The conservation consultation advice given at the time of the application concluded that *"the proposed development on what is a highly prominent site would result in considerable harm to the setting of the CA"*. This heritage consideration of the value of the setting would not be changed or influenced by designating the land as Local Green Space.

The land is clearly within the context of the CA and its setting. If harm caused to the setting of the CA by development is considered to be substantial then the NPPF

advises it should be refused. If it is less than substantial, paragraph 134 of the NPPF requires that:

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

There would not appear to be opportunity for any public benefits arising from the previously proposed residential development of the land in question.

f) The assessment does not specifically relate to the land in question

Response

The assessment relates to the land within the boundary of the site as shown on the plan on page 74 of the assessment, which clearly includes the land in question.

g) There is no recommendation in the conservation area character appraisal to protection of this land as Local Green Space.

Response

It is not the role of a conservation area character appraisal to propose Local Green Space designations. Guidance on the preparation of such appraisals is included in Historic England's guidance on 'Conservation Areas - Designation, Appraisals and Management' (February 2016). This includes identifying the key characteristics of the area such as open spaces, trees and landscape. As such, the appraisal clearly recognises the significant contribution the surrounding 'exceptional' landscape makes to the setting of the CA, which includes the land in question.

h) The reference to the land defining the separation of the medieval village is not understood. The hedgerow is protected under other regulations and is not a green space.

Response

The ancient hedgerow along Lower Road together with the land set behind it forms the edge of the medieval settlement.

Key point 3:

Changes made to viewpoint 3 in the conservation area character appraisal between the consultation draft and adopted version were in response to the planning application (Ref: 14/02403/OUT)

Response:

Notwithstanding the development proposals at the time, the appraisal followed a separate full public consultation process prior to adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document. As part of the public consultation it is understood that the local community requested further appraisal of the important views of the CA from the landscape to the south. This was responded to in the final version of the document.

Key point 4:

The Built Heritage Assessment by CgMs (March 2014) supporting the planning application concluded that the proposed development would cause less than substantial harm to the setting of the conservation area. If the harm is now considered to be higher this needs to be demonstrated.

Response:

The present considerations are prepared in the context of the proposed designation of the land in question as a Local Green Space and not on any development proposals for the land. If a development proposal should come forward the heritage implications, including any degree of harm caused, would be reassessed at that time based on the information provided (also see response to key point 2e).

**John Davey MIHBC MRTPI
Conservation Consultant**