



Ms Claudia Jorge
The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd

Direct Dial: 0207 973 3749

Our ref: PA01200108
20 December 2023

Dear Ms Jorge

Pre-application Advice

LAND EAST OF WARWICK ROAD DRAYTON WARWICK ROAD BANBURY

Thank you for contacting Historic England seeking our pre-application advice on these proposals.

Summary

The proposed housing development would cause harm to the significance of the Hanwell Conservation Area through development in its setting. We are not convinced the harm is justified, contrary to the requirements of the NPPF. The proposals also conflict with numerous related local planning policies. Historic England would strongly object should this application be submitted for planning permission.

Advice

Significance of the Hanwell Conservation Area

The application site consists of agricultural fields to the south of the conservation area and village of Hanwell. These fields form a rural buffer that separates Hanwell from the northwest suburbs of Banbury. Hanwell is a small linear settlement with early medieval origins. While some infill modern housing has sprung up along Main Street, the approach to the village along Warwick Road, West Street and the surrounding Public Rights of Ways (PROWs) remain rural in nature.

As Hanwell is an agricultural settlement, the close connection of village with the surrounding landscape farmed from it is essential to understanding the history of the Conservation Area. Furthermore, the rural context also greatly enhances the aesthetic appeal of what is a very attractive group of buildings. The fields of the application site positively contribute to that rural setting and therefore are important aspects of the conservation area's character and appearance.

As set out in the Hanwell Conservation Area Appraisal, there are views out to the horizon to the south that take in aspects the application site. The views looking



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towards the application site are identified as negative views, as the industrial and urban expansion of Banbury is clearly visible beyond.

Impact of the development on the historic environment

The proposed development consists of an outline application for up to 170 residential homes, new play facilities, public open space, landscaping and access. The application would extend the urban edges of Banbury to within a single field's width from the village and conservation area of Hanwell. This would markedly reduce the sense of rurality around Hanwell on the approach to the village along Warwick Road, West Street and the PROWs south of the village.

We understand additional screening is proposed to mitigate this impact. However, even if visibility of the new development in views of or from the conservation area is negligible, the scale and proximity of the development is still likely to have wider impacts on the way we experience the rural feel of the area and the setting of the conservation area. As Historic England's setting guidance and the NPPG make clear, the historic connection between places, the kinetic experience of approaching a place, and factors such as noise can often contribute to the setting of a designated asset.

These proposals would not only reaffirm the negative impacts the northern expansion of Banbury has had on the rurality of the village, but greatly exacerbate them. Developing these fields would essentially close the rural gap to the south between Banbury and Hanwell and would be both visible and appreciable (for example, through noise) on nearby approach roads and the PROWs to the village. Such development would affect the appreciation and understanding for the rural origins of the village and the close connection it has with the landscape. It will also affect to some extent the understanding of the historic relationship of the buildings within the conservation area with the surrounding fields which they farmed. Overall, we consider the proposals would likely cause a high level of harm to the significance of the conservation area. In the language of the NPPF the harm would be in the range of less than substantial.

Relevant policy and guidance

Should these proposals come forward for planning permission, Historic England would be guided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Local Planning Policies in consideration of proposals that have the potential to affect the significance of designated heritage assets. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be) (Para. 199). Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset be avoided or minimised (Para. 195). The harm which remains should then be clearly and convincingly justified when weighing it against the public benefits associated with the proposal (Paras. 200, 202).



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The site is not allocated for development in the Cherwell District Council current or emerging Local Plan. The Council is also able to demonstrate they have the required 5-year housing land supply and so the development proposals must be assessed in accordance with the Council's Development Plan.

The application site was assessed as part of a larger site within the Council's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (2018; site HELAA030). The assessment concludes the site was 'unsuitable for development' and would 'be a direct risk of coalescence of Banbury and Hanwell village which development would lead to impacts on the Hanwell Conservation Area and the high landscape value and visual sensitivity of the site'.

The proposals would also be considered against Cherwell Council's own policies for development in the built and historic environment. These are set out in Policy ESD 15.

The Hanwell Conservation Area Appraisal (August 2007) identifies the land around the boundary to the north and south are important to the character of the village and setting of the conservation area and should be protected from unsympathetic development (para 7.10).

Within the Management Plan, it states the 'open land around the Conservation Area should be protected from any future development that would adversely affect the character of the village. It is essential that the historic and in parts semi-rural nature of the area is not overwhelmed' (13).

The Government's National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) section on Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, paragraph 013, and Historic England's published guidance on the setting of heritage assets (Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3) are useful in understanding what constitutes the setting of a heritage asset and how that setting might be affected by development.

Historic England's position

We cannot see any readily apparent justification for the harm entailed as required by NPPF paragraph 200. The site is not allocated for housing in either the current or emerging Cherwell Local Plan. It's also a site that has been found to be 'unsuitable for development' in the Council's 2018 HELAA, due to the impact it would have in amalgamating Hanwell and Banbury and the impacts this would have on the Hanwell Conservation Area. We therefore assume that local housing need can be met without the need to develop this site. Given the lack of justification for the harm or support in local planning policies, we do not think the development of this site can be supported. As any form of residential development on this site would be harmful, regardless of design quality, we do not consider that there is scope to modify the proposals in order



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to make them acceptable. Should we be consulted by the council on these proposals we would object and recommend it would be appropriate to refuse the application.

Next Steps

Thank you for involving us at the pre-application stage. Your current proposal does not address our concerns, as set out above, and so is unlikely to receive our support if submitted for statutory approval. Your scheme may benefit from our continued engagement; if so, we would welcome the opportunity to continue discussions through our Extended Pre-application service, details of which can be found on our website at www.HistoricEngland.org.uk/EAS. If you would like to discuss this option further, please do contact me.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas
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LAND EAST OF WARWICK ROAD DRAYTON WARWICK ROAD BANBURY Pre-application Advice

List of information on which the above advice is based

Annex EDP 1 - Objection Report by Keep Hanwell Village Rural Action Group (KHVRAG)
Annex EDP 2 - Archaeology and Heritage Assessment (edp3253_r010)
Annex EDP 3 - LVIA (edp3253_r007)
Masterplan
Assemblage of site walkover photographs
Photoviewpoints



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