



**HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS
SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
LOCAL PLAN REVIEW**

**REPORT No 8: NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY
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Non-technical Summary

This exercise has considered the potential impact on heritage assets resulting from development of six sites identified in the Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Local Plan Review. The assessments have been made following extensive discussions with various officers, principally **Martin Saunders the Council's** Senior Development Officer (Conservation of the Historic Environment).

Several visits were made to each site to consider various aspects of the proposed developments and to provide an extensive photographic evidence base. Wherever possible these included visits to heritage assets within or close to the sites in order to consider views from these assets to the sites as well as views from the sites to the assets.

In addition visits were made to Warwickshire County Record Office to examine historic maps and other archival evidence in order to establish the significance of the heritage assets affected by the proposals.

The reports consist of an Introductory Statement that details the methodology employed in the assessments together with a detailed heritage impact assessment on each individual site.

This non-technical summary draws together the information collected for each site with recommendations for its capacity to accommodate development. Where appropriate it recommends areas within the sites that should remain undeveloped in order to protect the setting of the heritage assets as required by primary legislation and/or government policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The legislative framework relating to the setting of Listed Buildings is long established and requires local planning authorities to consider the desirability of preserving a building or its setting or

any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Government Policy on the Historic Environment is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which defines what is meant by the term heritage asset. The NPPF also defines the terms significance and harm as well as describing what the setting of a heritage asset means.

In doing so it states that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets and that the greater their significance the greater this weight should be.

The NPPF also states that harm to heritage assets (or their setting) should be exceptional and for certain categories such as Grade II* or Grade I buildings such harm should be wholly exceptional.

These are important considerations since development of sites identified in a local plan for development clearly have the potential to cause harm to the setting of heritage assets either where they are located within a site or stand on land near to such sites.

The purpose of the assessments is not to make recommendations about whether sites should be allocated for development. Those decisions rest with the local planning authority. What is necessary is to indicate whether the site allocations have the potential to cause harm so that the decision takers can make informed decisions about balancing harm with the need to provide sites for development. In doing so the Council must show that it has taken proper account of the historic environment and acted accordingly.

Site 1 **Barratt's Farm, Balsall Common**

This is a large site to the east of the settlement of Balsall Common comprising numerous fields that were established following the enclosure of this formerly open land in the early nineteenth century. The post-enclosure field boundaries were established by hedgerows that still exist along with associated tree planting that give the area a rural character on the edge of the existing village boundaries.

Three listed buildings lie within the site with four immediately adjacent to the site as well as a locally listed building and others which are not locally listed but which have some degree of interest.

Development of Site 1 would fail to preserve and would cause harm to **the setting of the Grade II listed Poplars Farm, Barratt's Farm** and its associated barn which lie within the site. It would have a neutral **impact on the setting of the Grade II listed no's 83a, 83 and 85 Meeting House Lane and The Brickmakers Arms, Station Road** all of which are adjacent to the site. With regard to the latter, additional development may have a beneficial impact on its role as a public house and social facility for the community. Development would also affect the setting of the undesignated heritage assets on Old Waste Lane. Harm to the setting of heritage assets should be exceptional.

The assessment suggests that further expert advice is sought to **establish the area's landscape value**. It also suggests by way of mitigation **that fields adjacent to Poplars Farm and Barratt's Farm** are left largely undeveloped and that existing footpaths throughout the site should be retained as public amenities.

Site 3, Windmill Lane, Balsall Common

This is a triangle of land at the southern end of Balsall Common. As with Site 1, the field boundaries are part of the post enclosure landscapes of this area. Within the triangle of land some new housing is built on previously developed land.

The heritage asset potentially affected by development is the Grade II* Berkswell Windmill. Although sited within a rural area the windmill is not in an isolated location and several properties and a mobile homes site are in close proximity. The windmill is a highly important building as reflected in its listing at Grade II* and it is highly sensitive to change in its setting.

As the tallest building in the vicinity the windmill is a prominent structure when approached from the north. From other directions it is less visible with views heavily filtered by existing trees. There are however clear views from the windmill to parts of the site and development in these areas would fail to preserve the setting of the building. It has been suggested that development in these areas would not only fail to preserve its setting but could also affect its operational function. However no evidence has been provided to substantiate this suggestion.

The assessment concludes that the visual effect of developing the southern part of the site would fail to preserve and would cause harm to the setting of the windmill. Such harm should be wholly exceptional.

By way of mitigation it suggests that areas of land at the southern end of Site 3 should remain undeveloped, that views to and from the windmill should remain open and that no development should exceed two stories to ensure that the windmill remains the tallest building in the vicinity.

Site 8, Hampton Road, Knowle

Three areas of land are proposed for development comprising fields north-west of Hampton Road opposite Grimshaw Hall (Site 8A) the football and cricket pitches east of Hampton Road off Wootton Close (Site 8B). Land south of the Grand Union Canal off Hampton Road (Sites 214 and 215) has been suggested as an area for the relocation of the football and cricket pitches on Site 8B if those areas are included as development sites. All areas are shown on the enclosure map of 1820 together with details of the landowners.

The heritage asset potentially affected by development is Grimshaw Hall, a Grade I listed building and an extremely fine example of timber framing surrounded by attractive gardens and grounds which themselves form part of its setting. The building is of high architectural, artistic and historic interest.

Whilst public views of Grimshaw Hall itself are somewhat limited (even when leaf cover has fallen) large parts of the proposed sites are visible from the grounds of the hall. The setting of the hall is indivisible from its surrounding gardens and grounds.

The assessment concludes that development on large areas of Sites 8A and 8B would fail to preserve the setting of Grimshaw Hall and would cause harm to its setting. Such harm should be wholly exceptional.

The potential effect of development on Sites 214 and 215 cannot be fully assessed but it is reasonable to conclude that the combined effect of earthmoving operations and the creation of sports pitches, the provision of floodlights, fencing, clubhouse and changing facilities and car parking could cause moderate harm to the setting of Grimshaw Hall.

Site 12, Dog Kennel Lane, Shirley

This is a large site, rural in nature and in use for agriculture. Dog Kennel Lane currently forms a southern edge to the West Midland conurbation. Field patterns within the site were already established by 1794 as shown on a survey of estates belonging to John Burman at that time and many of these hedgerows still remain.

The heritage asset potentially affected by development is Light Hall, a Grade II listed building which is currently surrounded by fields. Adjacent to the house is a (possibly medieval) moat and the building itself has high architectural, artistic and historic interest. Light Hall is described on the 1842 Tithe map of Tanworth **in Arden as "House, yards, pleasure grounds and buildings"**. **There are no clear remains of the former "pleasure grounds" and little evidence of the former walled garden.**

The assessment concludes that development of the site would fail to preserve and would cause harm to the setting of Light Hall and such harm should be exceptional.

By way of mitigation the assessment suggests that an area of land immediately around Light Hall should remain undeveloped and that a field adjacent to Tanworth Road should remain open to preserve key views of the house and outbuildings. Land at the junction of Dog Kennel Lane and Tanworth Road should be retained for potential community uses and land north and north-east of the house should be low density development and key views should be established to and from the house. These should then remain as open areas.

Site 13 South of Shirley

This is a large site extending from the southern outskirts of Shirley to the Stratford Canal and east towards Dickens Heath Road and Site 12. Its character is very different to other sites considered in these assessments as it largely comprises land used for the growing of Christmas trees in the centre and western parts of the site with open fields to the east.

The heritage assets potentially affected by development are the Grade II listed Whitlocks End Farm and the locally listed barn adjacent to the house. The interest these assets is medium having been compromised by extensive alterations and conversion to residential use.

The assessment concludes that the wider surroundings of the assets have been extensively altered by the tree growing business and that development of the site could have a minor negative impact in failing to preserve the setting of the listed farmhouse but cause no overall harm to that setting given the extent of changes that have occurred.

By way of mitigation the assessment suggests that the significance of the assets could be enhanced by the preparation of a detailed design brief to outline suggested layout, scale, massing and materials for any new dwellings in their vicinity.

Site 19, HS2 Interchange site at Bickenhill

This is the largest site comprising land contained within a triangle formed by the M42, the A452 and the A45. The site has already been chosen as the site for the first interchange on the HS2 line outside London and the assessment makes no comment on this proposal. The purpose of the assessment is to consider the potential impact of further development over and above that already proposed via HS2 to comprise a major development hub for the region.

Three heritage assets are potentially affected by the proposals. Park Farmhouse a Grade II* building lies within the site, and Packington Hall and its parkland lie to the east of the site. The Hall is listed Grade II* and the park is registered Grade II*.

The assessment identifies Park Farmhouse as having close links with the Hall and Park as the former home of the estate's **agent and clearly designed as an "eyecatcher" from the pleasure grounds** that lie west of the Hall. This link has not been previously been identified but it is an important historical association between the assets.

Development of Site 19 would fail to preserve the setting of Park Farmhouse and would cause significant harm to its setting. Depending on the scale and location of buildings it could also fail to preserve the setting of the Hall and Park and cause harm to the settings. Such harm should be wholly exceptional.

The assessment concludes that this can only be fully assessed via a Landscape Visual Assessment carried out in accordance with methodology established by the Landscape Institute.