

Growing Baldock

Environmental Statement Volume 2: Figures & Appendices

Chapter 8: Built Heritage

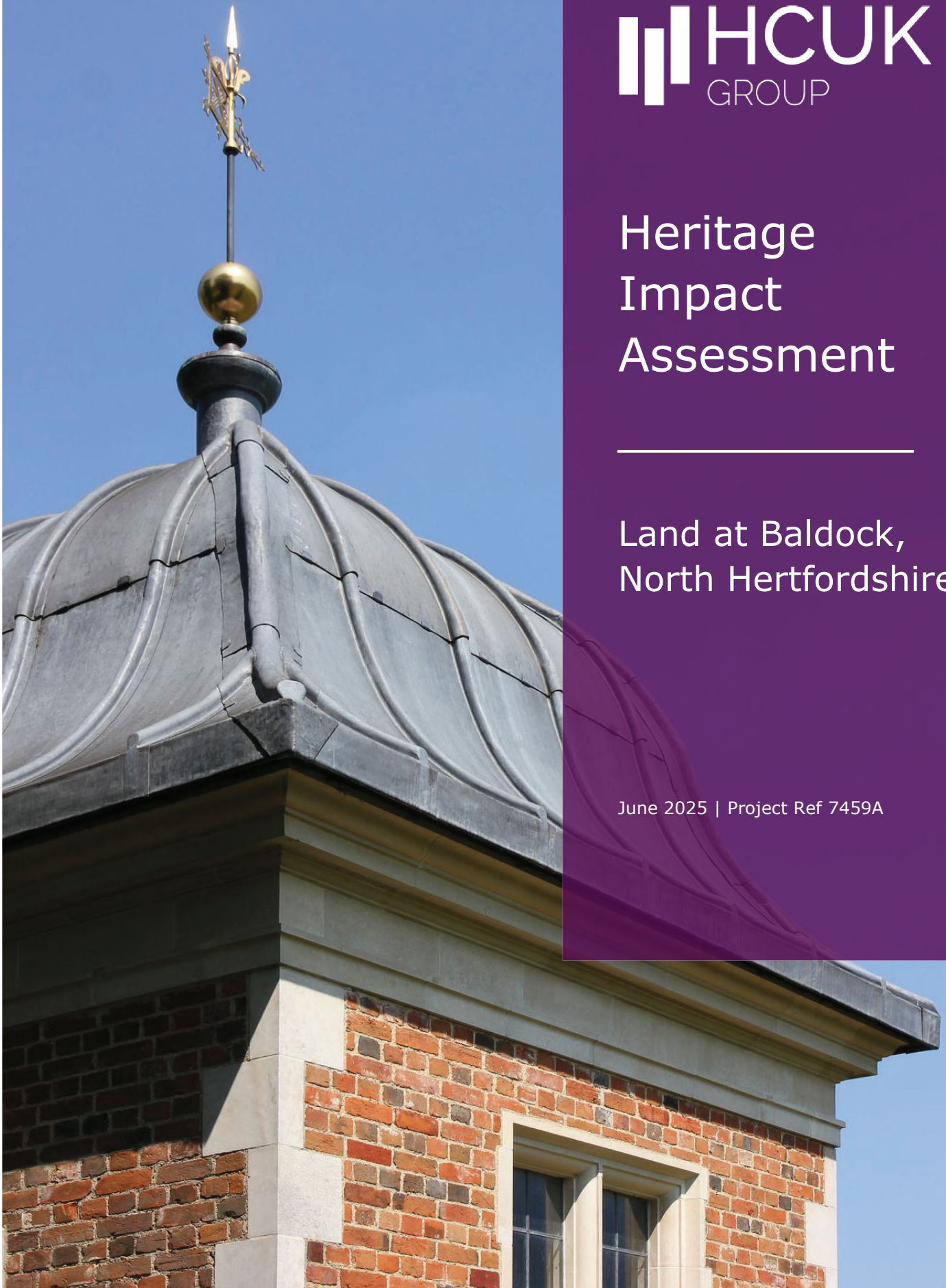
Appendix 8.1 Heritage Impact Assessment



Heritage Impact Assessment

Land at Baldock,
North Hertfordshire

June 2025 | Project Ref 7459A





Championing a sustainable
natural environment



RTPI
Chartered Town Planners

Project Number: 7459A

File Origin: <https://heritagecollectiveuk.sharepoint.com/sites/7001-7500/Shared Documents/7401-7500/07459 - Land north of Baldock/7459A - Heritage/HER/Reports/2025.06.24 Baldock HIA HC7459 PJV6.docx>

No text or imagery within this report has been generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Relevant Planning Policy Framework.....	5
3. Background and Development	8
4. Statement of Significance.....	11
5. Heritage Impact Assessment.....	21
6. Conclusions	27

Appendices

App. 1 Scale of Harm table (HCUK, 2019)

App. 2 GPA3 Assessment: Historic England's Guidance on Setting

1. Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by HCUK Group on behalf of Urban and Civic Developments Ltd. Following the development of the Strategic Masterplan, this assessment now accompanies the submission of the proposals for outline planning permission for the development of land at Baldock, North Hertfordshire (hereafter 'the site').

1.2 The site, which is allocated within the North Herts Local Plan 2011 – 2031 comprises several parcels of land to the north, east and south of the existing settlement of Baldock. The majority of the land is currently in-use as agricultural (arable) land, and is situated to the north and south of Bygrave Road and Royston Road, and to the east and south of Clothall Common. The parameter plan is shown below on Figure 1, and allocated land shown on Figure 2.

1.3 The proposals include residential development, a mixed-use local centre, employment, educational facilities (primary and secondary), playing fields, refuse facilities, care facilities, green infrastructure, and the expansion of existing allotments. The description of the development is as follows:

Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for means of highway access into the development from the A505, North Road, Royston Road, Clothall Road and Wallington Road, for up to 3,200 homes, up to 16ha of employment and waste infrastructure, mixed use local centre, flexible land use parcel on BA3 for education and residential uses, up to 2 x primary schools, 1 x SEND school, health hub, green infrastructure (including parks, formal sports provision, play, habitat areas, informal open space and structural planting), internal street network, access junctions and railway crossing, public transport infrastructure, pedestrian/cycle network (including PRow diversions, active travel routes, mobility hubs and crossing of the railway), utilities and drainage infrastructure (including diversions of existing and provision of new infrastructure, pumping stations, sustainable drainage, primary substations, rising main/strategic sewer and renewable energy infrastructure), ground remodelling/earthworks and any necessary demolitions.*

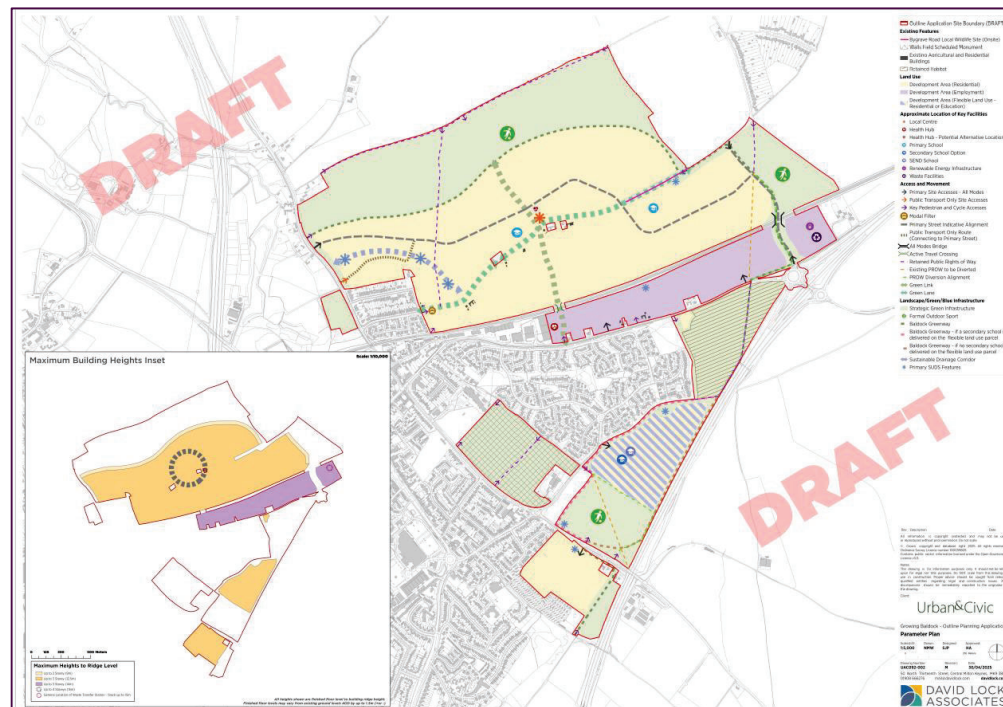


Figure 1: Baldock parameter plan

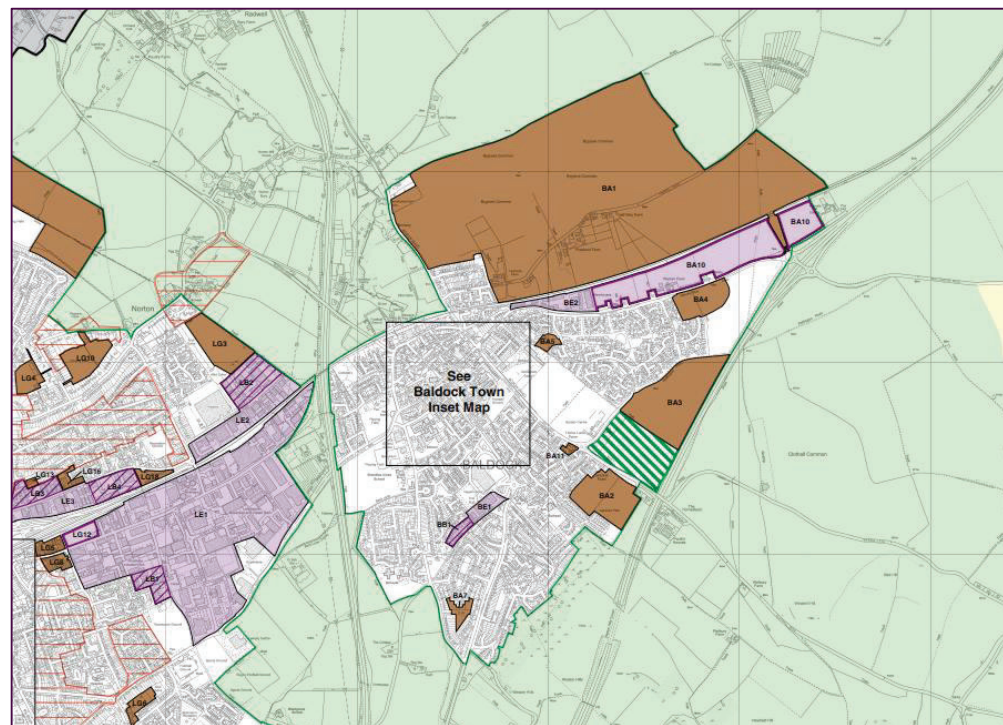


Figure 2: Land allocated for housing around Baldock, indicated in brown (North Herts Local Plan 2011 – 2031)

The Context

1.4 HCUK have been providing Heritage advice since the inception of the project, and earlier versions of this Heritage Impact Assessment (August 2022 – December 2023) informed the development of the Strategic Masterplan for 'Growing Baldock'.

1.5 There are no designated heritage assets within the site itself, however there are a number of listed buildings, scheduled monuments and a conservation area within close proximity of the site boundaries. The proposals have the potential to effect the setting of these heritage assets and consequentially their significance, and they are therefore the subject of this impact assessment. These assets comprise:

- **Baldock Conservation Area:** The application site is located beyond the boundaries of the conservation area, however given its relatively close proximity any effects on the setting of the conservation area and its character and appearance are fully considered within this assessment.
- **Two scheduled monuments:** These sites comprise the Romano-British small town and Late Iron Age settlement off Clothall Road and the Settlement site south of Blackhorse Farm. Both of these scheduled monuments are currently experienced as areas of open greenspace on the edges of Baldock, but are not visually tangible historic features (i.e. there is no visible built form or clear earthworks which give them prominence).
- **Individual listed buildings outside the conservation area:** These include four Grade II listed dwellings along North Road (namely, The Nook, Long Bailey, Blackhorse farmhouse and The Compasses).
- **Grade I Church of St Mary, Baldock:** The church is situated in the centre of the Baldock Conservation Area, however as the most prominent asset in the area it is considered here additionally as an individual heritage asset.

1.6 No non-designated heritage assets have been identified by the Local Planning Authority as requiring consideration. All archaeological considerations are covered within the accompanying Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (Phoenix Archaeology, 2023).

- 1.7** An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report was submitted by the client to the Local Planning Authority in February 2025. In relation to Built Heritage no specific concerns were raised and the following response was received:

The Applicant's Scoping Report (paragraph 3.5) also describes a proposed assessment of Built Heritage Effects.

No responses regarding built heritage were received from Historic England or from the Council's Conservation Team, after they were consulted.

The Council agrees that the Environmental Statement will need to include a chapter on Heritage Effects (Archaeology and Built Heritage), and the proposed EIA methodology in respect of Heritage is supported.

Purpose of this Statement

- 1.8** The purpose of this updated Heritage Impact Assessment is to accompany the outline planning application in order to inform the decision makers of any potential effects of the proposed development on the historic built environment.
- 1.9** The heritage assets susceptible to impact have been observed and assessed by the author following a site visit in good weather in August 2022.
- 1.10** Value judgements on the significance of the heritage assets affected are presented and the effects of the proposals upon that significance are appraised. The report sets out how the proposal complies with the guidance and policy of the NPPF and local planning policy.

2. Relevant Planning Policy Framework

2.1 The decision maker is required by section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building and its setting when exercising planning functions. The decision maker must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the significance of the listed building, and there is a strong presumption against the grant of permission for development that would harm its heritage significance.¹

2.2 Measures being implemented as a consequence of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2024 will have the effect of making the desirability of preserving or enhancing other types of designated heritage asset a statutory consideration.

2.3 The setting of a heritage asset can contribute to its significance. Setting is defined in the NPPF as follows:

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.

2.4 Historic England has produced guidance on development affecting the setting of heritage assets in The Setting of Heritage Assets (second edition, December 2017), better known as GPA3. The guidance encourages the use of a stepped approach to the assessment of effects on setting and significance, namely (1) the identification of the relevant assets, (2) a statement explaining the significance of those assets, and the contribution made by setting, (3) an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the setting and significance of the assets, and (4) consideration of mitigation in those cases where there will be harm to significance.

¹ Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited v East Northamptonshire District Council and others [2014] EWCA Civ 137. This principle has recently been confirmed, albeit in a lower court, in R (Wyeth-Price) v Guildford Borough Council.

2.5 The NPPF requires the impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset² to be considered in terms of either “substantial harm” or “less than substantial harm” as described within paragraphs 214 and 215 of that document. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) makes it clear that substantial harm is a high test, and case law describes substantial harm in terms of an effect that would vitiate or drain away much of the significance of a heritage asset.³ The Scale of Harm is tabulated at Appendix 1.

2.6 Paragraphs 214 and 215 of the NPPF refer to two different balancing exercises in which harm to significance, if any, is to be balanced with public benefit.⁴ Paragraph 18a-020-20190723 of National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) online makes it clear that some heritage-specific benefits can be public benefits. Paragraph 18a-018-20190723 of the same NPPG makes it clear that it is important to be explicit about the category of harm (that is, whether paragraph 214 or 215 of the NPPF applies, if at all), and the extent of harm, when dealing with decisions affecting designated heritage assets, as follows:

Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.

2.7 Paragraphs 212 and 213 of the NPPF state that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset when considering applications that affect its significance, irrespective of how substantial or otherwise that harm might be.

2.8 One of the overarching objectives of sustainable development, as expressed in paragraph 8 of the NPPF, is mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy. Historic England has a Climate Change Strategy, and has published Mitigation, Adaptation and Energy Measures. More specifically, Historic England has published a Heritage and Climate Change Carbon Reduction Plan (March 2022). These and similar strategies run in parallel with heritage-

² The seven categories of designated heritage assets are World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Park and Gardens, Registered Battlefield and Conservation Areas, designated under the relevant legislation.

³ Bedford Borough Council v SSCLG and Nuon UK Limited [2013] EWHC 4344 (Admin).

⁴ The balancing exercise was the subject of discussion in City and Country Bramshill v CCSLG and others [2021] EWCA, Civ 320.

specific methodologies relating to the assessment of significance, and the effect of change on significance.

2.9

A full review of local policy contained within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan has been undertaken. Of specific relevance are Policy SP13 'Historic Environment' and Policy SP14 'Policy SP14: Site BA1 – North of Baldock' of the Draft North Herts Local Plan 2011 – 2031.

3. Background and Development

Cartographic Evidence

- 3.1** Historic mapping shows that the application site to the north, east and south-east of Baldock has remained open land throughout the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries (Figures 3 – 5). It is largely comprised of the area known as 'Bygrave Common', part of the Parish of Bygrave which lies between Baldock and Ashwell.
- 3.2** The site and its surrounds are characterised by large open fields as the parish was never subject to an Enclosure Act in the 18th or 19th centuries, so that the open fields of the medieval period were largely maintained. The settlement of Baldock itself can be seen to expand considerably only later in the 20th century and into the 21st century, when the residential areas extended into Clothall Common to the east (Figure 6).



Figure 3: Extract from the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map Hertfordshire Sheet VII, Surveyed: 1880, Published: 1884



Figure 4: Extract from the revised First Edition Ordnance Survey Map Hertfordshire Sheet VII.NE, Revised: 1897, Published: 1899



Figure 5: Extract from the Revised Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map Bedfordshire Sheet XXVII.NE, Revised: 1921, Published: 1925



Figure 6: Aerial image of Baldock, 2022

4. Statement of Significance

Assessment of Significance

4.1 This chapter of the report establishes the significance of the relevant heritage assets in the terms set out in the NPPF, and it comments on the contribution of setting to significance. The identification of the heritage assets equates to Step 1 of GPA3, and the assessment of significance equates to Step 2 of GPA3. Steps 2 and 3 of GPA3 are closely connected, so this chapter should be read in conjunction with Chapter 5 (Heritage Impact Assessment) and with the tabular methodology at Appendix 2.

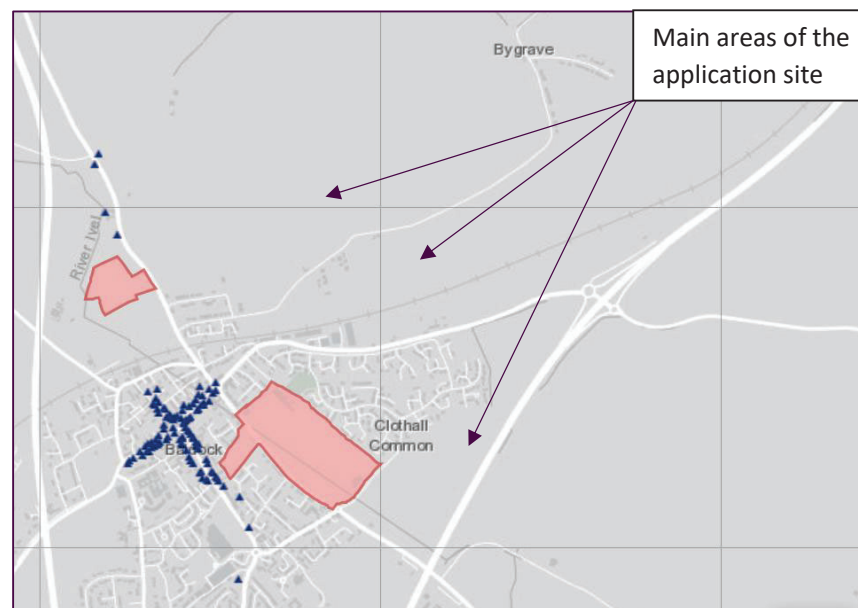


Figure 7: Distribution of designated heritage assets around the application site (Historic England, August 2022)

Heritage Assets

Step 1

4.2 There are no designated heritage assets within the site itself, however there are a number of listed buildings, scheduled monuments and a conservation area within close proximity of the site boundaries. No non-designated heritage assets have

been identified by the Local Planning Authority during pre-application consultations or during the course of this Heritage Impact Assessment.

4.3 The proposals have the potential to effect the setting of a number of designated heritage assets and consequentially their significance, and they are therefore the subject of this impact assessment.

4.4 The heritage assets identified as being potentially susceptible to impacts and therefore addressed further within Step 2, below, comprise:

- The Baldock Conservation Area;
- Two scheduled monuments: The Romano-British small town and Late Iron Age settlement off Clothall Road and the Settlement site south of Blackhorse Farm;
- Four Grade II listed dwellings along North Road (The Nook, Long Bailey, Blackhorse farmhouse and The Compasses);
- The Grade I Church of St Mary, Baldock.



Figure 8: Boundary of the Baldock Conservation Area (NHDC, 2003)

Step 2

The Baldock Conservation Area

- 4.5** The application site is located beyond the boundaries of the conservation area, and is separated from the historic core by the built form which surrounds it, however given its still relatively close proximity any effects on the setting of the conservation area and its character and appearance require further consideration.
- 4.6** The boundary of the Baldock Conservation Area is shown above on Figure 8, and general photographs of the area are shown below on Figures 9 – X. The Baldock Conservation Area is characterised by a diverse range of historic buildings, however it is principally comprised of 18th Century buildings, including large Georgian Town Houses, such as Clare House, The Manor House and Holford House, as well as older buildings which were re-fronted in brick during this period, such as The George Inn. The conservation area also contains examples of 16th and 17th Century timber-framed buildings, such as 'The Gates' and No.41 High Street and No.1 Church Street (all of which have been rendered) and the Old Bull Public House, Church Street (where the timber-framing is visible).
- 4.7** North Hertfordshire District Council produced a Character Statement for the Baldock Conservation Area in 2003, and provides an assessment of its location and setting as follows:
- Baldock is situated in the centre of North Hertfordshire, set within chalk hills, close to the Garden City of Letchworth. Baldock is set just above the head of the River Ivel in a bowl, which is created by the slopes of the steep chalk scarp to the south and the slightly more undulating chalk slopes to the north and east. This is an open arable landscape with sparse woodland cover. The only prominent view from within the Conservation Area is from the southern end of the High Street to open countryside. All other views to the surrounding landscape are distant, or in the approach to the settlement. The main approaches are highlighted by informal groups of ornamental trees. (2003, 7).*
- 4.8** As noted above, and during the site visits undertaken as part of this assessment, outward views from within the conservation area are prevented by the local topography, as well as the intervening built form which surrounds the historic core.

Indeed, even views from the southern end of the High Street which are highlighted in the statement above, are no longer attested.

4.9 The application site therefore forms part of the open landscape setting which physically surrounds the settlement of Baldock (and contained within that is the conservation area), however it is not appreciable from within it. The settlement of Baldock is visible from the application site to the north, however the distinctive character and appearance of the area is not appreciable from this distance, and with the exception of the Church of St Mary, none of the individual historic buildings are discernible.

4.10 Given the above observations, the setting of the Baldock Conservation Area makes a very limited contribution to its significance, character and appearance, and its distinctive architectural and historic interest is best appreciated from within the town centre and in close proximity.



Figure 9: View towards Baldock from Bygrave Road, spire of St Mary's visible in the distance (lower than pylons, indicated by arrow)



Figure 10: View north-east along Royston Road looking outward from the edge of the conservation area



Figure 11: View westwards along Royston Road towards the Church of St Marys (views within the Baldock Conservation Area)

Scheduled Monuments



Figure 12: Scheduled monument - Romano-British small town and Late Iron Age settlement off Clothall Road



Figure 13: Scheduled monument - Settlement site south of Blackhorse Farm

4.11 There are two scheduled monuments within close proximity of the application site and which adjoin the existing settlement of Baldock. These sites comprise the Romano-British small town and Late Iron Age settlement off Clothall Road and the Settlement site south of Blackhorse Farm (Figures 12 and 13 above). Both of these scheduled monuments are currently experienced as areas of open greenspace on the edges of Baldock, but are not visually tangible historic features (i.e. there is no visible built form or clear earthworks which give them prominence).

4.12 The significance of these monuments stems principally from their archaeological (evidential value), and this will not be altered by the proposals. Their settings are currently characterised by the surrounding settlement of Baldock, particularly at Clothall Road where built form and roads lie to the north, east, south and west of the scheduled area. The proposals would not have any effect on the current setting of the scheduled monument off Clothall Road, and will not pose any harm to its significance as a designated heritage asset.

4.13 By their very nature, both monuments are 'settlements' and thus their current setting is an 'evolved' version of their original siting. The monument south of Blackhorse Farm is currently situated at the edge of the Baldock settlement, and the masterplan would see a greater amount of built form sited in its vicinity. However, the masterplan has been designed to include sufficient green space to mitigate this effect along North Road, and no consequential harm is posed to its significance as a designated heritage asset by the change within its setting.

Listed buildings outside the conservation area

4.14 There are four listed buildings located outside the conservation area which, given their proximity to the site, have been afforded consideration. These include four Grade II listed dwellings which are all located along North Road, The Nook, Long Bailey, Blackhorse Farmhouse and The Compasses.

4.15 The significance of these assets stems principally from their architectural and historic interests.

4.16 The Nook Cottage dates to the late 17th century and is a (much altered) timber-framed and thatched cottage, exemplifying traditional building techniques and is a small roadside dwelling. Long Bailey was formerly 2 cottages, constructed of red

brick, timber frame, and a tiled roof, dating to the mid to late 18th century and with 20th century extensions. The Compasses was formerly a public house, dating to the 17th century (or earlier in the western block) and with an 18th century east wing. Blackhorse farmhouse is an 18th century farmhouse constructed of red and grey brick on its ground floor and colour washed pebble dash on the first floor with a hipped tiled roof.

- 4.17** The site visits confirmed that while the proposals would alter one aspect of the current setting of these assets (which currently is characterised by rural/agricultural surrounds and the roadside), any consequential impact on significance would be negligible.
- 4.18** Blackhorse farmhouse which is located to the west of North Road, possesses no historic link to the land comprising the site, and views from its location across North Road are limited by the substantial hedgerow on the eastern side of the road.
- 4.19** None of these assets are considered to be particularly susceptible to the level of change posed, and the masterplan has further mitigated this potential negligible effect on setting through the inclusion of a very substantial area of green space (including landscaping, parkland and open space) which would intervene between these assets and the new residential areas.
- 4.20** The proposals are not therefore considered to pose any harm to the significance of these assets.

Parish Church of St Mary (Grade I)

- 4.21** The Church of St Mary is located in the centre of Baldock, and within the conservation area.
- 4.22** The significance of the church stems principally from its considerable architectural and historic interest, as well as its communal value as a religious centre, place of worship and memorial. The list description provides the following information regarding its phasing:

Church of Saint Mary (Formerly listed under Hitchin Street) C13 east end of chancel, C14 west end. C14 nave, aisles, north and south chapels, west tower and 2 storey south porch with C15 turret. C15 windows and nave clerestorey.

North porch added 1836. C19 spire. C13 double piscina in chancel, south chapel C14 piscina and double sedilia. C15 north chapel brasses and restored screen to chapels and chancel. Octagonal C13 font. Fine C18 and C19 marble wall tablets including Caldecott memorial with carved figures, 1846 by E H Baily. North aisle window 1881 by C E Kempe.



Figure 14: The Church of St Mary, Baldock

- 4.23** Its 19th century spire is visible from a number of vantage points both within the settlement and beyond it, although views outward from the church are entirely prohibited by the immediate surrounding built form of the town. The setting of the church is characterised by its town centre location, and by the prominence of its spire throughout the settlement. In views back towards Baldock from the application site the spire remains a visible feature within the town, although pylons compete with the spire and exceed its height in these long range views.

- 4.24** The application site does not form a contributory part of this assets setting, beyond being a component of the rural surrounds of the town. The proposals will not alter the context within which the church is appreciated, or appear in any views with, from towards or alongside it. No harm is considered to be posed to the significance of this heritage asset.

5. Heritage Impact Assessment

5.1 This chapter of the report provides an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets identified in the previous chapter, including (where applicable) effects on the setting of those assets. It equates to Step 3 of GPA3, which has a close connection with Step 2. This chapter should be read in conjunction with the preceding chapter, and the tabular GPA3 assessment in Appendix 2.

Impact Assessment

5.2 The site is allocated for development within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011 – 2031), and a Strategic Masterplan has been developed for the site 'Growing Baldock'.

5.3 The full technical description of the proposals is as follows:

- Up to 3,200 dwellings (C3) in BA1, BA2, BA12, including self / custom build plots, older persons housing, accessible / adaptable housing.
- Local Centre in BA1 to comprise:
 - Up to 3,500 m2 hotel/residential institution (C1, C2);*
 - Up to 750m2 pub/takeaway (sui generis);*
 - Up to 700m2 convenience retail (E);*
 - Up to 800m2 retail/café/restaurant (E);*
 - Up to 550m2 office (E);*
 - Up to 1,150m2 gym (E);*
 - Up to 550m2 nursery (E);*
 - Up to 1,500m2 of Health Hub (E, e), if not provided on BA10;*
 - Up to 500m2 community hall (F2).*
- employment and infrastructure uses in BA10 comprised of:

- Up to 51,500m² of employment uses including a mix of:
 - office - Class E, g) i) – up to a maximum of 20,000m²;*
 - indoor sport and recreation – Class E, d) – up to a maximum of 5,000m²;*
 - research and development - Class E, g) ii) and/or light industrial - Class E, g), iii) – up to a maximum of 26,500m²;*
 - industrial – Class B2 - up to a maximum of 26,500m²;*
 - Health Hub – Class E, e - up to a maximum of 1,500m².*
- Waste infrastructure comprising:
 - vehicle depot – sui generis - up to a maximum of 1,500m²;*
 - waste transfer station - Class B2 – up to a maximum of 3,500m²;*
 - household waste recycling centre – sui generis- site area of up to a maximum of 1.1 hectares.*
- renewable energy infrastructure (sui generis).
- up to 2 x 2 form entry (FE) primary schools (D1) in BA1, with potential to expand to 3FE subject to need and as agreed via School Review within S106 agreement;
- up to 12 FE secondary school on BA3 (size of secondary school, if provided on site, to be agreed via School Review Process within S106 agreement);
- 2 hectares of land for SEND school on BA3;
- Green infrastructure, open spaces and other landscaped areas including:
 - parks,*
 - play areas,*
 - formal outdoor sports provision (including ancillary facilities),*
 - structural planting,*
 - retained and proposed wildlife habitat areas,*
 - community food production areas;*
 - formal/informal open space; and*

up to 1,000m² of sports pavilion uses (D2).

- Access and movement infrastructure including:

Active travel (pedestrian and cyclist) infrastructure including enhanced existing and new leisure and utility routes and crossings, and the Baldock Greenway;

Mobility hubs;

Diversion and extension of Public Rights of Way;

Vehicular and cycle parking;

Internal street network including public transport infrastructure;

Access junctions into site from North Road (separate bus and vehicular junctions), A505 (additional arm to existing junction), Royston Road (2 x vehicular junctions), Wallington Road and Clothall Road;

1 x all vehicular modes crossing and 1 x active travel crossing of the railway;

Land to facilitate northern station access improvements; and

Modal filters.

- Drainage works including foul and surface water infrastructure, Sustainable Drainage Systems, pumping stations and strategic sewer;
- Provision of and diversion/upgrades to existing utilities and services infrastructure to support the development;
- Demolition of existing buildings and structures;
- Ground works including any necessary ground remodelling; and
- Boundary treatments including construction hoarding.

The effects of the proposals on the heritage assets

- 5.4** As part of the GPA3 settings assessment eight designated heritage assets were identified as being potentially susceptible to impacts by the proposal due to either

their close proximity or the potential extents of their settings. These assets included the Baldock Conservation Area, two scheduled monuments, four Grade II listed buildings along North Road (Blackhorse Farmhouse, The Nook, Long Bailey and The Compasses) and the Grade I Listed Church of St Mary within Baldock centre.

- 5.5** The site visits and further consideration under Steps 2 and 3 of the GPA3 (see also Appendix 2) indicate that while the proposals will increase the amount of built form in the broader vicinity of these assets, and extend the current settlement, any potential adverse impacts are to be mitigated through design and layout.

Baldock Conservation Area

- 5.6** The application site is located well beyond the boundaries of the conservation area, however given its still relatively close proximity and in acknowledgment that settings may be particularly extensive spatially, any effects on the setting of the conservation area and its character and appearance have been fully considered.

- 5.7** It is clear that there is a sufficient 'buffer' of existing built form around the conservation area and the listed buildings within it, that separates the application site from the heritage asset visually, and more broadly experientially. Therefore while the proposals would increase the overall settlement area of Baldock, and would reduce the agricultural surrounds which are currently experienced along North Road and Bygrave Road, it is not considered that this effect would consequentially pose any harm to the character and appearance or the significance of the conservation area as a heritage asset. The Strategic Masterplan will include substantial areas of greenspace within these areas, and this would serve to retain the open character of the settlements broader surrounds.

Scheduled Monuments

- 5.8** The scheduled monuments comprise the Romano-British small town and Late Iron Age settlement off Clothall Road and the Settlement site south of Blackhorse Farm. Both of these scheduled monuments are currently experienced as areas of open greenspace on the edges of Baldock, but are not visually tangible historic features (i.e. there is no visible built form or clear earthworks which give them prominence).

- 5.9** As discussed in the preceding section, the significance of these monuments stems principally from their archaeological (evidential value), and this will not be altered by the proposals.
- 5.10** Their settings are currently characterised by the surrounding settlement of Baldock, particularly at Clothall Road, and by their very nature, both are 'settlements' sites. The Strategic Masterplan will be designed to include sufficient green space to mitigate any effects caused by the growth of the settlement off North Road and south at Clothall Common, and while there would be a change in the character of these assets wider settings, it is not considered that this would pose any consequential harm to their significance.

Listed Buildings along North Road

- 5.11** These include four Grade II listed dwellings along North Road (The Nook, Long Bailey, Blackhorse farmhouse and The Compasses). While the proposals would alter an aspect of the current setting of these assets (which currently is characterised by agricultural land), following Steps 2 and 3 of the GPA3 assessment it is evident that this would not cause harm to their significance.
- 5.12** None of these assets are considered to be particularly susceptible to the level of change posed, and the Strategic Masterplan will further mitigate this potential effect through the inclusion of substantial areas of green space (including landscaping, parkland and open space) which would intervene between these assets and the new residential areas.

Grade I Church of St Mary

- 5.13** The church, which is situated in the centre of the conservation area, is the most prominent asset in the area. There is wide visibility of its spire from surrounding areas, including from the site itself (north of Bygrave Road). There are no outward views from the church (i.e. views from the church will not be changed by the proposals).
- 5.14** The Strategic Masterplan will take into consideration the wider visibility of the church spire, and there is the potential for some improvement of views towards it and greater accessibility of these views (which are currently from private/inaccessible agricultural land). The increased levels of built form surrounding the

existing settlement, which the proposals will create, is not considered to have any detrimental effect on the setting of the church. The church is clearly sited at the centre of the settlement it serves and it will remain so should consent be granted. The proposals are not considered to pose any harm to the significance of this asset.

5.15 Overall, and given the above, while the proposals will pose various (but very minimal) levels of change within the settings of these assets. The carefully developed Strategic Masterplan has effectively mitigated any adverse effects, and no harm would therefore be posed to the significance of the designated heritage assets.

5.16 Paragraphs 214 to 216 of the NPPF are therefore not engaged by the proposals, and there would preservation for the purposes of Section 66(1) of the Act.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by HCUK Group on behalf of Urban and Civic Developments Ltd as part of an outline planning application for the development of land at Baldock, North Hertfordshire. The site, which is allocated within the North Herts Local Plan 2011 – 2031 comprises several parcels of land to the north, east and south of the existing settlement of Baldock.
- 6.2** Eight designated heritage assets were identified as being potentially susceptible to impacts by the proposal due to either their close proximity or the potential extents of their settings.
- 6.3** These assets included the Baldock Conservation Area, two scheduled monuments, four Grade II listed buildings along North Road (Blackhorse Farmhouse, The Nook, Long Bailey and The Compasses) and the Grade I Listed Church of St Mary within Baldock centre.
- 6.4** The site visits and further consideration under Steps 2 and 3 of the GPA3 indicate that while the proposals will increase the amount of built form in the broader vicinity of these assets, and extend the current settlement, any potential adverse impacts have been mitigated through the design and layout of the strategic masterplan.
- 6.5** No non-designated heritage assets have been identified by the Local Planning Authority as requiring assessment during pre-application consultation, and none have been identified during the course of this HIA.
- 6.6** No harm has been identified to the significance of the designated heritage assets and paragraphs 214 to 216 of the NPPF are therefore not engaged by the proposals, and there would be no need for preservation for the purposes of Section 66(1) of the Act.

Appendix 1

Scale of Harm (HCUK, 2019)

The table below has been developed by HCUK Group (2019) based on current national policy and guidance. It is intended as simple and effect way to better define harm and the implications of that finding on heritage significance. It reflects the need to be clear about the categories of harm, and the extent of harm within those categories, to designated heritage assets (NPPF, paragraphs 201 and 202, and guidance on NPPG).⁵

Scale of Harm	
Total Loss	Total removal of the significance of the designated heritage asset.
Substantial Harm	Serious harm that would drain away or vitiate the significance of the designated heritage asset
Less than Substantial Harm	High level harm that could be serious, but not so serious as to vitiate or drain away the significance of the designated heritage asset.
	Medium level harm, not necessarily serious to the significance of the designated heritage asset, but enough to be described as significant, noticeable, or material.
	Low level harm that does not seriously affect the significance of the designated heritage asset.

HCUK, 2019

⁵ See NPPG 2019: "Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated." Paragraph 018 Reference ID: 18a-018-20190723.

Appendix 2

GPA3 Assessment: Historic England's guidance on setting

In assessing the effect of the proposals on the setting and significance of the designated heritage assets, it is relevant to consider how the following factors may or may not take effect, with particular reference to the considerations in Steps 2 and 3 of GPA3. The following analysis seeks to highlight the main relevant considerations.

<i>Relevant Considerations</i>	<i>The Baldock Conservation Area</i>
<i>Proximity of the development to the asset</i>	At its closest point, the application site is c. 600m from the boundary of the conservation area.
<i>Proximity in relation to topography and watercourses</i>	N/A
<i>Position of development in relation to key views</i>	The proposals do not fall within any key views associated with the conservation area.
<i>Orientation of the development</i>	N/A
<i>Prominence, dominance and conspicuousness</i>	The conservation area is not itself a prominent feature, particularly as Baldock is situated topographically within a 'bowl', however the proposals will not alter the prominence, dominance or conspicuousness of any of the buildings within the conservation area (where this may be attested).
<i>Competition with or distraction from the asset</i>	The proposals will not compete with or distract from the conservation area, and will not be visible within the same views.
<i>Dimensions, scale, massing, proportions</i>	The scale and massing(s) of the development areas within the masterplan would be in-keeping with existing buildings within and surrounding the conservation area.
<i>Visual permeability</i>	The proposals will not alter the visual permeability of the conservation area.
<i>Materials and design</i>	Materials and design(s) have not been finalised at this stage.
<i>Diurnal or seasonal change</i>	The potential effects of the proposals will not be dependent upon screening subject to seasonal or diurnal change.

<i>Change to built surroundings and spaces</i>	The proposals will increase the size of the settlement of Baldock which already surrounds the conservation area (historic core).
<i>Change to skyline, silhouette</i>	The proposals will not alter the skyline or silhouette.
<i>Change to general character</i>	The proposals will reduce the quantity of surrounding agricultural land around the broader settlement of Baldock, however they will not alter the immediate setting of the conservation area which itself is surrounded by modern settlement and commercial premises.

Relevant Considerations **Scheduled Monument: Romano-British small town and Late Iron Age settlement off Clothall Road**

<i>Proximity of the development to the asset</i>	At its closest point, the application site is c. 200m from the scheduled area.
<i>Proximity in relation to topography and watercourses</i>	N/A
<i>Position of development in relation to key views</i>	The proposals do not fall within any key views associated with the asset.
<i>Orientation of the development</i>	N/A
<i>Prominence, dominance and conspicuousness</i>	The scheduled monument is not itself a prominent or visible and tangible feature, and the proposals will not alter its current low level of prominence, dominance or conspicuousness.
<i>Competition with or distraction from the asset</i>	The proposals will not compete with or distract from the asset.
<i>Dimensions, scale, massing, proportions</i>	The scale and massing(s) of the development areas within the masterplan would be in-keeping with existing buildings surrounding the asset.
<i>Visual permeability</i>	The proposals will not alter the visual permeability of the scheduled monument.
<i>Materials and design</i>	Materials and design(s) have not been finalised at this stage.
<i>Diurnal or seasonal change</i>	The potential effects of the proposals will not be dependent upon screening subject to seasonal or diurnal change.
<i>Change to built surroundings and spaces</i>	The proposals will increase the size of the settlement of Baldock which already surrounds the asset.
<i>Change to skyline, silhouette</i>	The proposals will not alter the skyline or silhouette.
<i>Change to general character</i>	While the proposals will reduce the quantity of surrounding agricultural land at Clothall Common (which currently forms part of the assets setting), the masterplan includes sufficient greenspace adjacent to the scheduled monument to ensure that there will be a limited tangible increase in built form within its immediate vicinity.

Relevant Considerations	Scheduled Monument: Settlement site south of Blackhorse farm
<i>Proximity of the development to the asset</i>	At its closest point, the application site is c. 100m from the scheduled area.
<i>Proximity in relation to topography and watercourses</i>	N/A
<i>Position of development in relation to key views</i>	The proposals do not fall within any key views associated with the asset.
<i>Orientation of the development</i>	N/A
<i>Prominence, dominance and conspicuousness</i>	The scheduled monument is not itself a prominent or visible and tangible feature, and the proposals will not alter its current low level of prominence, dominance or conspicuousness.
<i>Competition with or distraction from the asset</i>	The proposals will not compete with or distract from the asset.
<i>Dimensions, scale, massing, proportions</i>	The scale and massing(s) of the development areas within the masterplan would be in-keeping with existing buildings within the surroundings of the asset.
<i>Visual permeability</i>	The proposals will not alter the visual permeability of the scheduled monument.
<i>Materials and design</i>	Materials and design(s) have not been finalised at this stage.
<i>Diurnal or seasonal change</i>	The potential effects of the proposals will not be dependent upon screening subject to seasonal or diurnal change.
<i>Change to built surroundings and spaces</i>	The proposals will increase the size of the settlement of Baldock which already surrounds the asset.
<i>Change to skyline, silhouette</i>	The proposals will not alter the skyline or silhouette.
<i>Change to general character</i>	While the proposals will reduce the quantity of surrounding agricultural land at Bygrave Common (which currently forms part of the assets setting), the masterplan includes sufficient greenspace adjacent to the scheduled monument to ensure that there will be no tangible increase in built form within its immediate vicinity.

Relevant Considerations	Listed Buildings on North Road: Blackhorse Farmhouse, The Nook, Long Bailey and The Compasses (Grade II)
<i>Proximity of the development to the asset</i>	At its closest point, the application site is c. 50m from The Compasses (closest Listed Building).
<i>Proximity in relation to topography and watercourses</i>	N/A
<i>Position of development in relation to key views</i>	The proposals do not fall within any key views associated with these assets.
<i>Orientation of the development</i>	N/A
<i>Prominence, dominance and conspicuousness</i>	The proposals will not alter the current (relatively low) level of prominence, dominance or conspicuousness that these assets possess if and where they are visible along North Road.
<i>Competition with or distraction from the asset</i>	The proposals will not compete with or distract from these assets.
<i>Dimensions, scale, massing, proportions</i>	The scale and massing(s) of the development areas within the masterplan would be in-keeping with existing buildings, however there is no built form proposed within the immediate vicinity of any of the listed buildings (an intervening greenspace buffer is indicated on the masterplan).
<i>Visual permeability</i>	The proposals will not alter the visual permeability of the assets.
<i>Materials and design</i>	Materials and design(s) have not been finalised at this stage.
<i>Diurnal or seasonal change</i>	The potential effects of the proposals will not be dependent upon screening subject to seasonal or diurnal change.
<i>Change to built surroundings and spaces</i>	The proposals will increase the size of the settlement of Baldock however the area of the site closest to the listed buildings will be retained as greenspace and therefore no additional built form will be constructed within their immediate surrounds.
<i>Change to skyline, silhouette</i>	The proposals will not alter the skyline or silhouette.
<i>Change to general character</i>	While the proposals will reduce the quantity of surrounding agricultural land at Bygrave Common (which currently forms part of the assets' settings), the masterplan includes sufficient

greenspace adjacent to ensure that there will be no tangible increase in built form within the immediate vicinity.

Relevant Considerations	Church of St Mary (Grade I)
<i>Proximity of the development to the asset</i>	The application site is c. 600m from the church at its closest point.
<i>Proximity in relation to topography and watercourses</i>	N/A
<i>Position of development in relation to key views</i>	The proposals do not fall within any key views associated with the asset. The spire of the church is visible from within the application site (in particular, from north of Bygrave Road).
<i>Orientation of the development</i>	N/A
<i>Prominence, dominance and conspicuousness</i>	The proposals will not alter the current level of prominence, dominance and conspicuousness that the church spire possesses.
<i>Competition with or distraction from the asset</i>	The proposals will not compete with or distract from the asset and will not be visible within the same view or alongside the asset.
<i>Dimensions, scale, massing, proportions</i>	The scale and massing(s) of the development areas within the masterplan would be in-keeping with existing buildings, and these areas of proposed (built) development are at sufficient distance from the asset.
<i>Visual permeability</i>	The proposals will not alter the visual permeability of the asset.
<i>Materials and design</i>	Materials and design(s) have not been finalised at this stage.
<i>Diurnal or seasonal change</i>	The potential effects of the proposals will not be dependent upon screening subject to seasonal or diurnal change.
<i>Change to built surroundings and spaces</i>	The proposals will increase the size of the settlement of Baldock however this will not directly affect the current experiential setting of the asset, which is situated within the town centre.
<i>Change to skyline, silhouette</i>	The proposals will not alter the skyline or silhouette.
<i>Change to general character</i>	While the proposals will reduce the quantity of surrounding agricultural land around the settlement of Baldock the masterplan also includes a substantial quantity of greenspace.

Standard Sources

<https://maps.nls.uk>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>

www.heritagegateway.org.uk

<http://magic.defra.gov.uk>

www.history.ac.uk/victoria-county-history

The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition). Historic England (2017 edition)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990

National Planning Policy Framework, 2021

National Planning Practice Guidance, 2024

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance, Historic England (2008)