

5 | The Proposed Development

The Proposed Development

- 5.1 The Proposed Development on the Site seeks to deliver 84 new homes in Royston. The development would provide green infrastructure space which would include walking and leisure routes as well as associated amenities. These green spaces include a green corridor running along the eastern and northern edge which would incorporate existing trees and hedgerows as well as additional planting.
- 5.2 The framework masterplan proposed sensitively integrates the housing parcels into a network of connected and accessible green spaces, which draw on the vernacular layouts. The landscaping for the development includes the potential for a community orchard and amenity grass on the higher topography.

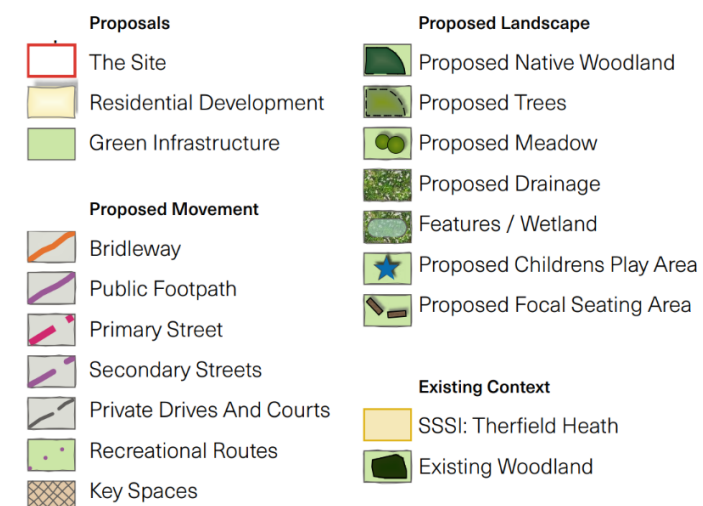


Figure 5.1 Proposed Masterplan

Section 6

Assessment of Effects.

6 | Assessment of Effects

Assessment of Royston Conservation Area

- 6.1 Royston Conservation Area is located to the north of the Site, separated from the Site by the built form of Royston.
- 6.2 The significance of the Royston Conservation Area is primarily derived from the historic interest of the development of Royston as a rural market town in Hertfordshire. The historic core of the conservation area remains distinct and well-preserved, offering a contrast between the historic core and the contemporary urban development beyond the conservation area at the town fringe.
- 6.3 The Site makes no material contribution to the setting of the conservation area, positioned as it is at some distance from the Site with modern development separating the Site and the conservation area boundary.
- 6.4 The proposed development would represent the next phase of development to an area which has a history of piecemeal additions and would introduce additional built form into the wider setting of the Conservation Area. The Site is located in an area of the CA's wider setting which is already characterised by more built form.
- 6.5 The proposed development has been designed to ensure that the design aligns with local precedents, with a large amount of the land assigned for green infrastructure (5.85ha, with 3.01ha assigned for development). The heights proposed are also in keeping with the vernacular heights, with two parcels of below 2 storey housing in the north and west of the Site before stepping up to 2 storeys across the Site.
- 6.6 Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposed development has been laid out in keeping with the vernacular height and layout of Royston, is located at some distance from the conservation area and would not impact the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 6.7 The key aspects of the conservation area's significance, such as the historic core of the village, the mix of historic architectural styles and the historic street layout, are retained by the proposals.

Royston Town Centre Asset Group

- 6.8 These assets have been grouped in this assessment due to their shared setting and location, primarily within the conservation area. The location of these assets within the conservation area is the key part of their setting as buildings within the town of Royston.
- 6.9 The Site is located in the much wider setting of these assets, and indeed, the setting of these assets is generally defined by the built-up context of the town centre, where streets such as King Street, High Street, Market Hill, and London Road form a coherent and historically layered streetscape. Many of these buildings sit in tight urban grain, with strong building lines and a sense of enclosure that contributes to their character. In contrast, the Site is physically and visually separated from this core by modern development and infrastructure, including roads and intervening buildings, which reduces any direct visual or spatial association.
- 6.10 Therefore, the development of the Site with residential built form which is in keeping with the character of the town and is not considered to harm the significance of the listed or locally listed buildings here. The proposed development would be understood as a contextual extension of the town in a location already characterised by modern residential development. This is seen through the proposed buildings heights on the Site, which are primarily 2 storeys with buildings below 2 storeys seen to the north and western edge of the development
- 6.11 Therefore, it is considered that there would be no harm to these assets as a result of the proposed development.

Scheduled Monument

- 6.12 The monument includes two bowl barrows situated on Therfield Heath. The designation extends for 2 metres around the archaeological features to support preservation. The Cemetery was positioned in a visible part of the landscape and this visibility forms part of the funerary landscape. The most significant views of the scheduled monument are from with Therfield Heath itself and from Baldock Road to the north.
- 6.13 The built form of the Proposed Development is primarily located to the north of the plot, avoiding the raised area of the Site in the south and south west corners. This will prevent the additional built form of Royston from backdropping views of the Scheduled Monument when looking south east from the Heath. Any incidental views would not alter the understanding of the funerary landscape and would be understood as a distant modern development at the edge of Royston. In addition, the proposed development would not block any key views of the scheduled monument.
- 6.14 In the most recent application on this Site, 20/00744/OP, Historic England did not object to the application, though noted that a "wide western buffer" should be incorporated into the proposal (at reserved matters stage) to ensure the conservation of the setting of the bowl barrow cemetery at all times of the year. The framework masterplan incorporates a generous buffer along the western edge, with the only additional built form here positioned adjacent the existing woodland, which would screen views.
- 6.15 Therefore, there is no harm to this asset as a result of the proposed development.



Figure 5.2 Building Height Framework Plan



Figure 5.3 Building Height Framework Plan

Section 7

Conclusion.

Summary

- 7.1
- This heritage assessment has been prepared on behalf of Gladman Developments Ltd to accompany a planning application for the development of the Site, land off Echo Hill, Royston.
- 7.2
- This heritage assessment has identified all designated heritage assets within 500m of the site boundary, and provided a assessment against the Royston Conservation Area and scoped heritage assets. The scoping is considered to be proportionate to the proposals and the potential impact upon the significance of these assets (as derived from setting). These have been grouped together for assessment purposes, and concludes that the proposals would preserve the special interest of the conservation area and the heritage assets.
- 7.3
- While the proposals are acknowledged to produce some increase in the sense of urbanisation within the wider town, the change to the setting of the heritage assets would only be apparent within their wider area beyond the village core. The Site and the heritage assets are separated by existing built form and landscaping and there would only be a minor erosion of the wider agricultural landscape. The proposals would have no effect on the ability to appreciate these assets in their context, or impact upon the primary components of their special interest.

Policy Compliance

- 7.4
- The proposed development is considered to preserve the identified heritage assets. This is in line with the following policy:
 - In line with NPPF Paragraphs 139, this report considers the proposed development to reflect the local design (and is in line with local design policy SP9).
 - In line with Paragraph 207, this report has assessed the significance of, and impact of the proposed development on, the heritage assets within a 500m radius of the Site to conclude that the proposed development would cause no harm and as such is in line with local heritage policy SP14.
- 7.5
- To conclude, this application is considered to fulfil the correct policy tests as outlined in the NPPF (2024) and would therefore allow the discharge of the Council’s statutory duty under 66(1) the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990.

Appendix 1

Methodology.

Heritage Assessment

This report provides an assessment of the significance of identified heritage assets and the potential effects of the proposed development. It has been informed by:

- Relevant legislation, and national and local planning policy (see Section 2); and
- Best practice guidance set out in:
 - Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK (IEMA/IHBC/CiFA, 2021)
 - Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (Historic England, 2008)
 - Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (Historic England, various).

Under the requirements of the above policy and guidance, the process of heritage impact assessments can be summarised as involving three parts:

- Understanding the cultural significance of identified designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting;
- Understanding the nature and extent of potential effects on significance and settings of identified heritage assets; and
- Making a judgement on the impact that the Proposed Development may have on significance and setting.

There are two ways in which the Proposed Development can affect heritage assets:

- by physical changes to the fabric, use and visual appearance of designated or non-non-designated heritage assets (known as direct effects); and
- by changes to the setting of designated or non-designated heritage assets in the vicinity (known as indirect effects).

Understanding Significance

Heritage assets are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: ‘A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)’.

The setting of a heritage asset is defined 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’ (NPPF, Annex 2).

Non-Designated Heritage Assets (‘NDHAs’) are defined as buildings, structures and places which have a degree of heritage significance but do not meet the criteria for designation: ‘Only a minority [of buildings] have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets’ (PPG paragraph 039).

NPPF paragraph 207 requires the significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by the Proposed Development to be described in a proportionate manner. The methodology used here for understanding the significance draws from the approach set out in Historic England’s Conservation Principles and NPPF Annex 2 by defining heritage interests. As defined in the PPG (Historic Environment, para 06), the heritage interest may be:

- Archaeological;
- Architectural and artistic; and/or
- Historic.

It is important to note that understanding significance is primarily a descriptive exercise. However, guidance by IEMA, IHBC and CiFA identifies that ‘importance’ can be defined and scaled as ‘high’, ‘medium’ or ‘low’ or any other simple scale that offers a form of gradation. This is done in broad terms, as per Table H1. The ability to scale assets, including differentiating those of ‘highest significance’ is also established in the NPPF (i.e. para.213).

As identified in NPPF paragraphs 207 and 208, significance can also derive from the setting of a heritage asset. HE’s GPA3 guidance gives general advice on understanding setting and how it may contribute to significance. This assessment follows the staged approach set out in GPA3 guidance to identifying the level of contribution that setting makes to the significance of heritage assets.

Assessing Effects

Legislative and policy requirements for the assessment of effects on heritage assets require the assessor to establish whether the value is preserved, better revealed/enhanced or harmed as a result of the Proposed Development.

Beneficial effects occur when the Proposed Development would enhance the value or contribution of the setting to value of heritage assets.

Should harm arise to the significance or contribution of setting to significance of designated heritage assets, there is a requirement in NPPF paras.212-215 to determine whether the level of harm amounts to ‘substantial harm’ or ‘less than substantial harm’. Any harmful impact to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require a clear and convincing justification and be weighed against the public benefits of the Proposed Development. Great weight should be given to asset’s conservation, the greater the harm, the greater the benefits that will be needed to justify approval.

For any harm to NDHAs, NPPF paragraph 216 requires balanced judgement with regard to scale of harm or loss and significance.

As established in Bramshill (2021) and Whitechapel Bell Foundry (2021) , when assessing effects, it is possible to undertake an internal heritage balancing exercise where relevant heritage harms and heritage benefits can be balanced to come to a ‘net’ position.

Significance	Designation of Receptor
Very High	Site acknowledged of international importance World Heritage Site
High	Grade I or Grade II* Listed Asset Scheduled Monument
Medium	Grade II Listed Asset Conservation Area
Low	NDHAs of higher local importance (including local listing) Designated Heritage Assets compromised by poor preservation
Very Low	NDHAs of lower local importance or compromised by poor preservation.

Table H1: Heritage Significance



Delivery | Design | Engagement | Heritage | Impact Management | Planning
Sustainable Development | Townscape | Transport

Edinburgh : 11 Alva Street | Edinburgh | EH2 4PH

Glasgow : 177 West George Street | Glasgow | G2 2LB

London : Da Vinci House | 44 Saffron Hill | London | EC1N 8FH

Manchester : This is The Space | 68 Quay Street | Manchester | M3 3EJ

Birmingham : The Colmore Building | 20 Colmore Circus Queensway | Birmingham | B4 6AT

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