

Bramcote / Stapleford

**Opun Design Review Panel
workshop**

11.10.16

Executive Summary

The Opun Panel judged the issues detailed below to be of particular importance. Where we have suggested additional work, it is envisaged that this will be carried out by an applicant as part of a planning application. It is important to note that the recommendations for additional work made here do not preclude or prevent the allocation of the site. Key points are:

- Undertaking a detailed site analysis to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of site and context i.e. identifying and mapping character areas, key routes, connection points, movement pattern, key views to and from the site etc.
- Provision of a Development Framework Plan for both sites which will set a strategic framework for the overall development concept and development principles.
- Provision of a Parameters Plan to ensure a high quality scheme is delivered, through the provision of clearly stated parameters and guidance on street hierarchy, parking, building density, building height, open spaces and landscape.
- Provision of a detailed Landscape Strategy Plan which identifies the different character and identity of all of the existing outdoor spaces at an in depth and local level etc.
- Utilising the landscape and water as a unifying element to connect the two sites i.e. a landscaped vehicle route incorporating SuDS / Swales connecting the two sites.
- Maintaining and enhancing Bramcote Hills Park, Bramcote Hills, and Stapleford Hill within the Landscape Strategy / Green Infrastructure for the site.
- Provision of a clear street hierarchy to provide legibility and sense of place.
- Provision of a 'Vision' for Coventry Lane including an integrated approach (highways, landscape and urban design) in addressing existing problems of connectivity, speeding and noise. This should include maintaining and enhancing public rights of way, safer crossing of Coventry Lane etc.
- Explore accessing the site off Coventry Lane as well as new pedestrian linkages to other nearby streets.

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- Creating linkages to / with the planned residential development to the west at Field Farm.
 - Provision of cycling and pedestrian routes which integrate with the existing network and connect to facilities including the schools and college.
 - Enhancing the buffer of the landscaping adjacent to the railway line to reduce the potential impact of the railway (i.e. noise).
 - Enhancing and opening up access to non-designated heritage assets, such as the ridgeline.
 - Keeping built development clear of the ridges.

Introduction

Opun are working with Broxtowe Borough Council in providing design support and advice on a number of sites within the district for potential residential development. The Opun Panel members involved in the workshop for Bramcote provided a mix of built environment disciplines including urban design, planning, landscape architecture, highways, heritage and conservation.

The purpose of the workshop was:

- To identify key issues for resolution and development, and
- To agree a set of design principles for the site in an illustrative form, which,
- Sets out an indicative schedule of follow-on work that will need to be undertaken by applicants should this site be developed.

Bramcote and Stapleford

The sites are located within the Bramcote and Stapleford area of Broxtowe Borough.

There are two sites; one to the east of, and one to the west of, Coventry Lane.

The site to the east of Coventry Lane (the 'Eastern' site) is the larger of the two sites. It is bound to the north by an operational railway line and a disused canal (the former Nottingham Canal), which is also a Local Wildlife Site, and beyond that by a residential area (Sharnford Way), with open fields further beyond on the western side of Coventry Lane. To the east is Moor Lane which is bound by a significant residential area, the northern part of which is arranged in a cul de sac street pattern, and to the south is the A52, a major route connecting to Nottingham, Derby and the M1 motorway. Bramcote sits to the south of this site, and on the south west of it is the A6007 (which connects to Trowell and Ilkeston) with residential areas on the southern side, and to the west is the A6002 (Coventry Lane). On the western side of Coventry Lane are: Stapleford Hill (a Local Wildlife Site); Bramcote Crematorium; and the other ('Western') site.

The site itself is currently used for a number of community uses which include the following educational facilities: Bramcote Hills Primary School; the Bramcote School, (part of which was formerly known as Bramcote Park School); Bramcote College, (BC6F); and Foxwood School, which are each located within their own separate areas on the eastern side of the site. Access to the schools and college is from two access points on Moor Lane and one access point off the A52 via the Bramcote Leisure Centre, at the south of the site. There are also a number of leisure and sports facilities on the site which include Bramcote Leisure Centre, Bramcote Cricket Club and associated sports pitches. These are located to the south of the site and accessed from the A52 and Ilkeston Road. Bramcote Hills Park, which also includes large areas of established woodland, is located within the centre, southern and western areas of the site and is used for recreational purposes and popular with dog walkers. It includes a play area and car park, with vehicular access off Ilkeston Road close to the junction with Coventry Road. The Brethren's Meeting Room, is located to the north off the Bramcote College site on the eastern side of the site, but with access from Coventry Lane. The topography of the site is significant.

The highest point of the site is Bramcote Hill (107m). However, located on the ridgeline, Bramcote College provides long views to the adjacent areas.

The site to the west of Coventry Lane (the 'Western' site) is bounded to the north by the railway (linking Nottingham with the Erewash Valley Line) and beyond by open fields and the disused Nottingham Canal (which includes a listed bridge, the Nottingham Canal Swancar Bridge), to the east by Coventry Lane and the other site (on eastern side of Coventry Lane), and to the south by the (currently) open fields of Field Farm (the Field Farm site has outline planning consent for residential development) as well as residential areas (including Mayfield Drive and Longden Close), and to the west by the A6007 and further residential areas.

The site itself is predominantly agricultural land with areas of mature landscaping in particular along the existing brook and field boundaries. It includes the Stapleford Hill Local Wildlife Site to the southeast which includes Hemlock Stone. Further to the north along Coventry Lane is the Bramcote Crematorium and to the north of that is an area of industrial uses which are accessed via Sidings Lane off Coventry Lane. These industrial uses include both buildings and extensive open storage. To the north of Sidings Lane is Hulks Farm. A flood lagoon and extensive treeline is located immediately to the west of Coventry Lane, within a corridor of vegetation. There are established footpaths through the site along existing field boundaries and through the Stapleford Hill Local Wildlife Site. The topography of the site varies and is at its highest at Stapleford Hill (101m). There is vehicular access to the site off Coventry Lane via Sidings Lane to the east of the site.

An Opun Design Review was undertaken in September 2015 (Ref: DR2015-035) for the Field Farm site which included the Western site and wider area.

Supporting Information

The opportunity to create a development with a strong sense of identity and vision is considered to be crucial to the success of the scheme.

Action: Detailed site analysis should be undertaken to demonstrate an in depth understanding of both sites and site features i.e. identifying and mapping the different character areas within the site, heritage assets, key routes, connection points, movement pattern, key views to and from the site (especially long views), and local facilities and amenities. In addition, comprehensive assessments of the landscape assets / features should be undertaken, including identifying the landscape character areas within the site and the relationship / connections of the spaces both within and outside of the site.

Development Framework

The importance and significance of the site to Bramcote, Stapleford and the wider area was highlighted, in particular the need to provide a carefully considered, comprehensive development which integrates and benefits the existing and wider area.

Action: Provision of a Development Framework plan for the sites. This will set a strategic framework for the overall development concept and development principles, as well as other key delivery issues. It will also be a useful tool in understanding the proposals in context, the relationship with adjoining uses and proposals, and enable decisions to be made on individual planning applications whilst ensuring the overall development is not compromised. The Framework should define the vision and development objectives for the sites; establish an initial design framework for the development; promote high quality design; set out locations and requirements for essential infrastructure, facilities, housing, employment, green infrastructure / open space, connectivity and movement. A set of annotated plans should also be provided.

Action: The provision of a Design Code or other type of design guidance in supporting the Framework / Parameters Plan would be beneficial in ensuring a high quality scheme is delivered, through the provision of clearly stated parameters and guidance on street hierarchy, parking, building density, building height, open spaces, and landscape. The Design Code should be concise and undertake a collaborative approach/response across a range of built environment disciplines e.g. landscape, highways and urban design. Should there be a need for self-build homes, then innovate approaches to design coding, such as the 'plot passport', could be explored.

Green Character and Infrastructure

The range of differing existing green spaces within and adjacent to the sites were recognised as significant assets in providing distinction, identity and character zones within the development i.e. the mature woodland to the east and west of Coventry Lane, the belt of landscape / green infrastructure which extends from east of Moor Lane towards Wollaton Park and also across the site to the west to Boundary Brook, which is a distinctive feature within the area, (especially at Thoresby Road). These features should be fully utilised to inform the character areas of the site. There was consensus that the landscape has a significant and strong influence in driving the identity and character of the development.

The function, form, relationship, character, and identity of each of the proposed open spaces (formal and informal) should be well defined to ensure an understanding of how the spaces contribute to the overall landscape strategy and how the spaces vary within the development. The open spaces will need to be meaningful, well connected, accessible (i.e. to both the existing and new communities), functional and purposeful (e.g. with informal and formal spaces), utilise existing landscape features (e.g. water and hedges) and form a hierarchy of spaces. The proposed open spaces should provide connections to, and complement existing open spaces, i.e. connecting natural and informal play areas with formal play spaces. A range of open spaces should also be provided. Opportunities should also be sought to combine green and blue infrastructure, e.g. use of SuDS as landscape features.

Action: Provision of a detailed Landscape Strategy which identifies the different character and identity of all of the existing outdoor spaces at an in depth / local level i.e. a concept / vision for the character areas.

Action: Provision of additional information regarding the function, form and character of the proposed open spaces (hard and soft) and the relationship between the new and existing spaces.

Blue Character and Infrastructure

Recognising the role of water within the development (i.e. the existing watercourses, brook, the disused canal and potential sustainable urban drainage systems) would strengthen the blue character and infrastructure of the development. For example, there are additional opportunities for informal and natural play by creating an open space with the brook running through it, incorporating water attenuation features / SuDS principles into the development, which would also strengthen the legibility and street hierarchy within the development.

Action: Utilising the landscape and water as a unifying element to connect the two sites e.g. a landscaped vehicle route incorporating SuDS/ swales connecting the two sites.

Action: Undertaking a comprehensive and integrated approach to the management of water within the site, highlighting the need for sustainable drainage solutions to provide amenity value, as well as dealing with surface water attenuation i.e. combined blue and green infrastructure.



Coventry Lane

Coventry Lane (A6002) was recognised as a ready-made, integrated and connected route through the site. However, the environment of the route (high vehicle speeds combined with limited facilities for pedestrians, e.g. crossing points), will need to be addressed.

It was considered important that all of the connections, routes and access points create a legible and well-connected environment and development.

Action: Provision of a 'Vision' for Coventry Lane including an integrated approach (highways, landscape and urban design) addressing existing problems of connectivity, speeding and noise. Measures could include changing surface materials or re-engineering the highway which could reduce attenuation levels and provide opportunities for siting housing closer to the route. It was noted that changing the speed limit using signage would not be enough. Early dialogue on these issues with Nottinghamshire County Council Highways is encouraged.



Pedestrian and Cycle Connections

Proposed cycle and pedestrian routes must be attractive, safe, direct and integrate with existing and proposed networks. They must also link with key spaces and places, in particular educational facilities, to encourage cycling and travel by foot.

Action: Provision of a clear street hierarchy (primary, secondary and tertiary routes) to provide legibility and a sense of place, including using existing hedgerows and SuDS.

Action: Consideration should be given to the provision of cycling and pedestrian routes that integrate with the existing network and connect to facilities such as the local schools and college.



Heritage Assets

The sandstone cutting to Moor Lane (including historic graffiti) was considered a non-designated heritage asset and opportunities should be taken to emphasise this feature.

The long views from the site of Bramcote were admired and the development should recognise that these form part of the setting of Bramcote's listed church, with the spire being particularly important as viewed from parts of the site.

The listed farmhouse to the north of the site was considered to be separated from the site by the disused canal and railway line and the site was not deemed to form part of its historically meaningful setting. Therefore, it was considered development would not impact / affect the significance of the building

Action: Selective clearance of the landscape to the sandstone cutting to allow the feature to be viewed and appreciated.

Action: Identification of the vantage points and the extent of the long views from the site and for the views to influence and inform the site layout.



Conclusions

Following the workshop and the key issues raised the recommendations are as follows:

1. Provision of supporting information including undertaking a detailed site analysis i.e. identifying and mapping character areas, key routes, connection points, movement pattern, key views to and from the site etc.
2. Provision of a Development Framework Plan for both sites which will set a strategic framework for the overall development concept and development principles. The Framework should: define the vision and development objectives for the sites; establish an initial design framework for the development; promote high quality design; and set out locations and requirements for essential infrastructure, facilities, housing, employment, green infrastructure, open space, and connectivity and movement.
3. Provision of a Parameters Plan, would be beneficial in ensuring a high quality scheme is delivered, through the provision of clearly stated parameters and guidance on street hierarchy, parking, building density, building height, open spaces and landscape.
4. Provision of a detailed Landscape Strategy Plan which identifies the different character and identity of all of the existing outdoor spaces at an in depth and local level, i.e. a concept / vision for the character areas.
5. Provision of additional information regarding the function, form and character of the proposed open spaces and the relationship between these and the existing spaces.
6. Utilising the landscape and water as a unifying element to connect the two sites i.e. a landscaped vehicle route incorporating Suds / Swales connecting the two sites.
7. Undertaking a comprehensive and integrated approach to the management of water within both sites, highlighting the need for sustainable drainage solutions to provide amenity value, as well as dealing with surface water attenuation, (i.e. combined blue and green infrastructure).

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8. Provision of a 'Vision' for Coventry Lane including an integrated approach (highways, landscape and urban design) in addressing existing problems of connectivity, speeding and noise. Early dialogue with Nottinghamshire County Council Highways is encouraged.
 9. Provision of a clear street hierarchy (including primary, secondary and tertiary routes) to provide legibility and sense of place including using existing hedgerows and SuDS.
 10. Provision of cycling and pedestrian routes which integrate with the existing network and connect to facilities including the schools and college.

The key issues raised and recommendations for the Eastern site only are as follows:

11. Selective clearance of the landscape to the sandstone cutting to allow the feature to be viewed and appreciated.
12. Identification of the vantage points and the extent of the long views from the sites. These views should influence and inform the site layout.

Issues and proposals diagram





