

NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN 2011 – 2026 PART 1 EXAMINATION

HEARING STATEMENT

ISSUE 7

Blandford

March 2015

Question 7.1: Is there any evidence that the proposed residential development sites at Blandford Forum, including the development of land to the south-east and west of Blandford St Mary, is not available, sustainable or deliverable? If such evidence exists what alternatives are available and have they been satisfactorily considered by the Council?

- 1.1. The Council is not aware of any evidence that the proposed residential development sites in Blandford Forum are not available, sustainable or deliverable. The residential sites are located at: Black Lane; the Brewery; west of Blandford St Mary; and to the south east of Blandford St Mary. Extensive consideration of all relevant factors was undertaken prior to these sites being included in LP1.

Black Lane

- 1.2. The site at Black Lane is now built out, being completed in 2014 with the construction of 77 dwellings.

The Brewery

- 1.3. The Brewery site is owned by Hall and Woodhouse and has planning permission for a mixed-use scheme including 195 homes, a new brewery complex and about 3 hectares of new / redeveloped B-Class employment land and buildings. The consent has been partially implemented through the construction of the new brewery complex. The Council understands that house builder Linden Homes has an interest in the residential element of the scheme. The North and north East Dorset Transport Study (INF009) found this to be the most accessible of all the sites in Blandford which were assessed, especially in terms of pedestrian links and access to public transport, and therefore very sustainable.

West of Blandford St Mary

- 1.4. To the west of Blandford St Mary lies land off New Road and Fairmile Road which has been assessed in the SHLAA (2/06/0541 and 0540) as suitable for housing and having longer term potential. It was also found to be very accessible by the North and north East Dorset Transport Study. The Crown Estate, owners of the land off New Road, Lower Bryanston Farm (site 2/06/0541), commissioned a series of reports on various aspects of the land to support its residential development. Concept drawings of development of this land were prepared as part of an initial appraisal of the potential of the site. Discussions with Dorset County Council as Highway Authority led to the conclusion that access to the site was achievable from New Road given certain junction improvements with Dorchester Hill. Some improvements to this junction have already been put in place. The Council therefore views this land as available and deliverable.
- 1.5. The land off Fairmile Road (the 'Dorchester Hill' site), was assessed in terms of its impact on the landscape, sustainability and agricultural land quality and found to

be acceptable and, through the SHLAA process (site 2/06/0540), to have longer term potential as a housing site. The small paddocks immediately adjacent to Fairmile Road (within Bryanston Parish) are owned by The Crown Estate.

- 1.6. Charles Church Developments (agent Goadsby) have an interest in the larger paddocks further south. In April 2014 a request for an EIA screening opinion (02/2014/0427/PLNG) was submitted on behalf of Charles Church Developments for a scheme of 60 dwellings on the land in their control. The application included an indicative layout. The Council responded in May 2014 that an Environmental Impact Assessment was not required. There have also been pre-application discussions and the Council's understanding is that preparatory work is now being undertaken with a view to a planning application being submitted in early summer 2015. The work undertaken to date demonstrates that the site is available and deliverable.

South East of Blandford St Mary - 'St Mary's Hill'

- 1.7. The land to the south-east of Blandford St Mary, situated to the south of the A350 / A354 junction on the Blandford Bypass (the 'St Mary's Hill' site) was submitted by the landowner as part of the SHLAA (2/04/0460) and has been assessed as being available and having potential for housing. This site was included in the Local Plan Part 1 (LP 1) following consultation on the Focused Changes (SUD007) in August 2014, which also saw the deletion of the site at Crown Meadows, Blandford Forum.
- 1.8. Pre-application discussions took place with the developer (Blandford St Mary Homes) in early 2014 and these were informed by a great deal of technical work including: a transport assessment; a landscape and visual appraisal; an ecological survey; and surveys of ground conditions. These studies were submitted by the developer's agent (Malcolm Brown from Sibbett Gregory – Representor ID 1596) in response to consultation on the Pre-submission Document.
- 1.9. The North and north East Dorset Transport Study found this to be a very accessible site and therefore sustainable. In addition, The Travel Plan submitted with the pre-application papers demonstrated that the site is sustainable with the introduction of various highway and other improvements to assist pedestrian and cycle movements to, from and within the site.
- 1.10. An EIA screening opinion has been issued by the Council for the development of the first phase of 150 homes on 4 hectares of the site (2/2013/1095/PLNG). The Council issued its screening opinion indicating that an EIA is required in October 2013. The Council's understanding is that work on the EIA is progressing with a view to a planning application being submitted. On the basis of the work undertaken to date, the Council has no reason to believe that the site is not available or deliverable.

Other Sites

- 1.11. In addition to the sites noted above, other greenfield sites were examined as to their suitability for residential development during the plan period, including:
- land to the west of Blandford (the 'Crown Meadows' site);
 - land to the north east of Blandford (south of Letton Park);
 - land to the north of Blandford (part of which is now being promoted for employment development); and
 - other sites submitted through the SHLAA.
- 1.12. In response to the Focused Changes consultation, an additional field was also put forward for residential development immediately adjoining the south-eastern edge of the St Mary's Hill site, which would extend development up to Ward's Drove (Representor IDs 3109 and 3074).
- 1.13. The three key constraints influencing the selection of sites for development at Blandford (as outlined in paragraph 8.11 of LP 1) are:
- heritage assets;
 - the Dorset and Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONBs; and
 - the floodplain of the River Stour.
- 1.14. To accommodate the growth required to meet the strategic needs of Blandford, the Council sought to focus housing in accessible locations having regard to these constraints. More detail on the overall site selection process is set out at the background paper Market Towns Site Selection (MTC001). A landscape impact assessment of potential housing sites, as put forward through the SHLAA, was also undertaken (ECC020). An update in relation to the issue of agricultural land is provided in Appendix 1 in the form of a brief summary of the issues prepared by the Council and a response from Natural England.
- 1.15. In summary, initial analysis of constraints highlighted four broad areas where development could take place and these were analysed through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process. Land south of Blandford (Crown Meadows) and land west of Blandford St Mary (Lower Bryanston Farm and Dorchester Hill) were selected due to the sites' proximity to town centre facilities and schools, thereby encouraging sustainable travel choices. This approach also contained all development within the boundary of the bypass (A350), reducing further the landscape impact that would result were development to be allowed further afield.

Crown Meadows

- 1.16. At a late stage in the production of the Local Plan, English Heritage identified the impact of the proposed development at Crown Meadows as causing substantial harm to heritage assets. In response to English Heritage's concerns the Council undertook further 'focused changes' consultation, which proposed the deletion of the Crown Meadows site and the inclusion of the St Mary's Hill site in LP 1. The

consultation was supported by heritage assessments for both sites (ECC006a and 006b), which were endorsed by English Heritage. The consultation was also supported by a supplement to the SA Report (SUD008) and an addendum to the Habitats Regulations Assessment (SUD009). An update in relation to heritage matters and the Crown Meadows site is included as Appendix 2. This takes the form of a brief report prepared by the Council assessing the potential impact of the proposed development on a newly identified Listed Building: a pill box, which forms part of the WWII defences at Blandford.

- 1.17. There is a ‘strong presumption’ against harm to conservation areas and listed buildings derived from the relevant statutory tests in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. National planning policy advises local planning authorities to conserve heritage assets “*in a manner appropriate to their significance*” (NPPF paragraph 126) and establishes that “*great weight*” should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets (NPPF paragraph 132). It also indicates that consent should be refused where a proposed development would lead to substantial harm to or total loss of a designated heritage asset, except in certain defined circumstances. The definition of ‘significance (for heritage policy)’ set out in the NPPF’s glossary confirms that setting forms an integral part of a heritage asset’s significance.
- 1.18. Having regard to: the law; national planning policy; and the technical evidence (endorsed by English Heritage) that the proposed development at Crown Meadows would result in substantial harm to a number of designated heritage assets; the Council considers that the site should not be developed and that its deletion from LP 1 following consultation on the focused changes is justified.
- 1.19. The Council is therefore of the opinion that the proposed residential sites at Blandford identified in LP 1 (as revised) are available, sustainable and deliverable and that the alternatives, including The Crown Meadows site, have been satisfactorily considered.

Question 7.2: Can development at Blandford St Mary be satisfactorily assimilated into the existing settlement and the wider setting, including the AONB?

- 1.20. The Council considers that development at Blandford St Mary can be satisfactorily assimilated into the existing settlement and the wider setting, including the AONB.
- 1.21. The sites lying close to Blandford St Mary have been subject to careful landscape impact assessment. Land to the south east of Blandford St Mary lies outside the Dorset AONB and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. However, the Council’s Landscape Assessment of Potential Housing Sites at Blandford (and Shaftesbury) (ECC020) highlighted concerns that development of the site could adversely impact on the landscape and the setting of the town. The Landscape Impact Assessment examined this site (ECC020 2/03/0460) and revealed that while

careful mitigation of a number of negative impacts would be required to make the site acceptable, there is no reason to believe that such measures would not be successful.

- 1.22. While the site to the south east of Blandford St Mary is located relatively close to jobs and facilities, the by-pass could present a barrier to pedestrian and cycle movements and measures would need to be put in place to overcome this. An alternative alignment to that shown in the 2003 Local Plan (COD030) of the proposed Charlton Marshall / Spetisbury / Sturminster Marshall By-pass would enable housing to be provided on this site. The feasibility of satisfactorily accommodating an alternative by-pass route has now been established and agreed with the Highway Authority. In association with this, measures such as a bridge or an underpass have been discussed as potentially being needed to overcome the ‘severance’ caused by the location of the site beyond the by-pass but the County Council has now accepted that any crossing can be ‘at grade’. This route could provide a link in the Trailway, creating a safe route through part of Blandford.
- 1.23. In addition to the work undertaken by the Council the proposals for the St Mary’s Hill sites are supported by a great deal of technical work submitted by the developer’s agent (Malcolm Brown from Sibbett Gregory – Representor ID 1596) in response to consultation on the Pre-submission Document. This technical work, which has informed pre-application discussions, includes: a transport assessment; a landscape and visual appraisal; an ecological survey; and surveys of ground conditions.
- 1.24. Land to the west of Blandford St Mary (ECC020 2/03/0540 and 2/03/054) has also been assessed carefully in landscape terms. The Landscape Assessment saw the land between Dorchester Hill and Fairmile Road as forming part of the South Blandford Downs Landscape Character Area which, in turn, is part of the undulating, rolling, open chalk downland landscape which extends south of Blandford, abutting the Dorset AONB along its north-western edge. Development of the site would have some impact on trees and hedgerows copses within and around this site and on the character and setting of the AONB.
- 1.25. The Landscape Assessment concluded, though, that if development were to be located away from the more elevated and exposed parts of the site this would minimise the identified impacts on landscape character and the AONB. If development could also ensure the retention, protection and management of the key mature old hedgerows crossing the site, and those which border it, then this would also help minimise impacts.
- 1.26. Land at Lower Bryanston Farm lies just within the eastern boundary of the Dorset AONB, embracing undeveloped agricultural land with hedgerows and a number of trees. The Landscape Assessment identified a number of impacts but suggested that if development was to be located within the lower/ flatter eastern part of the site then this would minimise the identified visual impact. If the creation of a new,

hard, urban, west facing edge was softened by structural planting this would also be a key mitigation measure. Development in this suggested, limited location would also sit within the context of existing development and be at a low enough elevation not to create a significant negative landscape and visual impact on the wider character of the AONB and the setting of the town. If existing hedgerows and trees were protected, maintained and managed then this would also be a key mitigation point.

- 1.27. In addition to landscape issues, the Council considered the potential impact of development of land at St Mary's Hill on heritage assets. This site lies close to Lower Blandford St Mary, which contains a number of Listed Buildings in an attractive setting. As stated in the Blandford St Mary Heritage Assessment (ECC006b) '*The overall impact of the proposed development on the significance of heritage assets will be limited and not sufficient to warrant resistance in heritage terms*'.
- 1.28. The background to The Crown Meadows site and the potential impacts on heritage assets is set out in response to Q7.1. The in-depth heritage assessment of the site concluded that development should not take place and due to the severity of the impact, it was unlikely that it could be successfully mitigated. The heritage assessment of the St Mary's Hill site demonstrated that it would be a more suitable option that English Heritage would not challenge if promoted through the Local Plan. On this basis, the Council took the view that the heritage impact of any development at St Mary's Hill would be acceptable, supporting the inclusion of the site in LP 1.

Question 7.3: Is there any evidence that the proposed economic development sites in Blandford Forum are not available, sustainable or deliverable? If such evidence exists what alternatives are available to the Council?

- 1.29. The Council is not aware of any evidence that the proposed economic development sites in Blandford Forum are not available, sustainable or deliverable. The two strategic industrial sites, the Brewery and land off Shaftesbury Lane, met the market, sustainability and strategic assessment factors examined in the Employment Land Review (SED011) and were found to be acceptable in accessibility terms in the North and north East Transport Strategy (INF009).

The Brewery

- 1.30. Development of the mixed-use regeneration site at the Brewery commenced some time ago and is progressing. To that extent, it is available and deliverable. The Council views it as sustainable as it retains employment in the town and is well placed in terms of access to the town centre and transport links out of Blandford. These include pedestrian links as well as vehicular and public transport. The site, to

the south of Blandford, contributes about 3 hectares of new/redeveloped Class B employment land and buildings towards Blandford's needs of 6 hectares by 2026.

Land off Shaftesbury Lane

- 1.31. The second strategic employment site in Blandford is a 4.8 hectare site off Shaftesbury Lane to the north of the town, which was identified as an allocated employment site in the 2003 Local Plan (COD030) alongside significant areas of residential development, also off Shaftesbury Lane. Part of the site is being developed as the Glenmore Trading Estate and units are currently being marketed.
- 1.32. Much of the rest of the site has planning permission for a new supermarket (Asda) and further employment units. Outline consent for the Asda store / employment units was granted in 2013 (2/2011/1439/PLNG) and in August 2014 a reserved matters application (2/2014/0387/PLNG) was approved. The Council has no reason to believe that this development will not proceed in due course.
- 1.33. The site is suitably located for employment use in terms of transport links and relates well to existing industrial and commercial development on the other side of Shaftesbury Lane on the Blandford Heights Industrial Estate. Consequently, the Council sees this site as available and deliverable.
- 1.34. Although the foregoing sites provide sufficient land to meet Blandford's anticipated employment land requirements to 2026, other smaller sites will also contribute to that requirement. The Council has no reason to believe that vacant plots on existing industrial estates, such as the Sunrise Business Park, beyond the northern edge of Blandford, or on the Blandford Heights Industrial Estate, will not be developed during the Plan period. Indeed, planning permission was granted in December 2014 for three industrial units for Business (Class B1), General Industrial (Class B2) and Storage / Distribution (Class B8) uses on land at Blandford Heights (02/2014/1291).

Stour Park

- 1.35. Two sites are identified in LP1 as the locations for future retail development, both of which have planning permission. The Asda supermarket on land off Shaftesbury Lane is discussed above. The other site is an extension to the existing Tesco store at Stour Park. Planning permission was granted in May 2012 (2/2010/1222/PLNG), but this scheme has not yet started and the land is currently being marketed as a development site. The site is considered to be available, sustainable and deliverable and in the event that it is not developed for retail, then it will be developed for other economic development uses.

Town Centre Regeneration

- 1.36. The Council has considered the scope for town centre regeneration in the context of the key issues of flood risk and heritage. Having regard to these issues, it is considered that land to the south of East Street, including the land around the Co-op store off Langton Road has the most potential for regeneration, including the

provision of further additional retail floor space. While this land is largely protected from flooding by existing defence works, any future development would have to take account of flood risk, as outlined in paragraph 8.37 of LP 1.

- 1.37. There is also considered to be potential to extend the existing retail outlets south of Market Place and East Street. In these areas, any scheme would have to take account of not only flood risk issues, but also potential impacts on heritage, notably the character of the long ‘burgage plots’ that extend down to the Rover Stour. In view of the constraints in this area, the Council considers that the potential here is more limited, as stated in paragraph 8.38 of LP 1.

Blandford Camp

- 1.38. Blandford Camp, which is located to the east of Blandford Forum, is the home of the Royal School of Signals. The possibility of using the site, or parts of the site, for non-military purposes has been discussed in the recent past especially when it was proposed to relocate the training function to Wales. Those plans were scrapped in 2010, pending further review and the site remains a ‘Core Site’ meaning that it is likely to remain in military use for the foreseeable future.
- 1.39. LP 1 recognises that there is a possibility that the military role of Blandford Camp may change in the future such that existing buildings or other previously developed parts of the Camp could become available for non-military uses. Paragraph 8.31 indicates that the Council would investigate the possibility of such buildings and land being utilised for employment uses in the longer term, if needed.

Sites East and South East of Sunrise Business Park

- 1.40. Two objection sites (to the east and south east of Sunrise Business Park) have been put forward for employment purposes in response to consultation on LP 1. The Council does not consider that these sites should be brought forward for development because:
- Sufficient provision of employment land has already been made to meet identified needs; and
 - The sites are located in a prominent location within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.
- 1.41. The supporting text to Policy 11 – The Economy shows that the level of employment land available in the District (49.2 hectares) significantly exceeds the future need identified in employment land projections (26.2 hectares). Figure 6.1 in LP 1 also shows that the level of employment land available in Blandford (10.3 hectares) exceeds the future need identified for the town (6.0 hectares).
- 1.42. Land in the vicinity of Sunrise Business Park was also examined in the Landscape Impact Assessment (ECC020) and the results are summarised in paragraphs 5.32 to 5.34 of the Market Towns Site Selection Background Paper (MTC001), as set out below.

- 1.43. *“Land West and East of Sunrise Business Park - Development would have a significant, adverse impact on the rural setting and landscape character of the AONB, being seen on the skyline from several directions and therefore creating a negative landscape and visual impact. It would have an unacceptable impact on the setting and context of this part of the settlement and form a large, incongruous urban extension out into open, undeveloped countryside. Development would also impact negatively on the internal and boundary trees, hedgerows and copses.*
- 1.44. *The site lies within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and is continuous with this open, downland landscape in the AONB to the north; this designation gives it a high sensitivity rating. The site also has an important role in providing a green, open, undeveloped area of countryside rolling up to the A350 boundary and in creating a distinct, urban/rural edge to this northern side of the settlement. Some of the surrounding trees and copses will have some wildlife value and the site's historic field pattern has some historic value.*
- 1.45. *Due to the openness of the site to views within the AONB, little mitigation is possible which could minimise the identified injurious impacts on character of the landscape. In the winter months, there is the possibility of more open views into the site from along the A354 Blandford Bypass.”*
- 1.46. The Council has considered these alternatives, but in view of the lack of identified need and the potential impacts of development on the AONB, these sites are not proposed for development.

Question 7.4: Can it be demonstrated that the proposed development in Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary would not have a significant adverse effect on highway safety or on the ability of other infrastructure to satisfactorily accommodate the growth?

- 1.47. Discussions with Dorset County Council as Highway Authority have been undertaken at length with regard to the proposed development sites at Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary.
- 1.48. Highway issues, including road safety, formed part of the considerations of the planning applications for the Brewery site (including 2/2006/1353) and any issues were resolved prior to the grant of planning permission.
- 1.49. Land to the south east of Blandford St Mary (St Mary’s Hill) has been subject to pre-application discussion and measures have been agreed with Dorset County Council to deal with access to the site and the reconfiguring of the line of the proposed Spetisbury / Charlton Marshall bypass. Road safety concerns associated with this issue have been addressed within those considerations. Measures such as a bridge or an underpass have been discussed as potentially being needed to overcome the ‘severance’ caused by the location of the site beyond the by-pass but the County

Council has now accepted that any crossing can be 'at grade'. This route could provide a link in the Trailway, creating a safe route through part of Blandford.

- 1.50. Land to the west of Blandford St Mary has been assessed by consultants instructed by the landowner and a highway improvement scheme to address some of the road safety issues at the junction of New Road/ Fairmile Road / Blandford Hill has already been implemented. Specific site access matters will be addressed as part of any planning application.
- 1.51. Highway capacity was examined in the North and north East Dorset Transport Study and modelling future flows showed that, at the strategic level, there should be no capacity issues created by new development. Infrastructure requirements for supporting new development are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (SUD020). In developing the IDP, account was taken of existing infrastructure capacity and regard was had to the outcomes of the consultation exercises undertaken in developing LP1. Where highway infrastructure improvements are required they are set out in the IDP.
- 1.52. Other infrastructure elements are able to accommodate the amount of growth proposed, with enhancement where necessary and as shown in the IDP. The Council has planned positively for growth in LP1 and had full regard for the infrastructure requirements of that growth. Nevertheless, the Council has stated that the IDP will be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary as circumstances change to ensure that infrastructure provision remains in step with development.

Question 7.5: Are all the infrastructure requirements listed in policy 16 justified and deliverable?

- 1.53. The public consultation on the Draft Core Strategy undertaken in 2010 produced over 5,700 comments, of which 364 were specifically directed towards infrastructure. Further comments were received in subsequent consultations. In particular, the targeted consultation exercise undertaken in October / December 2012 included a draft version of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (SUD020) which has been prepared alongside LP 1. Over 300 comments and responses were received which were helpful in identifying local infrastructure needs.
- 1.54. Further, schemes within the purview of the Council's Development Working Party (comprising representatives of District, Town and Parish Councils together with representatives of community partnerships and community organisations) were examined within the context of the IDP and contributed to its provisions.
- 1.55. Policy 16 indicates the main elements of infrastructure provision to support growth under one of three headings: grey, social and green infrastructure. Grey infrastructure provision supports the sustainable and effective movement of people in and around Blandford and thus reflects Section 4 of the NPPF. This component of Policy 16 pays due regard to strategic aims in the North and north East Dorset Transportation Study (INF009) as well as Dorset's Local Transport Plan 3

(LTP3) (INF006). In addition, provision for a safeguarded route for the Spetisbury / Charlton Marshall bypass is included. Provision of the infrastructure outlined above (and the longer term safeguarding of a bypass route) will support both growth in Blandford and the implementation of other policies in LP 1 and meet locally expressed needs.

- 1.56. Social infrastructure proposals included in Policy 16 relate especially to locally expressed needs with respect to Policy 16(s), (t) and (v) and to Dorset Council Council's assessment of educational needs in Blandford over the plan period together with additional medical and health provision to respond to local GP practice requirements.
- 1.57. The new sports pitches and associated facilities forming the green infrastructure components of Policy 16 stem from local expressed needs as well as an assessment of requirements in the town derived from the Open Space Audit and Assessment of Local Need (INF013) which found that Blandford had the least provision per 1,000 population at 0.45 hectares per 1,000 population.
- 1.58. The infrastructure requirements listed in Policy 16 are set out in the IDP, which provides details of costs, funding sources and timescales as well as the delivery agencies involved. Delivery of some items is already taking place, such as improvements to medical facilities at Blandford Hospital and the improved provision of sports pitches at Larksmead.
- 1.59. There is, therefore, a local and strategic basis for the infrastructure requirements listed in Policy 16 and clear prospects of delivery. Policy 16 has been prepared to accord with the principles of the NPPF and is justified in that regard.

Question 7.6: Should Figure 8.1 show the safeguarded route for the Spetisbury and Charlton Marshall by-pass?

- 1.60. The Spetisbury and Charlton Marshall bypass is a longstanding aspiration and land to be safeguarded for the proposed bypass was shown in the 2003 Local Plan (COD030). Local Plan Policies 5.21 and 5.22 continue to be saved to maintain this safeguarding. Inset Map 2 of the 2003 Local Plan shows how the Spetisbury and Charlton Marshall bypass would join with the A354 in the form of a large, new roundabout.
- 1.61. The promoters of the St Mary's Hill site have been in negotiation with Dorset County Council, as Highway Authority, and have agreed that, in principle, the junction could be relocated further west in order to enable their site to be developed. As a result, the deletion of the roundabout junction from Inset Map 2 was consulted upon as part of the focused changes consultation, as was the inclusion of some new wording in the policy. The new wording has been included in Policy 16 as criterion P16A (which appears after criterion r) and reads "*the identification of a safeguarded route for the Spetisbury and Charlton Marshall Bypass as part of the development of the land south east of Blandford St Mary*".

- 1.62. With this in mind, the inclusion in Figure 8.1 of an indication of the safeguarded route of the bypass would aid clarity. This could take the form of a broad broken arrow (as used to show the line of the proposed Enmore Green Link Road at Shaftesbury in Figure 8.3) and referenced in the diagram legend as 'Safeguarded route of Spetisbury and Charlton Marshall bypass (indicative)'.

Question 7.7: Figure 8.1 identifies land at Black Lane (No 7) for housing growth but this is not referred to in policy 16. Why not?

- 1.63. Figure 8.1 includes land at Black Lane as a site to which reference is made in the text (at paragraph 8.22 of the submitted Local Plan) as a site which has contributed to meeting Blandford's housing needs over the period 2011 - 2026. The site is now fully developed and so does not appear in Policy 16.

Question 7.8: Is the Council's delivery strategy, as summarised in paragraph 8.12, justified bearing in mind the presumption in favour of sustainable development?

- 1.64. LP 1 sets out at Policy 1 the way in which the Plan has been prepared in accordance with the NPPF in terms of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 1.65. Further, the Council explored various alternatives in 2007 in the Issues and Options exercise, which included a public consultation. The Council's development of its preferred strategy is set out in the Sustainable Development Strategy Background Paper (SDS001) and the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper 2012 (SDS002).
- 1.66. With the completion of sites such as Black Lane and other brownfield sites (such as the former Magistrates Court on Salisbury Road), the delivery strategy set out in paragraph 8.12 is already being implemented. This approach is considered to be the most appropriate within the NPPF's 'golden thread' of sustainable development.

Appendix 1A – Agricultural Land and Site Selection in Blandford

1. Agricultural Land and Site Selection in Blandford

- 1.1. The amount of residential growth required to meet the needs of Blandford has been established as being somewhere around 1000 dwellings over the period 2011 to 2026. On this basis the submission version of North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 identifies sufficient land to deliver about 1110 dwellings between 2011 and 2026.
- 1.2. When considering development options to meet the needs of the town, an assessment of the opportunities was undertaken looking at the key constraints and opportunities. This included a review of the key constraints such as flood risk, landscape, heritage, ecology and the physical location of the town centre relative to the built up area of the town. The assessment of constraints also included a review of agricultural land classification with a view to avoiding the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a).

Flood Risk

- 1.3. National policy states that "...development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk..."¹ through the application of the Sequential Test.
- 1.4. Blandford sits on the River Stour and hence its floodplain is one of the major constraints around the town. Avoiding the flood plain associated with the River Stour and its tributaries was one of the key considerations around the town.

Landscape

- 1.5. National policy puts an emphasis on the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes. In particular, the National Planning Policy Framework states that:
*"Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty."*²
- 1.6. Blandford is surrounded by high quality landscape with the town being located within the "Blandford Gap"; a gap in the chalk downs through which the River Stour flows. The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB sits to the north and east of the town whilst the Dorset AONB sits to the west of the town. However, parts of the built up area of the town also sit within the AONB designations.

¹ Paragraph 100, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012).

² Paragraph 115, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012).

Development within this sensitive landscape both within the AONBs and within their setting, has the potential to harm the designation

The Historic Environment

- 1.7. In relation to the historic environment, the National Planning Policy Framework states that local planning authorities should:

“...recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.”³

- 1.8. The town plays host to a number of heritage assets including the Georgian town centre and its extensive range of listed buildings, Bryanston House, the Victorian suburbs and the World War 2 anti-tank defences. The town is covered by extensive conservation areas and contains a number of unlisted heritage assets such as the Deer Park associated with Bryanston House. The setting of these heritage assets is an important consideration when considering options for managing the growth around the town.

Ecology

- 1.9. National policy highlights the importance of designated wildlife sites and the need to provide net gains in biodiversity where possible. In relation to the hierarchy of designated sites, it goes on to state that:

“Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.”⁴

- 1.10. In the immediate vicinity of Blandford there is one nationally designated wildlife site (Bryanston SSSI) and a number of locally designated sites (including The Milldown LNR and the Cliff SNCI). Located on the southern side of the River Stour, Bryanston SSSI has a resident maternal colony of Greater Horseshoe bats. The bats at Bryanston SSSI forage over an area of around 2km from the colony over pasture land and hence development on such land would have an impact on the SSSI.

Access to services

- 1.11. The access to everyday facilities by sustainable modes of transport is an important factor in considering the location of new development. One of the Core Planning

³ Paragraph 126, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

⁴ Paragraph 113, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

Principles in the National Planning Policy Framework⁵ that “*should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking*” is that planning should:

“...actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable...”

- 1.12. The town itself is bound by the bypass and the River Stour. Within this built up area, the town centre and the majority of the facilities such as shops and schools, are clustered along the River Stour corridor. This creates problems with accessibility in areas further away from the river especially due to the topography of the town resulting in residents being more inclined to rely upon their car to travel to the town centre rather than use more sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling. This likely increase in car usage is important when considering options for accommodating growth at the town.

Agricultural Land

- 1.13. Agricultural land is an important resource that needs to be managed in an appropriate way to underpin sustainable development. The agricultural land is important for the production of food, biomass, water storage and biodiversity.
- 1.14. National policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Policy Guidance indicates that agricultural land classification is a material consideration when making planning decisions and that development should be steered away from the best and most versatile agricultural land⁶ (Grades 1, 2 and 3a).
- 1.15. The Planning Policy Guidance expands on the text within the National Planning Policy Framework stating that national policy...
- “...expects local planning authorities to take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. This is particularly important in plan making when decisions are made on which land should be allocated for development. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.”⁷*
- 1.16. Blandford town is surrounded with grade 3 agricultural land with the exception of the river corridor which is classified as grade 4. There is also a small area of grade 2 land to the north of the town roughly between the A354 Salisbury Road and the

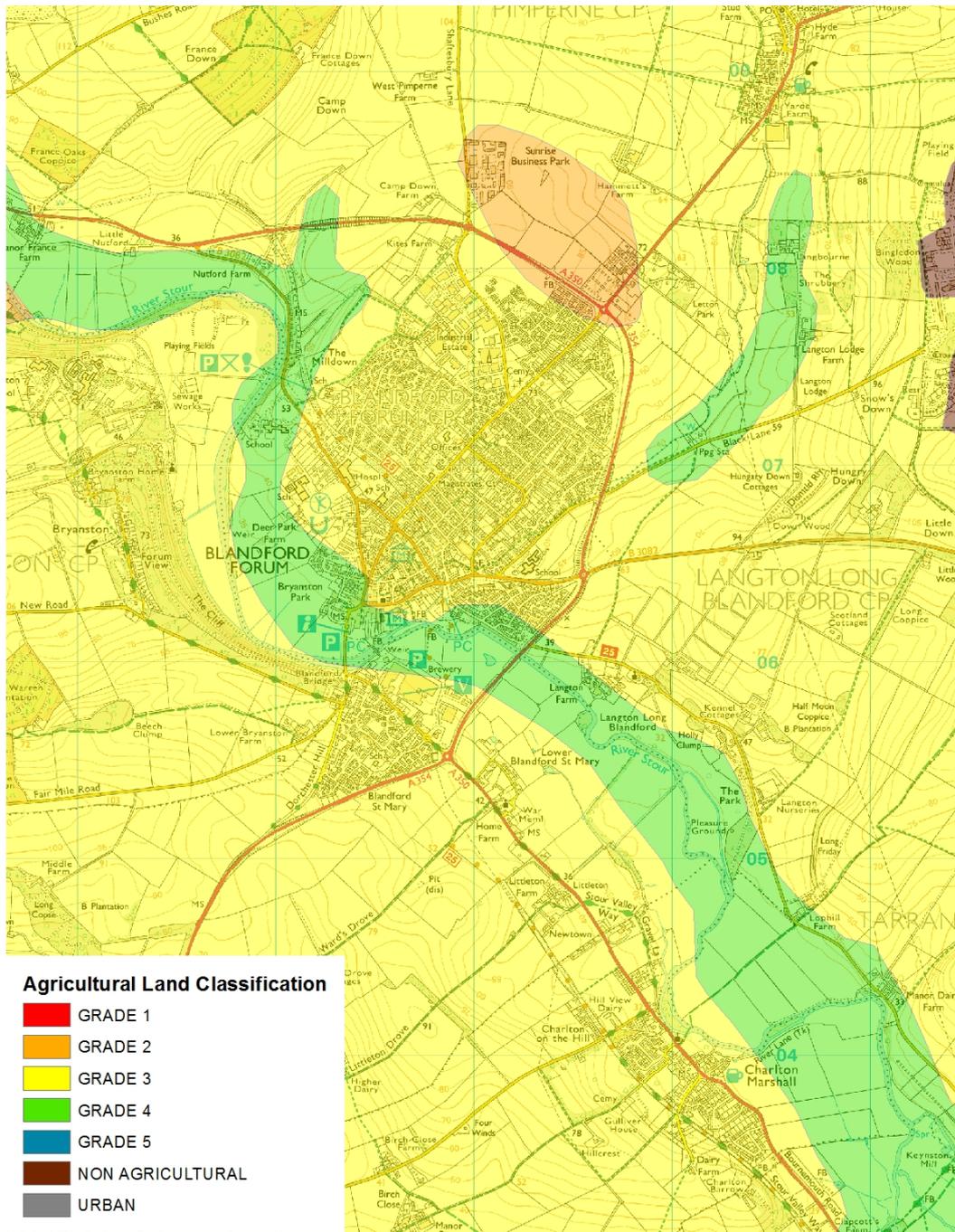
⁵ Paragraph 16, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

⁶ Paragraph 112, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012).

⁷ Paragraph 026, Reference ID: 8-026-20140306, Planning Practice Guidance, DCLG.

C13 Higher Shaftesbury Road and an area classified as grade 4 running along Pimperne Brook from Black Lane towards Salisbury Road (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Agricultural Land Classification⁸



Agricultural Land Classification - Blandford

0 0.25 0.5 1 Kilometers



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⁸ Strategic Agricultural Land Mapping, Natural England via www.magic.gov.uk

Site selection at Blandford

- 1.17. To accommodate the growth required to meet the strategic needs of Blandford, sites were considered outside of the areas at risk of flooding through the application of the sequential test. Of the remaining areas, those within the AONB boundaries were rejected as national policy indicates that major developments in these areas should be refused except in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.18. This initial analysis of constraints highlighted four broad areas where development could take place and these were analysed through the Sustainability Appraisal process. Initially, land south of Blandford (Crown Meadows) and land west of Blandford St Mary were selected due to their proximity to town centre facilities and schools thereby encouraging sustainable travel choices. In addition, this approach contained all development within the boundary of the towns bypass, reducing further the landscape impact that would result. The site to the south of Blandford (Crown Meadows) is on Grade 4 agricultural land.
- 1.19. At a late stage in the production of the Local Plan, English Heritage identified the impact on the historic environment resulting from the proposed development at Crown Meadows as being unavoidable and significant. Their suggestion was that this site was not developable and as such should be removed from the Local Plan in favour of an alternative site.
- 1.20. The next most appropriate site was considered to be the land south of Blandford St Mary on the opposite side of the towns bypass at the junction between the A350 and the A354. This site has a lesser impact on the historic environment whilst minimising the impact on the sensitive landscapes around the town. The site is however Grade 3a agricultural land; a fact that was first identified in the Addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal. This report highlighted the need for a sensitive treatment of the agricultural land in the area and to ensure that appropriate mitigation is put in place.
- 1.21. In the submission version of the Local Plan, reference is made to the need to safeguard the best and most versatile agricultural land. The following text has been included in Policy 4 – The Natural Environment:

Agricultural Land

4C The best and most versatile agricultural land (comprising grades 1, 2 and 3a) is a finite resource essential to enable agriculture to successfully operate. It is therefore important that the best agricultural land is safeguarded for agricultural uses. To achieve this, the council will seek to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land from development and only approve development which would result in its permanent loss where:

- *the site has been allocated for development in either the Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan; or*

- *it can be demonstrated that the social or economic benefits of the proposal outweighs the value of the land; or*
- *there is no appropriate alternative site including previously developed sites or sites of lower agricultural value; or*
- *the proposal is small in scale to support the diversification of an existing agricultural business.*

4D The grade of agricultural land will therefore be taken into account in the decision making process.

Conclusion

- 1.22. It is the Council's view that the site selection process at Blandford has been undertaken in an appropriate way considering all of the relevant planning constraints and opportunities around the town. In addition, the addition of text into Policy 4 relating to agricultural land value is sufficient to avoid impact on agricultural land unless there is an over-riding need for the development as in the case of growth at Blandford.
- 1.23. However if, in the opinion of Natural England, there is a need for the policy wording to be strengthened, the Council would be happy to consider a revision.

Appendix A2 – Natural England’s response to Appendix 1A

From: Stobart, John (NE) [<mailto:John.Stobart@naturalengland.org.uk>]
Sent: 02 February 2015 17:09
To: Terry Sneller
Subject: RE: Soil and Agricultural Land Quality - North Dorset Local Plan _ St Mary's Hill

Terry

Many thanks for the additional Soil and Agricultural Land Quality - North Dorset Local Plan paper. I understand this will be submitted to the Inspector for their consideration in relation to site selection.

Based on the submitted paper I can confirm that Natural England has no further comment on the site selection process, or further comment relating to Policy 4 – The Natural Environment: Agricultural Land.

Regards

John Stobart
Planning and Conservation Lead Advisor
Natural England
07825 844475

Please note that my working days are now Monday to Thursday

www.gov.uk/natural-england

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Appendix B – Heritage Assessment – Addendum, Crown Meadows

NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN 2011 – 2026 PART 1 EXAMINATION

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – ADDENDUM

WWII DEFENCES AT CROWN MEADOWS, BLANDFORD

February 2015

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	2
2.	Background.....	3
3.	The Site and Surrounding Area	4
4.	Analysis of Additional Heritage Asset and the Impact of Proposed Development	5
	Blandford Forum – Second World War Defences.....	5
	Effects of the Proposed Development on the Significance of the Asset	6
5.	Conclusions.....	7
	Appendix I: List Entry Summary extract from English Heritage.....	8
	Appendix II: Map Showing the Location of Pill Box	11

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In August 2014, the Council published a heritage assessment to support the North Dorset Local Plan 2011 to 2026 Part 1 and to inform the soundness of Policy 16, particularly with regard to development at Crown Meadows.
- 1.2 The heritage assessment considered the significance of any effects of proposed development on those heritage assets with which there would be any degree of direct or indirect impact. The heritage assessment found that the impact of the proposed development on the significance of heritage assets would range from substantial harm to varying degrees of less than substantial harm to no harm at all. It also concluded that several heritage assets would be likely to experience a major significant effect as a result of the proposed development resulting in substantial harm, including:
 - the Blandford, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston Conservation Area;
 - the Grade II ha-ha / defensive ditch and pill boxes;
 - the Grade II listed Bryanston Cottage; and
 - the non-designated Stables and The Deer Park.
- 1.3 This addendum to the 2014 heritage assessment has been prepared to consider the impact of English Heritage's listing of an additional heritage asset, which forms part of the Second World War defence structures at Crown Meadows. On 12 November 2014 an additional pill box was listed as Grade II (list entry ID 1422260) under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended, for its special architectural or historic interest. The information contained in the document is accurate as of February 2015.
- 1.4 This addendum should be read in conjunction with the 2014 heritage assessment which sets out the applicable legislative, national and local policy frameworks. The methodology undertaken to assess the impact of the proposed development is also contained in the heritage assessment which has drawn on guidance for understanding and assessing heritage significance provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as well as English Heritage's Conservation Principles (Policies and Guidance) April 2008, Seeing the History in the View (May 2011) and The Setting of Heritage Assets (October 2011).

2. Background

- 2.1 The North Dorset Local Plan – 2011 to 2026 Part 1 Pre-submission Document was consulted on from November 2013 to January 2014. It identified the development of approximately 150 new homes on a 5 hectare site to the west of Blandford Forum, otherwise known as the Crown Meadows, Bryanston Park or Deer Park. The site had also been identified as a ‘preferred option’ in the draft Core Strategy published in March 2010.
- 2.2 During consultation on the Pre-submission version of the Local Plan, concern was raised about the impact of this proposal on the listed buildings, conservation areas and other important historical features in the near vicinity of the site. English Heritage’s consultation response on the Pre-submission document gave its support to the overall approach to the conservation of the historic environment, however, raised concerns about the extent to which it had been taken into account in the preparation of the Local Plan and the identification of locations for growth, particularly at Blandford.
- 2.3 In response to concerns raised by English Heritage and the community, the Council undertook more in depth heritage assessments of proposed sites at Crown Meadows and St Mary’s Hill.
- 2.4 The assessment of the impacts on the heritage assets in the vicinity of Crown Meadows site concluded that the impact was so significant that development should not take place and due to the severity of the impact, it was unlikely that it could be successfully mitigated. These conclusions necessitated a review of the options for accommodating the growth of the town.
- 2.5 English Heritage endorsed the findings of the heritage assessments and considered the historic environment assessment of the St Mary’s Hill site demonstrated a more suitable option that it would not challenge if promoted through the Local Plan.
- 2.6 In light of the conclusions of the heritage assessments and English Heritage’s endorsement of the findings, the Council undertook a further round of consultation on a change to the strategy for the future growth of Blandford.
- 2.7 The North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 1: Pre-Submission Focused Changes (August 2014) document set out a number of major changes (and other changes) to the Local Plan Part 1 Pre-submission Document prior to its submission. Among other things, it proposed to delete the Crown Meadows site (change reference MAJ/16/1) as a broad location for growth along with the informal open space associated with the development and to identify land south-east of the A350/A354 (Tesco) junction, Blandford St Mary (the St Mary’s Hill site) as an alternative location for growth.

3. The Site and Surrounding Area

- 3.1 The site is located on the western edge of the town between the rear of houses on Parklands and the southern side of Bryanston Street. To the south of the site is the floodplain of the River Stour known as the Crown Meadows. Approximately 600m west of the site is The Cliff, a steep escarpment densely wooded with mature deciduous trees.
- 3.2 The key characteristics of the site are that it consists of a series of small scale, low lying paddocks used mainly for grazing and hay crop set within an attractive pastoral, parkland landscape. It forms part of the green undeveloped edge to the west of the town, lies within the Blandford, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston Conservation Area and in addition to its own historic and visual interest forming part of the picturesque Stour Valley; it contributes to the setting of several designated and non-designated heritage assets.

4. Analysis of Additional Heritage Asset and the Impact of Proposed Development

Blandford Forum – Second World War Defences

- 4.1 The Crown Meadows site includes a surviving section of the Second World War defences of Blandford Forum; they form part of the Blandford anti-tank island which was designed as a defensive strongpoint at a key position within a broader defensive stop-line. The defences are located in the Crown Meadows and in the gardens of Bryanston Cottage, Bethune and Nos 1-3 (consec) and 7-12 (consec) Parklands.
- 4.2 An assessment of the defences was undertaken by Entec UK Limited in April 2010. The defences were designated by English Heritage in January 2012 as Grade II listed owing to the rarity, intactness, group value and historic interest of the defences. The designated defences are as follows:
- Anti-tank Ditch (ST 8834 0636)
 - Pill Box (ST 8833 0650)
 - Pill Box (ST 88301 06395)
 - Anti-Tank Cubes (ST 8833 0638)
 - 508684 Anti-tank Obstacles to the south-east of Deer Park Holm (ST 88249 06464)
 - Anti-Tank Cubes and Dummy Pill Box along River Mews (ST 88322 06212)
- 4.3 Subsequent to the heritage assessment's publication in August 2014, English Heritage received an application to add an additional World War II pill box to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The additional pill box defence is located in the north-eastern corner of the BT telephone exchange grounds which are accessed from Short's Lane.
- 4.4 English Heritage notified the Council that it would undertake an assessment of whether the building has special architectural or historic interest and decided whether it should be added for listing.
- 4.5 The Council supported the structure's inclusion due to its very close proximity to the boundary with the open meadows and tank ditch, and that it was constructed as part of the line of defence for the Blandford anti-tank island.
- 4.6 On 12 November 2014, the pill box was listed by English Heritage as a Grade II heritage asset (list entry ID 1422260) under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended, for its special architectural or historic interest. An extract of the listing appears in Appendix I and a map showing the location of the pill box is included in Appendix II.

Effects of the Proposed Development on the Significance of the Asset

Pill Box (ST 88284 06401)

Description

- 4.7 The type 26 pill box is partially-sunken into the ground and was erected in 1940 as part of the Blandford Forum anti-tank island. The pill box is located in the north-eastern corner of the BT telephone exchange site, adjacent to the boundary with the Crown Meadows. It is approximately 5 metres south-west of the anti-tank ditch (ST 8834 0636) which was constructed at the same time by adapting and reinforcing the late 18th/early 19th century brick and flint ha-ha with concrete.
- 4.8 The pill box is constructed from red brick with a reinforced concrete roof and embrasures, and has gun holes on three of its sides. The entrance is now buried but is likely to be on the south-eastern side facing toward Blandford. It is situated between two trees and has been overtaken by substantial soil build up, as well as being overgrown by vegetation and trees.

Significance and Setting

- 4.9 The overgrown nature of the pill box means it is only partially-visible, which makes it difficult to be seen outside of its immediate vicinity and from the surrounding meadows. However, in the longer term the overgrown vegetation could be removed and its views reinstated relative to its wider context. While the pill box in its current state may not experience any direct harm as a result of the proposed development, its setting looks out over the adjoining meadows and the views out of the pill box and across Crown Meadows will be disrupted.

Mitigation

- 4.10 As with the other Second World War defences in the vicinity of Crown Meadows, the special interest of the heritage assets is dependent on the evident change and the protective role of the defences and the relationship between the town and Deer Park. Mitigation would be difficult to achieve given that the significance and understanding of the feature relies upon the open landscape between town and river. Any development within this area is likely to undermine the overall setting of the heritage assets and in this case substantial harm will be caused as a result of proposed development.
- 4.11 Mitigation would also be difficult to achieve given the pill box's location in the BT telephone exchange depot.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 National planning policy (NPPF paragraph 132) and Policy 5 of the North Dorset Local Plan – 2011 to 2026 Part 1 explain that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting, and any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.
- 5.2 The 2014 heritage assessment concluded that the Second World War defences, comprising the Grade II listed ha-ha/defensive ditch and pill boxes, would be likely to experience a major significant effect from proposed development at Crown Meadows which would result in substantial harm to these heritage assets.
- 5.3 NPPF paragraph 134 and Policy 5 of the Local Plan explain that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, any degree of harm, no matter how slight, should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal and a clear and convincing justification will be required.
- 5.4 When considered in isolation, the impact of the proposed development on the significance and setting of the additional Grade II listed pill box is likely to result in less than substantial harm. However, when the additional pill box is considered in the context of its role and relationship with the wider Second World War defence structures, the proposed development is likely to have major significant effect on its setting and significance that would result in substantial harm. Serious concerns arise from the proposed development of the site and the impact on the Second World War defences at Blandford.

Appendix I: List Entry Summary extract from English Heritage

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: World War II pillbox in the grounds of the Telephone Exchange

List Entry Number: 1422260

Location

Second World War defence structures: in the grounds of the Telephone Exchange, Short's Lane, Blandford Forum, Dorset

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Dorset

District: North Dorset

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Blandford Forum

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 12-Nov-2014

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Building

A pillbox erected in 1940-1 as a component of the Second World War Blandford Forum anti-tank island.

Reasons for Designation

The pillbox in the grounds of the BT Telephone Exchange, Short's Lane, Blandford Forum is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

* Intactness: the structure has survived mostly intact;

* Group value: it forms part of an important group of defensive structures known as the Blandford Forum anti-tank island;

* Historic interest: in being part of a key Second World War military program of inland defence works it provides a poignant visual reminder of the impact of world events on Blandford Forum and the wider landscape of the Southern Command defence area.

History

The pillbox in the grounds of a telephone exchange forms part of the Second World War defences erected in Blandford Forum in the summer of 1940. During Second World War Blandford Forum lay within the Southern Command defence area under

the command of V Corps which was in turn responsible for 50 Division, holding the forward areas of Dorset. In July 1940 V Corps selected the first layout of nodal defence points, designating ten towns as divisional anti-tank islands and prepared them for all-round defence. Amongst these was Blandford Forum, which was also the focal point of the stop-line that ran along the River Stour from Stalbridge to Christchurch. In configuring Blandford Forum as a nodal defence point the creation of obstacles used three basic principles. In the first instance, the existing means of communication in the form of the road and railway bridges over the River Stour were prepared for demolition whilst the road surfaces were prepared for cratering. Secondly, the existing natural obstacle of the River Stour and the man-made obstacles of the cutting and embankments of the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway were enhanced. The river, which runs from the north-west of the town in a loop along the west side and then along the south side before heading south-east towards Langton Long Blandford, provided considerable defence to the southern and western sides of the town whilst the cutting and embankments of the railway formed the majority of the remainder of the perimeter of the defences on the eastern side of the town. In addition, the existing C18 ha-ha that formed the boundary between Lord Portman's Bryanston Estate and the Borough of Blandford was also strengthened with reinforced concrete to create an anti-tank ditch. As a third measure the natural and man-made defences of the perimeter of the anti-tank island were complemented by the construction of wholly new anti-tank obstacles, mainly in the form of concrete anti-tank blocks. These were used to complement the existing railway earthworks on the eastern side of the town, such as those placed beneath the two railway bridges, but the majority were utilised on the western side of the town, in conjunction with the anti-tank ditch. As every anti-tank obstacle was covered by weaponry they were supplemented by a series of pillboxes. Further obstacles were provided in the form of a series of mines that were laid in Crown Meadows and to the east of the railway embankment. The anti-tank island was designed to channel invading forces away from the town itself, to an area of open ground in the north-west which would have been ranged by the Royal Artillery as a 'tank killing ground'. The defences around the town were completed by 24 August 1940. However, the associated stop-line remained unfinished and plans to erect 160 pillboxes and 10 miles of anti-tank ditch were still being considered. By early 1941 it was recognised that the concept of inland linear defence lines demonstrated a total lack of understanding for the modern methods of mechanised warfare and subsequently Southern Command abandoned the system with nodal points becoming the primary defensive positions. The operational life of the defences was short-lived. As early as December 1942, with the threat of invasion receding, defensive positions throughout the country were abandoned either wholly or in part and, as early as 1944, elements of some defences were being cleared.

Details

A partially-sunken Type 26 pill box, erected in 1940-1 as a component of the Blandford Forum anti-tank island, standing circa 5m from its associated anti-tank ditch and wall which runs to its north-east.

MATERIALS: the pillbox is constructed in red brick, with reinforced concrete roof and embrasures.

PLAN: it has a square plan.

EXTERIOR: the pillbox, only partly visible due to it having sunk to some extent and being wedged between two mature trees, has gun holes on three sides. It is likely that the entrance, now buried, is on its south-east side, facing the town.

INTERIOR: could not be inspected.

Selected Sources

Books and journals

Schmidt, HER , The Defences of Blandford Forum , (1997)

Other

CS Dobinson, Twentieth Century Fortifications in England. Volume II: Anti-Invasion Defences of WWII, 1996,

Appendix II: Map Showing the Location of Pill Box

The below map shows the location of the additional Grade II listed pill box that could be affected by the proposed development.



List Entry Number: 1422260
Grade II

0 0.025 0.05 0.1 Kilometers



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