

MATTER 42 - GOLCAR ALLOCATIONS

H738 – land west of Heathwood Drive, Golcar

Issue - Are the proposed housing and safeguarded land allocations in Golcar justified, effective, developable/deliverable and in line with national policy?

1 Introduction

1.1 The allocation of Site H738 for residential development is not sound as it is neither justified nor is it consistent with either the emerging Policies in the Local Plan or with national policy guidance.

1.2 Paragraph 126 of the NPPF sets out a requirement for Local Plans to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. When considering the impact of a proposed development upon the significance of a designated heritage asset, Paragraph 132 of the NPPF makes it clear that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and explains that significance can be harmed by development within its setting. This site lies to the south of a group of mid-nineteenth Century Grade II Listed Buildings. The loss of this site and its subsequent development will harm elements which contribute to the significance of these assets.

1.3 Consequently, the allocation of Site H738 for residential development would be in conflict with the following aspects of the emerging Local Plan:-

- The Spatial Vision – in that it conflicts with the intention that development will take place in a sustainable way (balancing economic, social and environmental priorities), that the local character and distinctiveness of Kirklees and its places will be retained, or that the natural, built and historic environment will be maintained and enhanced through high quality, inclusive design
- Spatial Objective 8 - in that it will not protect or enhance the characteristics of the historic environment
- Policy PLP35 – in that it will not conserve elements which contribute to the significance of a designated heritage asset.

1.4 It would also be contrary to national policy guidance as set out in the NPPF insofar as it would not:-

- Help to deliver a “*positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment*” as is required by NPPF Paragraph 126.
- Contribute to protecting or enhancing the historic environment. Therefore, it will not deliver sustainable development in terms of the conservation of the historic environment [NPPF Paragraph 7].
- Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Therefore it will runs contrary to one of the Government’s Core Planning Principles [NPPF Paragraph 17].
- Give great weight to the conservation of the area’s designated heritage assets [NPPF, Paragraph 132]
- Provide clear and convincing justification that the harm it would cause to the heritage assets is outweighed by the benefits [NPPF, Paragraph 134].

2 Response to the Inspector’s questions

2.1 Question i) Has the impact of the proposal on heritage assets been adequately assessed and addressed? Should protection and mitigation measures linked to the Heritage Impact Assessment (LE84) be specified? Are there implications for indicative capacity?

2.1.1 On the whole, we would broadly support the methodology that has been used for the Heritage Impact Assessment of this site. The Heritage Impact Assessment has set out a very good summary of the historical development of the textile industry in Golcar, the importance of weaver’s cottages to the understanding of the industrial development of the area, and has provided an excellent evaluation of the majority of the elements which contribute to the significance of this Grade II Listed terrace. However, we consider that it has failed to properly articulate the contribution which this undeveloped site makes to the setting of the Listed Buildings. As a result, it has underplayed the harm that the loss and eventual development of this site might have upon their significance. Moreover, we do not consider that the harm to the setting of these Listed Buildings is capable of effective mitigation by the measures suggested in the Heritage Impact Assessment.

- 2.1.2 The eighteenth and nineteenth Century houses are a distinctive characteristic of Golcar. The terrace at Slades Road is typical of many found in and around the village with what would have been residential accommodation on the lower floor with the looms located on the upper two stories. The long ranges of mullioned windows on the second and third floors of its southern elevation are characteristic of many of these weavers' cottages.

'The most distinctive loomshops were those which occupied the top floors of cottages and were lit by long mullioned windows. ... The correlation between branch and building type reflected the requirements of woollen weaving, which did not need a damp atmosphere, and for which topfloor loomshop afforded sufficient space and light with only minimal disruption to normal domestic planning. The frequent grouping of these weavers' cottages in pairs or terraces of three or more suggests that they were built either as speculation or by manufacturers providing housing and working accommodation for a wage labour force. Internally the loomshops were open rooms with a fireplace or some other source of heat; some had internal access to the cottages below, while others had their own external doors enabling domestic and industrial functions to be totally separate.' [Yorkshire Textile Mills 1770-1930, HMSO (1992)]

- 2.1.3 From Slades Road itself, immediately adjacent to the Listed Buildings, one does not get a real impression of the scale of these buildings or, indeed, of what their original use might have been. It is only from the south that the true height and prominence of these houses can be fully appreciated. The dominance of this terrace is heightened by the fact that the land falls to the south and, as a result, they have a commanding view across the surrounding open countryside. Moreover, it is only really from the south that one can comprehend how the building originally functioned.
- 2.1.4 Other than from the Allocated site itself, there are only few public vantage points from which views of the southern elevation of these weavers' houses can be gained (although, as the NPPG makes clear "*the contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting*" [NPPG, Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 18a-013-20140306]). There is a public footpath immediately to the west of the building. However, because of the difference in the levels between the footpath and the adjacent field, it provides no views of the Listed Buildings

(contrary to the statement in Paragraph 5.3 of the Heritage Impact Assessment). However, some idea of the scale of the weaver's houses and their dominance in the landscape can be obtained from Heathwood Drive, to the east. In addition, from that part of Slades Road on the higher ground to the west of the village (in the vicinity of the Golgar Lily public house), one can obtain a long-distance view towards these Listed Buildings and gain some appreciation of the contribution that Site H738 makes to the rural setting of these buildings.

2.1.5 As the Heritage Impact Assessment notes [Paragraph 3.4] the presence of barns to the rear of these dwellings indicates that, as well as weaving, there is a high likelihood that their occupants also farmed the surrounding land. Therefore, there may also be a functional relationship between the Listed Buildings and Site H738.

2.1.6 The allocated site, therefore, makes an important contribution to the setting of the weavers' houses, and enables one not only to appreciate their scale but also understand how they were used. The loss of this field and its subsequent development would destroy the rural setting of this building and also erase one of the few public views of these buildings. The suggestion within the Heritage Impact Assessment that the harm is lessened by the fact that development would not block light to the first floor windows would not result in any significant reduction in the degree of harm which residential development of this site would have to their setting.

2.2 The current allocation within the Kirklees UDP

2.2.1 The Kirklees UDP identified this site as Provisional Open Land. Provisional Open Land are sites having "*identifiable value as open land*" but are also judged "*to be capable of development either now or when new infrastructure ...can be provided*" [Doc. LE1, Paragraph 2.15]. There appears to be some expectation that because of this UDP designation this site should automatically come forward as an Allocation in this Local Plan.

2.2.2 The UDP makes it clear that:-

“The reassessment of provisional open land will involve determining for each site whether in the prevailing circumstances there is a case for releasing some or all of the land for development, or whether it should be maintained as provisional open land until the next review of the plan. Reallocation of provisional open land as green belt or urban greenspace will occur only in exceptional circumstances.”

.... The review will follow the guidance in PPG2 concerning safeguarded land, so that, exceptionally, some land may be removed from the provisional open land designation because it is unfavourably located in terms of achieving sustainable development”. [Doc. LE1, Paragraph 2.16 to 2.17]

- 2.2.3 It is clear, therefore, that the allocation of Provisional Open Land for residential development is not automatic and that, in some exceptional circumstances, certain sites might be reallocated as Urban Greenspace. The development of Site H730 would result in considerable harm to an element which contributes to the significance of a designated heritage asset. As such the development of this area will not deliver sustainable development in terms of protecting and enhancing the historic environment, and conflicts with the Government’s Core Planning Principle that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Historic England would contend that and that this reassessment of the important of this site would constitute an “exceptional circumstance” warranting reallocating the former Provisional Open Land as ‘Urban Greenspace’.

3 Conclusions

- 3.1 The Heritage Impact Assessment has failed to properly articulate the contribution which this undeveloped site makes to the setting of the Grade II Listed Buildings at Slades Road. As a result, it has underplayed the harm that the loss of Site H738 and its eventual development would be likely to have upon the significance of these assets.
- 3.2 In terms of NPPF Paragraph 134, this is likely to constitute less than substantial harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset albeit at the upper-end of the spectrum of harm. Whilst the degree of harm may be less than substantial, nevertheless, it would still be causing harm to a designated heritage asset. As such, therefore, it would not be delivering sustainable development in terms of protecting and enhancing the historic environment, it would conflict with one of

the Government's Core Planning Principles (that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance), nor would it be likely to provide the positive strategy for the conservation of the historic environment that is required for Local Plans.

- 4 Suggested Change
- 4.1 Site H738 should be deleted