

# **Heritage Statement**

**Land at  
Haverhill Road & Hinton Way  
Stapleford  
Cambs**

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## 1.0 Introduction & Site Location

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been written to inform an outline planning application for development of a retirement care village in Use Class C2, comprising housing with care, communal health, wellbeing and leisure facilities, public open space, landscaping, car parking, access and associated development on a site between Haverhill Road and Hinton Way, Stapleford. The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) requires an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (paragraph 189).
- 1.2 The outline application includes access, but all other matters are reserved.
- 1.3 This Statement provides an appraisal of the heritage assets affected and assesses significance in accordance with the policies contained in the NPPF and the guidance contained in Historic England's Advice Note 12 *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*. The impact of the proposed works on the significance of the heritage assets is then described and considered.
- 1.4 The application site comprises 24.37 hectares of arable land located on the western side of Haverhill Road and lying wholly within the Cambridge Green Belt.



- 1.5 The land slopes southwards from the Gogmagog ridge, forming a sweep of chalk downland leading to Stapleford village. The edge of the settlement is marked by housing on the north-west side of the road, leading into Gogmagog Way which faces the parish recreation ground. The southern portion of the application site adjoins this.

- 1.6 The application site continues northwards along the western side of Haverhill Road, with arable land on the east side of the road. The site boundary then includes land stretching westwards to meet Hinton Way, which has a ribbon of development leading southwards into Great Shelford. This 'arm' of the application site is bordered to the north by an area of woodland (Foxhill Plantation), containing a number of large dwellings in spacious plots, with commanding views, some of the houses are listed buildings.
- 1.7 The area between Hinton Way and Haverhill Road comprises arable fields with Stapleford cemetery occupying a rectangular site in their midst. A footpath connects it to Mingle Lane in Stapleford, which forms part of the Stapleford Conservation Area in the vicinity of St Andrew's parish church.



View looking southwards across the site to the edge of Stapleford village

## 2.0 Site Context & Significance

- 2.1 Stapleford lies close to the former ford over The Granta which gave the village its name. The parish stretched from the river, northwards across rising ground from around 15 metres to about 75 metres OD, to the Roman road, Worstead (or Wool) Street). This is a scheduled ancient monument (listing no. 1003263). At this north end of the parish, on high ground, are three prehistoric monuments, also scheduled: the Iron Age hill-fort at Wandlebury (1009395), a Bronze Age barrow and a Neolithic causewayed enclosure at Little Trees Hill (1011717) and a Bronze Age tumulus at Wormwood Hill (1006904) with a Neolithic longbarrow (1020845).
- 2.2 Within the parish of Great Shelford, but only 2km to the southwest of the application site, is a Neolithic causewayed enclosure (1452825), whilst cropmarks indicative of Iron Age and Roman settlement lie to the north-west and are partly scheduled (1006891).
- 2.3 This area of sweeping chalk downland appears to be the site of considerable prehistoric activity with scattered finds indicating the use of the Gogmagog Hills by prehistoric communities, (e.g. at Heath Farm)<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.4 The Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) records a number of finds of Roman artefacts within the parish, including a padlock and shackle (CHER 04766), Roman rings at Wandlebury (CHER 04762 and 08209), a brooch at Middlefield (CHER 05050) and an unconfirmed oral report of a hypocaust in 1854 (CHER 05137). Roman settlement is suggested, but so far without evidence.
- 2.5 St Andrew's church retains some small fragments of Anglo-Saxon carved stonework (CHER 04730a) and three burial locations are recorded on higher ground, at Foxhill Plantation (CHER MCB9838), beside the Roman Road where a group of skeletons was found in the eighteenth century (CHER 08211), and an individual with a sword found at the golf course on the north side of the A1307 (CHER 08193).
- 2.6 The present village seems to have grown around the vicinity of the parish church and a small green (of around 30 acres until inclosure in 1812) with the principal manor house (later Bury Farm which was rebuilt after a fire in 1851) to the south<sup>2</sup>. The form of the village was roughly oval formed by its lanes and settlement was fairly scattered. Some traces of hollow-ways are noted in the village (CHER 09897 and CHER 11273), whilst remains of ridge and furrow are recorded at various locations: north of Bury Farm (CHER 11271), and on the higher ground (CHER 08903, CHER 09267 and CHER 496531). Artefact finds of mediaeval date include horseshoes and harness bells (CHER 04330), and a scatter of small metal finds of dates from the Middle Ages through to the nineteenth century has been recorded in fields a little north of Fox Hill (CHER 00969).

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<sup>1</sup> CHER 14637

<sup>2</sup> Wright, A.P.M (ed) *The Victoria History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely vol.VIII (VCH) p.228*

- 2.7 Part of the mediaeval core of the settlement, around St Andrew's parish church, is embraced by the Stapleford Conservation Area, designated in September 1989.



- 2.8 Early maps show a fairly consistent village form centred in this locality. The parish church is a grade II\* listed building and there are a further seven listed buildings, all grade II. These comprise The White House in Mingle Lane, which dates from the fifteenth century, Stapleford Hall in Bar Lane, dating from around 1630. Dormer Cottage also in Bar Lane is of eighteenth century date as is Dove Cottage, a former dovecote on Gogmagog Way. The Slaughter House on Church Street and no.7 Bar Lane are of nineteenth century date.
- 2.9 The nineteenth century saw a rise in the number of dwellings in the village from 58 in 1821 to around 125 by the 1870s, but there was little building away from the village, apart from Heath and Gogmagog Farms in the north of the parish, until 1900. The exceptions were a number of large houses built along Mingle Lane from the 1840s after the opening of the railway station at Shelford<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.10 It was shortly after 1900 that Edwardian mansions in substantial grounds were built on the rising ground (known as Foxhill since the thirteenth century), north of the application site. These included 'Middlefield' (also called Mount Blow) designed by Edwin Lutyens and built in 1908 for the legal scholar, Henry Bond, and occupied in the 1920s by the Cambridge antiquary, T.C. Lethbridge.<sup>4</sup> Also of 1908 is 'Pinewood', designed by William Flockhart with a 'cranked plan' in three parts, including a tower – all in Arts & Crafts style. Both of these buildings are listed (Pinewood grade II and Middlefield II\*) and in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework are 'designated heritage assets'.
- 2.11 A third, less flamboyant house, Fox Hill, was built in 1911 for Sir Hugh Anderson who became Master of Gonville & Caius College<sup>5</sup>. Though not listed, it is certainly of local interest.
- 2.12 It was mainly after the Second World War that infilling produced continuous housing over most of the village area, which has become contiguous with Great Shelford and has developed a somewhat suburban appearance.

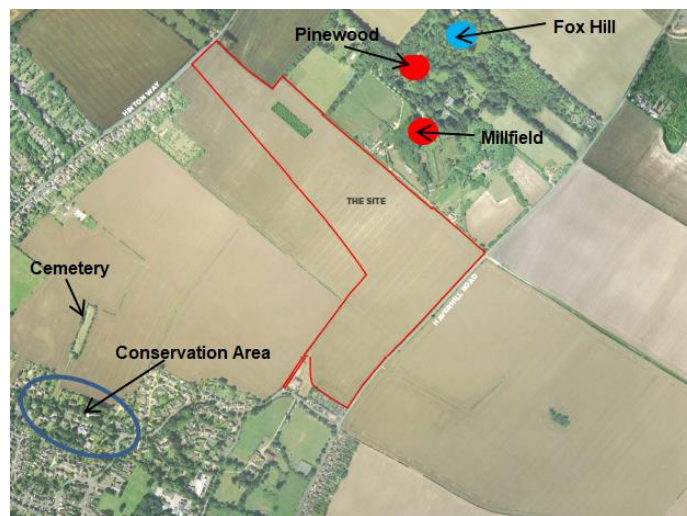
<sup>3</sup> Wright, A.P.M. (VCH) op. cit. p.228

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p.229

<sup>5</sup> Bradley & Pevsner The Buildings of England: Cambridgeshire p.p. 650-651

## Significance

- 2.13 The National Planning Policy Framework defines 'significance' as, "The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting".<sup>6</sup>
- 2.14 There are no heritage assets on the application site. However, the site lies close to the northern edge of the conservation area, which in terms of the NPPF is a designated heritage asset. Also to the north lie the listed buildings, Middlefield and Pinewood, both designated heritage assets and the building of local interest, Fox Hill, which in terms of the NPPF may be considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.



- 2.15 These heritage assets have architectural and historic interest, showing in the case of the conservation area, part of the mediaeval core of the settlement and containing the listed parish church. It is a grade II\* listed building and this grade, shared with Middlefield, places it within the top 5.8% of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. It is a particularly important building of more than special interest and may be considered to be of very high significance, as indeed is its setting.
- 2.16 The Edwardian mansions set in the former Foxhill Plantation were built to be exclusive, away from the main settlement, with spacious grounds and secluded in leafy surroundings. This setting is also of very high significance.
- 2.17 The scheduled ancient monuments in the north of the parish, the Roman Road, Wandlebury, Little Trees Hill and Wormwood Hill are of the highest significance. They form a part of a wider prehistoric landscape of national significance. Also within this setting are a number of archaeological sites which although not designated, are collectively of high significance and are non-designated heritage assets. The nearest of these are at Foxhill, of Roman and Saxon date.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> NPPF 2029 Glossary

<sup>7</sup> CHER 05050 & CHER MCB9838

### 3.0 Proposed Works

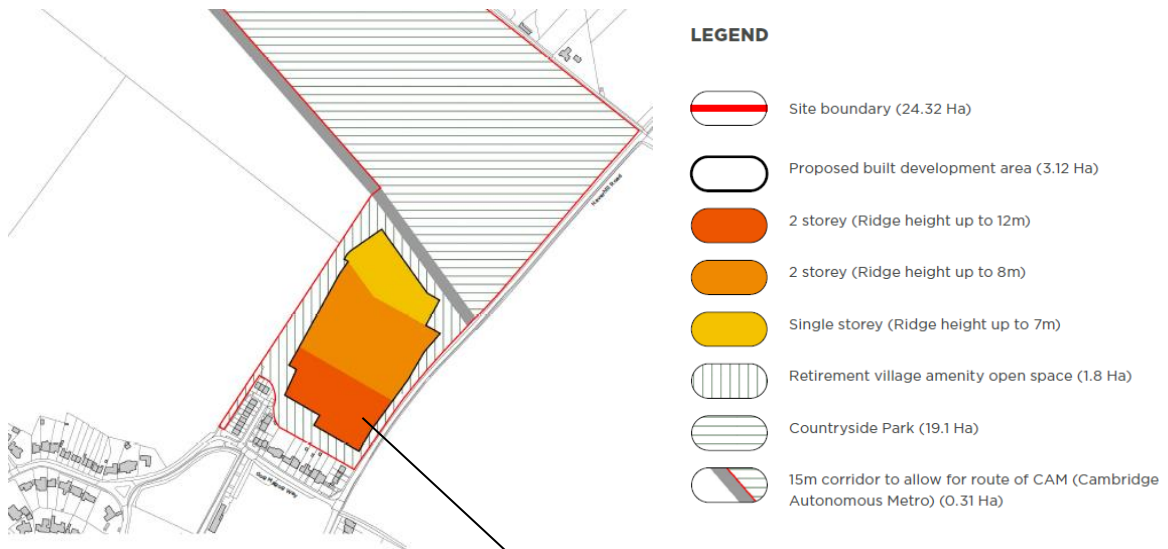
- 3.1 The application is in outline for the development of a retirement care village (Use Class C2) comprising housing with care, communal health, wellbeing and leisure facilities, public open space, landscaping, car parking, access and associated development (all matters reserved apart from access). The site forms an inverted L-shape with the residential retirement accommodation located in the 'short arm' to the south, whilst the longer arm, stretching between Hinton Way and Haverhill Road is devoted to public open space, a 'countryside park' for informal recreation use, as shown below.



- 3.2 The area for the countryside park comprises 19.1 hectares, approximately 78% of the total site area and would be open for the whole community.
- 3.3 The retirement village, occupying 3.12 hectares, provides a mix of high quality self-contained homes for sale, shared-ownership and/ or rent with a range of onsite facilities with 24 hour care services. Wider community access to some of the on-site facilities is to be available.



- 3.4 A two storey main care building would be sited to the south of the site with other facilities with lower dwellings sited to the north providing one and two bedroom retirement apartments.



- 3.5 Existing trees would be supplemented with additional planting to soften the impact of the development as part of a comprehensive landscaping scheme.

## 4.0 Heritage Impact Assessment & Conclusion

- 4.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering applications for development which affects a heritage asset or its setting, local planning authorities shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting (paragraph 66.1). Special attention shall also be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area in the exercise of any powers under the planning Acts (paragraph 72).
- 4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) expands on the 1990 Act. It identifies protection and enhancement of the historic environment as an important element of sustainable development and establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the planning system (paragraph 11). The NPPF also states that the significance of listed buildings and conservation areas can be harmed or lost by alteration to them or by development in their setting. Paragraph 200 states that proposals which preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of the heritage assets should be treated favourably.
- 4.3 Paragraph 189 of the NPPF requires an applicant to “describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting”. Paragraph 192 requires local planning authorities, in determining applications to take account of “the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets”.
- 4.4 Paragraph 194 states “Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. The question is whether the proposal causes harm to the significance of the heritage assets or their setting,
- 4.5 The application is accompanied by a *Landscape & Visual Appraisal* by The Landscape Partnership, prepared in consultation with the District Council’s Landscape Architect. The Appraisal notes that despite the open character of the site there are few public views into it due to the undulating character of the land, presence of roadside hedges, surrounding woodland in the locality and the relatively limited number of public rights of way.
- 4.6 The conservation area lies to the south-west of the site. Views from the conservation area towards the site are across the arable fields towards the proposed countryside park. The latter’s development is not harmful to the setting of the conservation area or the setting of the parish church. The change from arable to semi-natural grassland and trees/scrub within the proposed countryside park has a low landscape impact.

- 4.7 The development of the retirement village also will not impinge on the setting of the conservation area. As the Landscape & Visual Appraisal (LVA) observes, there is limited intervisibility between them, partly due to the intervening properties and associated vegetation. This includes views from listed properties within the Conservation Area including Stapleford Hall and St Andrews Church. The proposed retirement village is located on the village edge where suburban and village settlement has historically extended along the roads leading out of the villages. It is also located on a lower lying slope as is the rest of Stapleford. From within Stapleford the site is variably visible from the rear of properties and gardens that face towards the site with partial views on a short section of Gog Magog Way and Haverhill Road and from along the path leading to the cemetery. These areas are outside the conservation area and views from them are largely towards the more elevated countryside park, with the retirement village being largely concealed by hedges and other properties.
- 4.8 However, the setting of a heritage asset is not simply visual. The NPPF glossary defines it as the manner in which the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. The extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. The setting of the historic core of Stapleford, partly encompassed by the conservation area, has evolved as the settlement has expanded, notably along Hinton Way and Haverhill Road. The proposed retirement village may be seen as an iteration of this process. Its development does not harm the manner in which the historic core of the settlement is experienced and understood.
- 4.9 The individual listed buildings to the north of the application site (including Pinewood and Middlefield) are contained in mature woodland. Whilst some have vistas to the south out to the countryside, the LVA notes that none appear to align towards the retirement village. The sylvan setting of the Edwardian mansions on Foxhill remains unaffected and views to and from this group of buildings will be disrupted only by chalkland grassland planting within the proposed countryside park. The built element of the retirement village is very much on the village edge and so does not cause harm to the setting of these listed buildings.
- 4.10 There are elevated views from part of Magog Down with public accessibility, including the southern area to the south-west of the copse on Little Trees Hill. This is the most elevated view towards the site and includes both the proposed retirement village and the western part of the countryside park. It forms part of a panorama to the south-west including Stapleford village, which is relatively well contained within trees and vegetation, even in the winter months. The LVA identifies that the development will have a 'moderate adverse' impact on this view. The question is whether this impact on the view causes harm to the significance of the scheduled ancient monument.
- 4.11 Little Trees Hill forms part of a group of scheduled monuments in the north of the parish including the Roman Road, Wandlebury, and Wormwood Hill. Little Trees Hill includes a causewayed enclosure and a bowl barrow, both situated on a prominent chalk knoll to the south of the junction between the Babraham Road (A1307) and Haverhill Road, some 500m to the south west of the Iron Age hillfort, Wandlebury.

- 4.12 Although no earthworks can be observed on the ground, the causewayed enclosure is clearly visible from the air, and is recorded on aerial photographs. Such enclosures have been recorded mainly in southern and eastern England and were constructed in mid- Neolithic times (c.3000-2400 BC) but also continued in use into later periods. The enclosure on Little Trees Hill has been partially eroded by ploughing, but retains ditches and associated features beneath the ground. Its significance is enhanced by its association with an adjacent trackway, which will allow the relationship between the enclosure and its setting to be analysed over time.
- 4.13 The associated Bronze Age bowl barrow also adds to its significance and its importance is further enhanced by its accessibility to the public. Typically occupying a prominent position and the bowl barrow on Little Trees Hill survives in a very well preserved condition, in marked contrast to the majority of barrows within Cambridgeshire.
- 4.14 The importance of the barrow is enhanced by its archaeological relationship with the earlier causewayed enclosure in which it is situated and it forms part of a wider prehistoric landscape of national significance. Its setting is an important element of its significance and the public access enables it to be appreciated as a part of the wider chalk downland landscape. The proposed development impinges on this wider view and the retirement village element of the proposal will cause some harm to the appreciation of the setting. However, in terms of degree, the level of harm is less than substantial and in this case the level of 'less than substantial harm' is low to medium. The monument can still be experienced in terms of its archaeological value and in terms of its wider association with other nearby prehistoric sites. The sweep of chalk downland view is maintained for public appreciation and the proposed development whilst visible, does not cause undue harm to that appreciation of the setting.
- 4.15 The application site also lies in an area of high archaeological significance and although no archaeological finds have been made within it, the presence of below ground remains could exist. If this was considered significant, an appropriate condition requiring a scheme of archaeological investigation could form a condition of planning permission.
- 4.16 In conclusion, no substantial harm is caused to the setting of heritage assets, but in terms of the NPPF 'less than substantial' harm is caused to the setting of Little Trees Hill. In this case the level of 'less than substantial harm' is low to medium. The archaeological significance of the monument can still be appreciated and understood within its wider chalk downland context.
- 4.17 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states, "Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal<sup>2</sup>. In this case the public benefits, which carry considerable weight, are detailed in the accompanying planning statement.

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