

From: [REDACTED]
To: [LocalPlan \(GC\)](#)
Subject: Comments on HELAA Site Assessment – Land off Old House Road, Balsham (Site Ref. 40438)
Date: 11 December 2021 11:47:22
Attachments: [image888943.png](#)
[image825711.png](#)
[Entire Village Balsham Services & Facilities.PDF](#)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have not been able to upload comments on the HELAA sites. Please see below comments on behalf of [REDACTED] for the above site. I also attach a Balsham Services & Facilities Plan, which addresses the comments on Accessibility to Services and Facilities.

HELAA Site Assessment – Land off Old House Road, Balsham (Site Ref. 40438)

A Proposed Block Plan and Development Brief (prepared by Saunders Boston Architects) was submitted with the call for sites response to explain the design and layout of the promoted development. The key points to note are as follows:

- The promoted development is formed around a shared surface with a central square reflecting the layouts of local farmsteads.
- The promoted development represents a low density scheme within a high quality landscape setting.
- All of the plots have deep gardens to create a buffer between the promoted development and the mature hedgerows and trees at the site boundary and allows for the existing landscape features to be retained.
- The promoted development includes additional tree and hedgerow planting to enhance the landscape setting of the eastern edge of Balsham and provide a transition to the surrounding countryside.
- The promoted development includes two areas of open space, both of which will enable views to the east through the existing hedgerows to the adjacent fields and countryside. treatment.

A number of technical reports have been prepared for the promoted development. The findings are as follows:

- **Flooding & Drainage:** The site is located within Flood Zone 1 which means it has a low probability of flood risk. The promoted development would include an appropriate drainage strategy to manage surface water drainage.
- **Ecology:** A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (prepared by Applied Ecology Ltd) has been undertaken for the site. The site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory wildlife designations, and there are no protected sites in the vicinity. The site mostly contains semi-improved neutral grassland, with small areas of dense scrub. There are hedgerows at the site boundary; it is only those hedgerows on the eastern boundary that are identified as species rich. The following ecological recommendations are made: the existing boundary hedgerows should be retained, protected, enhanced, and kept free of artificial lighting after dark; additional landscaping with native plants should be provided within peripheral areas of the site to enhance biodiversity; and bat and/or bird boxes are incorporated into new buildings.
- **Trees:** There are some protected trees in the south west corner of the site, and there are other mature trees and hedgerows at the site boundary. A tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment will need to be undertaken, but it is anticipated that the existing trees and hedgerows would be retained and any that are removed will be replaced.
- **Landscape:** An assessment of the landscape character of the site and surroundings has been completed. A detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will need to be undertaken. It is likely that if the trees and hedgerows are retained at the site, and additional planting is provided at the site boundary and within the proposed development, then there should not be a significant adverse effect on the landscape setting of Balsham.
- **Heritage:** The site is not affected by any heritage assets. An archaeological assessment will be undertaken to determine whether there are any archaeological remains at the site.
- **Residential Amenity:** There is an existing vehicular access to the site between two existing dwellings. The impact of vehicles passing between the existing dwellings will be assessed and appropriate mitigation

measures on the access road will be introduced to protect the amenity of the existing residents.

█ comments and suggested amendment for the site assessment in the HELAA are as follows:

- **Landscape and Townscape:** The finding of the assessment that development at the site would have a “negligible impact on landscape character” is agreed. The trees and hedgerows at the site would be retained and enhanced. The promoted development would include additional landscape screening at the eastern and southern boundaries.
- **Biodiversity and Geodiversity:** The existing hedgerows at the site boundary would be retained and enhanced. The additional landscaping would comprise native plants to enhance biodiversity. Bat and/or bird boxes would be incorporated into new buildings.
- **Accessibility to Services and Facilities:** Balsham contains a good range of services and facilities, including a primary school, village shop, post office, and public houses. The attached Services and Facilities Plan identifies those facilities in the village and the walking distances to them from the site. All facilities are within 800m of the site. Balsham is on a bus route, with regular services to Haverhill and Linton and a limited daily service to Cambridge. There is a school bus service from Balsham to the secondary school at Linton Village College. The Greater Cambridge Partnership’s Making Connections project proposes a more frequent rural bus service for Balsham. Balsham will have a direct link to the ‘A11 Travel Hub’. Balsham is well related to Linton and to employment opportunities at Babraham Research Campus and Granta Park. It is requested that the score for accessibility to services and facilities is amended to reflect these comments, including improvements to bus services in the future.

Can you please confirm receipt of these comments. Please let me know if there are any questions.

Regards
Brian

Classification L2 - Business Data

Brian Flynn MRTPI
Associate

Carter Jonas

T: █ | carterjonas.co.uk
One Station Square, Cambridge, CB1 2GA



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Carter Jonas LLP
Place of Registration: England and Wales
Registration Number: OC304417
Address of Registered Office: One Chapel Place, London, W1G 0BG.