

Appendix 7a: Environmental Network – The Historic Environment

Great Barr Hall and Estate (Proposed changes to UDP Policy ENV8)

Great Barr Hall and Estate is one of the few Grade II* listed buildings and is the largest single area of historic importance in the Borough, as well as one of the largest sites with nature conservation interest. For these reasons, it is currently the subject of a specific policy in the UDP, policy ENV8. This policy seeks to safeguard the future of this asset, as well as providing for an element of public access.

However, the part of the Estate that was formerly St Margarets Hospital has been redeveloped as housing over the last few years. This, combined with changes in national legislation and policy, mean that parts of policy ENV8 are out of date. We need to consider how the policy should be revised or whether it needs to be retained at all.

We have added a notated version of the policy below with comments and questions showing how we think it might be modified.

The site is also listed in the UDP as a major developed site in the Green Belt, under policy ENV4. We think that policy ENV4 should be deleted for the following reasons:

- Unlike the previous Planning Policy Guidance Note 2, the NPPF no longer restricts redevelopment of previously developed land in the Green Belt to major developed sites that are identified in adopted local plans. The NPPF allows redevelopment of all PDL provided the proposals meet the relevant criteria, including having no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the previous buildings.
- Two out of the four sites named in policy ENV4 (Cartbridge Lane and Station Road) have been redeveloped for housing whilst a third site (Goscote Hospital) has been extensively rebuilt for medical and care uses.
- The site boundary of St Margaret's Hospital shown on the UDP Proposals Map within policy ENV4 only includes the area of the residential development by Bovis Homes that is largely complete, together with the former Queslett School site. Proposals for the latter are being considered in this SAD as a potential housing site.

SUGGESTED CHANGES TO AND COMMENTS ABOUT POLICY ENV8 (the current wording is in **bold text**, and comments/ questions are in *italics*).

Policy ENV8: Great Barr Hall and Estate and St. Margaret's Hospital

- (a) The area of Great Barr Hall and Estate and St. Margaret's Hospital is shown on the Proposals Map.**

Should the boundaries of the Great Barr Conservation Area and Registered Parkland also be shown? (the answer to this question should match that given to the question about whether we are to show conservation areas in general on the Map).

- (b) In considering proposals within this area, the Council will particularly take into account:-**

- I. The contribution the proposal makes to the aim of achieving a comprehensive approach to the **restoration** of Great Barr Hall and the historic landscape, ~~and the re-use and/or redevelopment of the former St. Margaret's Hospital.~~**

The deleted text is no longer relevant as the former hospital part of the site has been redeveloped.

We think the remainder of the text needs to be retained. Although Great Barr Hall is a grade 2 listed building, and is therefore safeguarded by council and national policies relating to listed buildings in general, the historic landscape associated with the Hall covers a larger area than the Registered Parkland. A specific policy that provides protection for this larger area is therefore still required.*

However, we think it might be appropriate to exchange the word "RESTORATION" for "CONSERVATION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE".

- II. Green Belt policies.**
- III. Government guidelines for the protection of agricultural land, the setting of listed buildings, nature conservation, development in Conservation Areas, and the future use of major developed sites in the Green Belt.**
- (c) The Council will encourage the re-use of those buildings of special architectural or historic interest in accordance with Policy ENV4 and other Policies of the Plan.**
- (d) New built development other than that which is normally appropriate in the Green Belt will be limited to the replacement of footprint of existing buildings. Such development will be restricted to locations considered to be environmentally acceptable which have no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt, and to a footprint and height not exceeding that of the buildings to be replaced. Every opportunity should be taken to locate and design such footprint replacement development so that it has less environmental impact than the buildings it replaces.**

These paragraphs align with national guidance in the NPPF.

- (e) All proposals must provide for:-**

- I. **The preservation, enhancement and improvement of the **character** of buildings of architectural or historic interest.**
- II. **The preservation, enhancement and management of the historic landscape, other historic features, the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and other areas of nature conservation value.**
- III. **The preservation and enhancement of the character of the Great Barr Conservation Area.**

These paragraphs duplicate national guidance in the NPPF in respect of features that have statutory designation. Non statutory locally designated features are protected by other policies in the UDP as well as the BCCS.

If these clauses are retained, the word "Character" should be replaced with "Significance".

- IV. **The removal of those features which detract from the character of the Estate.**

There is no definition of what these features might be, so this paragraph is of limited use.

- V. **Functionally and environmentally satisfactory arrangements for vehicular access from Queslett Road; the Council will require the developer to meet the costs of necessary off-site highway improvements. Any access from Chapel Lane should be minimised for environmental and traffic management reasons.**

Access arrangements to the St Margarets Hospital part of the site have been confirmed through the planning obligation for the Bovis Homes development. Any development of the remainder of the estate is likely to be smaller in scale, consisting of the re-use of Great Barr Hall together with possible enabling development. However, retaining this paragraph would keep the access requirement as part of the development plan.

- VI. **An indication as to how they will contribute and relate to the aim of achieving a comprehensive approach towards the future use and management of the Estate.**

The division of ownership of the estate means that it is no longer possible to enforce a comprehensive management approach across the whole of the area that is covered by policy ENV8, except through attempting to co-ordinate the activities of the different owners. However, the objective of this paragraph remains valid.

- VII. **Public transport access to the site which complies with the standards in Policy T12.**

The planning obligation for the Bovis Homes development provides for the support of a bus service that meets the standards in this policy. It is unlikely that any further

development of the remainder of the estate will be of a sufficient scale to justify additional public transport provision. However, retaining this paragraph would maintain the requirement for the existing development as part of the development plan.

- (f) Developers must demonstrate how schemes will provide for controlled public access to the Estate without detriment to the nature conservation interest, landscape quality and amenity of the site.**
- (g) The Council will ensure that the issues relating to the future of this Estate are considered in a comprehensive and long term manner. To this end, a phasing and implementation plan will be prepared by the Council, developers and all interested parties. Any proposals for enabling development to secure the restoration of Great Barr Hall and Estate including provision for future maintenance and management will be assessed against the guidance in the English Heritage Statement “Enabling Development and the Conservation of Heritage Assets”.**

These paragraphs remain of importance for Great Barr Hall and the remainder of the Estate that has yet to be restored. However, “Enabling Development and the Conservation of Heritage Assets” was English Heritage’s 1999 publication: this has now been superseded by “Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places”, published in Sept 2008.

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/enabling-development-and-the-conservation-of-significant-places/enablingwebv220080915124334.pdf>

The guidance states that ‘The complex task of assembling (by the applicant) and assessing (by the planning authority) an application for enabling development may be assisted by exception policies in local development frameworks. Planning briefs prepared as Supplementary Planning Documents are helpful for problematic places’.