

2022-147 Plot L Kingsway Business Park

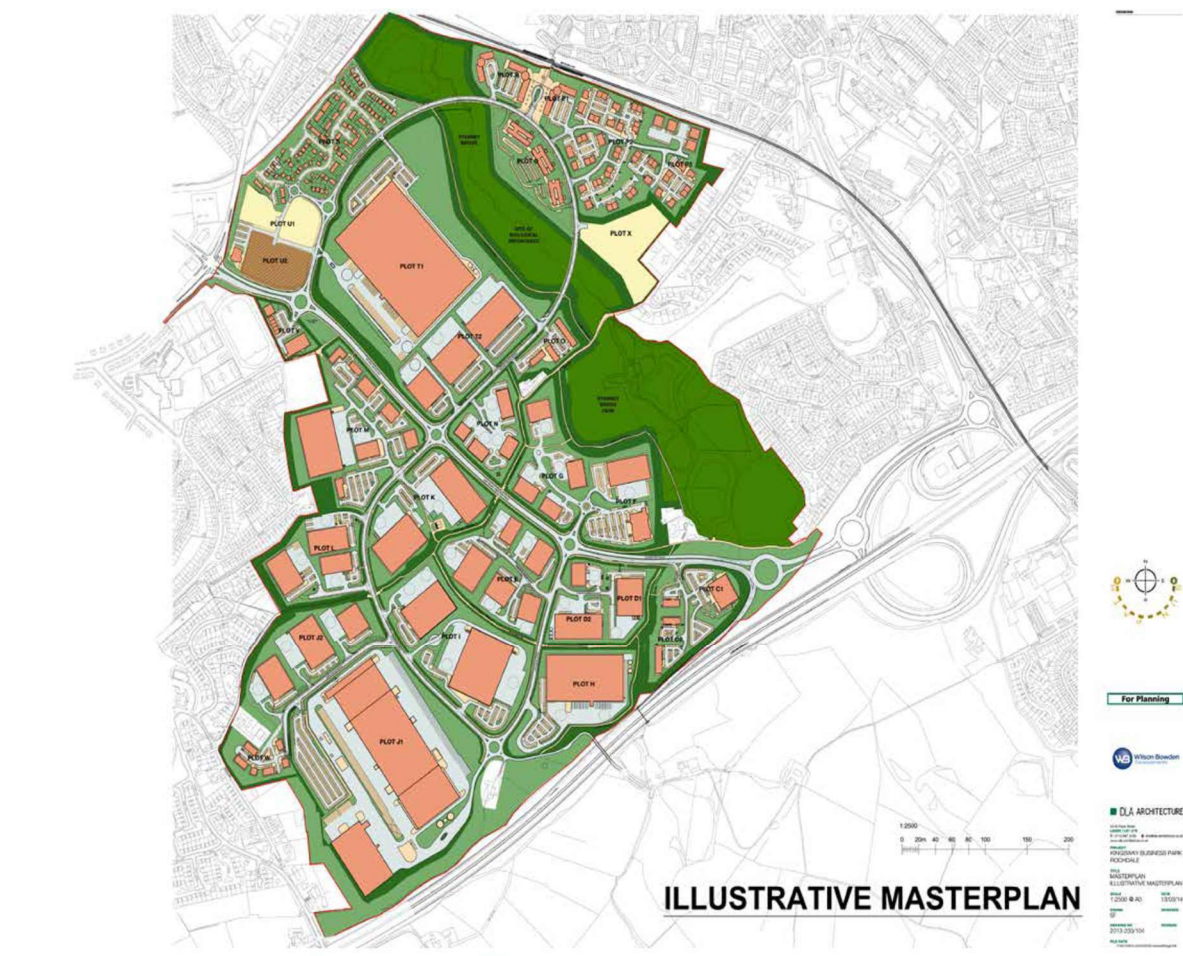
Heritage Statement

Introduction

The following Heritage Statement is to provide context and rationale around the Plot L Development at Kingsway with particular reference to the relationship with the Tithe Barn & Silverhill Farm Grade II Listed Buildings.

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the associated information that accompanies the full planning submission (ref:23/01324/FUL).

The current Kingsway Business Park masterplan was approved under the Outline Planning Permission dated 21 August 2014 (ref 14/00542/OUT) along with the subsequent Application for Removal or Variation of a Condition dated 06 September 2016 (ref 16/01085/VRCON) and 05 December 2018 (ref 18/00943/VRCON).



Plot L is a 3.73 Hectares (9.22 Acres) development plot located in southern half of Kingsway Business Park and accessed directly off the southern loop road of John Milne Avenue. Plot L borders residential properties along Neston Road, Turf Hill Community Centre and Kingsway Business Park Plot M (Application Reference Number: 22/00373/FUL) development to the north. John Milne Avenue is located to the east, Lower Lane bridleway and Kingsway Business Park Plot J2 (Application Reference Number: 22/01200/FUL) to the south and residential properties along Burnet Close to the west.

Tithe Barn is a Grade II Listed Building (List Entry Number:1068496). The building is now in residential use, located on the northern side of Lower Lane opposite the proposed development on Plot J2, but screened by the intensive landscaping along the boundary. The context of the Tithe Barn is within a row of more modern houses along Lower Lane.

Silverhill Farm is a Grade II Listed Building (List Entry Number:1068495) located in the southwestern corner of Kingsway Business Park. The buildings of interest are of traditional stone construction with slate roofs and are orientated NW to SE. Development undertaken over subsequent years added structures to the original farmhouse creating a mix of buildings including a separate stone barn, a series of single storey brick-built sheds and a modern barn structure. The listed buildings are both located to southwestern boundary of the farmyard with a low grade, low quality modern barn structure located to the northeastern corner.

Listing Status and Approach

The Historic England Listing for Tithe Farm identifies special architectural features of historic interest, an excerpt from the Historic England Listing is provided below:

Tithe Barn - "The House and adjoining barn, said to be a tithe barn. Probably mid C17 with C18 barn and C20 alterations. Hammer-dressed stone, now mostly rendered, with graduated stone slate and slate roofs. 3-unit 2-storey house with 2-storey porch and barn/stable wings to right, now partly converted for domestic use. 2-storey porch has moulded door surround with obtuse-angled lintel, a 2-light chamfered mullion first floor window (mullion removed) with arched lights and a coped gable with kneelers and ball finial. All windows have been altered, formerly having had chamfered and double- chamfered mullions. Ridge chimney stack. Similarly altered and C20 window openings to rear and barn. Interior: Beams with stepped stops. Timber-framed cross wall includes a door with shaped lintel. King-post roof trusses to barn."

The Historic England Listing for Silverhill Farm identifies special architectural features of historic interest, an excerpt from the Historic England Listing is provided below:

"Charles and Esther Beswick, 24th August 1789" on inscribed stone above door. Hammer-dressed stone in narrow courses and slate roof. 3 bays and 2 storeys (plus basement). Step approach to door with over light and square- cut stone surround between bays 1 and 2. Bays 1 and 2 have rectangular ground floor windows and 3-light flat-faced mullion first floor window (the central light being larger than the outer lights). Bay 3 was added slightly later the windows following the pattern of the other first floor windows. Plain eaves gutter brackets and ridge and gable chimney stacks.

As part of the mixed-use intent of the comprehensive Kingsway masterplan, the dilapidated listed building will, in due course, be brought back into use as part of the David Wilson Homes wider Plot W development which will retain the most significant historic assets of the listed buildings.

Previous Historic Assessment and Altered Setting

The setting of Tithe Barn was originally agricultural and rural however, this setting has evolved in recent decades. The arrival of Kingsway Business Park is part of this evolution and the Environmental Statement (undertaken to support the original Outline Planning Permission) provided a full assessment of the cultural and historic importance of the various listed buildings around the site was undertaken and this confirmed that the development of the Kingsway Business Park would undoubtedly and fundamentally change the setting of the Listed Buildings. The Outline Planning Approval provides consent for buildings up to 9m height to haunch along with the requirement to provide a 20m landscaped buffer (previously completed). Accordingly, the setting of the listed buildings in this part of the site was always going to be changed by the development on Kingsway Business Park.

The immediate setting of Silverhill Farm was originally agricultural and rural however, this setting has evolved in recent decades through the construction of dwellings to the north of Lower Lane and the West of Broad Lane. The arrival of Kingsway Business Park has further eroded this setting with commercial development undertaken to the east of Silver Hill Farm. At the time of the Environmental Statement (undertaken to support the original Outline Planning Permission) a full assessment of the cultural and historic importance of the building was undertaken and this confirmed that the development of the Kingsway Business Park would undoubtedly and fundamentally change the setting of this Listed Building.

In terms of development within the immediate context of Silver Hill Farm, a chilled warehouse is located approximately 200m to the east. To the west is Plot W with outline consent for buildings up to 7m in height which are to be appropriate to the setting of the listed building. To the north, on Plot J2 (the currently proposed scheme), the Outline Planning Approval provides consent for buildings up to 9m height to haunch along with the requirement to provide a 20m landscaped buffer (previously completed).

The Plot J2 development and associated landscaped buffer provide an established visual screen between the proposed Plot L development and both Tithe Barn & Silverhill Farm.

Accordingly, the setting of the listed building was always going to be radically changed by the permitted development on Kingsway Business Park. It should be noted, the list entry number for Silverhill Farmhouse does not mention the setting of the building. The building appears to be listed due to its architectural merit, and not because it contributes to the character or setting of the area.



Assessment of Harm

The proposed development of Plot L will further alter the setting of the listed buildings but, as has already been demonstrated, the nature of the development on Plot L was effectively forecast by the assessment undertaken when Kingsway Business Park first secured its permission. It was always acknowledged that the original rural setting would be eroded by proposed development, indeed the rural setting was lost some years ago through the development of the adjacent dwellings.

The current proposals are sensitively designed so no built form or mass is proposed directly visible from both Tithe Barn & Silverhill Farm.

The remaining limited historic setting of Silver Hill Farm lies in its relationship to the Lower Lane and the remaining open/ former garden land further to the east. In addition, the listing also confirms the interest which is retained in the structure itself. Overall, however, the historic significance of the asset is much reduced by the limited relationship to its original setting.

When considered in the wider context of Kingsway Business Park the harm upon Tithe Barn & Silver Hill Farmhouse is considered to result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage assessment in accordance with Paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework and this harm should be weighed up against the public benefits of the proposal.

Public Benefit Mitigation

When harm is created to the setting of a listed building (even when the harm is less than significant) there is a need to consider the public benefits which arise from the newly proposed development. Development on the Kingsway Business Park is one of the Council's key economic priorities. The site is defined and allocated in the Rochdale Core Strategy, and it is seen as one of the primary economic objectives of the Council. The current proposals will attract inward investment from business leading to the generation of local jobs, delivery of gross added value and provide an opportunity for economic growth.

As such and in consideration, there are clear public benefits arising from the proposed development which more than outweigh the limited impact on the setting of the Listed Building.