

**Placemaking Plan (Consultation)
B&NES Council (16.12.15 - 03.02.16)**

WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS



ON BEHALF OF MNRE

Prepared by:

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Date 11 August 2016

Ref:

In connection with the provision of written representations on the B&NES Council Placemaking Plan (Consultation August 2016).

Former Welton Manufacturing Site (SSV4)

11/08/2016

LPA Ref: Volume 4 – Somer Valley, SSV4
Our Ref: documents/aug2016PMB&NES/ behalf of MNRE.docX

Submission Date: 15 08 2016

APPENDICES

Appendix 5 Heritage Assessment, Former Brewery, Midsomer
Norton, Cotswold Archaeology (May 2016 CA
15821)

Appendix 6 Marketing Statement MNRE

Appendix 7 Viability Statement RL

1.0 BACKGROUND & SCOPE

This submission is made on behalf of MNRE in respect of their land interest at Station Road, Midsomer Norton (FWMS Site SSV 4, Vol 4 Somer Valley). It summarises their final responses to the draft document and supporting text presented within the Placemaking Plan (B&NES Council) on the former 'Welton Manufacturing Site' to accord with the required timeframe for submissions.

In doing so it confirms two outstanding matters regarding the (1) extent of the defined site and the which should underpin this site's consideration within the emerging plan and (2) the specific requirement for retention of the former Brewery Buildings on the defined (and potentially extended) SSV4 site. These matters are central to the refinement of existing planning policy SSV4 for the site.

MNRE representatives have worked closely with B&NES Council representatives (Economic Development/Planning Policy/Major Projects) over the last six years to ensure that future redevelopment opportunities on the site are fully considered. Duly made objections have been regardeing these two matters (Nos.1 & 2 above) but no specific supporting evidence was provided. The site is now the subject of an outline planning application which has been made with relevant supporting material. It is elements of this which the site owners wish to highlight in the context of this review stage of the Placemaking Plan.

By way of background the site was formally identified in the adopted B&NES Local Plan as a mixed-use site (GDS.1/NR14 See Appendix 3)). Pre-application discussions with a prospective developer of the site also took place in mid 2012.

Formal representations were made at the launch stage of the Placemaking Plan document (Terrace Hill Midsomer, September 2013) and the Options Stage (MNRE January 2015) .

MNRE are the current freehold owners of the whole of the site identified in Appendix 1. The adjoining Stones Cross Public House and Social Club are in separate ownerships (See Appendix 1). Dialogue over the comprehensive redevelopment of the entirety of the local area been ongoing for over 12 months. Discussions have concluded on the need to potentially extend the defined site boundary (Matter 1) and this has resulted in the recommendation to change the site to that shown in Appendix 2.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

The allocation site ('the site') has a total area of approximately 6.0 hectares and is located within the central built up area of Midsomer Norton adjacent to existing residential areas (See Site Location).

It comprises of an irregularly shaped vacant area of brownfield land extending within the Town Centre Shopping Area of Midsomer Norton.

Housing and community buildings bound the area on all sides (See Appendix 1). Existing public transport services to adjacent centres including Bath and Radstock extend along North/Radstock Road and Station Road/High Street.

There are former brewery buildings on the site which are limited of heritage significance (See *Appendix 3 attached Cotswold Archaeology Heritage Assessment November 2015*). It is these buildings which are at the heart of this written representation.

3.0 SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

This representation has arisen from the publication of the Placemaking Plan by B&NES Council covering the administrative area of Somer Valley (Vol. 4

The section on ' Former Welton Manufacturing Site' states :-

Context

56. The Former Welton Bibby & Baron (Welton Bag) factory located to the north east of the town centre and provides a substantial redevelopment opportunity. The site is positioned on the steep north facing valley side, sloping down from the ridge at North Road to the Wellow Brook base. There is a drop of approximately 10m from the valley ridge down to Wellow Brook, and similar level change on the south facing slope on the other side of the brook against the former railway line.

57. The factory buildings and ancillary uses occupy the majority of the 5.3ha site. The core complex straddles the valley base, culverting the Wellow Brook, and fronting out to Station Road. The position of the factory interrupts the valley setting and creates a significant barrier to a potential west-east strategic green infrastructure route following the Wellow Brook. An existing shared public footpath with bridleway and cycleway rights (ST Route T9/NR Greenway/Public Footpath CL24/21) extends along the northern boundary of the site.

58 There are no buildings at the ridge where the site fronts to North Road and consequently the site remains fairly hidden from this prominent position and the top of the High Street. Aside from a collection of historic buildings within the adjoining Conservation Area including the site's former brewery use, the majority of the buildings on site are of limited built quality. The 1850s brewery buildings survive largely untouched and with most of their external architectural features intact. These present a considerable asset to incorporate into future development of the site.

59. The priority will be to deliver an appropriate mix of employment floorspace and housing, and to improve connections through to the High Street. The Stone's Cross roundabout is the key point of arrival to the High Street but fails to capitalise on the range of attractive Victorian buildings there to announce the beginning of the High Street successfully. The steep, single sided pavement route along Station Road combined with heavy traffic creates an unattractive pedestrian environment and difficulties integrating the site.

60. The retail study (July 2015) considers this site as a potential large retail development site . It is not concluded that the site is sequentially inferior to the

South Road car park site in delivering new retail floorspace, due to it being an 'edge of centre' location. The issue of suitable pedestrian links between the High Street and this site also make it difficult for retail uses to function as an integral part of the town centre.

61 An important focus is the frontage to North Road, where an area of hard standing is divided from the valley top by a high wall. This area presents the only real opportunity to establish a more direct and attractive connection between the site and the High Street via the Stone's Cross gateway. It is also important to consider options for improving existing road and pedestrian routes as well as highway safety along Station Road.

1.247 Incorporation of a high quality green infrastructure link along the Wellow Brook through the site will also be a key priority, linking with the attractive Welton Green community space.

This submission is made on the basis that the site area should be extended to enable the policy objectives of Para 61 to be properly addressed as part of future decision making.

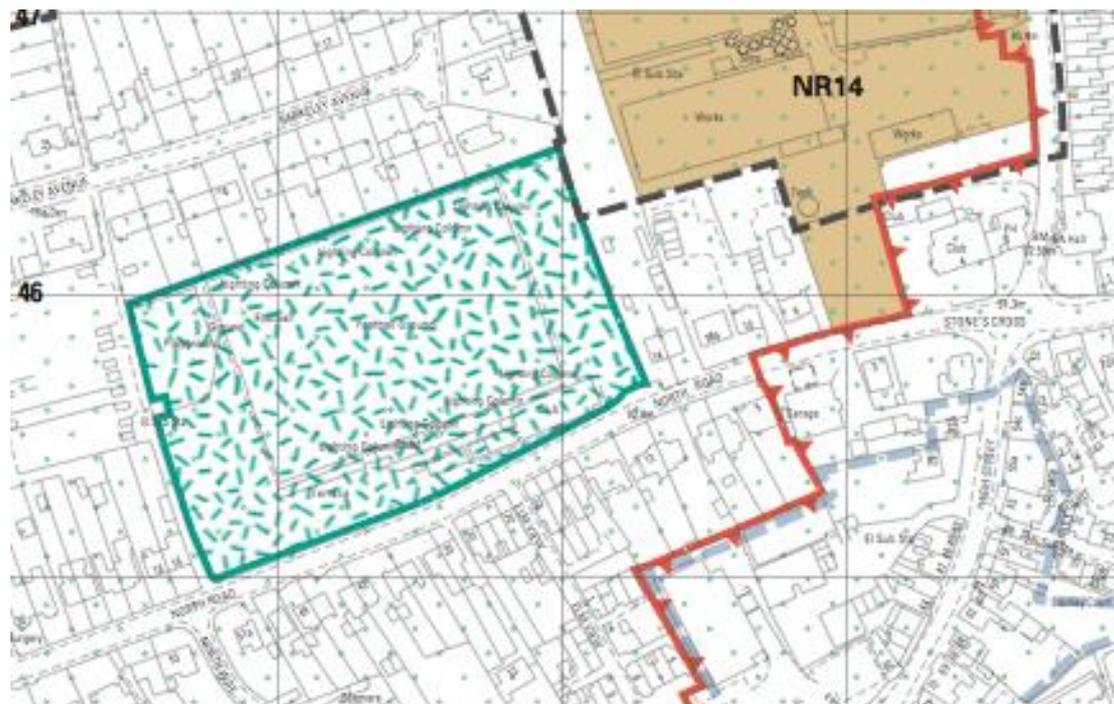


Appendix 1 Title Plan/Landownership

Whilst the explanatory text to Policy SSV4 (Para 59) refers to failure of the Stone's Cross Roundabout to act as a successful entry statement to the High

Street this area is not currently part of the defined site (SSV 4). These areas are important to general townscape enhancement and the achievement of proper pedestrian connection in the local area.

Appendix 2 Inset 19A MN Town Centre



4.0 FORMER WELTON BAG FACTORY SSV4

Given that the draft Placemaking Plan seeks to allocate and facilitate the delivery of housing, employment and other uses on this brownfield site (SSV 4) to meet the development needs identified in the adopted core strategy, its general approach is welcomed.

Council views on the 'reasonable alternatives' or 'options' for this site are also broadly accepted. However given that expressed requirements over the retention of former Brewery Buildings could form the basis of development management policies (the Draft Plan) used in the determination of planning applications for the site, suggested amendments and clarifications are sought over specific assumptions underlying the commentary on the site. MNRE reserve the opportunity to comment on subsequent iterations of the Site Assessment.

In accordance with previous submissions and based upon updated assessment work it is suggested that specific requirements regarding the former heritage buildings should be reworded to reflect that their comprehensive retention may not reasonably be fully incorporated (as per Para 58) based upon heritage assessment and commercial viability considerations. It is evident that no such research was conducted into heritage significance by the local planning authority prior to the inclusion of policy wording.

Copies of the marketing statement (Appendix 4) and heritage assessment (Appendix 5) attached to outline planning application (B&NES Ref No. 16/02607/OUT) are attached in order to illustrate related considerations. In addition information regarding the impact upon overall project viability are attached (See Appendix 6) . The policy wording should be reworded to state that 'if possible'

The Midsomer Norton & Welton Conservation Area extends along the eastern boundary of the site to include the former Brewery Building. There are no listed buildings within or adjacent to the identified site or the extended site proposal. The former Brewery Building is in a poor state of repair having been subject to significant internal alteration. The comparative narrowness of Station Road at this point will be a key design influencing factor.

Subject to detailed engineering investigations the owners of the site would be happy to assist in ensuring that any options for future development seek to fully investigate opportunities to preserve and enhance the former Brewery Building (or its existing frontage). In this regard the expressed desirability of putting this building to a viable use/s is acknowledged. This would be assessed against overall scheme viability and delivery. Existing exploratory text should be amended to reflect this position.

1.244 The priority will be to deliver an appropriate mix of employment floorspace and housing, and to improve connections through to the High Street. The Stone's Cross roundabout is the key point of arrival to the High Street but fails to capitalise on the range of attractive Victorian buildings there to announce the beginning of the High Street successfully. The steep, single sided pavement route along Station Road combined with heavy traffic creates an unattractive pedestrian environment and difficulties integrating the site.

As per previous comment. Future treatment of the public realm in the vicinity of North Road and the site's connection (and 'entry statement') through to the High Street will be a key 'design influencing factor' in taking forward detailed proposals. The existing Victorian buildings referred to in this commentary are situated outside the site on the north side of North Road/Radstock Road. MNRE seek written confirmation that these additional buildings could now be included within an amended allocation area.

6.0 MIDSOMER NORTON/SOMER VALLEY

B&NES Council acknowledge that current outline planning application proposals should help to enhance the centre by making better use of public spaces and improving linkages between different parts of the retail frontage.

In this regard MNRE highlight the important contribution that a vibrant public realm makes to the success of the high street.

End/midsomernortonv.2

WELTON BIBBY BARON

MSN 9

Area and Description

- 5.64ha
- The site is located on the west side of Station Road (A362) a short distance to the north of Stones Cross.
- The greater part of the site (c4.3ha) is occupied by substantial industrial buildings and is adjoined to the south by housing fronting on to North Road and to the north by the Norton-Radstock Greenway, beyond which is housing. There is housing development on the east side of Station Road.
- The western part of the site (c.1.3ha) comprises a finger of overgrown open land between Berkeley Avenue and the Greenway. This part of the site is crossed by a footpath linking the Town Centre with the Greenway and the housing areas of Welton beyond.
- The site is bisected by the Wellow Brook flowing from west to east.
- Vehicular access to the site is from Station Road.
- The boundary of the Midsomer Norton and Welton Conservation Area follows the eastern boundary of the site.
- The long liners rear gardens of 13/14 North Road present a buffer between the site and Berkeley Avenue and could be developable subject to the landowners position.

Housing Potential

- The site is allocated in the Local Plan (Policy GDS.1/NR15) for mixed use residential and business uses, to include about 100 dwellings and provision for the public rights of way within the site.
- This policy supposed on the rationalisation of the existing commercial activity on-site
- If the present occupier were to relocate the housing potential would increase to c.150.
- A development concept similar to that permitted re Alcan (MSN.10) is foreseeable.

Suitability

- The site is well located in relation to the built -up area and is within reasonable walking distance of the Town Centre. The site is well located in relation to pedestrian routes linking the Town Centre with Welton.
- Part of the undeveloped part of the site around Wellow Brook falls within zone, part of which is also 3. Wellow Brook is culverted beneath the developed part of the site.
- The industrial part of the site may be present contamination / remediation issues.
- The western part of the site adjacent to the Wellow Brook is likely to be of nature conservation interest.
- Older buildings adjacent to the site frontage contribute to the setting of the Conservation Area and will require attention at planning application stage.

Highways

- **Access:** Access to this site will need to be taken from Station Road as the frontage onto North Road is not sufficient to create an access of the appropriate standard. Given the level of traffic likely to be, it is likely that a mini-roundabout, or even signal-controlled junction may be necessary. Given the potential scale of development, a secondary access may be required. The access and on-site roads must be of an adoptable standard.
- **Local Impact:** A Transport Assessment is required to consider the impact on local roads and further afield. In particular, the impact on the Stones Cross junction should be assessed, as well as capacity and safety issues along West Road. The T.A. should include a Travel Statement which will include an assessment of local travel infrastructure – ped/cycle links to the town centre, other key facilities and public transport.
- **Wider Impact:** The T.A. should also consider the impact on the wider network toward Bristol and Radstock, as there will be a cumulative effect with the number of other significant sites locally. Potential junction assessments at Station Rd / Radstock Road (A362) and A362 / B3355 roundabouts. If access is retained at the northern extent of this site, the access should be assessed as a staggered crossroads along with Valley Walk, a likely access point for any development at MSN 30, a potential long term significant strategic development site, which together with MSN.9 would cause a cumulative impact at all junctions listed above and A362 / A367.

Availability

- Welton Bibby and Baron Ltd will be vacating this site in 2013 following a move to new premises in Westbury

Achievability

- Likely to be deliverable within the next five years given evidence of availability.

Actions to overcome constraints

- Flood Risk Assessment, sequential test and implementation of mitigation works.
- Contamination report and implementation of remediation works.
- Demolition of existing buildings.
- Employment Land Assessment to ascertain mix of uses for redevelopment of site.

Appendix 5

Proposed Site Boundary to include additional
buildings in the vicinity of Stones Cross

