



Little Waldingfield Masterplanning

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Quality information

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report presents an illustrative masterplan for one potential development site in the Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Area. It has been prepared by consultants at AECOM on behalf of Locality, working with the Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee. It is based on a detailed appraisal of the area carried out through a desk study and fieldwork. The potential development site identified for the illustrative masterplan was selected by the Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Committee based on the evidence base gathered this far, including consultation responses received as part of the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan consultation process.

The Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Committee is fairly well progressed in the production of its Neighbourhood Plan and has requested this work to access professional advice on the planning and design of potential new development in the village.

This study builds upon the previous work carried out by or on behalf of the the Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Committee including:

- *Little Waldingfield Design Guide, 2019;*
- *Little Waldingfield Parish Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), 2019;*
- *Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Village Character Assessment, 2018;*
- *Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Site Options and Assessment ,2018;*
and
- *Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Household Survey Results, 2018.*

1.2 Aims of the Masterplan

This document has been prepared to provide a high-level spatial plan for the selected site, to show the scale and nature of the development that could be accommodated on the site, should other constraints be resolved and the site is allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan.

1.3 Process

The following steps have been undertaken to prepare this report:

- Initial meeting and site visit;
- Urban design analysis;
- Site options;
- Draft report; and
- Final report.

1.4 Local context

Little Waldingfield is a small settlement located in south west Suffolk, within the District of Babergh. The nearest towns are Lavenham, located approximately 4 km north, and the market town of Sudbury located approximately 6km south west. The Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Area is approximately 660 ha, with a population of 366 in the 2011 census.

Little Waldingfield has a few prominent buildings including St. Lawrence's Church, the only Grade I Listed Building in the village. Listed Buildings in proximity of the development site considered in this document include:

- The Swan Public House is a Grade II Listed Building situated in a prominent location at the centre of the village. The public house was built in the 18th century and is of timber framed construction covered by plaster. Open space in front of the building together with the junction of The Street and Church Road creates a spacious character of the village centre.
- Enniskillen House is a Grade II Listed Building situated next to The Swan Public House, built in the 18th or early 19th century. The front façade is emphasised by three ranges of windows and a porch. A low brick wall separates the front garden from the street and strongly contributes to the historic and rural character of the village.

The village is surrounded by arable fields, which creates an open setting. The settlement, with its distinctive landmark formed by the tower of St. Lawrence's Church, is visible from many directions; there are only a few places where views are obscured by small woodlands and groups of trees.



The Swan Public House



Enniskillen House




Swingleton Green

Little Waldingfield

Acton

Chilton

 Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

0 0.5 1 2 3 Kilometers

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community. Contains Ordnance Survey Data © Contians OS open data.

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID and the GIS User Community

1.5 Planning Policy Review

1.5.1 National planning policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2019

The NPPF sets out that a key objective of the planning system is “*to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*”, which will be achieved through three overarching objectives. This includes “*an environmental objective - to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment*” (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019).

Part 12, Achieving Well-designed Places, states that “*design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development*”. Part 12 goes on to state “*policy and decisions should ensure that developments... are visually attractive... (and) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)*”. An understanding of history and heritage is therefore important in developing neighbourhood plans to demonstrate how this should inform future development.

Part 16, Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, states that “*plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment... (taking) into account ...the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of place.*”

Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance expands on the NPPF and outlines planning best practice. First published in 2014 it has had several updates, the most recent in October 2019. The section on design includes guidance on promoting good design (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 26-001-20191001). It states that “*good design is set out in the National Design Guide under the following 10 characteristics, context,*

Identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan.”

Paragraph 006 Reference ID: 26-006-20191001 states that masterplans focus “*on site specific proposals such as the scale and layout of development, mix of uses, transport and green infrastructure. Depending on the level of detail, the masterplan may indicate the intended arrangement of buildings, streets and the public realm.*”

1.5.2 Local planning policy

Babergh Core Strategy, 2014

The Babergh Core Strategy will guide development across the District until 2031. It establishes the overarching vision of the district, which is to “*continue to be an attractive, high quality place in which to live and work, and to visit. The local character and distinctiveness of South Suffolk will be further enhanced by a strong economy and healthier environment providing the framework for a well-connected network of places that is made up of mixed and balanced communities.*” The document includes strategic policies related to sustainable development, housing, economic development and the environment. Many of these policies are relevant to the design of development within Little Waldingfield, including:

- Policy CS2 - Settlement Pattern Policy;
- Policy CS4 - Chilton Wood Strategic Land Allocation and Strategy for Sudbury / Great Conrad;
- Policy CS11 - Strategy for Development for Core and Hinterland Villages;
- Policy CS13 – Renewable / Low carbon Energy;
- Policy CS14 – Green Infrastructure;
- Policy CS15 – Implementing Sustainable Development in Babergh;
- Policy CS16 – Town, Village and Local Centres;
- Policy CS18 – Mix and Types of Dwellings;
- Policy CS 19 – Affordable Homes;
- Policy CS20 – Rural Exception Sites; and
- Policy CS21 – Infrastructure Provision.

Babergh Local Plan 'Saved Policies', 2006

'Saved' policies from the Babergh Local Plan, 2006 will remain also until replaced by a New Joint Local Plan being developed by Babergh and Mid-Suffolk District Councils. The policies of most relevance to this document are described below:

- Policy HS02 – states that '*new housing development in non-sustainable villages will take the form of infilling (up to a maximum of 3 dwellings) within the Built-Up Area Boundary*';
- Policy HS03 – classifies Little Waldingfield as a non-sustainable village;
- Policy HS05 – Replacement Buildings;
- Policy HS27 – sets out density for residential development;
- Policy HS28 – sets out rules for infill planning applications;
- Policy CR08 – sets out rules where development proposals affect hedgerows;
- Policy CN01 – states that '*all new development proposals will be required to be of appropriate scale, form, detailed design and construction materials for the location*' and '*Proposals must pay particular attention to the content of any adopted Village Design Statement*';
- Policy CN03 – explains that development leading to the loss of important open space, visually important gaps in the street scene or recreational facilities within towns and villages will not be permitted;
- Policy CN06 – sets out rules for proposed alterations, extensions or changes of use for Listed Buildings;
- Policy CN08 – states the requirements for new development in Conservation Areas or developments which will have an impact on views into or out of the Conservation Area;
- Policy EN22 – sets out rules for outdoor lighting.

Emerging new Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan, Preferred Options (Reg 18), Consultation Document published in July 2019

The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan consultation document sets out the strategy for growth in both districts, indicating where development will take place up to 2036. Once adopted, the new Joint Local Plan will replace the existing local planning policies for Babergh. The Plan will set out a vision for the area and will include policies and land allocations.

Little Waldingfield was re-classified as a Hamlet Village from a Hinterland Village in the draft Local Plan review of the settlement hierarchy. Hamlets in Babergh are expected to deliver 3% of the District's growth, which equals 261 total homes; the number includes outstanding planning permissions and new homes to be delivered from April 2018 to March 2036. The minimum housing requirement for the Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Area over the plan period is 16 homes. The adjustment of the Settlement Boundary to include land south-east of The Street (B1115) that Babergh has assessed as being suitable for development attracted significant objections, including from Historic England.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Draft (SHELAA), July 2019

In July 2019, BMSDC undertook a comprehensive assessment of three potential development sites in Little Waldingfield. The assessment found the following:

- The Site SS0545 was discounted because of no possibility of creating suitable access to the site and poor connectivity to the existing settlement. Development of the site would be likely to cause substantial harm to designated heritage assets and their setting, which cannot be reasonably mitigated.
- For site SS0874 a low-density partial development of the site (linear development along The Street / B1115 only) was recommended, taking identified constraints into consideration; and
- Site SS0875 is not suitable due to poor connectivity to the existing settlement and is not consistent with the settlement pattern.

The interactive map is available online,

<https://baberghmidsuffolk.opus4.co.uk/planning/localplan/maps/baberghmidsuffolks/helaa2019#/x:607916/y:257030/z:0/b:14/o:2820,o:2821,o:2822,o:2823> and illustrates the extent of the potential development sites assessed.

The Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan evidence base documents

The Little Waldingfield Design Guide, April 2019 was prepared to inform future development within the area and to encourage a design-led approach to development. This Design Guide provided general guidance on the form that new development should take.

The Little Waldingfield Parish Housing Needs Assessment, March 2019 provides information regarding the quantity and mix of new housing. Based on the policy options the housing requirements figure for Little Waldingfield ranges between 7 and 21 houses over the period of the plan. It also states that 45% of new homes should be 1 or 2 bedrooms, 50% of 3 bedrooms and 5% of 4 bedrooms. The assessment also examines the number of Affordable Housing needs.

The Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Village Character Assessment, October 2018 was prepared by the Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, to identify and describe the distinctive features, appearance and character of Little Waldingfield.

The Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Site Options and Assessment, October 2018 provides assessment of two potentially suitable site options to allocate for housing in the Neighbourhood Plan. Under the assessment, partial allocation of Site SS0874 (Land to the south east of The Street, Little Waldingfield) was more appropriate than allocation of Site SS0545 (Land west of The Street, Little Waldingfield), when assessed against the core elements of achieving planning consent. This considered the impact on designated heritage assets, appearance and layout, means of access, landscaping, and scale of development.



2. Site Analysis

2.1.1 Areas of Study

The following plan presents the three sites identified through the Call for Sites undertaken by Babergh District Council in 2014 and in 2016 for the 2017 SHELAA. Only Development Site 1 (SS0545) was selected by the Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Committee for inclusion in the illustrative masterplan.

Development Site 1 is located in the centre of the village, behind the row of houses lining The Street. There are two Listed Buildings, The Swan Public House and Enniskillen House are in immediate proximity to the site. The playing fields located to the north and arable fields to the west enclose the area. Currently, Development Site 1 belongs to one landowner and is maintained as a private garden with significant groups of mature trees, an orchard and an artificial pond.



SS0875

Development Site 1
(SS0545)

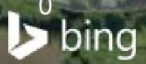
SS0874

B1115

B1115

Existing Settlement Boundary

0 0.15 0.3 0.6 Kilometers



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community. Contains Ordnance Survey Data

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2.1.2 Opportunities and Constraints: Site 1 SS0545

Opportunities

- Topography is flat throughout the majority of the Development Site.
- The site is located within the centre of the village, an approximately 1-minute walk from the bus stop and the White Swan Pub. The village playing fields are located immediately to the north of the Development Site.
- The building layout plan adjacent, shows semi-detached and detached homes with occasional terraced houses.
- Front and large back gardens are prevalent for the majority of houses.
- On plot parking on driveways or in garages is common across the village. On street car parking is mostly found on The Street and Church Road.
- The Street provides access for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Existing buildings show a consistent building line reinforced by a boundary feature separating front gardens from the street. These elements create interest across the streets.
- A well-developed network of Public Rights of Way links the village with the countryside.
- Dense hedgerow with mature trees separate the site from the playing fields.

Constraints

- The only point of access to Development Ste 1 is from The Street (B1115). Proposed access would be located opposite a road junction that could raise road safety issues; therefore the Highways Authority should be consulted.
- There is a significant group of mature trees and an orchard within the site.
- The site is adjacent to and partially within the Little Waldingfield Conservation Area. The site is located to the rear of Grade II Listed Buildings.
- New development on this site be behind existing development and would not correspond with the historic linear layout of the village, which strongly contributes to the character of Little Waldingfield.
- A large artificial pond is present on the site.

- The existing low voltage electricity pole at the entrance to the site may need to be moved.



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The existing access on Development Site 1



Visual connections from Development Site 1 with St. Laurence's Church.



The north east corner of Development Site 1 looking towards the location of the proposed development illustrated in Option 2.



The south west corner of Development Site 1, the location of proposed development illustrated in Option 1.



3. Illustrative Masterplan

This section shows the form that any development on the potential development site could take. It is informed by the Little Waldingfield Design Guide and the objectives of the emerging draft Neighbourhood Plan. It considers two potential options for the partial development of the site.

3.1.1 Illustrative Masterplan Option 1



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Figure 1 Illustrative masterplan Development Site 1, Option 1.

The Little Waldingfield Parish Housing Needs Assessment, March 2019 was reviewed to inform the proposed site options. The extent of the red line boundary presented in the SHELAA, July 2019 was reduced in the masterplan, to retain back gardens of the houses north of Enniskillen House.

Option 1

Ha	Units	Net Plot Density	Indicative Population
1,05 ha	6	22	15

* Net Plot Density: number of dwellings per hectare on land devoted solely to residential development.

Indicative Housing Mix

Option 1	2b Houses	3b Houses	4b Houses	Total
Amount	2	3	1	6

Option 1 (Fig. 1) considers the possibility to retain the pond, orchard and most of the mature trees dispersed across the site. The following points are the result of the proposed housing arrangement:

- The point of access from the junction of The Street / B1115 and Church Road should be agreed with the Highways Authority.
- The low voltage power line located at the proposed entrance would need to be relocated to enable access. This opens an opportunity to reduce visual clutter created by cables and improve short distance views within the centre of the village.
- The bus stop located at the proposed entrance would need to be relocated to enable access to the site.
- The proposed pedestrian access would link to the existing pavement along The Street.
- The proposed footpath would link the centre of the village with the playing fields.
- The proposed development cluster would be located in the south west corner of the site to retain the significant group of mature trees, orchard and the pond. Note that this would result in north facing rear gardens.

- Strategic planting would reduce impacts on the Swan Public House and Enniskillen House, which are Listed Buildings.
- Proposed development would not disrupt the view of St. Lawrence's Church.
- Hedgerows are proposed at places as a boundary features to integrate the proposed development with the well-vegetated surroundings.
- Proposed development would reflect the type and mix of housing identified in *The Little Waldingfield Parish Housing Needs Assessment, March 2019*.
- Houses would have different sizes of back gardens. It is important to provide a variety of sizes, ensure privacy and buffering from surrounding properties and minimise overlooking.
- Proposed development would provide on-plot off street parking.
- New development would not correspond with the historic linear layout of the village. However, there are more recent developments in the village which are positioned along cul-de-sacs and strategic planting would provide screening.

The proposed development corresponds in many aspects with the design principles set out in the *Little Waldingfield Design Guide, 2019*. The guidelines relating to the appropriate type, scale, form of buildings and their position within the plot were applied. Option 1 would provide additional green space, retain existing hedgerows, orchard, and most of the dispersed trees. The role of the playing fields as a community hub would be enhanced through the proposed footpath linking the playing fields with the village centre.

Proposed development would not correspond with the historic linear layout of the village, and would have an impact on the heritage assets and the Conservation Area. The impact could be mitigated to a large extent by strategic planting and appropriate height of the buildings.

Design Element	Description	Proposals consistent with design guide (yes / no)
Street pattern and building layout	Do the development proposals respect and respond to the linear pattern of development in the village?	No
Building type and layout	Do the development proposals respond to the existing type and building layout?	Yes
Buildings heights and roof lines	Do the development proposals respond to the context of the built environment with regards to the height, structure and continuity of the roofline?	Yes
Boundary treatment	Do the development proposals use boundary treatments which are common or complementary to the street and reinforce the continuity of the building line?	Yes
Architecture, materials and surface treatments	Do the development proposals complement materials and architectural detail?	Yes
Open space and public realm	Do the development proposals contribute to the quality and provision of open space and public realm in the village?	Yes
Views	Do the development proposals retain and emphasise identified important views and gateways?	N/A

3.1.2 Illustrative Masterplan Option 2



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Figure 2 Figure 1 Illustrative masterplan Development Site 1, Option 2.

Option 2

Ha	Units	Net Plot Density	Indicative Population
1,05 ha	4	25	10

* Net Plot Density: number of dwellings per hectare on land devoted solely to residential development.

Indicative Housing Mix

Option 2	2b Houses	3b Houses	Total
Amount	2	2	4

Option 2 (Fig. 2) is based on similar assumptions to Option 1, retaining the pond, orchard and most of the mature trees dispersed across the site. The proposed development would be located in the open space east of the orchard and would retain the existing hedgerows and trees separating the site from playing fields. The following points are the result of the proposed housing arrangement:

- The point of access from the junction of The Street / B1115 and Church Road should be agreed with the Highways Authority.
- The low voltage power line located at the proposed entrance would need to be relocated to enable access. This opens an opportunity to reduce visual clutter created by cables and improve short distance views within the centre of the village.
- The bus stop located at the proposed entrance would need to be relocated to enable access to the site.
- The proposed pedestrian access would link to the existing pavement along The Street.
- The proposed footpath would link the centre of the village with the playing fields.
- The proposed development cluster would be located in the south west corner of the site to retain the significant group of mature trees, orchard in the north-west corner of the plot and the pond.
- Strategic planting would reduce impacts on the Enniskillen House, which is a Listed Building.

- Proposed development would not disrupt the view of St. Lawrence's Church.
- Hedgerows are proposed at places as a boundary features to integrate the proposed development with the well-vegetated surroundings.
- Existing hedgerow and trees separating the Site from the playing fields would be retained and enhanced where required.
- Proposed development would reflect the type and mix of housing identified in *The Little Waldingfield Parish Housing Needs Assessment, March 2019*.
- Proposed development would provide on-plot off street parking.

The proposed development corresponds in many aspects with the design principles set out in the *Little Waldingfield Design Guide, 2019*. The guidelines relating to the appropriate type, scale, form of buildings and their position within the plot were applied. Option 2 would provide additional green space, retain existing hedgerows, orchard, and most of the dispersed trees. The role of the playing fields as a community hub would be enhanced through the proposed footpath linking the playing fields with the village centre.

Proposed development would not correspond with the historic linear layout of the village, and would have an impact on the heritage assets and the Conservation Area. The impact could be mitigated to a large extent by strategic planting and appropriate height of the buildings.

Design Element	Description	Proposals consistent with design guide (yes / no)
Street pattern and building layout	Do the development proposals respect and respond to the linear pattern of development in the village?	No
Building type and layout	Do the development proposals respond to the existing type and building layout?	Yes
Buildings heights and roof lines	Do the development proposals respond to the context of the built environment with regards to the height, structure and continuity of the roofline?	Yes
Boundary treatment	Do the development proposals use boundary treatments which are common or complementary to the street and reinforce the continuity of the building line?	Yes
Architecture, materials and surface treatments	Do the development proposals complement materials and architectural detail?	Yes
Open space and public realm	Do the development proposals contribute to the quality and provision of open space and public realm in the village?	Yes
Views	Do the development proposals retain and emphasise identified important views and gateways?	N/A

4. Next steps and sources of further information

4.1 Next steps

The recommended next steps for how to use the outcomes of this masterplan options are to:

- Consider including the two masterplan options in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan;
- Engage with the District Council and County highways officers to develop policies supporting the site allocation;
- Engage with the landowner.

4.1.1 Embed masterplan into draft neighbourhood plan

If the site is to be allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan, the report can be used as evidence to support the draft policies where the analysis highlights relevant issues and opportunities that can be influenced by land use planning interventions. The preferred option will need to be selected, backed up by community engagement. A starting point for embedding this within the Neighbourhood Development Plan would be Locality's 'Writing Planning Policies' guidance.

4.1.2 Engage with the council and County highways officers

The inputs from the District Council's policy and development management specialists, as well as County highways officers would be invaluable in advance of formal consultation and submission. The Council should also confirm that it is comfortable with the amount and mix of homes indicated.

4.1.3 Engage with the landowner

The document can be used to inform discussions with the site's landowner. It will help to establish expectations ahead of detailed designs being worked up and submitted for planning consent, should the site be adopted.

4.1.4 Further information

Further technical support is also available to priority neighbourhood planning groups and forums through Locality, funded by MHCLG. The other packages of support currently available which may be of relevance to Little Waldingfield are:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
- Evidence Base and Policy Development
- Plan Health Check Review

Further information is available in the Neighbourhood Planning Grant Guidance Notes produced by Locality: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/about/grant-funding/>.



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