



Historic England

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27th March 2017

Dear Valerie,

Plaistow and Ifold Neighbourhood Plan - SEA Screening Opinion

Thank you for your e-mail of 10th March requesting our views on whether or not the revised draft Plaistow and Ifold Neighbourhood Plan would be likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore should be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

As you will be aware, we provided an opinion on the previous version of the Plan on 19th October 2016, which was that there was the potential for significant effects on the historic environment arising from the then proposed housing allocation south of The Dairy. You subsequently drew my attention to the fact that an extension to the Plaistow Conservation Area was approved in 2013 which included part of the proposed housing site. I therefore wrote again on 26th October advising that we could be more confident that there would be impacts on the historic environment, which were more likely to be significant.

This suggested, therefore, that strategic environmental assessment of the Plan should be required. However, we noted that the draft Policy H1A contained criteria intended to protect the setting of the Conservation Area and the nearby listed buildings which, if amended to reflect the fact that the then proposed site was partly within the Conservation Area, we considered may be sufficient to ensure that the development of this site would not have a significant adverse effect on the historic environment of the parish.

We doubted that a SEA would suggest more in the way of mitigation and therefore did not consider it absolutely essential that the Plan be subject to such an assessment. However, we explained that, if the then proposed site was taken forward, we would expect to see full justification why this site is being proposed rather than any other which might not have the same adverse impacts for the historic environment, and that an SEA would be a way of demonstrating that this site is the best overall when assessed against a number of sustainability objectives.



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Since then, it appears that the Plan has been revised in a number of ways, including the deletion of The Dairy site from consideration and the inclusion of a new allocation of land opposite The Green. This new site is outside the Conservation Area, although abuts it along the western and northern boundaries, and is within the setting of the grade II listed Stone House.

We note that Policy H1 allocating the site contains a criterion relating to the protection of the setting of the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings, and that Policy EH1 of the revised Plan, whilst needing improvement, still seeks to afford protection to heritage assets in the Plan area. We again doubt that a SEA would suggest more in the way of mitigation.

(However, as noted in my original letter, it is also important to consider the potential for non-scheduled archaeological remains. The Historic Environment Record and James Kenny should be consulted on the proposed site at an early stage - we note that there is no reference to non-scheduled archaeological records in the SHLAA assessment).

In addition, we note that the revised Plan includes an explanation of how the choice of the site now proposed was made, being the site that AECOM considered the third best option. We therefore see no need for a formal SEA to undertake an assessment of alternative sites.

In conclusion, therefore, we do not consider it essential that the Plan undergoes Strategic Environmental Assessment given the criteria regarding the Conservation Area and the nearby listed buildings in Policy H1 and Policy EH1 (subject to the possible existence of non-scheduled archaeological remains on the site).

Nevertheless, given that the site lies within the setting of the Plaistow Conservation Area and at least one listed building, it might be considered prudent to undertake an SEA of the Plan. This, however, is a decision for you as the relevant local authority as the responsibility for ensuring that the Plan meets the basic conditions lies with the qualifying body and yourselves as the authority that will make the Plan if it passes the referendum.

We hope these comments are helpful. Please contact me if you have any queries

Thank you again for consulting Historic England.

Best wishes,



Martin Small
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