

Our ref: JCH01566/iii

North Warehouse  
Gloucester Docks,  
Gloucester GL1 2EP  
T +44 1242 259 290

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Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service  
South Cambridgeshire District Council  
South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Great Cambourne  
Cambridge, CB23 6EA

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Proposed Local Plan allocation site: Land rear of Fisher's Lane, Orwell, SG8 5QX (Site ref: 40496)  
– Built heritage rebuttal to South Cambridgeshire District Council's HELAA site assessment.**

I have been retained by Endurance Estates to provide built heritage consultancy support in relation to bringing forward the above site for allocation.

I write to you in specific reference to the Historic [built] Environment assessment set out in South Cambridgeshire District Council's HELAA assessment for the above site. The Historic [built] Environment assessment states that the Site is:

*'Within 100m of a Registered Park and Garden.*

*This field [the Site] is on the western most edge of Orwell and is lined to by linear residential development to the south and to the north. The development context is detached houses with large gardens. The west of the Site lies opposite a Grade I registered park and garden. Some small level of development might be possible, but it would need to respect the residential context and the views into and out of the Wimpole Hall site'.*

The Historic [built] Environment assessment notes only one heritage asset for consideration in relation to the proposed allocation Site, the non-statutory Grade I Registered Park and Garden (RPG) associated with Wimpole Hall (itself c.2.5km west-north-west of the Site's north-western corner). It is not a point of contention that a portion of the Site is within 100m of the south-eastern boundary of the Victoria Plantation element of the RPG. The assessment does not conclude that the Site cannot take any residential development but that the quantum would only be a 'small level', due to 'views into and out of the Wimpole Hall site'. This is a point of contention.

Despite identifying that some quantum of residential development would be appropriate for the Site, the Historic [built] Environment assessment for the Site is marked as Red. This is also a point of contention. Of the seventeen issues considered in the assessment, only the Historic [built] Environment issue is marked Red, thereby rendering the whole outcome for the Site's allocation as Red, that is, it should not come forward as an allocation due to 'views into and out of the Wimpole Hall site'. It is also contended that there are any such meaningful views present.

The comment in the Historic [built] Environment assessment that residential development of the Site 'would need to respect the residential context' of the Site is out of place here, since no element of the residential development noted to the north and south of the Site is a heritage asset.

The sole heritage asset in question, the RPG, extends from around the Hall via the nineteenth-century Victoria Plantation to the north side of Cambridge Road to the north west of the Site (see enclosed map). The Victoria Plantation represents a tiny and a remote, peripheral spur on the far eastern edge of this spatially huge heritage asset of over 200ha. The far north-western extent of the asset is over 3.5km from the

Site. The Plantation, a tiny part of the RPG associated with Wimpole Hall, it is not a primary or highly significant element and is part of the later remodelling of the estate in the nineteenth century.

The designation citation notes that the wider RPG includes a complex and extensive designed landscape of avenues, tree belts, lodges, brooks, gardens and pleasure grounds, a kitchen garden, gravel terraces, lawns, parterres, glasshouses, designed parkland and a deer park. None of these elements, other than the trees of Victoria Plantation, are visible from the Site. There are designed views that radiate from the Hall, none of which involve Victoria Plantation. The Plantation is merely a later example of one of many peripheral tree belts used to screen the primary elements of the estate from the surrounding agricultural landscape. It is highly unlikely that the Victoria Plantation, on its own and without the association to the wider RPG, would meet any of the criteria to be designated as a registered park and garden in its own right.

The RPG has a c.145m frontage onto Cambridge Road. The Site holds a c.80m frontage onto the Road with the Site's north-eastern edge directly in line, across the Road, with the north-eastern edge of the RPG. The grounds of Volvac House, on Fisher's Lane, takes up the remaining frontage opposite the heritage asset. The linear residential development noted in the assessment to the north of the Site abuts the north-eastern boundary of the RPG.

The south-eastern portion of Victoria Plantation is legible from much of the Site as an area of visually homogeneous mature, dense woodland. There is no indication or legibility that this woodland is part of a complex, extensive and multi-phased designed landscape associated with the seventeenth-century Wimpole Hall (remodelled in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a neo-Classical country house). The Plantation, as it approaches and addresses Cambridge Road, is legible from parts of the Site only as a block of mature woodland. Its significance as a heritage asset is not legible from the Site. Consequently, the Site does not significantly contribute to the significance of the asset.

The Site does not figure prominently in views of Victoria Plantation from surrounding countryside. The built heritage statement, provided to inform consideration of the Site's allocation, notes the key views from Toot Hill (to the east of the Site) and from Old Wimpole Road (to the west of the Site). In the former, the Plantation is read as a visually homogeneous belt of dense woodland with the Site to the left fronting existing built form. The built form along Cambridge Road, to the north of the Site, continues to the right. There is no ready legibility of the extensive breadth of the contributors to the whole asset's very high significance.

In the latter view, from Old Wimpole Road, the Site is largely visually lost in the foreground of Toot Hill. There are some glimpsed views of the existing built form on Fisher's Lane with the dense woodland belt of Victoria Plantation to the left. Again, there is no ready legibility of the breadth of the asset's significance.

There are no views into and, presumably, out (excepting from a c.80m section of the south-eastern boundary edge along Cambridge Road) of the Victoria Plantation in relation to the Site. There is no legibility of the very high significance of the RPG from the Site.

Even if there were any such views and any degree of legibility of the asset's very high significance, the submission's indicative master plan provides for a significant buffer of built form away from the north-western end of the Site addressing Cambridge Road, with strengthened and deepening of the planting in this area that will provide a sympathetic element to Victoria Plantation's setting in this direction.

In summary, the Site:

- Is within 100m of the non-statutory Grade I registered park and garden (RPG) associated with Wimpole Hall;
- No other heritage asset is relevant to this case;
- The assessment concludes that the Site can take some quantum of residential development;
- The Site's residential context is not a Historic [built] Environment consideration;
- A tiny portion of the RPG (the south-eastern boundary of the Victoria Plantation) addresses the north-western boundary of the Site;
- The Victoria Plantation is not a notable portion of this very highly significant heritage asset, such that of itself, it is very unlikely that it would meet any criteria to be designated as a registered park and garden;
- There are no significant views into and out of Victoria Plantation with the Site;
- Views from the Site allow no legibility of the RPG's very high significance;

**Our ref: JCH01566/ii**

- Views from the wider landscape that take in Victoria Plantation and the Site provide no legibility of the RPG's very high significance;
- The Site's built form can be set back from the north-western edge and the current planting strengthened and deepened to provide sufficient screening; and
- Residential development of the Site, in a form shown in the submitted master plan, would not have a negative impact on the significance of Walpole Hall Registered Park and Garden. The Site can accommodate the quantum of development in the form set out in the submission in relation to the Historic [built] Environment.

In conclusion, the South Cambridgeshire District Council's HELAA Historic [built] Environment assessment has not understood the minimal level of contribution of the Victoria Plantation to the very high significance of the RPG, thereby grossly overstating the potential impacts of residential development of the Site to the very high significance of the non-statutory Grade I Registered Park and Garden (RPG). The residential development of the Site would have no meaningful impact on the significance on the RPG. Consequently, Historic [built] Environment considerations represent no significant constraint to the residential development of the Site. The current assessment needs to be reviewed and amended accordingly.

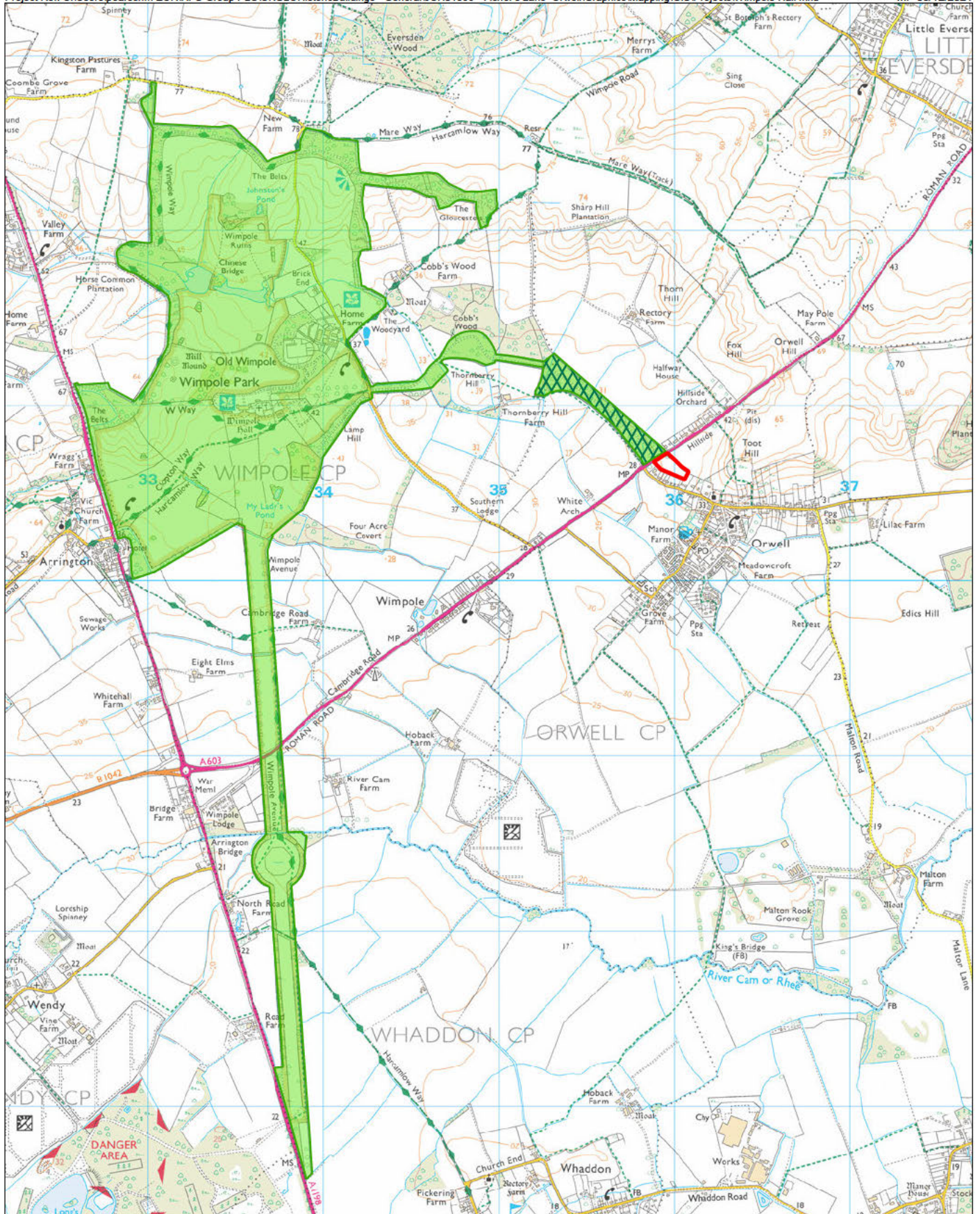
Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours faithfully,  
for RPS Consulting Services Ltd



**Jonathan Smith**  
**BA (Hons) MA PGCE PGDip MCifA IHBC**  
Deputy Operations Director, Archaeology & Built Heritage





-  Site Boundary
-  Wimpole Hall Registered Park & Garden
-  Victoria Plantation



0 250 500 750m  
Scale at A4: 1:30,000



Figure 1  
Rear of Fisher's Lane, Orwell