SYCHA
development planning ltd

THE RUSSELL FAMILY PARTNERSHIP
LAND AT CHURCH FARM, THE STREET, BRINKWORTH, WILTS, SN15 5AD

WILTSHIRE LOCAL PLAN – CALL FOR SITES

PLANNING BRIEFING NOTE SEPTEMBER 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this briefing note is to provide supplementary background information relating to potential development land at Church Farm, Brinkworth, in support of the call for sites submission.

1.2 Church Farm is a working livestock farm, but one that has scaled back in recent years, providing opportunities for farm diversification and for residential and beneficial community land uses, including workspace and public open space.

1.3 The owner partnership wishes to promote a couple of land parcels for residential-led development through the Wiltshire Local Plan process and confirms their availability for development during the replacement 20-year plan period.

1.4 The working family farm will continue for the foreseeable future and a current therapy farm ('Dave and Ewe') will continue to be accommodated within the current ownership.

1.5 This note is structured as follows:

- Section 2 sets out the local context and the development opportunity present in Brinkworth;
- Section 3 provides a description of the sites being put forward for development;
- Section 4 looks at the planning history for the sites;
- Section 5 sets out a review of the key planning considerations to inform consideration of the suitability of the land for residential development, community employment and public open space; and
- Section 6 provides a summary of the note.

2. Village Context and The Opportunity

2.1 Brinkworth is an elongated village along the B4042 and most development fronts this main road, with development also stretching south along School Hill, and with several small housing estates scattered around the village. St Michael and All Angels Church, the

Three Crowns pub, and village school, close to the junction of the B4042 and School Street, acts as central points for the village.

2.2 The village is enviably located on a principal bus route that runs between Chippenham and Swindon, via Malmesbury and Royal Wootton Bassett. Brinkworth residents have a regular public transport service to multiple key settlements and their wide range of employment opportunities, education and health services, and other facilities.

2.3 The village has a reasonable range of established community services and facilities including the church, village hall, recreation field, pub, and small-scale employment opportunities including serviced office accommodation at Brinkworth House, although the village lacks a centrally-located community shop for meeting convenience and everyday shopping needs.

2.4 Combined, this makes the village a strong candidate for appropriate housing growth as part of the development strategy for the next Wiltshire Local Plan.

2.5 There is also a very clear opportunity to boost the sustainability and self-sufficiency of the village through provision of new community facilities, including a rural enterprise hub (flexible meeting and work space for small businesses and individuals), a farm shop/convenience store for everyday shopping, and parking for the church. Such facilities might be readily delivered in conjunction with appropriate housing growth, whilst a growing population would also help sustain existing facilities such as public transport services, the village pub and school.

3. The Sites and Proposed Development

Overview

3.1 Church Farm is centred on a collection of traditional and modern farm buildings, accessed directly from the B4042, around 150m west of the village church.

3.2 The Farm extends to include agricultural land parcels north and south of the village centre, as shown indicatively on the map below at Fig.1 and Land Registry plan at Fig.2 (referred to in this note as 'Site 1' and 'Site 2'). The Farm also has land to the south of the village and mainline railway, and further afield, which is not subject of this call for sites submission.



Fig.1 - Broad location plan of Church Farm and associated land with the location of the existing farmyard identified by the red star. (Google Maps base)

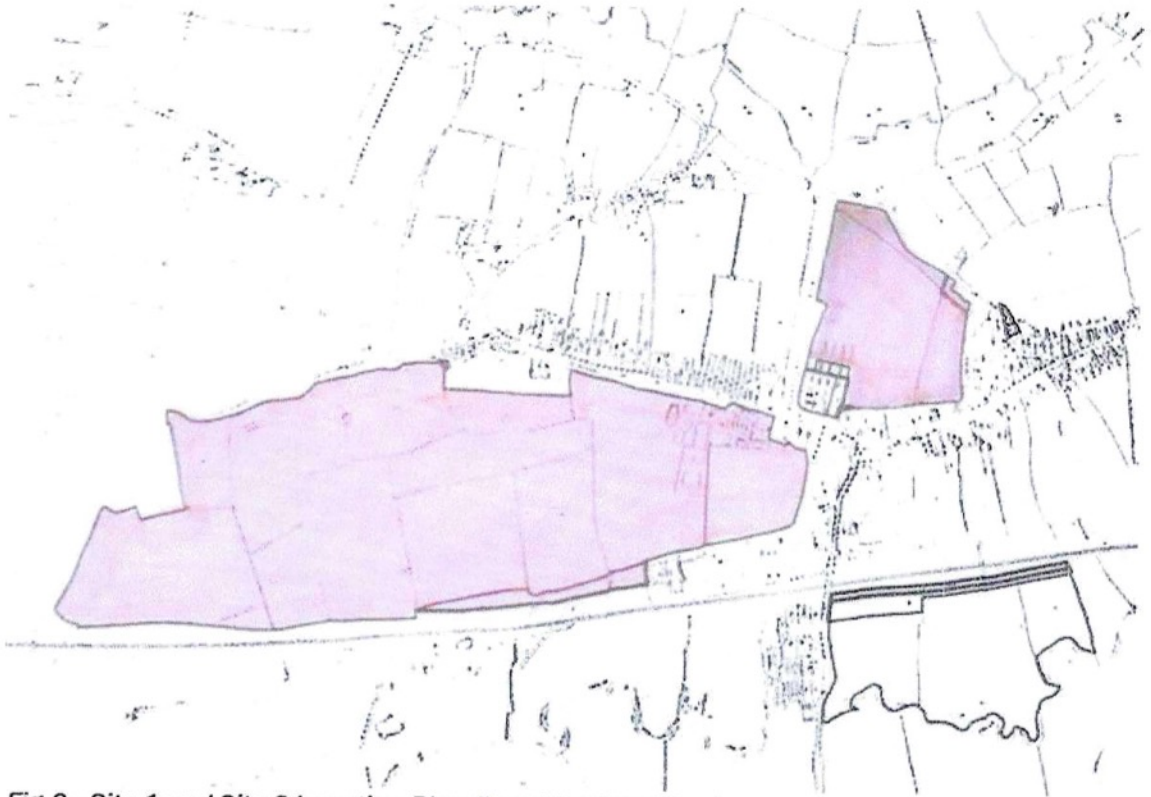


Fig.2 - Site 1 and Site 2 Location Plan (Land Registry Plan)

Site 1

3.3 Site 1 comprises the farm yard area and adjoining fields (permanent pasture) to the south of the B4042 and west of the village Church. The total area extends to approximately 35Ha and the land falls from north to south by 15 - 25m towards the Dauntsey Vale.

3.4 Current vehicle access to the land is obtained from the B4042, into the farm yard area (Fig.3), and via Causeway End, around 400m west of the main farm entrance.



Fig.3 – Photograph looking east along the B4042 showing Church Farm entrance on right.

3.5 Other points of vehicle access are physically possible along The Causeway and via the back lane running west from School Hill, on the southern side of the site (Bridleway BRIN26, as shown on the plan at Fig.9 below).

3.6 Site 1 is generally contained by infrastructure and residential development to the north (B4042, housing), east (School Hill, housing and church) and south (railway line and Railway Cottages). However, the western end of the site is open countryside and the site is generally open in character, as shown on the representative photographs below, taken from the church yard (Fig.4) and midpoint of the Causeway corresponding with Footpath BRIN27(Fig.5).

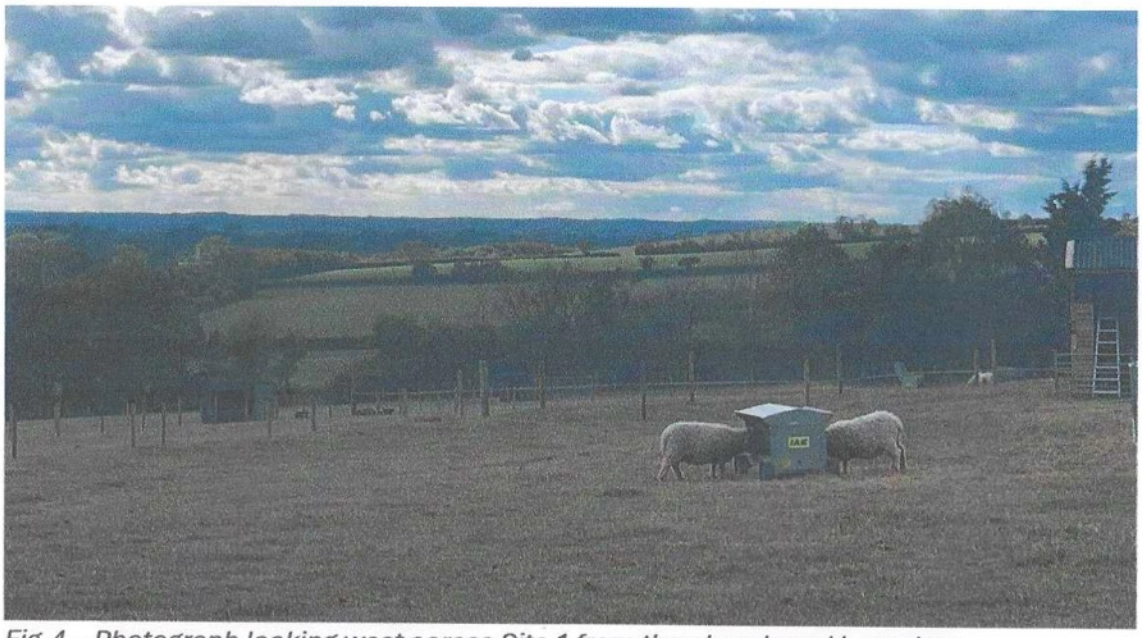


Fig.4 - Photograph looking west across Site 1 from the churchyard boundary.



Fig.5 – Photograph looking southeast across Site 1 taken from The Causeway entrance to Footpath BRIN27.

3.7 The Church Farm farmyard comprises traditional and modern farm buildings of various sizes, hardstandings, storage areas, and a slurry bed.

3.8 The therapy farm occupies the easternmost field, neighbouring the village church, and it includes a modest timber shelter for a collection of animals (donkeys, sheep, goats, etc).

Site 2

3.9 Site 2 is to the north of the B4042, set behind existing housing. It comprises neighbouring fields (permanent pasture) with a total area of approximately 6.5 Ha. The land gently falls south to north by around 10m.

3.10 Vehicle access to the land is currently obtained from the B4042 via a short track passing between dwellings, on the southern side of the site, as shown in the photograph below (Fig.6). There is scope to improve this access point in support of residential development as visibility is generally good.



Fig.6 – Photograph of the current vehicular access to Site 2 from the B4042.

3.11 Other points of vehicle access to Site 2 could be achieved along the B4042, Barnes Green on the eastern side, and Shoemaker Lane that runs along the northern boundary.

3.12 Site 2 has residential development on its southern and eastern boundaries. Brinkworth Cemetery is located on the western side of the site and open countryside is found to the north, beyond Shoemaker Lane. Ramps Hill is a feature in the local landscape, located around 500m to the north (Fig.7).



Fig. 7 – Photograph looking north across Site 2 towards Ramps Hill

The Proposed Development

3.13 The two sites are put forward for residential and employment /community use development, and public open space.

3.14 Church Farm would be retained as a working farm, meaning that some existing farmyard buildings, land and infrastructure would be retained in agricultural use. Additionally, the owners would continue to offer and provide suitable space for the therapy farm on land within its ownership.

3.15 It is recognised that the combined area of the two sites is extensive and that future housing yield would reflect the emerging locational strategy for the Local Plan (the strategic role of Brinkworth in meeting prevailing housing and other development needs over the new plan period), as much as having regard to local/site-specific opportunities and constraints.

3.16 Residential development at one or both of the submitted sites will bring with it opportunities for habitat/landscape improvements and creation of new public open spaces (eg. allotments, equipped play areas, orchards, new hedgerow and woodland planting, SuDS), complementing retained pastures and the therapy farm. The aspiration for a permanent recreational field is also noted in the Parish of Brinkworth with Grittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2024-2038 (BGNDP).

3.17 Overall, there is clear opportunity to mitigate appropriate housing development and significant potential for associated material public benefits within the current land ownership.

3.18 Residential development would be most suitable towards the eastern end of Site 1 (whilst respecting the setting of the church, and on assumption that the therapy farm is moved to another suitable location if necessary) and at Site 2, where it would be physically well-related to the existing settlement pattern, require limited supporting infrastructure, and where visual encroachment into surrounding open countryside is minimised and capable of mitigation. This approach would put new residents is short walking distance of the established village centre and its facilities.

3.19 This approach can reasonably yield around 100 – 150 dwellings, with supporting employment/community space and public open space, without significant adverse effects, thereby making a valuable and sustainable contribution towards the identified need for approximately 3,500 dwellings per annum over the new Local Plan period, based on the Government's standard methodology.

3.20 Residential development at this scale would naturally include a range of house sizes, types, and tenures. Prevailing policy-compliant affordable housing is assumed and specialist forms of accommodation could also be included, such as sheltered housing for older people, in line with local community needs and aspirations.

3.21 The existing farm yard area presents an opportunity for new community services and facilities, either through conversion of some of the existing farm buildings or new development, linked to new housing. As suggested above, this could include employment, community, and retail spaces, with associated off-street parking areas. Such facilities would benefit from the central location on the B4042 frontage, close to existing bus stops.

3.22 The arrangement of any new community facilities will need to be compatible with the continuing working farm, noting that the large steel portal frame building set back from the B4042 behind older buildings will be retained along with appropriate yard area and means of access for farm vehicles.

3.23 On assumption that Brinkworth (and other such villages) will need to contribute strategically (but proportionately) towards identified housing needs, the two sites put forward here are considered to be sustainable opportunities for village growth, offering significant scope for improving the local community's access to high quality housing (including affordable housing) and local services/facilities.

3.24 There are no known constraints that would necessarily preclude or delay residential development at either site.

4. Relevant Site Planning History

4.1 The Council's online records present no planning history for the sites.

5. Planning Appraisal

5.1 This section considers the main planning issues associated with potential residential development at the sites, with reference to local designations as necessary.

Development Strategy

5.2 Brinkworth is currently classified as a 'Small Village' in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and consequently there is no defined Settlement Framework Boundary.

5.3 As a fourth tier settlement, policy support is currently given to a limited level of development that responds to local needs and which helps to retain the vitality of village communities. This would generally comprise infill development within the existing built up area, with exceptions considered under the neighbourhood plan process or through the Core Strategy's exception policies.

5.4 All development in the village would be expected to respect its existing character and form and protect sensitive landscape areas.

5.5 The BGNDP was made in July 2025. The Vision refers to limited and sustainable development, driven by local housing and employment needs, and enabling young and old members of the community to reside within the Parish.

5.6 Since preparation and adoption of the BGNDP, housing need in Wiltshire has substantially increased (from around 1,500 to 3,500 dwellings per annum), prompting the Council to recently withdraw a pre-submission version of the Local Plan and start the process again under new plan-making regulations.

5.7 Whilst a general continuation of the established settlement hierarchy and associated apportionment of development needs can be anticipated, lower order settlements including large and small villages can be expected to have to deliver much more housing over the new plan period to meet the standard method requirement. This is likely to require housing growth in more sustainable villages beyond traditional infilling and exceptions.

5.8 Brinkworth is considered to be a strong candidate for major housing and related growth on account of its public transport accessibility, existing infrastructure and potential for improvement, and ability to promptly deliver development that is well-related to the existing settlement pattern.

5.9 The adverse effects of development are capable of being mitigated in appropriate circumstances, and should not substantially outweigh the benefits, as would be the case with the two sites put forward in this submission.

Public Rights of Way

5.10 The local PROW network is shown on the plan extract at Fig.8 below.



Fig.8 – Wiltshire Council – Rights of Way Explorer

5.11 Development at the sites can maintain and enhance this network, including improved wayfinding, maintenance, and year-round access initiatives such as improved surfacing and lighting where appropriate.

Transportation

5.12 As mentioned previously, Brinkworth is located on a principal bus route (Fig.9) offering residents regular public transport access to multiple key settlements and their wide range of employment opportunities, services, and facilities. This includes access to main line rail services from Chippenham or Swindon.



Fig.9 – Connection Wiltshire Plan Showing Principal Bus Services

5.13 Major development at the sites will be expected to provide appropriate infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians, linking in to established networks. To cater for an increased local population, improvements to existing public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure can be contemplated as part of the masterplanning process. In this regard, the BGNDP sets out a range of community aspirations, including local improvement to footpaths, that can be taken into consideration.

5.14 Overall, the village can be regarded as a sustainable location for development. Development at the sites will support sustainable patterns of movement and need not give rise to any significant adverse effects on the transport network or on highway safety. Opportunities to improve local walking, cycling and public transport can be supported through major housing development.

Local Green Space

5.15 The BGNDP designates 'Local Green Spaces' which are afforded protection, as shown on the plan extract below (Fig.10).



Fig.10- BGNP Map B: Policy BG04 Local Green Space

5.16 Local Green Space 6 – The Verge (on The Causeway) is located on part of the northern boundary of Site 1, coinciding with a gap in built development along the B4042. This is a thin strip of open grassland containing trees and hedgerow and it allows intermittent but extensive views over Dauntsey Vale, albeit with no public footpath located on this side of the highway for most of its length.

5.17 BGNDP Policy BG11 (Local Development) supports infill development within small gaps within existing built-up areas subject to criteria. Development is to be avoided in 'key breaks' and the edges of the main built up area along main roads are defined. The break along 'The Verge (on The Causeway)' Local Green Space (see below) is one such gap that is considered important for the character and form of the settlement.

5.18 The Causeway represents a constraint to development at Site 1 and a key consideration will be ensuring that the value of this identified Local Green Space is not unduly harmed by future development. Any adverse effects would need to be outweighed by the public benefits of development or suitably mitigated.

Ecology and Biodiversity

5.19 The Sites are not located close to any designated areas such as SSSI or LNR according to DEFRA Magic mapping. The Sites are not on a Priority Habitat Inventory and they do not appear to have any unusual sensitivities or features of high ecological/habitat value, but this will need to be confirmed through specialist surveying.

5.20 Development at the Sites will need to retain and enhance features such as trees and hedgerows, whilst also demonstrating biodiversity net gain, noting that the BGNDP encourages delivery of at least 20% net gain.

5.21 Given the extent of ownership, and being realistic about the potential development yield on the submitted sites, there would be opportunities for significant biodiversity net gain including opportunities for new tree and hedgerow planting.

5.22 It is reasonable to expect that sensitively designed and well-considered development can avoid significant harm to the natural environment and also provide appropriate measures of mitigation where necessary.

Loss of Agricultural Land

5.23 Natural England Agricultural Land Classification mapping for the South West Region shows that the two Sites are Grade 3 but have a low likelihood of containing 'Best and Most Versatile' Agricultural Land (<20%). Accordingly, the quality of the land should not be identified as a constraint to potential future development.

Flood Risk and Drainage

5.24 Site 1 is located in Flood Zone 1 and accordingly is at low risk of flooding form surface water and local rivers.

5.25 The northern part of Site 2 is at higher flood risk, as shown on the GOV.UK Flood Map for Planning extract below (Fig.11). Any future development at Site 2 can exclude the area at higher flood risk.



Fig.11 – Extract from Flood Map for Planning showing Site 2 areas of higher floor risk.

Local Amenity

5.26 Well-designed development at an appropriate density at one or both of the Sites would ensure that the privacy and general amenity of established neighbouring residents is adequately protected through careful master planning. This may include suitable landscape/open space buffer zones alongside existing houses and building at an appropriate height and scale.

5.27 It is assumed that sensitive development schemes would have no materially adverse amenity impacts on existing local residents and would also provide high standards of

amenity for new occupants, including meeting appropriate standards for private and public amenity space.

Heritage

5.28 Historic England mapping shows that there are heritage assets in the vicinity of the Site. The nearest assets are the village Church (Grade 1 listed building) and associated monuments in the churchyard (all Grade II), along with the Brinkworth War Memorial (Grade II) and the Old Rectory (Grade II). The locations of these assets are shown on map extract at Fig.12.

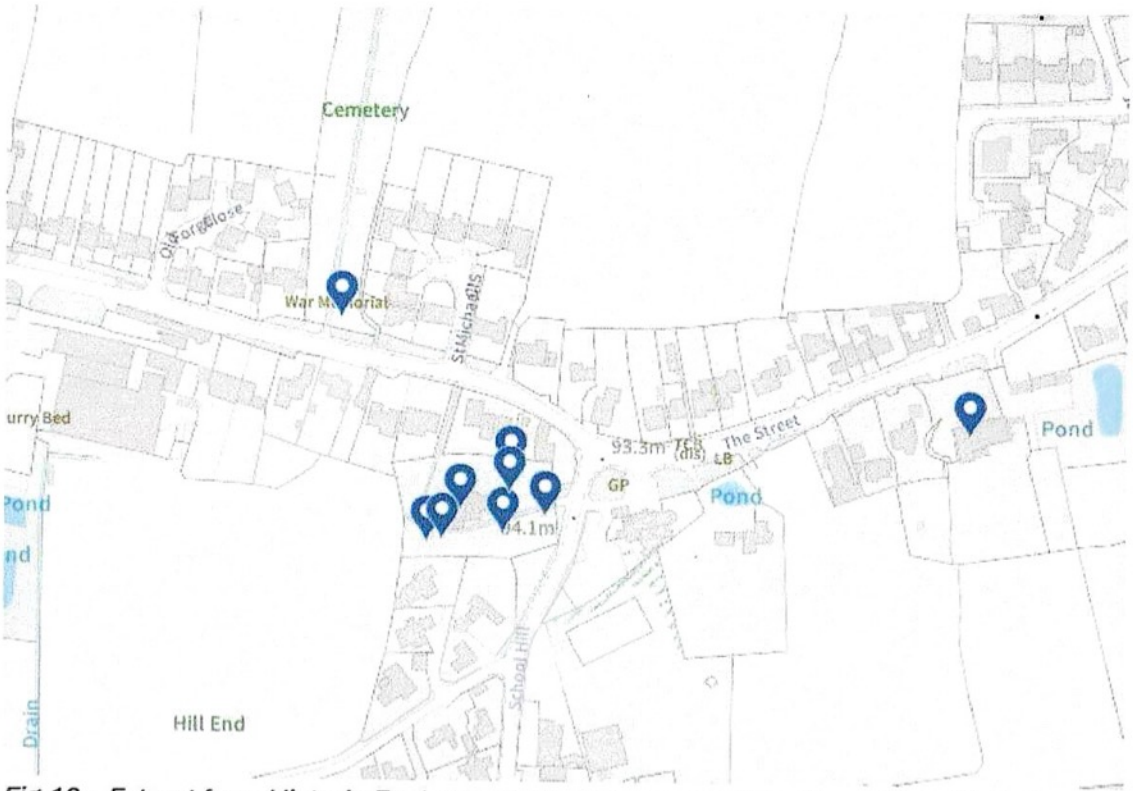


Fig.12 - Extract from Historic England Map Search showing location of listed buildings

5.29 The eastern end of Site 1 shares a boundary with the churchyard and the church tower is prominent in views across the site, especially as it is on higher ground. Built development at this end of the site would need to be handled sensitively in order to mitigate potentially harmful impacts on the setting of the church, albeit recognising that the setting of the church is already predominantly developed and residential in character.

5.30 The BGNDP also identifies non-designated heritage assets, including those shown on the plan extract below in the vicinity of the Sites (Fig.13)

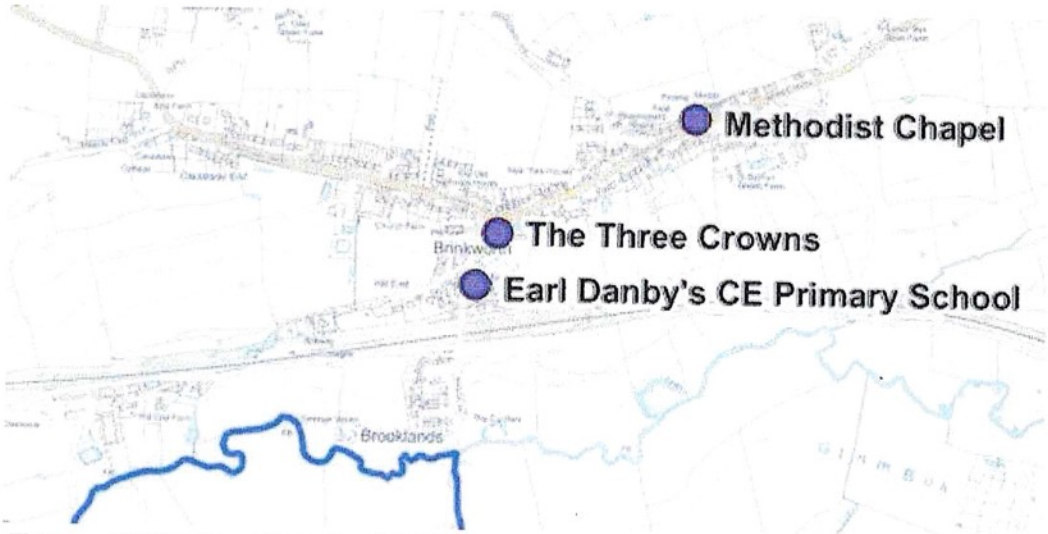


Fig.13 - BGNP Map C: Policy BG07 – Non-Designated Heritage Assets

5.31 Overall, the Sites are not sensitive in terms of built heritage and no significant harmful effects on heritage assets are likely to arise from well-designed residential development.

Key Views

5.32 The BGNDP identifies key views that should be maintained and/or enhanced through development, including those shown on the plan extract below (Fig.14).

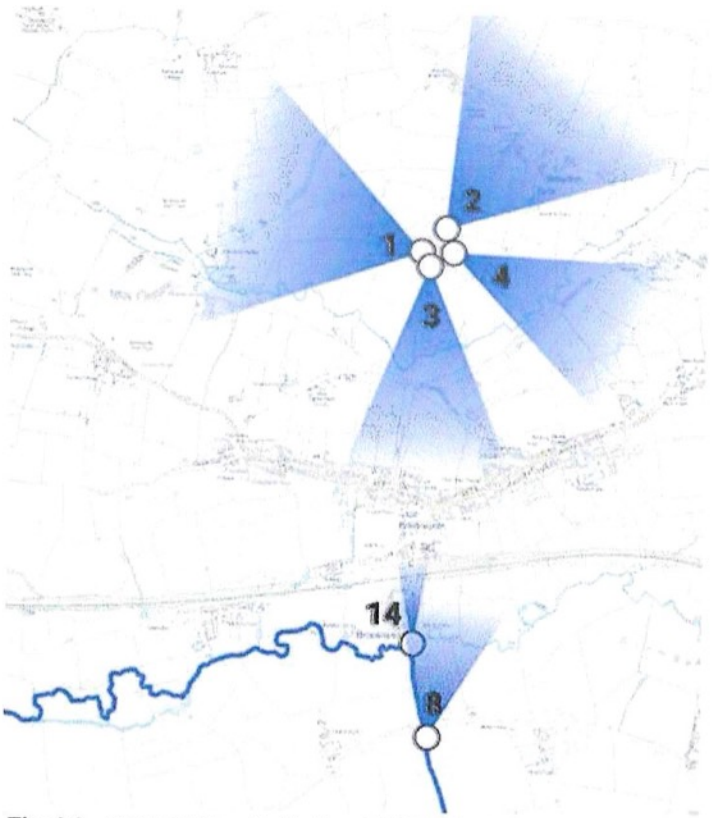


Fig.14 - BGNP Map A: Policy BG03 Key Views

5.33 'Key View 3' is the elevated view from Ramps Hill looking south towards the village church. Site 1 is positioned to the west of this viewing corridor, behind established housing, and new housing would not materially impact on this view. Site 2 is positioned within this viewing corridor, in the foreground of current development located along the B4042. Residential development on Site 2 would have an urbanising effect on Key View 3 but this will be mitigated due to the topography, with new development sat below existing housing and not obscuring views towards the church.

5.34 'Key View 14' is a view of the village church looking north when approaching along School Hill. 'Key View 8' is a longer distance view from Brinkworth Road/School Hill junction where the church is seen on the ridgeline, set within its residential setting. It is unlikely that development at Site 1 and Site 2 will be visible from Key View 14 but there is potential for development at Site 1 to be visible in longer distance views from the south including Key View 8, set below the ridgeline.

6. Summary

6.1 This Briefing Note has introduced two potential development sites close to the centre of Brinkworth village. They are put forward for residential use along with employment and community uses, including public open space.

6.2 The working family farm will continue for the foreseeable future and a current therapy farm ('Dave and Ewe') will continue to be accommodated within the current ownership.

6.3 Brinkworth is noted as a sustainable location for growth due to established public transport connections with key settlements.

6.4 It is suggested that the sites could yield around 100-150 dwellings and supporting uses in combination, as part of the development strategy for the new Local Plan.

6.5 The analysis indicates that this level of development can complement the village, enhance its facilities, and not give rise to any significant adverse effects. There is ample scope for mitigation and delivery of public benefits within the land ownership (new community/employment/retail space, landscaping and habitat creation, new public open spaces, etc.).

6.6 There are no known constraints that would necessarily preclude or delay residential development.

6.7 It is confirmed that the Sites can be made available for residential and associated development at short notice and early on in the replacement Local Plan period.

6.8 The Local Planning Authority is respectfully invited to put these Sites forward as options for residential/mixed development in the new Local Plan.