DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
- 8 JUL 2008
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Design and Access Statement

Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre.
Proposed Medieval Village
- a supporting statement.

As part of the continuing development of the interpretation of the Medieval Period, and in compliance with Policy BE1 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan, it has been proven that replica buildings can provide an effective enhancement of the interpretation of medieval life that is currently undertaken on this site. Temporary Planning Consent was granted to build a number of buildings in a fenced off area now known as "Ambion Parva Village"; or 'Little Ambion'. (This is in respect of the disused medieval village to the west of the Centre that was called Ambion Village – this village died out some time after 1345).

The three traditionally framed timber structures presently on site consist of a 2 storey hall, known as Captain's Retreat; a single storey cruck cottage known as Gunner's Cruck; and a 2 storey building known as The Old Salt Road Inn.

The site was awarded temporary planning permission (ref:- 2006/0583/04) running from June 2006 until June 2009.

The site chosen for the village is opposite the Tithe Barn Restaurant, and is passed immediately on entering the site from the public car park. The topography of the site allows the placing a number of buildings in this context with minimal visual impact from the surrounding area. The nearest residential property that could see any of the proposed buildings is over 0.5km away. To help reduce the visual impact the majority of the buildings will have natural washes on the external walls and have thatched roofs (though initially a bright colour, within a matter of weeks will 'mellow' to a dull brown / grey colour). The buildings have been positioned in such a way that there will be a number of different roof heights, angles and profiles to reduce any obvious intrusion on the skyline.

From an historical perspective the buildings are generic replicas, showing examples of the type of structures one might have found in a rural context, throughout the midlands during the medieval period. However they are to be laid in such a manner that they create a plausible 'village' layout.

The impact on the biodiversity of the site will be minimal. The grass has been regularly mown short for over 20 years. Tents have also been erected on the site throughout the summer season with a number of events being held there.

In 2003 a nearby pond was drained and a new one dug. Great Crested Newts were trapped and subsequently moved to the new pond which had specifically designed habitat / nesting sites constructed nearby. There is now a stone track and solid fence between the pond and the proposed site. It subsequently felt that there would be minimal / no adverse effect on the newts, but a finger tip search would be carried out prior to any work being carried out on a new structure by qualified staff.

All villages needed water, Ambion was no exception, but there were no steams running through the village. Ambion Parva also has no stream, so a well, "Diggers Dell", would also need to be in the village. However this would simply be a prop; and a small structure would be placed on the existing ground surface to represent the well, and give a focal point to the 'village green', or village centre.

In the last 5 months, including 6 weeks of holidays (up to 30/04/08) over 1700 school children have used the village, i.e. approximately 125 children a week; while over 800 members of the public have visited the village during the first 3 weekend events. Prior to the village being started living history events were based solely around tents and were free (a small charge is now levied). Numbers are therefore difficult to gauge. However there were no school groups in the equivalent time period.

The buildings are not an attempt at 100% authentic replicas; but more of a three dimensional visual experience 'bringing history alive'.



This can be seen in the use of some of the materials. Soft wood frames would be extensively used rather than oak, and the roofs would be only a representation of thatching. However the joints and style are medieval. This conforms to Policy REC26 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan.

To allow maximum access to the village as a whole and as many different areas within the village, some medieval features of the buildings may be altered.

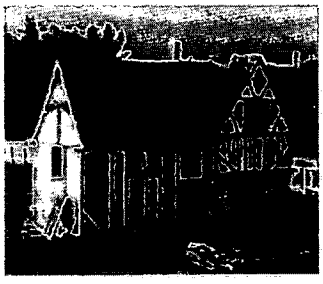
These predominately are doorways, where thresholds would have minimal height differences, widths would be wide enough for wheelchairs, and clearances would be as high as reasonably possible. It must be remembered however, that the ground undulates and there may well be occasions where access is via steps or wooden thresholds.

Ambion Parva already has proved very popular with all user groups visiting the site, and numbers have increased accordingly. However it is also popular across the whole year, so though visitor numbers are up, it is spread over 12 months rather than seasonally as before. This conforms to Policy NE5 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan.



The Existing Buildings.

Captain's Retreat.



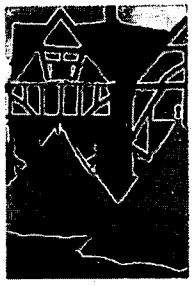
The Captain's Retreat is a two storey construction in a box frame style – the box gives maximum internal space and is easily added too. This is typical of medieval homes in the Warwickshire / Leicestershire area. The weight of the roof is spread throughout the frame and the corners are locked together by wall plates and tie beams. This house is actually made up of two separate buildings being a 13th century Hall, which is open to the rafters and the later 15th century cross wing addition, which is jettied and so has two floors. The jetty construction results in the weight of the floor being counterbalanced by the weight of the roof above.
The addition and consequent change in use was common and reflected the development from a hall with a central hearth to a desire for private living quarters and separate kitchen or solar.
The house has a working fireplace and chimney in the cross wing.
Height to the eve is approximately 3.0m.
Height to the ridge is approximately 6.0m.
Floor area covers approximately 39sq.m.

Gunner's Cruck Cottage.



The Cruck Cottage is a lower status building with four massive timbers extending from floor to ceiling to support the weight of the roof. The wall timbers are less regular and reflect the use of materials as they are available, both new and reused.
Height to the eve is approximately 1.8m.
Height to the ridge is approximately 4.9m.
Floor area covers approximately 35sq.m.
Both the Captain's and the Gunner's are temporary buildings that will, in the fullness of time, need to be replaced.

The Old Salt Road Inn



A Medieval Inn would have been found in most medieval towns, ale and mead, the drink of choice, would have been brewed on site. Adults and children alike drank ale as an alternative to the dirty water. The name given to our inn is due to existence of an old salt road that runs across the Battlefield Heritage site, near to the village.
Height to the eve is approximately 3.5m.
Height to the ridge is approximately 6.0m.
Floor area covers approximately 50sq.m.

The village can be used throughout the school year for any school group who visit the Heritage Centre as part of their studies. At present our main curriculum area covered is key stage 3 history (11 – 14 year olds). However we are able to offer educational support to GCSE, A level students, adult learning groups and even key stage 2 children (8's & 9's).
The site is also available throughout the year to support lifelong learning, potentially by using audio guides or interpretation boards. This allows members of the public to experience the village during the week without a guide. During the weekends either an historical interpreter or members of the in house re-enactment team are available to walk visitors around the site.

The Additional Buildings.

There will be an additional 6 plots within Ambion Parva.
These would be:-
"The Granary"
"The Chapel"
"The Stables"
"The Hot Workshop"
"The Hot Sutlry"
"Mick's Cottage"

"The Granary"
Nearly every village would have a large open plan barn (normally for the church's tithe). This building is an amalgam of 2 areas. The first would allow our main school sessions to take place within the Granary where space is a mandatory requirement while giving easy access for the interpreters to their kit.
The building would be representative of a single storey timber framed barn with a 'thatched' pitched roof with a single central ridge. Access would be through large double wooden doors in the front gable end.

The second part of the building would house two 8' x 20' steel storage containers. These hold the re-enactors' weapons and other assorted items used within the village.

This would help reduce the time and effort required to setup, and break camp; as well as protect the value of some of the kit. With this in mind it is felt that these containers need to be within easy reach of the village. This part of the building would therefore be a four sided façade, to hide the containers from public view.
Height to the eve would be approximately 1.8m.
Height to the ridge would be approximately 7.0m.
Floor area would cover approximately 123sq.m.

"Mick's Cottage"
Due to the fact that simple cruck cottages would have made up the largest percentage of buildings within any Medieval village. The last building within Ambion Parva would be another cruck cottage similar to "Gunner's Cruck". This would allow us the ability to create a village green effect, for the public at the top end of the 'area', while allowing us maximum flexibility for demonstrations (such as archery) in the bottom half of the 'area'
Height to the eve would be approximately 2.14m.
Height to the ridge would be approximately 5.19m.
Floor area would cover approximately 34.5sq.m.

"The Stables"
To finish off the existing Inn, a building suitable for groups to sit in and have lunch in will be added to the eastern wall
The building would be representative of a single storey timber framed barn with a 'thatched' pitched roof falling away from the Inn. Access would be through large double wooden doors in the front façade, and via an internal (existing) door into the Inn.
Height to the eve would be approximately 2.0m.
Height to the ridge would be approximately 3.2m.
Floor area would cover approximately 35.5sq.m.

"The Hot Workshop"
A workshop would allow us to interpret some of the crafts that would have been seen in everyday life. These would include stick making, hurdle making, green wood working (pole lathe), pot making, or weaving. However it is felt that it would be useful to have the ability and capacity to run a small forge from this building (both water and electricity are located in the "King Dick's shed" situated immediately behind this area). This building would therefore need to incorporate an effective and safe working fire area.
The building would be representative of a single storey, predominately timber framed workshop with a 'thatched' pitched roof with a single off centred ridge. Access would be through large double wooden doors in the front façade.
Height to the eve would be approximately 2.14m.
Height to the ridge would be approximately 4.0m.
Floor area would cover approximately 30sq.m.

"The Hot Sutlry"
With the large numbers of re-enactors on site, the ability to produce hot food that is hygienically prepared, is essential. Historically this has been on open fires, but this has always proved troublesome. A purpose built building, which the public would be ale to look into (rather than enter), would be a useful addition to the village. There has already been great interest from the public in the social and domestic aspects of medieval life and a simple building from which talks and demonstrations can be given would enhance the visitor's knowledge and enjoyment.
The building would be representative of a single storey timber framed building with a 'thatched' pitched roof with a single off centred ridge. Access would be through a door on the gable end or / and on the rear façade.
Height to the eve would be approximately 1.8m.
Height to the ridge would be approximately 4.0m.
Floor area would cover approximately 40sq.m.

"The Chapel"
Religion played such a fundamental part in medieval life that it would be remiss not to have a building depicting the religious aspect of this period.
This building would be ideally made of stone (funding dependant) and would be orientated east / west. Access would be via the west door.
Height to the eve would be approximately 3.5m.
Height to the ridge would be approximately 7.0m.
Floor area would cover approximately 47sq.m.

Extra requirements in consideration for the application.

As well as the buildings for Ambion Parva, showing the domestic aspects of medieval life; it would be badly amiss not to also show other aspects of village life.
All men over the age of 12 had to (by law) undertake their longbow practice at the village butts. With this in mind, it would be a mistake not to have our own village butts in Ambion Parva. The position of these would be determined by the area of the site. (See Below)

All the buildings would be made using wooden beams and plywood infill. Theses would be sealed around the edges using exterior mastic before being "rendered" using exterior aertex. All interior floors would be concrete screed, made to look like flagstone or cobbles, to reduce the risk of trips and aid access for all.