

East Devon Local Plan 2020-2042

Site Selection report Addendum – Historic Environment Site Assessment Exton



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 East Devon District Council is preparing a Local Plan covering the period 2020 to 2042 that will allocate sites for development. The site selection process is a judgement that balances top-down strategic issues relating to the Local Plan district-wide housing and employment requirements and the spatial strategy for the distribution of development, with the specific factors in the site assessments. For each settlement, a Site Selection report¹ contains the assessment of sites and identifies those which will be allocated, alongside those that will not, with reasons why.
- 1.2 The Regulation 19 Publication Draft Local Plan consultation took place from February to March 2025. Historic England identified major concerns for some sites, relating to the impact upon the historic environment. This report is an addendum to the Historic Environment Site Assessment prepared for the site at Exton (Wood_28) where Historic England required further assessment.

¹ Site Selection reports are available at: [Evidence and Examination Library - Site Allocations \(SAL\) - East Devon](#)

2 Site Reference Wood_28

Site details

Settlement: Exton

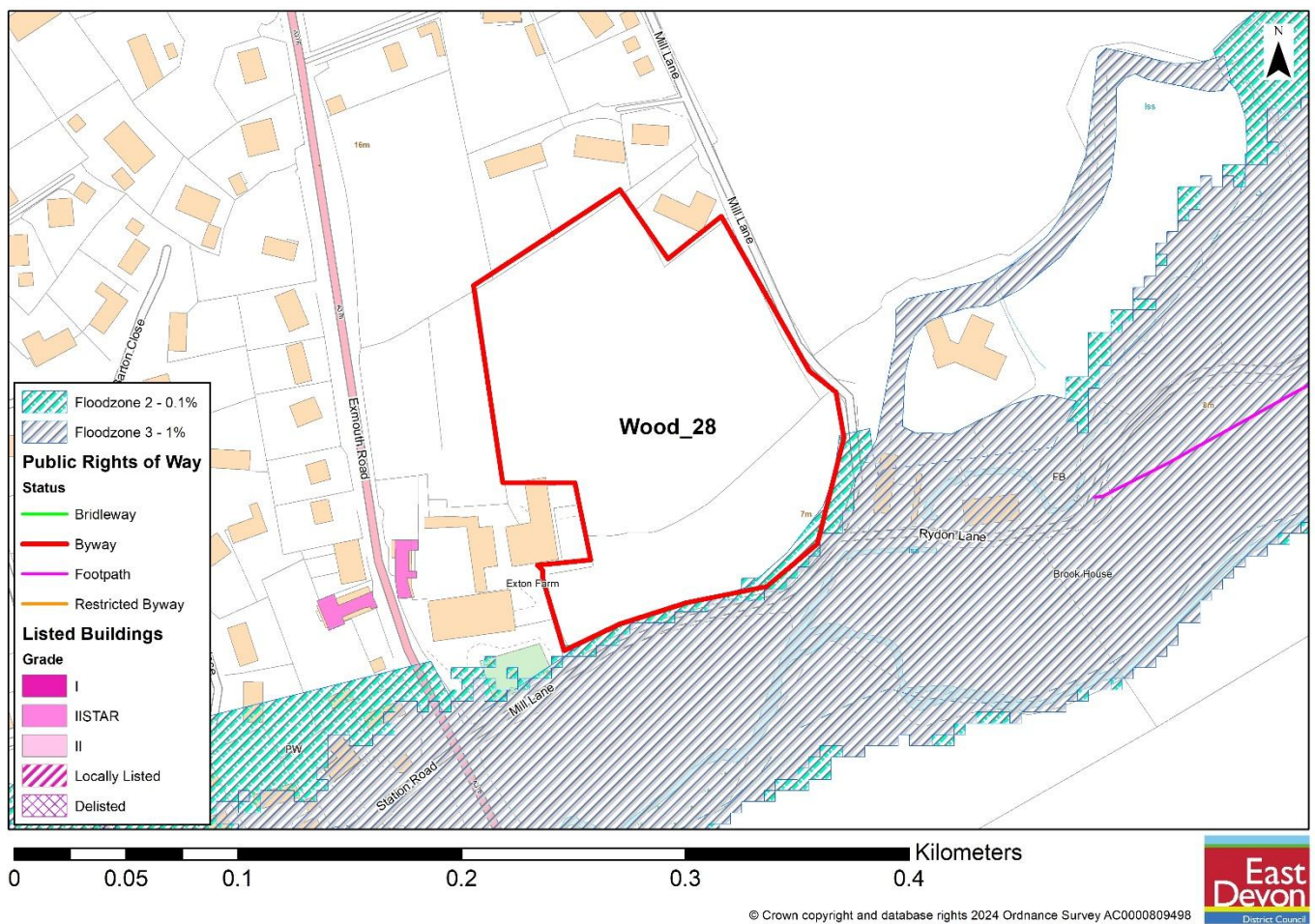
Reference number: Wood_28

Site area (ha): 2.2

Address: Land to the north and east of Exton Farm, Exton,

Proposed use: Residential

Site map



Photos



View from A376 showing Grade II* listed Exton Farmhouse on the left, rooftops of existing dwellings visible over the single storey barn in the centre, and farm buildings on the right



View from field gate on Mill Lane, looking west across the northern field. Farm buildings block views of Exton Farmhouse, with only the ridge of the farmhouse visible



Zoomed in photo from field gate on Mill Lane, showing the ridge of Exton Farmhouse above existing farm buildings



View from Grade II* The Belvedere tower at Powderham. Wood_28 is located under the black arrow

Historic Environment Site Assessment

Notes on history of area

The location of Exton on the banks of the River Exe meant it was established to provide homes for mariners and other coastal occupations. The area has a history of large and fertile farms, adapted for market gardening in the mid-19th century. The introduction of the railway in the 1860s cut off the shoreline from the village. As farmland was developed for housing, Exton has become home to commuters and retired people, with most properties being large individual homes with their own grounds. There are several listed properties in the south east part of the village, include two Grade II*, but apart from that there few heritage assets in the village.

Overall conclusion

Medium: no significant effects which cannot be mitigated. An impact is predicted, but would not compromise the asset(s) cultural heritage value to the extent that the attributes that led to its designation, or ability to understand or appreciate its value, are diminished or compromised. Mitigation may make the impact acceptable. The overall significance of the asset would not therefore be materially changed.

Step 1. Identify any heritage assets potentially affected	
Is the site within 100 metres of a designated heritage asset?	Yes Grade II* listed Exton Farmhouse 46m to west. Grade II* 1 Exton House 75m to west. Two Grade II listed dwellings 120m to south/south west.
Could development of the site affect any heritage asset (designated or non-designated) or its setting?	Yes. Northern part of site is visible from Grade II* listed Exton Farmhouse, albeit views are partially obstructed by the existing single storey barn north east of the farmhouse. Development could affect the rural/agricultural setting of the farmhouse. Grade II* 1 Exton House is on the opposite side of the A376 with no views or relationship with Wood_28, so development would not affect this asset. The two Grade II listed dwellings to south/southwest have glimpsed views of site, but intervening trees and hedgerow limit these views, so development would not affect these assets. Views of the site from Grade II* listed The Belvedere Tower at Powderham, but the distance (3.3km), low trajectory of the views, and the context of existing buildings adjacent to the site, mean development would not affect this heritage asset.
List any heritage assets potentially affected.	Exton Farmhouse.

Step 2. Existing contribution of site to significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 1	
Description of asset	<p>Exton Farmhouse – Grade II*. C17th Roughcast Cob on stone footings with brick gable end and patching, thatched gabled-end roof on farmhouse, with C19th alterations and large extension on south side with tiled roof. Property based on a three-room cross passage plan form, not usually seen in Devon and is unusual in its size and elevated sense of status, with projecting first floor porch and quality of architectural detailing.</p>
Significance of asset and setting	<p>Key elements of Exton Farmhouse’s special architectural or historic interest (from the Heritage Impact Assessment for planning application 19/2132/MFUL):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High architectural and aesthetic interest with clear phasing. • Good level of survival of interior features and plan form. • Contribution made by the open courtyard to the east, albeit not currently of high quality, especially given that this is now the principal access. <p>The setting of the building is important to its significance. The busy road (A376) to the west detracts from its setting, but the surrounding fields to the north and east form the remaining rural/agricultural setting.</p>
Relationship of site with heritage asset	<p>The site forms part of the remaining rural/agricultural setting to the heritage asset. The remaining vernacular farm buildings to the east of the asset would be considered curtilage listed. The northern part of site is visible from the heritage asset over the existing single storey barn north east of the farmhouse.</p> <p>Note: the farm structures to the east of the farmhouse have planning permission for redevelopment (19/2132/MFUL). The brick barn (West range) is being converted. The South barn is being demolished, with a new range in brick with timber clad South elevation being built to mirror the east range. The North barn (NE of farmhouse) will be partially retained and partially rebuilt at the same height and overall scale as the existing barn and will be used for garaging for the farmhouse. The East end on the NE barn will be part of the development and rebuilt at the same height to provide additional living space for unit 1 of the brick barn conversion. Therefore, partial views above the barn to Wood_28 and dwellings on Mill Lane from the farmhouse and A376 will remain.</p> <p>New units to the East in place of the long barn will maintain the current footprint and so will not change the relationship between the farmhouse and Wood_28. The existing vegetation between Wood_28 and the West new build range will be retained but ‘trimmed back’.</p>

Level of contribution (site to heritage asset)	Moderate.
Further assessment required?	No.

Step 3. Identifying potential impact on significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 1	
What impact would development have on the heritage asset and its setting?	<p>Development would adversely affect the link between the farmhouse and its remaining rural/agricultural setting to the east, harming its significance. The impact would not just be visual but would also introduce greater noise and smells.</p> <p>The north/north west part of site is visible from Grade II* listed Exton Farmhouse, albeit views are partially obstructed by the existing single storey barn north east of the farmhouse.</p> <p>However, the farm structures to the east of the farmhouse have planning permission for redevelopment (19/2132/MFUL), so the character of the farmhouse will evolve from being a working farm to a substantial domestic dwelling and as such, the setting is likely to reflect this through a level of gentrification and change.</p> <p>The setting of the asset is already compromised by the busy road (A376), and the existing dwellings in the vicinity, including four around 180m to the north east that are visible from the asset.</p> <p>The change in context from the approved development (19/2132/MFUL), along with other detractors in the vicinity (busy road, existing dwellings), lessens the impact of developing Wood 28 upon the farmhouse and its setting.</p>
Could the site be developed in a way that minimised potential impact?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Careful consideration of layout, design, building height and landscaping.</p>
Would the development affect the heritage asset in other ways?	No.

Step 4. How to maximise enhancements and avoid harm	
Heritage asset 1 maximising enhancement	
Could the development improve public access to and interpretation of the heritage asset?	No, the existing farm buildings obstruct public access from the site to the heritage asset. However, public access will be possible when the farm structures to the east of the farmhouse are redeveloped (planning permission 19/2132/MFUL).
Would development enable further research and recording of the heritage asset?	No.
Would development enable better revealing of the significance of the heritage asset?	Yes – retaining the northern part of the site as open space will enable public views of the asset from its remaining rural/agricultural setting.
Would development enable the asset to be removed from the at risk register?	Asset is not on the at-risk register.
Heritage asset 1 avoiding harm	
Are there reasonable alternative sites?	No – only two sites are under consideration in Exton. The scale of development from both sites is consistent with the Local Plan spatial strategy.
Could the site boundary be changed to avoid harm?	No, the site reflects existing field boundaries, and there is insufficient justification to change the site boundary. However, development layout can minimise harm, such as retaining the north/north west part of the site as open space.
Could the amount of development be reduced to avoid harm?	Yes, potentially by restricting the amount of development in the northern part of the site.
Would a different type of development (use) avoid harm?	No.
Could design avoid harm?	Yes. Retain the north/north west part of the site as open space. Lower building heights on rising land to the north east. Use of building materials that complement the farmhouse and the Devon farm location, with the use of red brick, timber cladding and slate roof for the new dwellings. Retain historic hedgerow, create new native hedges.
Notes	Further detail on layout should be considered through the planning application process. As a broad guide, retaining the north/north west part of the site as open space equates to around 0.5 hectares, still leaving sufficient area for a site capacity of 39 dwellings in the remaining 1.7 hectares.
