

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 25 July 2017
DIRECTORATE: Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
HEAD OF PLANNING: Peter Baguley

APPLICATION REF: N/2017/0757

LOCATION: Delapre Abbey , London Road

DESCRIPTION: Additional car parking provision to include disabled and coach parking, additional pedestrian and delivery provision, lighting and fencing

WARD: Delapre & Briar Ward

APPLICANT: Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust
AGENT: BCAL Consulting

REFERRED BY: Head of Planning
REASON: Council owned land

DEPARTURE: No

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 **APPROVAL** subject to the conditions as set out below and for the following reason:

Subject to planning conditions imposed, the impact of the proposed development on the character, appearance or historical significance of the listed building, the registered Battlefield and Delapre Conservation Area would be outweighed by the public benefit arising from the development, with no unduly adverse impacts on neighbour amenity, road safety or drainage. The impact of the proposal on the registered Battlefield has been minimised by appropriate site selection of the proposed car park and the proposal would assist with the overall project to restore the Abbey and bring it back to viable use and thereby accords with Policies S10 and BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies E20 and E26 of the Northampton Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for additional parking to serve Delapre Abbey, providing 128 general car spaces in total, an increase of 82 above the current provision, as well as 6 disabled parking spaces and 2 coach spaces. The additional parking provision would come from remodelling and extension of the existing parking areas and the provision of an additional grasscrete parking area. The proposal differs from the previously approved scheme, as altered by a minor amendment in July 2016, only in the detailed design of the parking layout.

- 2.2 The proposal also includes a pathway to visitor reception, new fencing and railings and lighting plus CCTV cameras to the car park. Originally proposed was a delivery loop for the restaurant to the front of the 18th Century Stable Block but following concerns being raised by Historic England and the County Archaeologist, this has been amended to a drop off bay only and relocated further away from the Abbey

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The site of this proposal includes the existing car park area, which would be reconfigured, and a grassed area adjacent to this, within the grounds of the Abbey. This grassed area is located to the north of the drive, before the main Abbey buildings and is adjacent to one residential property (Park Cottage).
- 3.2 The site is within the Delapre Park Conservation Area as well as the registered Battle of Northampton site. The Abbey buildings are Grade II* listed.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 In October 2013 an application was approved for the repair and refurbishment of Delapre Abbey, 18th Century Stables and Coach House and change of use to include functions/events, conferences, guided tours, visitor and heritage centre and ancillary retail, offices, café and restaurant, and holiday lets. An associated application for listed building consent for the works required was also approved at that time.
- 4.2 Subsequently applications for associated works have also been approved, mainly for advertisement consent but also for a disabled toilet, café facility and the siting of temporary buildings.
- 4.3 Application N/2015/1498 for the formation of a parking area was approved in March 2016 and the layout was subsequently amended under application N/2016/1010 which was approved in July 2016 by the Planning Committee.

5. PLANNING POLICY

5.1 Statutory Duty

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014) and Northampton Local Plan (1997) saved policies.

Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities when considering development to pay special attention to preserving a listed building or its setting and to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

5.2 National Policies

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the current aims and objectives for the planning system and how these should be applied. In delivering sustainable development, decisions should have regard to the mutually dependent social, economic and environmental roles of the planning system. The NPPF should be read as one complete document. However, the following sections are of particular relevance to this application:

Paragraph 17: states that planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

Paragraph 126: states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

Paragraph 131: in determining applications Local Planning Authorities should take account of: The desirability of sustaining the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic viability and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 132: when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the assets conservation and any harm should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Paragraph 133: where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, LPA's should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.

Paragraph 134: Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

5.3 West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides an up to date evidence base and considers the current Government requirements for plan making as it has been prepared in full conformity with the NPPF. Policies of particular relevance are:

Policy S10 – Sustainable Development Principles – requires development to satisfy a range of sustainable development principles including through achieving the highest standards of sustainable design; protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural built environment and heritage assets and their settings.

Policy BN5 - The Historic Environment- which sets out that heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced and that where heritage assets are at risk they will be appropriately conserved and managed.

5.4 Northampton Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)

Due to the age of the plan, the amount of weight that can be attributed to the aims and objectives of this document are diminished, however, the following policies are material to this application:

Policy E9 Locally Important Landscape Areas gives special importance to the impact of proposals to the character of locally important landscape areas.

Policy E20 which states that the design of any new building or extension should adequately reflect the character of its surroundings in terms of layout, siting, form, scale and use of

appropriate materials and that development should be designed, located and used in a manner which ensures adequate standards of privacy, daylight and sunlight.

Policy E26 which states that development must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area, and not include the demolition of any building which makes a significant contribution to the character or appearance of the area.

Policy E38 which states that planning permission will not be granted for development which would adversely affect the character or setting of a nationally important ancient monument (whether scheduled or not), important historic landscape or the site of the battle of Northampton.

5.5 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

The Site of the Battle of Northampton Conservation Management Plan 2014
Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

6. **CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

Comments received are summarised as follows:

- 6.1 **County Archaeologist** – The delivery loop should be deleted from the plans, other below ground elements can be dealt with by a suitable mitigation strategy.
- 6.2 **Environment Agency** – No objection to the above application and no Flood Risk Activity Permit is required.
- 6.3 **Historic England** – Acknowledges the need for an appropriate transport management system and security measures including a suitable lighting scheme to support the long term sustainable use of the Delapre Abbey site. Concerned by the quantity and design of the proposed lights, and the visual impact of these installations in this sensitive area of the main approach to the principal building. Would recommend that the number of lanterns is reduced significantly. The safety and security requirements of the site could potentially be met with a scheme that responds more sensitively to its particular historic character. The proposed new vehicular loop with associated gated access points would not be in keeping with the character of the polite architectural style associated with the stable block and the main house and as result would have a harmful impact. Therefore recommend that the current proposals are amended taking account of opportunities to reduce the harm caused.
- 6.4 **NBC Conservation** – The revised plans remove the previously proposed delivery access route. As now revised, the extent and layout of the car park is similar to that granted consent in 2016 and will have no greater impact on the character and setting of the listed buildings and Delapre Park Conservation Area. The delivery bay is acceptable. The proposed 6 metre high lamp standards will be visually intrusive but have been justified as necessary to create a safe environment for users of the car park. The bollard lighting is appropriate and acceptable.
- 6.5 **Public Protection** – No objections or comments.
- 6.6 **Lead Local Flood Authority** – This application is outside the scope of applications on which the Lead Local Flood Authority would comment, therefore refer to standing advice.
- 6.7 **Local Highway Authority** – The Traffic Management Plan submitted is sufficient to ensure that the proposed development will not negatively impact the highway network.
- 6.8 One letter of objection received from a neighbouring occupier, making the following points in summary:

- Traffic Management - need to advise users that the drive is a single track road with passing places, especially people unfamiliar with the drive. This needs to be a condition on any planning approval.
- Security - there have been recent issues including theft, damage, anti-social behaviour. There needs to be appropriate security to deal with this. There was a proposal to install gates at the end of the drive which appear to have been dropped. The council have a responsibility to consider community safety.

7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The issues to consider are the impact on the registered Battlefield, the Conservation Area, the setting of the listed building and on the amenities of adjoining occupiers, with particular reference to the difference in impact of the current proposals in comparison to the previously approved scheme.
- 7.2 In this respect, the layout of the parking area itself is very similar to that previously approved, with only minor variations in the detailed layout of spaces. The car park would be finished with a grasscrete surface and a non-invasive methodology would be adopted in terms of the method of construction. It is not considered, therefore, that there would be a significant impact, over and above that which has been previously assessed and considered to be acceptable.
- 7.3 In terms of the impact on adjoining occupiers, the car park would be close to the boundary with the garden of the neighbouring occupier Park Cottage. There would be landscaping provided between the parking spaces and the garden, which would provide some separation. The visual impact of the car park when not in use would also be minimised, as it would retain a green appearance and would not be marked out with lines.
- 7.4 However, it is considered that parking close to this neighbouring property would have more of an impact in the evenings. However, the impact of this can be satisfactorily mitigated by the management of the car park. This traffic management would enable control over where vehicles are parked on the site as well as access arrangements, reducing congestion. The car park will be covered by CCTV cameras which would help to deter potential anti-social behaviour in the area.
- 7.5 As with the previous application, some of the existing trees within the site would need to be removed. The extent of the work would be similar to what was previously proposed and received permission. It is not considered that the work would have any greater impact than previously considered acceptable. Nevertheless, details of tree protection measures will be required and a condition to this effect is recommended.
- 7.6 It is recognised that some impact will inevitably result, but this must be balanced against the need for parking to be provided, to allow the listed building to function as a visitor attraction and thereby secure its long term viable future. The public benefit to return the Abbey to long term viable use would outweigh any less than substantial harm that the proposal would incur.
- 7.7 It can also be noted that the submitted Traffic Management Plan has now been agreed by the Local Highway Authority, and a condition is proposed to require that the development is carried out in accordance with this plan. Notwithstanding the concerns raised by the local resident, it is considered that traffic safety would not be compromised by the proposal.
- 7.8 In addition to the minor changes to the layout of the car park, other changes are proposed in the current application, which have resulted in an increased site area for this development. For this reason it has not been possible for the current proposals to be submitted as a non-material amendment application, as was the case with the previous car park alterations.

- 7.9 The most significant of these changes was the introduction of a turning loop for delivery vehicles. The justification given for this is the need for deliveries to be made in close proximity to the restaurant. However, this proposed turning loop would have encroached upon important elements of the approach to the Abbey. This led to concerns being raised by Historic England and the County Archaeologist. As a result, this element of the proposals has been removed and replaced with a delivery area further away from the Abbey buildings. This would lead to much less encroachment and would have less than substantial harm to the character and setting of the Abbey and the Conservation Area.
- 7.10 A further element of the proposal is for the installation of new fencing and gates around the site, specifically between the car parking area and the main entrance to the Abbey. This also resulted in concerns being raised by Historic England, who have commented that the style and position of these features is not in keeping with the architectural style of the building and would have harmful impact. As a result, this element of the proposal would be omitted and a planning condition is recommended to confirm this.
- 7.11 Another new element to the scheme is the detailed design of lighting for the car parking area and access paths. The proposed lighting will take the form of pathway lighting bollards (0.6m high) and lighting columns with lanterns (6m high) in and around the perimeter of the car park. These also led to concerns being raised by Historic England, in particular relating to the number and type of lighting proposed, although not the principle of providing lighting to the area. In order to reduce further delay in the construction of the car park, it is considered that further details in terms of the number of lighting columns and design could reasonably be dealt with by planning condition, so that further details could be submitted and further consultation could be carried out with History England. This will allow other elements of the scheme to proceed, to enable the Abbey to be opened to the public in good time.
- 7.12 The proposal also includes the provision of CCTV cameras in around the car park area. They will be fixed to 4m high metal columns. Due to the fact that the car park will be located in a secluded corner, CCTV cameras are essential to improve security of the site, this is a point also raised by local residents. It is acknowledged that these are modern addition to the area, bearing in mind their simple design and removable nature, it is considered that their installation would not result in significant harm to the setting of the Abbey and the Conservation Area.
- 7.13 It is considered that the proposed revised car park layout would not cause unacceptable impact on the character and setting of the listed Abbey, Battlefield and the Conservation Area. Any impact would consider to be less than substantial and will be outweighed by the benefit to provide parking to serve the Abbey.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 In conclusion, the majority of the alterations to the parking area are minor in nature and would have no significant additional impact when compared to the previously approved scheme, either on the historic setting, the amenities of adjoining occupiers or the highway network. The detailed elements of the proposal, which are of concern to Historic England and the County Archaeologist, can be required to be amended by planning conditions as recommended below and as such can be overcome without delaying the commencement of works, It is considered that the proposal complies with Development Plan Policies and the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. CONDITIONS

- (1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- (2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 5489-61 A, 5489-63 A, 5489-64 B, 5489-65 A, 5489-66 A, 5489-67 A, 5489-70 A, 5489-SL-01, BS5837 2012 Tree Survey, A124/EI-01 B, A124/EL-02 B, A124/SEC-02 A

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to accord with the terms of the planning application

- (3) Development shall take place only in full accordance with the programme of archaeological work as set out in Ian Soden Heritage Services Report dated 21/03/17, updated as appropriate to take into account the revisions to lighting as required under Conditions 4 and 5 of this permission.

Reason: In the interests of archaeological research in accordance with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. This is a pre-commencement condition to prevent any damage to archaeological remains which would otherwise occur.

- (4) Notwithstanding the submitted details, full details of lighting including the number and design to be used within the car parking areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall be put into place prior to the commencement of the use of the car park hereby approved and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of security and the prevention of crime, in accordance with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- (5) Notwithstanding the submitted details, a detailed scheme of hard and soft landscaping for the parking area shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include, where present, the location and species of any existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development, in accordance with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- (6) All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the completion of the development, and which shall be maintained for a period of five years; such maintenance to include the replacement in the current or nearest planting season whichever is the sooner or shrubs that may die are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased with others of similar size and species.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development, in accordance with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- (7) The site shall be operated in full accordance with the BCAL Traffic Management Plan (Project Number 5489, Issue Date June 2017) upon first use of the car park hereby approved and shall continue to be operated thus thereafter.

Reason: To manage the impact on the highway network and to protect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and for the prevention of crime, in accordance with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- (8) This permission does not confer consent for the proposed fencing and gates as shown on the submitted drawings.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to prevent detrimental impact on the setting of the listed buildings and conservation area in accordance with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- (9) Prior to the commencement of any work in respect of the laying out of the overspill parking area hereby approved, where such works would be within the Root Protection Areas of any trees, details of tree protection measures to be used together with details of the method of construction of the parking area (which for the avoidance of doubt shall be a “no dig” method) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Within this area all works shall be carried out using the approved construction method, no vehicles shall be driven, nor plant sited, no materials or waste shall be deposited, no bonfires shall be lit nor the ground level altered during the periods of development.

Reason: In order to ensure adequate protection of existing trees on the site in the interests of achieving a satisfactory standard of development and maintaining the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the Listed Buildings, in accordance with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. This is a pre-commencement condition to enable timely submission of details.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

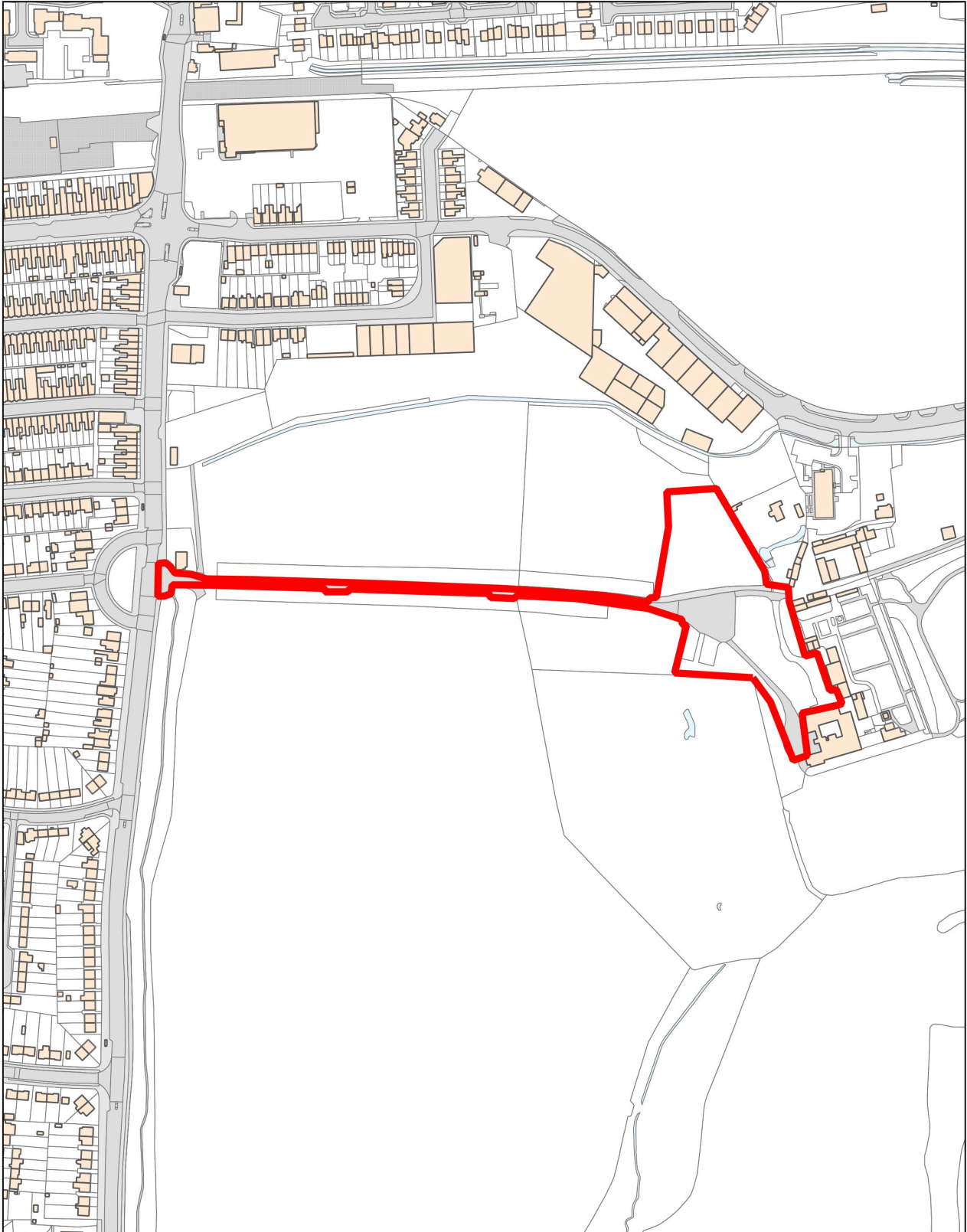
- 10.1 Application File N/2017/0757.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The development is CIL liable.

12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

- 12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.



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Scale: 1:3,500

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