



Wain Estates (Land) Limited

Wilderness Park, Land North of Wilderness Lane, Great Barr

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL AND GREEN BELT

ASSESSMENT

October 2023

FPCR Environment and Design Ltd

Registered Office: Lockington Hall, Lockington, Derby DE74 2RH

Company No. 07128076. [T] 01509 672772 [E] mail@fpcr.co.uk [W] www.fpcr.co.uk

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CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION 2

2.0 METHODOLOGY..... 3

3.0 PLANNING POLICY 8

4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS..... 14

5.0 LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS 22

6.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS 24

7.0 GREEN BELT 29

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 34

FIGURES

- Figure 1: Site Location Plan
- Figure 2: Aerial Photograph
- Figure 3: Landscape Character
- Figure 4: Landscape Sensitivity
- Figure 5: Designations
- Figure 6: Topography Plan
- Figure 7: Visual Appraisal
- Figures 8-14: Photo Viewpoints
- Figure 15: Green Belt

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: LVA Methodology and Appraisal Criteria
- Appendix B: Landscape Effects Table
- Appendix C: Visual Effects Table

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been carried out for the proposed residential development at Great Barr, Birmingham by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (FPCR). The purpose of this LVA study is to provide an assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. The landscape and visual effects have been considered in relation to the proposals detailed in the Development Framework Plan (Drawing Reference: 09364-FPCR-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0010) and the Design and Access Statement.
- 1.2 FPCR is a multi-disciplinary environmental and design consultancy established over 65 years, with expertise in architecture, landscape, ecology, arboriculture, urban design, masterplanning and environmental impact assessment. The practice is a member of the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and is frequently called upon to provide expert evidence on landscape and visual issues at Public and Local Plan Inquiries.

Site Location

- 1.3 Figures 1 and 2 show the location and context of the site. The site is situated on the north-western extend of Great Barr, Birmingham and lies to the south of the A34 Birmingham Road and to the north-east of Wilderness Lane.

Proposed Development

- 1.4 The proposed development is for up to 150 dwellings a new countryside park, and associated works.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 This LVA has been prepared based upon the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, third edition (GLVIA3), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, in 2013. The assessment of Landscape Value also takes account of guidance in Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02-21 "Assessing landscape value outside national designations".

2.2 In summary, the GLVIA3 states:

"Landscape and Visual impact assessment (LVIA), is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity." (GLVIA3 paragraph 1.1.)

2.3 There are two components of LVIA:

- *"Assessment of landscape effects; assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right;*
- *Assessment of visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people."* (GLVIA3 paragraph 2.21.)

2.4 The GLVIA3 states:

"LVIA can be carried out either as part of a broader EIA, or as a standalone 'appraisal' of the likely landscape and visual effects of a proposed development..."

- *As a standalone 'appraisal' the process is informal and there is more flexibility, but the essence of the approach – specifying the nature of the proposed change or development; describing the existing landscape and the views and visual amenity of the area that may be affected; predicting the effects, although not their likely significance; and considering how those effects might be mitigated – still applies".* (GLVIA paragraph 3.2)

2.5 The components of this report include: baseline studies; description and details of the landscape proposals and mitigation measures to be adopted as part of the scheme; and identification and description of likely effects arising from the proposed development.

2.6 In terms of baseline studies, the assessment provides an understanding of the landscape that may be affected, its constituent elements, character, condition and value. For the visual baseline, this includes an understanding of the area in which the development may be visible, the people who may experience views, and the nature of views.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

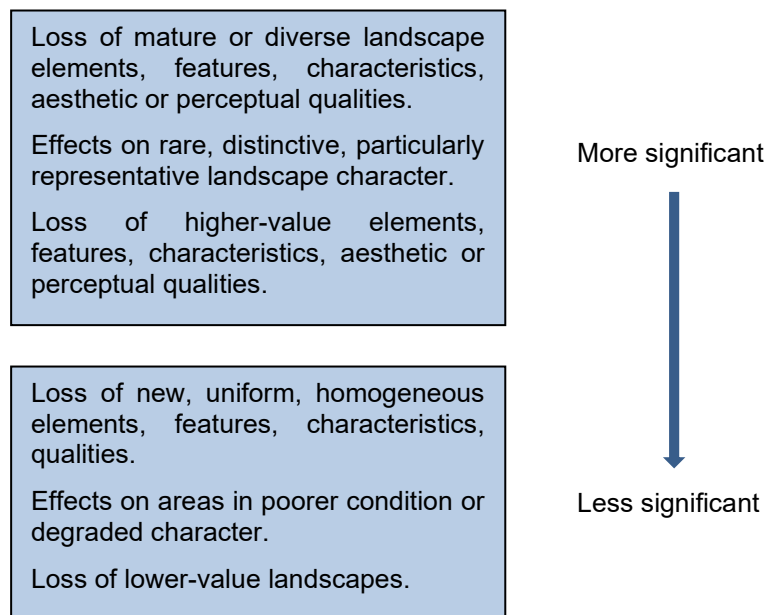
2.7 GLVIA3 states that *"An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource"* (GLVIA3 paragraph 5.1).

2.8 The baseline landscape is described by reference to existing published Landscape Character Assessments and by a description of the site and its context.

2.9 A range of landscape effects can arise through development. These can include:

- Change or loss of elements, features, aesthetic or perceptual aspects that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the landscape;

- Addition of new elements that influence character and distinctiveness of the landscape;
 - Combined effects of these changes.
- 2.10 The characteristics of the existing landscape resource are considered in respect of the susceptibility of the landscape resource to the change arising from this development. The value of the existing landscape is also considered.
- 2.11 Each effect on landscape receptors is assessed in terms of size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. In terms of size or scale of change, the judgement takes account of the extent of the existing landscape elements that will be lost or changed, and the degree to which the aesthetic or perceptual aspects or key characteristics of the landscape will be altered by removal or addition of new elements. Geographical extent is considered by reference to the extent of the area over which there will be a change. Duration is considered for the landscape effects, with short term effects being defined as those lasting less than 5 years, medium term effects lasting between 5 and 10 years and long-term effects being defined as anything over 10 years in duration.
- 2.12 The level of effect is determined by considering the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of effect on the landscape. Final conclusions on the overall landscape effects are drawn from the assessment components described. This appraisal describes the nature of the landscape effects, and whether these are adverse or beneficial, at the following stages of development; construction, completion (year 1) and longer term (year 15).
- 2.13 GLVIA3 sets out some guidance on the underlying principles, which are used in this appraisal. This includes Figure 5.10, Scale of significance. Whilst this scheme is not EIA development, and judgements on significance are not therefore required, the Figure does provide useful guidance on reaching an overall judgement on the level of effects. This is repeated below (note this includes the correction of a typo, from the published document).



- 2.14 The criteria used in the appraisal are set out in Appendix A.

Assessment of Visual Effects

- 2.15 An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity. This appraisal describes the nature of the visual effects and, whether these are adverse or beneficial, at the following stages of development; construction, completion (year 1 Winter) and longer term (year 15 Summer).
- 2.16 The first stage in the assessment is to identify approximate visibility/ visibility mapping. This is done by either a computerised Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)¹, or by manual methods using map study and field evaluation. A series of viewpoints are included within the assessment that are representative of views towards the site from surrounding visual receptors. Other views of the site are included where it supports the description and understanding of the site's landscape and visual characteristics.
- 2.17 The views also typically represent what can be seen from a variety of distances from the development and different viewing experiences.
- 2.18 It is important to remember that visual receptors are all people. For each affected viewpoint, the assessment considers both the susceptibility to change in views and the value attached to views.

“The visual receptors most susceptible to change are generally likely to include:

- *Residents at home;*
 - *People, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views;*
 - *Visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience;*
 - *Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area;*
- Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes tend to fall into an intermediate category of moderate susceptibility to change. Where travel involves recognised scenic routes awareness of views is likely to be particularly high.”* (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.33.)

“Visual receptors likely to be less sensitive to change include:

- *People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape;*
 - *People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity, not on their surroundings, and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life (although there may on occasion be cases where views are an important contributor to the setting and to the quality of working life).”* (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.34.)
- 2.19 Each of the visual effects is evaluated in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration or reversibility.
- 2.20 In terms of size or scale, the magnitude of visual effects takes account of:

¹ Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV): A map usually digitally produced, showing areas of land within which a development is theoretically visible. [GLVIA3]

- *“The scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;*
- *The degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line height, colour and texture;*
- *The nature of the view of the proposed development, in terms of the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses” (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.39).*

2.21 The geographical extent of the visual effect in each viewpoint is likely to reflect:

- The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
- The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development;
- The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.

2.22 As with landscape effects, the duration of the effect could be short to long term or permanent and the same definitions apply.

2.23 GLVIA3 states that there are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and context and with the type of proposal, but the following points should be noted;

- *Effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant*
- *Effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant*
- *Large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view. (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.44)*

2.24 The criteria used in this appraisal are set out in Appendix A.

Overall Landscape and Visual Effects

2.25 The final conclusions on effects, whether adverse or beneficial, are drawn from the separate judgements on the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of the effects. This overall judgement is formed from a reasoned professional overview of the individual judgements against the assessment criteria.

2.26 GLVIA3 notes, at paragraphs 5.56 and 6.44, that there are no hard and fast rules with regard to the level of effects, therefore the following terms have been used for this appraisal:

- **Major**
- **Moderate**
- **Minor**
- **Negligible**

- 2.27 Where it is determined that the assessment falls between or encompasses two of the defined criteria terms, then the judgement may be described as, for example, Major/ Moderate or Moderate/ Minor. This indicates that the effect is assessed to lie between the respective definitions or to encompass aspects of both.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, September 2023)

- 3.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policy and in combination these policies give the Government's vision of sustainable development. The NPPF emphasises the need for well-designed places, promoting healthy and safe communities and conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 3.2 Regarding landscape and green infrastructure, the Natural Environment section of the NPPF provides a policy context for the countryside and green infrastructure. The key objectives include protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and, minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- 3.3 Paragraph 174 states at part a) that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance valued landscapes and goes on to clarify that this should be in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan. Part b) states that planning policies and decisions should recognise "*the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside*".
- 3.4 Paragraph 175 advises that:
"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries".
- 3.5 Paragraph 176 goes on to add:
"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues". And
"The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas."
- 3.6 The site is within an undesignated landscape with no special protected status, and is not in the setting of a nationally designated landscape. The character of the site and its immediate context is assessed within this report to help inform decisions regarding "*the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside*". The potential to enhance green infrastructure networks is also considered.
- 3.7 The NPPF sets out National policy for Green Belts. Section 13 of the NPPF covers Protecting Green Belt land. The site lies within the Green Belt. Paragraph 133 notes that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The NPPF notes that "*The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.*"
- 3.8 Paragraph 134 sets out the 5 purposes of the Green Belt;

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 3.9 Paragraph 141 states that once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.
- 3.10 Paragraph 143 notes that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- 3.11 The PPG was first published on 6th March 2014 and is a regularly updated online planning resource which provides guidance on the NPPF and the planning system. The NPPF continues to be the primary document for decision making.
- 3.12 The guidance includes a section on the factors to be taken in account, when considering the impact of development on the openness of the Green Belt. This notes that openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects - in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume, and that the duration of the development and its reversibility are factors to consider along with the degree of activity, such as traffic generation. (Paragraph 001 Reference ID; 64-001-20190722) from 22 July 2019.

Local Planning Policy

The Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document, Sandwell Borough Council (December, 2012)

- 3.13 The following policies are of relevance to landscape and visual matters and the proposed development:

SAD EOS 2 - Green Belt

- 3.14 Policy SAD EOS 2 relates to the areas designated as green belt within the borough and states;
- 'Within the Green Belt, inappropriate development as defined in PPG2 will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances, where the harm of the development is clearly outweighed by other considerations.'*

SAD EOS 5 - Environmental Infrastructure

- 3.15 This policy relates to environmental infrastructure to be provided as part of new developments and states;
- 'Sandwell will promote environmental infrastructure within all new developments and opportunities should be fully explored to build in environmental infrastructure improvements to existing developments...'*

SAD EOS 10 - Design Quality & Environmental Standards

3.16 Policy SAD EOS 10 states that;

'Prominent sites which act as gateways or landmarks, for example, on the strategic highway network, are particularly important in terms of improving the image of the Borough and this should be reflected in their development.'

3.17 A plan of areas considered to be 'gateways' is included at Appendix 3 of the Development Plan with the site falling within a gateway shown around Junction 7 of the M6. Further guidance is provided within policy SAD DM5 (below).

SAD DM 5 - The Borough's Gateways

3.18 This policy relates to 'gateways' identified within the borough and states;

'When assessing proposals and applications for planning permission that will affect the environment of the Borough's gateways, the Council will apply the following principles:

- *Key landmark buildings, structures and features will be preserved and improved;*
- *The topography of the area will be emphasised in the design and location of new buildings or features;*
- *New development should be of a high quality, architectural design, using good quality, modern materials.*

3.19 The policy also sets out measures for improving the image of the area at gateways including the incorporation of *'Environmental Infrastructure features'*.

Black Country Adopted Core Strategy (February, 2011)

3.20 The following policies are of relevance to landscape and visual matters and the proposed development:

Policy CSP2 Development Outside the Growth Network

3.21 This policy relates to development outside of the Strategic Centres and Regeneration Corridors identified within the core strategy, the site lies outside of these areas. The policy states;

'By 2026, the areas outside the Strategic Centres and Regeneration Corridors will provide:

- *A strong Green Belt to promote urban renaissance within the urban area and provide easy access to the countryside for urban residents where the landscape, nature conservation and agricultural land will be protected and enhanced where practical and possible;*
- *...A strong network of green infrastructure, centres and community facilities;'*

3.22 The policy goes on to state;

'Green Belt boundaries will be maintained and protected from inappropriate development.'

Policy CSP3 Environmental Infrastructure

3.23 Policy CSP3 states;

'Development proposals will need to demonstrate that the strategic network of environmental infrastructure will be protected, enhanced and expanded at every opportunity.'

- 3.24 Measures to achieve this are set out in the policy and include;
- *'Resisting any development that compromises the integrity and quality of environmental infrastructure;*
 - *'Requiring development proposals to improve the quality and quantity of the area's environmental infrastructure in a manner appropriate to the character and needs of the area.'*

Policy CSP4 Place Making

- 3.25 This policy sets out the requirement for developments to have an understanding of the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located and to contribute to place-making. This includes through providing a multifunctional open space network.

Policy ENV2 Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness

- 3.26 Policy ENV2 states;
- 'All development should aim to protect and promote the special qualities, historic character and local distinctiveness of the Black Country ... Development proposals will be required to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance local character...'*

- 3.27 The policy seeks for proposals to sustain and reinforce special character. Amongst the measures listed is to protect are views from the elevated Barr Beacon located approximately 2.5km to the north-east of the site.

Policy ENV4 Canals

- 3.28 This policy relates to canals within the borough, the nearest of which is the Rushall Canal located approximately 250m to the west of the site. The policy sets out a number of requirements including protecting and enhancing the visual amenity of canals. There is no intervisibility between the canal and the site.

Other Relevant Strategies, Guidelines or Documents

Black Country Environmental Infrastructure Guidance Phase, 2009

- 3.29 The Black Country Environmental Infrastructure Guidance (EIG) sets out the following vision;
- 'It's about creating a step change in the image and environmental quality of the Black Country to underpin social and economic transformation as it meets the challenges of growth by delivering high quality, livable and distinctive places, which respect and make the most of the existing diversity of the Black Country's natural and built environment, particularly its canals, open spaces, and industrial and architectural heritage.'*
- 3.30 Phase 1 of the EIG sets the strategic foundations for more detailed work to be delivered through Phase 2. It identifies functions of environmental infrastructure and establishes broad principles and priorities.

Black Country Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, 2019

- 3.31 The purpose of this landscape sensitivity assessment is described as;
- ‘... to provide an assessment of the extent to which the character and quality of the landscape abutting the West Midlands conurbation within the Black Country and around settlements in South Staffordshire is, in principle, susceptible to change as a result of introducing built development.’*
- 3.32 The site forms the northern portion of Landscape Area BL25s1 (see figure 4). The study assesses the sensitivity of a number of characteristics/attributes to establish the overall sensitivity of the landscape areas. The assessment of characteristics/attributes for Landscape Area BL25s1 includes;
- Scale: *‘... Higher Sensitivity to Development: A predominance of small scale fields divided by largely intact hedgerows and hedgerow trees.’*
- Landscape Pattern and Time Depth: *‘Higher Sensitivity to Development: The area north of the M6 contains a well preserved pre-enclosure field system, with ridge and furrow and other cropmarks, and a number of ancient hedgerows and drainage ditches. It is a potential historic landscape area AHHLV25 Peak House Farm Field System...’*
- 'Natural' Character: *‘Higher Sensitivity to Development: A large proportion of the landscape area to the north is identified as priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland, and identified as a potential SINC. There is priority habitat deciduous woodland along the M6...’*
- Built Character: *‘Lower Sensitivity to Development: Built features within the landscape area include Q3 Academy School, Peak House Farm in the north. A pylon route crosses the south of the area, and the M6 cuts through the south of the area...’*
- Perceptual Aspects: *‘Lower Sensitivity to Development: The area's rural perceptual qualities are adversely affected by significant road noise from the M6 and A34. The visual impact of the pylon route running through the south of the landscape area also has a negative perceptual impact.’*
- Visual Prominence: *‘Lower Sensitivity to Development: The landscape area is not visually prominent in the landscape, particularly from the south and west where it is largely screened by woodland and mature hedgerow trees. Higher Sensitivity to Development: More elevated areas to the east along the A34 Birmingham Road are widely visible from large areas of the Black Country.’*
- Inter-visibility with Adjacent Designated Landscapes or Promoted View Points: *‘Lower Sensitivity to Development: The area is not visible from any designated landscapes or viewpoints.’*
- 3.33 The study gives an overall landscape sensitivity score to each of the landscape areas based on a five-point scale as follows; High, Moderate – High, Moderate, Low – Moderate and Low. Landscape Area BL25s1 is judged to be of Moderate landscape sensitivity. The following commentary is provided in relation to the overall landscape sensitivity judgement;
- ‘The landscape area has a moderate landscape sensitivity rating to residential development as it retains many rural qualities, including historic field patterns, ecological value due to the extent of priority habitats and an intact network of mature hedgerows.’*

3.34 The study defines the landscape sensitivity scores as follows;

Sensitivity	Definition
High	The landscape has strong character and qualities with notable features which are highly sensitive to change as a result of introducing built development.
Moderate - High	
Moderate	The landscape has some distinctive characteristics and valued qualities, with some sensitivity to change as a result of introducing built development.
Low - Moderate	The landscape lacks distinct character and qualities and has few notable features, or is robust with regard to introducing built development.
Low	

3.35 The study notes that;

'The relative sensitivity of each landscape area is assessed with respect to the principle of any development without knowing the location, layout, density, form, quantity or mitigation proposed of any development which may be constructed.'

3.36 And that the following scenario has been assessed for residential development;

'Residential dwellings are assumed to be 2-3 storeys – with associated access roads, private gardens and garaging'

3.37 While the study gives an indication of landscape sensitivity for the identified landscape area, the site forms only a proportion of the wider landscape area and the study is limited to assessing the general principle of development rather than specific development proposals or mitigation included within the development.

4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

Landscape Character

National Character

4.1 National Character Area (NCA) profiles have been prepared by Natural England for the 159 NCAs defined across England. These NCA profiles include a description of the natural and cultural features that shape the landscape, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics. Figure 3 illustrates the NCAs and other defined character areas within the context of the site.

4.2 At this very broad landscape scale, the site lies within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 67 'Cannock Chase and Cank Wood'. This NCA stretches from Halesowen in the south to Stafford to the north and therefore covers a very extensive landscape area. The Key Characteristics for the NCA are:

- *'A varied landscape ranging from the open heathlands and plantations of Cannock Chase, through towns, reclaimed mining sites and new developments, to dense urban areas.*
- *The dominant rounded central plateau is mainly formed of the Coal Measures of the South Staffordshire Coalfield, with other prominent hills in the south at Wren's Nest, Castle Hill, Rowley Hills and Barr Beacon.*
- *Extensive coniferous plantations, woodlands and historic parklands occur across the NCA, even within the urban areas where they are predominantly small and include lots of young plantations.*
- *Away from the unenclosed landscape of Cannock Chase, fields generally have a regular pattern and are frequently enclosed by mature hedgerows with some hedgerow trees. Here farming is generally mixed with arable cultivation in large fields. Livery is concentrated around the flanks of the Chase.*
- *Heathland and associated acid grassland were once much more extensive, although significant tracts still remain. Post-industrial sites and remnant countryside within the urban areas provide a mosaic of additional valuable habitats.*
- *The major rivers of the Trent and Tame lie adjacent to the NCA, both of which lie in broad flood plains. Streams and small rivers such as the Sow and the Penk drain radially from the higher ground into these rivers.*
- *The canal network is a notable feature and contributes significantly to the drainage of the urban areas.*
- *Industrial archaeology from the industrial revolution is a characteristic feature.*
- *The predominant building material of the 19th- and early 20thcentury buildings is red brick, with more modern structures within the urban areas.*
- *The settlement pattern is complex and contrasting, with some areas densely populated and others relatively sparse. The conurbation includes a mosaic of urban areas, former industrial land and patches of farmland, with an extensive urban fringe.*

- *The extensive networks of canals and railways reflect the industrial history of the area. Major roads include the M6, the M6 Toll and the A5.'*

4.3 The development presents the opportunity to contribute to Strategic Environmental Opportunity (SEO) 2 through its green infrastructure;

'SEO 2: Manage, enhance and expand the network of green infrastructure, such as woodlands, restored mining sites, parklands and canal routes, to increase biodiversity, access and recreational use and increase understanding of the area's rich industrial heritage, particularly geodiversity.'

The Black Country, A Historic Landscape Characterisation, 2019

4.4 The Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation subdivides the landscape into 51 historic character areas, of which the site lies within character area SD02 'Newton, Hamstead and Great Barr' (**Figure 3**). This character area is described as;

'This Character Area is situated in the north-east of the Borough and is situated on sandstone, mudstone and conglomerate, with coal measure only accessible at some depth. The modern character of the area is dominated by 20th century residential housing, with areas of surviving fields in the north-west of the character area that continue beyond the Borough boundary into Walsall (WL09).

Until the 20th century this area was largely agricultural, crossed by the Tame Valley Canal which opened in 1844. The only colliery in the Character Area was at Hamstead and the discovery of coal in this area prompted the expansion of the settlement of Hamstead in the 1880s. The eastern part of the Character Area was originally part of the Great Barr estate, and was taken over by the Walsall and West Bromwich Guardians in the 20th century. Some of this area has been developed for housing and the rest is now part of Walsall. The Red House Park is a public park in the centre of the Character Area.'

4.5 To the north the site adjoins historic character area WL11 'South East Walsall'. This character area is described as:

'This Character Area is located in the south of the borough, situated on the coal measures at its western edge and on mudstone and siltstone. The modern character of the area is dominated by settlement activity of mid- to late 20th-century origin and the area includes the residential part of central Walsall and its southern, eastern and northern suburbs....'

The eastern half of the Character Area includes several large inter-war and post-war period housing estates. The oldest surviving properties are located on or near the Birmingham Road. However, 1950s' expansion has left these houses as islands of early 20th-century character. The south-east of the Character Area contains substantial open recreational land laid out in the 20th century...'

4.6 The Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies 40 of Areas of High Historic Landscape Value (AHHLV) which are defined as;

'these recognise the quality of the wider landscape and their relative values. The significance of these areas arises from the natural and historic features contained within them (e.g. woodland, watercourses, hedgerows, and archaeological features). The significance of these areas is likely to be derived from their archaeological and historic interests.'

4.7 The site forms part of AHHLV 25 'Peak House Farm Field System', this is described as;

'Archaeological Interest: Representation of Cultural and Natural Heritage

The AHHLV contains a well-preserved example of a pre-enclosure field system. Evidence of ridge and furrow is visible across the site as cropmarks (but no earthworks appear to survive). Prehistoric finds have been recovered within this area and cropmarks indicative of below-ground archaeological remains have also been identified, highlighting the archaeological potential of the area. Many of the field boundaries are marked by drainage ditches linked to the moated site to the south (APA 23) and a number of hedgerows are recorded as ancient hedgerows. LiDAR shows a small mound in the AHHLV (NGR 403764 295377).

The field system is well preserved and contains cropmark remains and findspots suggestive of archaeological potential from Roman or prehistoric times. Drainage ditches in field boundaries link to a possible moated site.

Archaeological Interests: Rarity

The AHHLV contains a locally rare example of early non-parliamentary field pattern. Prehistoric deposits as indicated by the cropmark remains are rare within Sandwell as is the possible moated site which lies in the southern part of the AHHLV.'

- 4.8 The study also identifies 128 Archaeological Priority Areas (APA), defined as:

'Sites with a high potential for archaeological remains of regional or national significance that have not been considered for designation as scheduled monuments, or where there is insufficient data available about the state or preservation of any remains to justify a designation. APAs are likely to have high archaeological and historic interest.'

- 4.9 A small portion of the south-east of the site is designated as an APA (APA 24 Peak House Farm Moated Site).

Designations

- 4.10 Figure 5 illustrates the location of the designations within the site's context. Although landscape designations are not an exclusive indicator of quality, designated landscapes are commonly acknowledged as being of particular importance and sensitivity. While the site lies within the Green Belt is not covered by any landscape quality designation at either a national or local level.
- 4.11 Within the context of the site, there is a registered park and garden at Great Barr Hall. There is no intervisibility between the site and this park, though Merrions Wood north of the A34 is included in this designated area. The wood is also a Local Nature Reserve.

Topography

- 4.12 The following should be read in conjunction with Figure 6.

Context – Landform

- 4.13 The topography of the site's context rises to the east of the site towards junction seven of the M6 and existing settlement in Great Barr before falling again as part of a valley for a minor watercourse. Beyond the watercourse land begins to rise again to the east towards Barr Beacon. Land to the west of the site generally slopes downwards towards settlement at Yew Tree and the Walsall Golf Club.

Site - Landform

- 4.14 Fields in the north-east of the site are more elevated with a high point of approximately 160m AOD located adjacent to the A34 Birmingham Road. The landforms slope's down from the north-east reaching a to a low point of approximately 130m AOD in the site's south-western corner.

Site and Immediate Context

- 4.15 The Context Plan (**Figure 1**) and the Aerial Photograph (**Figure 2**) illustrate the site and its surrounding landscape context.
- 4.16 The field compartments are generally irregular in shape under grassland and comprise outgrown hedges with some hedgerow trees. There is no woodland on site, though some blocks of trees lie immediately to the west within the grounds of the Aston University sports facilities. Land west of the site comprises Aston University sports facilities and some areas of scrub and woodland accessed from the A34 Birmingham Road. There are also a range of buildings and built sports facilities, and the area has a very managed character.
- 4.17 Land east of the site comprises 20th century residential development, with mainly semi-detached and short terraced properties, mostly with sizable gardens. Properties on Peak House Road generally back onto the site and properties on the southern side of Wilderness Lane, front onto the site.
- 4.18 The Q3 Academy, with a range of academic buildings and sports facilities/external space lies immediately to the south and to the north runs the A34 Birmingham Road beyond which are located residential properties.

Landscape Value

- 4.19 In terms of "landscape value" it is appropriate to examine the role of the site and its immediate context in terms of the range of local factors set out in LI TGN 02-21, and summarised in the methodology. This considers the landscape in terms of a range of factors as set out below. As a starting point, landscape designations have been considered.
- 4.20 Landscape Designations: Figure 5 illustrates the location of the designations within the site's context. While the site lies within the Green Belt is not covered by any landscape quality designation at either a national or local level. Within the context of the site, there is a registered park and garden at Great Barr Hall. There is no intervisibility between the site and this park, though Merrions Wood north of the A34 is included in this designated area. The wood is also a Local Nature Reserve.
- 4.21 Natural Heritage: The site is not covered by any statutory ecological designation, a Local Nature Reserve lies to the north west beyond the A34 Birmingham Road and the site is identified as a potential SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation). Development on the site would be subject to ecological surveys.
- 4.22 Cultural Heritage: A registered park and garden at Great Barr Hall lies to the north of the site. There is no intervisibility between the site and this park, though Merrions Wood north of the A34 is included in this designated area. The nearest listed buildings to the site are Walsall (or Merrion's) Lodge approximately 235m to the north-west of the site and Hill Farm Bridge approximately 320m to the south-west of the site. There is a lack of intervisibility between these and the site.

- 4.23 The site is covered by an Area of High Historic Landscape Value (AHHLV) designation (AHHHLV 25 'Peak House Farm Field System') and a relatively small area in the south-east of the site is designated as an Archaeological Priority Area (APA) known as APA 24 Peak House Farm Moated Site.
- 4.24 Landscape Condition: The site comprises farmland with hedgerows and trees, these are generally well established and appear to be in reasonable landscape condition.
- 4.25 Associations: There are no particular associations with the site and its immediate context.
- 4.26 Distinctiveness: The site generally contains no particularly rare or unusual features though its relatively well defined irregular field pattern contrasts with surrounding settlement and sports facilities, and is more unusual in an urban context.
- 4.27 Recreational Value: The site is not publicly accessible. Beacon Way Long Distance Path runs adjacent to the west of the site, a further footpath runs adjacent to the site's boundary with Q3 Academy.
- 4.28 Perceptual (Scenic): The site and its immediate context are not particularly scenic due to the adjacent settlement edge and roads including the A34. The fields and hedges have some local scenic value. There are long views from parts of the eastern fields across to the south-west which gives some sense of scenic quality though extensive development is present in these views.
- 4.29 Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity): The site is not a particularly tranquil or a wild landscape, due to its location adjacent to the settlement and the A34, though away from the settlement edges it has a more natural character.
- 4.30 Functional aspects: The site functions as part of green space within the urban area, but with no public access its value is limited.
- 4.31 In conclusion and having appraised the above factors it is judged that the site and the immediate landscape is of **Medium** landscape value. The historic hedgerow pattern is of greater value and would suggest that the overall value is at the higher end of "medium" but the overall judgement takes account of the other factors which do not score quite so highly.

Visual Baseline

- 4.32 A visual appraisal has been undertaken for the site. This has explored the nature of the existing visual amenity of the area and sought to establish the approximate visibility of the site from surrounding locations and receptors. A series of photo viewpoints have been selected which support this analysis.
- 4.33 Photographs have been taken to illustrate a view from a specific vantage point, or to demonstrate a representative view for those receptors that are moving through the landscape, e.g. rights of way users. The photographs may demonstrate varying degrees of visibility and include both short and long range views. The photographs were taken on the 13th and 23rd of January 2023 and seasonal differences have been taken into account when determining the visual effects on these receptors.
- 4.34 'Photo Viewpoints', as referred to in this report are 'Type 1 Visualisations' or 'Annotated Viewpoint Photographs', as referred to in the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note on 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals' (TGN 06/19).

Photo Viewpoints

- 4.35 An assessment of the likely visual effects of the proposed development upon surrounding receptors is detailed in the subsequent section. Figure 7 details the location of the Photo Viewpoints and Figures 8-14 illustrates the photo viewpoints. They are briefly described below.

Viewpoint 1

- 4.36 Viewpoint 1 is taken from the east of the site and is indicative of the inter-visibility available from this area of the site with the surrounding context. The elevated nature of this viewpoint allows for an extensive view across the surrounding landscape and settlements with large areas of existing development in Walsall and West Bromwich visible as well as distant views to elevated land situated beyond.

Viewpoint 2

- 4.37 This viewpoint looks east from within the site towards existing dwellings off Peak House Road and demonstrates the intervisibility between these properties and the site. Beyond boundary/garden vegetation the existing properties can be seen backing onto the site.

Viewpoint 3

- 4.38 Viewpoint 3 is taken from Wilderness Lane and represents views available to users of the road. The view looks from a field gate across the site towards settlement at Walsall. To the left of the view Q3 Academy school can be seen beyond intervening vegetation.

Viewpoint 4

- 4.39 This viewpoint looks north from Wilderness Lane to the south of the site and represents views available to users of the road on their approach to the site. The grounds of the Q3 Academy can be seen to the left of the view and trees on either side of the road result in a channelled view towards hedgerows along the site's south-eastern corner.

Viewpoint 5

- 4.40 Viewpoint 5 looks north from the footpath which runs adjacent to the Q3 Academy School and represents views available to users of the footpath. There is a view across the site with partial views of development in Walsall as properties off the A34 Birmingham Road where intervening vegetation allows. A mobile phone mast adjacent to the site's northern boundary is also visible.

Viewpoint 6

- 4.41 Viewpoint 6 is taken from Hill Farm Bridge over the Rushall canal and represents views available to users of the bridge and the canal. Vegetation adjacent to the canal prevents views towards the site.

Viewpoint 7

- 4.42 This viewpoint is taken from a footpath which crosses land to the south-west of the site. There is a glimpsed view of land at Aston University Recreation Centre and a partial view of a building at the

Q3 Academy seen above/through intervening vegetation. Vegetation adjacent to the site's boundary prevents views of the site.

Viewpoint 8

- 4.43 Viewpoint 8 is taken from Beacon Way Long Distance Path which runs adjacent to the west of the site and represents views available to users of the route. A view of the site is available seen through established vegetation. Beyond the site there is a partial view of the Q3 Academy.

Viewpoint 9

- 4.44 This viewpoint looks south from the A34 Birmingham Road near the entrance to Aston Recreation Centre and represents views available to users of the road. Views of the site are prevented by vegetation adjacent to the site's boundary.

Viewpoint 10

- 4.45 Viewpoint 10 also represents views available to users of the A34 Birmingham Road and is taken from where the road passes the site's northern boundary. A view of the site's north-eastern corner is available where there is a gap in the site's boundary hedgerow. Beyond the site properties off Peak House Road can be seen.

Viewpoint 11

- 4.46 This viewpoint looks west from the A34 Birmingham Road and represents views available to users of the route. The hedgerow which runs adjacent to the site's northern boundary is visible.

Viewpoint 12

- 4.47 Viewpoint 12 looks east from Thorncroft Lane in Walsall and represents views available to users of the road. There is a channelled view in the direction of the site with elevated land in the south-east of the site visible, beyond which properties along Wilderness Lane can be seen.

Viewpoint 13

- 4.48 This view looks south-east from Walstead Lane and represents views available to users of the lane / residents along the lane. Views of the site are prevented by intervening vegetation.

Viewpoint 14

- 4.49 Viewpoint 14 is taken from Barr Beacon Nature Reserve and represents views available to visitors of the reserve. The elevated nature of this viewpoint allows for expansive views across the surrounding landscape and settlement. Views of the site are obscured by intervening vegetation.

Summary of Visual Baseline

- 4.50 The baseline analysis results in a number of reasoned conclusions which are summarised below:
- The elevated nature of the fields in the east and north-east of the site allows for long views from these locations to settlement to the south-west as well as views back from these locations.
 - Land in the south-west of the site is lower lying and generally well visually enclosed.

- Vegetation adjacent to the site's western and southern boundaries help to filter and screen views of the site with blocks of tree planting within the site's context to the south and west further restricting views.
- The site is visually enclosed to the east by the existing settlement edge.
- To the north the site's visual envelope is restricted by existing woodland including Merrion's Wood.

5.0 LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

Introduction

- 5.1 The existing landscape resource and the visual receptors and amenity of the site have been considered by the design process and have informed the resultant scheme. This approach has entailed collaboration between landscape, urban design, heritage and other professionals. The landscape components of the scheme are an important integral part of the proposals.

Landscape Design and GI Objectives

- 5.2 The key objectives of the landscape and GI proposals for the scheme are to:
- Maintain the function and openness of the green belt by restricting development to the north-east of the site adjacent to the existing settlement edge and establishing the rest of the site as an extensive Countryside Park.
 - Wherever possible retain the site's existing vegetation and set development within the existing field pattern.
 - In general, limit planting to the reinforcement of the existing field pattern to maintain the site's existing character.
 - Introduce new pedestrian routes through the site's GI which connect to existing routes adjacent to the site's boundaries.
 - Relocate Beacon Way Long Distant Footpath within the site to create a more desirable and usable route with the current route being located between tree planting and security fencing at Aston University Recreation Centre.
 - Locating development parcels and housing plots so that where possible they actively face green spaces. This would ensure that development has a positive relationship with the site's landscape features and context.
 - Locate SUDs features to link with the natural drainage pattern of the area.

Landscape and Green Infrastructure (GI) Proposals

- 5.3 The landscape and Green Infrastructure (GI) proposals for the scheme are detailed in the Design and Access Statement accompanying the planning application. In summary these proposals include:
- The provision of approximately 23.09 hectares of land dedicated to landscape, GI, public open space, play and habitat related proposals – representing approximately 85% of the total site area;
 - Establishment of an accessible Countryside Park, with ecological enhancement across the site.
 - Relocated Beacon Way Long Distant Footpath to be incorporated into the west of the site.
 - New informal footpath routes to be provided around the proposed developable area with connections to the relocated Beacon Way Long Distant Footpath and the footpath which runs adjacent to the Q3 academy to the south of the site.

- A proposed LEAP play area to be located close to the proposed developable area in the north east of the site.
- On plot landscaping, including tree planting where practicable, will help further integrate the built development into its surroundings and soften its overall appearance;
- A sustainable drainage system incorporating a series of drainage basins and existing ditches will attenuate the site's water run-off as well as contributing to delivering biodiversity and amenity enhancements; and
- The site's GI will include new / enhanced habitats such as grassland, shrub, hedgerow and tree planting to promote biodiversity.

Landscape Management

- 5.4 All of the landscape areas and public open space features will be managed and maintained. This would be achieved through the implementation of a comprehensive Landscape Management Plan (LMP), to ensure the successful establishment and continued thriving of the landscape proposals.

6.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

- 6.1 The following section outlines the likely landscape and visual effects that would arise from proposed development on the site. Schedules detailing these likely landscape and visual effects for the receptors are included in Appendices B and C respectively. Please refer to these in conjunction with the following descriptions.

Landscape Effects

Construction

- 6.2 The approaches and methodologies to be adopted by the construction of the proposed development would endeavour to minimise any unnecessary effects upon the environment and surrounding receptors. For example, the location and design of temporary site compounds, associated lighting, signage and screen fencing would all take these issues into account.
- 6.3 The landscape character of the site would inevitably change during the construction period and would include the active presence of plant and machinery and the increasing presence of new built development and infrastructure.
- 6.4 Conservation of the majority of existing boundary vegetation would assist in limiting the effects locally and these conserved hedgerows and trees would be protected during the course of the construction activity. The access point along Wilderness Lane, pedestrian access points off A34 Birmingham Road and vehicular routes within the site will require the removal of a sections of vegetation, this removal will be carried out during the construction phase.
- 6.5 It is considered that there will be **Negligible** effects upon 67 'Cannock Chase and Cank Wood at construction. For the site and its immediate context effects will be **Major/Moderate Adverse**. Construction effects will be temporary in nature.

Operation (following Completion)

- 6.6 The site lies within (NCA) 67 'Cannock Chase and Cank Wood' and forms a very small part of this wide National character area. The proposals have the opportunity to contribute to Strategic Environmental Opportunity (SEO) 2 through its proposed GI. It is considered that there will be **Negligible** effects on the overall character area.
- 6.7 In terms of the site and its immediate context, the primary change would arise as a result of the replacement of part of the agricultural land within the site with residential development and associated infrastructure, and the development of the Countryside Park. At present the land receives minimal management and the urban location means it is not viable for stock grazing. Built development would inevitably alter the character of the site and its immediate context, though the proposals are for built development are for a limited portion of the site adjacent to the existing settlement edge, where housing is already a strong part of the character. The majority of the site will form proposed GI with a new accessible Countryside Park, SUDs and footpaths including the re-directed long distance footpath route. The proposals for the site will retain as far as possible and reinforce the existing field pattern highlighted within the AHHLV designation. Effects upon the site and its immediate context are considered to be **Moderate Adverse** with the potential to become **Moderate/Minor Adverse** in the long term as the site's GI matures. The new Green Infrastructure would be a significant benefit.

Visual Effects

Visual Envelope (VE)

- 6.8 The VE is the area from which the scheme could be visible from within the surrounding land. The VE is not however, an indicator of the effect of the proposed development on the view but simply, its visible extent in the surrounding landscape.
- 6.9 The VE of the proposed development is restricted to the north by development north off the A34 Birmingham Road and woodland planting at Merrion's Wood. To the east the existing settlement edge will generally limit visibility to the site's immediate context. From the south there will be intervisibility between the site, the Q3 Academy and the footpath which runs adjacent to the site's boundary though vegetation along the site boundary will help to screen and filter views. In the wider context woodland planting south of the site will restrict the site's VE. Similarly views from the immediate west of the site will be screened or filtered by established trees along the site boundary with views from further west restricted by vegetation within the sports facilities west of the site.
- 6.10 Beyond the Rushall Canal to the south-west of the site some areas of Walsall fall within the development's visual envelope, these areas will experience views of proposals in the east/north-east of the site seen at a relative distance as demonstrated in viewpoints 1, 3 and 12. Viewpoint 1 also demonstrates that the VE of the development extends to areas of West Bromwich though the effects of views of the proposals at such a distance would be very limited.

Construction

- 6.11 During the construction phase, there will be some short term reversible adverse visual effects. Anticipated effects will primarily be caused by:
- Clearance and set up of compound area;
 - New junction arrangement off Wilderness Lane;
 - New highway works;
 - Building works; and
 - Construction traffic including HGVs and staff cars travelling to and from the site.
- 6.12 All construction works will be carried out in full accordance with best practice procedures to minimise, as far as practicable, potentially adverse effects. The visual effects during construction are assessed as being of a transient nature and, given that the timescales involved will be relatively short term.
- 6.13 Inevitably there will be disruption to the site and its immediate surroundings during this phase of works. The effects will be limited to the local area.
- 6.14 Residential receptors in close proximity to proposed built development are considered to experience in **Major / Moderate Adverse** visual effects during construction. Visual effects will be less pronounced for other identified receptors, effects will range from **Moderate Adverse** to **Minor Adverse/Negligible**.

Operation (following Completion)

- 6.15 The following provides a summary of the visual effects assessment included at Appendix C.

Residents

- 6.16 It was not possible to obtain views from properties as they are private views, but wherever possible photographs are taken from publicly accessible areas to provide an understanding of their visual experience. Where this hasn't been possible, professional judgment on visibility is derived through the field work analysis.

Residents at properties off the A34 Birmingham Road and Merrion's Close

- 6.17 Properties off the A34 Birmingham Road and Merrion's Close lie adjacent to the site's northern boundary. Properties generally front onto the A34 and views of the proposed buildings in the north of the site will be set back beyond multiple lanes of the road. Most properties will also benefit from screening/filtering of views by the avenue of trees within the central reservation and the hedgerow which runs along the majority of the site's northern boundary as demonstrated in viewpoint 10. Proposed planting to gap-up and reinforce this hedgerow would be beneficial to mitigate effects in the longer term. Residential receptors at A34 Birmingham Road and Merrion's Close are considered to be of High/Medium sensitivity, effects are considered to be **Moderate Adverse** in the short-term reducing to **Moderate/Minor Adverse** at year 15.

Residents at properties off Peak House Road

- 6.18 Properties along Peak House Road back onto the site. The majority of these properties have long rear gardens though a small number accessed off Farm House Way have shorter gardens. Views will be dependent on vegetation within/along garden boundaries though generally views will be available of proposed residential properties in the east of the site. The intervisibility between properties off Peak House Road and the site is demonstrated in viewpoint 2. Residential receptors at Peak House Road are considered to be of High/Medium sensitivity, effects are considered to be **Moderate Adverse** in both the short and long term.

Residents at properties off Wilderness Lane

- 6.19 Properties along Wilderness Lane lie to the south-east of the site. The majority of these front onto the lane with the site boundary located beyond, though approximately six properties close to the junction with Peak House Road side onto the site. Proposed residential development will be restricted to the north and east of the site. Residents at properties on the eastern extent of Wilderness Lane will experience the closest views of proposed residential properties whilst existing properties further west will front onto the proposed countryside park. Residential receptors at Wilderness Lane are considered to be of High/Medium sensitivity, effects are considered to be **Moderate Adverse** in both the short and long term for those close to the proposed development at the eastern end of the site and **Minor Adverse/ Negligible** for those further west along the lane, where an open aspect would be maintained.

Residents at properties in West Bromwich and Walsall

- 6.20 Relatively distant views are available from West Bromwich and Walsall towards the more elevated parts of the site as demonstrated in viewpoint 1 taken from within the site, viewpoint 3 from Wilderness Lane and viewpoint 15 taken from Thorncroft Way.
- 6.21 Views from the Yew Tree area of Walsall will be more readily available where land begins to rise to the west of the canal with properties adjacent to the canal benefitting from the strong visual barrier formed by the vegetation along the canal. Views will be available of proposed development in the east of the site. Views of the proposals will form a portion of a wider view. Residential

receptors in the Yew Tree area are considered to be of High/Medium sensitivity, effects are considered to be **Minor Adverse/Negligible** in both the short and long term.

- 6.22 Viewpoint 1 demonstrates the intervisibility between the site and more distant residential receptors within West Bromwich and Walsall there are a number of tower blocks which are likely to have clearer views towards proposals within the site. These receptors are set within the existing settlement and therefore views of the proposals will be seen in the context of surrounding existing settlement. Residential receptors in these areas are considered to be of High/Medium sensitivity, effects are considered to be **Minor Adverse/Negligible** in both the short and long term.

Footpath Users

- 6.23 Public Rights of Way (PROW) users are judged to be of high sensitivity, for consistency footpaths which are not designated PROW have also been judged to be of high sensitivity.

Footpath Adjacent to Site's Southern Boundary

- 6.24 A tarmacked footpath runs adjacent to the site's southern boundary. It runs westwards from Wilderness Lane adjacent to the north of the Q3 Academy. It is not a designated PROW. Vegetation lining the route help to screen/filter views of the site though some views through the vegetation are available as demonstrated in viewpoint 5. Where views of the proposals are available these will be seen beyond proposed GI/Countryside Park in the south of the site. Users of the footpath are considered to be of High/Medium sensitivity, effects are considered to be **Minor Adverse** in both the short and long term.

Beacon Way Long Distance Footpath

- 6.25 The Beacon Way Long Distance Footpath runs adjacent to the site's western boundary providing a link from the A34 Birmingham Road towards the Rushall Canal. The route of the footpath is enclosed by tree planting adjacent to the site's western boundary and security fencing at recreational facilities to the west of the site, creating a narrow and undesirable route. As part of the proposals there is an opportunity to re-direct this route through open space in the west of the site creating a more desirable and usable route. Users of this new footpath route would experience views of proposed built development within the site though for much of the route this would be set back beyond proposed GI / new Countryside Park. Users of the footpath are considered to be of High/Medium sensitivity. The potential new route through a wider more open green space could be considerably more attractive than the current rather unpleasant route, effects are considered to be **Minor Beneficial** in both the short and long term.

Highway Users

- 6.26 These receptors are of lower sensitivity as they are travelling through the landscape at speed and experience transient views of the landscape. These are considered to be of Medium sensitivity.

Users of A34 Birmingham Road

- 6.27 The A34 Birmingham Road runs adjacent to the northern boundary of the site. Close range views will be available of proposed dwellings the north of the site as the road passes the site. These will be seen in the context of existing residential development along the A34. A hedgerow runs along the majority of the site's northern boundary as demonstrated in viewpoint 10 which will help to screen the lower portions of proposed dwellings. Proposed planting to gap-up and reinforce this hedgerow would be beneficial to mitigate effects in the longer term. Viewpoints 9 and 11 demonstrate how vegetation and existing build form help restrict views of the site from the A34

from further east and west of the site. Users of the road are considered to be of Medium sensitivity, effects are considered to be **Moderate/Minor Adverse** in the short-term reducing to **Minor Adverse** in the long term.

Users of Thorncroft Lane

- 6.28 From Thorncroft Lane within Yew Tree, Walsall views will be available of proposed development in the east of the site adjacent to the existing settlement edge currently visible. Views of the proposals will form a portion of a wider view. Users of Thorncroft Lane are considered to be of Medium sensitivity, effects are considered to be **Minor Adverse/Negligible** in both the short and long term.

Users of Wilderness Lane

- 6.29 Wilderness Lane runs adjacent to the south-east of the site. Built development will largely be set back from the lane with a limited area of proposed built development adjoining the lane close to Peak House Road. Views of the proposals will be seen beyond the roadside hedgerow and within the context of existing built development along the lane. As the lane travels southwards beyond the site views quickly become screened by vegetation as demonstrated in viewpoint 4. Proposals will not block the long views available from the field gate demonstrated in viewpoint 3. Users of Wilderness Lane are considered to be of Medium sensitivity, effects are considered to be **Minor Adverse** both the short and long term.

Other Receptors

- 6.30 A small number of business premises situated off the A34 Birmingham Road and Peak House Road are located adjacent to the north-eastern corner of the site. Users of these businesses are considered to be of medium/low sensitivity, effects are considered to be no greater than **Minor Adverse**.
- 6.31 The Q3 Academy School is located to the south of the site. Vegetation lining the footpath to the north of the school as well as vegetation within the school grounds will help to screen/filter views of the site. Where views of the proposed built development are available these will be set back beyond proposed areas of GI / New Countryside Park. Users of the school are considered to be of medium/low sensitivity, effects are considered to be no greater than **Minor Adverse/Negligible**.
- 6.32 Recreational facilities including Aston University Recreation Centre and West Bromwich Albion Training Ground are located to the west of the site. Screening/filtering of views of the proposals will be provided by vegetation adjacent to the site's western boundary. Users of the facilities are considered to be of medium/low sensitivity, effects are considered to be no greater than **Minor Adverse**.

7.0 GREEN BELT

- 7.1 The NPPF sets out national policy for Green Belts. Section 13 of the NPPF covers Protecting Green Belt land. The site lies within the West Midlands Green Belt. Paragraph 133 notes that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The NPPF notes that "*The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.*"
- 7.2 Paragraph 134 sets out the 5 purposes of the Green Belt;
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 7.3 Paragraph 141 states that once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.
- 7.4 Paragraph 142 notes that when reviewing Green Belt boundaries and removing land for sustainable development, authorities should look at how the impact can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.
- 7.5 Paragraph 143 notes that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 7.6 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was first published on 6th March 2014 and is a regularly updated online planning resource which provides guidance on the NPPF and the planning system. The NPPF continues to be the primary document for decision making.
- 7.7 The guidance includes a section on the factors to be taken in account, when considering the impact of development on the openness of the Green Belt. This notes that openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects - in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume, and that the duration of the development and its reversibility are factors to consider along with the degree of activity, such as traffic generation. (Paragraph 001 Reference ID; 64-001-20190722 from 22 July 2019).
- 7.8 A Green Belt study has also been carried out for the Black Country.
[Black Country Green Belt Study - LUC - September 2019](#)
- 7.9 This study rates areas within the Green Belt as to how they contribute to the 5 nationally defined purposes of the Green Belt.
- 7.10 The study is divided into two different stages. Stage 1 looks at the contribution different land parcels make to the purposes of the Green Belt. The site forms part of a parcel referenced B81 Wilderness Lane. The land parcel is shown below.



- 7.11 Parcel B81 was given the following ratings for contributions to the purposes of the Green Belt within the study;

'Purpose 1: Checking unrestricted sprawl – Moderate.

Purpose 2: Preventing merging towns – Strong.

Purpose 3: Safeguarding countryside from encroachment – Moderate.

Purpose 4: Preserving setting and special character of historic towns – Weak/No Contribution.

Purpose 5: Assist in urban regeneration – Strong [all parcels were considered to perform strongly against purpose 5]'

- 7.12 Stage 2 of the study looked at the potential harm of removing certain parcels of land from the Green Belt. The parcels considered were much larger than the scheme now being assessed, and it is considered that the conclusions in the study have little relevance to the effects arising from the current scheme which covers a much smaller area of land.

Analysis of role in the land parcel containing the site in Green Belt Purposes

- 7.13 FPCR have carried out a land parcel assessment, to analyse the role of the land in terms of Green Belt purposes. For this exercise a land parcel slightly different to the Black Country study has been used and is shown on Fig 15. This parcel includes the Q3 Academy and generally follows clearly identifiable boundaries on the ground. To the northwest the boundary has been drawn along the

boundary of the sports fields and this is also the Borough Boundary. FPCRs analysis of the role the parcel plays in Green Belt purposes is set out below.

Purpose 1: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

- 7.14 **Moderate/Low** – The land parcel is heavily influenced by the adjacent built development at Great Barr and by development within it including the Q3 Academy. The motorway forms the southern parcel boundary and influences the character of that area. Much of the land is however open, so the overall conclusion on the role the parcel plays in checking unrestricted sprawl is Moderate/Low.

Purpose 2: to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.

- 7.15 **Low** - The parcel comprises an area of land on the edge of Great Barr. Great Barr itself includes part of Birmingham, Sandwell and Walsall. The parcel does not separate clearly identifiable towns. The parcel also plays a very limited role in separating different parts of the wider suburban area.

Purpose 3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Moderate – Most of the land parcel site has the characteristics of open countryside (ie an absence of built or otherwise urbanising uses in Green Belt terms), but is influenced by the surrounding built development, and has the Q3 Academy within it. The parcel includes some farmland and some areas of minimally managed green space. The area has a stronger association with the built-up area than the wider countryside.

Purpose 4: to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- 7.16 **No Contribution** - Land does not form part of the setting of a historic town.

Purpose 5: to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

- 7.17 Any parcels of green field land would make the same contribution to this purpose, it is considered neutral in the assessment.

Effect of the scheme on Green Belt Purposes

- 7.18 Having analysed the role of the wider land parcel in terms of Green Belt Purposes, this section of the assessment describes how development of the scheme would affect the role of the wider parcel and the overall integrity of the Green Belt

Purpose 1) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

- 7.19 Within the wider assessment parcel, the proposed development closely follows the existing settlement edge, keeping to a similar topography and limiting the effect on the wider character of the more open land. The part of the parcel proposed for built development has the strongest association with the existing settlement, it would not extend the settlement limits to the north or west.

- 7.20 The wider land parcel provides a Moderate/Low role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of the built-up area. The scheme itself would not materially change the role of the wider land parcel. As built development within the scheme would be contained to the east and would not extend beyond the existing houses to the north and west, it would have a **Low** effect on the purpose of checking the unrestricted sprawl of the large built up area.

Purpose 2) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.

- 7.21 The wider assessment parcel does not play a role in preventing large towns merging, though it does play a very limited role in separating different parts of the wider suburban area. Development of the scheme would be close against the existing settlement edge at Great Barr. It would not narrow any gap between development at Great Barr in Sandwell and the houses along Birmingham Road in Walsall to the north, as there is already built development along Birmingham Road. The perception of separation along this route would also be unchanged. Overall, the scheme would have no adverse effect on the role the existing land parcel plays in preventing neighbouring towns from merging.

Purpose 3) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

- 7.22 Within this parcel, the scheme would only involve built development at the very eastern side of the land parcel, where wrapped around by existing development. This is the least prominent part of the site within the wider environment, and the land that is most influenced by the existing settlement. Fitting the development within the field parcels formed by the existing mature hedges, would minimise the effect on the character of the more open land. The scheme includes an extensive area of green infrastructure, with 85% of the site remaining in green use, managed for biodiversity and public access, and secured by legal agreement. Inevitably there would be a degree of encroachment on the land used for housing itself, but the perception encroachment on any wider area would be negligible.

Purpose 4) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

- 7.23 The wider parcel does not provide this role, and the scheme would have no effect on this purpose.

Purpose 5) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.'

- 7.24 This purpose is neutral in the consideration of sites, and any green field sites on the existing Green Belt would have the same effect on this.

Summary

- 7.25 In terms of the effects of the proposals on the purposes of the Green Belt, the scheme would have a low effect on the purposes of checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas, and of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The scheme would not lead to any merging of historic towns, there would be no coalescence between different parts of the wider suburban area, or between Sandwell and Walsall. The gap between different parts of the wider the settlement would not be narrowed. The site makes no contribution to the criterion of preserving the setting and special character of historic towns.

Effects of the scheme on the Openness of the Green Belt

- 7.26 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) notes that openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects - in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume, and that the duration of the development and its reversibility are factors to consider along with the degree of activity, such as traffic generation.

- 7.27 In terms of spatial openness, the scheme would involve the change of approximately 3.91 ha of low grade agricultural land to residential development. The housing would be no more than 3 storeys, close to Birmingham Road, and 2 storeys elsewhere, limiting the spatial effect on the Green Belt.
- 7.28 The assessment of "*Visual Openness*" draws on the landscape and visual appraisal. This has demonstrated the limited extent from which the proposed development would be visible due to the surrounding built form and intervening vegetation. Generally, there are few locations beyond the immediate context of the site where there would be any notable views of the proposals. The viewpoints used in the appraisal and the visual envelope is shown on Figure 7.
- 7.29 From the north, views are limited by vegetation alongside the A34 Birmingham Road. From the east the only views would be filtered ones from the rear of the existing properties along Peak House Road. Properties on Wilderness Lane would largely have their open views towards and over the site maintained, apart from a small number of houses opposite the site entrance. Views from the west are generally limited by the overlapping vegetation and topography. Where the new houses would be seen, it would largely be in front of the existing ones.
- 7.30 Overall, this means that the effects on visual openness would be very limited. The extensive areas of Green Infrastructure within Wilderness Countryside Park would provide further visual containment and would further reduce any effects on visual openness over time.

Compensatory Improvements to the Green Belt

- 7.31 Paragraph 142 of the NPPF notes that when it is necessary to release land from the Green Belt, plans should set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land. The land is subject to a planning application, rather than it being Plan Making stage, but making compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt would still be beneficial. The proposed Wilderness Countryside Park provides excellent opportunities for compensatory improvements to the Green Belt. This area is shown on Figure 15. At present the land is not viable pastureland and receives minimal maintenance. There is no public access. By releasing part of the site for housing, the greater part of the site could be improved, though management based on nature conservation enhancement, and with new public access to the Countryside Park. This would provide a great opportunity for new and local residents to access a significant area of land for recreation and to enjoy wildlife interest on their doorsteps.

Conclusion

- 7.32 On the basis of the FPCR review, it is concluded that the harm rating for removal from the Green Belt of the part of the site for built development would be Low. Development of the site would maintain the physical and visual separation of the different parts of the wider suburban area and would have a very limited effect on encroachment on the countryside. Spatial and visual openness would be minimally affected. The significant new Wilderness Countryside Park will provide new public access to local people, and the habitat value of the site will be enhanced. The Compensatory Improvements to the land remaining in the Green Belt would be of significance.

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

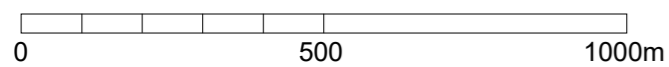
- 8.1 The site comprises an isolated parcel of former farmland, with a network of hedges displaying a historic field pattern. The pasture fields are no longer viable for stock grazing and now receive minimal management. There is no public access to the site, though a footpath runs past the southern boundary near the Q3 Academy school, and the Beacon Way Long Distance Footpath, runs along the western boundary, within a constrained and unattractive corridor. There are some views across the site from Wilderness Lane which forms the south eastern boundary, and views back to parts of the site from the wider urban area to the south west mainly from taller buildings. These are relatively distant. Generally, the site is fairly well visually enclosed, from short range views.
- 8.2 The scheme includes new residential development on the part of the site between Wilderness Lane and the A34 Birmingham Road. This part of the site is largely enclosed by existing residential development. The larger part of the site would remain open as accessible greenspace / Countryside Park, managed primarily for ecology, allowing people to get closer to nature. The Beacon Way Long distance route could be diverted from its current constrained corridor, though a much more open and attractive route through the site.
- 8.3 Overall, in landscape terms, part of the agricultural land would be lost to built development, but this could largely be developed within the pattern of the retained and managed hedgerows, The larger part of the site could remain open and underdeveloped, with enhanced management, keeping the pattern of hedgerows and meadows. New public access could be a significant benefit.
- 8.4 There would be some inevitable closer range visual effects for adjacent residents and road users, but these effects would be very localised and not at a high level.
- 8.5 The effects on the purposes of the Green Belt, arising through release of the part of the site proposed for built development, would be quite limited. There is a great opportunity for compensatory conservation and access improvements to the parts of the site which would remain in the Green Belt, as part of the proposed Wilderness Countryside Park.

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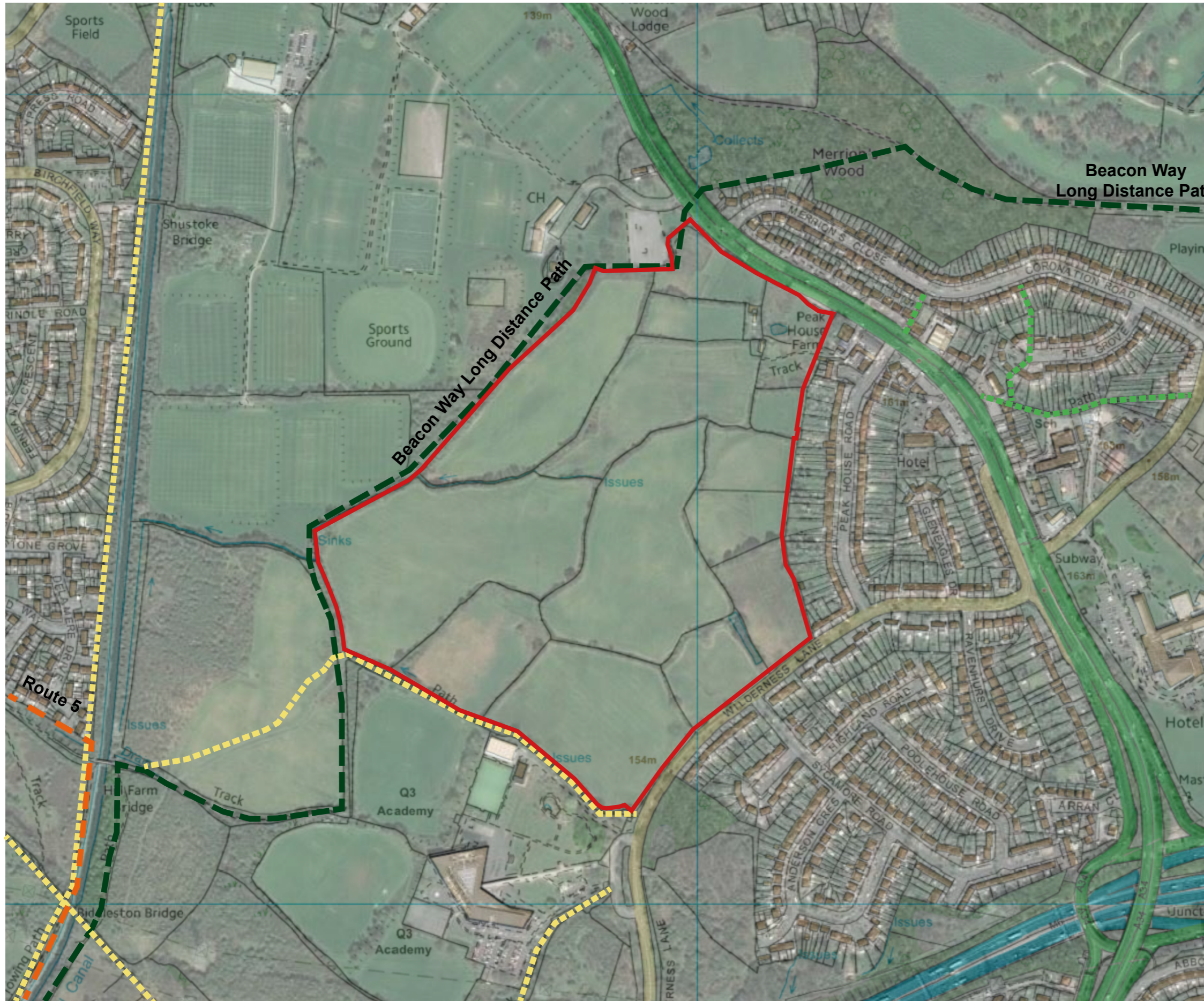
FPCR Environment and Design Ltd, Lockington Hall, Lockington, Derby, DE74 2RH ■ t: 01509 672772 ■ f: 01509 674565 ■ e: mail@fpcr.co.uk ■ w: www.fpcr.co.uk
 masterplanning ■ environmental assessment ■ landscape design ■ urban design ■ ecology ■ architecture ■ arboriculture

K:\9300\9364\LANDSLVIA\9364 LVA Figs.indd

client
Wain Estates
 project
Wilderness Park
Great Barr, Birmingham
 drawing title
SITE LOCATION PLAN

scale
1:12,500 @ A3
 drawing / figure number
Figure 1
 drawn
KAD
 issue date
August 2023
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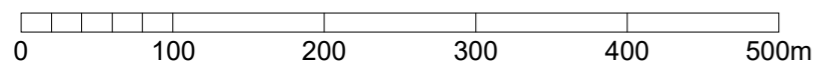
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-  Site Boundary
-  Footpath
-  Long Distance Route
-  Footpath/Cycle Route
-  National Cycle Network Route

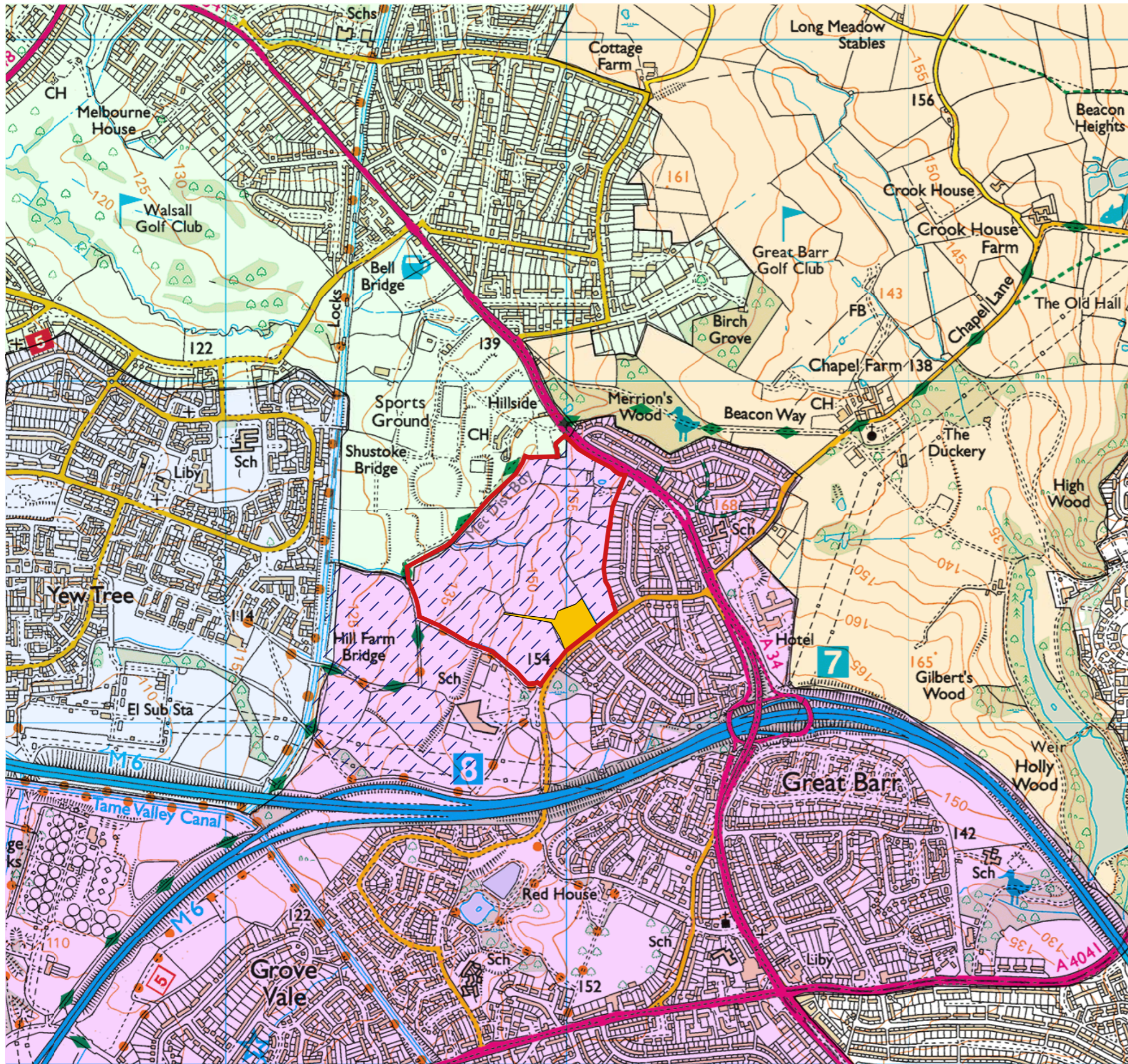
Approx. Scale: 1:5,000 @ A3



client
Wain Estates
 project
Wilderness Park
Great Barr, Birmingham
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AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

scale
approx. 1:5,000 @ A3
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





Site Boundary



Natural England National Character Areas

All of mapped area falls within National Character Areas 67: Cannock Chase and Cank Wood

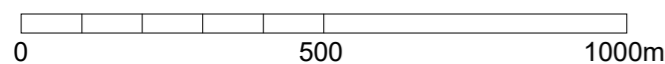
Black Country Historic Landscape Character Assessment

-  WL09 - Barr Beacon and Aldridge Fields
-  SD02 - Newton, Hampstead & Great Barr
-  WL11 - South East Walsall
-  SD05 - Yew Tree

Black Country Historic Landscape Character Assessment

-  AHHLV: Area of High Historic Landscape Value - AHHLV 25 Peak House Farm Field System
-  APA: Archaeological Priority Area
APA 24 Peak House Farm Moated Site

Scale: 1:12500 @ A3



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Great Barr, Birmingham

drawing title
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



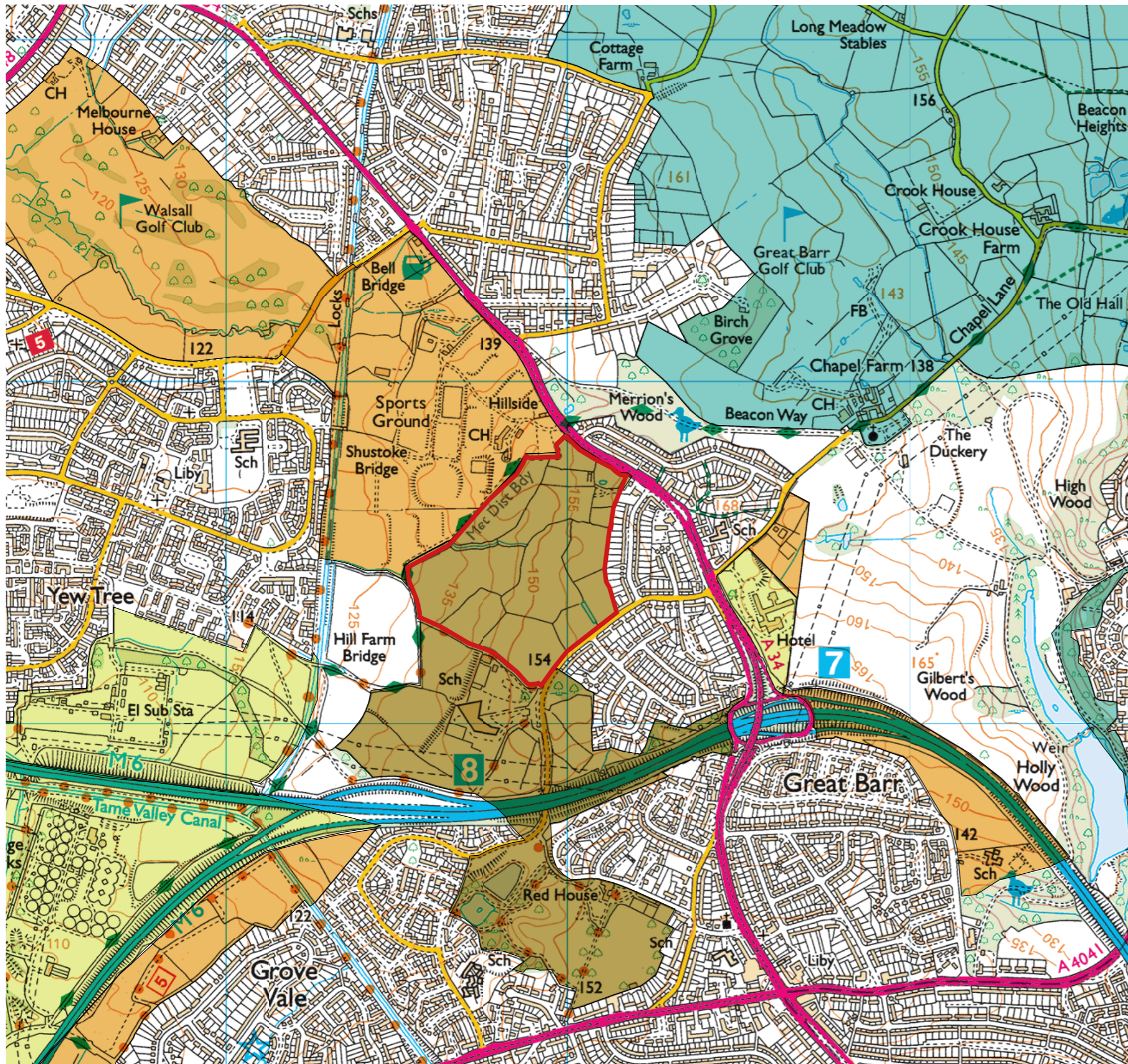
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


Figure 3



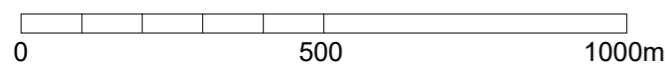
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 Site Boundary

Black Country Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, 2019

-  High
-  Moderate - High
-  Moderate
-  Low - Moderate
-  Low

Scale: 1:12500 @ A3



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 project
Wilderness Park
Great Barr, Birmingham

drawing title
LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

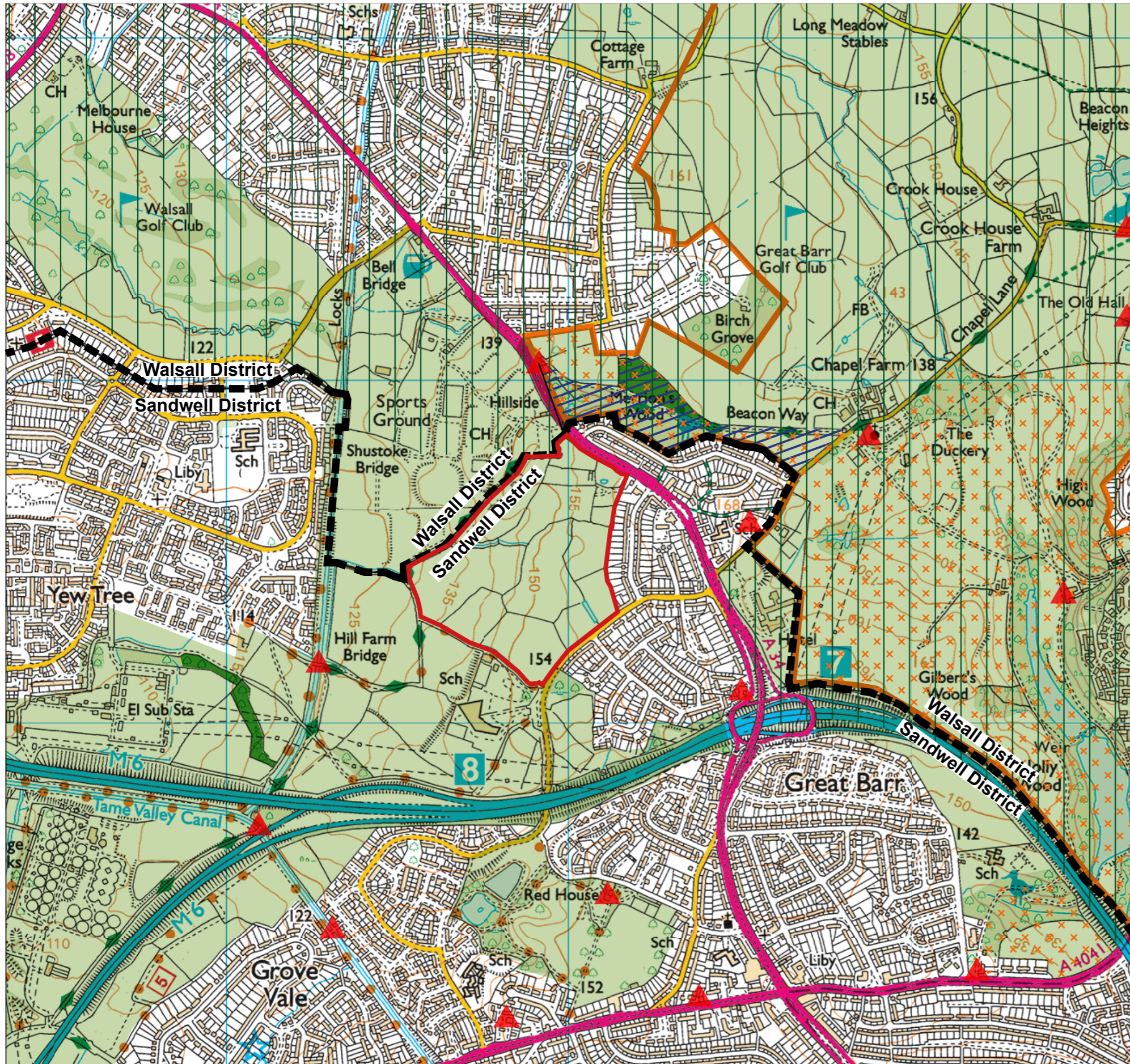
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KAD










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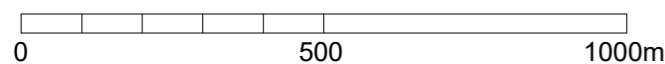
Figure 4



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-  Site Boundary
-  District Boundaries
-  Green Belt
-  Community Forest: Forest of Mercia
-  Local Nature Reserve: Merrion's Wood
-  Registered Park and Garden: Great Barr Hall, Grade II
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Conservation Area
-  Listed Buildings

Scale: 1:12500 @ A3



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Great Barr, Birmingham

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DESIGNATIONS

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


Figure 5



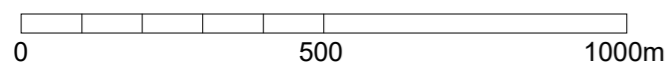
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-  Site Boundary
-  Terrain - Low
-  Terrain - High

NOTE- Topography map not accurately scaled as base map not geo referenced

Scale: 1:12500 @ A3



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Great Barr, Birmingham

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TOPOGRAPHY PLAN

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

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Figure 6

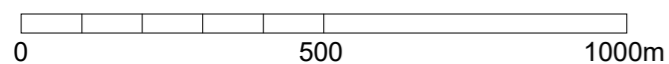


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-  Site Boundary
-  Photo Viewpoint Locations
-  Visual Receptor (with reference)

- A - Residents at properties off the A34 Birmingham Road and Merrion's Close
- B - Residents at properties off Peak House Road
- C - Residents at properties off Wilderness Lane
- D - Residents in West Bromwich and Walsall
- E - Users of footpath adjacent to site's southern boundary
- F - Users of Becon Way Long Distance Footpath
- G - Vehicular / pedestrian users of the A34 Birmingham Road
- H - Vehicular / pedestrian users of Thorncroft Lane
- I - Vehicular / pedestrian users of Wilderness Lane
- J - Users of businesses off the A34 Birmingham Road and Peak House Road and other roads to the south east of the site
- K - Users of Q3 Academy
- L - Users of recreational facilities to the north west of the site

Scale: 1:12500 @ A3



Inset Plan (NTS)

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Wilderness Park
Great Barr, Birmingham

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VISUAL APPRAISAL

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Figure 7



Photo Viewpoint 1: View west from within site



Photo Viewpoint 2: View east from within site

Photo Viewpoint 1
 Date & time of photo: 13 Jan 2023, 11:29
 Camera make & model, & sensor format:
 Canon EOS 6D, FFS
 Horizontal Field of View: 87°
 Direction of View: 250°, bearing from North

Photo Viewpoint 2
 Date & time of photo: 13 Jan 2023, 12:08
 Camera make & model, & sensor format:
 Canon EOS 6D, FFS
 Horizontal Field of View: 87°
 Direction of View: 90°, bearing from North

Printing note: To give the correct viewing distance the sheet should be printed at a scale of 1:1 on A1. To be viewed at comfortable arms length.
 Visualisation Type: Type 1
 Projection: Cylindrical
 Enlargement factor: 100%

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 Wilderness Park
 Great Barr, Birmingham
 drawing title
 PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 1 & 2

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drawn
 KAD
 drawing / figure number
 Issue date
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 Figure 8

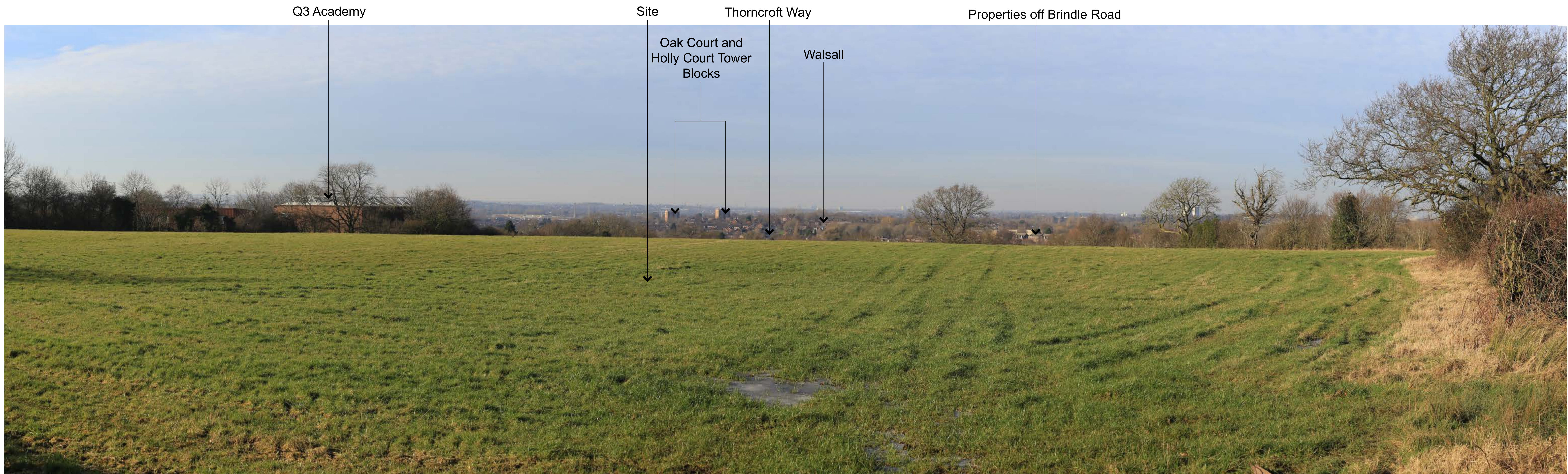


Photo Viewpoint 3: View west from Wilderness Lane



Photo Viewpoint 4: View North from Wilderness Lane

Photo Viewpoint 3
 Date & time of photo: 23 Jan 2023, 12:25
 Camera make & model, & sensor format:
 Canon EOS 6D, FFS
 Horizontal Field of View: 87°
 Direction of View: 295°, bearing from North

Photo Viewpoint 4
 Date & time of photo: 13 Jan 2023, 12:30
 Camera make & model, & sensor format:
 Canon EOS 6D, FFS
 Horizontal Field of View: 82°
 Direction of View: 350°, bearing from North

Printing note: To give the correct viewing distance the sheet should be printed at a scale of 1:1 on A1. To be viewed at comfortable arms length.
 Visualisation Type: Type 1
 Projection: Cylindrical
 Enlargement factor: 100%

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Photo Viewpoint 5: View north from footpath north of Q3 Academy



Photo Viewpoint 6: View north-east from Hill Farm Bridge

Photo Viewpoint 5
 Date & time of photo: 23 Jan 2023, 12:28
 Camera make & model, & sensor format: Canon EOS 6D, FFS
 Horizontal Field of View: 80°
 Direction of View: 20°, bearing from North

Photo Viewpoint 6
 Date & time of photo: 13 Jan 2023, 12:45
 Camera make & model, & sensor format: Canon EOS 6D, FFS
 Horizontal Field of View: 87°
 Direction of View: 60°, bearing from North

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Land at Aston University
Recreation Centre

Footpath

Approximate Direction
of Site

Q3 Academy
School

Photo Viewpoint 7: View east from footpath near to Beacon Way Long Distance Path



Site

Q3 Academy
School

Photo Viewpoint 8: View east from Beacon Way Long Distance Path



Photo Viewpoint 1
Date & time of photo: 13 Jan 2021, 12:50
Camera make & model, & sensor format:
Canon EOS 6D, FFS
Horizontal Field of View: 87°
Direction of View: 55°, bearing from North

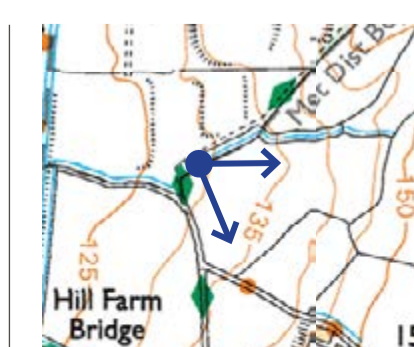


Photo Viewpoint 2
Date & time of photo: 13 Jan 2023, 13:01
Camera make & model, & sensor format:
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Horizontal Field of View: 87°
Direction of View: 125°, bearing from North

Printing note: To give the correct viewing distance the sheet should be printed at a scale of 1:1 on A1. To be viewed at comfortable arms length.

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Projection: Cylindrical
Enlargement factor: 100%

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Photo Viewpoint 9: View south-east from A34 Birmingham Road

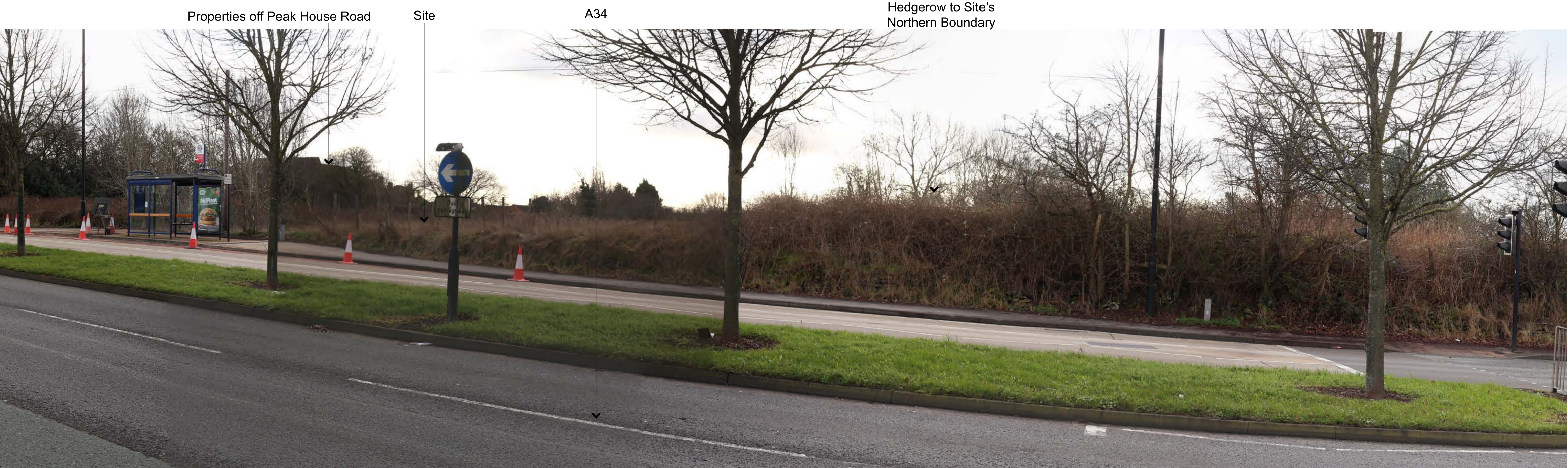


Photo Viewpoint 10: View south from the A34 Birmingham Road

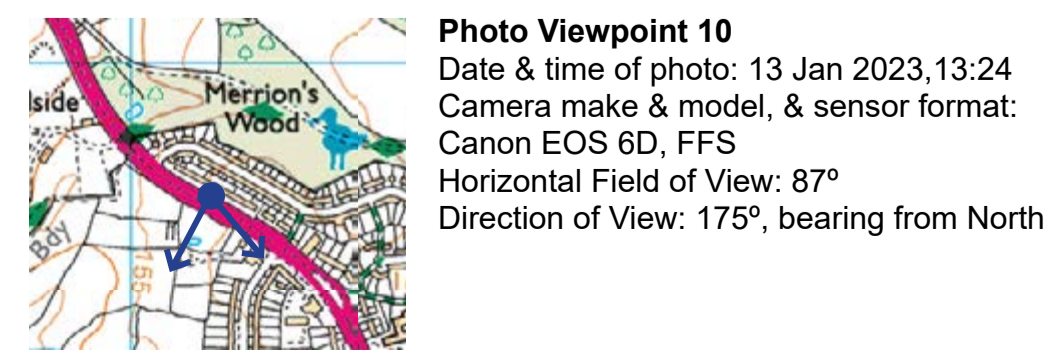
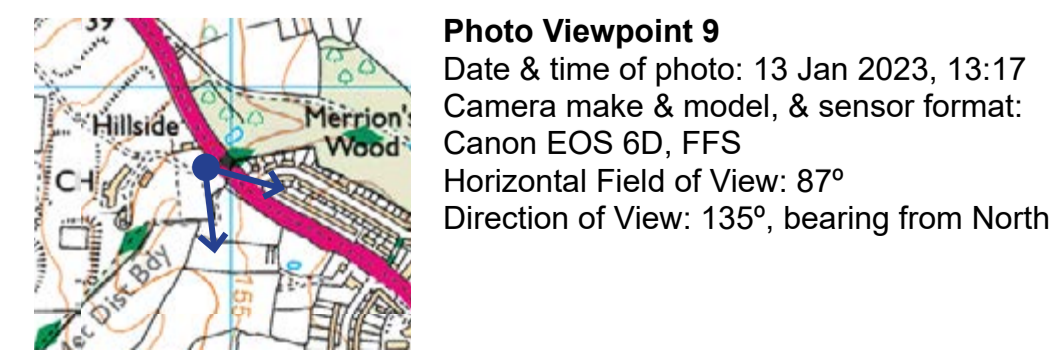


Photo Viewpoint 9
 Date & time of photo: 13 Jan 2023, 13:17
 Camera make & model, & sensor format:
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 Horizontal Field of View: 87°
 Direction of View: 135°, bearing from North

Photo Viewpoint 10
 Date & time of photo: 13 Jan 2023, 13:24
 Camera make & model, & sensor format:
 Canon EOS 6D, FFS
 Horizontal Field of View: 87°
 Direction of View: 175°, bearing from North

Printing note: To give the correct viewing distance the sheet should be printed at a scale of 1:1 on A1. To be viewed at comfortable arms length.
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 Enlargement factor: 100%

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Photo Viewpoint 11: View west from the A34 Birmingham Road



Photo Viewpoint 12: View east from Thorncroft Way

Photo Viewpoint 11
 Date and time of photo: 13 Jan 2023, 13:26
 Camera make & model, & sensor format:
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 Horizontal Field of View: 76°
 Direction of View: 275°, bearing from North

Photo Viewpoint 12
 Date and time of photo: 23 Jan 2023, 12:46
 Camera make & model, & sensor format:
 Canon EOS 6D, FFS
 Horizontal Field of View: 76°
 Direction of View: 120°, bearing from North

Printing note: To give the correct viewing distance the sheet should be printed at a scale of 1:1 on A1. To be viewed at comfortable arms length.
 Visualisation Type: Type 1
 Projection: Cylindrical
 Enlargement factor: 100%

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Photo Viewpoint 13: View south-east from Walstead Road



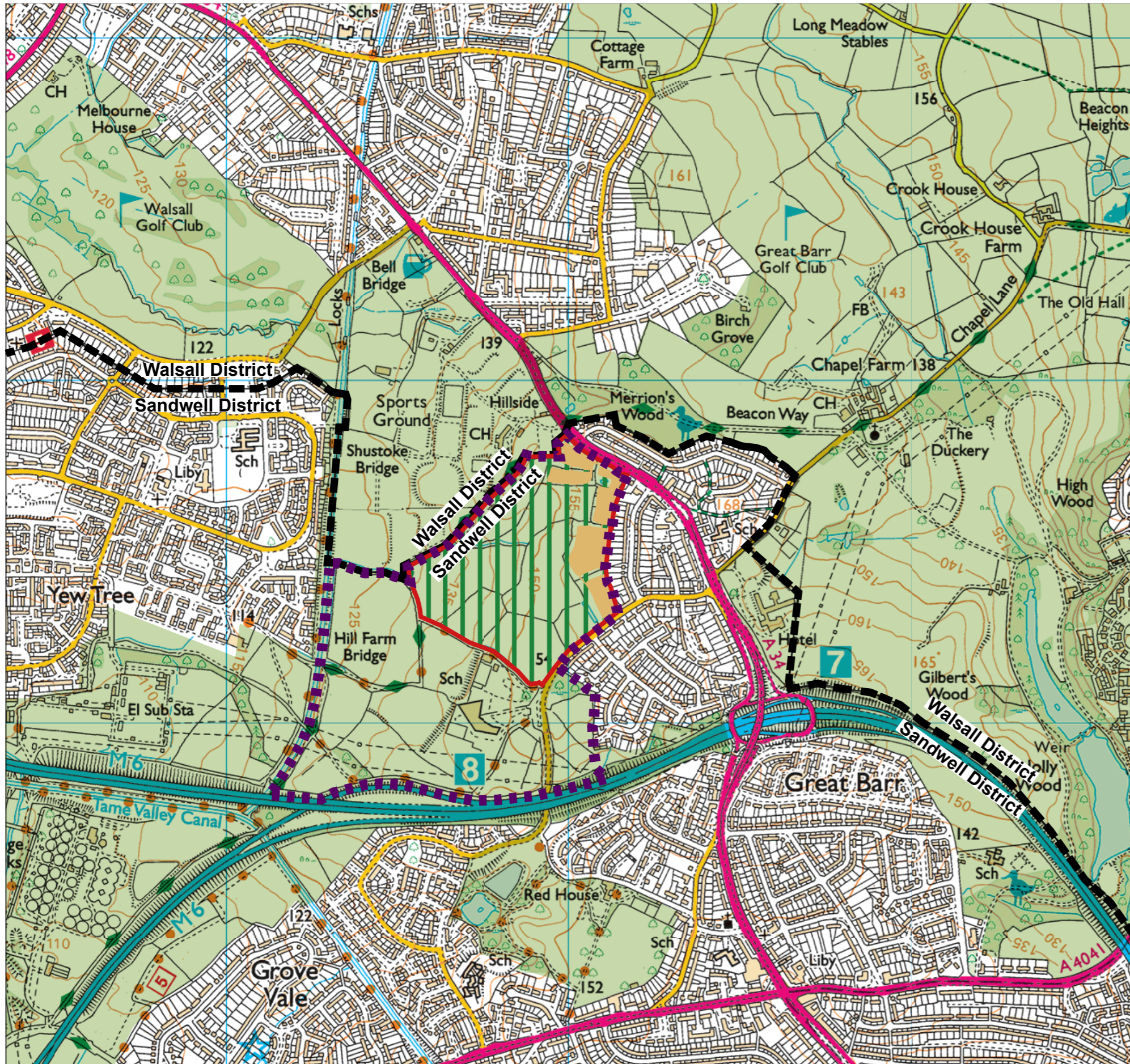
Photo Viewpoint 14: View west from Barr Beacon Nature Reserve

Photo Viewpoint 13
 Date & time of photo: 13 Jan 2023, 15:43
 Camera make & model, & sensor format:
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 Horizontal Field of View: 87°
 Direction of View: 140°, bearing from North







Photo Viewpoint 14
 Date & time of photo: 23 Jan 2023, 12:03
 Camera make & model, & sensor format:
 Canon EOS 6D, FFS
 Horizontal Field of View: 87°
 Direction of View: 240°, bearing from North

Printing note: To give the correct viewing distance the sheet should be printed at a scale of 1:1 on A1. To be viewed at comfortable arms length.
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 Enlargement factor: 100%

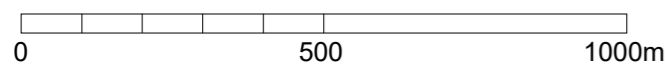
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-  Site Boundary
-  District Boundaries
-  Green Belt
-  FPCR Assessment Boundary
-  Proposed Area of Built Development
-  Area of Compensatory Improvement in Green Belt

Scale: 1:12500 @ A3



client
Wain Estates
 project
Wilderness Park
Great Barr, Birmingham
 drawing title
GREEN BELT



scale
1:12,500 @ A3
drawing / figure number

drawn
KAD

issue date
August 2023
rev

Figure 15

Appendix A

Landscape and Visual Appraisal – Methodology and Assessment Criteria

Introduction

- 1.0 The methodology for the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) undertaken for the proposed development is detailed in the LVA report. The following information should be read in conjunction with this methodology.
- 1.1 As advised in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) (GLVIA3), the judgements made in respect of both landscape and visual effects are a combination of an assessment of the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the landscape or visual effect. The following details the definitions and criteria used in assessing sensitivity and magnitude for landscape and visual receptors.
- 1.2 Where it is determined that the assessment falls between or encompasses two of the defined criteria terms, then the judgement may be described as High/ Medium or Moderate/ Minor etc. This indicates that the assessment lies between the respective definitions or encompasses aspects of both.

Landscape

Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.3 Landscape receptors are assessed in terms of their 'Landscape Sensitivity'. This combines judgements on the value to be attached to the landscape and the susceptibility to change of the landscape from the type of change or development proposed. The definition and criteria adopted for these contributory factors is detailed below.
- 1.4 There can be complex relationships between the value attached to landscape receptors and their susceptibility to change which can be especially important when considering change within or close to designated landscapes. For example, an internationally, nationally or locally valued landscape does not automatically or by definition have a high susceptibility to all types of change. The type of change or development proposed may not compromise the specific basis for the value attached to the landscape.

Landscape Value

- 1.5 Value can apply to a landscape area as a whole, or to the individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions which contribute to the character of the landscape. The following criteria have been used to categorise landscape value. Where there is no clear existing evidence on landscape value, an assessment is made based on the criteria/ factors identified below (based on the guidance in the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 "Assessing landscape value outside national designations", (which provides more up to date guidance than Box 5.1 of GLVIA3).

- Natural Heritage
- Cultural Heritage
- Landscape Condition
- Associations
- Distinctiveness
- Recreational
- Perceptual (scenic)
- Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity)
- Functional

Landscape Value	Definition
High	Landscape receptors of high importance based upon factors of natural and cultural heritage, condition, distinctiveness, recreational value, perceptual qualities associations and functional aspects.
Medium	Landscape receptors of medium importance based upon factors of natural and cultural heritage, condition, distinctiveness, recreational value, perceptual qualities and quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreational value, perceptual qualities, associations and functional aspects.
Low	Landscape receptors of low importance based upon factors of natural and cultural heritage, condition, distinctiveness, recreational value, perceptual qualities and quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreational value, perceptual qualities, associations and functional aspects.

Landscape Susceptibility to Change

- 1.6 This means the ability of the landscape receptor (overall character type/ area or individual element/ feature) to accommodate the change (i.e. the proposed development) without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline position and/ or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies. The definition and criteria for the assessment of Landscape Susceptibility to Change is as follows:

Landscape Susceptibility to Change	Definition
High	A highly distinctive and cohesive landscape receptor, with positive characteristics and features with no or very few detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape features intact and in very good condition and/ or rare. Limited capacity to accept the type of change/ development proposed.
Medium	Distinctive and more commonplace landscape receptor, with some positive characteristics/ features and some detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape features in moderate condition. Capacity to accept well planned and designed change/ development of the type proposed.
Low	Landscape receptor of mixed character with a lack of coherence and including detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape features that may be in poor or improving condition and few that could not be replaced. Greater capacity to accept the type of change/ development proposed.

Magnitude of Landscape Effects

- 1.7 The magnitude of landscape effects is the degree of change to the landscape receptor in terms of its size or scale of change, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The table below sets out the categories and criteria adopted in respect of the separate considerations of Scale or Size of the Degree of Change, Reversibility the geographical extent and duration of change are described where relevant in the appraisal.

Scale or Size of the Degree of Landscape Change

Scale or Size of the Degree of Landscape Change	Definition
High	Total loss of or substantial alteration to key characteristics / features and the introduction of new elements totally uncharacteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be fundamentally changed.
Medium	Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key characteristics / features and the introduction of new elements that would be evident but not necessarily uncharacteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be obviously changed.
Low	Limited loss of, or alteration to one or more key characteristics/ features and the introduction of new elements evident and/ or characteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be perceptibly changed.
Negligible	Very minor alteration to one or more key characteristics/ features and the introduction of new elements characteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be minimally changed.
None	No loss or alteration to the key characteristics/ features, representing 'no change'.

Geographical Extent

Geographical extent	Definition
Extensive	Notable change to an extensive proportion of the geographic area.
Moderate	Notable change to part of the geographic area,
Minimal	Change over a limited part of the geographic area.
Negligible	Change over a very limited part of the geographical area

Duration

Duration	Definition
Short term	The change will occur for up to 5 years.
Medium Term	The change will occur for between 5 and 10 years.
Long term	The change will occur for over 10 years

Reversibility

Reversibility	Definition
Irreversible	The development would be permanent and the assessment site could not be returned to its current/ former use.

Reversible	The development could be deconstructed/ demolished and the assessment site could be returned to broadly its current/ historic use (although that may be subject to qualification depending on the nature of the development).
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Visual

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

- 1.8 Visual sensitivity assesses each visual receptor in terms of their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views. The definition and criteria adopted for these contributory factors is detailed below.

Visual Susceptibility to Change

- 1.9 The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of; firstly, the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and secondly, the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on the views and visual amenity they experience.

Visual Susceptibility to Change	Definition
High	Residents at home with primary views from ground floor/garden and upper floors. Public rights of way/ footways where attention is primarily focussed on the landscape and on particular views. Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and/ or on particular views. Communities where views make an important contribution to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents. Travellers on recognised scenic routes.
Medium	Residents at home with secondary views (primarily from first floor level). Public rights of way/ footways where attention is not primarily focussed on the landscape and/ or particular views. Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes.
Low	Users of outdoor recreational facilities where the view is less important to the activities (e.g. sports pitches). Travellers on road, rail or other transport where views are primarily focussed on the transport route. People at their place of work where views of the landscape are not important to the quality of the working life.

Value of Views

- 1.10 The value attached to a view takes account of any recognition attached to a particular view and/ or any indicators of the value attached to views, for example through guidebooks or defined viewpoints or references in literature or art.

Value of Views	Definition
High	A unique or identified view (e.g. shown as such on Ordnance Survey map, guidebook or tourist map) or one noted in literature or art. A view where a heritage asset makes an important contribution to the view.
Medium	A typical and/ or representative view from a particular receptor.
Low	An undistinguished or unremarkable view from a particular receptor.

Magnitude of Visual Effects

- 1.11 Magnitude of Visual Effects evaluates each of the visual effects in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The table below sets out the categories and criteria adopted in respect of the Scale or Size (including the degree of contrast) of Visual Change. The distance and nature of the view and whether the receptor's view will be stationary or moving are also detailed in the Visual Effects Table.

Scale or Size of the Degree of Visual Change	Definition
High	The proposal will result in a large and immediately apparent change in the view, being a dominant and new and/ or incongruous feature in the landscape.
Medium	The proposal will result in an obvious and recognisable change in the view and will be readily noticed by the viewer.
Low	The proposal will constitute a minor component of the wider view or a more recognisable component that reflects those apparent in the existing view. Awareness of the proposals will not have a marked effect on the overall nature of the view.
Negligible/ None	Only a very small part of the proposal will be discernible and it will have very little or no effect on the nature of the view.

Level of Effect

- 1.12 The final conclusions on effects, whether adverse or beneficial, are drawn from the separate judgements on the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of the effects. This overall judgement is formed from a reasoned professional overview of the individual judgements against the assessment criteria.
- 1.13 GLVIA3 notes, at paragraphs 5.56 and 6.44, that there are no hard and fast rules with regard to the level of effects, therefore the following descriptive thresholds have been used for this appraisal:
- **Major**
 - **Moderate**
 - **Minor**
 - **Negligible**

- 1.14 Where it is determined that the assessment falls between or encompasses two of the defined criteria terms, then the judgement may be described as, for example, Major/ Moderate or Moderate/ Minor. This indicates that the effect is assessed to lie between the respective definitions or to encompass aspects of both.

APPENDIX B: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)									
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape			Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Overall Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
National Landscape Character									
Natural England, National Character Area Profile (NCA) (NCA) 67 'Cannock Chase and Cank Wood'	Varies across broad character area	Varies across broad character area	Varies across broad character area	Construction: Negligible Completion: Negligible Year 15: Negligible	No	The site forms a very small part of National Character Area (NCA) 67 'Cannock Chase and Cank Wood'. This NCA stretches from Halesowen in the south to Stafford to the north and therefore covers a very extensive landscape area. The development presents the opportunity to contribute to Strategic Environmental Opportunity (SEO) 2 through its Green Infrastructure (GI); <i>'SEO 2: Manage, enhance and expand the network of green infrastructure, such as woodlands, restored mining sites, parklands and canal routes, to increase biodiversity, access and recreational use and increase understanding of the area's rich industrial heritage, particularly geodiversity.'</i> The site's GI will include a countryside park, new habitats and an interpretation boards. Overall effects upon the national character area are considered to be limited.	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
Landscape Character: Site and Immediate Context									
Site and Immediate Context	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction: High / Medium Completion: Medium Year 15: Medium / Low	No	In terms of the site and its immediate context, the primary change would arise as a result of the replacement of part of the agricultural land within the site with residential development and associated infrastructure, and enhancement of the remaining part of the site for nature conservation and public access. At present the land receives minimal management and the urban location means it is not viable for stock grazing. Built development would inevitably alter the character of the site and its immediate context, though the proposals are for built development are for a relatively limited portion of the site adjacent to the existing settlement edge, where housing is already a strong part of the character. The majority of the site will form proposed GI with a new accessible countryside park, SUDs and footpaths including the re-directed long distance footpath route. The proposals for the site will retain as far as possible and reinforce the existing field pattern highlighted within the AHHLV designation.	Major / Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse

APPENDIX C: VISUAL EFFECTS TABLE (VET)												
Ref	Receptor Type, Location and photographs <small>(including approx no. of dwellings where applicable)</small>	Judged Sensitivity of Visual Receptor			Judged Magnitude of Visual Effects				Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion (Winter)	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion (Summer)
		Susceptibility to Change	Value	Overall Sensitivity	Distance from Site Boundary (or Built Development where stated) <small>(approx. m/km)</small>	Nature of View	Is the View Temporary or permanent?	Size/Scale of Visual Effect (including degree of contrast/integration) at Stages of Project		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
		High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low		Full Partial Glimpse None		High Medium Low Negligible/ None		Adverse or Beneficial	Adverse or Beneficial	Adverse or Beneficial
A	Residents at properties off the A34 Birmingham Road and Merrion's Close (approx. 25 dwellings) (Viewpoint 10 is taken from near these properties)	High	Medium	High / Medium	Approx. 35m	Full - Partial	Permanent	Construction: High / Medium Completion: Medium Year 15: Medium / Low	Properties off the A34 Birmingham Road and Merrion's Close lie adjacent to the site's northern boundary. Properties generally front onto the A34 and views of the proposed buildings in the north of the site will be set back beyond multiple lanes of the road. Most properties will also benefit from screening/filtering of views by the avenue of trees within the central reservation and the hedgerow which runs along the majority of the site's northern boundary as demonstrated in viewpoint 10. Relatively close views will be available of proposed dwellings in the north of the site. A hedgerow runs along the majority of the site's north eastern boundary which will help to screen the lower portions of proposed dwellings. Proposed planting to gap-up and reinforce this hedgerow will help mitigate effects in the longer term.	Major / Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse
B	Residents at properties off Peak House Road (approx. 35 dwellings) (Viewpoint 2 looks from within the site towards the rear of these properties demonstrating intervisibility)	High	Medium	High / Medium	Approx. 10 - 35m	Full - Partial	Permanent	Construction: High / Medium Completion: Medium Year 15: Medium	Properties along Peak House Road back onto the site. The majority of these properties have long rear gardens though a small number accessed off Farm House Way have shorter gardens. Views will be dependent on vegetation within/along garden boundaries though generally views will be available of proposed residential properties in the east of the site. Existing vegetation along the site's boundary with these properties will be retained.	Major / Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse
C	Residents at properties off Wilderness Lane (approx. 35 dwellings)	High	Medium	High / Medium	Nearest properties are adjacent to site boundary, the majority lie	Full - Glimpse	Permanent	Properties on the eastern extent of Wildness Lane: Construction: High / Medium	Properties along Wilderness Lane lie to the south-east of the site. The majority of these front onto the lane with the site boundary located beyond, though approximately six properties close to the junction with Peak House Road side onto the site. Proposed residential development will be restricted to the north	Properties on the eastern extent of Wildness Lane: Major / Moderate Adverse	Properties on the eastern extent of Wildness Lane: Moderate Adverse	Properties on the eastern extent of Wildness Lane:

	(Viewpoint 3 is taken from Wilderness Lane)				approx.. 20m from the site			Completion: Medium Year 15: Medium Properties on the western extent of Wildness Lane: Construction: Medium / Low Completion: Low / Negligible Year 15: Low / Negligible	and east of the site. Residents at properties on the eastern extent of Wilderness Lane will experience the closest views of proposed dwellings with a number of existing properties on the eastern extent of the lane directly facing onto the proposed site access and new dwellings. Existing properties further west will front onto the proposed Countryside Park and will maintain an open aspect. Views towards the proposed dwellings will become increasingly distant and oblique further west. The majority of the existing roadside hedgerow along the site's boundary with Wilderness Lane will be retained as part of the proposals with removal limited to that required for the new site access.	Properties on the western extent of Wildness Lane: Moderate / Minor Adverse	Properties on the western extent of Wildness Lane: Minor Adverse / Negligible	Moderate Adverse Properties on the western extent of Wildness Lane: Minor Adverse / Negligible
D	Residents in West Bromwich and Walsall (inter-visibility demonstrated in viewpoints 1, 3 and 15)	High	Medium	High / Medium	From approx. 700m to site boundary (further to visible portion of the site)	Partial - Glimpse	Permanent	Construction: Low / Negligible Completion: Low / Negligible Year 15: Low / Negligible	Relatively distant views are available from West Bromwich and Walsall towards the more elevated parts of the site as demonstrated in viewpoint 1 taken from within the site, viewpoint 3 from Wilderness Lane and viewpoint 15 taken from Thorncroft Way. Views from the Yew Tree area of Walsall will be more readily available where land begins to rise to the west of the canal with properties adjacent to the canal benefitting from the strong visual barrier formed by the vegetation along the canal. Views will be available of proposed development in the east of the site. Views of the proposals will form a portion of a wider view. Viewpoint 1 demonstrates the intervisibility between the site and more distant residential receptors within West Bromwich and Walsall there are a number of tower blocks which are likely to have clearer views towards proposals within the site. These receptors are set within the existing settlement and therefore views of the proposals will be seen in the context of surrounding existing settlement.	Minor Adverse / Negligible	Minor Adverse / Negligible	Minor Adverse / Negligible
E	Users of footpath adjacent to site's southern boundary (Viewpoint 5)	High	Medium	High / Medium	Adjacent to site boundary	Partial	Temporary	Construction: Low Completion: Low/negligible Year 15: Low/negligible	A tarmacked footpath runs adjacent to the site's southern boundary. It runs westwards from Wilderness Lane adjacent to the north of the Q3 Academy. It is not a designated PROW. Vegetation lining the route help to screen/filter views of the site though some views through the vegetation are available as demonstrated in viewpoint 5. Where views of the proposed houses are available these will be seen beyond proposed GI/Countryside Park in the south of the site, which will be visually beneficial .	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse/Negligible	Minor Adverse/Negligible
F	Users of PROW / Beacon Way Long Distant Footpath (View from existing route shown in Viewpoint 8)	High	Medium	High / Medium	Adjacent to site boundary at nearest point	Partial	Temporary	Construction: Medium / Low Completion: Low Year 15: Low	The Beacon Way Long Distance Footpath runs adjacent to the site's western boundary providing a link from the A34 Birmingham Road towards the Rushall Canal. The route of the footpath is enclosed by tree planting adjacent to the site's western boundary and security fencing at recreational facilities to the west of the site, creating a narrow and undesirable route. As part of the proposals there is an opportunity to re-direct this route through open space in the west of the site creating a more desirable and usable route. Users of this new footpath route would experience views of proposed built development within the site though for much of the route this would be set back beyond proposed GI / new Countryside Park. The potential new route though a wider more open green space could be considerably more	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial

									attractive than the current rather unpleasant route leading to beneficial effects.			
G	Vehicular / pedestrian users of the A34 Birmingham Road (Viewpoint 10)	Medium	Medium	Medium	Adjacent to site boundary	Full	Temporary	Construction: High / Medium Completion: Medium / Low Year 15: Low	he A34 Birmingham Road runs adjacent to the northern boundary of the site. Close range views will be available of proposed dwellings in the north of the site as the road passes the site. These will be seen in the context of existing residential development along the A34. A hedgerow runs along the majority of the site's northern boundary as demonstrated in viewpoint 10 which will help to screen the lower portions of proposed dwellings. Proposed planting to gap-up and reinforce this hedgerow would be beneficial to mitigate effects in the longer term. Viewpoints 9 and 11 demonstrate how vegetation and existing build form help restrict views of the site from the A34 from further east and west of the site.	Moderate Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
H	Vehicular / pedestrian users of Thorncroft Lane (Viewpoint 12)	Medium	Medium	Medium	From approx. 700m to site boundary (further to visible portion of the site)	Partial - Glimpse	Temporary	Construction: Low / Negligible Completion: Low / Negligible Year 15: Low / Negligible	From Thorncroft Lane within Yew Tree, Walsall views will be available of proposed development in the east of the site adjacent to the existing settlement edge currently visible. Views of the proposals will form a portion of a wider view.	Minor Adverse / Negligible	Minor Adverse / Negligible	Minor Adverse / Negligible
I	Vehicular / pedestrian users of Wilderness Lane (Viewpoint 3)	Medium	Medium	Medium	Adjacent to site boundary	Full – Partial	Temporary	Construction: Medium Completion: Low Year 15: Low	Wilderness Lane runs adjacent to the south-east of the site. Built development will largely be set back from the lane with a limited area of proposed built development adjoining the lane close to Peak House Road. Views of the proposals will be seen beyond the roadside hedgerow and within the context of existing built development along the lane. As the lane travels southwards beyond the site views quickly become screened by vegetation as demonstrated in viewpoint 4. Proposals will not block the long views available from the field gate demonstrated in viewpoint 3.	Moderate Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
J	Users of businesses off the A34 Birmingham Road and Peak House Road	Low	Medium	Medium / Low	Adjacent to site boundary	Full - Partial	Permanent	Construction: High/Medium Completion: Medium Year 15: Medium	A small number of business premises situated off the A34 Birmingham Road and Peak House Road are located adjacent to the north eastern corner of the site. Views will be available of new dwellings in the north-east of the site from these premises. Existing vegetation along the site's boundary will be retained and help provide screening/filtering to some views.	Moderate Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
K	Users of Q3 Academy	Low	Medium	Medium / Low	Approx. 5m (to school grounds)	Partial	Permanent	Construction: Low Completion: Low / Negligible Year 15: Low / Negligible	The Q3 Academy School is located to the south of the site. Vegetation lining the footpath to the north of the school as well as vegetation within the school grounds will help to screen/filter views of the site. Where views of the proposed built development are available these will be set back beyond proposed areas of GI / new Countryside Park.	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse / Negligible	Minor Adverse / Negligible
L	Users of recreational facilities to the north west of the site	Low	Medium	Medium / Low	Approx. 5-10m	Partial	Permanent	Construction: Medium / Low Completion: Low Year 15: Low	Recreational facilities including Aston University Recreation Centre and West Bromwich Albion Training Ground are located to the west of the site. Screening/filtering of views of the proposals will be provided by vegetation adjacent to the site's western boundary. Proposed built development within the site will be set back from the majority of the western site	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse

									boundary beyond proposed GI / new Countryside Park.			
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