



REPRESENTATION

in respect of
Land at Blackhalve Lane
South Staffordshire Draft Local Plan Regulation 19
Consultation

on behalf of
St Philips

23 May 2024

Client Reference: 00575n-1-P

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This representation is made by RCA Regeneration Ltd on behalf of St Philips, in respect of Land at Blackhalve Lane to the latest South Staffordshire Publication Plan 2024 Consultation (Regulation 19), which is running from Thursday April 18th – Friday 31st May 2024.
- 1.2. South Staffordshire Council have progressed their local plan review to another Regulation 19 stage having reached the following previous stages:
 - Issues and Options – 2018
 - Spatial Housing Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery (SHSID) -2019
 - Preferred Options – 2021
 - Publication Plan (Pre-submission) – 2022
- 1.3. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and SEA Directive¹ requires a clear and transparent process of identifying, describing and evaluating reasonable alternatives in both policy and site allocation terms. There is often a direct conflict between the imperative to deliver new homes and enough jobs to support the local economy, whilst continuing to offer sufficient protection to the environment. There is also a soundness and legal compliance element to the preparation and production of SA documents and as such we have considered these as part of our submission.
- 1.4. This representation provides a case for the allocation of the subject site as well as providing a view on some emerging policies.
- 1.5. The timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan is understood to be as follows:
 - Evidence Gathering - 2016
 - Issues and Options - 2018
 - Spatial Housing Strategy & Infrastructure Delivery Consultation – 2019
 - Preferred Options Plan – 2021
 - Publication Plan (i) – 2022
 - Publication Plan (ii) – 2024
 - Submission and Examination – 2025
 - Adoption - 2026
- 1.6. We do not respond to all sections of the Publication Plan Consultation, only those which we currently consider relevant to our clients and/or the sites they are promoting and areas/villages/settlements within which those sites are located.
- 1.7. To reflect the requirements of the consultation process, the following table sets out which paragraphs/page numbers we have commented on, and these are then dealt with, in turn, throughout this document.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance>

Policy	Paragraph	Page
DS1	5.1	24
DS4	5.6	46
SA3	6.19	64

- 1.8. These views are without prejudice to future submissions or hearing statements, which may be made in advance of the Examination.

2. PART A: CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- 2.1. Part A of the Publication Plan discusses the site's context and development strategy. Our comments are as follows:

Cross Boundary Issues and Duty to Cooperate

- 2.2. At paragraph 3.6, the publication plan acknowledges the LPA's duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries, for issues such as housing delivery.
- 2.3. South Staffordshire Council were originally proposing to take c.4000 homes as 'unmet need' from the Greater Birmingham, Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) or Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA), but this appears to have fallen away, despite there being deep concerns that the need has, if anything, worsened.
- 2.4. We are aware, that given the most recent changes to the NPPF with regards to Green Belt, the neighbouring authority of Wolverhampton (who have recently completed a Reg 18 consultation), are favouring an approach to housing delivery based on the reallocation of 11,998 homes to neighbouring authorities². Indeed, Dudley Borough in reducing their housing requirement, still cannot accommodate over 1,000 new homes within their authority boundary either.
- 2.5. Given the scale of the unmet need, we consider it would be helpful for South Staffordshire Council to immediately publish their thoughts on the approach being taken by both Dudley Borough and Wolverhampton City Council (WCC). We have already made representations to Dudley and WCC's somewhat 'perverse' approaches, particularly given they have withdrawn a number of proposed housing allocations on Green Belt sites within their own authority boundaries.
- 2.6. Our question is therefore why South Staffordshire are now abandoning the Duty to Cooperate, resulting in the under-delivery of potentially 1,000s of additional new homes given Dudley and WCC's assumptions on the Duty to Cooperate
- 2.7. It is potentially catastrophic that so much housing development will not be delivered in the area, despite there being overwhelming evidence that the need exists. We consider there to be a failure of the Duty to Cooperate not only on the part of South Staffordshire, but its neighbouring Black Country Authorities. This is contrary to the Planning Practice Guidance³ which states:

"Local planning authorities should bear in mind that failure to demonstrate compliance with the duty at the Local Plan examination cannot be corrected after the Local Plan has been submitted for examination. The most likely outcome of a failure to demonstrate compliance will be that the local planning authority will withdraw the Local Plan."

Vision and Strategic Objectives

- 2.8. We disagree with Strategic Objective 1 in its aim to require "compensatory improvement to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt". We question how this will be mandated and what level of viability testing has been undertaken to ensure that development is not stymied due to the requirement to make further contributions towards off-site improvements, beyond that of established and impending S106, CIL, Biodiversity Net Gain and Net Zero obligations. In accordance with paragraph 57⁴ of the NPPF, which only requires s106 to be

² <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/wolverhampton-local-plan>

³ Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 9-012-20140306

⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf

necessary to make development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

- 2.9. We agree with Strategic Objective 2 with regards to meeting housing needs of the district whilst making a proportionate contribution towards the unmet needs of Greater Birmingham. It would be helpful to understand what proportion would be assisting Birmingham and what proportion for the Black Country authorities? We have repeatedly asked for this information to be made available in our previous representations.
- 2.10. We agree with Strategic Objective 3 with regards to meeting housing needs for different groups in the community, including a range of market and affordable housing.
- 2.11. We agree with Strategic Objective 4 with regards to developing a high-quality design and character.
- 2.12. We agree with Strategic Objective 5 with regards to encouraging healthy communities through the provision of health, education, open space, sport and leisure infrastructure, acknowledging the positive contribution house building makes to these services via S106 agreements.
- 2.13. We agree with Strategic Objective 6, to foster sustainable economic growth and inward investment, acknowledging the significant growth, employment and tax revenue associated within house building.
- 2.14. We agree with Strategic Objectives 7 & 8, to support rural areas and villages and the community services they depend on. In supporting these objectives, we acknowledge the positive contribution housing growth has to sustaining these communities, maintaining and enhancing demand for services and ensuring the vitality.
- 2.15. We agree with Strategic Objectives 9 & 10, to ensure new development is served by infrastructure and transport networks, particularly for development that grows existing settlements with established transport links, services and infrastructure. However, it is also here that meeting the Duty to Cooperate is essential in identifying and delivering cross-boundary infrastructure which would facilitate unmet housing need from neighbouring authorities.
- 2.16. Strategic Objectives 11 & 12, are laudable and seek to protect and enhance the natural environment and deliver climate change mitigation, whilst acknowledging the positive impact housing development in South Staffordshire can have on these objectives. Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain will enhance habitats and the natural world, whilst delivering housing growth. Low carbon and energy efficient technology, such as Air and Ground Source Heat Pumps, solar PVs, EV charge points and provisions made within new building regulations will ensure appropriate climate mitigation through the delivery of new homes. It is our view that the building regulations regime is the best way to set standards for energy performance in new buildings. We would refer the council to the Ministerial Statement⁵ of 13 December 2023 which sets out that:

“... the Government does not expect plan-makers to set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned buildings regulations”.
- 2.17. We agree with Strategic Objective 13 to protect and enhance historic environments across South Staffordshire.

⁵ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2023-12-13/hlws120>

Green Belt

- 2.18. Whilst we acknowledge that South Staffordshire is heavily constrained with regards to the level of Green Belt land across the district (80%), we believe a proactive approach to releasing Green Belt land to meet strategic objectives, such as housing delivery, should be adopted. We are encouraged that “*boundary amendments*” will be made to accord with the development strategy. It is clear that there are exceptional circumstances in place to justify a wholesale review of the Green Belt within the authority, or opportunities to meet burgeoning housing need will be lost. The obvious lack of cooperation with neighbouring authorities on this approach is disappointing.
- 2.19. With regards to policy DS1, we agree that Green Belt development should enhance access to outdoor sport and recreation, enhance landscape, visual amenity and biodiversity – as indeed many proposals within the Green Belt are capable of (including the subject site).
- 2.20. We also agree with DS1 that where Very Special Circumstances can be demonstrated with regards to inappropriateness, planning permission should be granted. However, this is a difficult hurdle to get over and the most appropriate way to deliver new housing is through a positively prepared local plan.
- 2.21. We do not agree that affordable housing to meet local community needs should be “limited”, considering the significant and worsening affordable housing shortage within South Staffordshire, as demonstrated by the c.1,500 households on its social housing waiting list. South Staffordshire should look to encourage as many forms of affordable housing delivery as possible, including via Rural Exception Sites.

Green Belt Compensatory Improvements

- 2.22. Despite paragraphs 147 and 148 of the latest NPPF, we disagree that Green Belt proposals must require “*compensatory improvements*” in order to gain planning consent. We instead agree with motion set by paragraph 57 that requires contributions to be necessary to make development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and related in scale and kind. Improvements on adjacent site or sites elsewhere in South Staffordshire would not, in our view meet the tests within paragraph 57, as they are not directly related to the development.
- 2.23. We further question whether these further obligations have been tested within South Staffordshire’s evidence base with regards to financial viability. The cost of these compensatory improvements must be tested against existing assumptions for developer contributions, to ensure financial viability. Without such testing, this requirement cannot fairly be applied to development across an LPA which is mostly Green Belt.

Housing

- 2.24. We are concerned that the previous publication plan had a target delivery of 9,089 homes over the plan period, which has now been inexplicably more than halved to 4726 dwellings over the plan period up to 2041 (just 227 dwellings per annum). This figure takes into account South Staffordshire’s own housing need of 4086 dwellings and the additional 640 Dwellings from the unmet needs of the GBBCHMA. The unmet need identified in paragraphs 5.9 to 5.11 attributed to the authorities in the Black Country and Birmingham have as much as 106,653 homes worth of unmet need. Wolverhampton and Dudley alone account for over 12,000 homes as unmet need. It appears that South Staffordshire have all but abandoned their previous approach of meeting c4,000 units of this unmet need via the Duty to Cooperate, and since then very little has changed to warrant this new approach.

2.25. We would stress that the 4,726 figures should be viewed as a minimum and should not discount opportunities to provide housing on the edge of neighbouring authorities, which benefit from existing services and infrastructure.

Development Needs & Spatial Strategy to 2041

2.26. Policy DS4 should make clear that the delivery of 4,726 homes is a minimum target and should encourage sustainable development on all sites where all other development plan policies are met.

2.27. We believe that the spatial strategy should allocate potential housing sites on the urban fringes of the Black Country which already benefit from good sustainable transport links and higher order services such as surgeries, schools and shops. There are also significant employment opportunities throughout the Black Country that simply do not exist within the rural areas of South Staffordshire.

2.28. We believe DS5 should encourage strategic development in urban fringe locations to extend existing larger settlements.

3. PART B: SITE ALLOCATIONS

Site Allocations – Housing

- 3.1. The housing allocations at Policy SA3 do not allocate any housing to urban edge sites, which would take advantage of existing services and transport infrastructure of neighbouring Black Country settlements. We do not agree with allocations over reliant on the tiered settlements of South Staffordshire as this completely ignores the fact that the authority is inter-dependent with the Black Country for employment, retail and educational opportunities and that meeting the needs of the Black Country will require the release of some Green Belt land within South Staffordshire: something that was acknowledged in the later iteration of the emerging Black Country Plan.

4. THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

- 4.1. We would firstly like to highlight that we are disappointed that our client's site: Land at Blackhalve Lane has not been included as an allocation within the Publication Plan document. We believe the site should be included in the emerging plan as it would make a valuable contribution towards meeting the district housing target 4,726 homes over the period to 2041, as well as making a contribution to Wolverhampton City Council's significant unmet need.
- 4.2. The land at Blackhalve Lane has already been subject to previous representations at preferred options, Issues and Options, Spatial Housing Strategy stages and the previous iteration of the Publication Plan. It is noted that the site has been previously partly proposed for housing as an allocation in (what was) the emerging Black Country Plan. This has since been withdrawn and the other part of the site has been omitted from the South Staffordshire Plan.
- 4.3. The redline plan provided below shows a white dashed line which details the part of the site falling into the Wolverhampton Local Plan boundary (which was a former proposed allocation within the Black Country Plan) and the eastern part of the site which falls into South Staffordshire (not allocated). The boundary between the two is just a broken hedgerow which offers a poor boundary to the edge of the Green Belt should the Wolverhampton element of the site come forward eventually. We firmly consider a more comprehensive scheme would ensure a more holistic approach is taken to creating a robust, enduring and permanent Green Belt boundary.



- 4.4. An allocation here would also serve as a logical opportunity to deliver some of Wolverhampton's unmet need in a highly sustainable location.
- 4.5. The site is also within close proximity to another former proposed allocation to the south 'Land north of Linthouse Lane (site reference: 486c Policy SA2) within the previous Reg19 Publication

Plan (2018-2039). However, this does not appear to feature in the most recent allocations within the appendices to this Publication Plan.

- 4.6. It is clear that the locational sustainability of the entire site remains the same as the element which had been allocated in the Black Country Plan: there is no difference. We firmly believe the council should reconsider their position in relation to the remainder of the site as to continue to treat it as an omission site would be a significant missed opportunity to cooperate with Wolverhampton on their unmet need. We have already made submissions to the recent consultation for the Wolverhampton Reg 18 Local Plan making the case that the removal of the site (and wider allocation) is incredibly short sighted.
- 4.7. As is clear from the vision document submitted with this representation (and submitted to previous consultation), the site can deliver a strong mix of housing in accordance with the density and type prescribed within the proposed policies, whilst delivering green infrastructure (and necessary biodiversity net gain) and areas of sustainable drainage and other public benefits, during the first 5 years of the plan. The site has the capacity to deliver around 100 new homes (around 70 market and 30 affordable homes of mixed tenure).
- 4.8. Further, unlike many of the allocations proposed within various small villages across South Staffordshire, the site at Blackhalve Lane would form a logical and immediate continuation of Wolverhampton, which is served by established community facilities and sustainable transport infrastructure.
- 4.9. The site also benefits from being unconstrained, as it is within Flood Zone 1, not within the context of any landscape or heritage designations and not straddled by any public rights of way.
- 4.10. Below is an extract from the vision document which demonstrates an initial layout of how the site (including that which is a former draft allocation to the BCP) could be delivered:



4.11. A number of other technical reports have been undertaken to demonstrate how the site could be delivered in accordance with the emerging plan. The technical assessments are extensive and whilst not submitted with this representation, can be provided upon request – they include:

- Agricultural Land Classification Report
- Air Quality and Noise Survey
- Ecological Surveys
- Flood Risk and Drainage Technical Note
- Historic Environment Technical Note
- Geo-Environmental Desk Study
- Topographic Survey
- Transport Technical Note
- Tree Survey

4.12. For the reasons highlighted above, we urge that the council gives further consideration to our client's site at Blackhalve Lane, and it should be included as a housing allocation within the Submission Plan.

APPENDIX A: VISION DOCUMENT



Blackhalve Lane, Wolverhampton

Site Vision

November 2018



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Prepared on behalf of St Philips Ltd

Project Ref: STP0415

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DATE	COMMENT	CREATED BY	CHECKED BY	VERSION
16.11.2018	For team/ client comment	AJF	NW	1
28.11.2018	For client comment	AJF	KK/NW	2
30.11.2018	For review	AJF	KK/NW	3
30.11.2018	For submission	AJF	KK/NW	4



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1 Introduction and vision

Document format

Node has been commissioned by St Philips Ltd to undertake a masterplanning exercise for land at Blackhalve Lane, Wolverhampton, in support of the promotion of the site through the South Staffordshire local plan review process.

This document follows a best practice framework first established by CABI. This approach allows the design of a scheme to build logically and coherently on an evidence base gathered from technical briefings, desktop review and contextual analysis.

The site

The site is comprised of five compact pasture fields located towards the north eastern extent of the city of Wolverhampton.

The greenfield site is bounded by Blackhalve Lane to the south, Wood Hayes Road to the west, a small cluster of five residential properties in the south western corner, and Oakley Farm immediately abutting the eastern boundary. The north, south and western boundaries are screened by mature hedgerows and trees. Within the site a series of linear hedgerows define the field boundaries. These hedgerows include a number of mature trees that are a strong feature of the site. In addition, an existing field pond is present in the middle of the site.

Located on Wolverhampton's rural-urban fringe, the site is also on the boundary of the two suburbs of Bushbury and Wood End, which together make up a gateway to the wider South Staffordshire countryside.

In addition to the recreational opportunities the countryside has to offer, this site location is deemed to be highly sustainable with the significant level local shops, services and amenities situated within a short walking distance.

Vision

Establishing a vision is a vital stage in the design process, ensuring that all stakeholders are unified in their aspiration of the future for the site and that this same aspiration is maintained throughout the planning and design process.

The vision for this site is to create a residential scheme which maximises the site's existing landscape assets to provide a characterful development that integrates with both the local built environment as well as the South Staffordshire countryside.

Future proposals will seek to create a scheme which promotes healthy lifestyles for its residents through the provision of active travel, creation of community spirit and a positive local greenspace network.

LEGEND

 Site boundary
(4.93ha)




0  100
metres

FIGURE 1.1 | SITE LOCATION | 1:2,500



2 Appreciating the context

2.1 Strategic context

Planning policy

South Staffordshire

The development plan at present comprises the South Staffordshire Local Plan, which is made up of:

- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012) which covers the plan period to 2028
- Site Allocations Document (SAD) (2018), which seeks to implement the Core Strategy

Within the Local Plan, the site is currently washed over by a Green Belt designation (Core Strategy Policy GB1) which seeks to restrict development as per the five purposes, set out in the Framework. There are no other site specific designations affecting the site.

The SAD, at policy SAD1 sets out that there will be a review of the Local Plan, which must be submitted for examination by the end of 2021. This will include a District-wide review of housing need (including assessing options to meet housing need from the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area and Black Country); a review of employment land supply; the spatial strategy; provision for Gypsies and Travellers, and a comprehensive Green Belt

South Staffordshire Council are undertaking a wholesale review of their development plan. This presents a golden opportunity to review green belt, look again at all types of housing and employment land delivery and shape a future where historic and environmental assets continue to be enhanced and protected.

A lot has changed since the Core Strategy was adopted, and the Council will have to start from first principles in many ways.

Wolverhampton

The site falls largely within South Staffordshire, but a small proportion also sits within Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough, who are also reviewing their development plan.

The development plan at present comprises the Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) (2011) and its accompanying Area Action Plans, which are unrelated to this site.

The BCCS was produced jointly by the four Black Country Authorities for the plan period to 2026.

The BCCS replaced much of the Unitary Development Plan (2006) for Wolverhampton, however some saved policies, such as Minerals Safeguarding (Policy MIN1) partly cover a small area of the site.

The site sits outside of any of the Regeneration Corridors and Strategic Centres, where most new development has been focussed. The BCCS is now subject to review, where an Issues and Options document has been published. The site (Ref 123) has been submitted to the Call for Sites as part of this process.

Key	
	A Roads
	Railway
	Proposed Tier 1 Settlement
	Proposed Tier 2 Settlement
	Proposed Tier 3 Settlement
	Proposed Tier 4 Settlement
	Railway Station
	Urban Area
	Green Belt
	Open Countryside
	Strategic Employment Sites
	Bobbington Airport

* Approximate site location

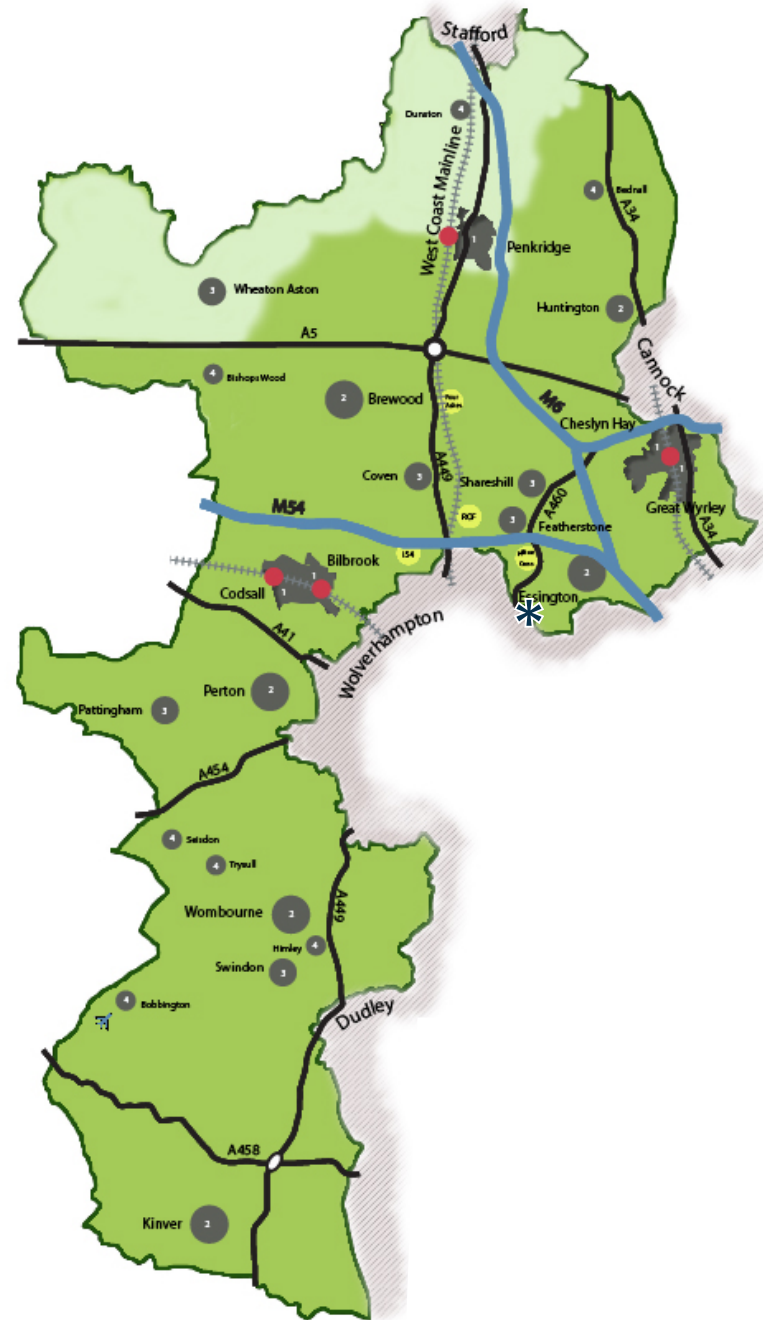


FIGURE 2.1 | THE SITE'S ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXT
(EXCERPT FROM SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW ISSUES AND OPTIONS)

Land use

The site is sustainably located within a 10-15 minute walking distance of many local shops, services and amenities, including two well-serviced local centres located separately at the junctions of Wood End Road and Linthouse Lane, and Blackhalve Lane and Cannock Road. Together these support two doctors surgeries, three pharmacists, a library, a community centre, two post offices as well as a number of local shops, cafés and restaurants.

The nearest primary school is Berrybrook Primary School, an Ofsted rated 'good' school located roughly 800m from the site. In addition, both Long Knowle Primary School and Wood End Primary School are within 1km walking distance of the site.

1. Berrybrook Primary School
2. Primrose Lane health centre
3. Local shops and cafés located at the junction of Wood Hayes Road and Blackhalve Lane
4. Long Knowle Community Hub



LEGEND

Site boundary (4.93ha)

Land use

- Urban area
- Place of worship
- Community centre
- Doctors surgery
- Pharmacy
- Bar/ cafe/ restaurant
- Library
- Post office
- Primary school
- Secondary school



0 1 kilometres

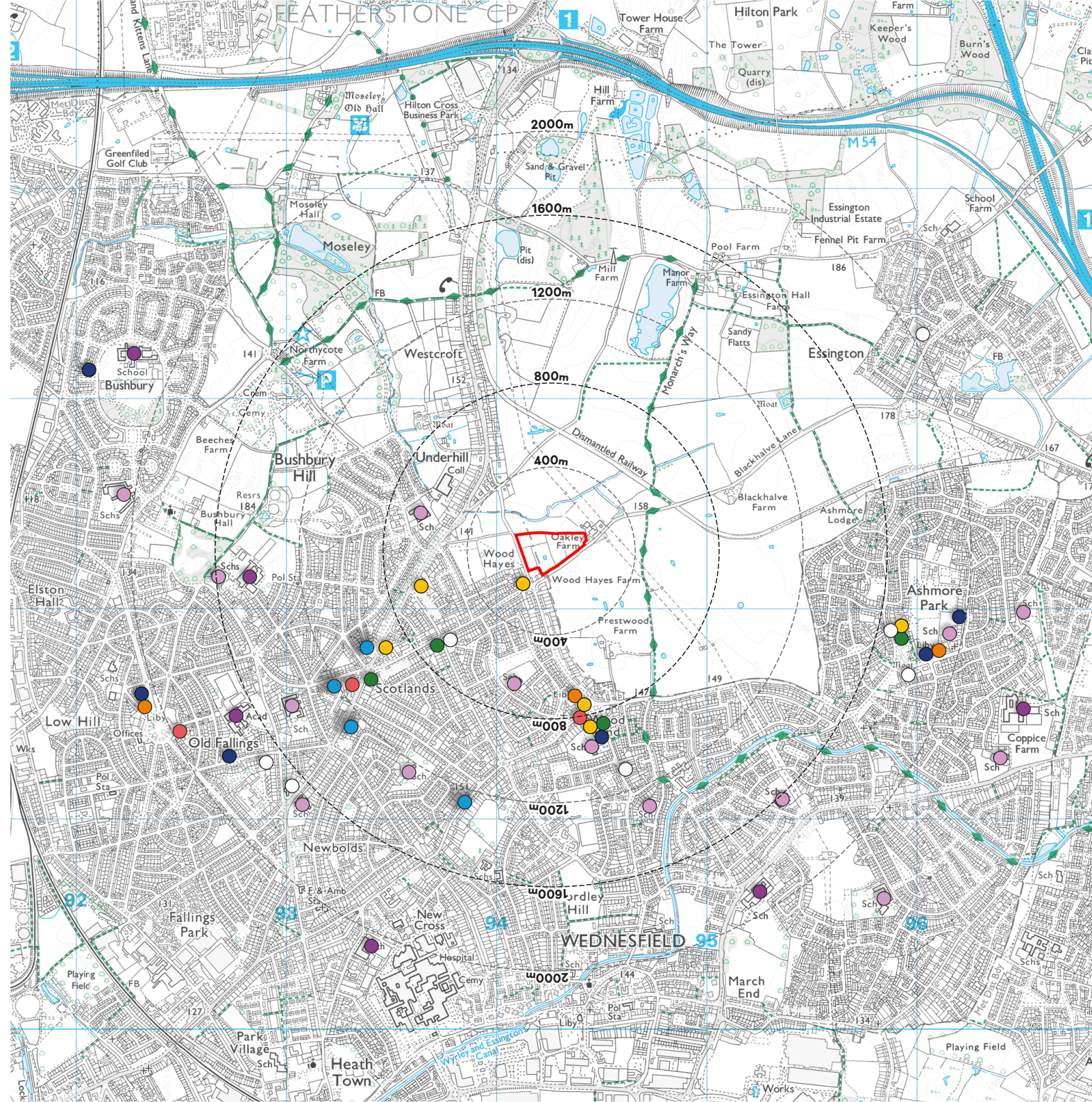


FIGURE 2.2 | LAND USE | 1:25,000

Access and movement

Located on Wolverhampton's rural-urban fringe, the site is positioned with good immediate links to local services and amenities as well as strong wider links to neighbouring towns and the motorway network.

Pedestrian and cycle access

The site is surrounded by a network of footpaths, public right of ways and bridleways that provide immediate links across Wood Hayes playing fields to amenities and services located along A460 Cannock Road. In addition the location provides ease of access to wider recreational routes such as Monarch's Way, a 615 mile route that approximates the escape route of Charles II following his defeat at the battle of Worcester.

Public transport

The nearest bus stops are adjacent to the site at the junction of Wood Hayes Road and Blackhalve Lane. These provide access to bus service 71 with a peak-hour service frequency of every 10 minutes between Wolverhampton, Essington and Cannock. Additional bus stops within a 5-minute walking distance provide access to bus service 65 with a peak-hour service frequency of every 4 minutes between Wolverhampton and Fordhouses. The nearest railway station is 5km away within Wolverhampton city centre.

Vehicular movement

The site's southern boundary and existing agricultural access fronts Blackhalve Lane and provides ease of access to the A460 Cannock Road, a strategic link connecting Wolverhampton city centre to the M54 and M6 motorway corridors.

1. Blackhalve Lane with the site to the left
2. Existing agricultural site access
3. Bus shelter on Blackhalve Lane
4. Monarch's Way public footpath



LEGEND

Site boundary
(4.93ha)

Pedestrian and cycle

- Footpath
- Public right of way
- Monarch's Way
- Bridleway

Public transport

- Bus stop location
- No. 71 bus route
- No. 65 bus route



0 1
kilometres

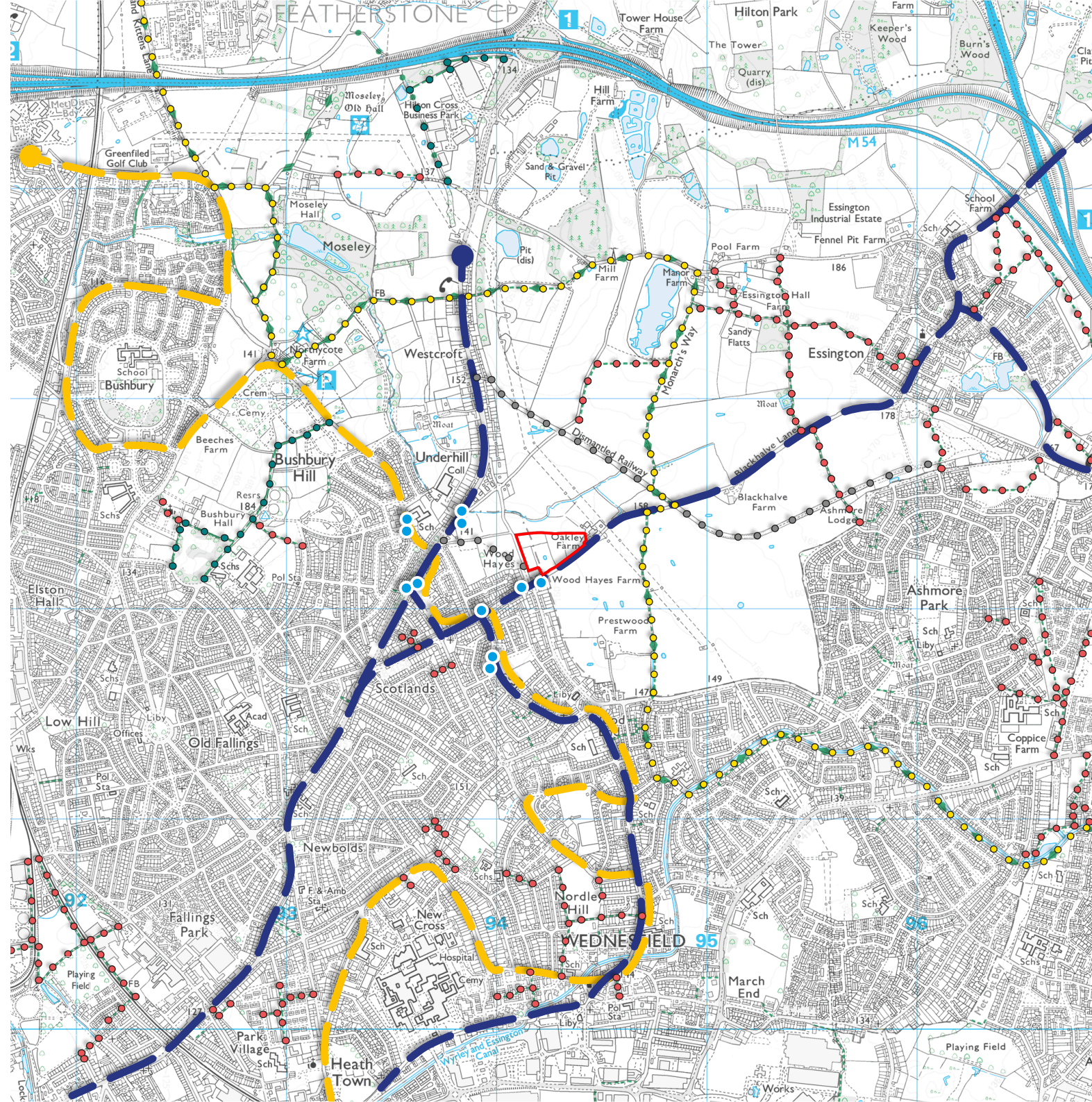


FIGURE 2.3 | ACCESS AND MOVEMENT | 1:25,000

Heritage assets

An assessment has been conducted to establish the potential for heritage sensitivity, both within the site itself and its surrounding context

Although there are no designated heritage assets within or immediately adjacent to the site, a few lie within the wider locality. Bushbury Hill Conservation Area was designated in 1972 and covers a largely greenspace area which incorporates a mix of uses.

North east of the site is a scheduled monument, a historic moated residence where the cottage is now demolished. Moated sites are characteristic of central eastern England, the majority of which were constructed between 1250 and 1350.

No statutory listed buildings are located within the site's context. Three locally listed buildings are located within the site's wider context, the closest of which is c.650m away and not visible from the site.

In summary, there are no heritage assets within the site or within sufficiently close proximity to allow for potential impact to arise from its development.

1. Locally listed public house: The Pheasant



1

LEGEND

Site boundary
(4.93ha)

Heritage

Bushbury Hill conservation area

Scheduled monument

Locally listed building

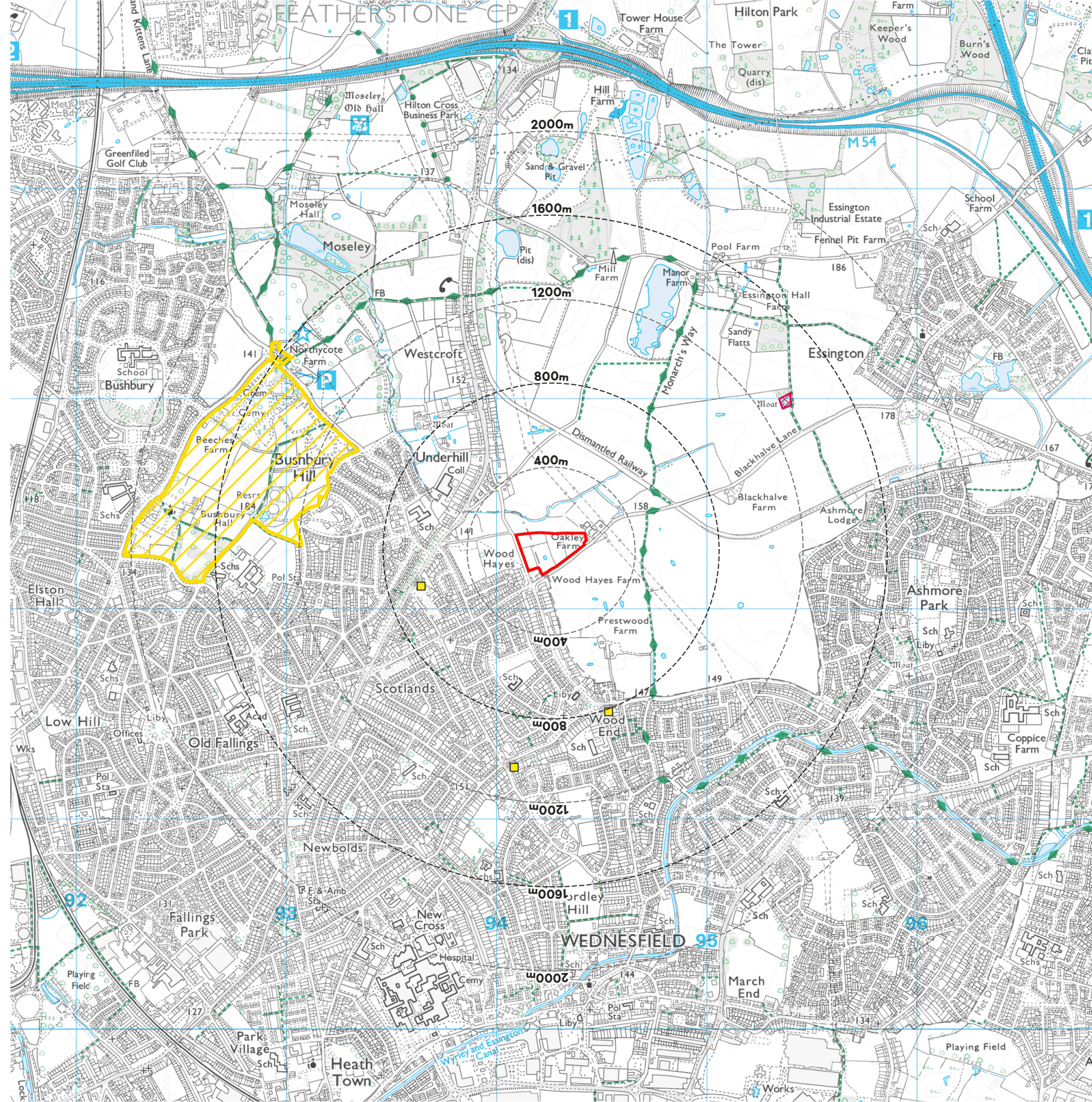


FIGURE 2.4 | LOCAL HERITAGE | 1:25,000

Landscape

National landscape character

The site is located within NCA67 'Cannock Chase and Cank Wood' national landscape character area. Natural England describes NCA67 as follows:

The National Character Area (NCA) forms an area of higher ground rising out of Shropshire and Staffordshire Plain NCA to the west. Much of this western boundary is defined by the transport corridor of the M6. Needwood and Claylands NCA lies to the north, separated by the Trent Valley.

The eastern edge adjoins Trent Valley Washlands NCA. The NCA lies on the watershed, with much of it draining east into the River Trent via the River Tame and a number of smaller

tributaries that drain Cannock Chase. The remainder of the NCA drains west into the Severn catchment. In the south the NCA merges with Arden NCA within the Birmingham conurbation, and here there are close links through the roads, railways and canals.

From Cannock Chase there are views west over the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain and to the north-east and east over the Claylands and the Trent Valley. To the north of the NCA the plantations and heathland of the Chase create prominent views within the area. In the south of the NCA there are also significant viewpoints at Turners Hill at Rowley Regis and at Barr Beacon east of Walsall.

Natural England cites a number of characteristics for NCA 67 'Cannock Chase and Cank Wood' including:

- 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 predominant building material of the 19th- and early 20th century 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.

The site sits on the edge of this character area to the south and does not reflect the heathland character of Cannock Chase itself.

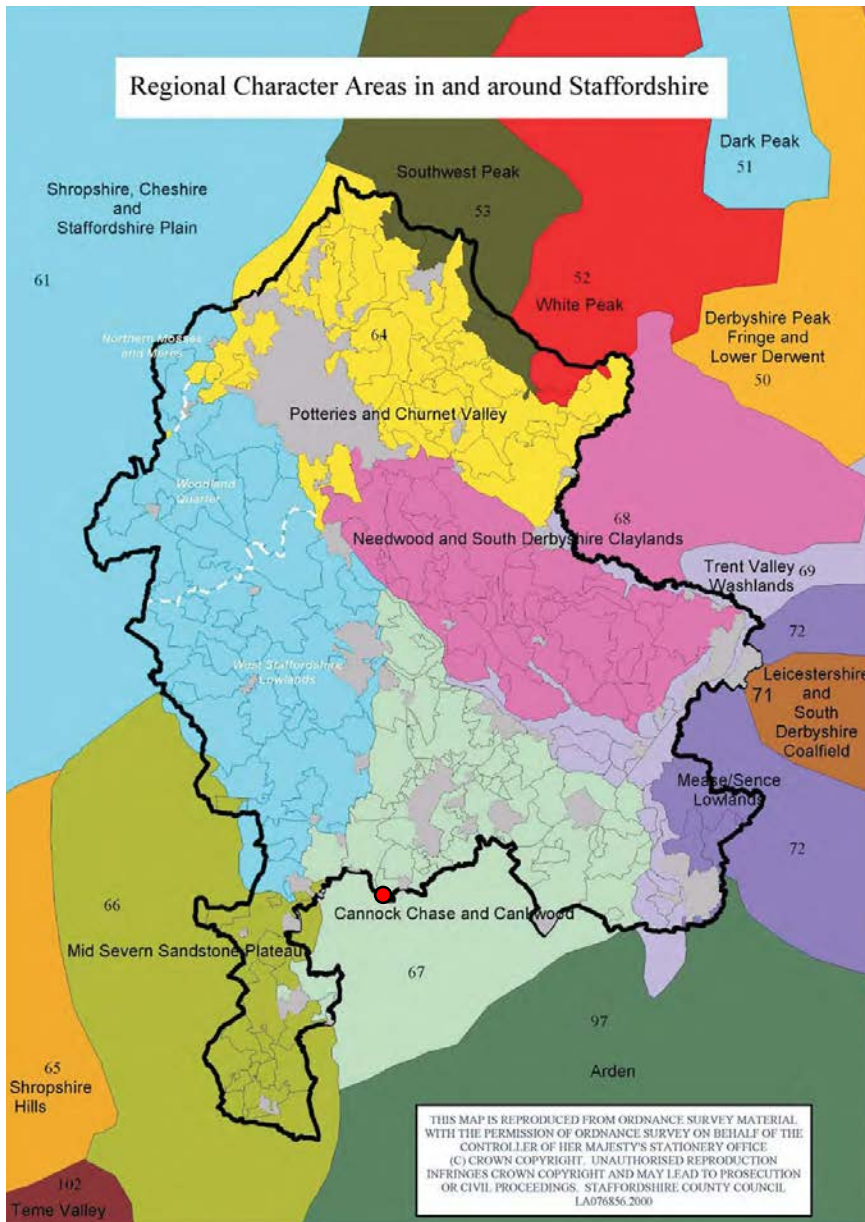


FIGURE 2.5 | NATIONAL CHARACTER AREAS WITHIN THE STAFFORDSHIRE REGION (EXTRACT FROM SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE SPG VOL.3)

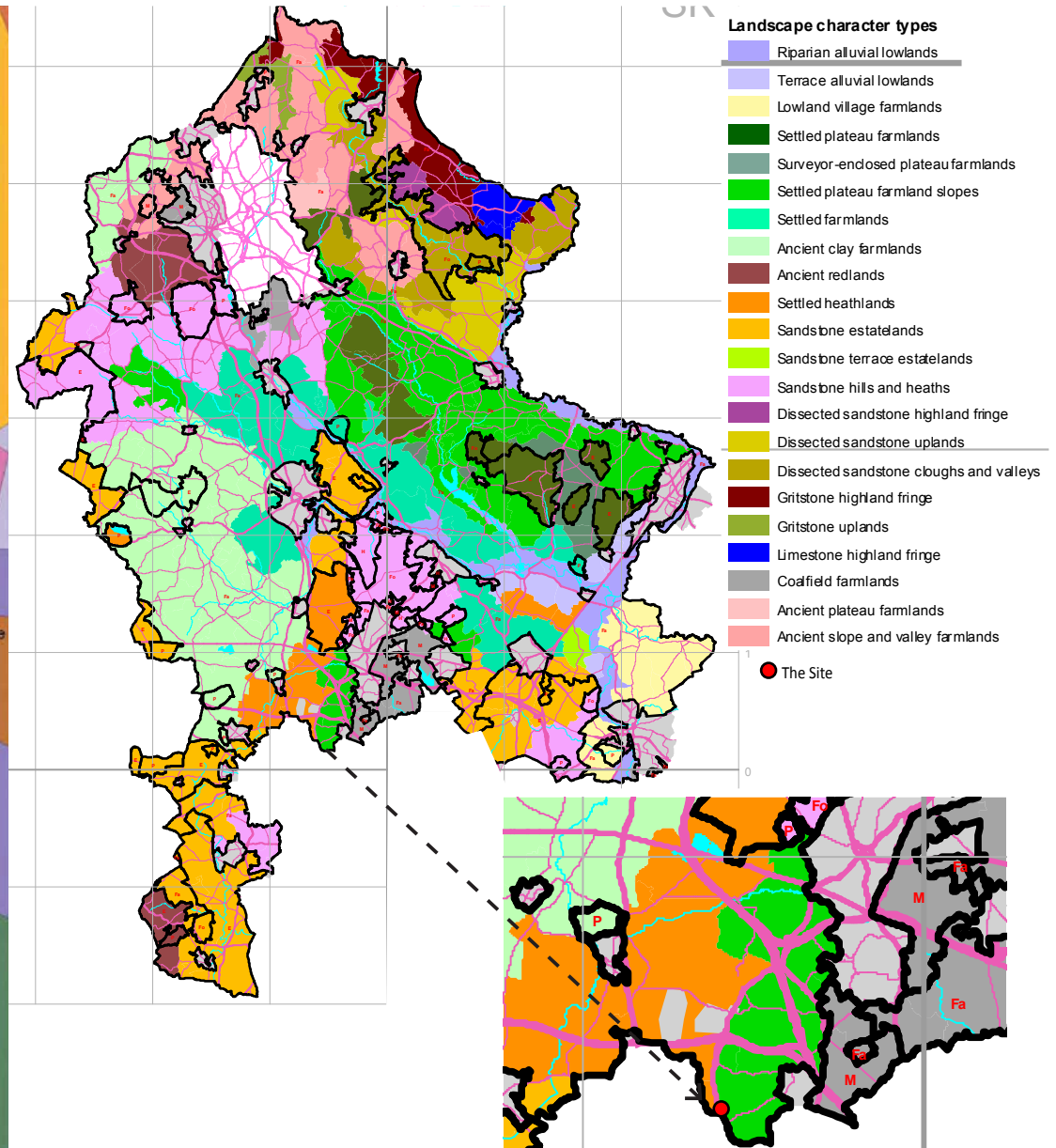


FIGURE 2.6 | LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES IN STAFFORDSHIRE (PLANNING FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGE SPG)

Regional landscape character

The site is situated at a regional level in the 'settled plateau farmland slopes' character area. This is defined within Staffordshire County Council landscape descriptions as follows:

These are, in general, landscapes of the slopes below rolling plateaux, on which boulder clay overlies Triassic mudstones. The soils, which are generally non-calcareous stagnogleys, support dairying with some mixed farming in a semi-regular pattern of hedged fields, with scattered woods, often of ancient origin, and areas of remnant heath. There is a dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and farmsteads, with urban influences in places.

Visual character

The single example of the type found in this Regional Character Area is a landscape of intensive arable and pastoral farming where fields have been enlarged to increase the scale considerably in places. The well-trimmed nature of the hedgerows, isolated trees and prominent rolling landform ensure that there are always views across the landscape to the distance or intermediate horizons.

The many small woods (none of them of ancient origin) and the stream valleys are important in locally reducing scale and directing views. Typical red brick farmhouses and scattered cottages are quickly losing their character by improvement or erection of large associated buildings.

The area is easily accessible due to the network of narrow winding lanes serving the farms and hamlets. Newer properties are surprisingly numerous and reduce the quality of the landscape by their visibility and inappropriate design.

Characteristic landscape features

Intensive arable and pasture farming; large scale field pattern with well-trimmed hedgerows; a rolling, often pronounced landform; well treed stream corridors; dispersed red brick farms; narrow winding lanes and small woodlands.

Incongruous landscape features

Adjacent urban landscape uses and encroaching urban elements such as sewage works; electrified railway; power lines; lines of fencing replacing deteriorating hedgerows.

The site is more characteristic of this regional landscape character type.

Landscape summary

In summary, our desktop appraisal and site survey of landscape and visual matters have established the following key points:

- The site is within the green belt but well contained by mature trees and hedgerow on the boundaries of the site and is in urban fringe location on the edge of Wolverhampton
- The site includes five agricultural fields with mature hedgerows and large hedgerow trees
- The site is rolling in nature with an existing pond in the middle of the site.
- Oakley Farm is located on the eastern boundary of the site

- Development on the corner of Blackhalve Lane and Wood Hayes Road screens views of the site from the junction
- To the north of the site a small watercourse Water Head brook runs in a valley
- The site is most visible in close proximity to the site from Blackhalve Lane
- The site is generally screened from long distance views to the north, east and south by intervening vegetation
- Views from public rights of way on higher ground to the north including Monarch Way are all within the context of the wider urban setting of Wolverhampton itself.

A number of landscape panoramic photos have been produced on the following pages to illustrate the points above.

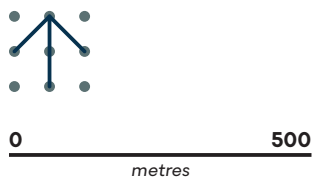
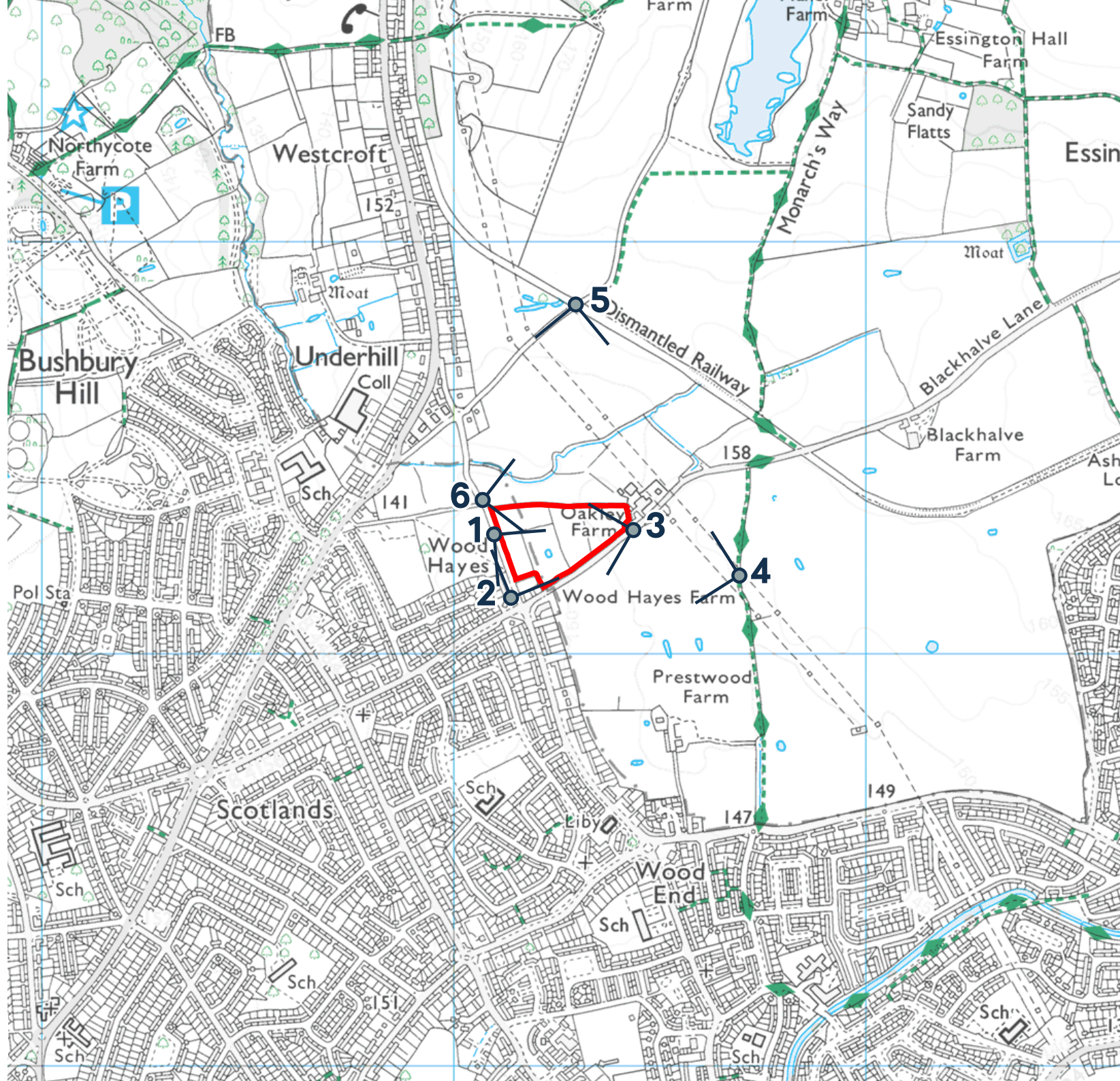
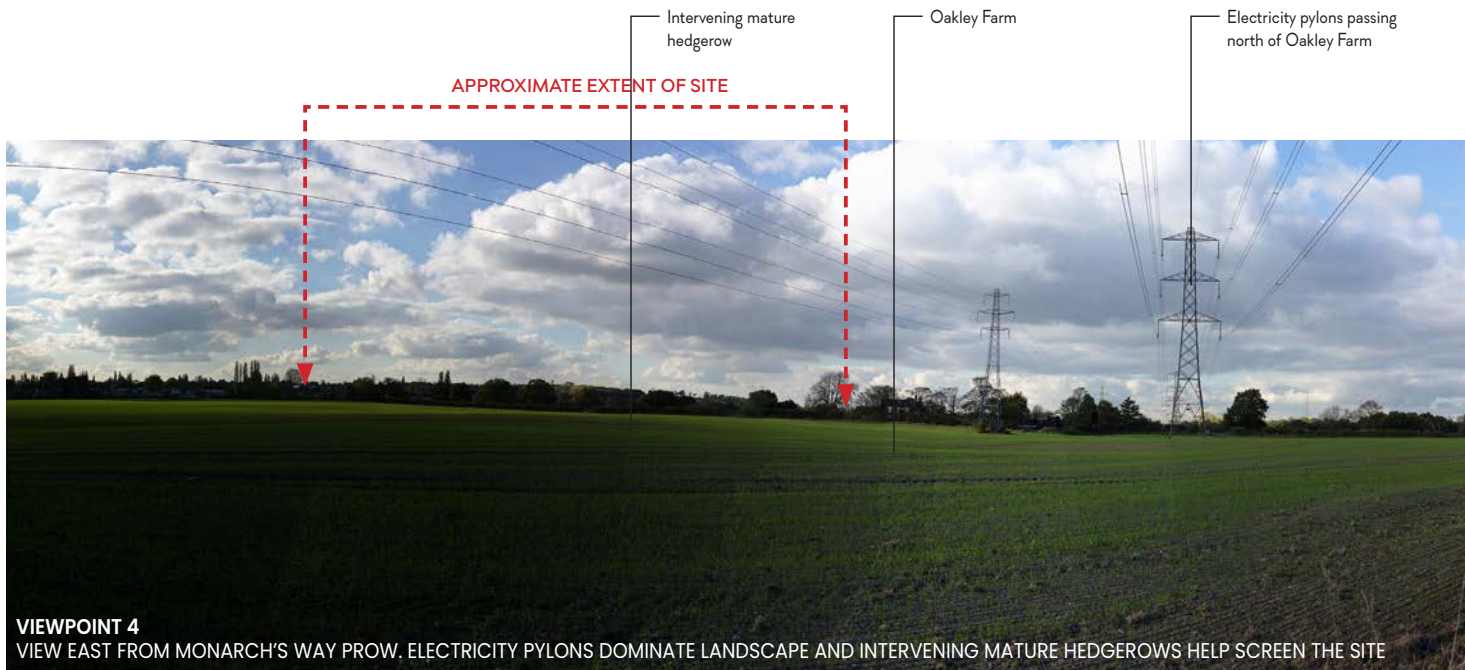
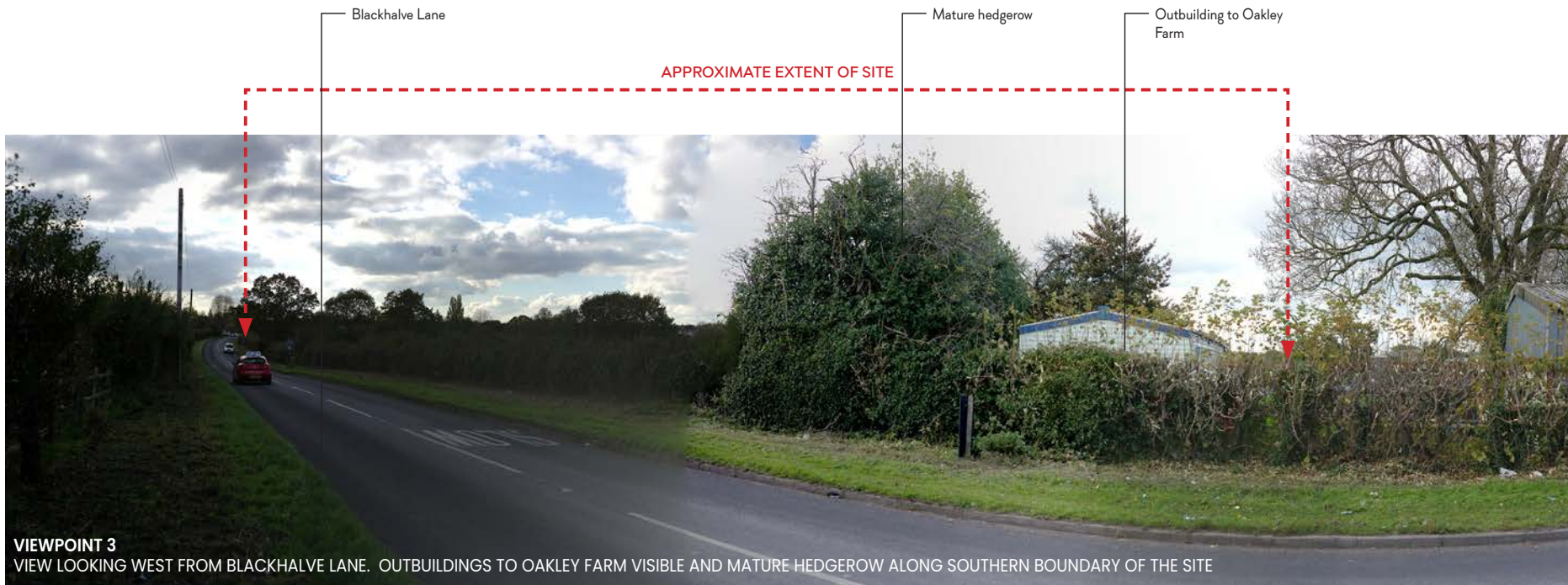
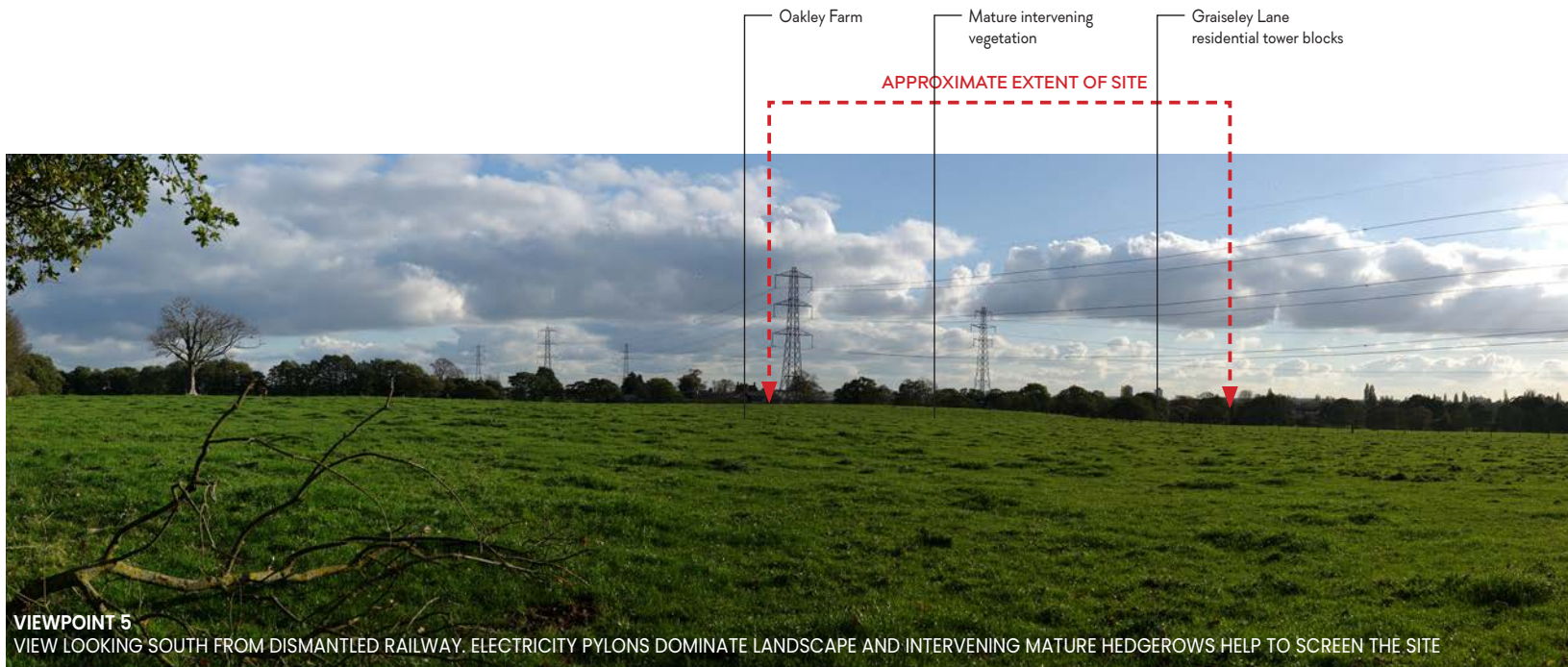


FIGURE 2.7 | VIEWPOINT LOCATION PLAN | 1:12,500







Green Belt Assessment

The site at Blackhalve Lane, Wolverhampton currently sits within the Green Belt. Around 80% of the district is designated Green Belt, and this has historically limited development to a significant degree.

As set out in the NPPF and reiterated in the Issues and Options document (p.16), it is clear that authorities should direct development away from Green Belt where possible, or where this is unavoidable, direct development away from the most sensitive areas of Green Belt, subject to sustainability and deliverability considerations.

Sites which therefore do not make a strong contribution to the role and function of the Green Belt in South Staffordshire will be considered for

potential release in order to facilitate the planned growth for the District.

We have considered the Blackhalve Lane site against the five purposes of Green Belt as set out below (NPPF)

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- To assist in the urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas

The site is located in an urban fringe location on the edge of Wolverhampton. It is well contained within the landscape being screened from long distance views by intervening vegetation, hedgerows and trees. The site has mature hedgerows to its boundaries to the south, east and north with the western boundary of the site screened by Oakley Farm.

Residential development at the corner of Blackhalve Lane and Wood Hayes Road also screens the site from this junction. This existing development to the east of Wood Hayes Road as well as the large complex of buildings at Oakley Farm and Electricity pylons give a urban fringe character to the site. The

site if removed from the Green Belt therefore forms a logical extension to the urban area that does not create urban sprawl. An opportunity exists to improve the boundary to the Green belt as existing residential development backing into the site does not have robust rear boundaries.

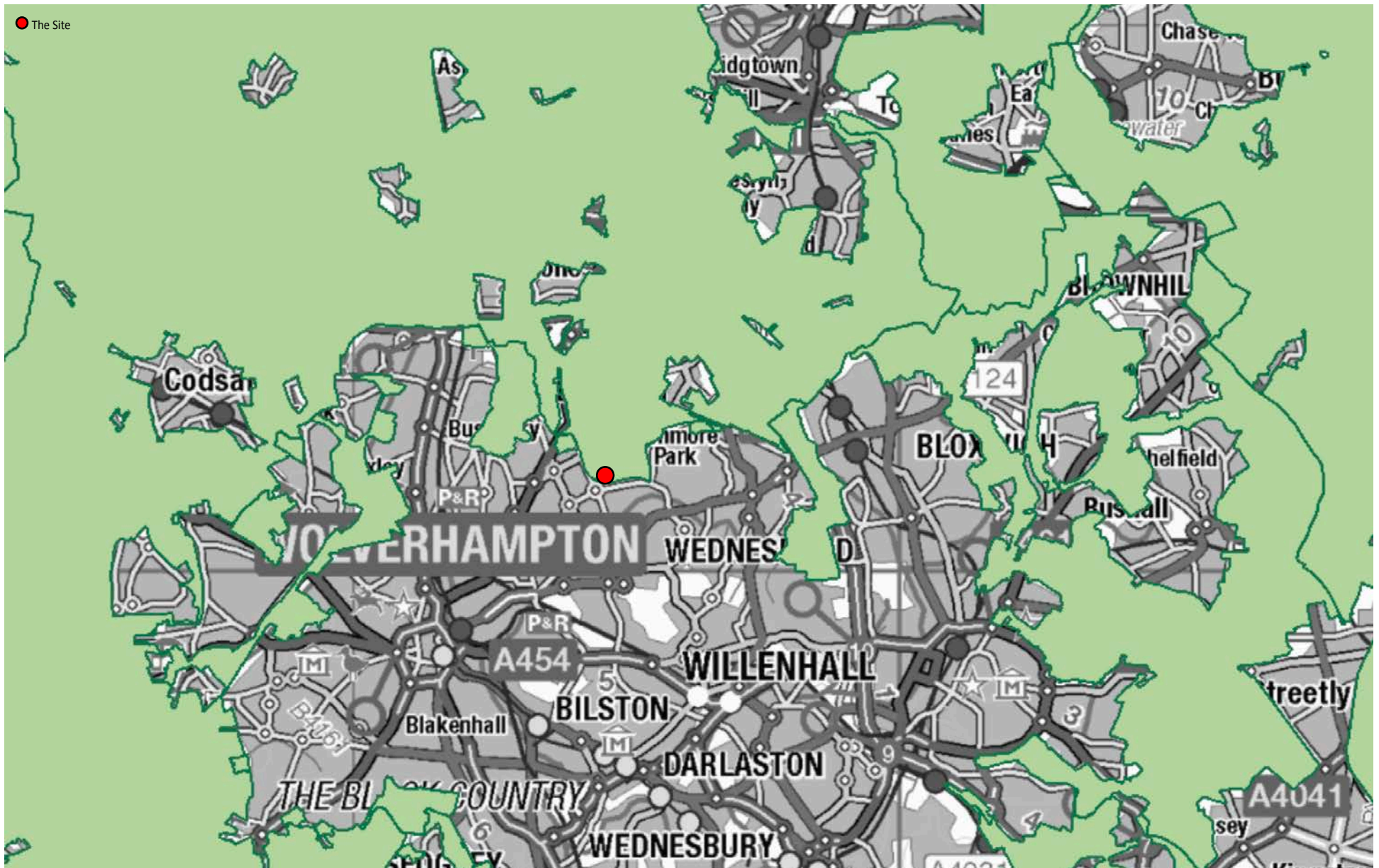


FIGURE 2.8 | GREEN BELT BOUNDARY
 (EXTRACT FROM MAGIC.DEFRA.GOV.UK)

To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

The Green Belt in this location does not have a strong function in preventing settlement coalescence. The nearest non-Green Belt settlement is some distance away, in Essington, where it is separated from the edge of Wolverhampton by a very narrow area of Green Belt, where Sneyd Lane almost connects Ashmore Park with Essington in places.

To the north is Featherstone, another smaller village that has also almost merged with the wider built up area of Wolverhampton. Beyond that lies the M54 and M6 Toll before reaching the larger town of Cannock.

To some extent the merger of surrounding villages has already occurred. The contained nature of the site and the retention of a significant green wedge between the site and Essington and a lack of inter-visibility between the two will ensure that any perception of merging of settlement does not occur.

To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

Most Green Belt sites will make a contribution to openness, but being made up of smaller land parcels, the site, as already explained, is well contained with the landscape by mature hedgerows and trees and by existing development.

Views of the site are only visible in close proximity and in certain locations not at all due to the height and nature of boundary treatments. From long distance views the site is not visible and is seen in the context of the wider built up area of Wolverhampton itself.

It is proposed to retain key landscape features of the site including significant internal hedgerows and field trees.

The development will also work with the natural topography of the site. Opportunities also exist to provide mitigation planting and ecological enhancements in line with the site landscape character.

To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

The site is on the edge of Wolverhampton but this fringe location is not within a conservation area, nor the setting of listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments.

The nearest conservation area is Bushbury Hill approximately 1 km to the east of the site. This is screened by intervening built form and is completely separate from the context of the site itself.

The development of this site will not impact upon the special character of a historic town in that regard and it does not contribute in this way.

To assist in the urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Given the growth aspirations of the Council and the acknowledgement of the unmet need from the GBHMA it is clear that Green Belt land must be released in South Staffordshire and other neighbouring 'Green Belt' authorities. This is an absolute conclusion of the Issues and Options document.

The unmet need has been tested in scenarios which look at increasing densities, releasing additional previously developed sites and site in non green belt locations, and it is still subject to a shortfall of around 48,000 to 2036.

The remaining previously developed sites in Birmingham and the Black Country authorities that have yet to be redeveloped are no less likely to come forward if green belt is released in South Staffordshire. Issues of viability are being addressed for many sites, which are also able to access grant funding in some cases. However relying solely on such sites will not deliver the unmet need in a timely way and ultimately – there is still a requirement to release Green Belt land.

Conclusion

The Blackhalve Lane site overall performs fairly poorly when examined against the five purposes of Green Belt as set out in the NPPF. All green belt sites will perform fairly well in terms of safeguarding the countryside because development will change the openness of the site. However, for a relatively modest loss of Green Belt land in this sustainable location, we consider that there are far more sensitive Green Belt sites in the District that contribute strongly to the purposes set out earlier.

Ecological designations

An assessment has been conducted to establish the potential for ecological sensitivity, both within the site itself and its surrounding context

No statutory designated sites are within a close proximity to the site, the nearest being Noose Lane Local Nature Reserve which is located 2.9km south east of the site.

Oakley Farm Potential Site of Importance (PSI) lies partly within the site at its western end. There is no evidence of the presence of protected or notable species, however the site and immediate surrounds have potential to support a number of such birds and mammals.

In summary, there are no statutory ecological assets within the site or within sufficiently close proximity to allow for potential impact to arise from its development.

The presence of Oakley Farm Potential Site of Importance has been recorded and reflected within the design development process.



LEGEND

- Site boundary (4.93ha)

- Local landscape**
- EA flood zone 2
- EA flood zone 3
- Local wildlife site
- Site of importance for nature conservation (SINC)
- Site of local importance for nature conservation (SLINC)
- Potential site of importance
- Retained biodiversity alert site
- Woodland

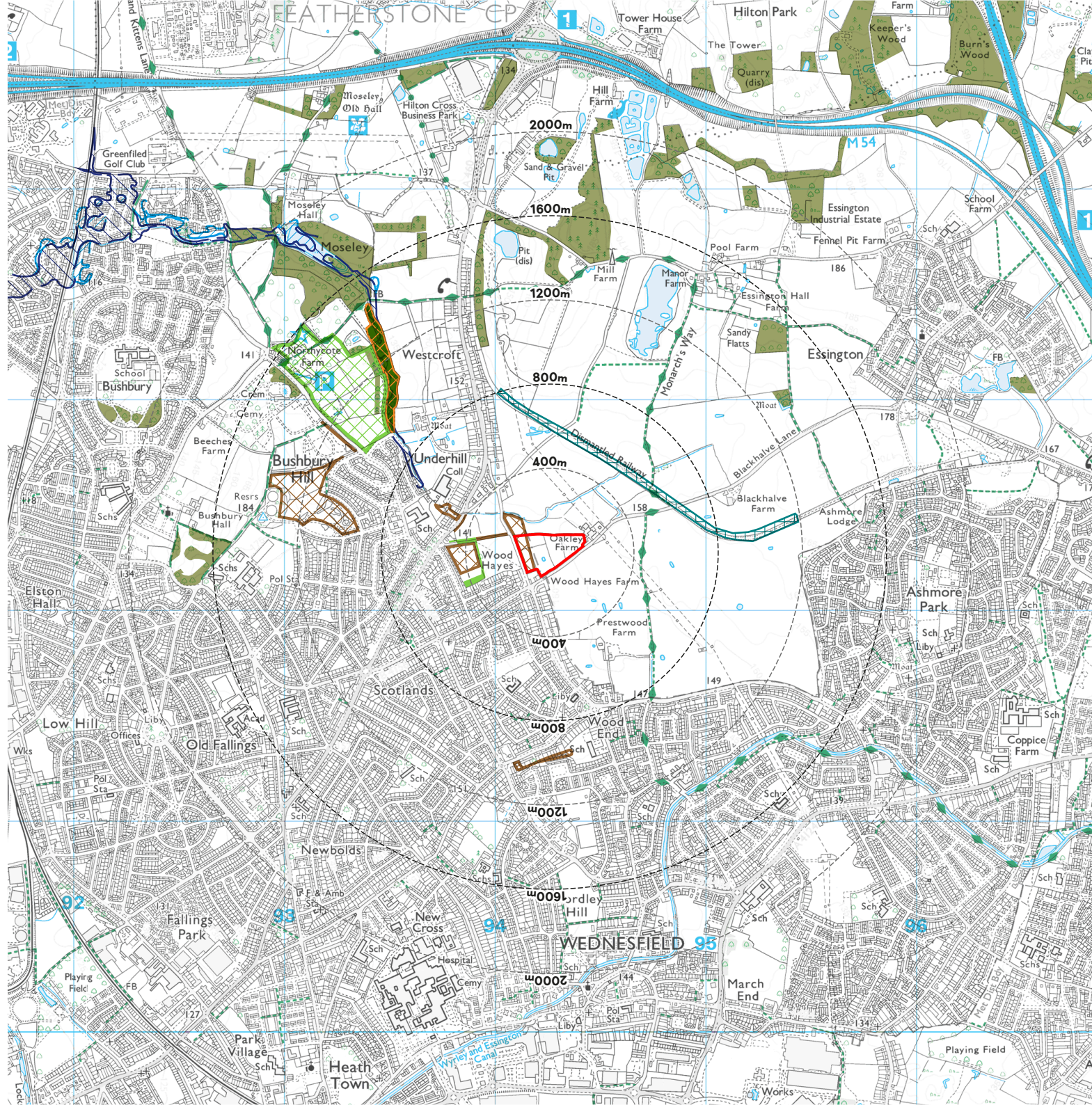


FIGURE 2.9 | ECOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE | 1:25,000

Morphology

Consideration has been given to the built form and residential typologies surrounding the site to help inform future development proposals. The site lies on the boundary of Wolverhampton's post-war urban sprawl area and South Staffordshire's rural countryside and scattered village settlements.

Wolverhampton's post war development is comprised of long straight residential boulevards fronted by the formal repetition of large semi-detached and short terraced dwellings with generous front and rear gardens,

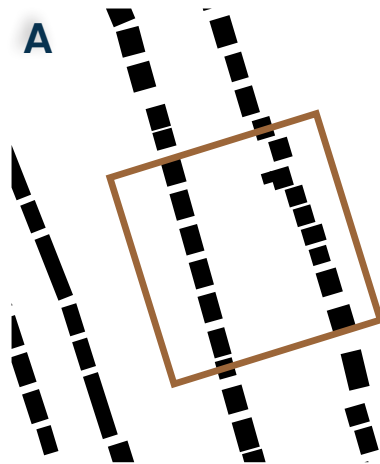
In contrast, traditional villages of South Staffordshire often began as a cluster of individual farms that expanded around a community use, such as a church or market place.



0

200

metres



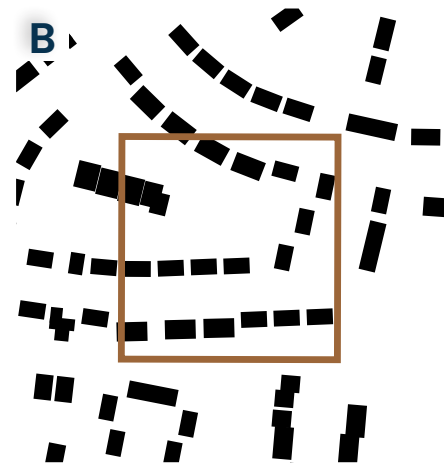
Wood End

Dwelling type(s)

Formally arranged large semi-detached post-war housing with long rear gardens and front gardens that have often been converted for on-plot parking

Residential density

The composition of semi-detached dwelling with large front and rear garden plots supports a density of 22dph.



Ashmore Park

Dwelling type(s)

Largely consistent semi-detached post-war housing, fronting long sinuous streets with wide verges and blank open space. A mixture of on-street parking and converted front gardens.

Residential density

The inclusion of short terraced runs and redeveloped rear garden plots creates a compact grain maintaining 40dph



Essington village

Dwelling type(s)

A blend of Edwardian terraced housing fronting back of pavement, post-war semi-detached dwellings with large front and rear gardens, as well as detached mid-twentieth century housing.

Residential density

The contrast of development eras and variable plot sizes results in a density of 25dph



Built character

Throughout both the surrounding suburbs of Wolverhampton and the local village of Essington, the dominant built form is large semi-detached post-war housing, set around long straight residential boulevards incorporating wide verges and some tree planting. Occasional runs of short terraces help increase the built density, which is often characteristically low due to long front and rear garden plots.

The architectural character is classic of this era, with high eaves-fronted roofs that are often hipped, with the addition of lean-to garages at the side of properties that infill the space between the dwellings. Bay windows are a common feature, both with and without gabled roof pitches. Over time the materiality has become varied, however red brick remains the dominant material with dark brown roof tiles.

2.2 Site assessment

Site description

A comprehensive photographic audit of the site and its surroundings has been undertaken. Key photographs and their location are shown on figure 2.6 opposite.

The site is comprised of five small pasture fields that are currently used for light cattle grazing. It's southern boundary abuts the northern side of Blackhalve Lane and is book-ended by development, including residential housing at the western end fronting both Blackhalve Lane and Wood Hayes Road. In addition, a small operational farm fronting Blackhalve Lane immediately sides onto the site's eastern boundary.

The site's most notable features include a variable undulating topography, field boundaries which

incorporate a number of large mature trees and an existing field pond.

With the exception of the eastern field parcel, the majority of the site slopes gently north westwards away from Blackhalve Lane. However, the north western field slopes back towards the centre of the site, meeting in a shallow valley that exits the site centrally along its western boundary.

The site's eastern field parcel slopes parallel to Blackhalve Lane, gently rising towards Oakley Farm.

Three internal field boundaries run roughly north-south through the site and these possess the most notable mature landscaping, including hedgerows, several large trees and a small agricultural drainage ditch.

An existing field pond and associated scrub lies south west to the centre of the site. Although this pond was dry at the time of undertaking the site visit, it may well be wet during a period of the year and be a usable ecological habitat.

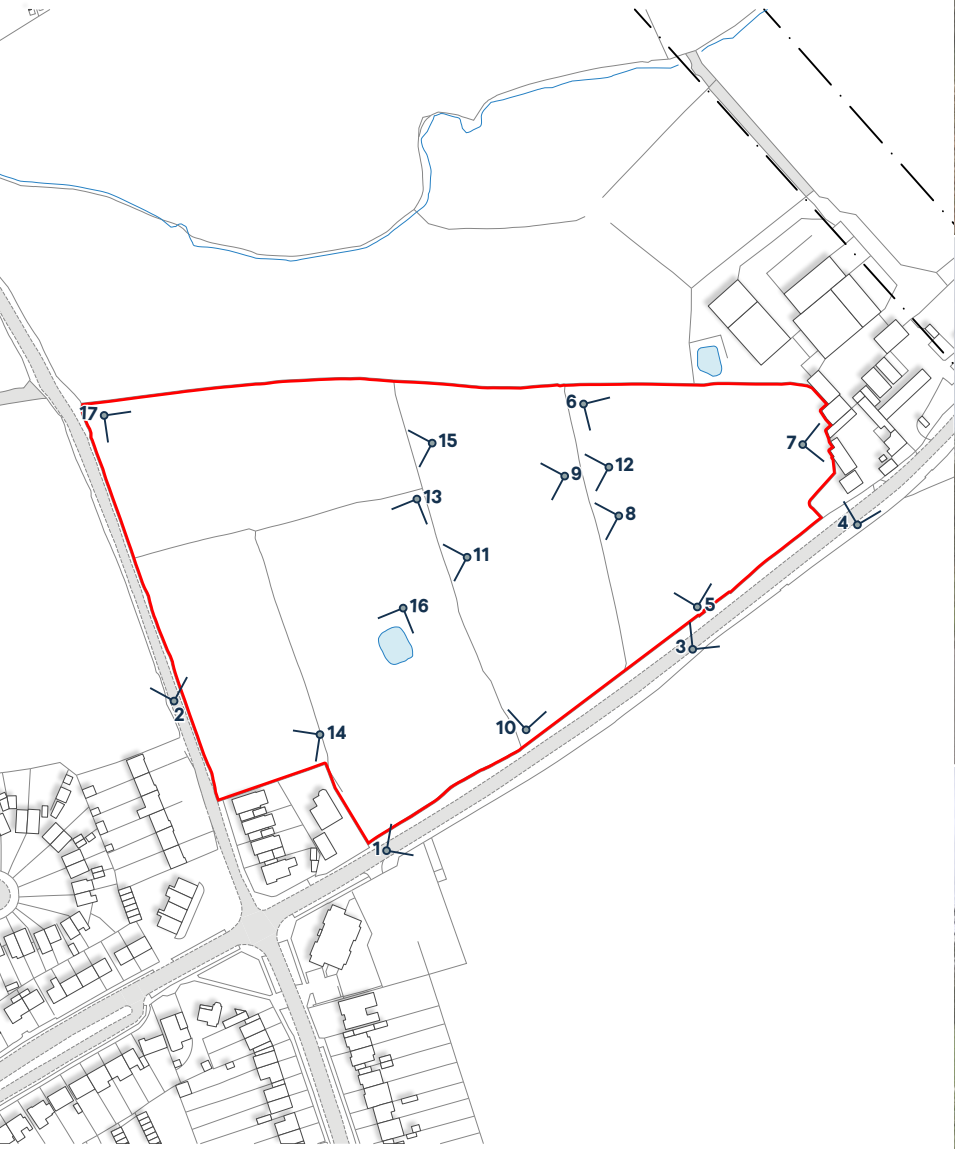


FIGURE 2.11 | PHOTO LOCATION PLAN | 1:3,500



Viewpoint photographs

1

2

3

4

5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16



17

Arboricultural survey

An arboricultural survey has been undertaken in accordance with BS5837:2012 utilising the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) methodology on the 23rd October 2010.

The key findings of the arboricultural survey are:

- Twenty nine records have been made across the site comprising of twenty three individual trees, one tree group and five hedgerows.
- Twenty key records have been made that are important arboricultural assets and have been awarded high retention values (A1 to B2), this is due to the longevity and visual prominence they exhibit.

- Very few records (five) have been categorised as retention value 'C' due to their limited arboricultural merit or impaired condition which are unlikely to pose as a constraint to the sites re development.
- Four Category U trees have been recorded on the site that require prompt management intervention for health and safety reasons.

The most significant arboricultural constraints are:

- The twenty A1 to B2 records (20,16,1,2,4,5,7,8,10,12,14,17, 6, 11, 15, 21, H3-H5) are the chief arboricultural constraints on this site. They all exhibit Root Protection Areas, canopy extents and are of a higher retention

value and as such constrain the development design in the occupied areas.

- Many of the twenty key records are in ecologically connected hedgerows and where possible the design shall attempt to retain the continuous arboricultural features within and forming the hedgerows.
- A single privately owned and off site TPO (Wolverhampton Council) tree (T5 Amenity Tree Care) is located off site but requires design consideration to ensure its RPA is not compromised.

The arboricultural survey has provided an important technical input into the design development process. Its findings have been reflected in the resultant design for the site.



FIGURE 2.12 | TREE CONSTRAINTS PLAN | NTS

Flood risk and drainage

An assessment of the flood risk to the site from all sources as well as any mitigation that will be required to manage this flood risk has been undertaken.

In addition, a drainage strategy to manage surface water runoff and foul water from the site has been developed to help inform the design development process. Key findings are as follows:

- All development will be contained in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore sequentially acceptable.
- All sources of flood risk are considered to be low to very low for this development.
- Although the risk from groundwater flooding is considered to be low, it is advised a ground investigation is carried out on site to confirm this and any required mitigation.
- The site's ground conditions indicate that disposal of surface water via infiltration is unlikely to be viable. Discharge into a watercourse is also considered unfeasible due to topography and third party land entry permissions.
- Consequently, surface water runoff will be attenuated and discharged via 2 detention basins, with a maximum combined volume of 1,345m³, to a Severn Trent sewer at manhole 0352 to the west of the site.
- The development will not increase runoff or flood risk downstream by utilising a sustainable drainage system to store and restrict flows to the Greenfield rates.
- The foul water drainage networks will discharge via gravity to foul sewers within Blackhalve Lane and Wood Hayes Road.

Air quality

An initial air quality assessment has been undertaken in support of the development of proposals for the site.

This has determined the following:

- A review of both SSDC and CWC Local Air Quality Management documents indicate that the proposed development site lies within CWC's citywide Air Quality Management Area, and near to
- The nearest monitoring location to the proposed development is located approximately 1.7km to the southwest of the site, adjacent to Cannock Road (Site ID: CAN), and shows annual mean concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) lie well below the air quality objective of 40 µg/m³.
- Therefore, it is considered that NO₂ concentrations on the application site will be comparable, and that air quality will not pose a constraint to the site.
- Detailed air quality assessment will be undertaken to confirm NO₂ and PM₁₀ pollutant concentrations at the site, and to quantify increases arising from development traffic within the local area. Impact significance will then be established.
- A suitable mitigation strategy, proportionate to predicted development impact will be identified.
- It is envisaged that the mitigation strategy would be developed in liaison with SSDC and CWC, to maximise opportunities to improve air quality in the area.

Noise

An initial noise assessment has been undertaken to establish existing sound levels at the site, and to enable assessment of sound levels against WHO and BS8233:2014 criteria, and to determine assist in specifying a suitable noise mitigation strategy for the development.

The principal noise sources in the vicinity of the site are road traffic using Wood Hayes Road, adjacent to the western boundary of the site, and Blackhalve Lane adjacent to the southern boundary. Other sources of noise include a school and nursery located approximately 300m to the west of Wood Hayes Road. However, noise associated with this use was only faintly audible at certain times during site walkover.

To attenuate sound levels from road transport sources, a general mitigation strategy has been identified. The final mitigation strategy may include some or all of the following mitigation measures, and will be informed by considerations other than noise that need to be taken into account during the layout design process. It is envisaged that the noise assessment work and mitigation strategy will be refined as the scheme progresses.

- Careful consideration of the site layout so that areas near to Blackhalve Lane and Wood Hayes Road use dwelling frontages to provide screening to gardens from the road, i.e. gardens to be located behind dwellings, facing away from the road.
- An acoustic barrier of approximately 2m height may be installed along the Blackhalve Lane boundary, to provide additional screening of sound, and therefore more flexibility for the site layout.
- The installation of 1.8 m high acoustically sound garden fencing, where required.
- Internal sound levels will be attenuated via the specification and installation of suitably attenuated glazing and ventilation systems.

Agricultural Land Classification

Desktop assessment

Provisional ALC mapping does not differentiate between Grades 3a and 3b and therefore it cannot be used to distinguish Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land (BMV land is defined as Grade 1, 2 and 3a of the ALC).

Site survey

A detailed soil resource and agricultural quality survey was subsequently carried out in October 2018. It was based on observations at intersects of a 100 m grid, giving a sampling density of one observation per hectare.

Soils at the site were found to comprise sandy clay loams over slowly permeable reddish heavy clay loam or sandy clay loam. The subsoils display greyish and mottled colouration (gleying) to shallow depth, indicating seasonal waterlogging caused by perched water above the poorly-structured lower subsoil. The soils are imperfectly-draining (Soil Wetness Class III) with a moderate capacity to absorb excess winter rainfall.

Land of Subgrade 3a has been identified across the majority of the site due to the moderately high topsoil clay content, combined with imperfect subsoil drainage, presenting seasonal wetness limitations to machinery access.

The land is capable of supporting spring-sown (as well as autumn-sown) arable crops, but with flexibility limited by wet periods. Were the site to be developed, the loamy topsoils represent a high quality resource for reuse in gardens and landscaping.

A development of a similar scale on greenfield land elsewhere in the local area would likely result in a similar proportional loss of BMV. The Site poses a logical extension to existing built up area and is capable of utilising existing amenities, services and infrastructure; which is preferable to the development of isolated areas of agricultural land elsewhere in the District.

It is unlikely that the development of the Site would conflict with the wider local agricultural interests of highly productive agriculture or horticulture and would therefore appear to be viable for a residential development.



FIGURE 2.14 | AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION | NTS

2.3 Opportunities and constraints

Following an assessment of the site and its local context a number of opportunities, constraints, and technical considerations have been identified to be taken forward into the design development process. The following bullet points and adjacent plan provides a summary of these key factors affecting the site that require urban design consideration.

- **Connecting the community:** The site offers the opportunity to create a development that provides direct pedestrian and cycle connections to the local service centre (junct. of Blackhalve Lane and Wood Hayes Road) and the public playing fields opposite Wood Hayes Road.
- **Sensitive boundaries:** Consideration must be given to the relationship between the existing residences fronting both Wood Hayes Road and Blackhalve Lane, as well as Oakley Farm to ensure these are well managed to provide both secure a private outward facing development.
- **Enhance local ecology:** The western portion of the site is designated as a Potential Site of ecological Importance (PSI). Although not a statutory designation, we see the sensitive incorporation of this asset as a key opportunity for the site to contribute to the cohesion and resilience of the wider ecological network. The relationship between any development proposals, biodiversity enhancements and the PIS should be considered carefully.
- **Working with existing assets:** There is an opportunity to utilise the site's existing landscape features, including mature trees and hedgerows, and on-site watercourses to create a sense of place within a future scheme.
- **Topography and views:** Although the site is considered relatively low risk in relation to visual impact on the landscape, the combination of rising topography and sparse vegetation along parts of the site's northern boundary allow for some filtered views to enter the site. Therefore the layout of development and the potential for additional planting should be carefully considered.
- **Character creation:** As the site lies on the rural-urban fringe between Wolverhampton's urban extent and South Staffordshire's countryside villages, proposals need to recognise and respond appropriately to both these contrasting built forms.
- **Sustainable drainage:** groundwater issues should be managed sustainably through the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) such as attenuation ponds and swales.

LEGEND

- Site boundary (4.93ha)
- Landscape**
 - Potential site of ecological importance (PSI)
 - Existing tree: classification A
 - Existing tree: classification B
 - Existing tree: classification C
 - Existing tree: to be removed
 - Root protection area
 - Existing hedgerow
 - Existing field pond
 - Existing watercourse
 - Watercourse easement (8m)
 - Potential storm water attenuation location
 - Contour height
- Access**
 - Existing footpath
 - Potential pedestrian/ cycle access
 - Existing agricultural access
 - Potential site access
- Miscellaneous**
 - Views into the site
 - Sensitive boundary
 - Noise mitigation zone
 - Pylon and overhead cables

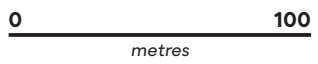


FIGURE 2.15 | OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS | 1:2,500

3 Creating urban structure

The detailed understanding gained from the contextual analysis and site assessment process has enabled the generation of three, site specific design principles:

1: Creating ecological corridors

The design should recognise the site's proximity to several non-statutory designated ecological sites and seek opportunities to create a positive response to the wider ecological network.

This could be achieved through a number of solutions, one of which may be to use the site to enhance Waterhead Brook's role as linear ecological corridor.

In addition the design could look to further focus ecological enhancements around existing features such as mature trees and existing watercourses to create north-south migration corridors through the site to allow wildlife to access Waterhead Brook.

2: Protecting high points

The design should account for the site's unique topography, seeking to preserve the rural character of the South Staffordshire countryside through buffering development from high points which may be subject to filtered views from both Wood Hayes Road and Blackhalve Lane.

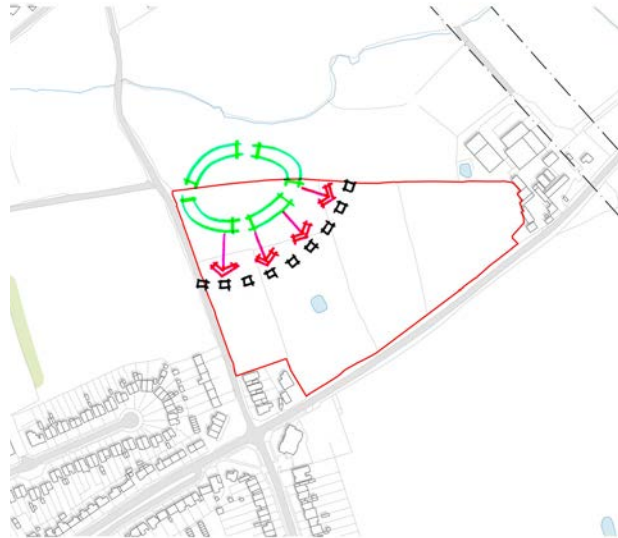
3: Maximising connections

The design should seek to maximise the site's sustainable location through providing opportunities for active travel modes to directly access both local shops and services located at the junction of Wood Hayes Road and Blackhalve Lane, as well as join existing footpath networks which can provide direct links with the A460 Cannock Road and local services such as primary schools.

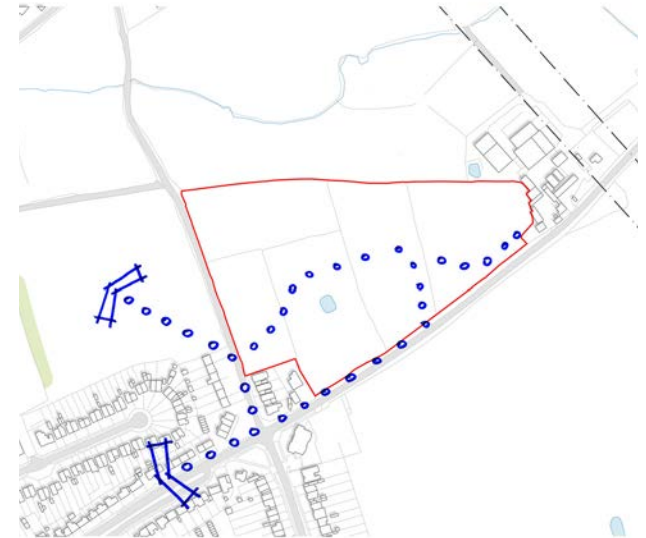
1 Creating ecological corridors and strengthening green infrastructure



2 Protecting high points



3 Maximising connections



0 100
metres

FIGURE 3.1 | DESIGN PRINCIPLES | 1:2,500

4 Detailing

The design for the site has been developed following the analysis of both the site and its local context. It complies with national and local design policy; responding to local character and context, and protecting local distinctiveness whilst ensuring an attractive environment for existing and future residents.

Use and amount

The proposed site uses are as follows:

- **Residential: 2.75ha**
This could provide approximately 100 units
- **Usable open space: 1.79ha**
- **Local equipped area of play (LEAP)**

In an effort to align with the South Staffordshire's core strategy policy H1, the proposed housing mix should provide for a variety of both dwelling sizes and tenures as well as being informed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The SHMA (2017) sets out that South Staffordshire has a need for the following dwelling sizes:

- **1 bedroom: 19.6%**
- **2 bedroom: 32.6%**
- **3 bedroom: 27.6%**
- **4+ bedroom: 20.2%**

In addition, the SHMA sets out a need for 21.6% affordable housing provision within South Staffordshire.

Layout

The masterplan (figure 4.1) indicates the location of land uses, the vehicle and pedestrian access points to the development, the street network and the integration and retention of key landscape features such as the mature trees and hedgerows along the existing field boundaries.

The development makes use of secure perimeter blocks, increasing the levels of natural surveillance over the streets, footpaths and public open spaces whilst also limiting unwanted access to rear gardens through the back-to-back arrangement.

The internal street network is accessed via a single priority junction with Blackhalve Lane, and is structured around two

larger development parcels being separated by a green finger running north-south across the site. In an effort to promote active forms of travel within the scheme, an additional pedestrian and cycle connection has been provided along the site's western boundary to allow for direct links with the adjacent playing fields as well as local shops and services.

The public open space has been concentrated over the designated Potential Site of Importance (PSI) in addition to a north-south green finger. These proposals aim to provide a greenspace network that allows for ecological migration through the site as well as enhancing the Waterhead Brook ecological corridor, which connects Wolverhampton with the wider Staffordshire countryside.

LEGEND

Site boundary
(4.93ha)

Land use

Residential
Public Open Space
LEAP Local equipped area of play

Access

Pedestrian/ cycle access
Key pedestrian/ cycle movement
Vehicular access
Primary vehicle route
Secondary vehicle route
Tertiary vehicle route/ private drive

Landscape

Existing tree: classification A
Existing tree: classification B
Existing tree: classification C
Existing tree: to be removed
Root protection area
Existing hedgerow
Proposed tree
Proposed attenuation pond
Contours



0 100 metres



FIGURE 4.1 | DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK | 1:2,500

Scale

Much of the development will be limited to two storeys as to remain in-keeping with character of the wider built form as well as restricting the impact of any development on existing views across the landscape. However, where appropriate increased building heights and architectural distinctiveness may be used to increase legibility or provide adequate levels of enclosure over larger spaces.

Appearance

The Development Framework responds to both the local built context of Wolverhampton as well as the scattered rural village character of South Staffordshire. This has been achieved through maximising elements of Wolverhampton's built context such as utilising existing building lines and 'completing the block' of adjacent development, as well as providing a largely direct and linear street layout which creates a synergy with the adjacent post-war development.

Further to this, the rural village character of South Staffordshire has been embodied through the use of irregular development block patterns, in an effort to correlate with the more organic nature of village development patterns.

Movement and access

Pedestrian movement

The Development Framework proposes a scheme which maximises the network of routes for pedestrians and cyclists, both within the site itself as well as integrating with the site's immediate surroundings.

Although the primary all-mode access is proposed via Blackhalve Lane along the site's southern boundary, due to the site's sustainable location adjacent to local shops, and amenities such as playing fields and bus stops it is anticipated that there will be a desire to provide direct access between proposed residences and these existing uses. Therefore the layout has proposed a strong internal east-west route through the site, which interconnects

with the proposed additional pedestrian and cycle access point to the west.

Public transport

In order to encourage the use of public transport by future residents, direct pedestrian and cycle links have been provided to both the bus stops on Blackhalve Lane and the existing footpath network that will provide easy access to additional bus services via the A460 Cannock Road.

Vehicle movement

The site will be accessed by a single priority junction with Blackhalve Lane, roughly central along the site's southern boundary.

Due to the desire to both retain existing landscape features such as

mature trees, hedgerows and minor watercourses as well as achieve an outward facing block layout, the layout does have a degree of single sided development within the internal street network. Therefore, where possible it is proposed these outward facing streets are to be designed as shared surface or private drives with a soft materiality in and effort to create a smooth transition between the proposed development and the open space.

Landscape

Much of the on-site usable open space provision has been focused around both the Potential Site of Importance (PSI) ecological designation, and the linear network of existing landscape feature which comprise the existing internal field boundaries.

As mentioned previously, this is in an effort to enhance the ecological functionality of these spaces as well as provide a robustness to the wider ecological network. This can be achieved through additional planting of native species in areas where there are gaps in the network, allowing for ease of movement for both plant and animal species through the site in both a north-south and east-west directions.

Additionally proposed within the open space provision is a Locally Equipped Play Area (LEAP) to service the site's future residents.

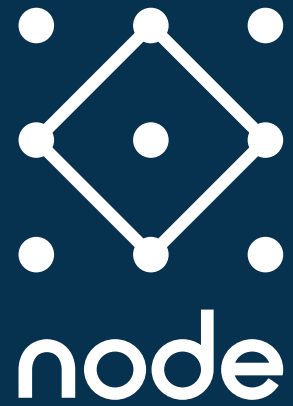
Spaces which are functional for both the future residents in a recreational sense as well as helping to support the local natural ecosystems can be hugely beneficial for reasons such as:

- Promoting healthy lifestyles through active travel and active play within well-designed and beautiful spaces
- Encouraging users to develop an understanding and respect for the natural environment, and
- Providing spaces where incidental meetings can take place between neighbours leading to the creation of a positive community spirit.

Summary

Node has been commissioned by St Philips Ltd to prepare a masterplan for the site at Blackhalve Lane, Wolverhampton. This vision document has demonstrated that the quantum of development proposed for the site can be comfortably accommodated within the site in a design response that reflects the nature of its built and landscape context.

The proposal would create a high quality new residential development in a sustainable and desirable location where new residents would assist in supporting existing services within the local area.



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