

---

# Landscape and Visual Appraisal Land at Milverton, Warwickshire

Prepared on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Limited

October 2014



# Landscape and Visual Appraisal

## Land at Milverton, Warwickshire

Prepared on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Limited

Project Ref:	19697	19697	19697
Status:	Draft	Draft	Final
Issue/Rev:	1	2	3
Date:	09/09/2014	23/09/2014	15/10/2014
Prepared by:	AH	AH	AH
Checked by:	AH/MC	AH/MC	AH/MC
Authorised by:	AH/MC	AH/MC	AH/MC

Barton Willmore LLP  
7 Soho Square  
London  
W1D 3QB

Tel: 020 7446 6888  
Fax: 020 7446 6889  
E-Mail: [Matthew.Chard@bartonwillmore.co.uk](mailto:Matthew.Chard@bartonwillmore.co.uk)

Ref: 219697/A5/Reports/AH  
Date: October 2014  
Status: FINAL

### COPYRIGHT

The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership.

All Barton Willmore stationery is produced using recycled or FSC paper and vegetable oil based inks.





## CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.0	SITE CONTEXT .....	1
3.0	METHODOLOGY .....	5
4.0	PLANNING POLICY .....	9
5.0	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER.....	22
6.0	SITE APPRAISAL .....	27
7.0	VISUAL APPRAISAL .....	29
8.0	CONTRIBUTION THE SITE MAKES TO THE PURPOSES OF THE GREEN BELT .....	36
9.0	OBJECTIVES, LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT .....	42
10.0	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .....	44

## ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

- Figure 1: Site Context Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1;
- Figure 2: Landscape Character Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1
- Figure 3: Topographical Features Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1;
- Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan at 1:5,000 scale @ A3;
- Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1; and
- Figure 6: Opportunities and Constraints Plan at 1:5,000 scale @ A3

## APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Site Appraisal and Site Context Photographs
- Appendix 2: Landscape Character Extracts

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Barton Willmore Landscape Planning and Design (BWLPD) were commissioned by Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal of land at Milverton, Warwickshire (hereinafter referred to as the 'Site') for the purpose of identifying its suitability for residential development (the 'Proposed Development'), and subsequently prepare a landscape and visual opportunities and constraints / development principles plan to inform the development proposals.
- 1.2 A landscape appraisal is the systematic description and analysis of the features within the landscape, such as landform, vegetation cover, settlement and transport patterns and land use. A visual appraisal assesses visual amenity receptors, which are the viewers of the landscape, and could include locations such as residential or business properties, public buildings, public open space and public rights of way.
- 1.3 This report also provides an appraisal of the Site in terms of its contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. The objectives are to consider the policy basis for the underlying Green Belt designation which applies to the Site; assess the landscape character and visibility of the Site and inform the potential to release the area of Green Belt land encompassing the Site in relation to the five purposes of the Green Belt, as identified in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 80.
- 1.4 The Appraisal should be read in conjunction with the following figures and appendices:
- Figure 1: Site Context Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1;
  - Figure 2: Landscape Character Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1
  - Figure 3: Topographical Features Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1;
  - Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan at 1:5,000 scale @ A3;
  - Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1;
  - Figure 6: Opportunities and Constraints Plan at 1:5,000 scale @ A3;
  - Appendix 1: Site Appraisal and Site Context Photographs; and
  - Appendix 2: Landscape Character Extracts.

## 2.0 SITE CONTEXT

- 2.1 As shown on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan**, the Site is located on the northern edge of the town of Leamington Spa, with its southern boundary immediately adjoining the gardens of residential properties located within the area of Milverton. The town of Warwick is located some 2km to the south-west and its eastern limits come within very close proximity of the western extent of Leamington Spa, giving the impression of a large swathe of built development south of the Site, extending from east to west and also to the south-east.
- 2.2 Larger settlements are far less evident to the north and north-west of the Site, with smaller villages and isolated farms predominating, set within a landscape of medium to large sized agricultural fields utilised for arable cropping and stock grazing, along with other land uses such as Warwickshire Golf and Country Club, located approximately 1.7km to the north-west of the Site.
- 2.3 The A452 Kenilworth Road runs in a north-south direction along most of the eastern boundary, although the north-eastern part of the boundary skirts around a small copse and the wooded southern edge of the car park of Warwickshire Nuffield Hospital, and includes a number of other buildings clustered around a roundabout where Old Milverton Lane meets the A452.
- 2.4 The northern boundary is defined in most part by Sandy Lane which becomes Old Milverton Road in the north-eastern corner, while the Leamington Spa to Kenilworth railway line runs along the western boundary. The A46 Warwick by-pass runs in a north-south direction approximately 1.2km to the west of the Site with the A46/A429 interchange located some 1km to the west of the north-western corner of the Site. The A452 Rugby Road runs in an east-west direction approximately 500 metres to the south of the Site, within the urban area.
- 2.5 The River Avon is a notable landscape feature in close proximity to the Site, running from west to east and then turning in a north-easterly direction, approximately 300 - 400 metres to the north.

### Public Rights of Way

- 2.6 A public right of way (PRoW W176/L3) passes through the Site travelling in an east-west direction from Bamburgh Close to Old Milverton. In the wider landscape there are a number of PRoWs to the west of the Site, across the railway line, within a body of land encircled by the River Avon as it sweeps from north to south in a semi-circular route. Two of these paths emanate from the St James's Church at Old Milverton and head south-west and south east, towards Guy's Cliffe and the edge of Milverton respectively. Further PRoW exist to the north

and north-east of the Site, heading northwards from Hill Wootton Road in the vicinity of Hill Wootton, a settlement on higher land some 1.3km north of the Site.

### **Topography and Hydrology**

- 2.7 As shown on **Figure 2: Topographical Features Plan**, the Site is located close to the River Avon within the general floodplain area, although land falls away beyond the northern boundary of the Site towards the River Avon, which meanders across the landscape at an elevation of approximately 50m AOD. Landform is generally related to the winding route of the River Avon as it heads north and in this direction the landscape rises gently towards a prominent high point of approximately 90m AOD at Leek Wootton to the north-west, with an elevation of approximately 76m AOD at Hill Wootton to the north.
- 2.8 Landform is clearly influenced by the River Avon as it heads south and then south westwards through the southern part of Warwick, with elevations again ranging from between 55m AOD. The River Leam joins the River Avon along the western edge of Leamington Spa and heads eastwards through the heart of the town, again at levels of approximately 50m AOD, before land rises sharply along the eastern edge of the town, associated with the Campion Hills area.

### **Vegetation**

- 2.9 Vegetation in the vicinity of the Site is relatively sparse, with the main wooded areas in the immediate vicinity associated with the partly wooded banks of the River Avon. Small areas of woodland and linear tree belts are also associated with settlement patterns to the north-east of the Site, either side of Stoneleigh Road as it heads north-east from the B4113.
- 2.10 To the west beyond the railway line, there are again some small scale areas of vegetation associated with residential, farm related and other various buildings along Old Milverton Road, while further west vegetation is again evident along the banks of the River Avon as it curves down towards Leamington Spa.
- 2.11 In the wider landscape, open, agricultural fields dominate the landscape pattern, divided by well managed hedgerows with few trees, although in some places the fields are not bounded with any landscape features except ditches. Woodland cover increases towards the north-west in association with Warwickshire Golf and Country Club where some small and medium sized, mainly linear shaped copses are clustered in the central northern part of the course and larger woodland blocks are located to the north and west of the course. Vegetation is also evident within and around Leek Wootton to the immediate north-east of the golf course, related to residential gardens and some field boundaries.



- 2.12 Larger woodland blocks exist to the north-west of the Site around the settlement of Leek Wootton, and to the north of the Site around the settlement of Ashow.

### Designations

#### National Designations

- 2.13 The Site does not lie within or within visible range of any nationally designated landscapes.

#### Regional, County or Local Designations

- 2.14 The Site lies within the Green Belt as defined on the District Wide Proposals Map that accompanies the adopted Warwick District Local Plan (1996 – 2011) although Policy DAP1: Protecting the Green Belt has not been 'saved' so is no longer active. Current Green Belt policy for the District is set out in the NPPF.

- 2.15 The south-eastern part of the Site adjoins a very small section of the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area, (specifically Area 33: Northumberland Road) as shown on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan**. This represents a very small section of an extensive conservation area boundary. Conservation Areas are designated under Section 69 of the 1990 Planning Act which defines them as, "*Areas of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.*" Proposed development in close proximity to Conservation Areas should consider the setting of the Area when design plans are prepared, including building style, materials, colour, height and detailing.

- 2.16 As shown on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan** there are numerous Listed Buildings within Royal Leamington Spa, mainly concentrated to the south and south-east of the Site within the built up urban area, although a number are also located to the east of the Site within and close to Old Milverton. The closest ones to the Site are as follows:

- 46 Kenilworth Road, Grade II, circa 290 metres to the south of the south eastern corner of the Site;
- Barn, 24 yards to east of cottage farmhouse, Grade II, circa 380 metres to the west of the north western corner of the Site;
- Cottage Farmhouse, Grade II, circa 450 metres west of the north western corner of the Site;
- 36 Kenilworth Road, 38 Kenilwoth Road, both Grade II, circa 455 metres to the south of the south eastern corner of the Site;
- Church of Saint James, Grade II, circa 480 metres west of the north-western corner of the Site; and

- Parkhouse Farmhouse, Grade II, circa 560 metres west of the north western corner of the Site.
- 2.17 Section 66 (1) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 refers to the desirability of preserving the Listed Building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. As the Visual Appraisal demonstrates, all the listed buildings noted above are considered sufficiently separated from the Site by landform, intervening vegetation and built forms to avoid adverse effects from the Proposed Development.
- 2.18 Guy's Cliffe is an approximately 56 hectare, Grade II Registered Park & Garden with its eastern boundary located approximately 510 metres to the west of the Site boundary and through which the river Avon flows from north to south-east. The citation for this designated landscape reads, *"Early C19 gardens and pleasure grounds in part designed by Uvedale Price, which were developed from C17 riverside walks and mid C18 rococo gardens"*. There is no intervisibility between the Guy's Cliffe Registered Park and Garden and the Site.
- 2.19 Within Guy's Cliffe there is a Scheduled Monument known as 'Guy's Cave hermitage and other rock cut chambers at Guy's Cliffe'. The citation for the monument reads, *"The monument includes the standing and buried remains and rock cut features of Guy's Cave hermitage and chapel at Guy's Cliffe, as well as caves and rock cut features associated with the later use of the site, within three separate areas of protection."*
- 2.20 There are no Registered Battlefields within visible range of the Site so no further consideration of this historical and cultural feature has been included in this report.

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

### Landscape and Visual Appraisal

- 3.1 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been prepared with reference to the guidelines as set out in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ' 3rd Edition, and Topic Paper 6: 'Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity '. The aim of these guidelines is to set high standards for the scope and content of landscape and visual assessments and to establish certain principles that will help to achieve consistency, credibility and effectiveness when undertaking these forms of assessment. A desktop assessment of the study area was undertaken, including an assessment of landscape character, landform, landscape features, historic evolution, policy and designations. This information was used as the initial basis against which to appraise the Site. A visit to the Site and surroundings was subsequently undertaken in August 2014 to verify desk-based findings and provide photography for inclusion within this appraisal.
- 3.2 The appraisal has been confined to an area approximately 3.0km from the Site, referred to as the study area. The study area selected is considered to be of a sufficient scale to establish the landscape and visual baseline of the Site and to determine its contribution to the landscape and the aims and purposes of the Green Belt.
- 3.3 A description of the existing land use of the study area is provided and includes reference to existing areas of settlement, transport routes and vegetation cover, as well as local landscape designations, elements of cultural and heritage value and local landmarks or tourist destinations. These factors combine to provide an understanding of landscape value and sensitivity and provide an indication of particular key views and viewpoints that are available to visual receptors and which should therefore be included in the visual appraisal.
- 3.4 To determine the extent of visual influence, a visual appraisal was undertaken of the Site to consider the nature of existing views from publically accessible viewpoints including roads, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and public open space. Consideration was given to private views however access to private properties was not obtained. Views were assessed from all directions and from a range of distances. The viewpoints chosen are not intended to be an exhaustive list, but rather to represent the potential views attained towards the Site in order to identify areas of higher visual sensitivity which may not be best suited for development.
- 3.5 A more detailed landscape appraisal of the Site is then undertaken, which in combination with the wider visual appraisal, assists in the identification of opportunities and constraints which would assist in defining the boundaries for potential future development, and thus an amended Green Belt boundary.

3.6 The sensitivity of the Site is considered in terms of the following:

- Landscape Character

i.e. landform, vegetation cover, land use, scale, state or repair of individual elements, representation of typological character, enclosure pattern, form/line and movement

- Visual Influence

i.e. landform influences, tree and woodland cover, numbers and types of residents, numbers and types of visitors and scope for mitigating potential for visual impacts

- Landscape Value

i.e. national designations, local designations, sense of tranquillity/remoteness, scenic beauty and cultural associations

#### Evaluating the Contribution of the Green Belt

3.7 As illustrated on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan** land surrounding Milverton, including the Site, is designated as Green Belt Land. Relevant Green Belt Policy relating to this land has been identified at the national and local levels in the following chapter.

3.8 The Site was first assessed against each of the first four of the five purposes of Green Belt as set out in the NPPF. The fifth purpose *"to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land"* was not considered of relevance to the Site. Therefore, the following four criteria have been considered:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging in to one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

3.9 In evaluating the contribution of the land to the Green Belt, the following criteria (Table 1) will be used to assess the contribution of the Site to the first four purposes of the Green Belt.



Table 1: Contribution of Green Belt Purpose Categories

Threshold	Assessment
Significant	Significant landscape and visual contribution towards purpose of Green Belt
Some	Some landscape and visual contribution towards purpose of Green Belt
Limited	Limited landscape and visual contribution towards purpose of Green Belt
None	No landscape and visual contribution towards purpose of Green Belt

#### Assessment against the Characteristics of the Green Belt

- 3.10 The NPPF states that the key characteristics of the Green Belt are *'their openness and their permanence,'* (paragraph 79). In defining new boundaries to the Green Belt, it must be ensured that these characteristics are not diminished for the areas remaining within the Green Belt designation as a direct result of development on the identified sites.
- 3.11 An assessment will be made of the openness of the Green Belt in that particular location and to what extent the removal of the Site would have on the perception of openness in the remaining designated area.
- 3.12 In addition, the Site and its location will be shown demonstrating their relationship to existing elements, such as motorways and rivers, as well as visual barriers, such as ridgelines and areas of woodland. This is to help assess the impacts of the development upon the openness of the remaining designated areas and to help identify boundaries that may be considered to be 'permanent'.

#### Definitions

- 3.13 When considering the ability of the Site to meet each of the purposes of the Green Belt, the following definitions should be considered.

#### *Openness*

- 3.14 Openness is taken to be the degree to which the area is unaffected by built structures. It is considered that, in order to be a robust assessment, this should be considered from first principles, i.e. acknowledging existing structures that occur within the area, rather than seeing them as being 'washed over' by the existing Green Belt designation.

#### *Sprawl*

- 3.15 Disorganised and unattractive extension to developed area (perhaps lacking defensible boundary), spread out over a large area in an untidy or irregular way.

*Encroachment*

- 3.16 The gradual advancement of development beyond an acceptable or established limit.

*Defensible boundaries*

- 3.17 The NPPF states that, when choosing boundaries, 'local authorities should define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent,' (paragraph 85).

## 4.0 PLANNING POLICY

### National

#### National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The NPPF aims to provide one concise document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England by replacing previous Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). It aims to provide a planning framework within which the local community and local authorities can produce distinctive local plans which respond to local needs and priorities.
- 4.2 The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as *"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*, and providing it is in accordance with the relevant up-to-date Local Plan, and policies set out in the NPPF including those identifying restrictions with regard to designated areas. The NPPF states that the *"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development"* and that there are *"three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental"*. The role the environment will play is described as *"contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use of natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a Low carbon economy."*
- 4.3 Twelve Core Planning Principles are set out, of which the following are relevant to consideration of landscape and visual matters, and state that planning should:
- *"not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;*
  - *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
  - *take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*

- *contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; and*
- *conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations."*

4.4 The NPPF then identifies and describes thirteen aspects contributing to the delivery of sustainable development which should be considered in developing local plans and reviewing planning applications. Those of relevance to the landscape and visual considerations of the Site and Proposed Development include Section 7: Requiring good design. Paragraph 58 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments, *inter alia*:

- *"...Establish a strong sense of place;*  
*..."*
- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings;*  
*..."*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping."*

4.5 Paragraph 61 states that:

*"planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment."*

4.6 With regard to the natural environment, Paragraphs 109-125 of Section 11 focus on conserving and enhancing the local and natural environment. The framework states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by *inter alia* *"protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils."*

4.7 Paragraph 110 sets out that the aim, in preparing plans for development, should be to minimise adverse effects on the local and natural environment, and that plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value.



4.8 Paragraph 114 notes that furthermore, local planning authorities should:

*"set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure."*

4.9 Paragraph 125 states that:

*"By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation."*

4.10 The Site currently forms part of the Green Belt. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy, as set out at paragraph 79 (Chapter 9: Protecting Green Belt Land) of the NPPF is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. In this respect, the NPPF advises that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

4.11 The general purposes of the Green Belt as stated at paragraph 80 in the NPPF are:

- "(i) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- (ii) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;*
- (iii) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- (iv) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;*
- and*
- (v) to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land."*

4.12 Paragraph 81 of the NPPF provides advice on the use for land within designated Green Belts, indicating that Green Belts have a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives relevant to the Site:

*"...enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, 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 or derelict land."*

#### County and District Level Planning Policy

4.13 Under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), Warwickshire

County Council now only deals with 'County matter' development, which is primarily minerals and waste development. In addition, as from 20th May 2013 the saved Warwickshire Structure Plan policies no longer form part of the statutory Development Plan for Warwickshire. Therefore all planning policies relating to housing developments are contained within relevant District level Development Plans.

*Warwick District Local Plan 1996 – 2011 (adopted September 2007)*

- 4.14 This Plan is the currently adopted document which controls the location and nature of new development within the district. Most of the policies have been 'saved' for use by the Council in taking planning decisions until such time as they are replaced by the emerging Warwick District Local Plan (2011 – 2029). Chapter 3 is concerned with the Core Strategy which includes four main aims, the second of which, 'Effective Protection of the Environment' is of particular relevance. Within each main Aim are a number of relevant Objectives, as follows:

***"Objective 2B: To protect and enhance the natural environment:***

- We recognise our responsibility to protect important assets of the natural environment, particularly biodiversity, for current and future generations. An attractive and diverse natural environment will contribute towards the achievement of economic, environmental and social aims. We will therefore protect the landscape character, geological/geomorphological features and wildlife habitats and species of value and acknowledged national, regional or local importance from inappropriate new development in urban and rural locations. We will aim, wherever possible, to enhance all of these assets."***

***"Objective 2D: To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes:***

- The landscape quality of our rural areas and the character and setting of the District's towns and villages are important in giving Warwick District distinctiveness and identity. The historic street patterns and 'green corridors' that run through the towns and villages are important features and distinctive attributes of the District. We will protect sensitive areas from new development to ensure that the towns and villages retain their separate identities and individual characters."***

***"Objective 2E: To promote high quality sustainable design and enhance the built environment:***

- The appearance of new development can have a significant impact on the quality of our built environment which in turn can influence the achievement of other economic and social aims.***
- Securing good design is essential to achieving attractive environments for people to live and work in and to visit. We will require proposals to have regard to their context and to local architectural, historical and natural features. We will support proposals which can demonstrate a positive contribution to the quality of the built environment and will encourage innovative design which is sensitive to its locality."***

4.15 Section A of the Local Plan is entitled District Wide Policies and Chapter 4 is concerned with Development Policies, the following of which are relevant.

4.16 Policy DP1: Layout and Design, states that:

***"Development will only be permitted which positively contributes to the character and quality of its environment through good layout and design. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they:***

- b) relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines"***

4.17 Policy DP1 further states that:

***"Development proposals which have a significant impact on the character and appearance of an area will be required to demonstrate how they comply with this policy by way of a Character Appraisal and Design Statement."***

4.18 Policy DP3: Natural and Historic Environment and Landscape, states that development will only be permitted which:

***"... protects important natural features and positively contributes to the character and quality of its natural and historic environment through good habitat/landscape design and management.***



4.19 Furthermore, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they:

*c) "protect and enhance the landscape character of the area, particularly respecting its historic character;*

*d) provide appropriate levels of amenity space which incorporate suitable habitat features and hard and soft landscaping;*

*e) integrate the amenity space and proposed landscaping into the overall development*

...

*Development proposals which have a significant impact upon the character and appearance of an area will be required to demonstrate how they comply with this policy by way of a Nature Conservation and Landscape Analysis. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, the Council may consider possible mitigation measures to reduce any harm caused by these adverse impacts. Where mitigation measures are not possible, compensation measures may be appropriate".*

4.20 Chapter 5 is concerned with 'Sustaining Communities' and in the 'Building Communities' sub section, Policy SC13 is relevant. Policy SC13: Open Space and Recreational Improvements states that:

*"Contributions from residential and commercial developments will be sought to provide, improve and maintain appropriate open space, sport and recreational facilities to meet local needs."*

4.21 Section B of the Local Plan, entitled Location Specific Policies, includes a number of policies relevant to the Proposed Development.

4.22 Policy UAP1: Directing New Housing states:

*"Residential development will be permitted on previously developed land and buildings within the confines of the urban areas subject to other policies to manage the supply of housing under Policy SC10. In all other circumstances, residential development will not be permitted unless it is for affordable housing to meet local needs in accordance with the definition within Policy SC11."*

4.23 It should be noted that Policy DAP1: Protecting the Green Belt has not been 'saved' so is no



longer active.

- 4.24 The south-eastern part of the Site adjoins a very small part of the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area, therefore Policy DAP8: Protection of Conservation Areas is relevant and states that:

***"Development will be required to preserve or enhance the special architectural and historic interest and appearance of Conservation Areas as defined on the Proposals Map. Development will also be expected to respect the setting of Conservation Areas and important views both in and out of them."***

*Draft Warwick District Local Plan 2011 – 2029 (no issue date)*

- 4.25 Warwick District Council is preparing a new Local Plan for Warwick District which will guide the area's future development for the next 18 years. The publication draft Local Plan has been consulted on between 16<sup>th</sup> May and 27<sup>th</sup> June 2014. The Council are currently considering the responses to this consultation but, subject to the outcomes of the consultation period, may now proceed to the Submission of the new Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Examination.
- 4.26 Due to the new Local Plan not having been submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination, and thus not independently examined or found to be a 'sound' planning document, very little weight can be given to it for decision making purposes. Notwithstanding this, in order to carry out a robust assessment of the Site it is considered that it should still be taken account as part of this appraisal. A number of the draft policies have been adapted from those contained within the approved Warwick District Local Plan (WDLP, 1996 – 2011), and where applicable this has been indicated below. In addition, a raft of new policies have also been introduced and included in consideration below.
- 4.27 The draft Local Plan states the following under section 'Local Plan Objectives', point 1.51 in relation to new development:

***"Make sure new developments are appropriately distributed across the District and designed and located to maintain and improve the quality of the built and natural environments, particularly historic areas and buildings, sensitive wildlife habitats and areas of high landscape value. In addition new developments should respect the integrity of existing settlements"***.

- 4.28 Point 1.54 goes on to state the following objective:

***"Protect and enhance high quality landscapes and important heritage and natural assets, ensuring that where adaptation is needed, this is done in a sensitive way".***

4.29 The draft Local Plan goes on to set out four Strategic Policies, with the third of these, Strategic Policy DS3: Supporting Sustainable Communities, of particular relevance, which states:

***"We will promote high quality new development including:***

- a) delivering high quality layout and design which relates to existing landscape or urban form and, where appropriate, is based on the principles of garden towns, villages and suburbs;***
- b) caring for our built, cultural and natural heritage;***  
...
- c) protecting areas of significance including high quality landscapes, heritage assets and ecological assets;***  
...

4.30 Strategic Policy DS3 goes on to say that:

***"We will expect development which enables new communities to develop and sustain themselves. As part of this we will provide for the infrastructure needed to support communities and businesses including:***

- c) green infrastructure (such as parks, open space and playing pitches)."***

4.31 Strategic Policy DS4: Spatial Strategy is also of relevance, stating that:

***"Allocated Housing and Employment will be distributed across the District to take account of the following:***

- ...
- b) where greenfield sites are required for housing, they should be located on the edge of urban areas in sustainable locations close to areas of employment or where community facilities such as shops, bus services, medical facilities and schools are available or can be***

*made available."*

...

- d) limiting development on sites which would lead to coalescence of settlements to ensure settlement identity is retained;*
- e) sites which have a detrimental impact on the significance of heritage assets will be avoided unless suitable mitigation can be put in place;*
- f) areas assessed as high landscape value or other highly sensitive features in the natural environment will be avoided; and*
- g) taking the national Green Belt policy in to account, sites in the green belt will be limited to those locations where exceptional circumstances can be justified. The following will be taken into account in considering exceptional circumstances:*
  - i. the availability of alternative suitable sites outside the Green Belt;*
  - ii. the potential of the site to meet specific housing or employment needs that cannot be met elsewhere;*
  - iii. the potential of the site to support regeneration within deprived areas; and*
  - iv. the potential of the site to provide support to facilities and services in rural areas.*

4.32 Policy DS19: Green Belt states:

*"The extent of the Green Belt is defined on the Policies Map. The Council will apply Green Belt policy in accordance with government guidance as set out in the national planning policy."*

4.33 Again, the Explanation section of the policy text is relevant where it states:

*"The Warwickshire Green Belt covers a large part of the District and seeks to prevent urban sprawl that would prejudice the open nature and predominantly rural character of this area. National policy regards inappropriate development as, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and advises that it should only be approved in very special circumstances. In addition, national policy identifies exceptions to what is deemed inappropriate.*



***Other policies in this plan expand upon the meaning of those exceptions, including: Limited Village Infill Housing Development in the Green Belt... ."***

- 4.34 Policy H1: Directing New Housing is relevant as it is concerned with where new housing will be permitted, as follows:

***"Housing development will be permitted in the following circumstances:***

***..."***

***b) within the Growth Villages and Limited Infill Villages, as identified below and on the Policies Map;"***

- 4.35 Policy H54: Improvements to Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities is very similar in wording to Policy SC13: 'Open Space and Recreational Improvements' in the adopted Warwickshire District Local Plan so has not been reproduced here.

- 4.36 The draft Local Plan goes on to include a number of relevant policies related to the built environment, including Policy BE1: Layout and Design. However, the wording of this policy is very similar to Policy DP1: 'Layout and Design' in the adopted Warwickshire District Local Plan, so has not been reproduced here.

- 4.37 The draft Local Plan expands consideration of the natural environment and landscape character in comparison to the adopted Warwickshire District Local Plan and includes a number of new policies of relevance to the proposed development.

- 4.38 Policy NE1: Green Infrastructure, states that:

***"The Council will protect, enhance and restore the District's green infrastructure assets and strive for a healthy integrated network for the benefit of nature, people and the economy... .. The Council will continue to work with partners, including neighbouring authorities and the Local Nature Partnership to plan for green infrastructure at a landscape scale; protecting and enhancing existing habitats and restoring fragmented areas ensuring access natural green space and improvements to landscape character."***

- 4.39 Policy NE4: Landscape states that:

***"New development will be permitted which positively contributes***

*to landscape character. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:*

- a) integrate landscape planning into the design of development at an early stage;*
- b) consider its landscape context, including the local distinctiveness of the different natural and historic landscapes and character, including tranquillity;*
- c) relate well to local topography and built form and enhance key landscape features, ensuring their long term management and maintenance;*
- d) identify likely visual impacts on the local landscape and townscape and its immediate setting and undertakes appropriate landscaping to reduce these impacts;*
- e) aim to either conserve, enhance or restore important landscape features in accordance with the latest local and national guidance;*
- f) avoid detrimental effects on features which make a significant contribution to the character, history and setting of an asset, settlement, or area;*
- g) address the importance of habitat biodiversity features, including aged and veteran trees, woodland and hedges and their contribution to landscape character, where possible enhancing these features through means such as buffering and reconnecting fragmented areas;*
- h) maintain the existence of viable agricultural units, and;*
- i) are sensitive to an area's capacity to change, acknowledge cumulative effects and guard against the potential for coalescence between existing settlements".*

4.40 Policy HE2: Protection of Conservation Areas, states that:

*"Development will be expected to respect the setting of Conservation Areas and important views both in and out of them."*

*Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Leamington and Whitnash) May 2014*

4.41 This Local Development Framework evidence base identifies the Site as reference: L07 (Land North of Milverton). The Site is described as being within an area of 'medium' landscape value. The suitability of the Site for development is described as:

***"Potentially suitable in part, subject to alteration of the Green Belt boundary..."***

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

*Residential Design Guide (April 2008)*

4.42 The purpose of this SPG is to provide a design framework for the provision of residential accommodation in the Warwick District, seeking to promote high quality and innovative design for the housing of the 21st Century. The Guidance sets out a number of requirements that planning proposals should take account of, including:

- a) "Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form pattern or movement and land use;***
- b) Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines;***
- c) Reinforce or enhance the established urban character of streets, squares and other spaces;***
- d) Reflect, respect and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;***
- e) Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development.***
- f) Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;***
- g) Adopt appropriate materials and details;***
- h) Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;***
- i) Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;***
- j) Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features; and***
- k) Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other, to provide a safe and attractive environment."***

4.43 In terms of design considerations, the following elements are identified as contributing to the attractive qualities of many residential areas, and which should be considered in all applications:

- ***"Local distinctiveness;***

- *Densities and increased scale;*
- *Design character;*
- *Design practicalities;*
- *Layout, design and dwelling mix;*
- *Access for the disabled;*
- *Parking considerations; and*
- *Landscaping.”*

4.44 In terms of landscaping, the following detailed guidance is provided:

- *“Use deciduous trees to provide shade in Summer and allow sunlight to filter through in Winter;*
- *Avoid excessive overshadowing of buildings whilst placing trees away from south facing elevations;*
- *Use planting to maximise solar gain;*
- *Use hedges and trees as windbreaks and also to provide shelter from cold draughts, particularly strong northerly winds;*
- *Consider boundary treatment of any site as an integrated part of landscape proposals; and*
- *Carry out a biodiversity survey of the site as part of the site assessment to ensure that existing habitats can be adequately protected.”*



## 5.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

5.1 The Landscape Character Assessment approach is a descriptive approach which seeks to identify and define the distinct character of landscapes that make up the country. This approach recognises the intrinsic value of all landscapes, not just 'special' landscapes. The description of each landscape is used as a basis for evaluation in order to make judgements to guide, for example, landscape management or development. In line with this approach, national landscape guidance is now moving from concentrating efforts on designating and protecting those areas of the countryside, which are most important for landscape and wildlife (the quality approach) to a character approach, as a way of enriching the quality of the whole countryside whilst accommodating appropriate development. This approach complements the protection that designations may offer. **Figure 3: Landscape Character Plan** illustrates the extent of landscape character areas in the vicinity of the Site, as featured in published assessments, extracts from which are included in **Appendix 2**.

### National

5.2 Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency) has produced a Countryside Character Map of England which includes broad-brush descriptions of the different character areas. Natural England has recently revised its National Character Area (NCA) profiles.

5.3 The Site lies within National Character Area 97: Arden, revised and published in May 2012. Key characteristics for Character Area 97: Arden includes the following:

- *"Well-wooded farmland landscape with rolling landform;*
- *Mature oaks, mostly found within hedgerows, together with ancient woodlands, and plantation woodlands...;*
- *Narrow meandering clay river valleys with long river meadows...;*
- *Numerous areas of former wood pasture with large, old, oak trees...;*
- *Diverse field patterns ranging from well hedged, irregular fields and small woodlands that contrast with larger semi regular fields on former deer park estates...;*
- *Complex and contrasting settlement pattern with some densely populated where traditional settlements have amalgamated to form the major West Midlands conurbation whilst some settlements remain distinct and relatively well dispersed;*



- *North eastern industrial area based around former Warwick coalfield with distinctive colliery settlements. North western area dominated by urban development...;*
- *Transport infrastructure, the M42, M40, M6 and M5...;*
- *Shakespeare's 'Forest of Arden' [...] is still reflected through the woodland cover, mature oaks, small ancient woodlands and former wood pasture."*

5.4 In terms of tranquillity, the character profile states:

*"Despite the major road and motorway network, a sense of tranquillity can still be found in the woodlands, sunken lanes, narrow river valleys and enclosed urban landscapes."*

5.5 The following Statements of Opportunity are of relevance:

- *"SEO 1: Manage and enhance the valuable woodlands, hedgerows, [...] distinctive field boundaries and enclosure patterns throughout the NCA..."*
- *SEO 2: 'Create new networks of woodlands, heathlands and green infrastructure, linking urban areas like Birmingham and Coventry with the wider countryside to increase biodiversity, recreation and the potential for biomass and the regulation of climate change'.*

5.6 It is further stated that this could be achieved through the following:

*"Enhance urban areas and fringes through sympathetic building and landscape design. Creation of new green infrastructure with associated habitat creation and new public access..."*

5.7 In terms of 'landscape change' the character profile states:

*"There is development pressure throughout the area. The majority of the NCA falls within the southern half of the West Midlands Green Belt which extends around Coventry and Redditch and south to Stratford. Growth proposals seem to be focussed around the East of Birmingham and North Solihull. Coventry is an area previously designated as a growth point and there has been consideration of sustainable urban extensions into the green belt...."*

5.8 In terms of Future Opportunities, the character profile identifies the following:

- *"...opportunities for good, sustainable design reflecting local settlement patterns, green infrastructure and local character reflected in design and materials; and*
- *Associated potential for new green infrastructure building upon the network of sites in the urban fringe."*

5.9 Recommendations noted in the Landscape Opportunities section include:

- *"Protect and manage woodlands particularly ancient woodlands and wood pasture to maintain the character of Arden; and*
- *Create new green infrastructure with associated habitat creation and new public access on former mining sites and close to urban populations in the West Midlands Green Belt."*

#### County

*Warwickshire Landscapes Project (1987)*

5.10 This body of work includes maps and guidelines documents relating to three separate main areas within Warwickshire, comprising Borough of Rugby, Stratford Towns Urban Edge and Arden, Avon and Dunsmore. The Site lies within the third main area and, more specifically, within the Arden sub-area.

5.11 The Arden sub-area is split up into a number of different Landscape Character Areas (LCA's) and the Site falls within the Arden Parklands LCA which is described as follows:

*"Arden parklands is characterised by large arable fields, often poorly defined by low cut and gappy hedgerows. Although field pattern tends to be a subsidiary landscape element, it is important to conserve primary hedgelines, including those along roadsides, bridleways, footpaths and parish boundaries. These form a key structural element in the landscapes, particularly where they contain mature hedgerow trees. Such features should be conserved and managed more positively as landscape features. This would include allowing hedgerows to grow thicker and taller (up to 2m in height), strengthening individual gappy hedges and encouraging the natural regeneration of hedgerow oaks. Where primary hedgerows have been removed, consideration should be given to replacement planting.*

5.12 Overall character and qualities are described as:

*"An enclosed, gently rolling landscape defined by woodland edges, parkland and belts of trees."*

5.13 The key characteristic features are identified as:

- *"Middle distance views enclosed by woodland edge;*
- *Belts of mature trees associated with estatelands;*
- *Many ancient woodlands, often with irregular outlines;*
- *Large country houses set in mature parkland;*
- *Remnant deerparks with ancient pollarded oaks; and*
- *Thick roadside hedgerows, often with bracken."*

5.14 The Management Strategy for Arden Parklands is as follows:

- *"Retain and enhance the effect of wooded enclosure."*

5.15 Landscape Guidelines are identified as:

- *"Felling coupes should be carefully designed to retain the effect of wooded enclosure;*
- *Species selection along woodland edges should favour native trees and shrubs; and*
- *Enhance tree cover through the planting of new woodlands and belts of trees."*

5.16 General Development Guidelines for Arden (relating to housing) are as follows:

- *"Conserve the character of rural settlements by retaining existing features and local patterns in all development schemes; and*
- *Soften hard built edges through increased tree planting within and around new development."*

#### District/Local Level Character Assessments

5.17 There are no district or local level character assessments relating to the Site.

#### Conservation Area Guidance

5.18 The south-eastern part of the Site bounds a very short section of the northern boundary of the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area. The conservation area is divided into 37 sub-

areas. The sub-area the Site adjoins is sub-area 33: Kenilworth Road, the key characteristics of which are identified as:

- *"Part of planned town layout from late 19th Century;*
- *North end development late 19th Century with villas;*
- *Very good street trees;*
- *South end development with Edwardian houses;*
- *Larger middle section individually designed interwar houses;*
- *some 1950's infills. Good detailing, some imaginative designs;*
- *No.38 is a good 1930's house;*
- *Good garden trees;*
- *Varied boundary treatment some ironwork to southern end good brick walls with plinth remain in southern section;*
- *Large late Victorian house, new residential home at mid point, has unsympathetic extensions; and*
- *Gardens important to setting of house, linking of plots for redevelopment would not be appropriate."*



## 6.0 SITE APPRAISAL

- 6.1 **Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan** illustrates the extent of existing vegetation, boundary features and buildings and roads on or in close proximity to the Site. A number of **Site Appraisal Photographs (A-V)**, included in **Appendix 1**, have been taken from within the Site as part of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal visit, and serve to illustrate the features on the Site and its existing character, as described below.
- 6.2 The Site comprises 12 arable agricultural fields of varying shapes and sizes with a site area of approximately 83 hectares (ha) in total. Land within the Site is gently undulating with a high point of approximately 72m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the north-west. Land then slopes downwards from this point to the centre of the Site to a level of approximately 60m AOD. Land then slopes up from the centre of the Site to the south-east of the Site to a level of approximately of 65m AOD. Field boundaries comprise of hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees.
- 6.3 The south-eastern boundary of the Site adjoins residential development along Bamburgh Grove, Vernon Close and Northumberland Park, as illustrated in **Site Appraisal Photographs A, B and C**. Recently constructed properties visible along Northumberland Park fall within the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area and these, in combination with residential properties along Vernon Close and Bamburgh Grove, form an abrupt and prominent settlement edge, as illustrated in **Site Appraisal Photographs C and H**. The eastern boundary of the Site where it abounds Kenilworth Road is delineated by a hedgerow and tree belt (TB1), as illustrated within **Site Appraisal Photographs B, C, D, E and I**.
- 6.4 A combination of hedgerows and mature trees exist along the boundary where the Site abounds Wyndrush, Broadway, Oak Priors, Oldways and Oak Bank House, located along Kenilworth Road in the north-east of the Site, limiting intervisibility between the Site and these properties, as illustrated by **Site Appraisal Photographs G, H and I**.
- 6.5 The north-eastern boundary of the Site where it adjoins the Warwickshire Nuffield Hospital is delineated by a tree belt (TB2), also limiting intervisibility between this building and the Site, as illustrated in **Site Appraisal Photographs G and H**. The Site Appraisal Photographs also demonstrate the character of the northern boundary, which runs alongside Old Milverton Lane in the north-east of the Site, which comprises a dense hedgerow and intermittent mature trees.
- 6.6 Sandy Lane Farm lies to the north-east of the Site, surrounded by hedgerows (H5) and mature trees, as illustrated in **Site Appraisal Photographs E, D, H and I**.

- 6.7 The northern boundary adjoining Sandy Lane comprises of a dense hedgerow with occasional gaps which allow intermittent views out of the Site towards Sandy Lane, as illustrated in **Site Appraisal Photographs F and J**.
- 6.8 From the northern boundary of the Site, the existing residential edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa is apparent, exerting a level of urban influence over the Site; reducing the sensitivity of the Site; and exhibiting a greater affinity of the Site with the settlement of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa than with the wider countryside, as illustrated by **Site Appraisal Photographs J and K**.
- 6.9 **Site Appraisal Photographs L-S** demonstrate the character of the western part of the Site, comprising agricultural fields influenced by the existing built up edge of Milverton, exerting a level of urban influence, which is experienced in views from PRow W176 which traverses the Site. The Site Appraisal Photographs L-S also demonstrate the limited intervisibility between the Site and the settlement of Old Milverton, separated by the railway corridor and associated tree belts (TB3).
- 6.10 **Site Appraisal Photograph T**, taken from outwith?? the Site boundary looking east towards Bamburgh Grove and Northumberland Road, demonstrates the limited intervisibility between the Site and the historic part of Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area (specifically area 33: Northumberland Road), as a result of substantial intervening vegetation in rear gardens and along the eastern edge of fields F8 within the Site and F8a outwith?? the Site boundary.
- 6.11 **Site Appraisal Photograph U** is looking north over field F7 from the central area of the Site. The photograph demonstrates the strong northern hedgerow boundary along Sandy Lane with landform falling away to the River Avon in the valley beyond. Landform in the valley beyond barely rises above the horizon, limiting views into the wider countryside from the Site and limiting views from the wider countryside back towards the Site.
- 6.12 A large allotment is located within the southern part of the Site, exerting further settlement edge characteristics over the Site, and reinforcing the Site's affinity with the settlement edge rather than the wider countryside, as illustrated in **Site Appraisal Photograph V**.

#### Summary of Site Appraisal

- 6.13 The character of the Site is influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa, reducing its sensitivity. The Site has strong, robust and defensible boundary features, including tree belts, hedgerows, roads and railway corridors which contain it from the wider countryside and limit intervisibility between the Site and its wider surroundings. The Site contains strong internal landscape features including hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees which define its character.

## 7.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

- 7.1 A visual appraisal of the Site and its environs was undertaken in August 2014 to determine the relationship of the area with its surroundings, the visibility of the Site within the wider landscape, the suitability of the land for development and the effect that this would have on the landscape and visual characteristics of the area.
- 7.2 The visual appraisal was undertaken from publicly accessible viewpoints within the surrounding landscape, such as from roads and footpaths to determine the approximate extent of the area from which the Site is visible from the eye level of a person standing on the ground. The visibility of any site is predominantly influenced by its landform and the extent and type of vegetation cover and built elements within the Site and the surrounding landscape.
- 7.3 There is, in most visual appraisals, a continuum of degrees of visibility ranging from no view of the Site to full, open views. To indicate the degree of visibility of the Site from roads, public rights of way and properties, three categories of visibility have been used in this assessment:
- a. Open view: A clear view of a significant proportion of the Site within the wider landscape.
  - b. Partial view: A view of part of the Site or a filtered view of the Site, or a distant view in which the Site is perceived as a small part of the view; and
  - c. Truncated / No view: Views towards the Site are curtailed by visual barriers, such as intervening topography, vegetation or built forms.
- 7.4 In order to represent the nature of identified views, a number of **Site Context Photographs (1-18)** are included within the Illustrative Material within **Appendix 1**. The locations from which these photographs were taken from are illustrated on **Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan** which also gives an indication of the level of visibility of the Site from the surrounding area.
- 7.5 As illustrated within **Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan** and within the **Site Context Photographs (1-18)**, views toward the Site from the north, south, east and west are predominantly curtailed by a combination of intervening vegetation, built form and topographical variation, in all but the most immediate surroundings and a very limited number of longer distances views from elevated land to the north, north-west and west where small parts of the Site are visible but not easily discernible from limited sections of PRoWs, forming a very small element in a much wider view and seen in the context of the existing settlement edge.



### Near Distance Views (0-500 metres)

- 7.6 **Site Context Photograph 1** is taken from Sandy Road, immediately to the north of the Site where there is a gap in the hedgerow for field access, looking south. Sandy Road and the dense hedgerow which delineate the northern boundary of the Site are visible in the far left of the view. Built form and allotment gardens associated with the settlement edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa feature in the view, exerting a level of urban influence over the Site and giving the Site a greater affinity with the settlement of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa than with the wider countryside, reducing the sensitivity of the Site. Field boundaries including hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees provide an important landscape structure within the Site, contributing to the wider landscape character. Road users of Sandy Lane will experience glimpsed, transient views over the Site from short sections of Sandy Lane as a result of the northern boundary hedgerow predominantly curtailing views for road users. These views are seen in the context of the existing residential edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa.
- 7.7 **Site Context Photograph 2** is taken from further west along Sandy Road close to where it becomes Old Milverton Lane. Again, the dense northern boundary hedgerow predominantly curtails views from along this section of road. However, where there are gaps in the hedgerow for field access, views across parts of the Site are attained, seen in the context of the Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa settlement edge, with views of residential properties on the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa visible. The built form of Sandy Lane Farm is also visible from this location, in an elevated position, adding to the palette of built forms which exert an urbanising influence over the Site.
- 7.8 **Site Context Photograph 3** is taken from the A452 Kenilworth Road along the eastern boundary of the Site. The road exerts a level of influence over the character of the Site and reduces its tranquillity and sensitivity. Rising landform within the Site limits views over the majority of the Site from this location, with only the easternmost part of the Site visible, with Sandy Lane Farm occupying an elevated position, introducing an element of built form into the view. The tree belt (TB1) running along the eastern boundary of the Site substantially filters/curtails views into the Site from the majority of Kenilworth Road.
- 7.9 **Site Context Photograph 4** is taken from PRow W176 on the edge of Old Milverton, to the west of the Site, looking east. Substantial tree belts along the railway corridor filter/curtail views across the majority of the Site. Topographical variation within the Site limits views from this location towards the centre and east of the Site as land falls away. Existing built form on the edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa visible in the view, exerts a level of urban influence over the Site.



7.10 **Site Context Photograph 5** is taken from Lamintone Drive to the south of the Site, on the northern edge of Milverton, looking north. Recent residential development characterises the streetscape in the left to the right of the view, with the Site partially visible in the left of the view, with views over the remainder of the Site curtailed by intervening built form and topographical variation within the Site.

7.11 **Site Context Photograph 6** is taken from Windermere Drive near the entrance to the allotments, looking north. Recent residential development characterises the streetscape in the left to the right of the view, with the Site partially visible in the centre of the view, with views over the remainder of the Site curtailed by intervening built form.

**Site Context Photograph 7** is taken from PRow L3 to the south-east of the Site along Bamburgh Grove, looking north-west. Recent residential development along Bamburgh Grove characterises the streetscape in the left to the right of the view, with views towards the Site curtailed by existing built form and intervening vegetation. This recent development of Bamburgh Grove is located between the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area (area 33: Northumberland Road) and a section of the Site's south-eastern boundary.

7.12 **Site Context Photograph 8** is taken from a location along PRow W176 slightly further west of the location of Site Context Photograph 4, where the PRow joins Old Milverton Road. Residential properties within Old Milverton along Old Milverton Road are visible in the left of the view, with vegetation including tree belts within rear gardens and the western boundary of the Site along the railway corridor, predominantly curtailing views towards the Site.

Medium distance (501m-1km)

7.13 **Site Context Photograph 9** is taken from Sandy Lane, to the north-east of the Site, looking south-west. Views towards the Site are curtailed by topographical variation and intervening vegetation, including woodland blocks and tree belts.

7.14 **Site Context Photograph 10** is taken from PRow W177 within Guy's Cliffe Registered Park and Garden (Grade II) to the west of the Site, looking east. The A46 is just visible in the left of the view, with St James's Church visible in the centre of the view, set within a framework of mature trees. The Site is not visible from this location with views curtailed as a result of topographical variation and intervening vegetation.

7.15 **Site Context Photograph 11** is taken from the B4115 (Coventry Road) to the north-west of the Site, looking south-east. The railway line and viaduct over the River Avon are visible in the left and centre of the view. The rising fields to the south of the River Avon are visible in the right-centre of the view, rising up to a localised ridge, beyond which the Site is located. As such, the Site is curtailed from view as a result of this topographical variation between

this location and the Site. In the right of the view, the railway line disappears from view as it passes the western boundary of the Site, with Old Milverton and St James's Church visible in the far right of the view, separated from the Site physically by the railway line and visually by intervening vegetation, including substantial tree belts along the railway corridor.

#### Long Distance Views (1km +)

- 7.16 **Site Context Photograph 12** is taken from the edge of Hill Wootton, in the vicinity of Wootton Grange Farm, to the north of the Site, looking south. Views towards the Site are predominantly curtailed by topographical variation and intervening vegetation between this location and the Site. A very small part of the Site, limited to its south-eastern edge, forms a very small element within the view, seen in the context of the existing residential edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa.
- 7.17 **Site Context Photograph 13** is taken from Westhill Road to the east of the Site, looking west. Built form associated with Royal Leamington Spa is present in the view, including North Leamington School. However, the Site is curtailed from view as a result of intervening vegetation including substantial tree belts and mature trees.
- 7.18 **Site Context Photograph 14** is taken from Warwick Road/Sustrans Cycle Route 52 on the edge of Leek Wootton, to the north-west of the Site, looking south-east. The A46 and its associated vehicle movements form a prominent infrastructure corridor within the centre of the view with the settlement of Royal Leamington Spa in the distance. The fields to the south of River Avon slope up to a localised ridge, beyond which lies the Site, predominantly curtailed from view, with the exception of a very short length of the northern boundary hedgerow in the north-western part of the Site.
- 7.19 **Site Context Photograph 15** is taken from a localised ridgeline along the B4115 in the vicinity of PRoW W174, looking south-east. Substantial woodland vegetation along this road curtails views towards the Site from this location.
- 7.20 **Site Context Photograph 16** is taken from PRoW 179d, in an elevated position to the north-west of the Site, looking south-east. The Site is barely discernible from this location with views being predominantly curtailed by intervening vegetation. Where a very small part of the Site is visible, this forms a very small element in the view, seen in the context of the existing settlement edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and other built forms, including Eden Court high rise tower block in Lillington, visible in the centre of the views, situated in an elevated position on the horizon.
- 7.21 **Site Context Photograph 17** is taken from a PRoW (recently adopted) in an elevated position to the north-west of the Site in the vicinity of Leek Wootton and Warwickshire Golf

Club, looking south-east. Residential properties within Leek Wootton, including Stone Edge, are visible on elevated ground in the left of the view, set in a framework of mature trees which limit views from these properties towards the Site. Land then falls away to the right of Stone Edge where views towards Royal Leamington Spa are attained from this location. Built form associated with Royal Leamington Spa, including Eden Court tower block in Lillington are present in the view. The majority of the Site is curtailed from view as a result of intervening vegetation and topographical variation, including the southern fields beyond the River Avon which slope upwards to a localised ridgeline with the Site located beyond. The south-eastern part of the Site forms a small, barely discernible part of the wider panoramic view, seen in the context of the existing settlement edge of Royal Leamington Spa.

7.22 **Site Context Photograph 18** is taken from an elevated position along PRoW W180 in the vicinity of Prospect Farm and Woodbine Cottages, looking east. Built form associated with Royal Leamington Spa and Warwick can be seen in the distance from the centre to the right of the view. The Site is predominantly curtailed from view as a result of intervening vegetation including woodland blocks and tree belts. However, a very small part of the Site, barely perceptible to the naked eye, limited to the south-eastern section of the Site, forms a very small element of the wider panoramic view, seen in the context of the existing built up edge of Royal Leamington Spa.

#### Summary of Visual Appraisal

7.23 The Site's location adjoining the existing built up edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa, in combination with its robust and defensible boundaries and surrounding topographical variation (including the Sites location beyond a localised ridgeline of upward sloping fields to the south of the River Avon), extensive tree belts and woodland blocks in the wider landscape, results in views into the Site from publicly accessible areas being predominantly restricted to:

- Near distance open views from PRoW W176/L3 which traverses the Site;
- Near distance partial views from a limited number and limited sections of roads immediately to the south of the Site associated with recent housing development on the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa;
- Near distance, partial, transient views from short section of the A452 Kenilworth Road to the east of the Site, where there are limited gaps in the tree belt along the eastern boundary of the Site;
- Near distance, partial, transient views from sections of Sandy Lane/Old Milverton Lane to the north of the Site;
- Long distance, partial views from very limited locations on the southern edge of Hill Wootton; and



- Long distance, partial views from a limited number of and limited lengths of PRoWs on elevated ground to the north-west and west of the Site.
- 7.24 Where near distance views of the Site are experienced from publicly accessible places, the Site is seen in the context of existing residential built form on the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and associated infrastructure including the A452 Kenilworth Road to the east of the Site and the railway corridor to the west of the Site. These urbanising features exert a substantial influence over the Site, giving the Site a greater affinity with the urban edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa than with the open countryside which exists to the north of the Site.
- 7.25 Where long distance views of the Site are experienced from publicly accessible places, limited to small parts of the Site, the visible parts of the Site form a very small element in a wider panoramic view, seen in the context of existing built form associated with the settlement of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa.
- 7.26 There is limited intervisibility between the Site and Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area, with the small section adjoining the south-eastern edge of the Site being the only visible part of the Conservation Area. This part comprises recent development and forms a very small element of the wider Conservation Area which covers an extensive part of the settlement of Leamington Spa.
- 7.27 In terms of residential receptors, the views which are most likely to change as a result of the proposed development are those near distance residential receptors immediately adjacent to or in close proximity to the southern, south-eastern and northern edge of the Site. This includes; residential properties along Northumberland Park, Vernon Close, Bamburgh Grove, Fairhurst Drive, Lamintone Drive and Range Meadows Close to the south and south-east of the Site which will likely experience open/partial views towards the Site and proposed built form; and residential properties, including Quarry Cottage, Quarry Lodge and Sandy Lane Farm to the north of the Site, which again will likely experience open/partial views towards the Site. However, in terms of these properties immediately to the north of the Site, changes in the view will be limited by proposed planting along the northern boundary filtering views over time and the retention of areas of open space in the north-eastern part of the Site limiting views towards built form.
- 7.28 Residential properties along the A452 Kenilworth Road immediately to the east of the Site, including Wyndrush, Broadway, Oak Priors, Oldways and Oak Bank House will likely experience a limited detrimental change in the view with views across the Site filtered by extensive tree belts and mature trees around the boundaries of these properties.



- 7.29 A limited number of residential properties in Hill Wootton potentially experience distant, partial views towards the Site, likely to be limited to upper floor windows only. In this context, any detrimental change in the view will likely be limited and seen in the context of the existing settlement edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa.

#### Landscape Value

- 7.30 The Site lies within Green Belt but is not covered by any national or local landscape designations. It contains a network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees and a small part of the Site lies adjacent to Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area. The close affinity with urban development including residential to the south and east; the A425 Kenilworth Road to the east; and railway corridor to the west of the Site reduces tranquillity and remoteness. The Site is considered to be of low to medium landscape value.

#### Capacity to Accommodate Residential Development

- 7.31 The Site varies in sensitivity to change, where the southern, western and eastern parts of the Site, which are influenced by adjoining residential development, rail and road corridors, are of lower sensitivity and the northern part of the Site is relatively more sensitive. The Site has the capacity to successfully accommodate residential development due to the low to medium landscape value and sensitivity of the Site and limited extent of intervisibility with the wider landscape. Residential development on the Site would result in a direct change of land use through the loss of areas of farmland and through the introduction of new built elements. However, the retention of open space in the west of the Site; and the provision of a green infrastructure corridor and landscape buffer to the north of the Site, would maintain an appropriate transition between the settlement edge and the wider countryside.
- 7.32 Any residential development would need to be sensitively designed through siting, layout, materials and massing, set within the existing vegetation structure. A comprehensive landscape strategy to enhance the landscape, biodiversity and visual amenity of the Site would be integral to ensure that residential development is readily assimilated within the Site. This would ensure that adverse landscape and visual effects on the surrounding area are limited. Overall it is considered that the Site has a medium to high capacity to successfully accommodate residential development of an appropriate form and scale.

## 8.0 CONTRIBUTION THE SITE MAKES TO THE PURPOSES OF THE GREEN BELT

- 8.1 Following a site visit and a review of baseline material, an assessment of the Site in terms of the first four Green Belt purposes is made within this appraisal, namely the contribution the Site makes to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas, preventing neighbourhood towns merging into one another; assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. The fifth purpose has not been assessed, and is 'screened out', as the Site is not brownfield land.
- 8.2 In evaluating the contribution of the land within the Site to the Green Belt, the Site has been ranked or quantified within a series of levels or categories, indicating a gradation from high to low, as recommended in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA). Accordingly, each threshold can be clearly defined, using simple, readily understood terms applicable for all circumstances in which they are applied. These thresholds are set out in Table 1 within the methodology. An assessment of the contribution that the Site makes to each of the four purposes is set out below.

Table 2: Assessment of Green Belt Purpose of the Site

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Contribution of the Site to the Green Belt <i>Limited/Some/Significant/None</i>
1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>Royal Leamington Spa has an irregular settlement edge and although development on the Site would result in an extension of Royal Leamington Spa to the north-west, it would not breach the established northern extent of Royal Leamington Spa, which includes Lillington and Cubbington; or the established western extent of Royal Leamington Spa, which includes Milverton.</p> <p>Although the Site predominantly comprises arable fields, it does not display characteristics of strong rural character as a result of the influence of adjoining development, particularly along its southern and south-eastern boundary, including residential development along Northumberland Park, Vernon Close, Bamburgh Grove, The Fairways, Moss Paul Close, Davis Close, Lamintone Drive and Range Meadow Close. The large allotment gardens in the southern part of the Site also displays settlement edge characteristics.</p> <p>The Site is contained by the A452 Kenilworth Road to the east; the built up edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to the south and south-east; Sandy Road/Old Milverton Lane to the North; and a railway corridor to the west.</p> <p>These boundaries are robust, defensible and permanent,</p>	Some reduced to <b>Limited</b> subject to the enhancement of existing landscape structure, particularly along the northern boundary of the Site adjoining Sandy Lane

	<p>and would contain development within the strong boundaries of the Site. These boundaries can be further strengthened through the planting of and enhancement of tree belts along the boundaries.</p> <p>A carefully considered proposed layout responding to and enhancing the existing landscape structure, would form a coherent extension to Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa, and would not constitute 'sprawl'.</p>	
<p>2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another</p>	<p>The settlement of Hill Wootton lies to the north of the Site with the larger settlement of Kenilworth to the north beyond Hill Wootton; the settlement of Leek Wootton lies to the north-west of the Site; the settlement of Old Milverton lies to the west of the Site; and the settlement of Warwick lies to the south-west of the Site.</p> <p><b>Settlement of Hill Wootton:</b></p> <p>The distance between the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to Hill Wootton is approximately 1.5km. Development on the Site would result in the settlements of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Hill Wootton becoming physically closer, by approximately 350m. However, this would not result in the merging of these settlements.</p> <p>The fields to the immediate south and north of the River Avon are of greater importance in the prevention of merging of these settlements, and constitute the undeveloped foreground of views from the settlement of Hill Wootton. The rising topography of this land to the south of the River Avon results in these fields being of greater prominence within local views than the fields within the Site, located beyond a local ridgeline, and of greater importance as a physical and visual gap between settlements.</p> <p>Sandy Road which runs along the north of the Site also provides a physical and permanent boundary to the Site which could be strengthened with the provision of a landscape buffer, containing development within the Site.</p> <p><b>Settlement of Kenilworth:</b></p> <p>The distance between the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to Kenilworth is approximately 3.5km, and as a result the development of the Site would not result in the merging of Milverton/Leamington Spa and Kenilworth.</p> <p><b>Settlement of Leek Wootton</b></p> <p>The distance between the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to Leek Wootton is approximately 1.8km. Development on the Site would result in the settlements of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Leek Wootton becoming physically closer, by approximately 50-100m. However, this would not result in the merging of these settlements.</p> <p>The fields to the immediate south of the River Avon are of greater importance in the prevention of merging of</p>	<p>In relation to the settlement of Kenilworth and Warwick: <b>None</b></p> <p>In relation to the settlement of Leek Wootton: <b>Limited</b></p> <p>In relation to the settlement of Hill Wootton: <b>Some reduced to Limited</b> with a green buffer on the northern edge of the Site</p> <p>In relation to the settlement of Old Milverton: <b>Some reduced to Limited</b> with the retention of an area of open space in the western part of the Site</p> <p>In relation to the settlement of Blackdown: <b>Some reduced to Limited</b> with the retention of an area of open space between development on the Site and residential properties along the A425 on the southern edge of Blackdown.</p>



	<p>these settlements, and constitute the undeveloped background of views from the settlement of Leek Wootton. The rising topography of this land to the south of the River Avon results in these fields being of greater prominence within local views than the fields within the Site, and of greater importance as a physical and visual gap between settlements.</p> <p>The Site and Leek Wootton are physically separated by a railway corridor and the A46 which both travel in a north-south direction. The railway corridor runs along the western edge of the Site providing a robust, defensible and permanent boundary to the Site.</p> <p><b>Settlement of Old Milverton</b></p> <p>The distance between the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to Old Milverton is approximately 250m. Development on the Site would not result in the settlements of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Old Milverton becoming physically closer, and would not result in the merging of these settlements.</p> <p>The railway corridor running along the western edge of the Site and associated tree belts provides a robust, defensible and permanent boundary and limits intervisibility between the Site and Old Milverton. An undeveloped area of land with strongly defined edges in the west of the Site would retain a physical and visual gap between Old Milverton and Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa.</p> <p><b>Settlement of Warwick</b></p> <p>The distance between the western edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to Warwick is approximately 250m. Development on the Site would not extend further west than the existing extents of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and as a result would not reduce the gap between Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Warwick. The River Avon provides a physical gap between these two settlements which have effectively already merged with built form of these two settlements along the east and west banks of the River Avon.</p> <p><b>Settlement of Blackdown</b></p> <p>To the east of the A452 Kenilworth Road, development in the Green Belt between the northern edge of Lillington/Royal Leamington Spa and Blackdown, including school buildings, pavilions, playing fields and tennis courts, has contributed to some degree of perceived and physical coalescence between these two settlements. Development on the Site would therefore not reduce the gap between the northern edge of Royal Leamington Spa and Blackdown. However, the agricultural fields within the Site, located to the west of the A452, provide some perception of separation between the northern edge of Milverton and the southern edge of Blackdown, including a small number of residential properties to the west of the A452 Kenilworth Road. This perception is primarily experienced when travelling along the A452. These residential properties are set within a wooded framework which limits intervisibility between the Site/proposed development and these properties. The</p>	
--	--	--



	<p>setting back of proposed built form from the A452 Kenilworth Road; the strengthening of the eastern boundary of the Site along the A452 Kenilworth Road; and the retention of a physical gap between the proposed development edge and these residential properties will help retain the function of the Green Belt to the west of the A452 Kenilworth Road, in so far as retaining a physical and perceived gap between the southern edge of Blackdown and the northern edge of Milverton. However, the physical gap between the northern edge of Milverton and the residential properties to the west of the A452 Kenilworth Road on the southern edge of Blackdown will reduce from approximately 400m to approximately 150m as a result of the Proposed Development. However, this needs to be seen in the context of the degree of physical and perceived coalescence of Royal Leamington Spa and Blackdown which already exists to the east of the A452 Kenilworth Road.</p>	
<p>3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<p>The Site comprises a series of arable fields bound by mature hedgerows and trees on relatively flat land, the eastern and western extent of which comprise of tree belts, along road and railway corridors.</p> <p>The Site is subject to urban influences to the south, including residential development; the east, including the A452 Kenilworth Road; and the west, including the railway corridor.</p> <p>The introduction of development within any area of countryside would inevitably result in impacts on the countryside, however, the extent of encroachment will be perceived within a limited visual envelope.</p> <p>Development would result in encroachment into arable fields and the development would form an extension of the built up edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa. However, this development would be seen in the context of existing development visible along the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa.</p> <p>The Site is defined to its east by the A452 Kenilworth Road, which is a prominent main road connecting Royal Leamington Spa and Kenilworth and Birmingham beyond. The Site is defined to its north by Sandy Road/Old Milverton Lane, with the River Avon running along a valley approximately 300m beyond, and whilst not a 'main road' is a prominent road providing connection to the settlement of Old Milverton. The Site is defined to its west by a railway corridor and associated tree belts. The Site is defined by the built up edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to the south. These boundaries are robust and defensible, and would prevent future encroachment beyond the limits of the Site.</p> <p>The strong Site boundaries would be enhanced through the introduction of a landscape buffer / green transition zone between the edge of proposed development and Sandy Lane/Old Milverton Lane, the result of which would form a robust limit to future development and contain development within the confines of the Site. In addition, these mitigation measures would filter views towards proposed development from settlements and roads to the</p>	<p><b>Some reduced to Limited</b> subject to the reinforcement of the northern Site boundary with a landscape buffer along Sandy Lane and Old Milverton Lane.</p>

	north and north-west, thereby limiting the perception of encroachment.	
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	<p>The Site is located adjacent to a very short section of the northern boundary of Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area. There is no intervisibility between the Site and the remainder of the Conservation Area, which covers an extensive area of the settlement of Royal Leamington Spa to the south of the Site, as a result of intervening built form and vegetation. The wider setting of the Conservation Area will therefore not be affected by the proposed development.</p> <p>There are no Listed Buildings within the Site and no intervisibility between the Site and any Listed Buildings with the vicinity of the Site. The setting and special character of Listed Buildings will therefore not be affected by the proposed development.</p>	<b>Some reduced to Limited</b> subject to development respecting the existing height, form and massing of surrounding residential properties and respecting the setting of the very small section of conservation area which adjoins the Site.

- 8.3 The overall contribution the Site makes to Green Belt is **'Some to Limited'**. Subject to the proposed landscape measures including the reinforcement of Site boundaries; the creation of a landscape buffer along the northern boundary; the retention of an area of green open space between proposed development on the Site and the western boundary adjoining the railway corridor with the settlement of Old Milverton beyond; and the retention of an area of green open space between the proposed development and the southern edge of Blackdown, the Site has capacity to accommodate built form whilst maintaining Green Belt function.
- 8.4 Although the Site comprises arable agricultural fields, it does not display characteristics of strong rural character as a result of the influence of adjoining development, particularly along its southern boundary which adjoins the built up edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa; its eastern boundary where it adjoins the A452 Kenilworth Road; and its western boundary which adjoins a railway corridor.
- 8.5 The existing boundaries to the Site are strong and robust. The boundaries of greatest sensitivity are; the northern boundary, defined by Sandy Lane; and western boundary, defined by the railway corridor with Old Milverton beyond. These could be enhanced and reinforced through reinforced boundary planting along the railway corridor and the planting of tree belts/landscape buffer along Sandy Lane. In addition, the retention of the fields closest to the settlement of Old Milverton as an undeveloped green open space with strongly defined edges would retain a physical and visual gap between Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Old Milverton. A carefully considered layout responding to the existing landscape structure, would form a coherent extension to Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa, and would

not constitute 'sprawl', as development would be contained within the robust and defensible boundaries of the Site.

- 8.6 Development on this land in combination with the mitigation measures detailed above will maintain a robust and defensible boundary to the settlement of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and will ensure that visual and physical separation is maintained between the settlements of; Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Old Milverton; Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Blackdown; Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Hill Wootton; and Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Leek Wootton.



## 9.0 OBJECTIVES, LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT

9.1 The overarching aim is to maintain a robust and defensible boundary to the settlement of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and retain the function of the Green Belt by maintaining separation between Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Hill Wootton, Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Leek Wootton; Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Old Milverton; and Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Blackdown.

9.2 The following key landscape and visual constraints are to be considered during the design evolution process:

- Create an attractive and locally distinctive setting, and assimilate the Proposed Development within the existing landscape framework;
- Retain an area of green open space at the western edge of the Site to maintain both visual and physical separation between the settlement of Old Milverton and Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa. This green space is to respond to and follow existing landscape structure;
- Retain an area of green open space in the north-east of the Site, between the Proposed Development edge and Blackdown, to maintain visual and physical separation;
- Introduce additional tree planting/landscape buffer along the northern edge of the Site adjoined by Sandy Road/Old Milverton Lane, to form a robust and defensible edge to Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa; to enhance definition of this edge; to reduce visibility into the Site from the north and north and north-west and to create an appropriate transition to the wider countryside;
- Retain and enhance existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees where possible, to promote a mature character within the Site, to provide a structural landscape setting to the proposed development and to screen and soften views of built form from the surrounding area;
- Create a Green Infrastructure corridor/spine running through the Site to provide informal and formal open space and recreation opportunities; sustainable drainage provision; ecological enhancements; and an appropriate transition to the wider countryside to the north.
- Provide appropriate landscape treatment between the Proposed Development and adjacent residential properties, roads and public rights of way, to ensure that the visual impact of development on adjacent receptors is minimised and the Proposed Development is seen to be well contained;



- Create links between open space, local centres and surrounding countryside. This access network will provide the backbone of the layout design;
- Establish SuDS features, where possible, as a unifying landscape structure across the Site;
- Proposed development on the Site is to respect the setting of and positively relate to the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area where it adjoins a short section of the south-eastern boundary of the Site.
- Provide a coherent pattern through street planting to facilitate legibility and sense of place, which extends through the Proposed Development.
- Proposed development will be constructed of materials sympathetic to the local character and which complement immediate built surroundings.
- Maintain and enhance the existing PRoW route through the Site and form green links between residential clusters;
- Retain the area of allotments to the south of the Site as an important community resource;
- To use locally occurring species wherever appropriate; and
- Maintain this framework through an ongoing positive management regime.

9.3 Refer to **Figure 6: Opportunities and Constraints Plan** within which the above are illustrated.

## 10.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

10.1 As illustrated within **Figure 1: Site Context Plan**, the Site lies on the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa. A railway corridor and associated tree belts define the western boundary of the Site, beyond which lies the settlement of Old Milverton. The A452 Kenilworth Road and a tree belt define the eastern boundary of the Site. Built form on the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa defines the southern and south-eastern boundary, including a very small part of the much wider Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area. The northern boundary is defined by a dense hedgerow which adjoins Sandy Lane/Old Milverton Lane, beyond which lie fields which slope down to the River Avon.

### Relevant Local Planning Policy

10.2 The Site currently forms part of the Green Belt. However, Policy DAP1: Protecting the Green Belt, of the Warwickshire District Local Plan (adopted 2007), has not been 'saved'. Other, relevant 'saved' planning policies within the Warwickshire District Local Plan (adopted 2007) include those relating to; Layout and Design; Natural and Historic Environment and Landscape; and Protection of Conservation Areas, which a considered approach to the development of the Site could accord with.

10.3 Relevant planning policies within the Draft Warwick District Local Plan 2011 – 2029 include those relating to; Green Belt; Supporting Sustainable Communities; Spatial Strategy; Layout and Design; Green Infrastructure; Landscape; and Protection of Conservation Areas, which a considered approach to the development of the Site could also accord with.

10.4 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Leamington and Whitnash) (May 2014) forms part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework and identifies the Site as reference: L07 (Land North of Milverton). The Site is described as being within an area of 'medium' landscape value. The suitability of the Site for development is described as **"Potentially suitable in part, subject to alteration of the Green Belt boundary..."**

10.5 The Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), provides guidance and advice on new development and its relationship with settlement pattern, character, distinctiveness, landscape, materials, open space and scale, height form and massing.

10.6 The Site is not subject to any other landscape designations other than Green Belt.

## Landscape Context

- 10.7 In terms of landscape character, the area including the Site has been assessed at national, county and district levels. At a national level, the Site falls within National Character Area (NCA) 97: Arden. Key characteristics of NCA 97: Arden include; a well wooded farmland landscape; rolling landform; mature hedgerow oaks; clay river valleys; diverse field pattern; and a complex and contrasting settlement pattern. The Site exhibits some of these features, for example mature hedgerow oaks and diverse field patterns. However, as a result of the Site's proximity to the built up edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa, it has a greater affinity with this settlement pattern, which exerts a level of urban influence over the Site, than it does with the wider countryside. Green Infrastructure provision is identified as an opportunity within NCA 97: Arden, which could be achieved through *'enhancing urban areas and fringes through sympathetic building and landscape design.'* A further opportunity for NCA97: Arden is identified as *"good, sustainable design reflecting local settlement patterns, green infrastructure and local character".*
- 10.8 At County Level, the Site falls within the wider area 'Arden' and within sub-area 'Arden Parklands', noted as being characterised by: large arable fields defined by low cut, gappy hedgerows; belts of mature trees; ancient woodlands; and thick roadside hedgerows. The Site exhibits some of these features, notably relating to fields, trees and hedgerows. A key management strategy for the sub-area is to *"retain and enhance the effect of wooded enclosure"*. General development guidelines for the wider 'Arden' area include *"conserve the character of rural settlements by retaining existing features and local patterns in all development schemes"* and to *"soften hard built edges through increased tree planting within and around new development."*
- 10.9 A considered approach to the development of the Site could also accord with the guidance and recommendations set out in the landscape character assessments.

## Site Appraisal

- 10.10 As illustrated within **Figure 2: Topographical Features Plan**, the Site is located close to the River Avon, although land falls away to the north of the Site towards the River Avon which meanders across the landscape at an elevation of approximately 50m AOD. Land within the Site is gently undulating with a high point of approximately 72m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the north-west. Land then slopes downwards from this point to the centre of the Site to a level of approximately 60m AOD, before slopes up from the centre of the Site to the south-east of the Site to a level of approximately of 65m AOD.
- 10.11 As illustrated within **Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan**, the Site comprises a number of irregular shaped agricultural fields and is strongly defined and influenced by its boundaries,



which include the A452 Kenilworth Road and a tree belt to the east; a railway corridor and tree belts to the west; Sandy Lane/Old Milverton Lane and a dense hedgerow to the north; and the existing built up edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to the south and south-east of the Site.

- 10.12 The fields that comprise the Site are predominantly agricultural land (with the exception of the allotment area to the south of the Site), bounded by well-managed hedgerows with mature field trees. Vegetation belts are present along the eastern and western edges of the Site along the railway corridor and the A452 Kenilworth Road. A dense hedgerow and intermittent mature trees define the northern boundary along Sandy Lane/Old Milverton Lane.
- 10.13 A Public Right of Way (PRoW W175/L3) passes through the Site, travelling in an east-west direction from Bamburgh Grove to Old Milverton.

#### Visual Appraisal

- 10.14 As illustrated within **Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan** and within the **Site Context Photographs (1-18)**, views from public places toward the Site from the north, south, east and west are predominantly curtailed by a combination of intervening vegetation, built form and topographical variation, in all but the most immediate surroundings and a very limited number of longer distances views from elevated land to the north, north-west and west where small parts of the Site are visible but not easily discernible from limited sections of PRoWs, forming a very small element in a much wider view and seen in the context of the existing settlement edge.
- 10.15 In terms of residential receptors, the views which are most likely to change as a result of the Proposed Development are those near distance residential receptors immediately adjacent to or in close proximity to the southern, south-eastern and northern edge of the Site. This includes residential properties along Northumberland Park, Vernon Close, Bamburgh Grove, Fairhurst Drive, Lamintone Drive and Range Meadows Close to the south and south-east of the Site which will likely experience open/partial views towards the Site and proposed built form, and residential properties, including Quarry Cottage, Quarry Lodge and Sandy Lane Farm to the north of the Site, which again will likely experience open/partial views towards the Site. However, in terms of these properties immediately to the north of the Site, changes in the view will be limited by proposed planting along the northern boundary filtering views over time and the retention of areas of open space in the north-eastern part of the Site limiting views towards built form.
- 10.16 Residential properties along the A452 Kenilworth Road immediately to the east of the Site, including Wyndrush, Broadway, Oak Priors, Oldways and Oak Bank House will likely



experience a limited detrimental change in the view with views across the Site filtered by extensive tree belts and mature trees around the boundaries of these properties.

- 10.17 A limited number of residential properties in Hill Wootton potentially experience distant, partial views towards the Site, likely to be limited to upper floor windows only. In this context, any detrimental change in the view will likely be limited and seen in the context of the existing settlement edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa.

#### Objectives, Opportunities and Constraints

- 10.18 The Site has the potential to accommodate proposed development, set within a strong landscape structure including creating an attractive and locally distinctive setting; retaining an area of greenspace in the western part of the Site; introducing tree planting/landscape buffer/Green Infrastructure corridor along the northern edge of the Site; retaining existing landscape features including hedgerows and hedgerow trees; respecting the setting and amenity of adjoining residential properties; creating links between open spaces; providing SuDS where possible; positively relating development to adjoining buildings and the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area; using materials sympathetic to local character; maintaining existing footpaths; retaining the area of allotment; and using locally occurring species where appropriate.
- 10.19 The overarching objective of the landscape proposals is to maintain a robust and defensible boundary to the settlement of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and retain the function of the Green Belt by maintaining separation between Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and the settlements of Old Milverton, Blackdown; Hill Wootton and Leek Wootton. This would be achieved by:
- Retaining an area of green open space at the western edge of the Site to maintain both visual and physical separation between the settlement of Old Milverton and Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa. This green space is to respond to and follow existing landscape structure;
  - Retaining an area of green open space between the Proposed Development and the southern edge of Blackdown to maintain both visual and physical separation; and
  - Introducing additional tree planting/landscape buffer along the northern boundary of the Site adjoined by Sandy Road/Old Milverton Lane, to form a robust and defensible edge to Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa; to enhance definition of this edge, to reduce visibility into the Site from the settlements north and north-west and to create an appropriate transition to the wider countryside.

## Conclusion

- 10.20 In conclusion, there is potential for proposed development to be successfully accommodated on the Site and assimilated into the wider landscape. Proposed development of the Site in combination with the mitigation measures detailed above and illustrated within **Figure 6: Opportunities and Constraints Plan** will maintain robust and defensible boundaries to the settlement of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and ensure that visual and physical separation is maintained between the settlements of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Old Milverton; Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Blackdown; Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Hill Wootton; and Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Leek Wootton. In addition, mitigation measures will ensure that landscape features within the Site are maintained and enhanced, and views toward proposed development are filtered from the north, north-west and west.
- 10.21 The overall contribution the Site makes to Green Belt is 'Some to Limited'. Subject to the proposed landscape measures including the reinforcement of Site boundaries; the creation of a landscape buffer along the northern boundary; the retention of a break between proposed development on the Site and the southern edge of Blackdown; and the retention of a break between proposed development on the Site and the railway corridor/Old Milverton, the Site has capacity to accommodate built form whilst not undermining the purposes of the Green Belt in this area.
- 10.22 The Site has numerous settlement edge characteristics, influenced primarily by existing residential development immediately to the south and south-east of the Site; the A452 Kenilworth Road to the east of the Site; the railway corridor to the west of the Site; and the area of allotments in the southern part of the Site. This, in combination with the limited visibility of the Site from within the wider area, as a result of existing vegetation and topographical variation, limits the contribution the Site makes to the wider countryside. There is therefore potential to assimilate development on the Site to form a coherent addition to the settlement of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa whilst respecting and potentially enhancing the settlement edge character.
- 10.23 Based on the above considerations, development on the Site would be acceptable in landscape and visual terms and would respond appropriately to relevant policy at national and local levels. The Site could successfully accommodate residential development, forming a new defined and robust settlement edge to Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa, set within a strong landscape framework, sympathetic to the existing townscape and landscape character.

## Figures

Figure 1: Site Context Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1;

Figure 2: Landscape Character Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1

Figure 3: Topographical Features Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1;

Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan at 1:5,000 scale @ A3;

Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1; and

Figure 6: Opportunities and Constraints Plan at 1:5,000 scale @ A3



	Site Boundary
	Highway Widening, Closure and Turn Lane
	Subsidence
	Subsidence Control
	Custom Two Stage Process (CSP)
	Highway
	Water
	Public Right of Way
	Controlled Highway Right of Way
	Urban Cycle Route
	Local Authority
	Highland Parks and Recreation
	Neighbourhood
	Neighbourhood Protection
	World Natural Heritage
	World Special Interest Heritage
	Green Belt
	Conservation Area

**Site Contact Plan**

Scale: 1:25,000

North Arrow

Grid Reference: 100 100

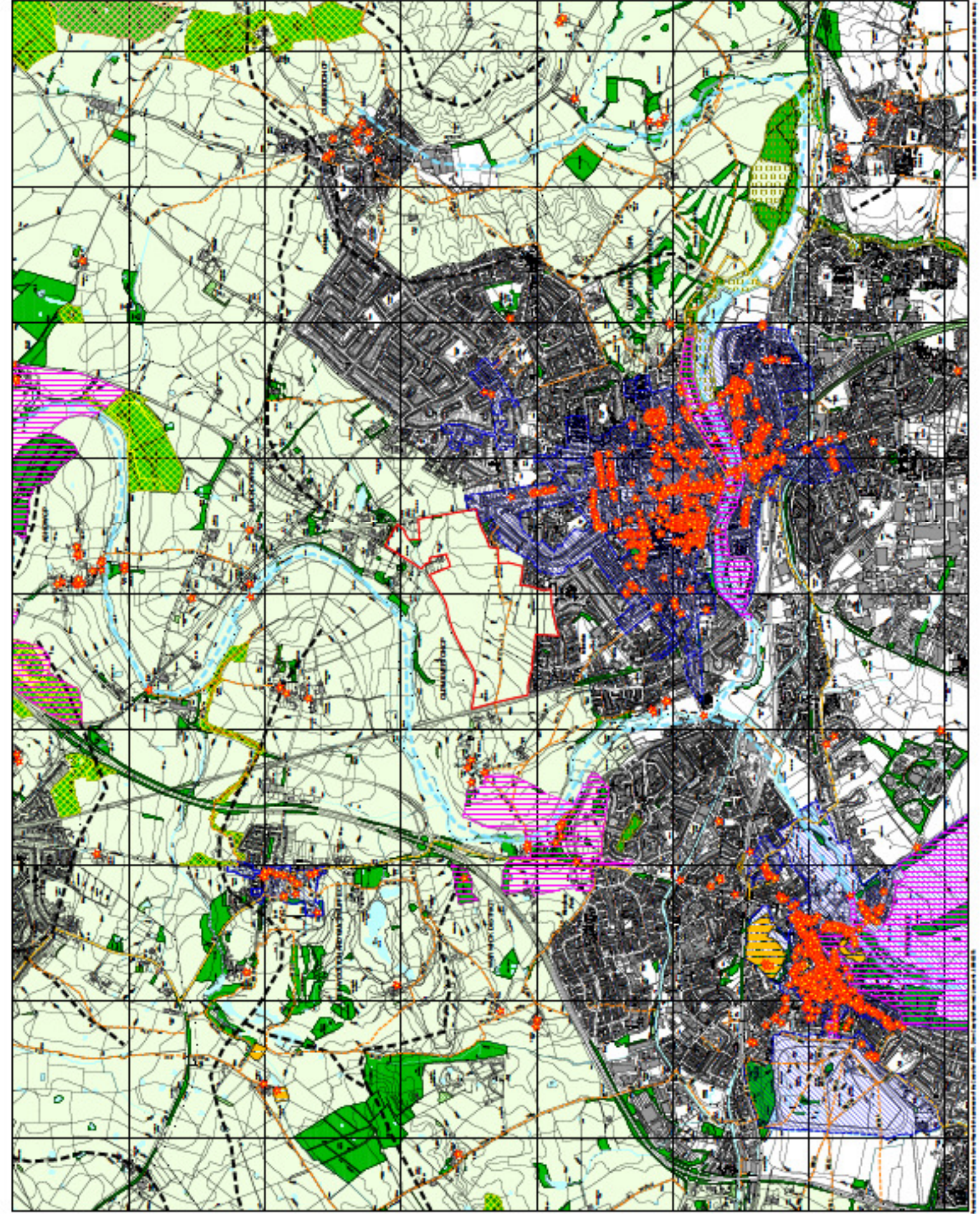
North

100m

0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000

**WILSON**  
WILSON ENGINEERING LTD  
100, ST. ANDREW'S ROAD, ABERDEEN, ABERDEENSHIRE, AB9 8YU, SCOTLAND, UK  
T: 01224 801200  
F: 01224 801201  
E: info@wilson-engineering.co.uk  
WWW.WILSON-ENGINEERING.CO.UK

**Figure 1**  
Site Contact Plan  
North West  
Wales  
Wales  
Wales

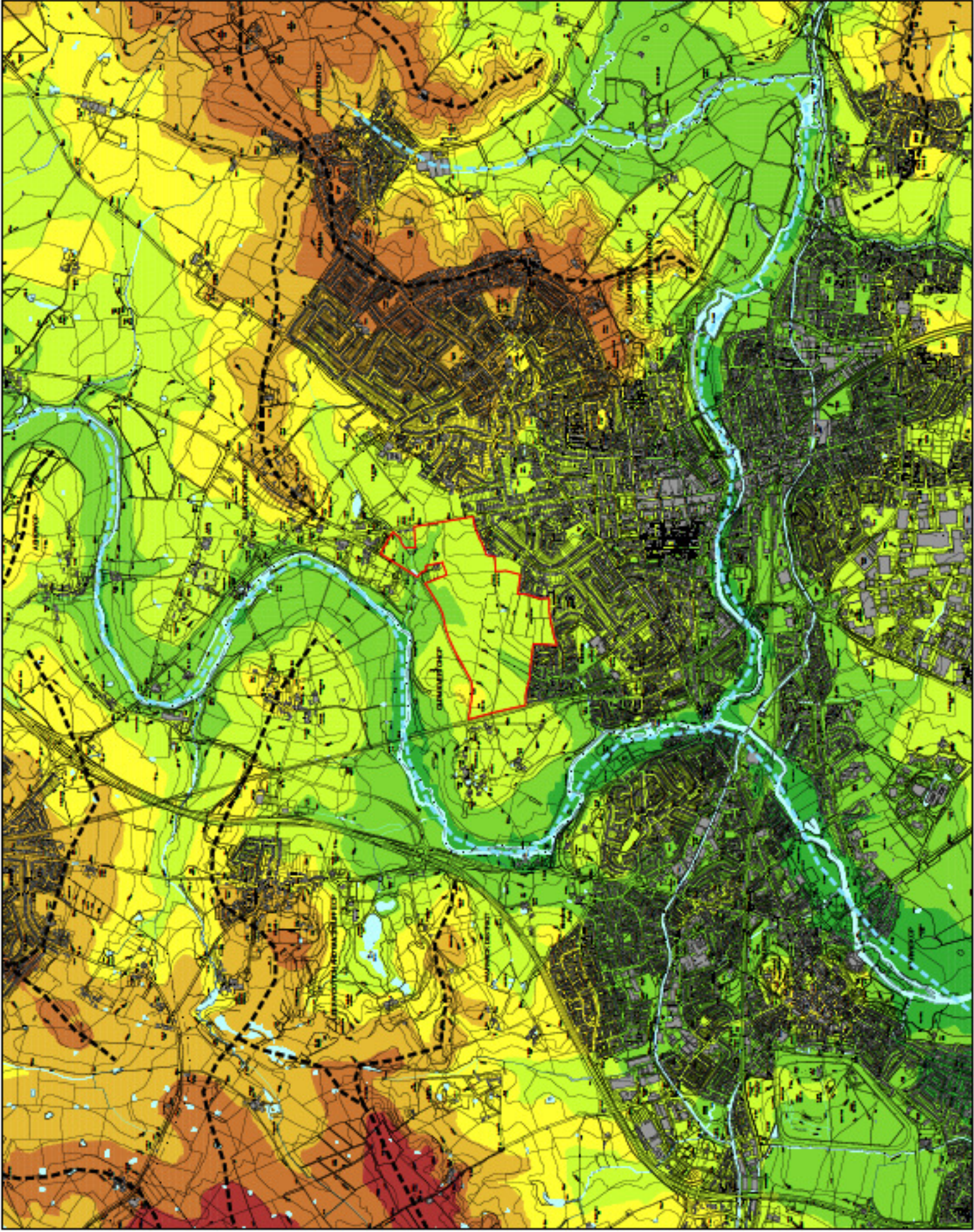
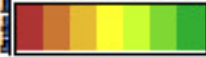






Legend

- Site Boundary
- Watercourse
- Existing Water Course
- Contour (1m Height Interval)
- Highway
- Railway
- Watercourse



**Figure 2**  
 North Merton  
 Warwickshire  
 Topographical Features Plan

Scale: 1:50,000  
 Date: 10/2018  
 Author: [Name]  
 Project: [Name]







Scale: 1:10000  
 The setting of the planning committee meeting is on the 15th of June 2024

**Legend**

- Site boundary
- Existing water courses
- Conservation of nightingales (COTN)
- Public right of way
- Local planning
- Neighbourhood
- Location of development (see opposite page 10)
- Landmarks
- Tree
- Other

North  
 100m  
 0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000

**Figure 4**  
 North Milverton  
 Wards  
 Site Appraisal Plan

Site Area	10.5 Ha	County Area	11 Ha
Ward Area	10.5 Ha	Ward Area	11 Ha
Ward No.	10	Ward No.	10
Ward Name	North Milverton	Ward Name	North Milverton
Ward Code	10	Ward Code	10

**NORTH MILVERTON**  
 WARD  
 10  
 10.5 Ha  
 10.5 Ha  
 10  
 10



North Milverton Ward 10.5 Ha 10.5 Ha 10 10





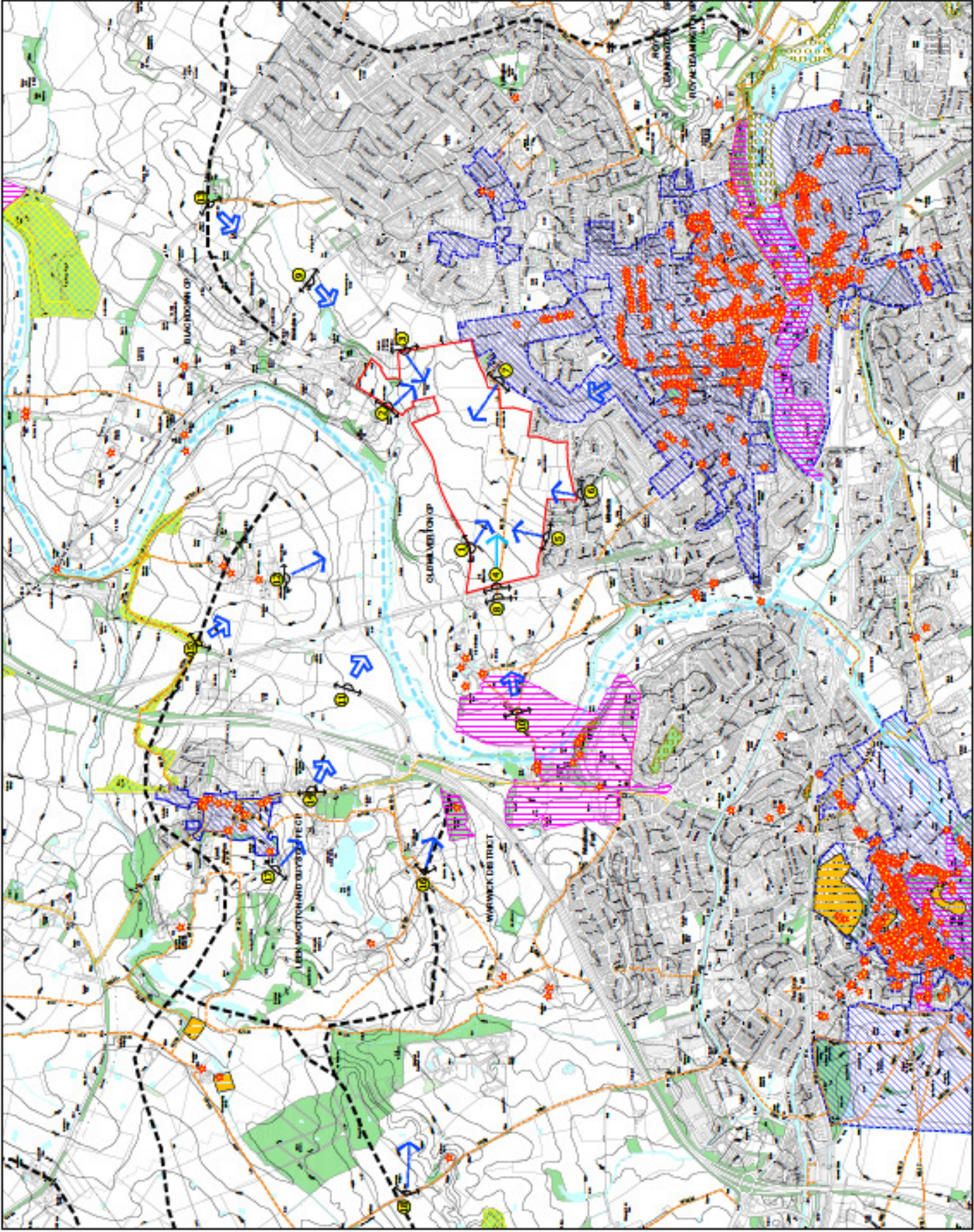
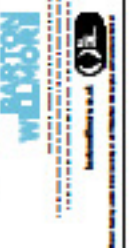
**Legend**

- Site Boundary
- Highway Right-of-Way and Tree Line
- Suburbia
- Suburbia - Core
- Customized Single-Family Residential
- Highway
- Water
- Public Right-of-Way
- Community Right-of-Way Intersections
- Urban Edge Buffer
- School Building
- High-Speed Park and Recreation
- Municipal Enclosure
- Local Urban Renewal
- Urban Renewal
- Major Transit Corridor
- Conservation Area
- Location of Suburbia/Highway Intersections
- Open Space
- Park
- Transit of the Area

Map No. 101  
 The City of Northampton  
 Planning Department  
 2017

**Figure 5**  
 Northampton  
 Visual Appraisal Plan

Scale: 1" = 100'  
 Date: 2017



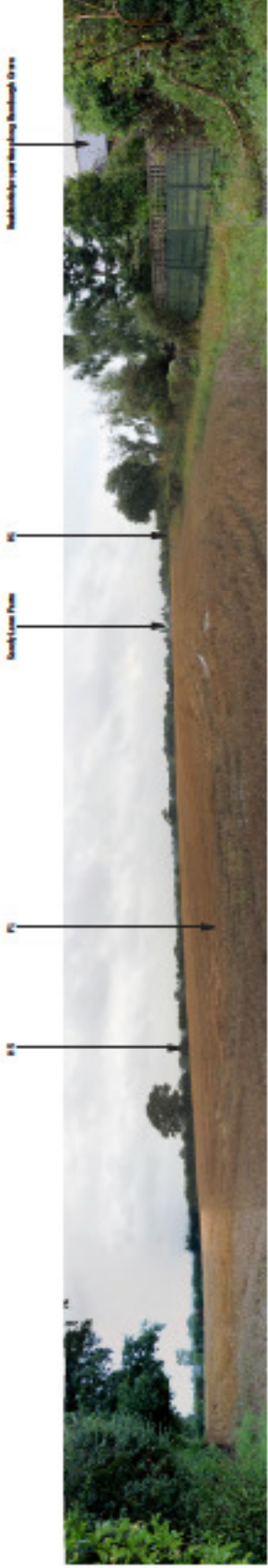




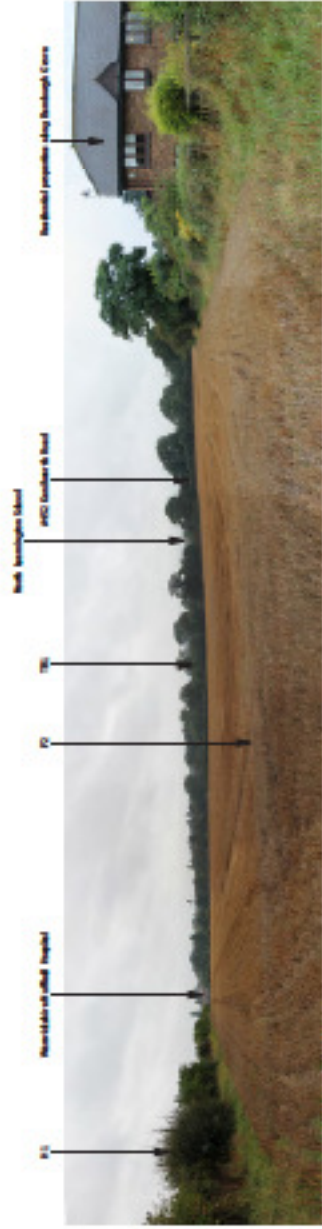
# **Appendix 1**

Site Appraisal and Site Context Photographs





SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H A



SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H B



SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H C



SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H D



SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H E



SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H F





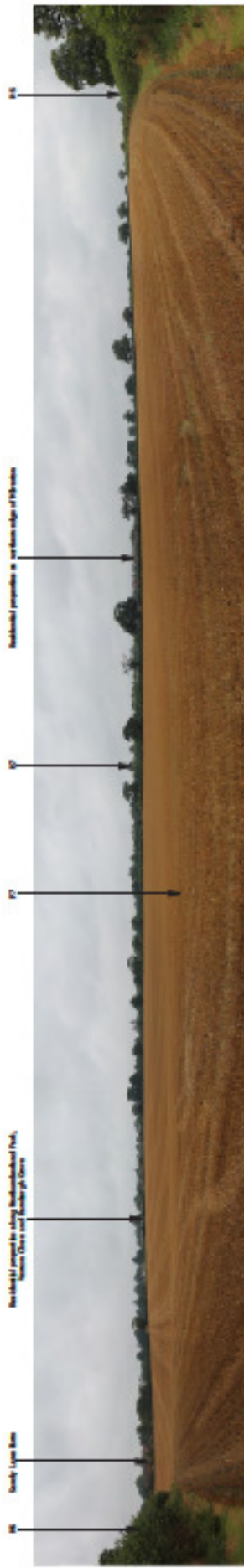
SITE AP PRASALL PHOTOGRAPH H G



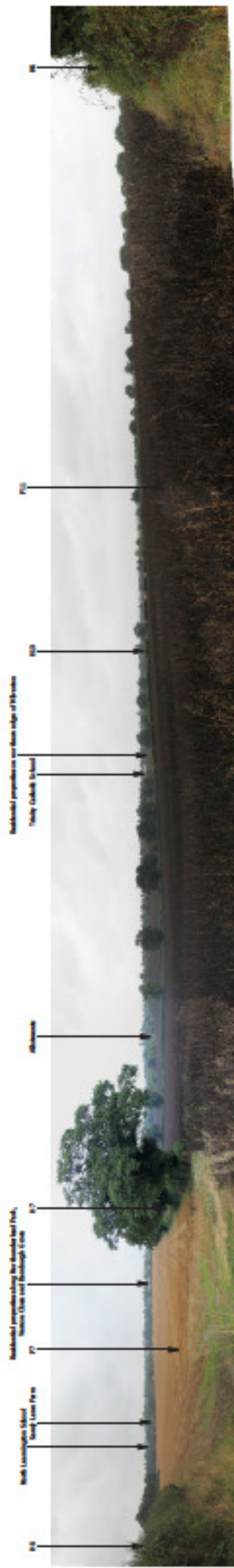
SITE AP PRASALL PHOTOGRAPH H H



SITE AP PRASALL PHOTOGRAPH H I



SITE AP PRUDSALL PHOTOGRAPH H J

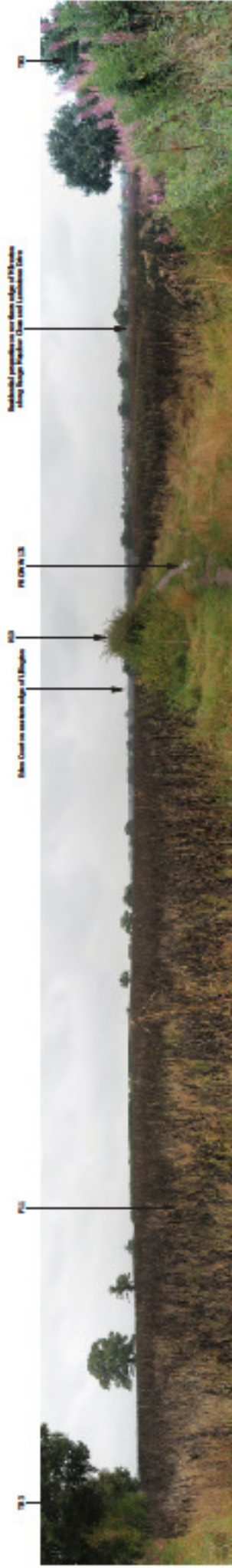


SITE AP PRUDSALL PHOTOGRAPH H K

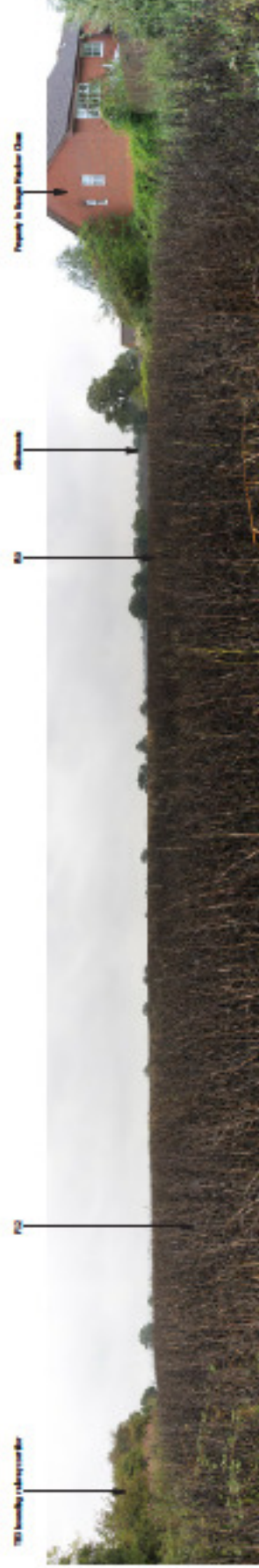


SITE AP PRUDSALL PHOTOGRAPH H L

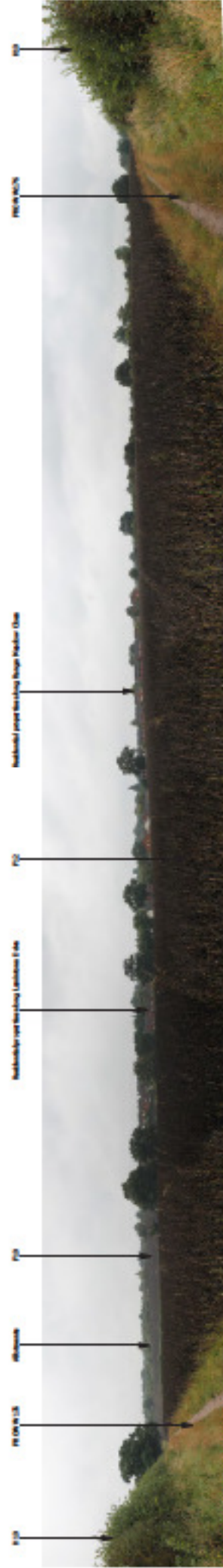




SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H-1

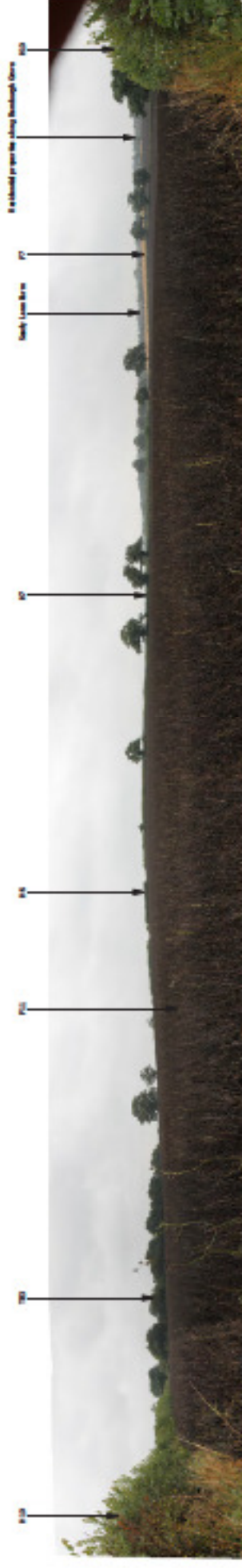


SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H-2



SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H-3

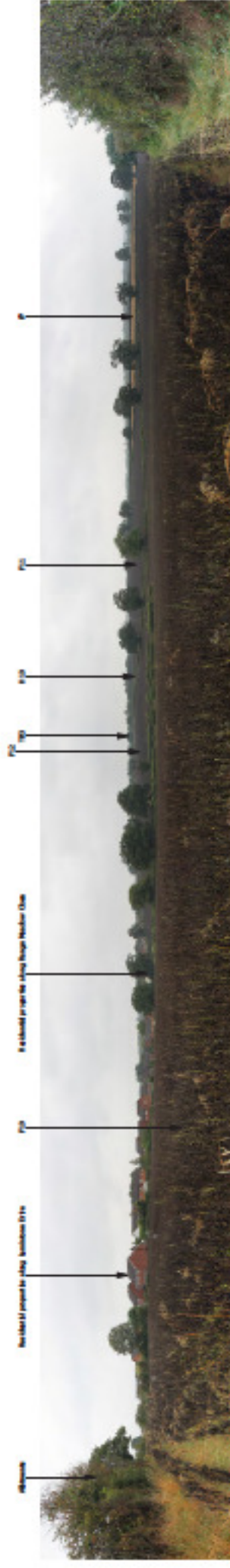




SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H P



SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H Q



SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H R



SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H S



SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H T



SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H U



SITE AP PRUSALL PHOTOGRAPH H V





SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 1: VIEW FROM SANDY LANE, LOOKING SOUTH

Order ref: 26  
 Elev: 101.75m AFD



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 2: VIEW FROM SANDY LANE, IN VICINITY OF QUARRY LODGE, LOOKING SOUTH-EAST

Order ref: 26  
 Elev: 101.57m AFD



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 3: VIEW FROM HENLWORTH ROAD, LOOKING WEST ACROSS THE SITE

Order ref: 26  
 Elev: 101.55m AFD



The table in back garden along Old Meriden Road

Hidden railway

Tree 100

FR 200

Tree 100

Approximate extent of the site



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 4 | VIEW FROM PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY 101.7N/BRIDGE OVER THE INCLINE RAILWAY, LOOKING EAST

Order ref: 206  
Dist ref: 1.57m A150

The site

Landmark Tree



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 5 | VIEW FROM LANE HOME DRIVE, LOOKING NORTH

Order ref: 206  
Dist ref: 1.58m A150

It is visible to the

Neighbourly trees

Access to site road

Approximate extent of the site



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 6 | VIEW FROM WINCORNHURST DRIVE, LOOKING NORTH

Order ref: 406  
Dist ref: 1.58m A150

NORTH HILL VERTON  
WARWICKSHIRE

SITE CONTEXT  
PHOTOGRAPHS: 4 - 6

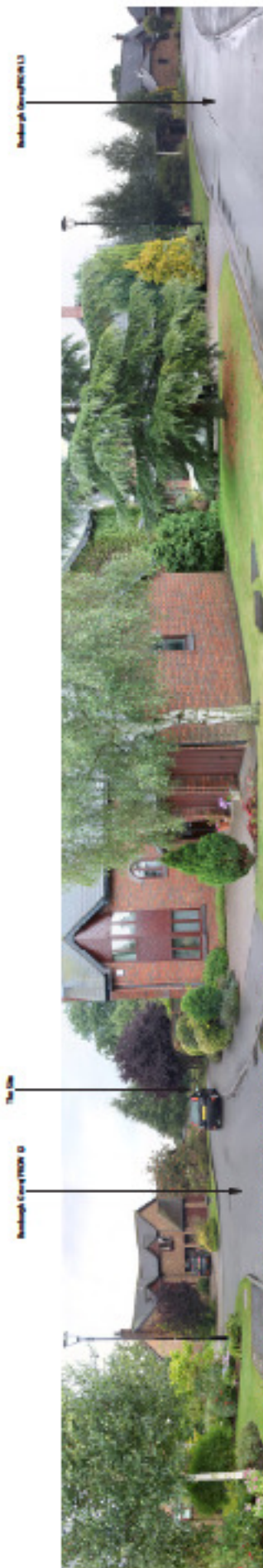
WE COMMISSIONED VERTON  
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

DATE TAKEN: AUGUST 2014

PROJECT NUMBER: 100017

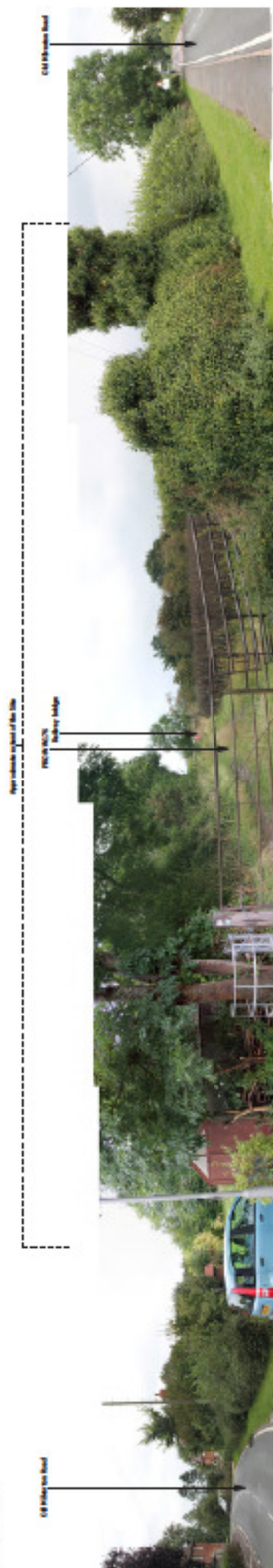
**BARTON  
WILLMORE**





**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 7: VIEW FROM BIRMINGHAM GROVE/PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY LA, LOOKING NORTH**

Order ref: 436  
 Date ref: 07/08/2024



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 8: VIEW FROM OLD MILVERTON ROAD, LOOKING EAST**

Order ref: 836  
 Date ref: 08/08/2024



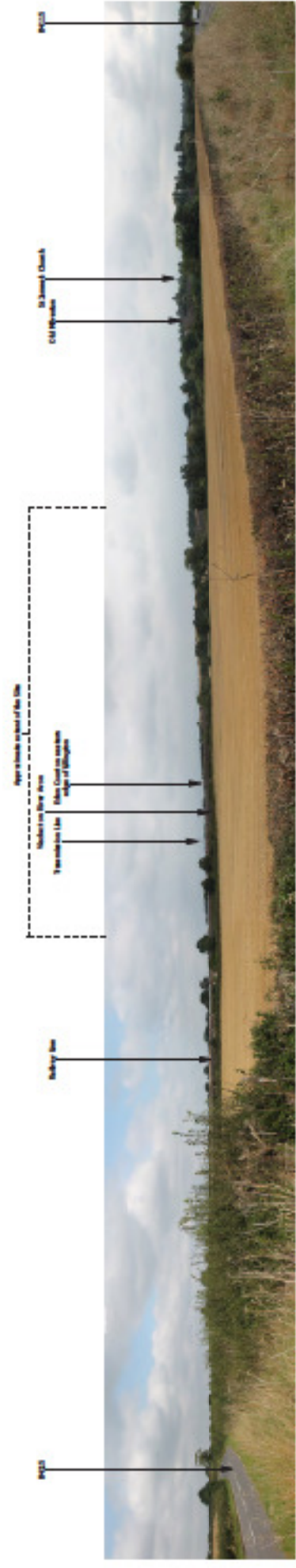
**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 9: VIEW FROM SANDY LANE, LOOKING SOUTH-WEST**

Order ref: 386  
 Date ref: 08/08/2024





**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 10: VIEW FROM PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY W-177, WITHIN GUY'S CLUB REGISTERED PARK, LOOKING EAST**  
 Order no: 704 m  
 Date: 10/10/2024

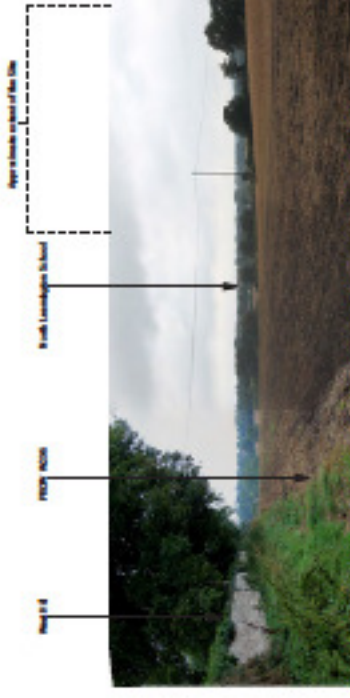


**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 11: VIEW FROM BELL'S, LOOKING SOUTH**  
 Order no: 705 m  
 Date: 10/10/2024



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 12: VIEW FROM TRACK IN HILL WOOTTON, LOOKING SOUTH**  
 Order no: 114 m  
 Date: 10/10/2024

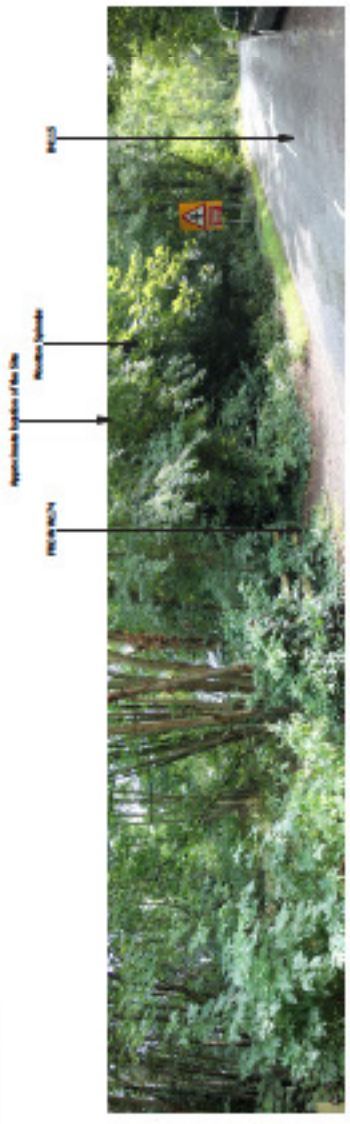




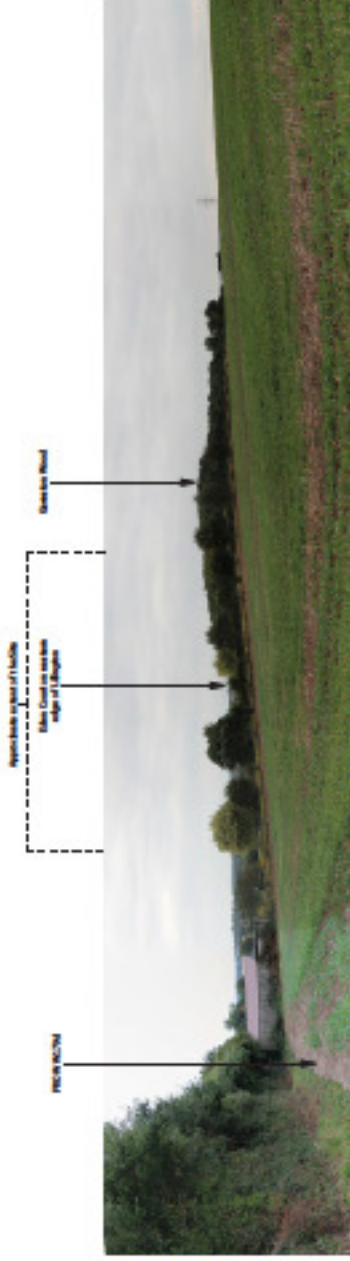
**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 13: VIEW FROM WESTHILL ROAD, LOOKING SOUTH WEST**  
 Date: ca. 11/20/18  
 Dr. with: Bill Alld



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 14: VIEW FROM WARWICK ROAD/SUSTAINS CYCLE ROUTE 82, LOOKING SOUTH EAST**  
 Date: ca. 11/20/18  
 Dr. with: Bill Alld



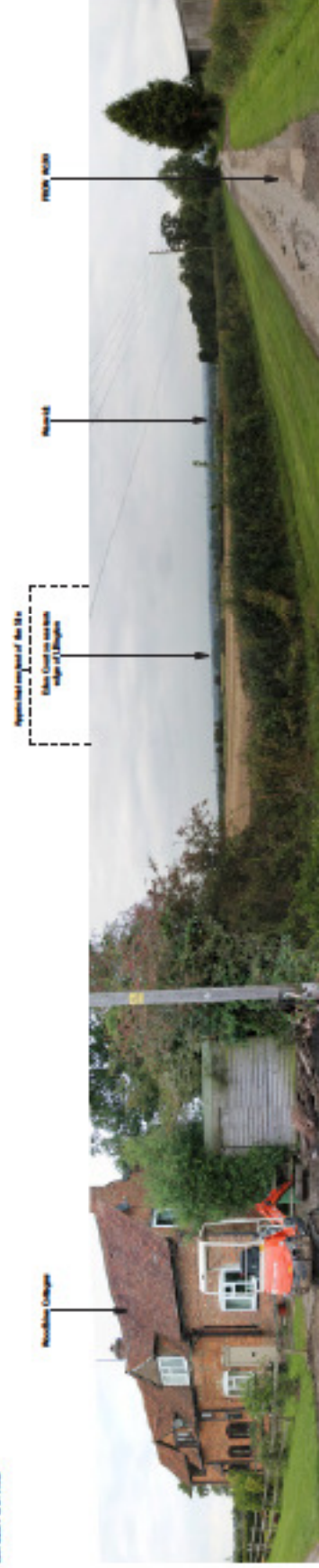
**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 15: VIEW FROM BALL'S, LOOKING SOUTH EAST**  
 Date: ca. 11/20/18  
 Dr. with: Bill Alld



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 16: VIEW FROM PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY WY 790, LOOKING EAST**  
 Date: Oct. 14, 2024  
 Orientation: 029° A150



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 17: VIEW FROM WARWOOD SHIRE GOLF CLUB, LOOKING SOUTH-EAST**  
 Date: Oct. 14, 2024  
 Orientation: 029° A150



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 18: VIEW FROM PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY WY 791, LOOKING EAST**  
 Date: Oct. 14, 2024  
 Orientation: 029° A150



## **Appendix 2**

Landscape Character Extracts

Summary

Description

Opportunities

Key facts  
and data

Landscapes  
change

Analysis



[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

NATURAL  
ENGLAND



## Summary

Arden comprises farmland and former wood-pasture lying to the south and east of Birmingham, including part of the West Midlands conurbation. Traditionally regarded as the land lying between the River Tame and the River Avon in Warwickshire, the Arden landscape also extends into north Worcestershire to about the Severn and Avon Vales. To the north and north-east it drops down to the open landscape of the Mease/Sence Lowlands. The eastern part of the NCA abuts and surrounds Coventry, with the fringes of Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon to the south. This NCA has higher ground to the west, the Cleat and Lickey Hills and to the east, the Nuneaton ridge. The landscape of the lower lying central area is gently rolling with small fragmented semi natural and ancient woodlands. Mature oaks set in hedgerows, distinctive field boundaries, historic parklands and narrow river corridors are key features, all on the doorstep of a heavily urbanised area. Land use throughout the area is mainly, residential, agricultural and industrial including coal mining which is still active in the north east of the NCA. Numerous transport corridors, road, rail, air and canal run through the area. There is likely to be increased development and greater pressure upon the existing infrastructure, particularly around Birmingham, Coventry and the main towns. This pressure could lead to the creation of a new Green Infrastructure linking the urban areas out into the more rural areas. This NCA is among the most geologically diverse. This has had a strong impact on the landscape's character and development and is further reflected in the range of locally and nationally important geological assets across the NCA. There are also many local biodiversity assets and strong cultural links with William Shakespeare and his 'Forest of Arden'.

## Statements of Environmental Opportunity

- **SEO1:** Manage and enhance the valuable woodlands, hedgerows, heaths, distinctive field boundaries and enclosure patterns throughout the NCA, retaining the historic contrast between different areas whilst balancing the needs for timber, biomass production, climate regulation, biodiversity and recreation.
- **SEO2:** Create new networks of woodlands, heaths and green infrastructure, linking urban areas like Birmingham and Coventry with the wider countryside to increase biodiversity, recreation and the potential for biomass and the regulation of climate change.
- **SEO3:** Conserve and enhance Arden's strong geological, industrial, and cultural resource, to increase public access, enjoyment, recreation and to retain a sense of place and history.
- **SEO4:** Enhance the value of Arden's aquatic features such as the characteristic river valleys, meadows and standing water areas like Bittell reservoirs, to increase resource protection eg. soil erosion, soil quality and water quality.



Click map to enlarge; click again to reduce.



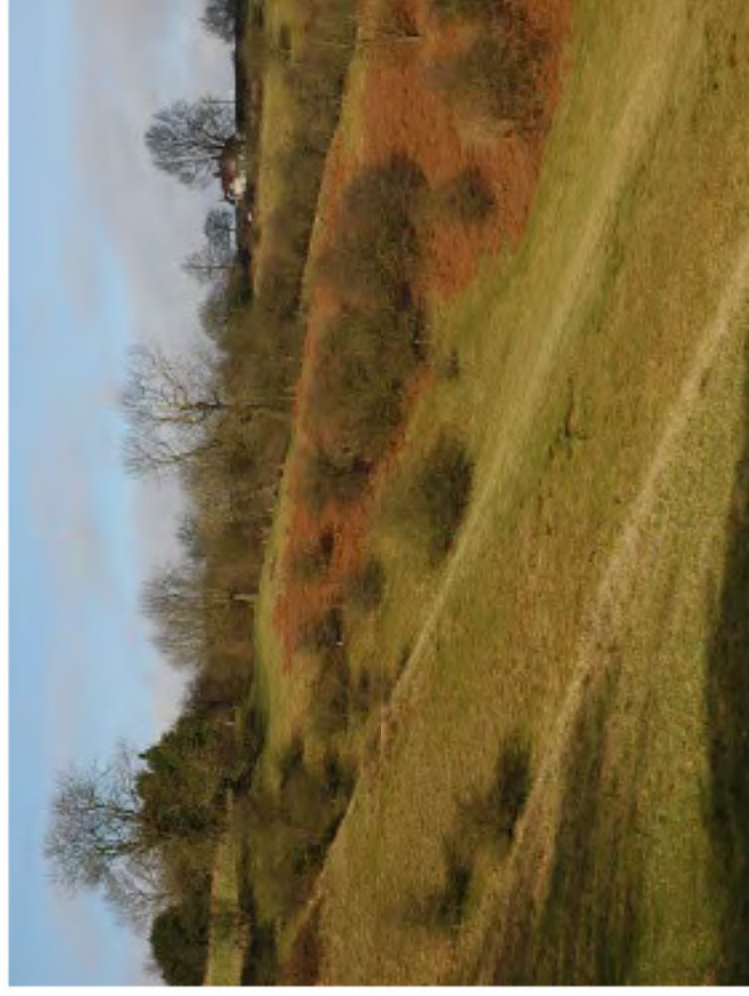
## Description

### Physical and functional links to other NCAs

To the north west of Arden is the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau NCA on the edges of Hagley Park. The Birmingham conurbation then links Arden with Cannock Chase and Cank Wood NCA. These National Character Areas, along with Arden, form the Natural Area referred to as 'The Midlands Plateau'.

In the north east, the M42 transport corridor links the Mease/Sence Lowlands NCA and a sliver of the Trent Valley Washlands with Arden along the edge of Tamworth. On the eastern edge, the Warwickshire landscape flows into the Leicestershire Vales. In the central section of Arden the River Arrow starts its journey south and then merges into the River Avon near Bidford on Avon in the Severn and Avon Vales. Moving south, the River Avon flows into Dunsmore and Feldon then on into Severn and Avon Vales in the south west.

From the highest point in Arden (Walton Hill, in the Clent Hill range), there are views from the summit looking south west into the Shropshire Hills, Malvern Hills, Temе Valley and south into the Cotswolds. There are also views across the NCA taking in the southern fringes of Birmingham from the Heart of England Way near Meriden.



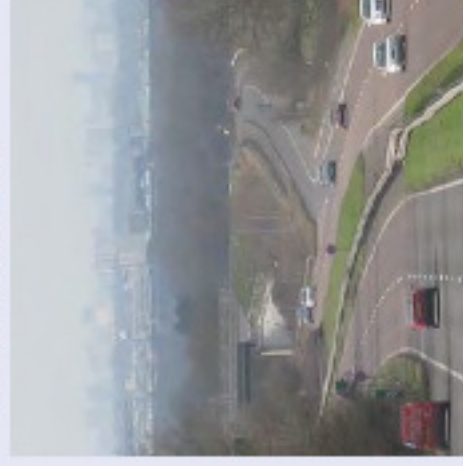
The eastern slopes of Walton Hill, the highest point in the NCA



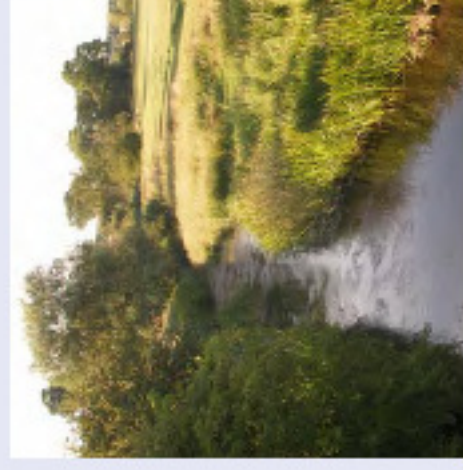
## Key characteristics

- Well-wooded farmland landscape with rolling landform.
- Geologically diverse with rocks ranging from the Precambrian to the Jurassic and overlain by superficial Quaternary deposits.
- Mature oaks, mostly found with hedgerows, together with ancient woodlands, and plantation woodlands that often date from the time of enclosure. Woodlands include historic coppice bounded by woodbanks.
- Narrow, meandering clay river valleys with long river meadows; the River Blythe SSSI lying between the cities of Coventry and Birmingham is a good example of this.
- Numerous areas of former wood-pasture with large, old, oak trees often associated with isolated remnants of more extensive heathlands. Village greens/commons have a strong association with remnant lowland heath. Fragmented heathland persists on poorer soils in central and northern areas.
- Diverse field patterns, ranging from well hedged, irregular fields and small woodlands that contrast with larger semi regular fields on former deer park estates, eg. Packington Hall and Stoneleigh Park.
- Complex and contrasting settlement pattern with some densely populated where traditional settlements have amalgamated to form the major West Midlands conurbation whilst some settlements remain distinct and relatively well dispersed.

- North eastern industrial area based around former Warwickshire coalfield, with distinctive colliery settlements. North western area dominated by urban development and associated urban edge landscapes such as managed green space, eg. allotments, gardens, parks, golf courses (rough areas) and public open spaces; playing fields, churchyards, cemeteries and institutional grounds (schools, hospitals etc).
- Transport infrastructure, the M42, M40, M6 and M5 are major transport corridors that sit within the landscape of this NCA.
- Shakespeare's 'Forest of Arden', featured in 'As You Like It', is still reflected through the woodland cover, mature oaks, small ancient woodlands and former wood pasture.



Demonstrating the undulating landscape between Coventry and Birmingham - looking west along A45, near to Meriden.



An example of the meandering clay river valleys with long river meadows typical of the Arden landscape.

## Statements of Environmental Opportunity

**SEO 1 - Manage and enhance the valuable woodlands, hedgerows, heathlands, distinctive field boundaries and enclosure patterns throughout the NCA, retaining the historic contrast between different areas whilst balancing the needs for timber, biomass production, climate regulation, biodiversity and recreation.**

**For example by:**

- Managing small woodlands, semi-natural woodland and ancient woodland to maintain pockets of tranquillity and enhance biodiversity value and where appropriate re-plant new locally characteristic woodlands for wood fuel/biomass, Managing and maintaining the existing resource of 'big historic trees' in urban areas and support schemes to expand urban tree planting to support urban biodiversity and increase sense of place and history.

- Managing hedgerows in traditional local style to enhance landscape character and improve biodiversity value, Improving existing fragmented heathlands in Southern Arden and Arden Parklands.



**SEO 2 - Create new networks of woodlands, heathlands and green infrastructure, linking urban areas like Birmingham and Coventry with the wider countryside to increase biodiversity, recreation and the potential for biomass and the regulation of climate change.**

**For example by:**

- Expansion of urban tree planting to support urban biodiversity, landscape character and sense of place and history, Targeting expansion of woodland for the benefit of biodiversity and landscape, particularly where it can link isolated woodland blocks and increase habitat connectivity,
- Ensuring that the right type of tree is planted in the right location to maximise the benefits for water quality, climate regulation, erosion control, tranquillity and sense of place, Planting new hedgerows, especially in the north-eastern part of the NCA, using species of local provenance, planting standard hedgerow trees primarily oak, to maintain the distinctive character of the area. Maintain associated grassland buffer strips and improve habitat connectivity, particularly where this can assist in regulating soil erosion,

- Planning and creating new and improved links between urban areas, green belt and the wider countryside or major open spaces within and/or near the conurbation especially in and around Birmingham, Coventry and north Solihull,
- Enhance urban areas and fringes through sympathetic building and landscape design, Creation of new green infrastructure with associated habitat creation and new public access especially around old mining and quarry sites in the central and north east areas of the NCA, Maintaining and improving the existing rights of way network such as the Heart of England Way, cycle routes and access land, Improving links to or within the wider network of canal towpaths such as the Grand Union and Avon canal walks and cycle routes.



## Supporting document 2: Landscape change

### Recent changes and trends

#### Trees and woodlands

- The character of the resource has been maintained, or is strengthening slowly but there has been a general lack of woodland management in many places.
- Across rural parts of this NCA and into neighbouring NCAs, there is an ambitious, programme to purchase land and create an extensive forest landscape, the "Forest of Dennis". This project has created over 400 ha of new woodland and aims to eventually create a further 4 to 8,000 ha.

#### Boundary features

- There has been loss and deterioration of hedges and hedgerow trees, the former particularly as a result of field amalgamation. Many hedgerows have fallen into disrepair through poor and or lack of management. The number of hedgerow trees has declined, and there has been a failure to nurture new generations. However, recent stewardship schemes have led to some positive management of hedgerows and improvement in hedgerow quality.

#### Agriculture

- In 2009, over 30% of farms were lowland grazing livestock holdings; Farms classified as 'other' (which include smallholdings) 27%; cereal farms 20%; mixed farms (7%). Trends between 2000 and 2009 show a decrease in the total number of holdings from 1,898 to 1,577 (a 17% decrease). Trends also show a significant decrease in dairy farms (down from 112 to 56, a decrease

of 50%), and mixed farming (down from 12.4 to 8.1, a decrease of 35%). Lowland grazing livestock has increased slightly (9%) Source: Agricultural census data 2000 & 2009, DEFRA

#### Settlement and development

- There is development pressure throughout the area. The majority of the NCA falls within the southern half of the West Midlands Green Belt which extends around Coventry and Redditch and south to Stratford. Growth proposals seem to be focussed around the East of Birmingham and North Solihull. Coventry is an area previously designated as a growth point and there has been consideration of sustainable urban extensions into the green belt.

#### Semi-natural habitat

- Semi-natural habitats are limited in this NCA with less than 1% designated for nature conservation. There is little evidence to show that there are agri-environment agreements for heathland management and restoration. The most extensive annual agri-environment agreements in 2003 were for lowland pastures on neutral/acid soils (487 ha) and regeneration of grassland/semi-natural vegetation (236 ha). Given the size of the area, this suggests the resource remains weakened.

#### Historic features

- In 1918 about 3% of the Arden area was historic parkland, but by 1995 it is estimated that 54% of that had been lost. Less than half of the remaining parkland is covered by a Historic Parkland Grant and only 12% is included within an agri-environmental scheme. This suggests some neglect of an important resource.



- It should also be noted that only about 58% of historic farm buildings remain unconverted of which the majority are intact structurally.

#### Rivers

- This area is drained to the south by the rivers Arrow and Alne. Laying within the River Severn catchment area, these rivers flow into the River Avon. Draining to the north, the rivers Tame, Blythe and Anker sit within the River Humber catchment. The River Tame joins with the River Rea to create a wide, shallow valley to the east of Birmingham.

## Drivers, future challenges and opportunities

#### Climate change

Climate change is likely to result in:

- Periods of heavy rain that may destabilise slopes and adversely affect riparian habitats.
- Species migration out of Arden and loss of small or isolated habitats.
- Changes to the way the landscape looks, eg. different tree species/crops.
- Increased demand for renewable energy installations and cropping.
- Summer droughts leading to continued over abstraction from local rivers and the potential loss of the iconic hedgerow and mature oak trees.
- Increased risk of localised flooding.
- Agricultural change with the potential for new crops.

## Future opportunities

- There is likely to be increased demand for food production in the future as a result of a national drive for greater self-sufficiency in food.
- Continuing development pressure in and around the Birmingham and Coventry conurbations and outlying towns. Opportunities for good, sustainable design reflecting local settlement patterns, green infrastructure and local character reflected in design and materials.
- Potential for new transport infrastructure including railways. There may be an opportunity to manage proposals to ensure best outcomes for the environment.
- Associated potential for new green infrastructure building upon the network of sites in the urban fringe.
- Continued demand for sand and clay from existing quarries, and possible planning applications for expansion.
- Increased demand for waste disposal and recreational facilities around the edge of the conurbation.
- Further agriculture change with the possibility of increased area under intensive arable production to meet food production needs.
- Potential for an increase in biomass production.

## Landscape opportunities

- Conserve, enhance and restore the area's ancient landscape pattern of field boundaries, historic (including farm) buildings, moated sites, parkland and pasture and reinforce its well wooded character.
- Protect and manage woodlands particularly ancient woodlands and wood pasture to maintain the character of Arden.
- Manage and restore hedgerows especially in the north-eastern part of the area (enclosure patterns) and restore parkland, ancient trees and stream side trees plus manage and replace in-field trees and hedgerow trees.
- Maintain and restore areas of heathland particularly in southern Arden, Arden Parklands and Birmingham Hills, lowland meadows and pastures and floodplain grazing marshes.
- Manage arable cultivation to encourage rare arable plants and range-restricted farmland birds and mammals, following appropriate management options under Entry Level Stewardship.
- Restore habitats associated with river valleys particularly the Blythe and Tame.
- Create new green infrastructure with associated habitat creation and new public access on former mining sites and close to urban populations in the West Midlands Green Belt.



# Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines

• Arden



## Wooded estatelands

The Wooded estatelands is mainly a peripheral Arden landscape, but characterised by large blocks of woodland, smaller covers, and areas of parkland. The large scale undulating topography emphasises the importance of woodlands in the landscape.

The continuity of this pattern is thus dependent on tree cover, and where this is weak the structure of the landscape also tends to be rather fragmented. The strategy is therefore aimed at creating a more unified landscape by enhancing the structure and wooded character of these areas.



For the most part, this landscape is characterised by a large scale hedged field pattern, which in many places has become fragmented and is in decline.

Where tree cover is weak, this pattern becomes more significant and in these areas it is important to avoid further fragmentation of the landscape through hedgerow removal. In particular, it is important to conserve primary hedgelines along roadsides, busleaves, footpaths and parish and farm boundaries, which often include many of the remaining hedgerow trees. Primary hedgelines form the essential structure of the landscape and they should be managed more positively as landscape features. This would include allowing hedges to grow thicker and taller. Where primary hedgelines are very gappy, or have been removed, consideration should be given to replacement planting.



Rivers and streamlines form important landscape features, especially where they are fringed by scattered trees and shrubs. Well wooded streamlines help to create a sense of scale and enclosure by dividing the landscape into a series of large compartments. To maintain this effect natural regeneration of trees should be encouraged. Planting new trees may also be appropriate in places, but care should be taken to avoid ecologically important sites such as unimproved grasslands and wetlands. New planting should reflect the various nature of the water course and should also aim to keep one bankside clear to maintain a variety of wildlife habitats along stream margins. Large woodland planting should be avoided, particularly where this has the effect of infilling meadows.



Hedgerow and garden trees are an important feature within and around rural settlements, where they provide shelter and a sense of proportion and balance to the built environment. Mature trees are particularly valuable as local landmarks and their presence often creates a strong sense of place. Trees also soften the hard edges of new buildings and help to link the settlement into the wider farmed landscape. This is especially important where the surrounding farmland has a more open, large scale character. In such areas it is particularly important to retain, and where necessary reseed, a fringe of smaller fields and trees around the edge of the settlement. This may be best achieved through local initiatives such as a Parish Map project.

## Management strategy

- **Conserve and enhance the overall structure and well wooded character of the landscape**

## Landscape guidelines

- **Conserve and restore all primary hedgelines and manage them more positively as landscape features**

- **Enhance the continuity and wooded character of river stream corridors**

- **Conserve and enhance tree cover within and around rural settlements**

## Part one Landscape assessment

### Arden

**Introduction** The region known as Arden is an area of former wood pasture and ancient farmlands lying on the eastern side of the Birmingham plateau. Traditionally regarded as the land between the river Tame and the river Avon in Warwickshire, Arden type landscapes also extend into north Worcestershire.

Although there are few dramatic physical features, the Arden countryside has an intimate, historic character with a strong sense of unity. Brick and timber are the chief building materials throughout the area and many farmsteads and barns blend subtly with their surroundings. This is Shakespeare's 'Forest of Arden', historically a region of woodlands and 'waste' which remains today one of the more wooded parts of the Midlands.

**Physical influences** The name Arden is derived from the old British word 'Aebs' meaning 'high land'. This relates primarily to the northern and central parts of the region which lie across the main Severn-Trent watershed on the eastern side of the Birmingham plateau. In the wider context of the West Midlands, the Birmingham plateau consists of two uplifted units of older Palaeozoic strata – the South Staffordshire and East Warwickshire plateaus – separated by an area of Triassic rocks covered for the most part by glacial drift. This central plateau is lower lying than the adjoining Palaeozoic areas and in Warwickshire it is largely underlain by Mercia mudstones with a covering of glacial sands and gravels or boulder clay. This gives the plateau a flat to gently rolling character, finely cut by the River Blythe and its tributary streams which flow northwards to join the Tame at Hans Hall. The Blythe is a slow-moving meandering river with countless minor tributary streams meandering in from every side. Many of these tributary valleys

are badly drained and occupied by sluggish, braided streams. Indeed, some of the place names, such as Fen End, Stogemore and Bradnos's Marsh, suggest that the area retained its marshy character until comparatively recent times. The Tame valley is wider than that of the Blythe and has a much more developed floodplain with at least two associated gravel terraces.

The East Warwickshire plateau is a dissected upland plateau closely associated with a spindle-shaped belt of Carboniferous and older rocks, which rise to just over 180 metres near Coaley. The major part of the plateau is occupied by the Upper Coal Measures, consisting mainly of red marls and sandstones and characterised by red, free draining soils. These are fringed on the north and north-west by the Middle (Productive) Coal Measures with which the Warwickshire coalfield is associated. A narrow band of Cambrian and pre-Cambrian rocks also outcrop along the north-eastern edge of the plateau, between Atherstone and Nuneaton. These older rocks, mainly consisting of hard diorite and quartzite, are faulted against the adjoining Triassic mudstones and present a steep scarp slope towards the Mease Lowlands to the north-east. The Carboniferous rocks are also cut off on the west by a major boundary fault which forms a pronounced edge to the plateau along the Blythe and Tame valleys. South and eastwards, where glacial drift deposits flatten the landform, the plateau slopes gradually into the valleys of the Avon and the Soar.

To the south of the main Severn-Trent watershed lie the river basins of the Arrow and the Aise which drain southwards into the Avon valley below Alcester. This area, underlain mainly by Mercia mudstones, has a varied undulating topography characterised by outcrops of Arden sandstone which form a series of prominent escarpments. Steep slopes are also found along the Lis escarpment to





Parkland was once extensive throughout the region, but despite losses to agriculture and urban development, it remains a characteristic feature in Arden parklands. Good examples survive of both medieval deer parks and 18th and 19th century ornamental parklands. As well as their historical importance, parklands provide diversity and interest in the landscape. Four parkland, however, in permanent grass with scattered trees is in decline. Many areas of former park have been taken into intensive agricultural production and old parkland trees frequently stand isolated and dying within arable fields. Whenever possible it is important to retain the peaceful, pastoral character of traditional parkland and to encourage new planting to replace old trees. Planning should respect the original design intentions of individual parks. Where opportunities may arise through Government incentives consideration should also be given to reinstating areas of former park.



Arden parklands is characterised by large arable fields, often poorly defined by low cut and gappy hedgerows. Although field pattern tends to be a subsidiary landscape element, it is important to conserve primary hedgerows, including those along roadsides, hedges, footpaths and ponds boundaries. These form a key structural element in the landscapes, particularly where they contain mature hedgerow trees. Such features should be conserved and managed more positively as landscape features. This would include allowing hedges to grow thicker and taller (up to 2m in height), strengthening individual gappy hedges, and encouraging the natural regeneration of hedgerow oaks. Where primary hedgerows have been removed, consideration should be given to replanting planning.



Heathland was once a common feature on the poorer sandy soils associated with areas of glacial drift in Arden parklands. Where these have been worked for sand and gravel there are positive opportunities for the creation of heathland. With the 1990s agricultural policy offering incentives to reduce arable production there may also be opportunities for creating heathland on farmland where the soils are suitable. By re-establishing pockets of heathy vegetation, or even larger areas of heathland, this distinctive regional characteristic could be considerably strengthened. This would provide visual diversity, enhance nature conservation interest, and restore an important historic feature in the landscape.

century. Here the rolling topography and gradual enclosure produced a characteristic pattern of medium sized fields. In the Elythe valley full enclosure was not completed until the 19th century resulting in a more regular pattern of larger fields. Elsewhere enclosure into large semi-regular fields is a feature of former deerparks. Examples are the Warwick and Kenilworth Castle parklands, which were enclosed between the 16th and 18th centuries.

Extensive woodland cover remained until the Norman Conquest, with the most heavily wooded manors recorded in the Domesday Survey. This registered over 30 square miles of woodland and wood pasture. Subsequently much woodland was cleared and enclosed for arable and stock. Between the 12th and 14th centuries, numerous medieval deer parks were created which probably helped conserve woodland cover. Most have left little impression upon the modern landscape, though good examples survive at Packington and Stoneleigh. Parks continued to be enclosed from the 15th century onwards and it is these, for example Merevale, Ashby and Berkswell, which are most prominent today.

As late as 1540 Leland wrote that "...the ground in Arden is much enclosed, plentiful of grass and woods". However, by 1822 C & J Greenwoods' one inch County map showed only small remnants of woodland. Land further shrinkage occurred during the 19th Century as maps show only slightly more woodland than is found today. Minor additions resulted from the Enclosure movement of this period with the planting of many small woods and coverts. These are uniform in size and shape and lack the irregular sinuous boundaries and woodlands of ancient woods. Often they are named as 'coverts', 'groves' or 'springs'.

Commons were a feature of areas of remnant woodland and many were wooded until

the east of Haslebury, while a series of narrow parallel ridges of glacial origin are a feature of the area between Wootton Wawen and Sutterfield. To the west along the county boundary is the Ridgeway, a flat-topped ridge also of glacial origin which once marked the watershed of the old Avon-Saar river system. The inhabitants of the Arrow and the Aline, in contrast to those of the Elythe, are frequently swift flowing and often enclosed in steep sided valleys. Narrow alluvial floodplains are associated with the lower parts of both rivers while terrace deposits occur only along the Arrow, where they form areas of flatter land adjoining the river corridor.

**Human influences** The historical development of Arden is a major factor influencing the character of the present day landscape. In a region with few dramatic physical features it is these subtle human influences, developed over many centuries, which have created the man-made landscapes and special features which clearly distinguish Arden from other areas of the county.

Agriculturally Arden may have originally served as an area of seasonal pasture for the more intensively developed Fildon estates to the south. However, permanent pastoral settlements were established at an early date. The resulting clearances were limited as small hedged enclosures or 'closes' which created a characteristic pattern of small irregular fields. These were particularly representative of the areas between Tamworth and Rowington and from Allesley to Fillongley.

In contrast open field agriculture was only represented to any degree in the Elythe valley, the lower Arrow and Aline valleys and the areas around Bearley and Norton Lindsey. Generally this was closely associated with nucleated villages. Precentral enclosure began relatively early in the southern part of the region with most fields being enclosed before the 18th

The effect of wooded enclosure in this landscape is created by the presence of large ancient woodlands and belts of trees. These create a sequence of linked wooded spaces which define the scale and character of the landscape. Usually they are the most dominant elements, although parkland also contributes to the effect of wooded enclosure. The many old deer parks have a particularly important historical dimension which adds variety and cultural interest to this landscape. The continuity of tree cover, however, is fragmented in places. The overall management strategy is therefore aimed at creating a more unified landscape by enhancing the wooded character of these areas.



It is important to retain the offset and overlapping nature of woodlands and belts of trees as these create a strong sense of enclosure. Any major breaks in continuity would have the effect of opening up distant views which would distort the scale of the landscape. Enclosure and landscape scale can be maintained by choosing a regeneration system which minimises visual change to key sections of a woodland. Such a system might include: well shaped and scaled retention in front of felling coupes; minimising visual change to key sections of the woodland; staggering fellings over time, including premature and late felling; and retaining clumps of trees on the edge of felling coupes. When managing woodlands these approaches would create interest and diversity in the landscape.



The gently rolling topography of this landscape is such that woodland edges are the most prominent features. As a result a major part of many large woods cannot be seen. These woods are ideally suited for commercial forestry operations. However, where conifers appear along woodland edges,

particularly as continuous single species stands, they present an unnatural appearance and disrupt the overall broadleaved character of the landscape. This effect could be softened by the inclusion of well shaped and scaled, irregularly spaced groups of broadleaves to vary species height and diversity.



The wooded character of Arden parklands depends on the continuity of the various tree cover elements to create a sequence of linked wooded spaces. Where tree cover is weak, particularly on the edge of urban areas, the structure of the landscape also tends to be rather fragmented. There is scope for significant new planting in these areas. Mixed woodlands would be acceptable as long as edges and skylines are sensitively handled. Belts of trees should be broadleaved in character. Particular attention should be given to the location and shape of new planting and to the space it encloses.

## Arden

relatively recent times. A typical wood pasture common was grassland or heather with thickly scattered trees and bushes. Other commons represented areas of heathland on poorer soils and the numerous 'Healy' names indicate those cleared of woodland at a relatively early date. Commons did not disappear completely until the last stages of enclosure in the early 19th century. The largest occurred at Sambroome and Shrewley, the latter extending nearly 10 miles from Rowington to Balsall Compton. Commons here left little impression upon the present landscape, except that they can often be identified as areas with a geometric pattern of fields and lanes within a surrounding irregular or semi-regular pattern.

Commons attracted settlement by landless labourers and poorer sections of the community. These formed the basis of many Arden hamlets, especially those known as 'Eng' or 'Gems'. An allied settlement type is the wayside cottage established on a roadside verge and taking in a long linear garden.

The dispersed settlement pattern more generally found in Arden was closely related to agricultural development. The typical expression of woodland assenting and heathland enclosure was a pattern of scattered farmsteads and hamlets. This dispersed pattern is reflected in a maze of narrow lanes, trackways and footpaths which grew up to serve outlying farms and hamlets. A land-owning peasantry gave rise to a wealthy class of yeoman farmers by the late medieval period. As a result many substantial brick and timber farmhouses were built in the 16th and 17th centuries, often on earlier moated sites.

A more recent and very distinct settlement type is associated with the pit villages of the coal mining industry. Extensive coal exploitation began in north Warwickshire in the 19th century, shortly after the start of the Industrial Revolution. This has had a

profound effect on the landscape of this part of Warwickshire. Mining villages contain much early 20th century terraced housing, often situated on hill tops and with a very distinctive 'northern' character. Some of these were new villages built to house mining families, while others were older villages relocated as a colliery expanded.

The presence of collieries attracted secondary industry which relied on coal for power. Hans Hall power station was built to produce electricity directly from coal. Other industrial plants sprung up to convert coal to coke and other products. Railways and roads were also built to transport the coal to other areas of the country. The effects of the mines therefore spread far beyond the colliery gates, and have made the north eastern part of Arden, between Tamworth and Nuneaton, an industrial landscape unlike any other in the country.

### Ecological influences

The natural vegetation of Arden is thought to have consisted of dense broadleaved woodland, dominated by oak on the light sandy soils and lime on the heavier clays and loams. Woodland clearance, from earliest times, resulted in the development of grassland and wood pasture over much of the area with heathland on the poorer, leached soils. Marshland occurred in low lying areas along rivers and streams. All of these habitats have been greatly influenced by land-use history and no large areas have survived. The sites of greatest ecological interest today are those that retain remnants of these ancient vegetation types. They reflect the underlying geology and soils and make an important contribution to landscape character. Some, particularly woodlands, also form prominent visual features.

**ancient woodland** Scattered blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland occur throughout Arden but are most common in the parishes of



**Arden river valleys** These landscapes mark the narrow, linear river corridors of the Arden, Aibe and Blythe, and a small section of the River Cole. They are defined exclusively by the limits of the alluvial flood plains, though associated river terraces or steep river bluffs may be important features in the landscape as experienced from the river itself.

The river channel is the dominant feature of these landscapes, especially where it is well defined by fringing alders and scrubs. Old willow pollards are also locally important. The most diverse river channels are those which have been least affected by river improvement works. These are typified by many meanders, islands and shingle beds. They also retain a varied bank profile with much marginal vegetation. In places these features are associated with adjoining flood meadows, creating a strong sense of place and feeling of naturalness. The sound and movement of water adds to this tranquillity, particularly in areas of fast flowing shallows.

Permanent pasture is a characteristic feature of river corridors. Within the alluvial floodplain of the Arden river valleys, flood meadows are the traditional land-use and where intact have a high value as nature conservation sites. Wet grassland and marsh add further interest. The field pattern in these meadows is often poorly defined by ditches or wire fences, but in places the boundary of the floodplain is marked by a prominent, sinuous hedgerow. The most extensive areas of flood meadow occur along the Aibe and the Blythe and also at Studley on the river Arden. These landscapes retain a peaceful, undisturbed, pastoral character with a strong sense of unity. Elsewhere, this unity is interrupted by the encroachment of arable farmland to the river's edge. This is especially true along much of the Arden.

There are few buildings within these landscapes, and this contributes strongly to

the peaceful, undisturbed character of the riverside environment. Due to their linear nature, however, the impact of development or the movement and noise of traffic is often very noticeable. This is particularly evident along the Arden near Redbush and the Blythe at Pocklington.

## General development guidelines

One of the key determinants of landscape character is whether built development intrudes on the landscape or integrates with it. With the diverse means available, through planning policy and related planning and highways legislation, a significant influence can be exercised in mitigating any adverse effects of development and in harnessing its many potentially enhancing effects. The general development guidelines set out below are designed to achieve these ends. These guidelines should be regarded as a good practice guide to be applied to all new development wherever it may occur. More specific design guidance to conserve and strengthen local settlement character can be found within the strategy and overall guidelines section.



Due to its ancient landscape character Arden retains a wealth of antiquities and historic buildings. Many of these are scheduled as ancient monuments or listed buildings, but there are many others unprotected by official designations. These features provide strong social and cultural links with the past and add considerably to landscape detail at a local level. They are also part of our heritage and it is important to conserve all sites of archaeological and historical significance.

- **Conserve all sites of archaeological and historical importance**



The suburbanising influences associated with new development are an increasing pressure on the traditional character of settlements, and are having a subtle, cumulative impact. Examples include the external modernisation of buildings, the erection of illuminated and composite plastic roadside signs, the replacement of roadside hedges with quick growing ornamental screens, the increased use of security fencing, and even standardised landscaping schemes.

- **Conserve the character of rural settlements by retaining existing features and local patterns in all development schemes**

Standardised planning and highway design criteria also often necessitate the replacement or modernisation of existing features and tend to result in rather bland and characterless developments. Much more discretion is needed when applying design standards in rural landscapes. In particular, original features such as walls, roadside hedges and mature trees should be retained, nursed or replaced. Where this is not possible consideration should be given to nursing or replacing such features.



The interface between new development and the surrounding landscape can often appear sharp and stark. Tree planting within and around new development is one of the best ways to soften hard edges. Integration can best be achieved by allowing established trees to run into a development site and designing new planting to break up their densely built appearance. At least 10% of the site should be allocated for tree and woodland planting and resources should be provided for the ongoing management of these features. Opportunities should also be sought, perhaps through planning gain, for off-site woodland planting to help link the development into the wider landscape pattern. The aim should not necessarily be to hide buildings, but rather to integrate them into the landscape, using locally occurring native species. Ornamental species planted as quick growing screens, particularly 'Weibull', should be avoided.

- **Soften hard built edges through increased tree planting within and around new development**

## Landscape change and current trends

pressures for new development. Urban expansion has been a major influence affecting the Arden landscape and in places both the ancient settlement pattern and rural character have been eroded. Some hamlets have expanded into larger residential centres, ribbon development has taken place along the Coventry urban fringe and new houses have been built throughout the area, with many conversions of redundant farm buildings. These influences are having a subtle cumulative impact on the landscape by bringing social change and a new appearance of affluence.

Urban influences are especially dominant in central Arden between Birmingham and Coventry and they have imparted a suburban character on the landscape. To help control their expansion most of Arden was designated as Green Belt after approval of the original County Structure Plan in 1973. In the future however, Arden will continue to be a popular place in which to live and work and if rural integrity is to be retained, it will be important to restrict the spread of suburban influences. This is particularly the case in south Arden following the opening of the M40 motorway.

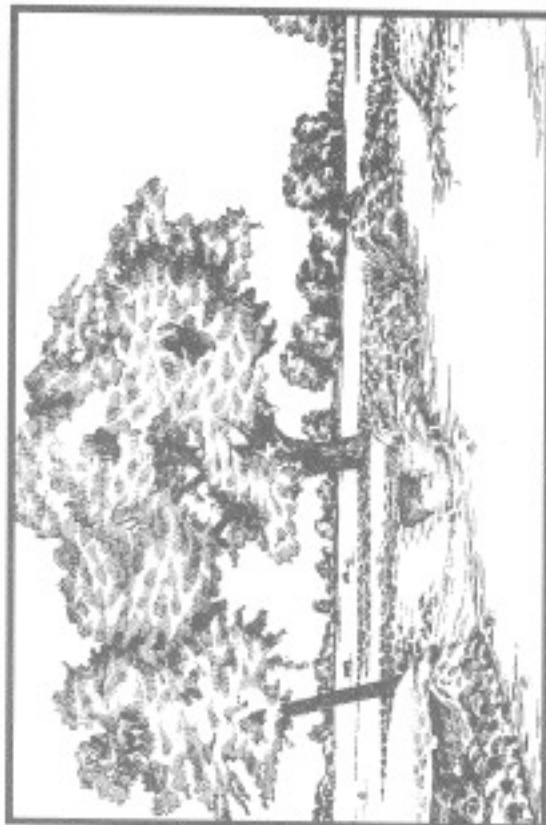
Locally mineral extraction has also had an impact on the landscape with coal mining on the North Warwickshire plateau and sand and gravel workings in central Arden. Though only having a limited lifespan these workings are often visibly intrusive.

**highway improvements** Road construction has had a major impact on the Arden landscape. New roads, particularly motorways (M6, M45, M40, A45), cut through existing landscape patterns. In places this has led to field rationalisation along the road corridor resulting in a loss of hedgerows and trees which makes the road more visible and intrusive. Traffic movement and noise has

had a particularly deleterious effect on many formerly peaceful rural landscapes.

Improvements to existing roads can also effect landscape character as road widening and realignment have resulted in the removal of hedgerows, ancient hedgerbanks and fords.

## Arden



### Arden river valleys

#### Overall character and qualities

Narrow meandering river corridors with riverside trees and grazing meadows.

#### Characteristic features

- River corridors defined by narrow alluvial floodplains.
- Grazing meadows, often with patches of wet grassland.
- Curvilinear hedgerows along the edge of the floodplain.
- Diverse meandering river channels with shingle beds and much marginal vegetation.
- Fringing elders and scrub.
- Old willow pollards.



**River valley wetlands** The character of the Tame Valley to the south of Llanarneth is strongly influenced by urban and industrial activities including mineral extraction, power lines and major road and rail routes. The river corridor lies in a broad valley which for the most part is poorly defined by gently sloping sides. Between Kingsbury and Doshill, however, there is a more prominent river blair where the valley runs along the edge of the North Warwickshire plateau. Steep scrubby banks are a feature in this area.

Areas of farmland still remain between the transport routes and gravel pits, though some of these are areas of restored gravel workings where there are large fields with no hedges or trees. Elsewhere pockets of pasture remain and provide a reminder of what the landscape must have been like some years ago. This former River meadowlands landscape has largely been replaced by open water and disturbed ground.

The River valley wetlands is a highly modified, and in places rather featureless, river corridor landscape, extremely worked for sand and gravel. Successive phases of extraction and restoration have resulted in a very variable landscape with little sense of unity. Five broad zones can be distinguished representing different stages in the development of a completely new river landscape. These include:

- areas currently being worked for sand and gravel
- unrestored or newly restored areas around recently flooded gravel workings
- mature wetland areas around old flooded gravel workings
- areas that have been filled and restored to farmland
- other non-agricultural land used mainly for sewage treatment lagoons

The mature wetland zone perhaps best represents the key characteristics of this new

river landscape, which is most well developed at Kingsbury Water Park. This is an enclosed wooded landscape characterised by a series of linked spaces comprising areas of open water. These vary in size from small ponds to large lakes. The straight edges around some of these lakes are visually discordant but overall the appearance of the landscape is considerably softened by much woodland, scrub and lines of trees. The River Tame is not a prominent feature in this wetland landscape, and the polluted and often heavily modified channel has itself few features of interest.

The power station at Hains Hall is a particularly prominent feature within the wider valley although much of the site lies on the edge of the alluvial floodplain. Associated industrial features including spoil tips, pylons and railways, however, impinge onto the river valley. Together with the nearby sewage treatment works these features have a major physical and visual impact creating a disturbed landscape with little sense of unity. The river channel through this area is canalised and lined with flood banks.

plateau area to the south of Birmingham many smallholdings are now farmed part-time or given over to pony paddocks.

In parallel there have been changes in grassland character with the making of silage rather than hay. This has resulted in many traditional pastures being reseeded or improved by chemicals and herbicides, which has greatly diminished their floristic interest. There are now very few grasslands which retain their original nature conservation interest.

The intensification of agriculture has in places resulted in the wholesale removal of hedgerows and trees creating open fragmented landscapes. This has been particularly marked in the north of the region where the historic pattern of small irregular fields has been completely swept away in some areas. The features that remain often appear out of scale with their surroundings. In particular isolated field trees and remnant petty hedgerows reinforce the impression of a landscape in decline.

Land drainage has severely affected the character of many river landscapes. This has resulted in a loss of wetland habitats and the conversion of former flood meadows to arable production. Wetland habitats have also been cleared during river channel management. The River Avon in particular has lost much of its marginal vegetation and associated wet grassland, and is only slowly recovering. Similarly, with the closure of working mills many mill leas and islands have been lost.

Although further agricultural expansion is now less likely, declining incomes and continued uncertainty in the short term may result in intensification of production on existing land. This could lead to continued 'improvement' of older grasslands and further loss of hedgerows.

In the longer term new incentives may encourage more environmentally sensitive

landring, with perhaps a return to more traditional mixed farming regimes. Priority areas for returning to pasture might include Ancient Arden landscapes, river floodplains and areas of former park and heath. Surplus arable land could also be targeted for other uses such as new woodlands.

**Trees and woodlands** Since the 1930's 16% of ancient woodland sites have been partly cleared, largely for agriculture but also for urban development and mineral extraction. In addition there has been a distinct change in woodland character with 42% of ancient sites replanted with a mixture of native and exotic species. Most notably there has been a demise in oak as the final timber crop. Many small planting schemes have also favoured quick growing non-indigenous species, often to provide cover for game or shelter around buildings.

Although a dominant element in the landscape, many small woods have been neglected, resulting in unmanaged, even-aged stands. Likewise hedgerow oaks and parkland trees are for the most part mature and in many places there are few young trees coming on to replace them. Excessive trimming of hedges exacerbates this problem by suppressing the natural regeneration of hedgerow trees. Without urgent action there is likely to be a continued decline in the wooded character of the landscape.

In the future it is likely that there will be continued incentives for landowners to plant trees through government planting schemes. Provided that new planting complements existing landscape character and avoids damaging historical or ecological features, it should be encouraged. To maintain the essence of Arden, however, oak must remain the dominant tree species.

## Part two Strategies and guidelines

**Introduction** Part two of this report examines recent changes which have affected the landscape in Arden and the current issues which are likely to influence change in the future. From this a series of management strategies set out the direction which is required in order to maintain and enhance regional character and local distinctiveness. These strategies are supported by a comprehensive set of landscape guidelines which provide detailed advice for farmers, foresters, developers and highway engineers. Responsibility is also placed on planners to encourage higher standards, using persuasion, planning conditions or enforcement as necessary. The same principles apply to other organisations who play a part in managing the landscape.

The guidelines show how landscape character should be conserved, restored or enhanced. They have been grouped into five topics reflecting the user groups at which they are aimed. Each topic is depicted by a stylised symbol:



settlement & buildings



highways



land management



field boundaries



trees & woodlands

Nature conservation is treated as an integral component within each of these topics. The guidelines are presented in the form of a short statement, supported by a summary outlining the issue in question

and the reasons why a particular course of action has been recommended.

The guidelines should be used in conjunction with the fold out map accompanying this booklet. This shows the location of the seven landscape types identified within Arden. The map also highlights areas within each landscape type where the structure and character of the landscape are in decline. These areas, termed 'enhancement zones', are indicated by hatching on the map. They represent priority areas where resources for landscape and habitat restoration should be targeted.

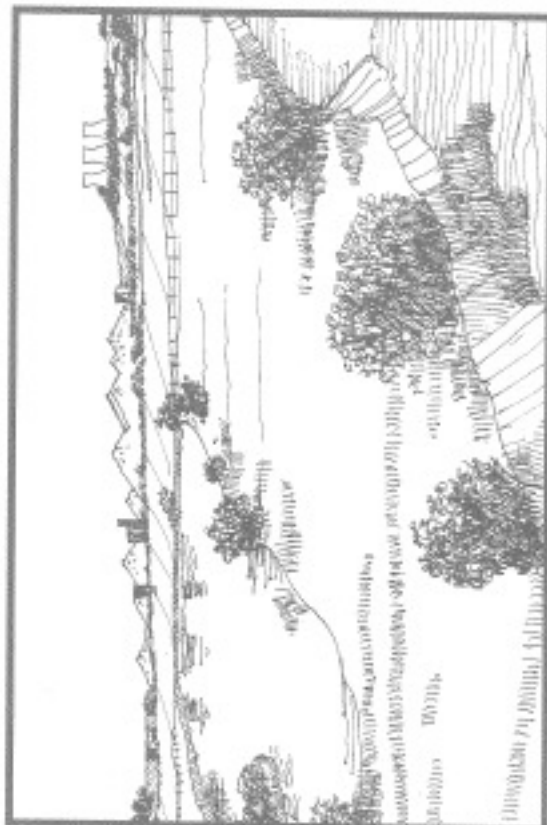
### Landscape change and current trends

There have been dramatic changes to the Warwickshire landscape in the last half-century as a result of agricultural intensification, urban expansion and the suburbanisation of the countryside. The impact of these changes has been

compounded by neglect and natural disasters, in particular Dutch elm disease, which has highlighted the environmental decline of the countryside. The result has been a gradual erosion of local character and sense of place.

**agricultural intensification** Major agricultural changes have taken place since the 1940s with an increase in arable land at the expense of permanent pasture. This has been most marked on the North Warwickshire plateau where in 1946 approximately 75% of the farmland was pastoral with dairying as the major land use. By the late 1980s this had declined to approximately 30% of the farmed area. Though not as marked, similar trends can be seen elsewhere in Arden, while on the

## Arden



### River valley wetlands

#### Overall character and qualities

A highly modified rather degraded river valley landscape strongly influenced by sand and gravel extraction and other industrial activities.

#### Characteristic features

- Broad flat alluvial floodplain.
- Large areas of open water in flooded gravel pits.
- Disturbed ground associated with sand and gravel extraction.
- Alder carr, willow scrub and fringing wetland vegetation.
- Spoil heaps with recolonising woodland and scrub.
- Modified, often canalised river channel.



### ARDEN

An historic region of low-wood pasture and heath characterised by ancient woodlands, nature hedgerow networks, and a dispersed settlement pattern of brick and half-timbered cottages and separate cottages.

**General strategy**  
 Enhance the historic, well-wooded character of the region.

**ARLEN HILLS**  
**Overall character and quality**  
 A small-scale, enclosed landscape with a varied, undulating topography, characterised by an irregular pattern of fields and ancient woodlands.

- Characteristic features**
- A varied undulating topography.
  - A network of meadow lanes and trackways often confined to tall hedgerows.
  - Fields and irregular patterns of small to medium woodlands.
  - Enclosed enclosure walls.
  - Field patterns associated with permanent pasture.
  - Many places names ending in 'Green' or 'Hill'.

**Management Strategy**  
 Conserve and enhance the ancient/irregular landscape pattern.

**ARLEN PASTURES**  
**Overall character and quality**  
 A small-scale, enclosed landscape, often perceived by suburban influences and characterised by small fields, hedgerow boundaries, nature hedgerow trees.

- Characteristic features**
- A gently rolling low profile.
  - A well defined pattern of small fields and hedgerows.
  - Numerous nature hedgerow walls.
  - Pasture patterns often grazed by horses.
  - A network of river lanes often with ribbon development.
  - Many place names ending in 'Heath'.

**Management Strategy**  
 Conserve and enhance the tiny and small scale enclosed character of the landscape.

**ARLEN HILLSLADES**  
**Overall character and quality**  
 A well-wooded, open rural landscape defined by woodland edges, pastured soil banks of hills.

- Characteristic features**
- Wide distance views enclosed by woodland edges.
  - Many of nature trees associated with settlements.
  - Many ancient woodlands, often with irregular outlines.
  - Large country houses and nature parks.
  - Remnant demesne walls around parkland.
  - Open meadow hedgerows, often with trees.

**Management Strategy**  
 Retain and enhance the effect of wooded enclosures.

**WOODS ESTABLISHMENTS**  
**Overall character and quality**  
 A well-wooded, open landscape characterised by a large scale rolling landscape by and around village woodlands.

- Characteristic features**
- A large scale rolling topography with occasional steep escarpments.
  - Large woodlands, often associated with ridge and trough.
  - Mature hedgerows and country lanes.
  - A semi-regular pattern of medium to large scale fields.
  - A varied settlement pattern of small villages and scattered farmsteads.

**Management Strategy**  
 Conserve and enhance the overall structure and well-wooded character of the landscape.

### INDUSTRIAL ARDEN

Overall character and quality  
 A historic urban landscape characterised by existing industrial, small towns, and ribbon development.

- Characteristic features**
- A varied, often steeply undulating topography.
  - Patterns of landform, often surrounded or bisected by urban development.
  - An often poorly defined pattern of small hedgerow fields.
  - Small, closely spaced ribbon settlements, often on hill tops.
  - Rows of terraced houses along roadsides.
  - Dispersed rural farms with semi-rural grassland and orchards.
  - RAF Cosford, gliding fields and other non-agricultural land.

**Management Strategy**  
 Conserve the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape.

### ARDEN RIVER VALLEYS

Overall character and quality  
 Historic river valleys with terraced towns and scattered woodlands.

- Characteristic features**
- A river corridor defined by narrow floodplains.
  - Gentle meadows, often rich pastures of wet grassland.
  - Characteristic ribbon settlements along the edge of the floodplains.
  - Dispersed rural farms with stone walls and much hedgerow vegetation.
  - Pringing urban and rural.
  - Clayware pottery.

**Management Strategy**  
 Conserve the special character and continuity of river corridors.

### AVON VALLEY WETLANDS

Overall character and quality  
 A highly modified river dependent landscape with extensive drainage infrastructure, land and water management and other industrial activities.

- Characteristic features**
- Based on alluvial floodplain.
  - Large areas of open water in flooded grassland.
  - Dispersed ground associated with land and ground extraction.
  - Urban can, urban scrub and hedgerow vegetation.
  - Open heath with surrounding woodland and scrub.
  - Modified, urbanised river channels.

**Management Strategy**  
 Enhance the unity and overall character of the landscape through habitat creation and management.

