

West Suffolk Local Plan Issues and Options October 2020

Call for sites form

If you would like to promote a site or sites for potential development then please complete this questionnaire.

All submissions must be accompanied by an ordnance survey map clearly showing the boundaries of the site outlined in red.

All submissions are made on a without prejudice basis. Please note that in seeking available sites the council is making no commitment in respect of which sites may be selected to be included in the preferred options stage of the West Suffolk Local Plan.

Please complete a separate questionnaire for each site

Only submit sites which:

- are available for development within the next 15 years
- that can accommodate five or more dwelling or are greater than 0.2 hectares in size if being promoted as a residential site.

Please send your form:

By email to: planning.policy@westsuffolk.gov.uk

By post to : Strategic planning, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU

You must provide an answer to all the questions in the form.

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Part one – site information

Please provide as much detail as possible about your site.

1. Location plan

Please supply a site plan that clearly shows the boundaries of the site outlined in red and access point indicated.

2. Settlement

What settlement is the site in, or nearest to?

Bury St Edmunds

3. Site address

Please provide the site address.

Land to the south of Hencote Lane, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2PD

4. Previously submitted site

Has the site already been identified within the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2020 or the West Suffolk Local Plan Issues and Options document?

YES **NO**
(click in the appropriate box)

If you answered yes, please enter the site reference number below.

5. Additional information to previously submitted site

Please send us any additional information/supporting statement you have in relation to the site you have previously submitted

6. Planning history

Does the site have any relevant planning history?

If you answered yes, please provide the planning application reference number(s).

No

7. Current land use

What is the current use(s) of the land?

Agricultural

8. Brownfield

Is the site brownfield (has it been built on previously)?

YES **NO**
(click in the appropriate box)

9. Site size

Please provide the site area in hectares.

4.1 hectares

10. Site description

Please describe the site, providing photos if possible.

Please refer to supporting information.

Part two – suitability

Site must comply with policies in the development plan documents which can be found at www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planningpolicy

11. Constraints

Are there any other constraints to the development of the site?

(For example flood risk, or a loss of historical assets, or community facilities, and/or habitats and biodiversity constraints?)

Information on constraints can be found at <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

Please provide as much information as possible.

Please refer to covering letter.

Part three – availability

Confirmation of the intention to develop the land must be received to enable us to consider your site.

12. Landowner details

Please provide full contact details of the landowner, including name, address, telephone number and email address.

Name: Mr John Oakes
Address: C/O Agent
Telephone number: C/O Agent
Email address: C/O Agent

13. Developer details

If there is a developer for the site please provide their full contact details, including organisation name, address, telephone number and email address.

Organisation:
Contact name:
Address:
Telephone number:
Email address:

14. Agent details

If you are an agent please provide full contact details, including your name, organisation (if applicable), address, telephone number and email address.

Organisation: Savills UK Ltd
Contact name: Lynette Swinburne
Address: Stuart House, St John's Street, Peterborough PE1 5DD
Telephone number: 01733 209943/07738191323
Email address: lynette.swinburne@savills.com

15. Intention to develop

How soon could development begin?

1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	15+ years
X			

Please enter any additional comments you think would be useful in regard to the timescale for development.

Whilst in use for farming at present, the site could be returned to the owner in the event that it was required for development.

Part four – achievability

Sites to be considered suitable for allocation need to show good potential to come forward within a 15 year timeframe.

16. Legal issues

Do any other parties have any legal rights that relate to the site?

YES **NO**
(click in the appropriate box)

If you answered 'yes' go to legal issues (question 14) below.

If you answered 'no' go to proposed use (question 15) below.

17. Legal issues details

Please provide further details on the legal issues affecting the achievability of developing the site.

None known

18. Proposed use

Please identify proposed future uses.

Select at least one option.

Residential	Economic development	Mixed use	Other use
x			

If you selected 'residential' please go to question 19.

If you selected 'economic development' go to question 20.

If you selected 'mixed use' go to question 21.

If you selected 'other use' go to question 22.

19. Type of residential use proposed

Please identify what type of residential dwellings is proposed.

Market housing	Affordable housing	Care home	Traveller site	Self or custom build	Other types of housing
x	X In accordance with policy				

If you have selected 'other types of housing' please clarify

--

20. Types of economic development

Please identify what type of 'economic use' is proposed

Retail	Leisure	Cultural	Office	Warehousing	Community building	Other
					X school related development	

If you selected 'other types of economic development' please specify.

--

21. Types of mixed use

Please provide further details on the 'mixed use' proposed for the site.

Please refer to covering letter.

22. Other uses

Please provide detailed information on the type of use proposed.

Site Submission: West Suffolk Local Plan Issues & Options

- Land to the South of Hencote Lane, Bury St Edmunds

FINAL

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Savills UK Ltd on behalf of Mr John Oakes are making the following site submission as part of the West Suffolk Local Plan Issues and Options consultation which extends until 22nd December 2020.
- 1.2. These representations accompany a site plan and pro forma relating to Land to the South of Hencote Lane, Bury St Edmunds which is submitted for consideration by the LPA as a location for potential future housing development.

Figure 1: Location of site in context of Bury St Edmunds

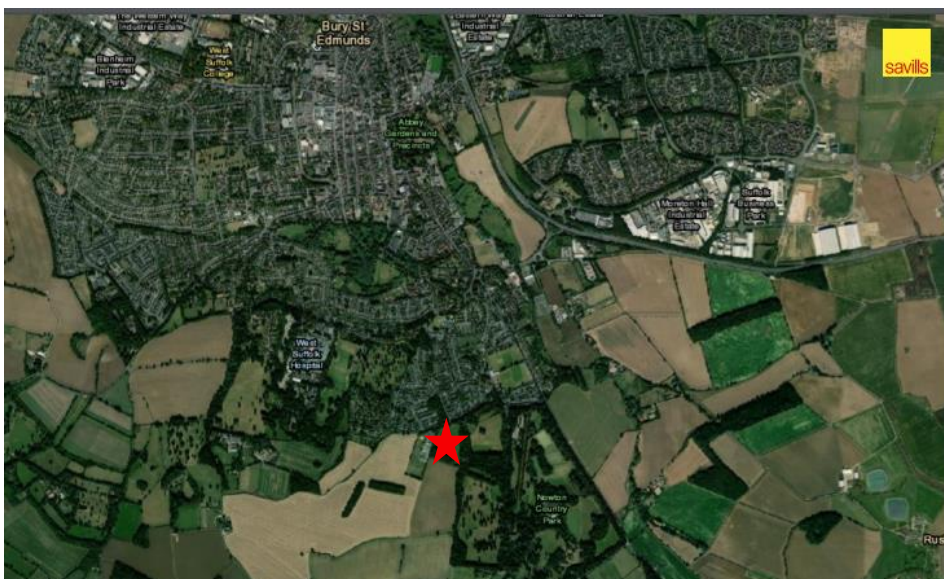


Figure 2: Site



2. Background

Site Description

- 2.1. The site is located to the south of Bury St Edmunds and is in use for farming and is let on an agricultural tenancy.
- 2.2. The site is immediately adjacent to the existing settlement boundary. Existing dwellings along Hickling Drive estate are a mix of semi-detached and detached properties. The settlement pattern is relatively uniform in scale and appearance. To the south of the main settlement of Bury St Edmunds the settlement pattern is disbursed and consists of smaller villages and hamlets and more substantial individual dwellings, often historic.
- 2.3. The site benefits from substantial existing mature vegetated boundaries, along with dense woodland to its southern boundary. It adjoins the existing settlement edge, with residential dwellings to the north and eastern boundaries and the Riverwalk Primary School to the west. The Site is separated from the wider agricultural landscape to the south by the woodland along its southern boundary.
- 2.4. The Riverwalk School sets a the context for development on the southern side of Hencote Lane.
- 2.5. The site is current accessed via Fox and Pin Lane to the south/east. It is considered possible to achieve access via Hencote Lane if required in the future.
- 2.6. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore at the lowest risk of flooding. There are no heritage assets on or immediately adjacent to the site.
- 2.7. The location of the site is especially sustainable in relation to local facilities, as it within walking distance of two schools. Riverwalk School, which is aimed at children with complex learning needs, is adjacent to the western boundary of the site, whilst South Lee School, an independent school for boys and girls, is around 350m to the north east. Victory Sports Ground is less 400m away, also to the north east, providing facilities for a range of leisure activities.
- 2.8. The nearest bus stop is less than 100m to the north east, providing regular connections into Bury St Edmunds throughout the day.

3. Planning Context

- 3.1. Within the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy, adopted 2010, Bury St Edmunds is identified as one of two main areas for growth. The Core Strategy notes that, in particular, longer term strategic growth will be provided to the south-east and north-east of Bury St Edmunds. Further detail about growth in this area is provided within the Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031, adopted 2014.
- 3.2. The site is located to the immediate south of Bury St Edmunds, however it falls within the Special Landscape Area where policy notes that there is a very limited capacity to absorb change without a significant material effect on their character and/or condition. Policy DM13 of the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Local Plan Joint Development Management Policies Document (February, 2015) states that individual proposals within or adjacent to these areas will be assessed based on their specific landscape and visual impact.

Planning History

- 3.3. The site areas are indicated on the submitted plan. No relevant historic applications have been identified on the Council's online search facility.

4. Site submission

- 4.1. The land to the south of Hencote Lane is well located in relation to existing development to the north and west. The site is served by an existing access via Fox and Pin Lane although it is considered that it may also be possible to access via Hencote Lane itself. The site is approximately 4.1 hectares in size (9.8 acres) and, if fully developed, could accommodate between 80 and 90 dwellings.
- 4.2. The position of the site to the immediate south of Bury St Edmunds means that it is inherently a sustainable location for growth. At present, the site is located at the outer extent, but within the Special Landscape Area, which could be a constraint to its development.
- 4.3. A Landscape Statement for Residential Development has been prepared by James Blake Associates which looks in detail at the site and how its development would impact the Special Landscape Area. The Statement is submitted in full as Appendix 1 of this report.
- 4.4. The report identifies the key constraints and opportunities present on the site and surrounding landscape alongside the analysis, to inform principles for the future development in this location. The Landscape Statement concludes:

“8.5.2 It has been assumed that the Site is included as part of the Special Landscape Area due to its apparent special landscape quality and character as a result of topography and natural vegetation. As has been demonstrated above, whilst the Site exhibits some characteristics of the local landscape it is not necessarily elevated above the ordinary, and there are similarly enclosed fields elsewhere on the southern edge of Bury St Edmunds.

8.5.2 Whilst SLAs are generally considered to have a very limited capacity to absorb change due their landform, historic importance and condition the Site itself is well enclosed and therefore development could be easily assimilated into the wider landscape. It is acknowledged that the Site is in good condition, however features of importance are limited to the boundaries and could be retained and incorporated into any future development.

8.5.3 Whilst the introduction of new elements in the form of buildings, infrastructure and open spaces will alter the qualities and key characteristics of the SLA, the enclosure of the Site would ensure limited to no influence on the rest of the SLA. It is therefore considered that through good design development could be accommodated within the Site.”

- 4.5. Design principles for the future development of the site which would preserve its landscape characteristics are set out in the Statement and a high level site plan is provided:

West Suffolk Local Plan Issues & Options

Representations on behalf of Mr J Oakes



4.6. JBA Design Principles for Development:

Development envelope

- The development envelope is the area identified within which the built form and infrastructure will sit; it is a constraint on the scale and spatial extents of the built elements of the masterplan.
- In order to minimise effects on landscape character and improve settlement setting, the edge of built development across all parcels should not extend right up to existing field boundaries. Some linear green space (most likely associated with access lanes to the frontages of properties) should be retained where possible.
- It is recommended that all the boundaries incorporate a landscape buffer, approximately 12m wide (to incorporate the root protection area of all existing trees); and that the eastern boundary should carefully consider the relationship to historic narrow lane.
 - Back to back development, but with a narrow landscaping strip which can be transferred to the homeowner and protected through a covenant; or
 - Incorporation of Public Open Space along this boundary, potentially incorporating sustainable drainage features.
- Additional open space to the Site frontage will enhance screening and connectivity across the Site. There should be no development within the Root Protection Zone (RPZ) of existing trees.

Existing and proposed green infrastructure

- Analysis of the existing green infrastructure network has identified a series of strategic green infrastructure links. It is considered that much of this Green Infrastructure can be retained and enhanced as a result of the proposed development.

- The masterplan will work with the existing scale and pattern of the local landscape character by creating a series of smaller development parcels which together form the overall development envelope. These create a layout which retains as much existing green infrastructure as possible, works within the capacity of the landscape and adds a natural permeability to the overall massing the wider development envelope.
 - Retained green infrastructure will be reinforced and enhanced through additional landscaping and improved management; the aims of which will consider location, function and also biodiversity objectives. The approach includes consideration of 'stand offs' to trees and hedgerows which will help to avoid potential impacts on the root protection zones of these elements, helping to ensure they are retained in the long term.
 - Notwithstanding the results of any detailed arboricultural surveys, to ensure the protection of existing strategic vegetation existing hedgerows should be safeguarded with a minimum 5m buffer, with a 10-15m zone to ensure the protection of mature hedgerow trees.
 - There will inevitably be some limited losses of vegetation across the Site however, overall, these losses will be balanced with extensive areas of new landscape planting and ecological enhancement areas. This will include a tree lined 'green link / boulevard' along the principal access with skyline trees and areas of open space / amenity areas, which will provide a green corridor through the development and break up the built form.
 - The strategy for existing and proposed green infrastructure will provide an immediate landscape structure which mitigates potential landscape impacts and will help to reduce or eliminate visual impacts.
- 4.7. Based on the developable area and design principles above, it is suggested that the **site could accommodate between 60-70 dwellings.**

5. Delivery of Housing

5.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 at paragraph 67 requires planning authorities examine the suitability, availability and economic viability of sites when undertaking housing and economic land availability assessment. Further detail about how these assessments should be undertaken is provided within National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)¹.

5.2. Therefore, an assessment of the sites against the tests within the NPPG, is provided below, confirming that they are suitable, available and achievable for development purposes.

Suitable

5.3. Bury St Edmunds is identified as one of two main locations for growth the adopted Development Plan. The site is located within the Special Landscape Area, however, as demonstrated in section 4 and Appendix 1, this blanket designation does not allow for site-specific nuances. The evidence within this submission confirms that the development of the site would not have a negative impact on the Special Landscape Area.

5.4. The 2019 NPPF establishes that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The three dimensions to sustainable development, as set out in the NPPF, require the planning system to perform an economic, social and environmental role.

5.5. Paragraph 82 of the NPPF recognises that a good way of meeting a District's housing requirements is by planning for larger scale development, which can include extensions to existing villages and towns.

5.6. It is therefore considered that the sites present an opportunity for the sustainable growth of Bury St Edmunds..

Available

5.7. The land is available for development and is within a single ownership.

Achievable

5.8. There are no known technical constraints relating to the sites and therefore it is considered that development would be economically viable. The scale of the site is such that they present a realistic option for growth in the short and medium term.

¹ Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 3-018-20190722/Paragraph: 019 Reference ID: 3-019-20190722/Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 3-020-20190722

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. This report sets out the background to the land to the south of Hencote Lane which is considered to represent a deliverable option for housing in the district.



Appendices




Appendix 1:

Landscape Statement, James Blake Associates, December 2020

Land south of Bury St Edmunds
LANDSCAPE STATEMENT
for Residential Development

on behalf of Savills
November 2020



~	FINAL	AS	JBA	JBA	December 2020
Revision	Purpose	Originated	Checked	Authorised	Date
Document Number: JBA 20/166 - Doc1		Document Reference: LANDSCAPE STATEMENT Land South of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk 			

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 James Blake Associates have been instructed by Savills on behalf of Mr John Oakes to provide a Landscape Statement in relation to land to the south of Bury St Edmunds, in order to determine the constraints of the Special Landscape Area and assess the suitability of the Site for development in landscape/visual terms.
- 1.1.2 This preliminary appraisal of landscape and visual impacts has been undertaken to determine the various landscape and visual constraints and opportunities regarding the wider site area and its context, how these might serve to influence the potential for development in respect of a strategic masterplan, and to influence an inherent landscape strategy as part of that masterplan.

1.2 Site Overview

- 1.2.1 The area (approximately 4.1ha) is regular in shape and comprises a single field. The Site has direct physical and visual links to the existing settlement edge to the north of the Site. There is currently no built development on site.
- 1.2.2 Additional information and a more detailed description on the physical components, landscape character and visual amenity of the site and study area are set out in later sections of this statement.
- 1.2.3 This Landscape Statement refers to a broad 'study area' for the purposes of the appraisal process (refer to **Figure 1, Site Location and Study Area**). The associated study area extends approximately 2km in all directions.

1.3 Methodology and Approach

- 1.3.1 The appraisal follows the principles of baseline assessment as set out in GLVIA3¹, and focuses on establishing the information relevant to the potential future development of the site. In line with the current guidance, the landscape resource and views are appraised separately.
- 1.3.2 The report assesses the potential landscape and visual constraints and opportunities of the site and its context, namely:
 - The landscape as a resource – by identifying important elements and features within and adjacent to the site; appraising landscape character and its key characteristics; and considering the value attached to the landscape as a whole;
 - Views and visual amenity – by identifying the extent of the visibility of the site; representative views as experienced by local residents and visitors to the area; and the existing nature of these views; and
 - Green Infrastructure – by exploring opportunities for the creation of open space as part of a wider strategic network.
- 1.3.3 The information was used to inform and develop a landscape-led strategy for residential development with associated green infrastructure and open space. It is envisaged that this strategy will provide an overarching vision and establish design principles for future development that minimise potential landscape and visual effects.

1 ¹Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - 3rd Edition (GLVIA3). Landscape Institute and IEMA. 2013

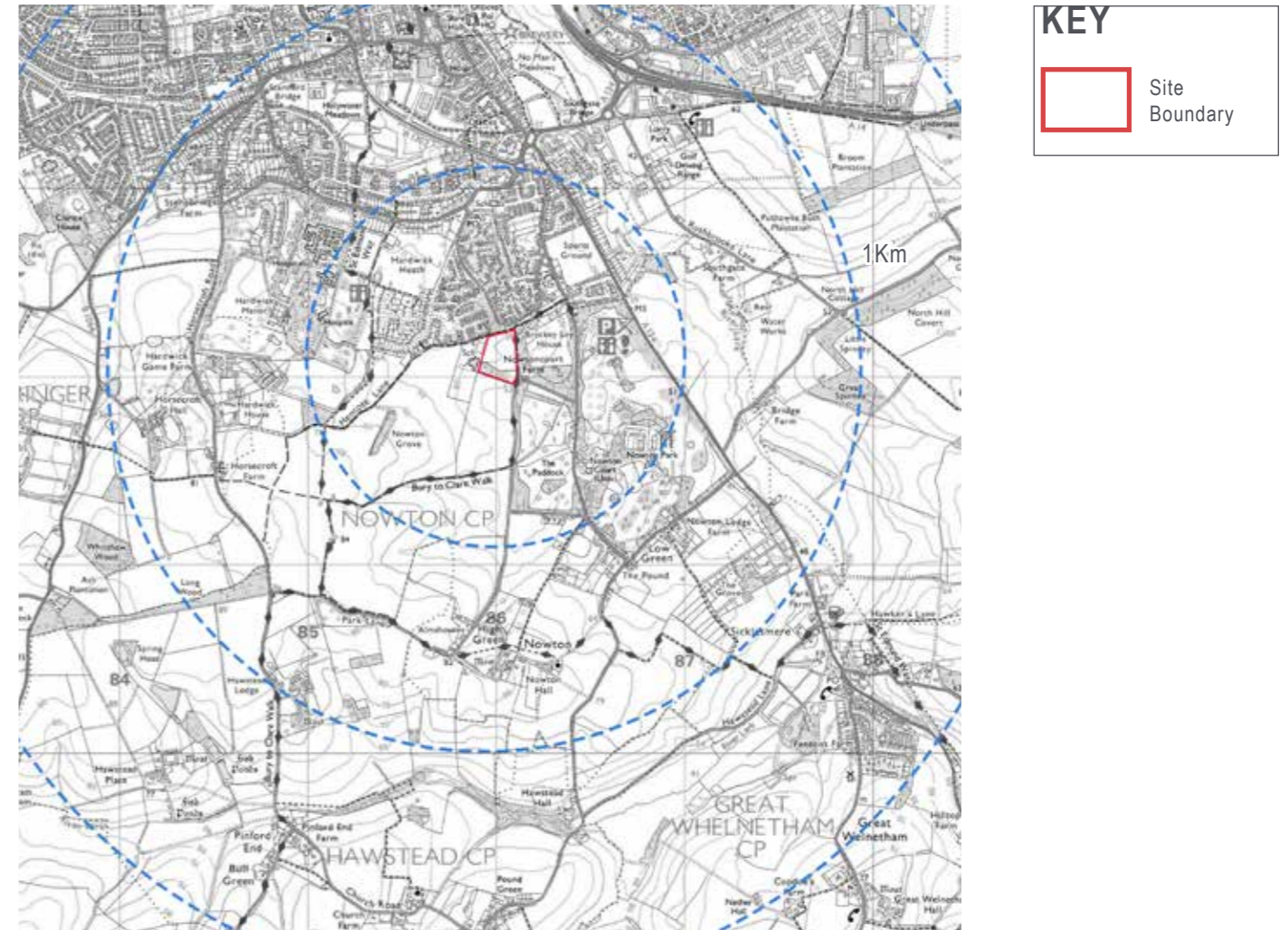


Figure 1: Site Location and Study Area

Source: Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright 2020. All rights reserved.

- 1.3.4 This assessment was informed by a desk study of current planning policy, designations, landscape character (including published landscape character assessments) and green infrastructure strategies as well as aerial/OS mapping. The desk study was supported by field survey, with a site visit undertaken on the 8th September 2020.
- 1.3.5 Photographs were taken with a digital camera with a 35mm lens on a cropped frame sensor (equivalent to 50mm on a full frame sensor) at approximately 1.8 metres in height. This is generally considered to replicate the human eye. These are presented as a series of viewpoints and have been used to inform this report (included as **Figure 7: Visual Analysis** and **Figure 8: Viewpoint Photographs 1 to 11**). Photographs taken in summer represent the best case scenario in terms of visual screening; visibility will be higher in winter when deciduous vegetation is not in leaf.

1. INTRODUCTION Continued.

- 1.3.6 Landscape features and elements provide the physical environment for flora and fauna and the associated importance of biodiversity assets. This report does not consider the value, susceptibility or importance on ecology and biodiversity, nor does it consider impacts from an ecological stance.
- 1.3.7 Heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas all contribute to the overall present day landscape character, context and setting of an area. These aspects have been given consideration within this report in terms of physical landscape resources (for example trees and hedgerows) and also landscape character. However, this report does not address the historic significance, importance or potential impacts on heritage assets and designations; these assets are assessed in the context of landscape and visual matters only.
- 1.3.8 Having established the relevant baseline position, the appraisal process then establishes landscape and visual receptors, specifically in response to the nature of the proposed development and identifies constraints and opportunities relevant to the study area. The appraisal then considers the nature of potential impacts and consequently, how these can inform an iterative approach to design.

2. SITE AND IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

2.1 Site Description

- 2.1.1 The area (approximately 4.1ha) is regular in shape and comprises a single field.
- 2.1.2 The Site lies outside of the current settlement boundary and in planning terms is classified as 'countryside', however the Site has direct physical and visual links to the existing settlement boundary to the north.
- 2.1.3 The land use of the Site is agricultural. The landscape is generally set across regular field enclosures which become slightly smaller in scale in close proximity to the settlement edge. In the wider landscape, arable land continues to dominate; with some small areas of woodland present.
- 2.1.4 The Site is bound to the north by an existing settlement and road, to the east are two parkland's; the private Breckey Ley Park and the public Nowton Park, to the south is a dense woodland with arable fields beyond, and to the west is Riverwalk Primary School (see **Figure 2**).
- 2.1.5 Vegetation on the Site consists of a grassed field, with the boundaries defined by mature hedgerows and trees, along with a large section of woodland that extends along the southern boundary, stopping short of extending across the whole southern boundary in the south eastern corner. Within the wider landscape field boundaries are defined by mature and continuous hedgerows and also by linear belts of trees and woodland. Some areas have been subject to agricultural intensification and hedgerow boundaries have been lost as a result.
- 2.1.6 There is currently one public access to the Site, and there are public views towards the Site from the local roads and Public Rights of Way Network.
- 2.1.7 The Site is enclosed by existing vegetation along the boundaries and comprises predominantly native trees such as Common Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Common Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Field Maple. Hedgerows are also comprised of native species such as Common Oak (*Quercus robur*). To the South is a woodland.
- 2.1.8 The Site slopes gently from west to east, falling from approximately 60m AOD along the western boundary to approximately 50m AOD in the south eastern corner.
- 2.1.9 The Site falls into a Special Landscape Area, assigned for its tranquillity.

2.2 Designations

- 2.2.1 The Site is unconstrained in terms of statutory landscape or ecological designations, however the wider landscape incorporates a number of statutory/non-statutory designations (see **Figure 4**). Those in closest proximity to the Site are described below:

Listed Buildings

- 2.2.2 The Dairy Cottage Grade II Listed lies the north-east of the Site approximately 800m away from the Site so is screened by existing settlement infrastructure. A one and a half storey building, formerly the dairy to Hardwick House (demolished). Timber-framed and rendered; thatched gambrel roof with ornate pierced bargeboards.
- 2.2.3 Nowton Lodge Grade II Listed lies the south-east of the Site approximately 570m away from the Site so is screened by existing vegetation from Nowton Park. A two storey timber-framed and rendered, pargetted with raised panels of old roughcast, plaintiled roof.

- 2.2.4 The Home Farm House Grade II lies to the west of the Site approximately 400m away from the Site there is some screening from tree cover on western boundary of Site. A two storey building, formerly the Home Farm to Hardwick House. White brick with front faced panels of knapped flint and hipped slate roof.

County Park

- 2.2.5 There are two Country Parks in very close proximity to the Site; Nowton Park to the east of the Site approximately 350m distant. The park screens most views from the western edge and is associated with a number of Listed Buildings including Nowton Lodge. Hardwick Heath just to the north west is 420m distant.

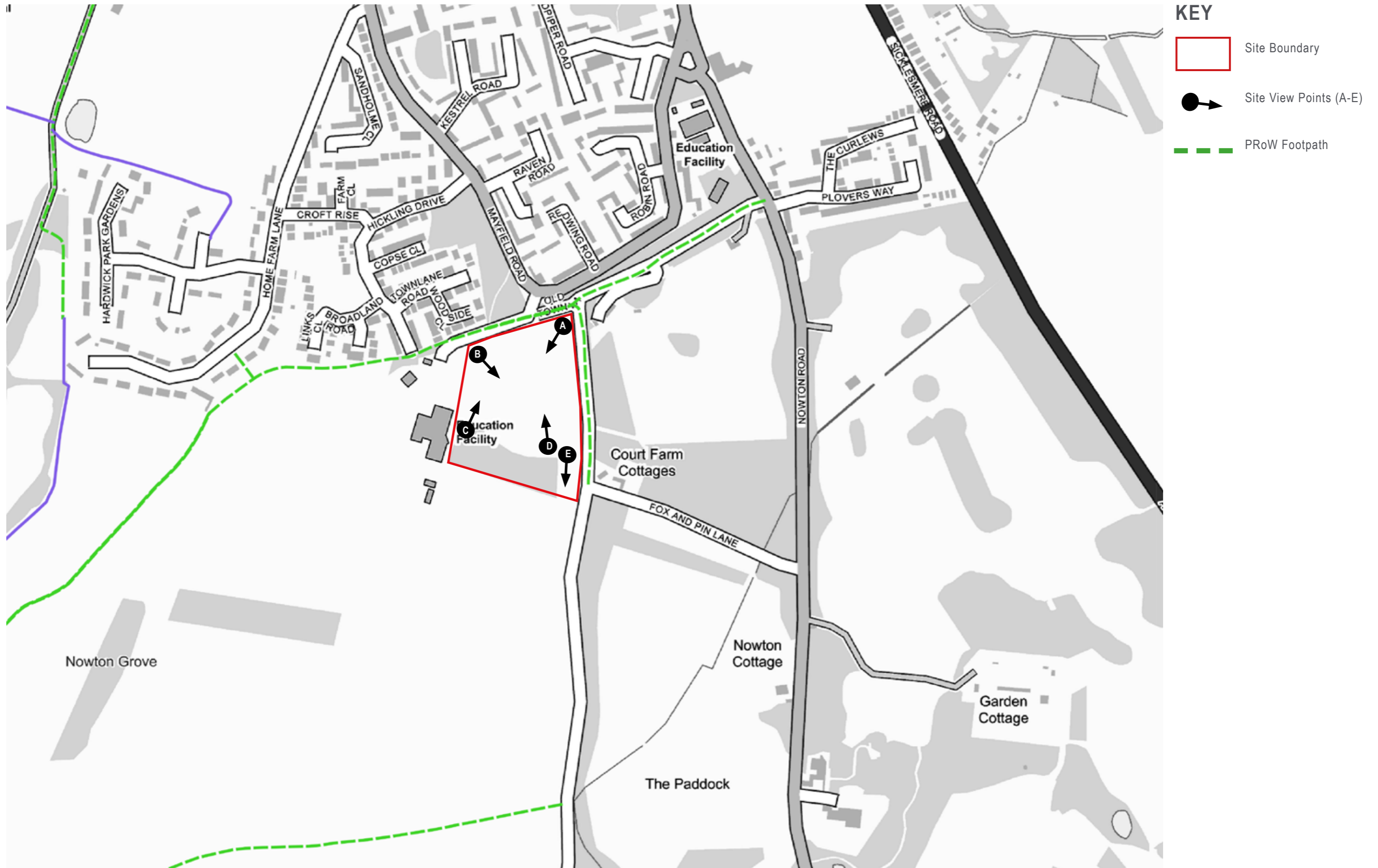


Figure 2: Site Context
 Source: Google Maps / JBA, November 2020.



Looking south from north-eastern boundary.



View south from north-western boundary.



View north-east from the south-western corner of the Site



View north from the south-eastern corner of the Site



View from south-east looking south-eastern corner of Site.

1. POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The following section provides an overview of planning policy at the national and local level as relevant to landscape. Policies contained within the following documents have been reviewed:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), February 2019;
- St Edmundsbury Core Strategy, December 2010;
- St Edmundsbury Rural Vision 2031, September 2014; and
- Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Joint Development Management Policies Document, February 2015.

1.1.2 Proposals to create a new West Suffolk Council (merging St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council) to drive prosperity, jobs and meet future challenges have been backed by Government and West Suffolk Council was incorporated in April 2019.

1.1.3 The new West Suffolk Council entirely replaces the borough and district council but continues to deliver the same services. The adopted local plans covering the former St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath areas will continue to apply to those parts of the West Suffolk Council area until a new Local Plan for West Suffolk is adopted. This is currently scheduled for mid-2023.

1.2 Planning Policy Framework

1.2.1 The following section outlines the general planning policies as relevant to landscape and the built environment.

1.2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in 2019, sets out the national planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. This includes how the planning system should contribute to achieving sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life.

1.2.3 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF sets out a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a 'golden thread' running through plan-making and decision-taking. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

1.2.4 NPPF Section 11: Making effective use of land promotes efficient use of land to meet housing needs whilst safeguarding and improving the environment. Developments should showcase opportunities for new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside in order to achieve environmental net gains. As well as recognising that undeveloped land has important functions to play such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production.

1.2.5 NPPF Section 12: Achieving well-designed places highlights the importance of quality design as a key aspect of sustainable development. In order to achieve this key communication between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests is important. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. Development should add overall quality to the area, are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, establish a strong sense of place, accommodate green space, beneficial to the local community.

1.2.6 NPPF Section 14: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal change supports the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, through the inclusion of green infrastructure.

1.2.7 NPPF Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment states that planning policies should encourage this through protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services. Prevention of pollution (soil, air, water, noise and land instability) should be considered when developing. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities.

1.2.8 NPPF Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment places emphasis on the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, recognising that *'heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource'* and should be *'conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance'*. These principles are supported by NPPG 18a: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

1.3 St Edmundsbury Core Strategy

1.3.1 Policies within the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy of relevance to this proposal include:

Policy CS2 - Sustainable Development

1.3.2 *'A high quality, sustainable environment will be achieved by designing and incorporating measures appropriate to the nature and scale of development, including:*

- *conserving and, wherever possible, enhancing the character and quality of local landscapes and the wider countryside and public access to them, in a way that recognises and protects the fragility of these resources'.*

Policy CS3 - Design and Local Distinctiveness

1.3.3 Proposals for new development must create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment. Particularly, proposals should address the consideration of protection of the landscape and historic views and provision or enhancement of open space, play, leisure and cultural facilities.

Policy CS11 – Bury St Edmunds Strategic Growth

1.3.4 Policy CS11 states that in order to accommodate the long term strategic growth for the town, land will be released, in a phased manner. This includes *'long term strategic growth – south-east Bury St Edmunds that:*

- *Positively uses the framework for new development provided by the existing natural environment and character of the area including maintaining significantly important open spaces that provide the setting of the historic centre;*
- *Provides improved public transport, foot and cycle links to the town centre and north towards the A14 and strategic employment sites;*
- *Provides new high quality strategic public open space and recreation facilities;*
- *Delivers around 1,250 homes of mixed tenure and size, including affordable homes; and*
- *In each case, the actual amount of development will be determined by environmental and infrastructure capacity considerations and the preparation and adoption of detailed masterplans in which the local community and other stakeholders have been fully engaged'.*

1.3.5 It is acknowledged that this policy is primarily in relation to land to the south east of Bury St Edmunds, however development of the Site presents the opportunity to meet some of these objectives.

1.4 Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031

1.4.1 Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031 provides a framework for managing the expected growth in the town over the next two decades. It includes guidance for residents, investors, developers and infrastructure providers in terms of how and where the town develops and grows.

1.4.2 Policies of relevance to the proposed development are currently outlined below:

Policy BV25: Conserving the Setting and views from the historic core

1.4.3 *'The council will seek to preserve or enhance the townscape and landscape setting of the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Conservation Area. Special care will be taken to ensure that views from and into this historic centre remain unspoilt with particular regard to the vista along Abbeygate Street and from the water meadows of the Lark and Linnet'.*

Policy BV26: Green Infrastructure in Bury St Edmunds

1.4.4 *'In and around the town of Bury St Edmunds the integrity and connectivity of the strategic green infrastructure network will be maintained, protected and enhanced, which includes the creation of new habitats, through the implementation of the St Edmundsbury Green Infrastructure Strategy. Opportunities to extend the coverage and connectivity of the strategic green infrastructure network should be undertaken in association with new development, where appropriate.*

1.4.5 *Green Infrastructure projects will:*

- a. enhance the character of the Green Infrastructure Action Zones identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy;*
- b. enhance and extend, where practical, the wetland landscape character of the urban River Lark and River Linnet;*
- c. provide new community parklands on the strategic growth areas in the town, the areas for which will be determined at the concept and masterplan stage;*
- d. connect multifunctional green infrastructure routes/corridors in the town to existing and future green spaces; and*
- e. promote access to, and appreciation of, local history and heritage assets within the landscape as part of a multi-functional approach.*

1.4.6 *The council will work with its partners to develop the green infrastructure network and implement proposed network improvements including those set out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy.*

1.4.7 *Planning permission for development that would harm the Green Infrastructure network will only be granted if it can incorporate measures that avoid the harm arising or sufficiently mitigate its effects'.*

1.4.8 The Site is not identified on the GI Opportunity Map, however arable land extending from the southern boundary is highlighted as an area for Landscape Enhancement and as such there may be opportunities to contribute.

1.5 Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Joint Development Management Policies Document

1.5.1 The Local Plans for Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury are the policy backgrounds against which planning decisions - and other decisions dealing with physical and environmental change in each authority area - are judged. The Joint Development Management Policies Document is used in day-to-day planning decisions across both areas, in line with each Council's adopted Core Strategy.

1.5.2 Particular policies of relevance to the proposed development in landscape or visual terms include:

Policy DM13: Landscape Features

1.5.3 *'Development will be permitted where it will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character of the landscape, landscape features, wildlife, or amenity value....'*

1.5.4 *Areas of particular landscape sensitivity, including Special Landscape Areas (as defined on the Policies maps) have been identified. These areas, and other valued landscapes such as The Brecks and the Stour Valley (subject of a management and delivery plan through the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project) have, by reason of their landform, historic landscape importance and/or condition, a very limited capacity to absorb change without a significant material effect on their character and/or condition. However, individual proposals within or adjacent to these areas will be assessed based on their specific landscape and visual impact.*

1.5.5 *All proposals for development should be informed by, and be sympathetic to, the character of the landscape. Landscape Character Types are identified in the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment. However, the 'Type' boundaries are only indicative, being mapped for the whole county at a scale of 1:50,000. Therefore, the character of the site and setting of a proposal should be individually assessed.*

1.5.6 *All development proposals should demonstrate that their location, scale, design and materials will protect, and where possible enhance the character of the landscape, including the setting of settlements, the significance of gaps between them and the nocturnal character of the landscape...*

1.5.7 *However, it is essential that commensurate provision must be made for landscape mitigation and compensation measures, so that harm to the locally distinctive character is minimised and there is no net loss of characteristic features.*

1.5.8 *Where this is not possible development will not be permitted'.*

1.5.9 Policy DM13 does not therefore restrict development from taking place, but rather emphasises the importance of minimising landscape and visual impacts and providing suitable landscape/visual mitigation and enhancement.

1.5.10 The Site lies within a Special Landscape Area as identified on the former St Edmundsbury area Policy Map. The key accompanying the map infers that Special Landscape Areas are related to Policy DM13 of the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Local Plan Joint Development Management Policies Document (February, 2015).

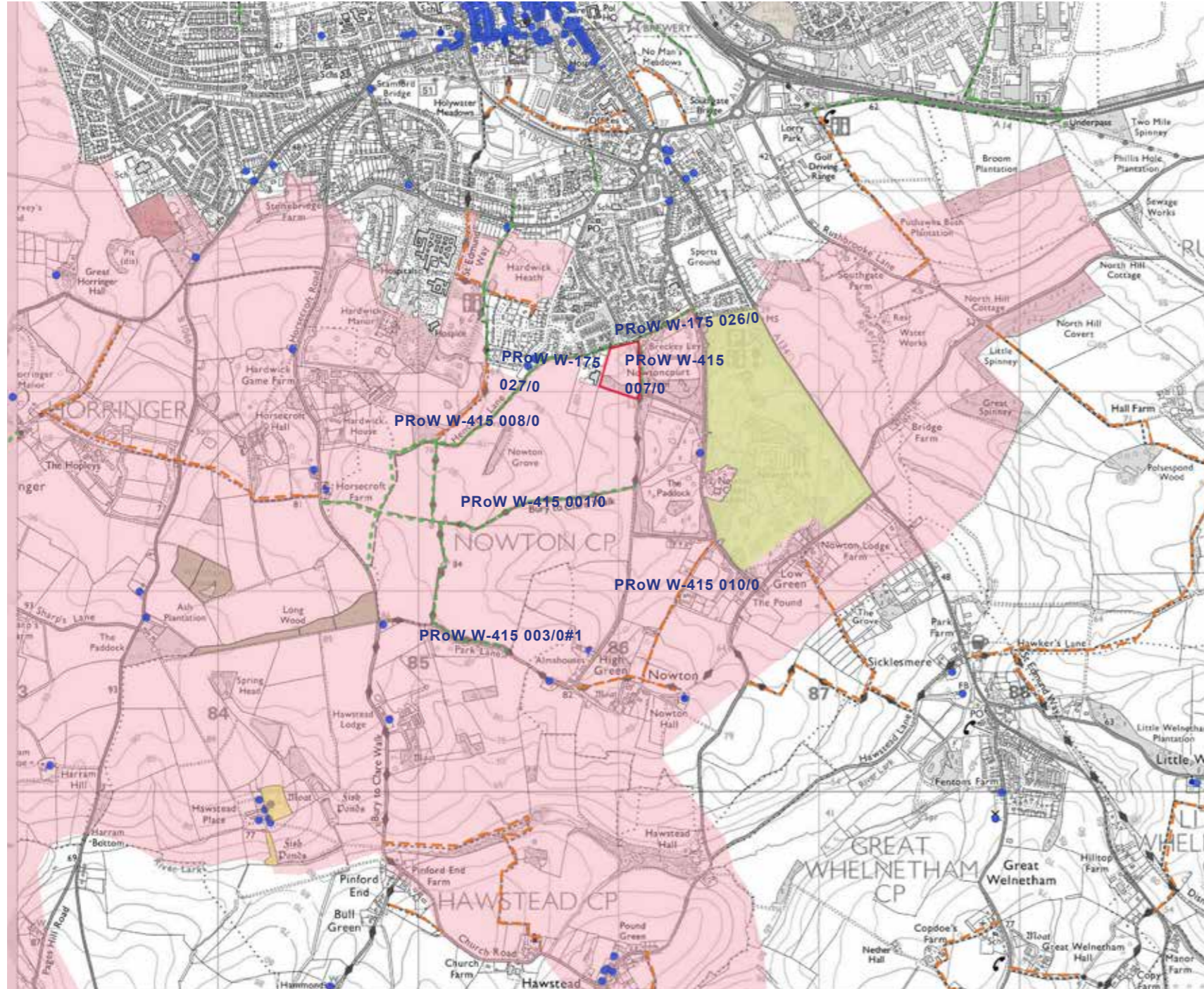
1.5.11 Special Landscape Areas are identified in District Council Planning Policy and have been designated locally because of their landscape sensitivity and scenic quality. The designation can be applicable to large areas of land, and the 2010 St Edmundsbury Core Strategy indicates that over 25% of the former St Edmundsbury Borough lies within one of the three designated Special Landscape Areas which cover the Brecks, and the area south of Bury St Edmunds.

Policy DM27: Housing in the Countryside

1.5.12 *'Proposals for new dwellings will be permitted in the countryside subject to satisfying the following criteria:*

- a. the development is within a closely knit 'cluster' of 10 or more existing dwellings adjacent to or fronting an existing highway;*
- b. the scale of development consists of infilling a small undeveloped plot by one dwelling or a pair of semi detached dwellings commensurate with the scale and character of existing dwellings within an otherwise continuous built up frontage.*

1.5.13 *Permission will not be granted where a proposal harms or undermines a visually important gap that contributes to the character and distinctiveness of the rural scene, or where development would have an adverse impact on the environment or highway safety'.*



KEY





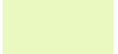




-  Site Boundary
-  PROW Footpath
-  PROW Bridleway
-  Listed Building
-  Country Park
-  Local Nature Reserve
-  Scheduled Monuments
-  SSSI
-  Special Landscape Area

Figure 4: Designations Map. Scale 1:20 000 @ A3.

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3. LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

3.1 Landscape Character

3.1.1 In accordance with National and Local guidance, this section considers the existing landscape character of the Site and its environs.

3.1.2 The character of the landscape evolves over time as a result of the interaction of human activity and the natural environment (people and place). Factors used to assess landscape character include:

- Physical – geology, land-form, climate, soils, fauna and flora;
- Cultural and Social – land-use, settlement, enclosure & history;
- Aesthetics – colour, texture, pattern, form and perception.

3.1.3 It should be noted that landscape is a continuum and character does not generally change abruptly on the ground. More commonly, the character of the landscape will change gradually and therefore the boundaries between both Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) should be considered to reflect zones of transition.

National

3.1.4 At the national level the Site lies within NCA 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland.

3.1.5 The South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland NCA (86) covers the four counties of Suffolk, Essex, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire. This area stretches from Bury St Edmunds to Ipswich, roughly following the A14 and embracing the Colchester hinterland before encompassing Chelmsford in the south and Stevenage in the west. In comparison to NCA 83, there is a noticeably more undulating topography with a chalky boulder clay plateau and small dissecting river valleys. It is an ancient landscape of an enclosed nature with a wooded arable countryside. There are rich species of old hedgerows, woods, parklands, meadows and traditional field patterns.

Key characteristics of the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland (NCA 86) include:

- *‘An undulating chalky boulder clay plateau is dissected by numerous river valleys, giving a topography of gentle slopes in the lower, wider valleys and steeper slopes in the narrower upper parts.*
- *Fragments of chalk give many of the soils a calcareous character, which also influences the character of the semi-natural vegetation cover.*
- *South-east-flowing streams and rivers drain the clay plateau. Watercourses wind slowly across flood plains, supporting wet, fen-type habitats; grazing marsh; and blocks of cricket-bat willows, poplars and old willow pollards. Navigation locks are present on some rivers.*
- *Lowland wood pasture and ancient woodlands support the dormouse and a rich diversity of flowering plants on the clay plateau. Large, often ancient hedgerows link woods and copses, forming wooded skylines.*
- *The agricultural landscape is predominantly arable with a wooded appearance. There is some pasture on the valley floors. Field patterns are irregular despite rationalisation, with much ancient countryside surviving. Field margins support corn bunting, cornflower and brown hare.*
- *Roman sites, medieval monasteries and castles and ancient woodlands contribute to a rich archaeology. Impressive churches, large barns, substantial country house estates and Second World War airfields dot the*

landscape, forming historical resources.

- *There is a dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, parishes and small settlements around ‘tyes’ (commons) or strip greens and isolated hamlets. The NCA features a concentration of isolated moated farmsteads and numerous well-preserved medieval towns and large villages.*
- *Larger 20th-century development has taken place to the south and east around Chelmsford, Ipswich and the new towns of Harlow and Stevenage.*
- *Traditional timber-frame, often elaborate buildings with exposed timbers, colour-washed render, pargetting and steeply pitched roofs with pegtiles or long straw thatch. Sometimes they have been refronted with Georgian red brick or Victorian cream-coloured bricks (‘Suffolk whites’). Clay lump is often used in cottages and farm buildings.*
- *Winding, narrow and sometimes sunken lanes are bounded by deep ditches, wide verges and strong hedgerows. Transport infrastructure includes the A14, A12, M11 and Stansted Airport.*
- *A strong network of public rights of way provides access to the area’s archetypal lowland English countryside’.*

(Natural England, 2012)

Regional

3.1.6 At the regional level (East of England Landscape Framework, Landscape East) the Site is technically located within an urban classification. However it lies between three Landscape Types that represent the character more accurately. Plateau Estate Farmlands, Wooded Village Farmlands and Wooded Plateau Farmlands Landscape Character Types. It is considered that the Site is more strongly representative of the Wooded Plateau Farmlands and as such it is this LCT which is described further.

3.1.7 ‘For the most part this is a settled, early enclosed landscape with frequent ancient woods, associated with a rolling, in places undulating glacial plateau, dissected by numerous shallow valleys. Located mainly in the Chilterns, east Hertfordshire and much of north Essex and southwest Suffolk. There is a second smaller area in east Suffolk, while a third and separate area lies to the north and west of Bedford.’

3.1.8 Key characteristics of this LCT include:

- ‘A rolling landscape on a dissected glacial plateau, in places deeply dissected, especially in the south west.
- This upland area is drained by numerous small watercourses which dissect the plateau, creating a series of shallow valleys. Field ponds are a feature in places.
- Frequent small to medium-sized ancient woods, with some notably larger woods in places, connected by a network of ancient hedgerows. A relatively high survival of primary habitats (> 7%), although relatively little is specifically protected (< 1%).
- Most of the land is in arable production.
- A wooded landscape with many ancient woods, copses and occasional smaller plantations.
- For the most part an early enclosed landscape, with late enclosures only occurring to a limited extent, in certain places. Around Bedford, however, there are extensive areas of common fields which were subject to parliamentary enclosure.
- An irregular pattern of medium to large sized fields. There has been much modification as a result of reorganisation/

3. LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS Continued.

boundary removal in the 20th century.

- A settled character comprising a mixture of scattered farmsteads, hamlets and occasional larger villages, the latter often linear in form where they have grown along roads. Late 20th century development impinges in the southern part of the area.
- The core part of this landscape, between Hertfordshire and Suffolk, has a strong vernacular tradition of timber framed buildings with tiled roofs. Some 19th/20th century brick buildings also occur in linear hamlets and around enclosed greens.
- Sinuous pattern of roads and lanes with small to medium-sized greens that are often triangular, or linear. These greens are often described as tyes in Suffolk and Essex.
- Despite its settled character this landscape is deeply rural and tranquil often affording a sense of remoteness and continuity. This is lost in some locations close to larger settlements and roads, or where there are pylons.
- The network of winding, hedged lanes and paths coupled with the rolling countryside give a feeling of intimacy. In places field amalgamation has resulted in longer views over rolling, lightly wooded countryside.

County

3.1.9 The county level assessment (the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment) provides the best level of detail for this assessment. At the county level, the Site sits within the Undulating Estate Farmlands Landscape Character Type 24. This Character type stretches from Sicklesmere (South of Bury) westwards towards Cambridgeshire and southwards to Clare.

3.1.10 Key characteristics of the Undulating Estate Farmlands LCT include:

- *'Undulating arable landscape*
- *Organic field pattern- rationalised by estate ownership*
- *Hedgerow trees; Oak, Ash, Field Maple*
- *North- complex arrangement of plantations*
- *Ancient woodlands*
- *Landscape parks and ornamental trees*
- *Substantial open areas created for airfields- post WWII- agricultural improvement*
- *Isolated farmsteads in the north, loosely clustered and dispersed settlement pattern*
- *Less dispersed settlements in the south*
- *Moated sites and vast number of medieval, Tudor timber framed and brick buildings*
- *Mostly well-kept landscapes and wooded farmlands'.*

3.1.11 Foundation- Chalky boulder clay- dissected by deep streams and rivers- undulates. Soil is predominantly Hanslope clays- relatively free draining due to slopes and mineral content.

3.1.12 Remnants of historic wooded areas remain. Important landscape parks (post-medieval); Ickworth, Nowton, Saxham,

Dalham and Branches Park in Cowlinge. Strong estate character influenced by parkland and complex plantation arrangement. Field medium to large- organic in form as well as planned layouts suggesting systematic enclosure of land.

3.1.13 Northern part- dispersed farmsteads; Chevington Hall, Hawstead Place and Denham Hall. Two small medieval castles at Denham and Lidgate. Villages; Sicklesmere, Horringer, Chevington, Chedburgh, Kedington and Hundon. Hawstead green- moderate size house with associated green. Also smaller linear Hamlets

3.1.14 Tree cover in south is fragmentary. Northern part: woodland cover is extensive and interlocking; mix of Oak, Ash and Field Maple. Influence of estates and ornamental planting is pervasive, Sycamore, beech, larch, chestnut and conifers. Beech prevalent on western edge-Dalham.

3.1.15 Views; farmland and woodland. Influence of parkland and ornamental planting within the undulating landscape creates aesthetic views. South of Bury view is often confined by woodland, southern parts of the landscape there are more open views.

3.1.16 Well-kept appearance- strong linkages of maintained hedgerows and woodlands. Pressure in the south from industrial farming has modified the landscape by removing detail of the field pattern.

Site Specific Landscape Character

3.1.17 The following key characteristics were identified during the field survey:

- The Site lies within a Special Landscape Area as identified on the former St Edmundsbury area Policy Map. The key accompanying the map infers that Special Landscape Areas are related to Policy DM13 of the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Local Plan Joint Development Management Policies Document (February, 2015).
- Special Landscape Areas are identified in District Council Planning Policy and have been designated locally because of their landscape sensitivity and scenic quality. The designation can be applicable to large areas of land, and the 2010 St Edmundsbury Core Strategy indicates that over 25% of the former St Edmundsbury Borough lies within one of the three designated Special Landscape Areas which cover the Brecks, and the area south of Bury St Edmunds.
- The Site consists of a green field enclosed by boundary mature hedgerows and trees. The southern boundary also consists of a woodland edge. The northern boundary is defined by the drive up to Riverwalk Primary School with dwellings of Woodside Close backing onto it and which forms the edge of settlement.
- Although the character of the Site itself is still considered rural and tranquil, the local landscape includes numerous signs of human influence. Existing settlement in the immediate locale includes dwellings of Woodside Close to the north, the primary school to the west, Breckey Ley House to the north east along with the associated Breckey Ley Park, Nowtoncourt Farm to the south east and Nowton Park further to the east.
- The surrounding landscape to the south is rural in character, being a managed agricultural landscape, predominantly arable in use. The medium to large-sized fields and the numerous farmsteads and hamlets combine to form a landscape pattern of medium complexity.
- A PRoW runs through the northern eastern boundary which is well used, with the lane defining the eastern boundary forming part of the Bury to Clare Walk national trail. There are also desire lines through the field.
- Horizon lines in the area are generally formed by a combination of tree belts, woodlands and hedgerow trees, merging together to form a generally wooded character.

3. LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS Continued.

3.1.18 The Site is generally considered to be representative of the local landscape, however it is influenced by the existing settlement edge to the north and the large primary school and associated activity to the west of the Site.

3.2 Landscape Management Guidelines

National: NCA Statements of Environmental Opportunity

3.2.1 Statements of Additional Opportunity for the South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands (NCA 86) of relevance to the proposal include:

- *'AO 1: Encourage measures that lead to the enhancement of existing historic settlements and sites of archaeological interest and the design and location of new developments and infrastructure. Provide wider associated social and cultural benefits through the provision and management of high-quality green infrastructure networks. For example by:*
 - *Within urban areas creating new multifunctional landscapes and habitats and extending at appropriate scales existing networks that are in character with the area and contribute to biodiversity through green infrastructure planning.*
 - *Ensuring that high-quality green infrastructure is considered in all newbuild projects, encouraging developers and planners to consider this aspect at the outset of scheme design with the aim of promoting space for wildlife and outdoor recreation.*
 - *Promoting the use of traditional building materials in building restoration or new development where this would be appropriate, to enhance the local character (for example, exposed timbers, colourwashed render (in traditional colours), pargetting, cream bricks ('Suffolk whites') or soft-hued red bricks)'.*
 - *Ensuring that local development frameworks recognise the importance of conserving and enhancing the landscape and the sense of history to help to reduce the likelihood of negative impacts from new developments'.*

County

3.2.2 The Undulating Estate Farmlands LCT: The views in this landscape are often full of well-treed farmland and woodland. The influence of parkland and ornamental planting in the undulating landscape creates some very pleasant views. Just to the south of Bury St Edmunds the view is often confined by woodland. Much of the area has a rather well kept appearance with strong linkages of hedgerows and woodland maintained by the influence of shooting on these estates.

3.2.3 Landscape Sensitivity and Change: landscape of undulating clay farmland, with frequent low hilltops. To the south of Bury areas of woodland are strongly augmented with plantation and parkland plantings. The extent of tree cover is now generally stable but much of this resource is at risk from inappropriate management and neglect including a lack of deer control.

3.2.4 *'Although most greens and commons in this landscape have been enclosed, they remain as important open spaces that shape the relationship of buildings to each other and define the form of settlements. Intake of such land into gardens, or a change of use, has a significant impact on the wider landscape.*

3.2.5 *Key forces for change: Settlement expansion eroding the characteristic form and vernacular styles. The release of land for development should, if at all possible, reflect the local pattern. When vernacular styles and detailing are*

used for housing or other development the choice should echo that of the immediate locality or the specific cluster in which the development is proposed.

3.2.6 *Land management guidelines:*

- *Recognise localised areas of late enclosure hedges when restoring and planting hedgerows.*
- *Maintain the extent, and improve the condition, of woodland cover with effective management.*

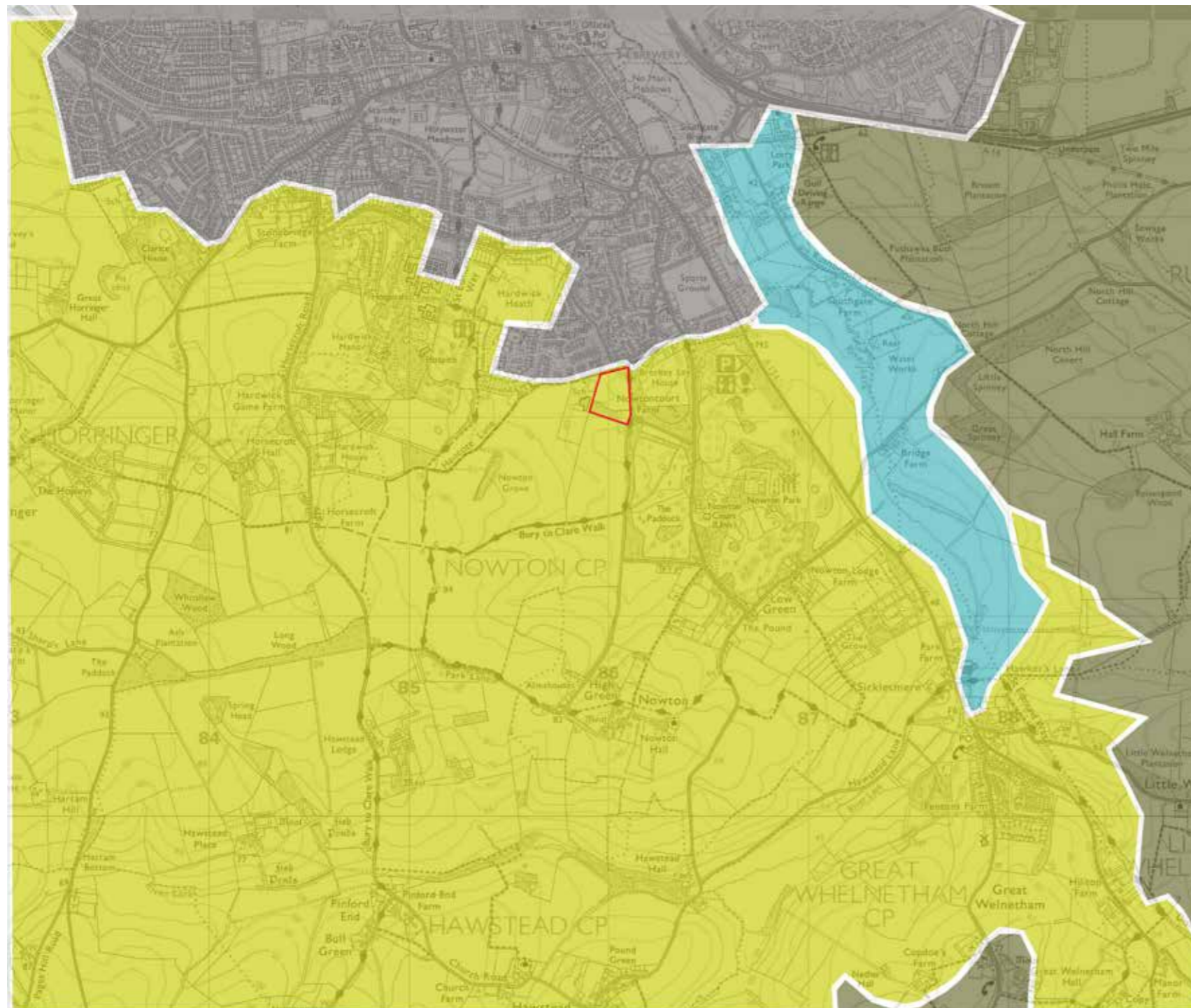
3.3 Settlement Character

3.3.1 The Site lies immediately adjacent to the existing settlement boundary. Existing dwellings along Hickling Drive estate are a mix of semi-detached and detached properties. The settlement pattern is relatively uniform in scale and appearance. To the south of the main settlement of Bury St Edmunds the settlement pattern is disbursed and consists of smaller villages and hamlets and more substantial individual dwellings, often historic.

3.3.2 In terms of the nocturnal character of the edge of settlement in proximity to the Site, many dwellings back onto Hencote Lane where light spillage will occur at relatively low levels. These are private residential dwellings, set back from boundary and typically lit from within, ie lack of lighting columns along the settlement edge and where lighting columns are located along the estate roads they are approximately 4m tall and light spill directed downwards. The section of the Lane defining the northern Site boundary also has dwellings backing onto it, however it has a greater proportion of mature trees which will screen and reduce light spill to extremely low levels. At night the school will be closed with only security lighting activated and typically located around the building perimeter. This is screened to a large extent by mature vegetated boundaries.

3.3.3 The overall nocturnal character of this southern edge of settlement will be dark countryside when view from the arable landscape looking northwards to settlement edge. Low levels of lighting and light spill from dwellings and the substantial screening effect provided by the existing mature vegetated boundaries and dense woodland, ensure that the surrounding wider rural landscape to the south of the settlement is not influenced by light spillage.

3.3.4 The proposal Site also benefits from substantial existing mature vegetated boundaries, along with dense woodland to its southern boundary. To the south eastern corner of the Site, there is a reduction in mature tree cover and as such proposed development will have to carefully consider layout design in respect of light spill.



KEY


 Site Boundary

Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment

 Plateau Estate Farmlands

 Urban

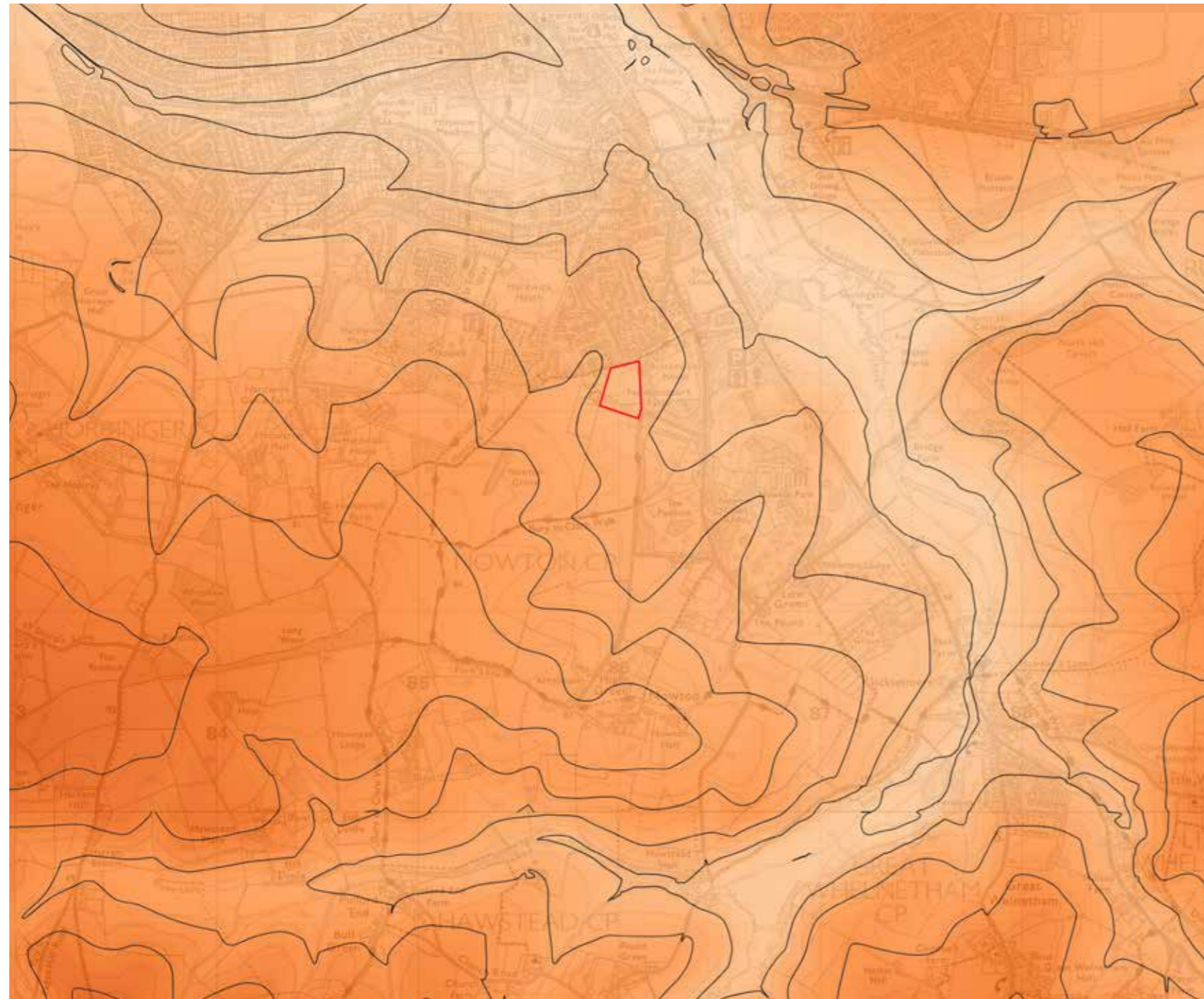
 Valley Meadowlands

 Undulating Estate Farmlands

Note: NCA 83: South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands and the Wooded Plateau Farmlands LCT encompass the full extent of the map

Figure 5: Local Landscape Character. Scale 1:20 000 @ A3.

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KEY

 Site Boundary

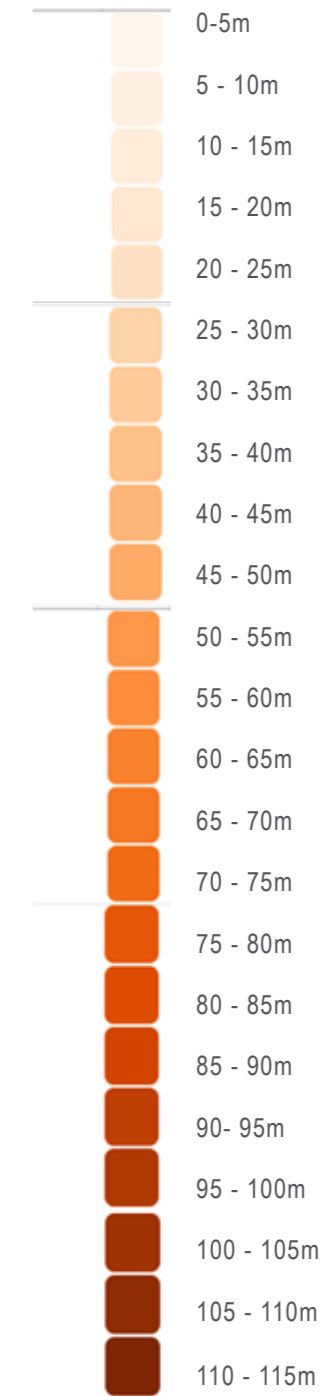


Figure 6: Landform Analysis. Scale 1:20 000 @ A3.

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4. VISUAL ANALYSIS

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 This section provides a description of the nature and extent of the existing views from, towards and between the Site and the surrounding area. It also includes reference to specific locations that will potentially be subject to potential impacts arising from proposed development of the Site.
- 4.1.2 Photographs were taken in September 2020 representing a best case scenario in terms of the level of screening provided by existing vegetation. Visibility will be higher in winter when deciduous vegetation is not in leaf.
- 4.1.3 Establishing the specific nature of these views provides an understanding of the context and setting of representative viewpoints and the nature of views in terms of distance, angle of view, and seasonal constraints associated with specific visual receptors. The identification of key sensitive receptors and links to the representative viewpoint are carried forward to the appraisal process.

4.2 Visual Envelope

- 4.2.1 The visual envelope is the extent of the area from which the Site and proposed development is likely to be visible (refer to **Figure 7**).
- 4.2.2 The combination of relatively gentle topography, the elevation and location of the Site, and numerous substantial woodland belts means that the Site is well screened from many potential viewpoints.
- 4.2.3 The visual envelope comprises open countryside with scattered settlement, including the settlement edge. The wider landscape contains an extensive network of Public Rights of Way. The principal views towards the Site are from the surrounding road network and Public Rights of Way which run through the wider landscape (see **Figure 7: Visual Analysis**).
- 4.2.4 The primary visual envelope extends a short distance to the north and to the south east.
- 4.2.5 The proposed development Site includes significant existing green infrastructure to its boundaries which will be retained, and which in the majority serves to eliminate or significantly reduce the impact of the proposed development (see Preliminary Landscape and Green Infrastructure Strategy, **Figure 10**).

Viewpoint 1

- 4.2.6 From this point, looking northwards towards the Site from Fox and Pin Lane, over a large arable field, the existing dense and mature woodland to the southern Site boundary prevent any views into the Site itself. Mature trees and hedgerows give a feeling of enclosure and merge to form a wooded horizon.

Viewpoint 2

- 4.2.7 View west across the Site from the remnant historic lane and PRow W-415 007/0 forming the eastern boundary. The dense mature woodland can clearly be seen forming the southern Site boundary, along with the mature trees forming the western Site boundary to the Riverwalk Primary School.

Viewpoint 3

- 4.2.8 View south across the Site from northern boundary PRow W175 026/0. This illustrates the enclosed nature of the site, with mature dense woodland forming the southern boundary, along with mature trees forming the eastern Site boundary. The mature trees of Breckey Ley House lend a historic estate feel with cedars and mature tall scotts pine appearing in-between and above the deciduous broadland trees.

Viewpoint 4

- 4.2.9 View to the south west from the junction of Mayfield Road with Hencote Lane that leads down to Riverwalk Primary School. This illustrates the mature trees defining the Site boundary, and the screening they afford the interior of the Site, with only glimpses afforded through the existing tree trunks.

Viewpoint 5

- 4.2.10 View from Hencote Lane and north western corner of Site, looking to the south east. This illustrates the mature trees defining the Site boundary, and the screening they afford the interior of the Site, with only glimpses afforded through the existing tree trunks.

Viewpoint 6

- 4.2.11 View from the 90degree corner of Fox and Pin Lane, at the junction with the remnant historic lane that defines the eastern Site boundary. The mature treed character opens up here at the lane junction, with views into the south eastern corner of the Site, and to the eastern end of the southern boundary woodland. Again views are curtailed to the short and immediate distance, due to the mature vegetated setting of the immediate locale.

Viewpoint 7

- 4.2.12 View from within the woodland on the south western corner of the Site adjacent to the boundary with Riverwalk Primary School. Views are curtailed by the dense woodland, with only glimpses along the farm track here and into the neighbouring school site.

Viewpoint 8

- 4.2.13 View from Fox and Pin Lane just outside the south eastern corner of Site, looking to the north. This is the only point at which views are afforded into and across the Site. A narrow, historic rural lane also utilised as part of the Bury to Clare Walk national trail, continuing north and south from this viewpoint along the lane and remnant lane to Breckey Ley House and Hencote Lane. Mature trees and woodland curtail views to a section of the Site only.

Viewpoint 9

- 4.2.14 View taken from Bury to Clare Walk PRow looking north-east. Mature woodland and trees merge together to form a wooded horizon. The Site is barely discernible, with only mature evergreen tree species indicating Breckey Ley Park, to locate the approximate position of the Site.

Viewpoint 10

- 4.2.15 View taken further west from Bury to Clare Walk PRow, looking north-east. Mature woodland, tree belts and trees merge together to form a wooded horizon. The Site is not discernible.

4. VISUAL ANALYSIS Continued.

4.3 Visual Receptors

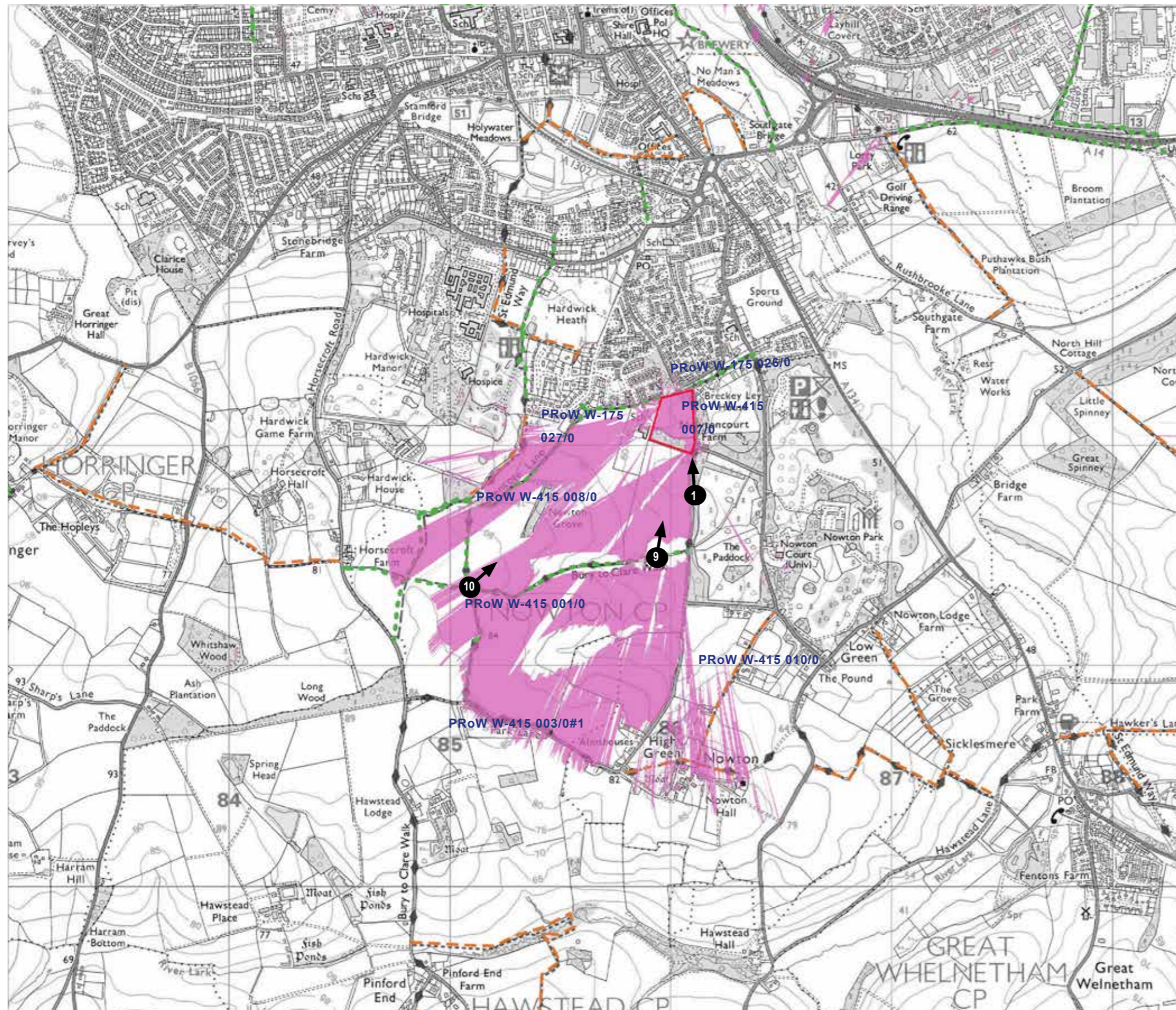
4.3.1 The following people have been identified as potential receptors of visual effects of development of the Site.

- Users of Public Rights of Way
 - Users of PRoW W-175 026/0;
 - Users of PRoW W-415 007/0;
 - Users of PRoW W-415 001/0.






- Users of Roads
 - Users of Mayfield Road;
 - Users of Hencote Lane;
 - Users of Fox and Pin Lane.

- Residents of Properties
 - Residents of Mayfield Road;
 - Residents of Breckey Ley House;
 - Residents of Woodside Close;
 - Residents of Court Farm Cottages

- Other Users
 - Users of Riverwalk Primary School]



KEY

-  Site Boundary
-  PRoW Footpath
-  PRoW Bridleway
-  Viewpoint number and location
-  Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Inset map

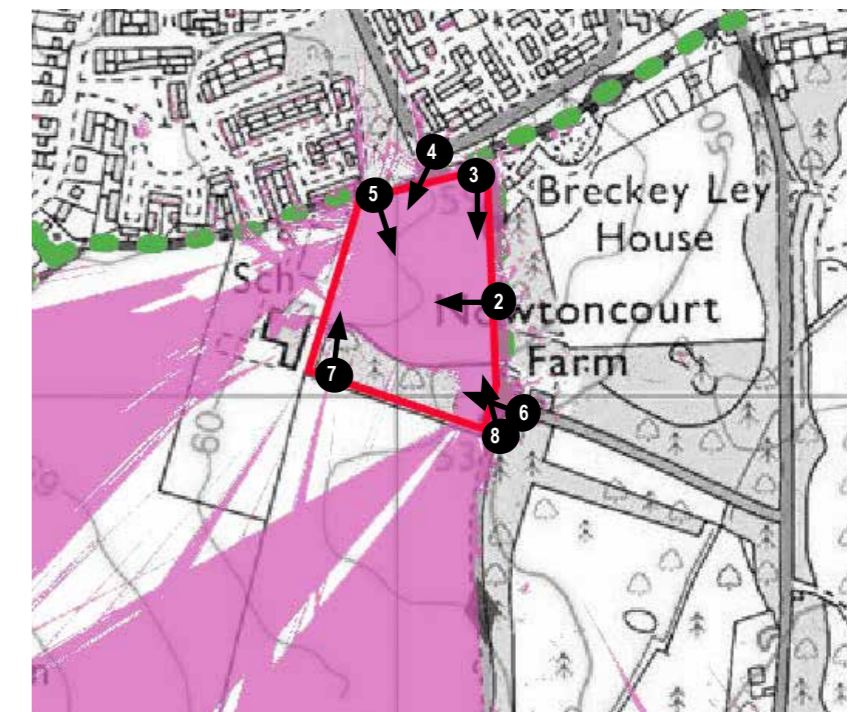


Figure 7: Visual Analysis and Locations of Representative Views.

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←----- Approximate Extent of Site ----->
Onsite woodland Fox and Pin Lane



Viewpoint 1: View north towards the Site from Fox and Pin Lane

←----- Approximate Extent of Site ----->



Viewpoint 2: View west across the Site from eastern boundary PRow W-415 007/0

Approximate Extent of Site



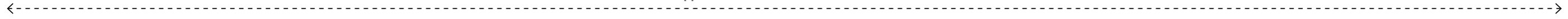
Viewpoint 3: View south across the Site from northern boundary PRoW W175 026/0

Approximate Extent of Site



Viewpoint 4: View from junction of Hencote Lane with Mayfield Road, looking south west

Approximate Extent of Site

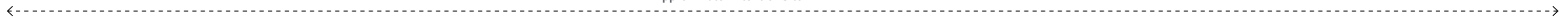


Hencote Lane



Viewpoint 5: View from Hencote Lane and north western corner of Site, looking to the south east

Approximate Extent of Site



Fox and Pin Lane



Viewpoint 6: View Fox and Pin Lane from eastern boundary looking west.

Riverwalk Primary School

Approximate Extent of Site



Viewpoint 7: View from woodland within south western corner of Site looking north.

Approximate Extent of Site

Fox and Pin Lane



Viewpoint 8: View from Fox and Pin Lane at south eastern corner of Site looking north.

←----->
Approximate Extent of Site



Viewpoint 9: View from Bury to Clare Walk PRoW looking north-east.



Viewpoint 10: View from Bury to Clare Walk PRoW looking north-east.

5. SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS AND OPPORTUNITIES

5.1 Potential Effects

- 5.1.1 All landscapes have a degree of intrinsic sensitivity, however landscapes contain a range of different components that will respond differently, subject to the type of the development that is being proposed. To inform the analysis, judgements should be made regarding the potential effects which arise specifically from the type of development being considered. The following section sets out the potential effects which would occur in relation to the proposed residential development of the Site.
- 5.1.2 During the construction phase direct adverse effects to landscape components will result from changes in land cover, vegetation and alterations to the existing topography, for example through excavation for foundations, roads and services. This will occur alongside the provision of temporary infrastructure such as access, site compounds and parking; the storage of materials; erection of temporary fencing/hoardings; the use of operational plant; and general construction works. All are uncharacteristic features of the landscape, but will generally be temporary and short-term.
- 5.1.3 Permanent effects relate to the built form of residential development, incorporating highways infrastructure, and likely to extend over the longer term.
- 5.1.4 Positive impacts will relate to formal areas of open space outside of the wider green infrastructure network and to mitigation integrated into the proposed development (i.e. green infrastructure and strategic landscaping), including retained trees and hedgerows (as far as possible), open space provision, SUDs, attenuation areas and new planting.

5.2 Characteristics and Opportunities

- 5.2.1 Landscape sensitivities / characteristics and opportunities for potential development, taking into account planning policy context, published landscape character guidance and observations during the site visits are set out below:

Landform

- The wider landscape is gently undulating, and this is particularly apparent to the south of the Site. The Site itself slopes gently from the western boundary to the eastern with the south eastern corner being the lowest point, but the majority of the parcel is broadly flat and will not require significant retaining features or be highly visible from the wider landscape.

Existing Vegetation

- The Site boundaries are well vegetated (although some of this vegetation is off-site) with dense mature trees along with a woodland to the southern boundary, which provides visual containment and creates a framework into which development could be easily assimilated into the wider landscape.

Complexity/Scale

- The study area exhibits two main land uses – the residential area to the immediate north of the Site and the agricultural landscape of the Site and the landscape to the south. The Site is more strongly associated with the existing residential area to the north and the school to the west, where mature dense woodland encloses, screens and separates the Site from the wider agricultural landscape to the south.

Landscape Character

- The Site lies within the Undulating Estate Farmlands Landscape Character Type (LCT) as identified in the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment. The LCT is described as a landscape of undulating clay farmland, with frequent low hilltops. Land use is predominantly arable with fields divided by an irregular sinuous field pattern. The long influence of estate ownership has led to an overall “tidy” appearance to the landscape in many places.
- Ancient woodland is a significant feature within the Undulating Estate Farmlands and tends to be in the form of large and sometimes interlocking blocks; to the south of Bury St Edmunds, this is strongly augmented with plantation and parkland plantings. The extent of tree cover is now generally stable but much of this resource is at risk from inappropriate management and neglect including a lack of deer control.
- Settlement is scattered widely throughout this landscape type, with parishes tending to have multiple built clusters of various sizes: large groups often elongated; outlying groups often based on green side settlement; and wayside settlements and farmsteads. These historic patterns within parishes are easily lost to infill and ribbon development.
- This landscape contains an important array of moated sites and farmsteads. The farmsteads are often of the planned “model farm” type although there are also some more multi-period farmsteads. These are often the focus for redevelopment and modification. As well as the loss of characteristic features on individual buildings, the associated development of garden curtilages and paddocks has a significant impact on the wider landscape, which increases with the frequency of such conversions.
- Although most greens and commons in this landscape have been enclosed, they remain as important open spaces that shape the relationship of buildings to each other and define the form of settlements. Intake of such land into gardens, or a change of use, has a significant impact on the wider landscape.

Openness to Public Views

- The extent of views into/out of the Site are restricted by tree cover in the surrounding landscape. The Site itself is considered to be well contained with Public Views restricted to public bridleways to the north and east, but even these views are intermittent through gaps in existing vegetation.

Openness to Private Views

- The Riverwalk School is located to the immediate west of the Site, however inter visibility is limited by existing boundary vegetation. There are some glimpsed views from within the Site to residential properties along Hencote Lane, however views from these properties are likely to be partially screened by existing vegetation.

Relationship to existing urban area

- The Riverwalk School sets a precedent for development on the southern side of Hencote Lane. Whilst there are not strong visual links to the existing settlement boundary, there are strong physical links and it is anticipated that access to the Site would be via one of these existing residential areas.
- There are desire lines present within the Site, which indicates that the Site is frequented by local people (albeit trespassing).

Scope to mitigate

- Given that vegetation is limited to the Site boundaries it is considered that there is good potential to mitigate. Key landscape management guidelines for the Undulating Estate Farmlands LCT include to:
- Maintain the extent, and improve the condition, of woodland cover with effective management• Maintain and restore existing tree cover
- Therefore, any potential development should seek to maintain and restore these features wherever possible, including appropriate offsetting widths to existing vegetation.

6. ASSESSING LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND SUSCEPTIBILITY

6.1 Principles

6.1.1 This section is used to help make judgements about the ability of the proposed Site to accommodate new residential development. 'The Approach to Landscape Sensitivity' (Nat. England June 2019 (superceding Topic Paper 6 for Landscape Sensitivity)) states that; Landscape Sensitivity is the term applied to landscape character and the associated visual resource, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the specific development type. It can be regarded as a measure of resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value.

6.1.2 For this the following definitions are used;

Landscape Character Sensitivity - the extent to which the proposed development can be accommodated without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. Looking at key physical features and characteristics such as extent and pattern of semi natural habitat, land use and enclosure pattern, quality and condition and whether the character of the landscape would be sustained, enhanced or diminished. Effects on the landscape experience are also assessed, relating to aesthetic factors such as scale, openness, form, line, pattern, movement and whether these aspects would be affected positively or negatively.

Visual Sensitivity - general visibility of proposed development considering views and approaches to the settlement from principal approach roads, possible effects on distinctive skylines and effects on visually conspicuous locations such as open, flat ground or open, high or rising ground. Influences of enclosing or screening elements such as landform, existing vegetation and built development; and visual receptors, dependent upon the location and context of the viewpoint and viewing opportunities, the occupation / pastime of the receptor and the importance of the view.

Landscape Value - This sets out the relative value attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a variety of different reasons, from national to local level. Landscape Value is attributed to landscape receptors on the basis of any statutory designations, heritage designations or local policy designations, combined with the assessors view on a range of other factors. These include the condition of the landscape, its management and how intact its traditional features remain. They may also include consideration of its scenic qualities, its cultural value, its interest to visitors or for recreation, and the rarity or irreplaceability of the characteristic features within it.

6.1.3 Whilst the NPPF does not define a 'valued landscape', and in line with the approach taken by the European Landscape Convention and Natural England, all landscapes are considered to have some degree of value, and that the best-designed developments are those that respond to the character and qualities inherent in the local landscape.

6.1.4 Recent case law in relation to NPPF paragraph 170 (CO/4082/2014 and CO/978/2016) is clear in distinguishing designated landscapes from 'valued landscapes'. To be considered a 'valued landscape', a landscape needs to demonstrate physical attributes which take it out of the ordinary and is not merely valued by local people. Factors which may be considered when determining whether a landscape is valued or not valued are set out within Box 5.1 of GLVIA3. These include aspects such as rarity, tranquillity, recreation value and conservation interest. Whilst the factors listed within the box are not comprehensive, it is useful starting point for assessing if a landscape is a "Valued Landscape".

6. ASSESSING LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND SUSCEPTABILITY Continued...

Sensitivity	Landscape Character / Visual Amenity	Definition
High	Landscape Character	<p>Features, of good to excellent condition, which are dominant within the landscape and are fundamental in defining the distinct landscape character of an area.</p> <p>Important characteristics and features recognised as forming an intrinsic part of the landscape, giving rise to a strong unique character and sense of place.</p> <p>Distinctive individual or rare features, which are likely, but not necessarily subject to statutory protection e.g. TPO's or Listed Buildings and/or given significant protection by planning policy.</p> <p>A landscape of strong positive and distinctive character with limited capacity to accommodate the development / change without affecting the baseline situation. These are likely, but not necessarily, statutory protected landscapes e.g. AONB, National Park, Registered Parks and Gardens recognised for their quality or cultural associations.</p> <p>Generally none or few detracting or uncharacteristic features. Low potential for replacement or for mitigation.</p>
	Visual Amenity	<p>Recognised or important views, including those identified within and protected by policy. Visual amenity assessed as good to excellent, an area of high scenic value. These views may include tourist destinations and those marked on maps.</p> <p>Designed views particularly from within and to historic landscapes/ heritage assets.</p> <p>Observers whose attention or interest may be focussed on the landscape to include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential properties with views from rooms occupied during daylight / waking hours (predominantly ground floor). Users of rights of way and recreation trails. Users of land with public access including Open Access.
Medium	Landscape Character	<p>Locally important and notable features, in good to average condition with some evidence of erosion, that contribute to the overall character of the area.</p> <p>Features and elements protected by local policy.</p> <p>A landscape of positive character and recognisable sense of place, with some capacity to accommodate the development / change without affecting the baseline situation. May include local landscape designations, or other designations indicating local cultural or historic value.</p> <p>Some detracting features may be present. Specific opportunities for restoration or enhancement.</p>
	Visual Amenity	<p>Views which are locally recognised including those protected by local policy such as visually important open space or special landscape area. Visual amenity assessed as average to good. These views may include local destinations and well used footpath routes.</p> <p>Views to or from locally important heritage assets.</p> <p>Views of the landscape are part of, but not the sole purpose of activity to include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential properties with views from rooms unoccupied during daylight / waking hours (predominantly first floor rooms) Those playing or spectating at outdoor sports or undertaking formal outdoor recreation. Users of local roads where there are clear / open views across the landscape and low levels of traffic, generally travelling at a low speed.

Sensitivity	Landscape Character / Visual Amenity	Definition
Low	Landscape Character	<p>Elements of average to poor condition, that make a limited contribution to the overall character of the area.</p> <p>Features or elements that are uncharacteristic and detract from the landscape character of the area.</p> <p>A landscape of ordinary character with some evidence of erosion and limited sense of place. Capacity to accommodate the development / change without affecting the baseline situation. Designations unlikely.</p> <p>Detracting features or elements are notable. Good opportunities for restoration and enhancement.</p>
	Visual Amenity	<p>Views which are not recognised or have limited value, such as footpaths which are not well used. Areas of average to low visual amenity.</p> <p>Detracting features may be clearly apparent.</p> <p>Attention is focussed upon the activity and not the wider landscape to include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receptors engaged in sports or Users of main roads travelling at speed, or local roads where the focus is on the road ahead owing to level of traffic and/or the composition of views. Places of work/study.

6. ASSESSING LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND SUSCEPTABILITY Continued...

6.2 Landscape Character Sensitivity

- 6.2.1 This assesses the extent to which proposed residential development can be accommodated without unacceptable adverse effects on its character.
- 6.2.2 This arable land of positive character, good condition and mature boundary vegetation of trees and hedgerows and dense woodland provides enclosure and an intimate sense of place. Boundary vegetation provides important landscape features which contribute to the overall landscape character and warrant protect from development where possible.
- 6.2.3 The Site abuts existing settlement edge, with residential dwellings to the north and eastern boundaries and the Riverwalk Primary School to the west. The Site is separated from the wider agricultural landscape to the south by dense mature woodland to its southern boundary.
- 6.2.4 Remnant historic narrow lanes such as Hencote Lane to the north and Old Town Lane to the northern and eastern boundaries are visible on historic mapping provide a sense of time depth, alongside Breckley Ley House and the wider influences of remnant parkland estates of Nowton Park and Hardwick Heath.
- 6.2.5 At the junction of Fox and Pin Lane and Old Town Lane the wooded character opens up slightly allowing a view into the Site and casting light onto the junction.

6.3 Visual Sensitivity

- 6.3.1 This assesses the general visibility and visual receptors.
- 6.3.2 The enclosure of the Site means that views are limited to the near distance, with existing vegetation foreshortening views from the wider landscape. Key views are identified in Figure 7.
- 6.3.3 This landscape consists of historic lanes where tall mature vegetation meets overhead, creating more intimate and semi-enclosed scene, especially noticeable around the southern edges of Bury St Edmunds and the old estate parklands of Nowton Park and Hardwick Heath. Views open up to longer distances as one rises up the plateau, further to the south with vegetation reducing to a single but strong network of hedgerows and occasional trees.
- 6.3.4 The primary receptors who have public views into the Site are users of the local Public Rights of Way network. With a focus on the wider landscape, these receptors are considered to have a high sensitivity to change, but it should be noted that these views are transient in nature and development of the Site would present the opportunity to enhance pedestrian links in the form of the already apparent desire lines.
- 6.3.5 There is a greater perception of connection, for proposed areas of the Site that are adjacent to the existing settlement, through movement and noise associated with village edge location.

6.4 Landscape Value

- 6.4.1 The Site, set within an undulating landscape consists rather ordinary arable field, bounded by good quality mature vegetation, along with woodland to the southern boundary, existing residential settlement and individual dwellings to the north and eastern boundaries, and large primary school to the west.

- 6.4.2 Given that there is no specific documentation in relation to the designation of Special Landscape Areas within West Suffolk, nor are the criteria for designating a Special Landscape Area known, an assessment of the Site in relation to the criteria are outlined below.

- 6.4.3 Whilst the Site is likely to be valued locally, there are few features which elevate the Site above the ordinary. Given the assessment below, it is considered that the Site is of Medium / Low landscape value. Whilst the Site lies within a local landscape designation, it is considered that development could be accommodated without adverse effects on the wider SLA. The Site is not considered to be a valued landscape in the context of the NPPF.

Landscape Value	Definition
Landscape Quality	Medium - In the absence of a detailed arboricultural survey, the majority of existing vegetation is considered to of moderate to low quality, but has some landscape value, particularly the woodland to the south of the Site. The trees are typical of the local landscape and comprise mainly native species such as Oak and Field Maple. Tree belts are generally in tact and continuous.
Scenic Quality	Medium - The Site is relatively well enclosed from the wider landscape by existing tree belts along all site boundaries. This has the effect of foreshortening views and is in contrast to the landscape to the immediate south where views are far reaching. The Site contributes mature trees and woodland to the well vegetated local landscape character.
Rarity	Low / None - The Site is not considered to accommodate any rare features, nor is it part of a rare Landscape Character Type. The dense woodland planting surrounding Breckley Ley Park and Nowton Park to the east of the Site gives the appearance of a large covert or plantation, which are common features within the SLA.
Representativeness	Low - The Site is of ordinary character in terms of arable land use with good boundary vegetation and woodland, exhibiting some key characteristics of Undulating Estate Farmlands LCT, namely the native hedgerow trees, gentle undulation and well-wooded appearance. There are no other features associated with the site that are considered representative of this landscape.
Conservation Interest	Low - The Site is not known to have any features of wildlife, archaeological or historical/cultural interest present.
Recreation Value	Low - The Site is not subject to public access, and therefore the Site itself had no recreation value. Public Rights of Way run along the northern and eastern site boundaries. Views from these PROWs are intermittent and in some places are heavily filtered by existing tree cover. As such, the Site is not valued in terms of landscape experience in recreation activity. The Site does not form a key vista in any views from Public Rights of Way within the wider landscape. Recreational interest within the study area is focused within Nowton Park Country Park, which features sports facilities and walking routes.
Perceptual Assets	Medium / Low - The Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment does not indicate that this area is valued for its wildness or tranquillity. Whilst the network of winding lanes to the south of the Site creates an intimate spatial scale, and the Site itself has an enclosed character as a result of its wooded enclosure, there is no overwhelming sense of tranquility as a result of its proximity to the Riverwalk School.
Associations	None - There are no known cultural or historical associations with this Site.

6. ASSESSING LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND SUSCEPTABILITY Continued...

6.5 Landscape Susceptibility

6.5.1 Landscape Susceptibility is the degree to which a defined landscape and its associated visual qualities and attributes might respond to the specific development type without undue adverse effects on the character of the landscape (related to landscape character sensitivity) or the way that it is perceived (related to visual sensitivity) and without compromising the values attached to it.

6.5.2 The Landscape Susceptibility for housing development was judged to be *lowest* where:

- The development would not increase the sense of urban sprawl when viewed from the surrounding landscape due to proximity of existing residential dwellings to the north and east and Riverwalk Primary School to the west;
- Riverwalk School to the west of the Site sets a precedent for development to the south of Hencote Lane.
- The Site is well contained in both landscape and visual terms by existing vegetation on / beyond the site boundaries;
- The existing woodland to the south of the Site provides strong physical and visual containment and creates a defensible settlement boundary;
- The development would have limited impacts on recreational users, with good potential to enhance access to the wider countryside;
- The development would fit well with the scale and pattern of the existing settlement and landscape elements; and
- Whilst the Site lies within a Special Landscape Area this is not an absolute constraint on development. The Site exhibits some of the key characteristics of the wider landscape, but this is also applicable to large areas of land to the south of the Site.

6.5.3 Overall the susceptibility of the landscape for housing development, is generally lower towards the western half of the Site, where residential development would be screened and is set against the backdrop of mature vegetation. Medium susceptibility to change is considered to be where the Site abuts the historic narrow lane to the north eastern corner and along the eastern boundary, where it serves as a backdrop to the parkland estate character area. There is also a reduction in mature tree cover in the south eastern Site corner allowing views in from the historic lanes.

6.5.4 Therefore it is considered that the Site can accommodate residential development, subject to appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures.

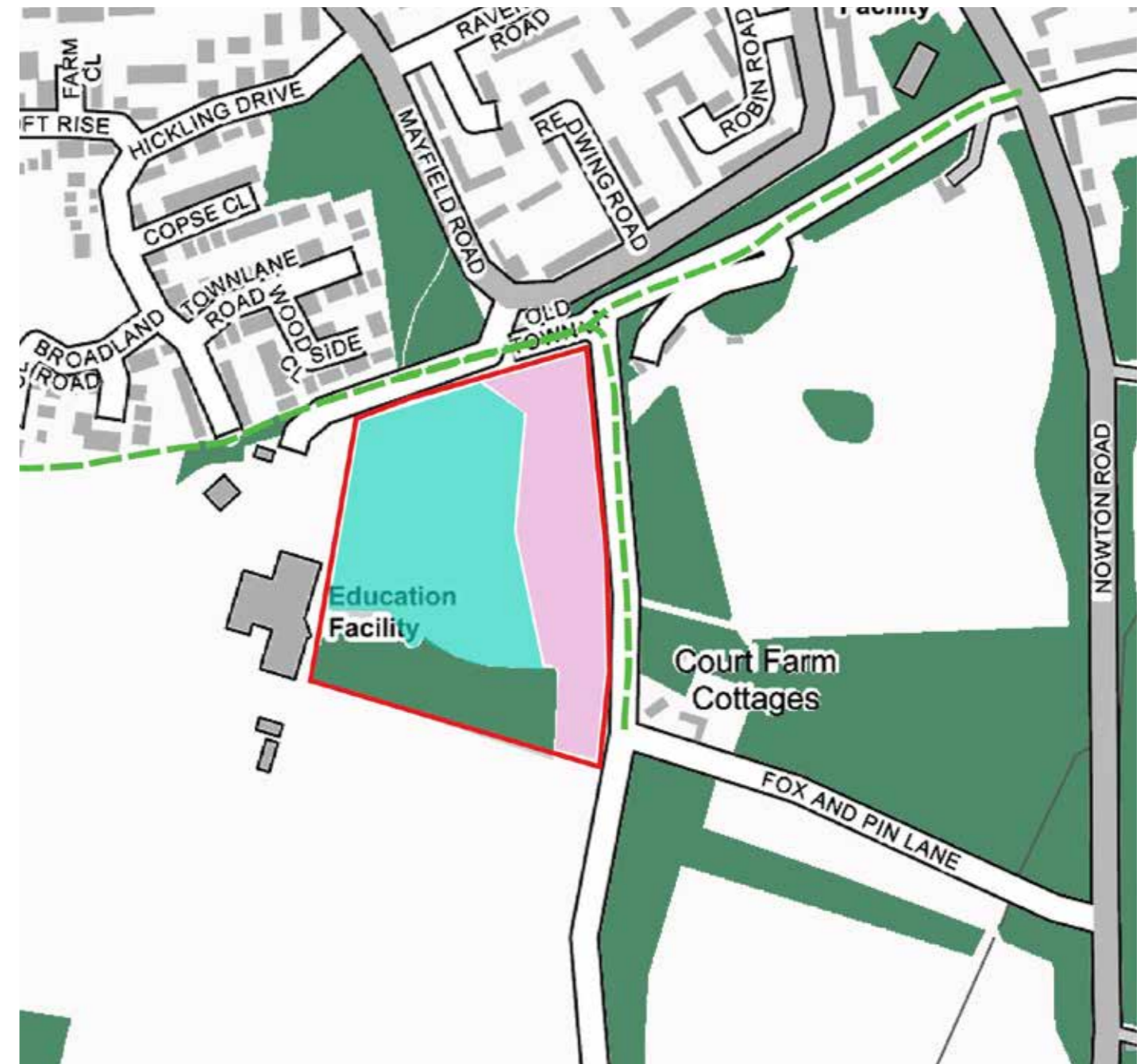








Figure 9: Susceptibility Plan

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KEY

	Site Boundary		Medium Susceptibility change
	PRoW Footpath		Low Susceptibility change
	High Susceptibility change		Existing Vegetation

7. PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT AND LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

7.1 Principles

7.1.1 The preliminary development and landscape strategy for the Site has considered landscape components, landscape character and visual amenity. This has drawn on the preliminary landscape and visual appraisal and the early identification of constraints and opportunities. It has also drawn on the opportunities and constraints identified for the study area and therefore addresses the context of the surrounding area. This includes:

- Considering the relationship between the urban fringe of the proposed development and the adjacent countryside;
- Ensuring that landscape is the integrating framework for new development and that the proposed development is well integrated into the surrounding landscape; and
- Applying an overarching green infrastructure strategy throughout the masterplan.

7.1.2 Adopting this approach ensures that the preliminary development and landscape strategy incorporates mitigation as an inherent component of the proposals, intending to avoid or reduce the adverse effects of a development proposal from the outset.

7.1.3 The principles for mitigation measures aim to:

- Conserve and enhance the landscape character of the surrounding landscape;
- Retain as far as possible and enhance existing landscape elements and features;
- Optimise protection and screening for visual receptors; and
- Avoid loss or damage to retained landscape elements and features (consequently also conserving and enhancing ecological fabric).

7.2 Preliminary Development and Landscape Framework

7.2.1 The preliminary development and landscape strategy for the Site has been informed by reference to the landscape and visual analysis.

Overview

7.2.2 In the context of the wider landscape around the south of Bury St Edmunds, the Site forms part of a transition area between the settlement edge and the wider countryside. Coupled with this is the consistent pattern of the mixed agricultural land uses across the study area and the framework of hedgerow field boundaries and occasional hedgerow tree belts/hedgerow trees. Together this creates a coherent sense of character, but one that gradually changes in response to the adjacent settlement.

7.3 General Design Considerations

7.3.1 General design considerations in relation to landscape and visual matters can be used to shape an appropriate design response in relation to local landscape character and visual amenity. These include:

Development envelope

7.3.2 The development envelope is the area identified within which the built form and infrastructure will sit; it is a

constraint on the scale and spatial extents of the built elements of the masterplan.

7.3.3 In order to minimise effects on landscape character and improve settlement setting, the edge of built development across all parcels should not extend right up to existing field boundaries. Some linear green space (most likely associated with access lanes to the frontages of properties) should be retained where possible.

7.3.4 It is recommended that all the boundaries incorporate a landscape buffer, approximately 12m wide (to incorporate the root protection area of all existing trees); and that the eastern boundary should carefully consider the relationship to historic narrow lane.

- Back to back development, but with a narrow landscaping strip which can be transferred to the homeowner and protected through a covenant; or

- Incorporation of Public Open Space along this boundary, potentially incorporating sustainable drainage features.

7.3.5 Additional open space to the Site frontage will enhance screening and connectivity across the Site. There should be no development within the Root Protection Zone (RPZ) of existing trees.

Existing and proposed green infrastructure

7.3.6 Analysis of the existing green infrastructure network has identified a series of strategic green infrastructure links. It is considered that much of this Green Infrastructure can be retained and enhanced as a result of the proposed development.

7.3.7 The masterplan will work with the existing scale and pattern of the local landscape character by creating a series of smaller development parcels which together form the overall development envelope. These create a layout which retains as much existing green infrastructure as possible, works within the capacity of the landscape and adds a natural permeability to the overall massing the wider development envelope.

7.3.8 Retained green infrastructure will be reinforced and enhanced through additional landscaping and improved management; the aims of which will consider location, function and also biodiversity objectives. The approach includes consideration of 'stand offs' to trees and hedgerows which will help to avoid potential impacts on the root protection zones of these elements, helping to ensure they are retained in the long term.

7.3.9 Notwithstanding the results of any detailed arboricultural surveys, to ensure the protection of existing strategic vegetation existing hedgerows should be safeguarded with a minimum 5m buffer, with a 10-15m zone to ensure the protection of mature hedgerow trees.

7.3.10 There will inevitably be some limited losses of vegetation across the Site however, overall, these losses will be balanced with extensive areas of new landscape planting and ecological enhancement areas. This will include a tree lined 'green link / boulevard' along the principal access with skyline trees and areas of open space / amenity areas, which will provide a green corridor through the development and break up the built form.

7.3.11 The strategy for existing and proposed green infrastructure will provide an immediate landscape structure which mitigates potential landscape impacts and will help to reduce or eliminate visual impacts.



Figure 10: Preliminary Landscape Strategy

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7. PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT AND LANDSCAPE STRATEGY Continued.

Landscape and detailed design

- 7.3.12 The detailed design stages can be tailored to include a high quality landscape scheme, including both public open space and private green space.
- 7.3.13 Areas of private garden space and the internal street scene have the capacity to include street and garden trees. Over time these will contribute to the green infrastructure framework across the site, enhancing the character and integration of the Site with the surrounding landscape context, and providing softening in nearby and distant views.
- 7.3.14 At detailed design the selection of species for trees and woodland will refer to native species and as well as those present in the context of the local landscape character.

Summary

- 7.3.15 Together these principles place a particular emphasis on green infrastructure across the site (including strategic landscape planting and open spaces) and the role that landscape characteristics and green infrastructure have in determining an appropriate boundary to the settlement edge.
- 7.3.16 The aims and principles can be taken forward through an iterative approach to inform an evolving design process at an increasing level of detail through the planning process.
- 7.3.17 It is considered that, with an appropriate approach to mitigation and the implementation of a robust landscape and green infrastructure strategy, a residential masterplan on the site will be well contained both physically and visually and will show clear defensible boundaries.

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Summary

8.1.1 This Landscape Statement has been prepared to determine the constraints and opportunities in respect of potential development of the Site, Land South of Bury St Edmunds. The document has addressed the following landscape resources and visual receptors:

- Landscape character, including physical landscape features and elements; and
- Views and visual amenity experienced by residents, recreational users (including visitors and tourists) and road users.

8.1.2 The report has determined the landscape and visual constraints and opportunities regarding the wider site area and its landscape context. The analysis will influence the assessment of the development potential of the wider site area, to inform master planning and the identification of developable areas.

8.2 Baseline Conditions

8.2.1 The area (approximately 4.1ha) is regular in shape and comprises a single field.

8.2.2 The Site lies outside of the current settlement boundary and in planning terms is classified as 'countryside', however the Site has direct physical and visual links to the existing settlement boundary to the north.

8.2.3 The land use of the Site is agricultural. The landscape is generally set across regular field enclosures which become slightly smaller in scale in close proximity to the settlement edge. In the wider landscape, arable land continues to dominate; with some small areas of woodland present.

8.2.4 The Site is bound to the north by an existing settlement and road, to the east are two parkland's; Breckey Ley Park and Nowton Park, to the south is a dense woodland with arable fields beyond, and to the west is a primary school (see **Figure 2**).

8.2.5 Vegetation on the Site is largely limited to a grassed field; enclosures are defined to a degree by hedgerows and tree belts however these are slightly fragmented in places. Within the wider landscape field boundaries are defined by mature and continuous hedgerows and also by linear belts of trees and woodland. Some areas have been subject to agricultural intensification and hedgerow boundaries have been lost as a result.

8.2.6 There is currently one public access to the Site, and there are public views towards the Site from the local roads and Public Rights of Way Network.

8.2.7 Vegetation is largely limited to the Site boundaries and comprises predominantly native trees such as Common Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Common Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Field Maple. Hedgerows are also comprised of native species such as and Common Oak (*Quercus robur*). To the South is a woodland.

8.2.8 The Site slopes gently from west to east, falling from approximately 50m AOD to approximately 48m AOD. There is also a gentle slope north to south from approximately 49m AOD to 52m AOD.

8.2.9 The former Suffolk Structure Plan 2001 notes (under Policy ENV8) that Special Landscape Areas have the characteristics of one or more of the following: (d) other areas of countryside where topography and natural vegetation, particularly broad-leaved woodland, combine to produce an area of special landscape quality and character. It has therefore been assumed that the Site is included as part of the Special Landscape Area due to the

special landscape quality and character as a result of topography and natural vegetation.

8.2.10 At the county level (Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment) the Site lies within the Undulating Estate Farmlands LCT. This landscape is undulating in nature with an organic field pattern and a variety hedgerow trees; Oak, Ash, Field Maple. There is a complex arrangement of plantations and ancient woodlands as well as Parklands.

8.2.11 The overall nocturnal character of this southern edge of settlement will be dark countryside when view from the arable landscape looking northwards to settlement edge. The Site benefits from substantial existing mature vegetated boundaries, although there is a reduction in mature tree cover at the south eastern corner, proposed development will have to carefully consider layout design in respect of light spill.

8.2.12 Extension of settlements is identified as a key force for change within this LCT. In particular, the visual impact of new vertical elements is increased by the landform. Appropriate mitigation is required in order to integrate new development into the local landscape context.

8.3 Likely Effects

8.3.1 Effects on landscape character will occur at a site level and its immediate landscape context and have little influence on the character of the wider landscape.

8.3.2 The nature of visual effects is such that the greatest degree of effect will be from locations in close proximity to the Site; from the wider countryside, the effects will be much reduced due to the limited visibility, existing context of the settlement edge and mitigation inherent in the proposed development which, over time, will help to integrate the proposed development into the landscape.

8.3.3 The preliminary development and landscape strategy aims to maintain and enhance the existing green infrastructure network and provide a series of proposals for existing and green infrastructure and open space that respond to local landscape characteristics.

8.3.4 Consequently, the use of existing landscape components to guide the landscape strategy and subsequent augmentation of these components can create a high-quality environment which respects the character of the wider area.

8.4 Summary of Characteristics and Opportunities

8.4.1 The report identifies the key constraints and opportunities present on the Site and surrounding landscape with the analysis, in the context of the specific nature of the type of development being considered, informing the inherent proposals for landscape mitigation. These include:

- Existing vegetation on the Site boundaries which creates a strong Green Infrastructure framework;
- The physical and visual relationship between the Site and existing urban area, particularly the interface between the Site and existing properties along northern edge;
- The physical and visual relationship between the Site and existing historic lanes;
- Landform - the Site is situated on the rising valley sides and the extent of the developable area should be carefully considered in order to avoid breaking the skyline; and
- Views and visibility - the Site is generally well-screened in near distance views, however there are some views from nearby roads and PRoWs.

8.4.2 These over-arching principles set the framework for the areas which are proposed for development. Each of these can be subject to a greater level of detail regarding masterplanning to identify additional detailed considerations through the planning process.

8.5 Conclusion

8.5.1 It has been assumed that the Site is included as part of the Special Landscape Area due to its apparent special landscape quality and character as a result of topography and natural vegetation. As has been demonstrated above, whilst the Site exhibits some characteristics of the local landscape it is not necessarily elevated above the ordinary, and there are similarly enclosed fields elsewhere on the southern edge of Bury St Edmunds.

8.5.2 Whilst SLAs are generally considered to have a very limited capacity to absorb change due their landform, historic importance and condition the Site itself is well enclosed and therefore development could be easily assimilated into the wider landscape. It is acknowledged that the Site is in good condition, however features of importance are limited to the boundaries and could be retained and incorporated into any future development.

8.5.3 Whilst the introduction of new elements in the form of buildings, infrastructure and open spaces will alter the qualities and key characteristics of the SLA, the enclosure of the Site would ensure limited to no influence on the rest of the SLA. It is therefore considered that through good design development could be accommodated within the Site.

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