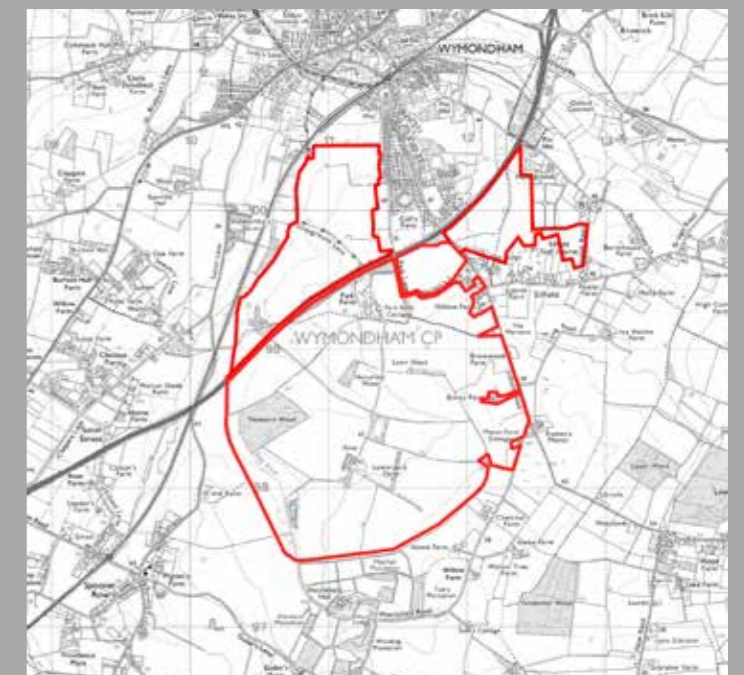



Landscape and Visual Appraisal
(James Blake Associates)

Proposed Silfield Garden Village, Wymondham, Norfolk
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL
for Residential Led, Mixed Use Development

on behalf of **Orbit Homes and Bowbridge Strategic Land**
February 2020



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scope

This landscape and visual appraisal (LVA) has been prepared to determine the constraints and opportunities in respect of a potential garden community on land to north and south of the A11 at Silfield, Norfolk.

The LVA 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.

Site Description

The Site comprises an extensive area of landscape to the north and south of the A11 dual carriageway. Whilst the landscape exhibits some of the key local landscape characteristics, there are few defining characteristics that elevate the landscape in general to a 'valued landscape' in NPPF terms. Urban influences such as the Wymondham Industrial Estate detract from the northern edge, and the A11 is a strong urbanising feature. Recreational value is limited to a two public footpath routes, through mainly arable land.

Vegetation on the site is largely limited to the arable land use; field enclosures are defined to a degree by hedgerows however these are fragmented in places, with many of the fields subject to post war intensification and hedgerow removal. Occasional hedgerow trees are present but are not frequent across the site. Several small woodland copses are present within the Site as well as Peaseacre Wood, an area of designated Ancient Woodland. In the wider landscape field boundaries are defined by mature and continuous hedgerows and also by linear belts of trees and woodland.

Landscape Baseline

At the district level (South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (2001) the Site straddles three different Landscape Character Areas (LCAs), the Wymondham Settled Farmland Plateau (D1), the Tiffey Tributary Farmland (B2) and the Ashwellthorpe Farmland Plateau (E1). Key characteristics of all of these LCAs include:

- Large scale arable farmlands in large fields with sparse hedgerows and hedgerow trees with some pastoral farmland in the valley;
- Framed and long-range views into adjoining character areas, and towards important landmarks; and
- Elements of vernacular interest.

Visual Baseline

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. The visual envelope comprises open countryside with scattered settlement made up of Wymondham to the north and smaller villages and hamlets including Silfield and Spooner Row to the south and east. The principal views towards the Site are from the surrounding road network and Public Rights of Way which run through the Site itself

Likely Effects

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.

The nature of visual effects is such that the greatest degree of effect will be from locations directly adjacent 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.

Landscape Strategy

The preliminary development and landscape strategy aims to maintain and enhance the existing green infrastructure network and provide a series of proposals for retaining existing green infrastructure as far as possible, and creating new areas of open space that respond to local landscape characteristics such as landform, hydrology, field boundaries, tree belts etc; all physical and enduring features in the landscape.

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 both the Wymondham urban area and the wider countryside.

Summary

Notwithstanding some degree of landscape and visual impact, development of the Site can come forward based on a sensitively designed mixed-use scheme with only limited landscape and visual effects at a localised level. Such impacts can successfully be avoided or reduced through effective mitigation at the detailed design stage.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 James Blake Associates Ltd. have been instructed by David Lock Associates, on behalf of Orbit Homes and Bowbridge Strategic Land, to undertake a preliminary appraisal of landscape and visual matters in relation to the proposed development of a new settlement of around 6,500 homes on land to the north and south of the A11 at Silfield, Wymondham, Norfolk (referred to as 'the Site').

1.1.2 The report has been prepared to support the representations to the Regulation 18 Greater Norwich Local Plan consultation; and the master planning of Silfield Garden Village.

1.1.3 This appraisal of landscape and visual impacts (LVA) 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 Site area is located on the southern edge of Wymondham, occupying land immediately north and south of the A11, adjacent to the existing urban area of Wymondham and to the west and north-west of the existing settlement of Silfield. The Site has direct physical and visual links to the existing settlement edge. The Site is irregular in plan form and comprises several arable field enclosures extending from the urban edge in the east to Bays River in the west.

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 LVA.

1.2.3 This LVA 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 3km 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

1 ³¹ 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - 3rd Edition (GLVIA3). Landscape Institute and IEMA. 2013

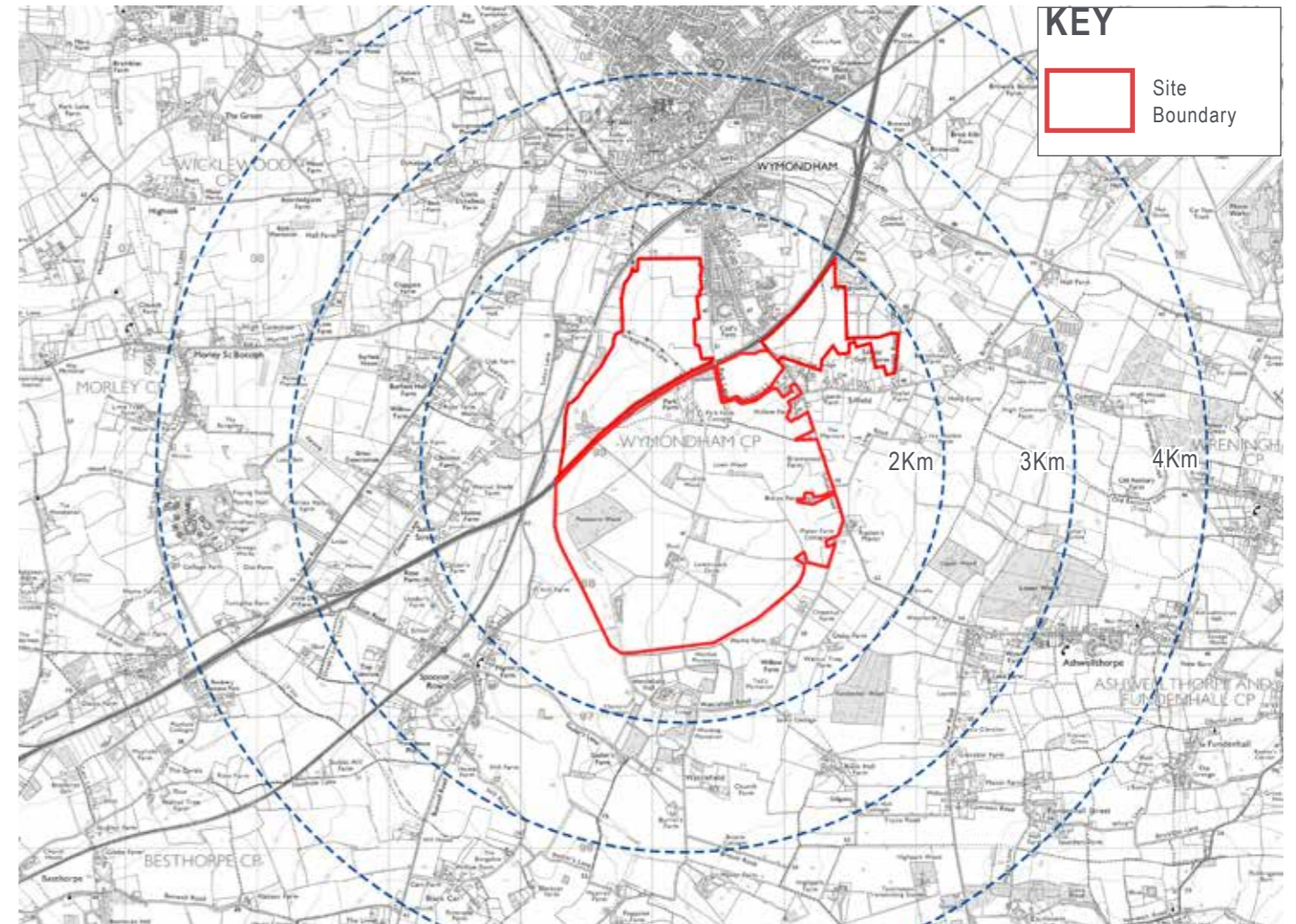


Figure 1: Site Location and Study Area

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- 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.

1.3.4 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 site visits undertaken on the 7th and 22nd of January 2020.

1. INTRODUCTION Continued.

- 1.3.5 Photographs were taken with a digital camera with a 50mm lens (equivalent focal length) at approximately 1.8 metres in height. These are presented as a series of viewpoints and have been used to inform the LVA (included as **Figure 6: Visual Analysis and Figure 7: Viewpoint Photographs 1 to 22**). Photographs taken in winter represent the worst case scenario in terms of visual screening; visibility will be lower in summer when deciduous vegetation is in full leaf.
- 1.3.6 Landscape features and elements provide the physical environment for flora and fauna and the associated importance of biodiversity assets. This LVA 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 LVA in terms of physical landscape resources (for example trees and hedgerows) and also landscape character. However, this LVA 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. Heritage matters are addressed separately in the Heritage Statement prepared by CgMs Heritage.
- 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 451ha) is irregular in shape and comprises two principal areas: the northern parcel, and southern parcel, on either side of the A11 dual carriageway.
- 2.1.2 The Site lies outside of the current settlement boundary and in planning terms is classified as 'countryside'. The land use of the Site is predominantly arable, set across regular field enclosures which become slightly smaller in scale within the southern parcel. In the wider landscape, arable land continues to dominate however becomes smaller in scale to the south-east, away from the settlement edge; some small areas of woodland are also present.
- 2.1.3 Vegetation on the Site is largely limited to the arable land use; field enclosures are defined to a degree by hedgerows however these are fragmented in places, with many of the fields subject to post war intensification and hedgerow removal. Occasional hedgerow trees are present but are not frequent across the site. Several small woodland copses are present within the Site as well as Peaseacre Wood, an area of designated Ancient Woodland. In the wider landscape field boundaries are defined by mature and continuous hedgerows and also by linear belts of trees and woodland.
- 2.1.4 Public access to the site is limited. A public footpath, PRoW Wymondham FP33 runs through the northern parcel, connecting Park Land in the east to Wymondham Road in the west via the railway line. Within the southern parcel of land a footpath, PRoW Wymondham FP19 (which merges with PRoW Wymondham FP34 beyond Park Farm) crosses the Site east-west linking the to the PRoW within the northern parcel of land via the A11. A public footpath, Wymondham FP21 runs north-south through a sub-parcel of the southern parcel (see paragraph 2.1.19).

Northern Parcel

- 2.1.5 The northern parcel, which extends to approximately 80ha comprises entirely agricultural land, which at the time of survey was under arable cultivation.
- 2.1.6 Vegetation is largely limited to the site boundaries with mixed species native hedgerows along the western and eastern boundaries of this parcel comprising species such as *Cornus sanguinea*, *Corylus avellana*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Prunus spinosa* and *Quercus robur*. There is also an internal hedgerow from the existing field access point from Park Lane marking a historic field boundary.
- 2.1.7 A small area of mixed broadleaved plantation woodland lies towards the south-eastern corner of this parcel comprising species such as *Acer campestre*, *Corylus avellana* and *Quercus robur*. Further areas of woodland lie towards the south-western corner of the Site, with a mixed use broadleaved plantation and a single species broadleaved plantation comprising *Alnus cordata*.
- 2.1.8 None of this existing vegetation is subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).
- 2.1.9 The land falls gradually to from east to west, falling from approximately 45m AOD along the eastern site boundary with Park Lane, to approximately 40m AOD along the western boundary near the railway line.
- 2.1.10 Beyond the northern boundary is an earth bund which serves to screen views of Wymondham Industrial Estate.
- 2.1.11 A wet ditch enters the parcel in the south-western corner from a culvert below the A11. Furthermore, there are two ponds located within this parcel.

Southern Parcel

- 2.1.12 The southern parcel, which extends to approximately 371ha comprises agricultural land, areas of woodland and a number of existing farm buildings and associated farmsteads at Park Farm and Lower Park Farm.
- 2.1.13 Hedgerows are more prevalent within this parcel, with many of the existing fields defined by mixed-species boundary hedgerows, some of which are considered to be species rich (refer to Ecology Technical Note prepared by BSG Ecology). The most prominent species are *Acer campestre*, *Carpinus betulus*, *Cornus sanguinea*, *Corylus avellana* and *Ilex aquifolium*. Many of the existing hedgerows are associated with a pattern of wet ditches.
- 2.1.14 Similarly the northern parcel, the southern parcel incorporates areas of scattered woodland and copses. The largest and most prominent is Peaseacre Wood, an area of designated Ancient Woodland, comprising species such as *Acer campestre*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Corylus avellana*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Fraxinus excelsior* and *Salix alba*.
- 2.1.15 Bays River, a headwater stream and tributary of the River Tiffey (itself a tributary of the River Yare) runs for approximately 2km through the whole Site. It flows into the Site at its south-eastern corner and forms the boundaries between a number of arable fields and Peaseacre Wood within the southern parcel before turning abruptly west and joining the Site's western boundary where it continuous to flow north beyond the western boundary of the northern parcel. It leaves the Site within the northern parcel of land to enter the Bays River Meadows South County Wildlife Site.
- 2.1.16 A drain runs the width of the southern parcel from east-north west. There are also a number of wet ponds within this parcel.
- 2.1.17 The southern parcel falls from approximately 56m AOD along the eastern boundary with Silfield Road to approximately 40m AOD along the western boundary with Bays River.
- 2.1.18 Verdon's Lane separates the parcel into two distinct areas although the smaller parcel to the north-east of this parcel is also agricultural land and is broadly similar in character to the wider southern parcel.
- 2.1.19 A second smaller sub-parcel of approximately 31ha lies to the north-east of Silfield Road and comprises further agricultural land which is bound by existing drains to the north-east. To the south of this parcel lies the Silfield Village Pitch and Put which incorporates substantial tree belts. A public footpath, Wymondham FP21 runs north-south through this sub-parcel.

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. Those in closest proximity to the Site are described below.

Peaseacre Wood

- 2.2.2 Peaseacre Wood, which extends to approximately 12ha, lies within the southern parcel of the Site. This is an area of Ancient Replanted Woodland and is thought to remnant woodland from the historical deer park.

Listed Buildings

2. SITE AND IMMEDIATE CONTEXT Continued.

- 2.2.3 Silfield Old Hall (Grade II Listed) lies just outside of the southern parcel of land, to the north of Verdon's Lane. The property dates back to the mid 17th century, with crosswings added in the late 17th century to form a cruciform plan. This building is largely timber-framed, although the ground floors of the wings are of brick. Inside a 17th century staircase and doors survive, and since 1940 the property has been divided into two houses.
- 2.2.4 Mariner's Inn (Grade II Listed) - this former public house was constructed in the early 17th century with a timber-frame partially coated with brick. The south gable wall is of 19th century brick, and there is an attached wing of clay lump. The property is well screened by existing vegetation on all sides. This property lies immediately adjacent to the south-eastern edge of the Site.
- 2.2.5 Chestnut Farmhouse (Grade II Listed) is an early 18th century brick building with a roof of black glazed pantiles. This two storey building has a hipped roof and two chimney stacks. Chestnut Farmhouse lies approximately 150m to the south-east of the southern parcel.
- 2.2.6 Wattlefield Hall incorporates the Grade II Listed house, barn and stables. Wattlefield Hall is a late 18th or early 19th century house, bought by the Wymondham solicitor John Mitchell in 1856 and given a new southeast front. There is also an impressive early 19th century stable court in the classical style to the rear. This barn, forming the north side of a stable court, dates to the late 18th century and is of brick with a roof of black glazed pantiles. These Listed structures lie approximately 315m to the south of the southern parcel.

County Wildlife Sites

- 2.2.7 There are a number of County Wildlife Sites (CWS) within the wider study area. While CWS do not receive statutory protection, they are given some protection through the planning system, with Norfolk Wildlife Trust playing the key role in advising planning authorities, developers and others on their protection. The closest to the Site is the Bays River Meadow CWS which lies adjacent to the western site boundary of the northern parcel of land.

Conservation Areas

- 2.2.8 The historic core of Wymondham is designated as a Conservation Area - an area of special architectural or historic interest. The Conservation Area was first designated in 1974 was reviewed in 1994 and 2001 following which various adjustments were made. Further adjustments were proposed as part of the consultation exercise and subsequently approved by the Council in December 2012.
- 2.2.9 The original Conservation Area incorporates Wymondham Abbey and the historic core of the town, centred around Middleton Street. The area defined in 2001, includes the town's historic core approximately defined to the south by the B1172 and the River Tiffey; to the west by the properties fronting Becketswell Road, Vicar Street to Cock Street, and to the north by Back Lane. In 1994, a new area was designated around The Lizard, an unusual cluster of cottages resting in the southern valley slopes of the River Tiffey.
- 2.2.10 The boundaries of the Conservation Area now extend south beyond the B1172 to the railway line, and to the west to include Becketswell meadow and Cavick House. To the north the boundary includes the development on Reynold's

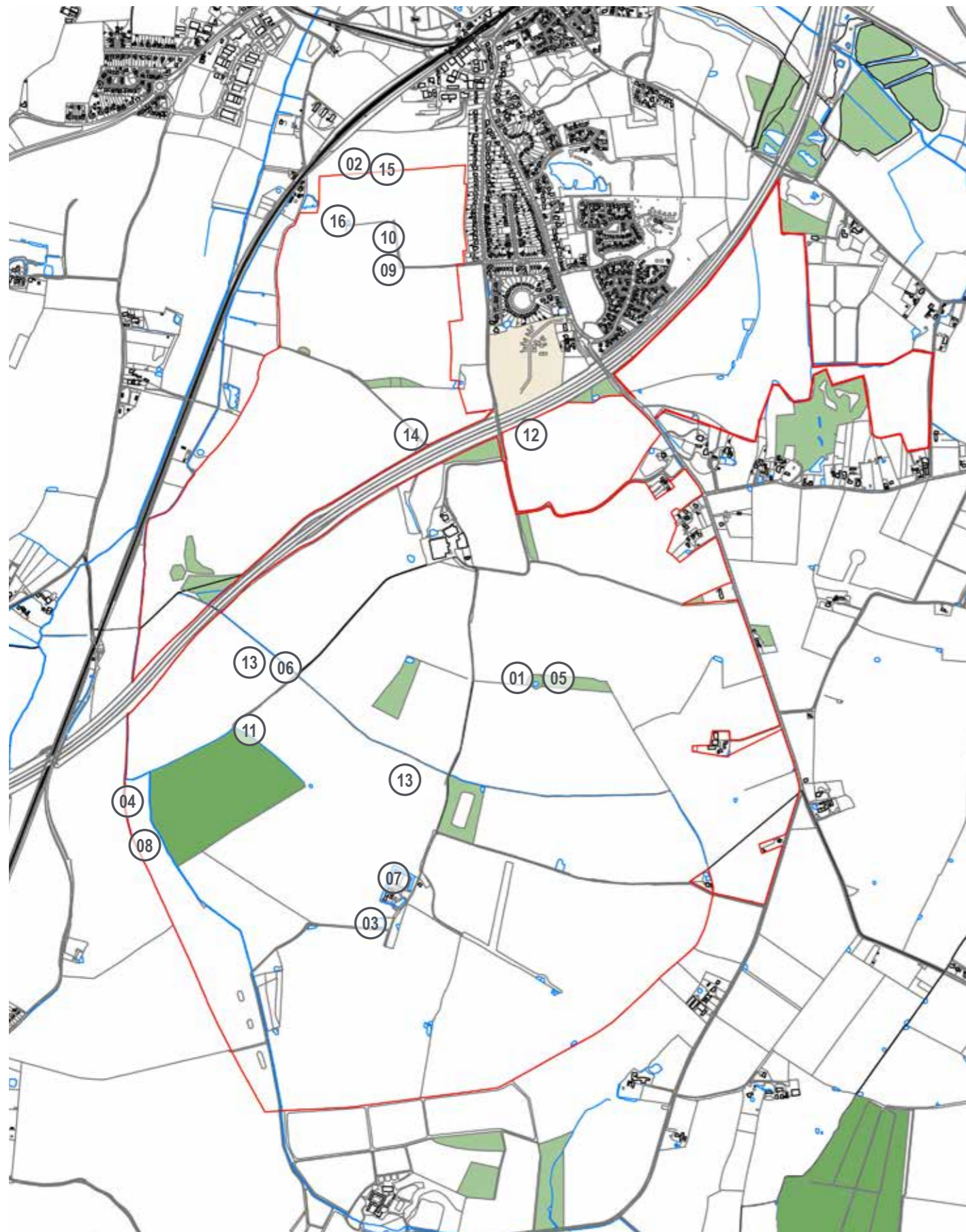


Figure 2: Site Features

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01 Field margins of ecological value



02 Relationship to adjacent land uses



03 Existing pond - potential focal green



04 Spoil heaps - detracting feature in the landscape



05 Desire/lines informal footpath through woods



06 Existing east-west watercourse



07 Heritage features - potential community use



Bays River



Stands of mature oak trees



Mature oak specimen



Existing bund - detracting feature in the landscape



Views to Wymondham Abbey



Visual relationship with Peaseacre Wood



Existing ponds - potential to utilize in drainage strategy



Visual relationship with A11



Linear Green Infrastructure Connectivity

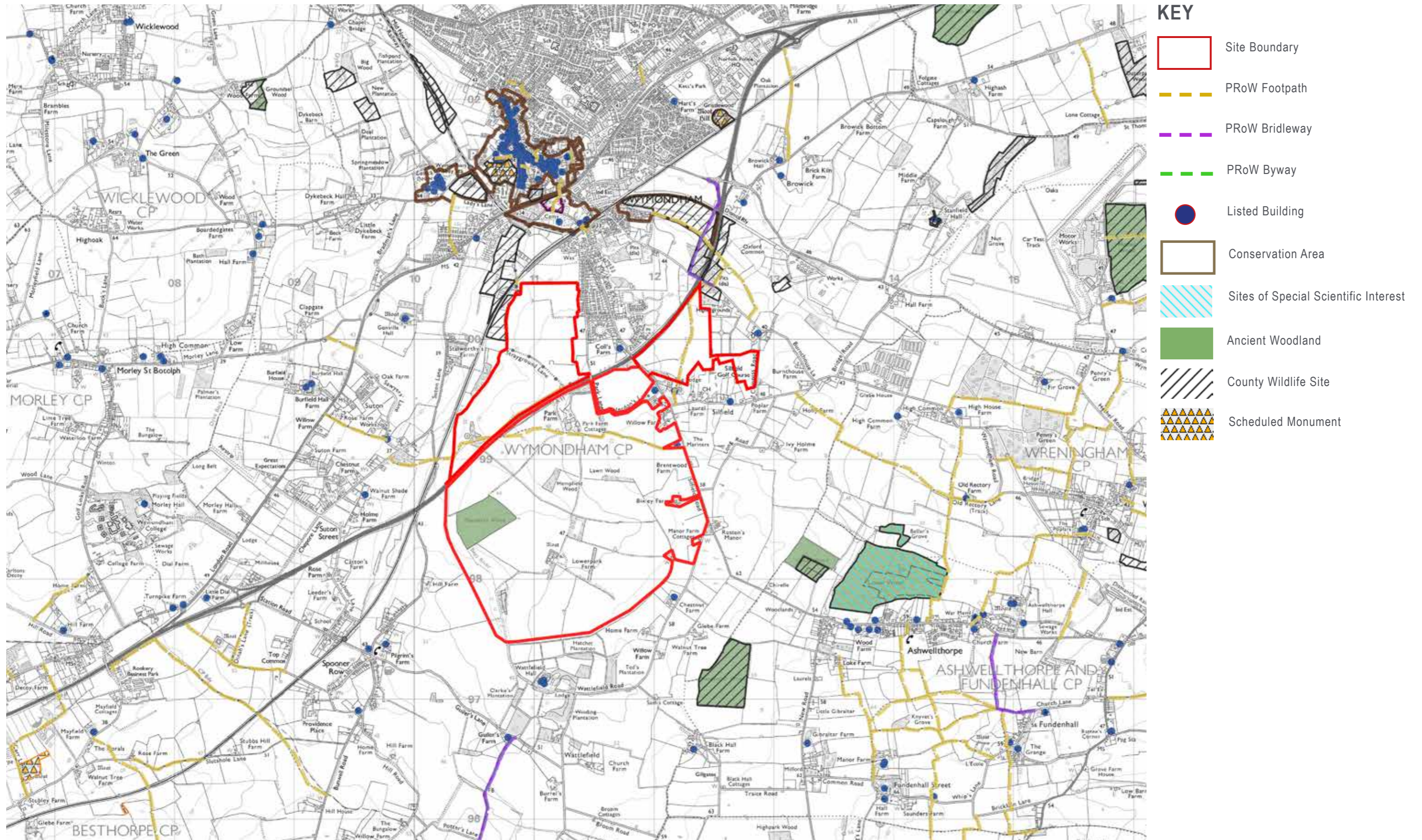


Figure 3: Designations Map. Scale 1:20 000 @ A3.

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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 (Natural England, 2012) the study area lies within the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Clayland (NCA 83).

3.1.5 At the National Level, Wymondham lies within NCA 83: South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands. NCA 83 occupies a large area of Central East Anglia which stretches from just below Norwich to the North of the River Gipping. The NCA is dominated by the predominantly flat clay plateau which is incised by several small-scale wooded river valleys with complex slopes which are unexpected for East Anglia.

3.1.6 Key characteristics of the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands (NCA 83) include:

- *‘Large plateau area of chalky glacial till that is generally flat or only gently undulating, but can be locally concave. The edges of the plateau have been dissected by watercourses that form greater slopes, especially along the tributaries of the Waveney.*
- *Views are frequently open, only sometimes confined by hedges and trees, with some woodland present. The small valleys support quite confined landscapes with intimate views.*
- *Chalk bedrock overlain by glacial till, gravels and sands. Heavy, seasonally waterlogged chalky clay soils occur on the plateau, with small areas of better soils at the edges. The valley bottoms contain areas of glacial outwash deposits as well as some areas of deep peat.*
- *Scattered areas of ancient woodland, game copses, shelterbelts, valley floor plantation and carr woodland as well as hedgerow trees provide a treed landscape character, despite much boundary loss.*
- *A mix of remnant medieval ancient countryside, some of it with a decidedly coaxial character, although irregular*

field patterns and large modern amalgamated open fields dominate.

- *Sinuuous field boundaries are formed by deep ditches, some with hedgerows and hedgerow trees.*
- *Extensive areas of arable land dominated by cereals with breakcropping of sugar beet and oilseed rape, and some pastures along valley floors Intensive pig and poultry production is common.*
- *Remnant parkland, ancient woodlands, commons and greens with a diverse grassland flora. River valleys support areas of ecologically rich unenclosed ‘semi-wild’ fenland and remnant dry heaths dominated by poor dry grassland.*
- *Small slow-flowing rivers and streams and the River Waveney drain the clay plateau. The River Waveney has a relatively large-scale open valley landscape compared with the other river valleys which have narrow valley bottoms. High density of isolated farm ponds in the southern half of the NCA.*
- *Historic features include Palaeolithic archaeology, evidence of Roman enclosures, bronze- age and iron-age activity, remnant medieval and Tudor deer parks, scattered small parkland estates and Second World War airfields. Round-towered Saxo-Norman and medieval churches and 19th-century windmills are prominent historic landscape features.*
- *Large number of isolated moated timber-framed farmhouses and farm buildings with steeply pitched clay-tiled or long-straw thatched roofs. Little flint, some brick (especially in towns).*
- *A dispersed settlement pattern of small nucleated market towns with architectural variety and colour, loosely clustered villages and scattered hamlets. Settlement is often focused around large medieval greens. Many of the market towns have modern extensions.*
- *Some major transport links including the Norwich to London main rail line but infrastructure routes are predominantly an extensive network of narrow lanes and byroads.*
- *The Mendlesham and Tacolneston masts (tall communications masts), wind turbines at Eye airfield and high-tension overhead power lines are prominent modern features in the landscape.’*

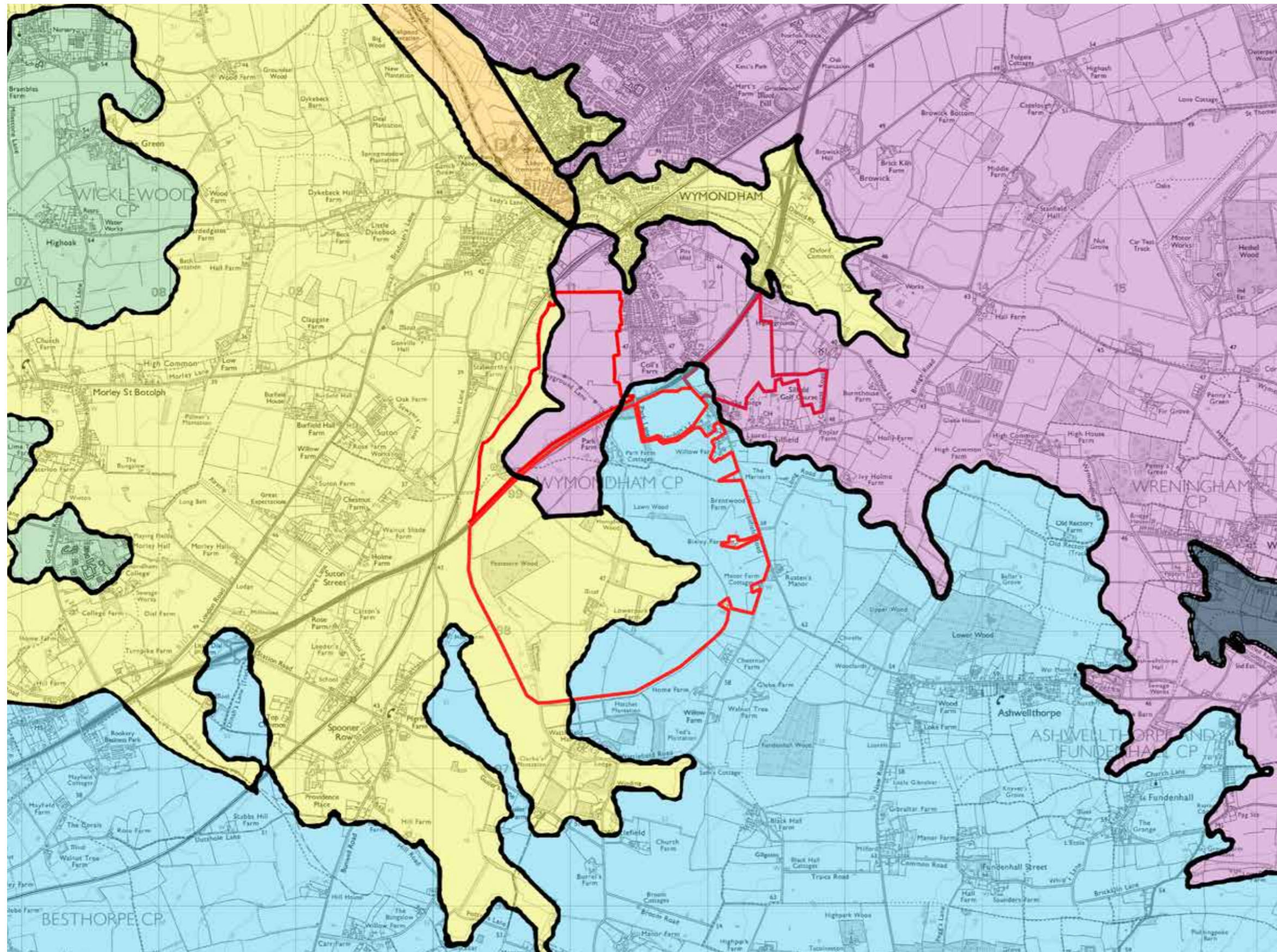
(Natural England, 2012)

District

3.1.7 At the district level (South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (2001) the Site straddles three different Landscape Character Areas (LCAs), the Wymondham Settled Farmland Plateau (D1), the Tiffey Tributary Farmland (B2) and the Ashwellthorpe Farmland Plateau (E1).

3.1.8 Key characteristics of the Tiffey Tributary Farmland LCA (B2) include:

- *‘Flat, shelving to gently undulating landscape incised by small hidden tributary streams and their small-scale shallow valleys.*
- *Pleasant rural working landscape of farmland with sparse settlement.*
- *Limited woodland cover creating wooded horizons, but including a number of ecologically important woodlands, some of which are ancient.*



KEY

- Site Boundary
- South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment, 2001**
- LCA A2: Yare/Tiffey Rural River-Valley
- LCA B1: Tas Tributary Farmland
- LCA B2: Tiffey Tributary Farmland
- LCA D1: Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland
- LCA E3: Hingham - Mattishall Plateau Farmland
- LCA E1: Ashwellthorpe Plateau Farmland

Figure 4: Landscape Character. Scale 1:20 000 @ A3.

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3. LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS Continued.

- Large scale arable farmlands in large fields with sparse hedgerows and hedgerow trees with some pastoral farmland in the valleys.
- Framed and long-range views into adjoining Yare/Tiffey Rural River Valleys and towards important landmarks including Wymondham Abbey.
- Water bodies of national ecological and historical importance including moated sites and natural lakes, some of which are listed SSSIs or SA Ms.
- Sparse settlement comprising villages and isolated dwellings but connected by a dense network of rural lanes.
- Elements of vernacular interest including isolated churches, timber-framed buildings, stepped gables and a windmill.
- Presence of important transportation links including the A11 which makes the area an important gateway into South Norfolk'.

3.1.9 Key characteristics of the Wymondham Settled Farmland Plateau LCA (D1) include:

- 'A settled landscape with large edge-of-plateau towns (including market towns and those of more modern origin) and villages plus smaller, nucleated settlements which are dispersed across the plateau.
- Large expanse of flat landform with little variation over long distances with strong open horizons -the archetypal 'Norfolk' landscape of popular imagination.
- Large scale open arable fields including sugarbeet, cereal and oilseed rape monocultures creating simple, often monotonous, character.
- Long views from plateau edge, including to Norwich from the northern plateau edge.
- Poor hedgerows generally, which accentuates the openness of the landscape. The resulting wide verges beside roads often contain attractive wildflowers. Some mature hedgerow trees are found, particularly beside roads, which are a distinctive feature. Areas of more intact hedgerow network sometimes occur around settlements.
- Sparsely wooded but with occasional woodland blocks, sometimes associated with former parkland areas, creating a more wooded character and wooded horizons in parts of this generally open landscape.
- Vernacular buildings particularly brick built, timber framed, and stepped gables. Some isolated churches sometimes hidden by dense screening churchyard vegetation'.

3.1.10 Key characteristics of the Ashwellthorpe Farmland Plateau LCA (E1) include:

- 'Distinctive flat, elevated landform, above the 50m contour.
- A large-scale landscape of both openness and enclosure provided by woodland.
- Panoramic views and some framed views along roads.
- Predominantly arable farming within large geometric fields.

- Mature remnant oak hedgerow trees occur within trimmed hawthorn hedges.
- Moats are a feature, sometimes associated with halls and sometimes occurring in isolation.
- Linear settlement occurs along roads with some vernacular buildings intermixed with more modern development.
- Rural roads have very straight stretches and are often flanked by wide grass verges.
- Presence of tall structures, with the prominent mast of Tacolneston transmitting station plus lines of telegraph poles.
- An overall peaceful rural character created by the absence of main roads and development'.

3.2 Landscape Management Guidelines

3.2.1 Key areas of sensitivity identified within the Wymondham Settled Farmland Plateau LCA (D1), as identified within the South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment, include:

- loss of vernacular character, particularly as a result of sprawl from the edge of the existing plateau top settlements;
- developments that intrude upon the view to important landmarks e.g. Wymondham Abbey or the City of Norwich;
- further "opening-up" of the landscape through loss of woodland, hedgerows or hedgerow trees
- the potential for settlement coalescence, particularly associated with the vulnerable A11 corridor or B1172 between Wymondham and Hethersett.

3.2.2 From within the northern parcel of the Site there are views towards Wymondham Abbey, key view corridors should be created where possible in order to retain these views to a key local landmark.

3.2.3 The overall strategy for the Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland is to maintain its open agricultural landscape character, with its distinct pattern of concentrated settlement on the plateau edge with more dispersed nucleated villages and isolated farm buildings across the plateau top. At the same time there is an opportunity to enhance landscape character through conservation and restoration of features including:

- restoration of hedgerows and field boundaries, particularly at settlement edges where vegetation could help integrate settlement into the landscape;
- woodland management (including former parklands) and, where appropriate, woodland creation to screen intrusive developments and enhance the 'wooded horizon' whilst retaining the positive aspects of openness;
- Restoration and enhancement of the landscape adjacent to the A11 corridor.

3.2.4 New development should (inter-alia):

- respect the distinctive settlement pattern comprising concentrations of development at plateau edge locations and smaller nucleated village settlements and dispersed buildings across the plateau;
- maintain the nucleated clustered character of the settlements and limit edge sprawl out into the adjacent landscape;

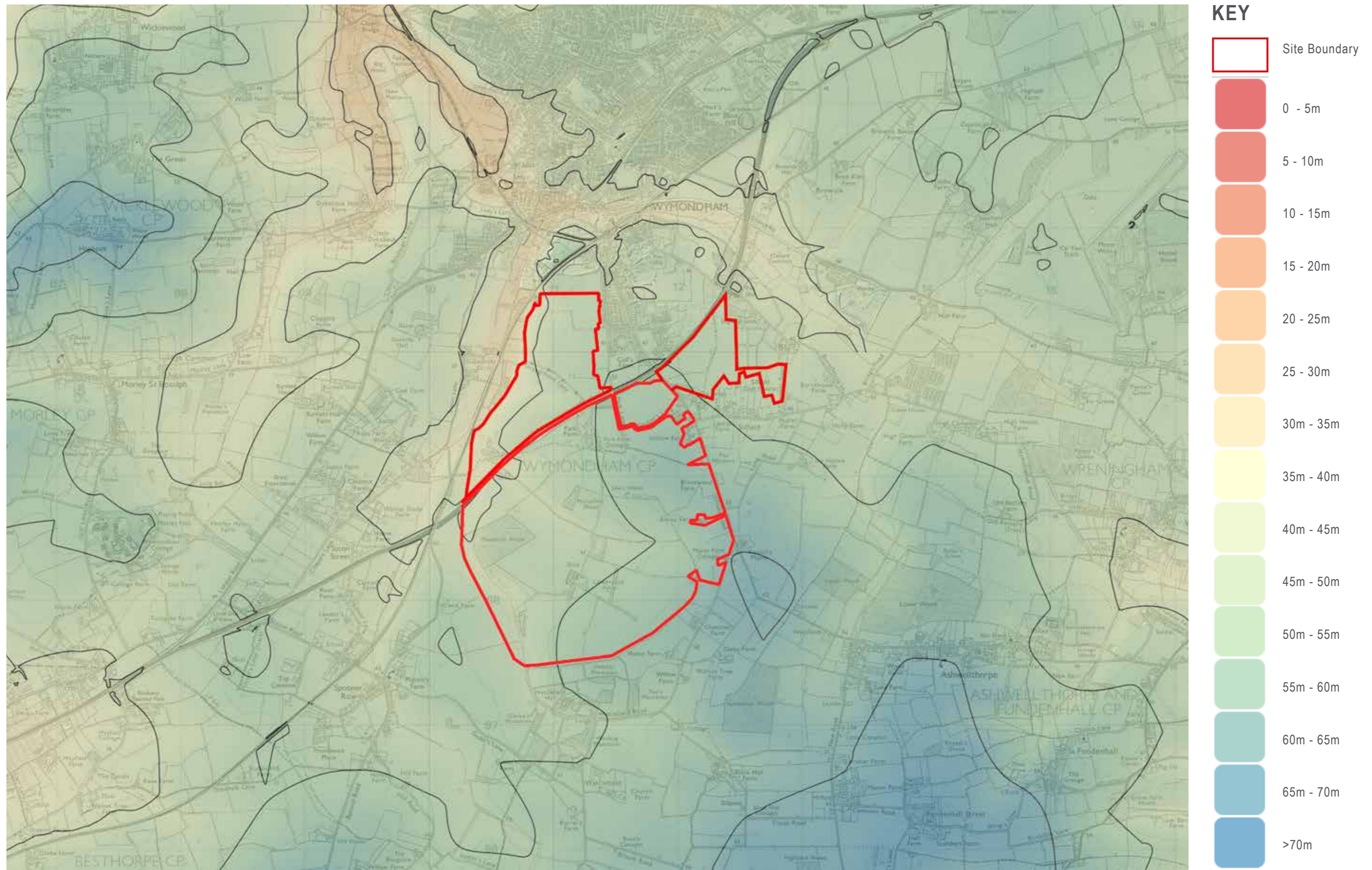


Figure 5: Landform Analysis. Scale 1:20 000 @ A3.

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3. LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS Continued.

well planned infill and edge development may be acceptable;

- consider (cumulative) impact of all tall structures such as masts, energy developments, farm buildings on skyline views and sense of 'openness' and particularly on views to the plateau skyline from the surrounding lower tributary farmland;
- maintain key views from the plateau edge to/from the City of Norwich;
- maintain strategic gaps between settlements, and in particular prevent further growth of Wymondham and/or Hethersett which would lead to coalescence of settlement along the A11 leading to the merger of Wymondham/Hethersett or Hethersett/Norwich.

3.2.5 Similarly, the key areas of sensitivity identified for the Tiffey Farmland LCA, as per the published landscape character assessment, include:

- further hedgerow loss, particularly around settlements, and loss of hedgerow trees leading to a sense of bleakness and loss of the pleasant framed quality of the views;
- introduction of tall elements, in particular large agricultural warehouse buildings, that may disturb the visual balance;
- sensitivity of areas with positive views into surrounding areas, in particular views of landmarks such as Wymondham Abbey;
- presence of important buildings, such as isolated churches, SAMs and other features of vernacular or archaeological interest or their settings which require protection from disturbance or visual intrusion.
- development associated with the A11 road corridor.

3.2.6 The landscape strategy objective is to conserve the character of the working farmed landscape with its sparsely settled character and distant views over open arable fields. Landscape enhancement should include:

- conservation and restoration of remaining hedgerows, particularly around settled areas;
- management of the woodlands to encourage ecological richness and, where appropriate, creation of new woodlands to enhance the framed quality of views;
- management of the tributary corridors to encourage biodiversity;
- enhancement to the A11 corridor to improve the role of the area as a major gateway into South Norfolk.

3.2.7 New development should (inter-alia):

- respect and conserve the rural quality of the small and intricate network of roads;
- consider the setting of the A11 and avoid linear developments associated with this important transportation corridor;

- protect views to landmarks and their settings, in particular Wymondham Abbey, Wicklewood Windmill and the isolated churches and ensure these are not adversely affected by development proposals.

3.3 Settlement Character

3.3.1 The parish of Wymondham is remarkably large, and is thought to be the rare survival of an intact Anglo-Saxon royal or aristocratic estate which, unlike other estates, was never divided up into more numerous smaller units which later became the basis of the parish system. There is a notable absence of church/hall settlements within the parish which is a variant on the typical 'Ancient' countryside settlement type.

3.3.2 The town retains a cohesive historic core, with a designated Conservation Area and large proportion of Listed Buildings dating from the 15th to 19th centuries. The road network and footprint of the town reflects the development of the medieval settlement pattern, and the visual relationship with the important Abbey site remains strong.

3.3.3 Outside of the historic core the overwhelming character of the town is 20th century with development set within large housing estates. Within these areas there is little or no surviving evidence of previous historic landscape features. The Tiffey river valley to the west and south of the town has limited modern housing growth so that the sense of a small historic town in a rural landscape is still largely intact on approach from the north and west. The development of housing and business parks either side of the B1172 approach from the north-east and more recently to the south-west has eroded the rural setting in these areas.

3.3.4 The southern parcel is thought to be the site of a historic deer park, although the deer park is difficult to see as a cohesive whole on the ground due to its isolation. Most of its outer boundary survives in current field boundaries, emphasised by road routes; and survival of the moat.

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 January 2020 representing a worst case scenario in terms of the level of screening provided by existing vegetation. Visibility will be lower in summer when deciduous vegetation is in full 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 6**).
- 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 made up of Wymondham to the north and smaller villages and hamlets including Silfield and Spooner Row to the east and south. 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 Site itself (see **Figure 6: Visual Analysis**).
- 4.2.4 The primary visual envelope extends a short distance to the north and south, and approximately 1km to the east and west in all directions. The secondary visual envelope on the other hand extends approximately 4km in all directions.
- 4.2.5 The Site has been split into two distinct areas – the northern and southern parcels. Each viewpoint will be individually assessed against each parcel of land within the development area in order to determine each receptors sensitivities to the proposed development.
- 4.2.6 The proposed development includes significant green infrastructure in the form of woodland planting which will be delivered alongside the garden village. In some instances this will serve to mitigate the impact of the proposed development in the long-term (see Illustrative Masterplan prepared by David Lock Associates).

Views from the Site

- 4.2.7 From within the northern parcel of land there are clear views towards the emerging Birch Grove development to the west of the Site. Looking north there are also clear views towards the towers at Wymondham Abbey. Given the relative elevation of the Site there are clear views looking down towards the A11 from the southern boundary.
- 4.2.8 From within the southern parcel of land there are clear views towards existing residential dwellings along Silfield Road. Looking south-west there are views towards the A11 and a number of other local routes.

Viewpoint 1

- 4.2.9 The existing agricultural access is visible to the right of the view. A mixed species native hedge runs along the length of Park Lane allowing only glimpsed views into the northern parcel. Numerous solitary oak trees are visible along the boundary edge. The existing settlement edge to the west of Park Lane is visible to the right of this view. The southern parcel is not visible from this point.
- 4.2.10 Built development would be clearly visible from this point, although set beyond an area of retained agricultural land, outside of the site boundary. While development will impact on the view, it offers the opportunity to create a positive relationship between the proposed development and existing built development along Park Lane.

Viewpoint 2

- 4.2.11 In this view from Park Lane, along the existing surfaced track in the south-eastern corner of the northern parcel, there are clear views across much of the northern parcel due to a lack of intervening boundary vegetation. Built development would be clearly visible from this point. The southern parcel is screened from view by layers of intervening vegetation within the Site itself and on the embankment of the A11 dual carriageway.

Viewpoint 3

- 4.2.12 In this view from the bridge over the A11 there are glimpsed views into the southern parcel. The north-eastern corner of the southern parcel, which is separated from the remainder of the Site by Verdon's Lane, is glimpsed through a gap in the existing roadside hedgerow. Development would be clearly visible from this point beyond the existing roadside hedgerow, although an area of Public Open Space is proposed which would form the focus of this view. Provided the vegetation is retained and effectively managed, including infill hedgerow planting, impacts on this viewpoint could be partially mitigated. Looking north there are glimpsed views across the northern parcel from this point, although partially screened by existing field boundary vegetation and vegetation on the embankment of the A11 dual carriageway.

Viewpoint 4

- 4.2.13 PRoW Wymondham FP19 runs through the southern parcel of land. From this point, where the footpath meets the existing farm access, there are clear views across most of the southern parcel. Given that the footpath crosses the Site development will be clearly visible from this point and there may be some localized disturbance to the Public Right of Way in the form of temporary closures/disturbance. The alignment of the existing Public Right of Way should be further considered at the detailed design stage. Views towards the northern parcel from this point are screened by existing vegetation on the embankment of the A11 dual carriageway.

Viewpoint 5

- 4.2.14 Viewpoint 5 was taken from PRoW Wymondham FP19, to the east of Viewpoint 4. In this view, looking north, there are clear views across the arable landscape towards the emerging 'Birch Gate' development. The development masterplan retains the PRoW alignment within an area of Public Open Space. Beyond this there will be clear views towards the proposed development. There are some glimpsed, distant views towards the northern parcel of land, although these are largely filtered by existing roadside vegetation.

4. VISUAL ANALYSIS Continued.

Viewpoint 6

- 4.2.15 Beyond Park Farm PRow Wymondham FP19 becomes PRow Wymondham FP34. In this view from the footpath to the west of Park Farm there are clear views across the southern parcel. Peaseacre Wood which lies in the south-western corner of the southern parcel is clearly visible from this point. From this point there will be clear views across the full extent of development within the southern parcel. The alignment of the existing Public Right of Way should be further considered at the detailed design stage. Views towards the northern parcel from this point are screened by existing vegetation on the embankment of the A11 dual carriageway.

Viewpoint 7

- 4.2.16 Verdon's Lane bisects the southern parcel into two distinct areas. Views across the Site from Verdon's Lane are in places partially screened by an existing mixed-species native hedgerow, but with some large gaps. In this view looking north there are clear views across the southern parcel of land and hence any development would be clearly visible. Similar views are afforded to the south above the existing roadside hedgerow. There are some glimpsed, distant views towards the northern parcel of land, although these are largely filtered by existing roadside vegetation.

Viewpoint 8

- 4.2.17 In this view from Silfield Road the southern parcel is at a slight distance, although still clearly visible above the existing roadside hedgerow. The initial masterplan proposes areas of Public Open Space in the south-eastern corner and built form would be seen beyond this. The northern parcel of land is barely discernible beyond layers of intervening vegetation.

Viewpoint 9

- 4.2.18 Viewpoint 9 is representative of users of Wattlefield Road. The existing vegetation means that there are only glimpsed, fleeting views into the southern parcel of land. New development is likely to be visible from this viewpoint and will impact on the nature of the view. Development should seek to improve the vegetated edge of the road and restore the native hedgerow character. The northern parcel of land is not visible from this point beyond layers of intervening vegetation.

Viewpoint 10

- 4.2.19 In this view north-east from Guiler's Lane the Site is at some distance, but Peaseacre Wood is clearly visible in the distance. A new area of woodland planting is proposed to the south-west of the Site as part of the wider strategic green infrastructure network to be delivered alongside the garden village. Prior to the full establishment of the woodland there will be some distant views towards the proposed development within the southern parcel of land which will set beyond areas of Public Open Space along the south-western site boundary. As the woodland becomes fully established this will serve to fully screen views from this point. The northern parcel of land is not visible from this point beyond layers of intervening vegetation.

Viewpoint 11

- 4.2.20 In this view from Wymondham Road the Site is at a slight distance, scattered vegetation along the western boundary of the southern parcel is clearly visible with Peaseacre Wood beyond. Development areas are generally located towards the eastern boundary of Peaseacre Wood and as such will be seen at some distance. The northern parcel

of land is not visible from this point beyond layers of intervening vegetation.

Viewpoint 12

- 4.2.21 Views towards the Site from Sutton Lane vary depending on location, angle and layers of intervening vegetation. From this viewpoint the whole Site is generally well screened by existing vegetation within the Tiffey Valley. The rising land to the east of the northern parcel is visible at some distance with existing residential dwellings along Park Lane beyond. The existing vegetation would seem to obscure much of the Site and therefore much of any future development. Glimpsed views will be possible towards the higher ground within the northern parcel. If new skyline impact trees can be incorporated into the development framework the impact on this viewpoint would be considered to be minimal.

Viewpoint 13

- 4.2.22 Similarly to Viewpoint 12 the Site is generally well screened by existing vegetation within the Tiffey Valley. Any development will be barely discernible from this point given the distance from the Site and strong vegetation cover within the valley.

Viewpoint 14

- 4.2.23 In this view from higher ground to the north-west of the Site, both parcels are barely discernible due to distance and layers of intervening vegetation. Any development will be barely discernible from this point.

Viewpoint 15

- 4.2.24 In this view from Besthorpe Carr, both parcels are barely discernible due to distance and layers of intervening vegetation. Any development will be barely discernible from this point.

Viewpoint 16

- 4.2.25 In this view from the bridge over the A11 on the eastern side of the Site there are some glimpsed views towards the southern parcel of land. New development is unlikely to be visible from this viewpoint beyond an area of proposed Public Open Space. Development should seek to provide a continuous vegetated boundary along the A11. The northern parcel of land is barely discernible beyond existing vegetation on the embankment of the A11.

Viewpoint 17

- 4.2.26 In this view from Silfield Road the Site is at a slight distance, although still clearly visible above the existing roadside hedgerow. The initial masterplan proposes areas of Public Open Space in the south-eastern corner and built form within the southern parcel would be seen beyond this. The northern parcel of land is not visible from this point due to distance and layers of intervening vegetation.

Viewpoint 18

- 4.2.27 This viewpoint was taken from Silfield Road, along the existing access track to Bixley Farm. From this point there are clear views across much of the southern parcel. The initial masterplan proposes areas of Public Open Space in the south-eastern corner and built form within the southern parcel would be seen beyond this. The northern parcel of land is not visible from this point due to distance and layers of intervening vegetation.

4. VISUAL ANALYSIS Continued.

Viewpoint 19

4.2.28 In this view from PRow Wymondham FP19 looking south, there are clear views across the arable landscape. The development masterplan retains the PRow alignment within an area of Public Open Space. Beyond this there will be clear views towards the proposed development within the southern parcel. The northern parcel of land is not visible from this point beyond existing vegetation.

Viewpoint 20

4.2.29 In this view from PRow Wreningham FP15 there are distant views towards the southern parcel of land. It is likely that proposed development will be glimpsed from the PRow.

Viewpoint 21

4.2.30 In this view from higher ground to the north-west of the Site, both parcels are barely discernible due to distance and layers of intervening vegetation. Any development will be barely discernible from this point.

Viewpoint 22

4.2.31 From this point on PRow Wymondham FP33 there are clear views across most of the northern parcel and south down the embankment to the A11. Given that the footpath crosses the Site development will be clearly visible from this point and there may be some localized disturbance to the Public Right of Way in the form of temporary closures/disturbance. The alignment of the existing Public Right of Way should be further considered at the detailed design stage.

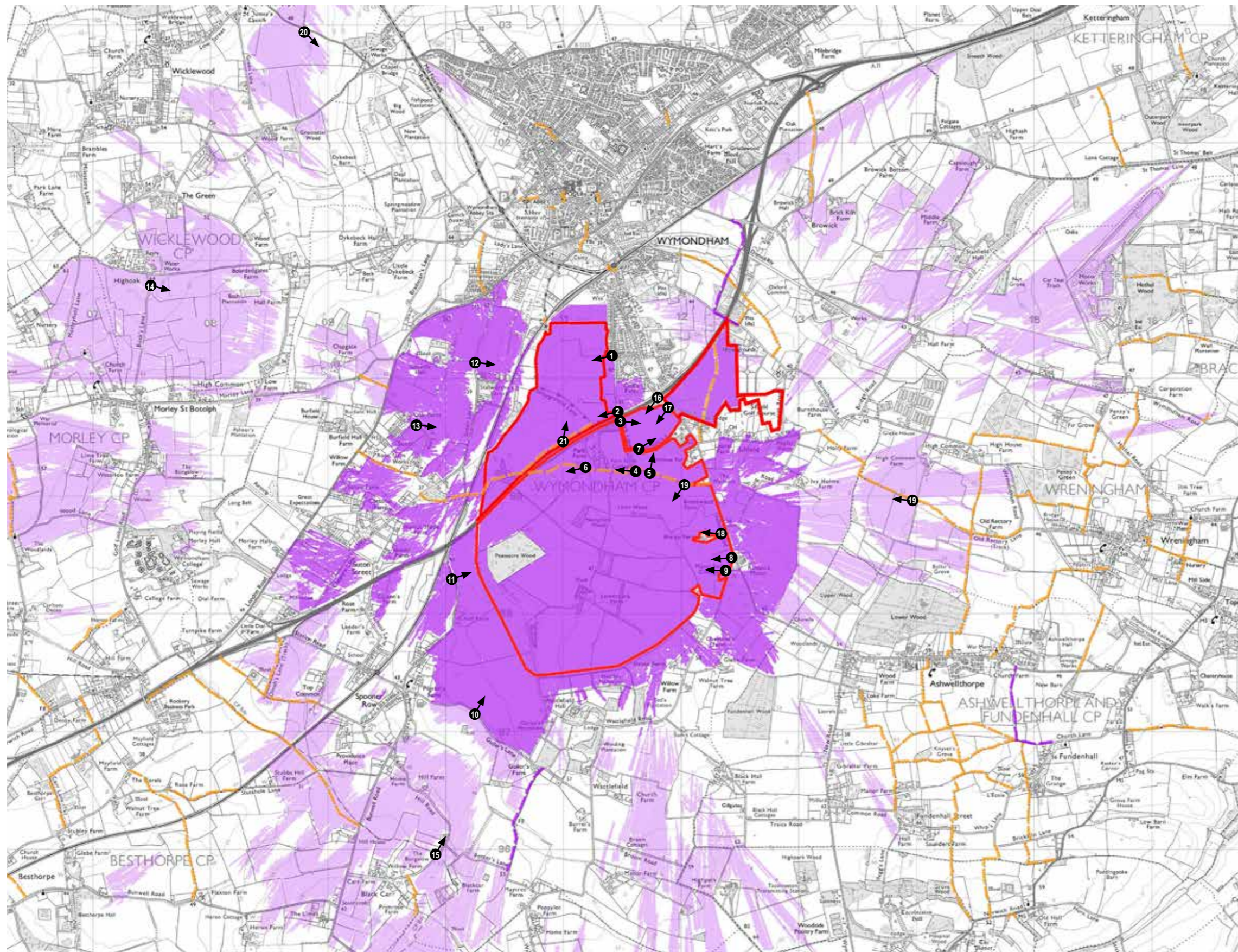
4.3 Visual Receptors

4.3.1 The following people have been identified as potential receptors of visual effects of development of the proposed Silfield Garden Village.

- Users of Public Rights of Way
 - Users of Wymondham FP8;
 - Users of Wymondham F19;
 - Users of Wymondham FP34;
 - Users of Wreningham FP15; and
 - Users of Wymondham FP33.
- Users of Roads
 - Users of Park Lane;
 - Users of the A11;
 - Users of Verdon's Lane;

- User of Silfield Road;
- Users of Wattlefield Road;
- Users of Guiler's Lane;
- Users of Wymondham Road;
- Users of Sutton Lane;
- Users of Sawyer's Lane;
- Users of Buck's Lane;
- Users of Besthorpe Carr; and
- Users of Crownthorpe Road.
- Residents of Residential Dwellings
 - Residents of Park Lane;
 - Residents of Silfield Road;
 - Residents of Wattlefield Road; and
 - Residents of Birch Grove.

4.3.2 The potential visibility of proposed development is consistent with the character of the local landscape due to the urban fringe influences and presence of existing residential built form across the majority of views; furthermore, views of proposed development can be addressed through appropriate mitigation.



- KEY**
- Site Boundary
 - Primary Visual Envelope
 - Secondary Visual Envelope
 - PRoW Footpath
 - PRoW Bridleway



Figure 6: Visual Analysis and Locations of Representative Views.

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Viewpoint 1: View south west towards the Site from Park Lane



Viewpoint 2: View south west across the Site from Park Lane



Viewpoint 3: View south east towards the Site from Park Lane



Viewpoint 4: View west across Site from PRoW Wymondham FP19



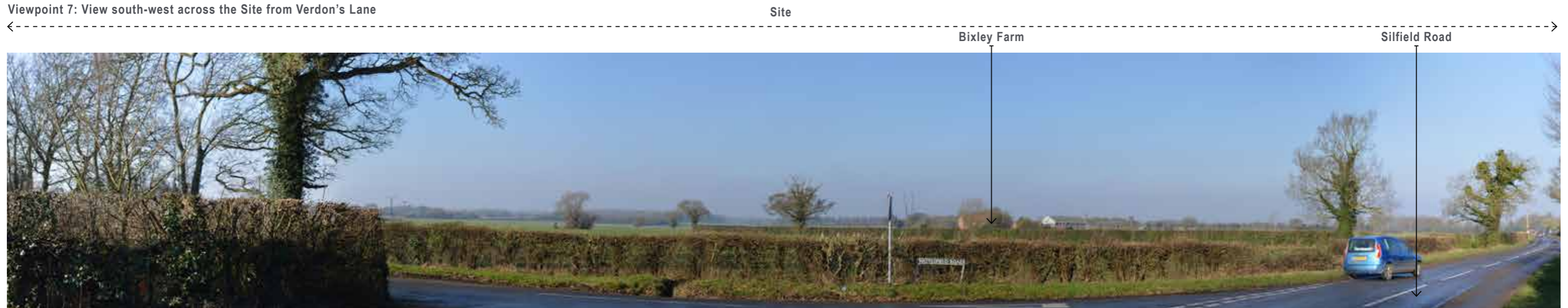
Viewpoint 5: View north across Site from PRoW Wymondham FP19



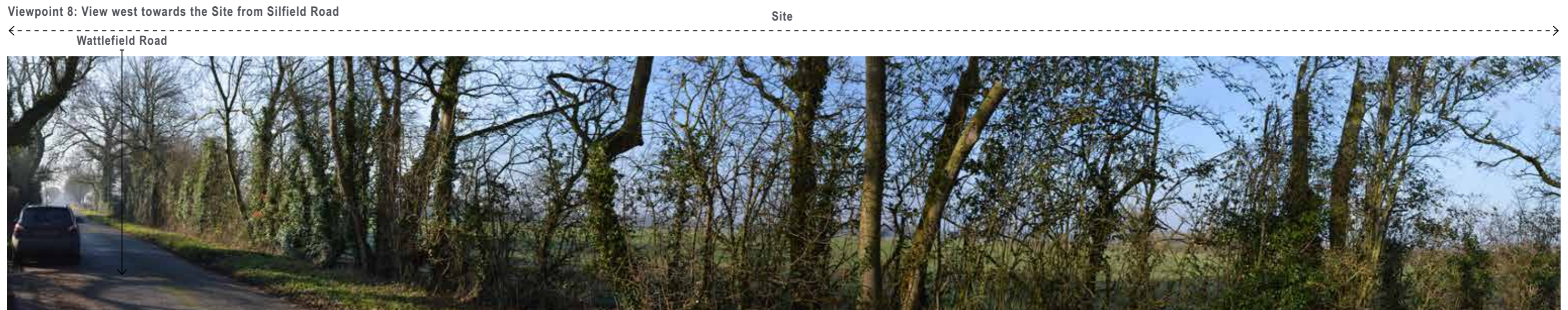
Viewpoint 6: View south-west across Site from PRoW Wymondham FP34



Viewpoint 7: View south-west across the Site from Verdon's Lane



Viewpoint 8: View west towards the Site from Silfield Road



Viewpoint 9: View west towards the Site from Wattlefield Road



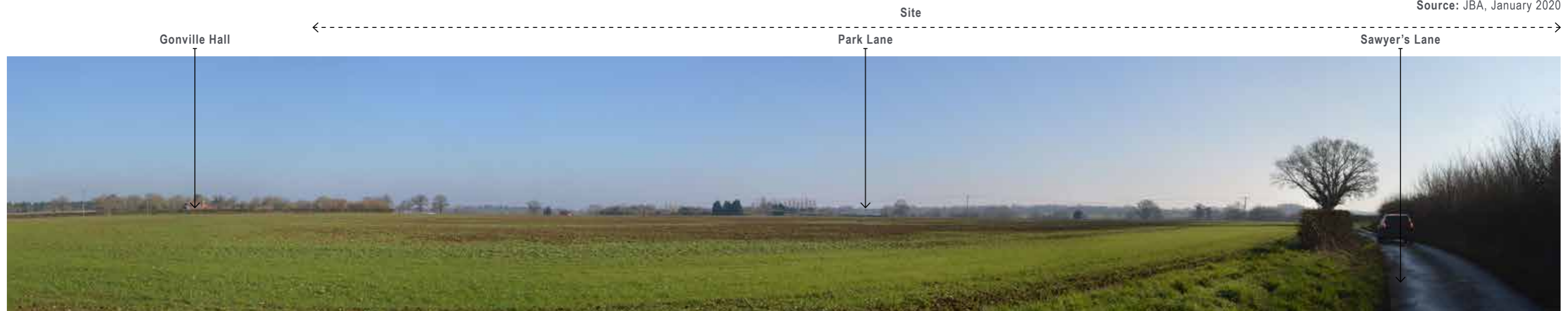
Viewpoint 10: View north east towards the Site from Guiler's Lane



Viewpoint 11: View east towards the Site from Wymondham Road



Viewpoint 12: View east towards the Site from Sutton Lane



Viewpoint 13: View east towards the Site from Sawyer's Lane



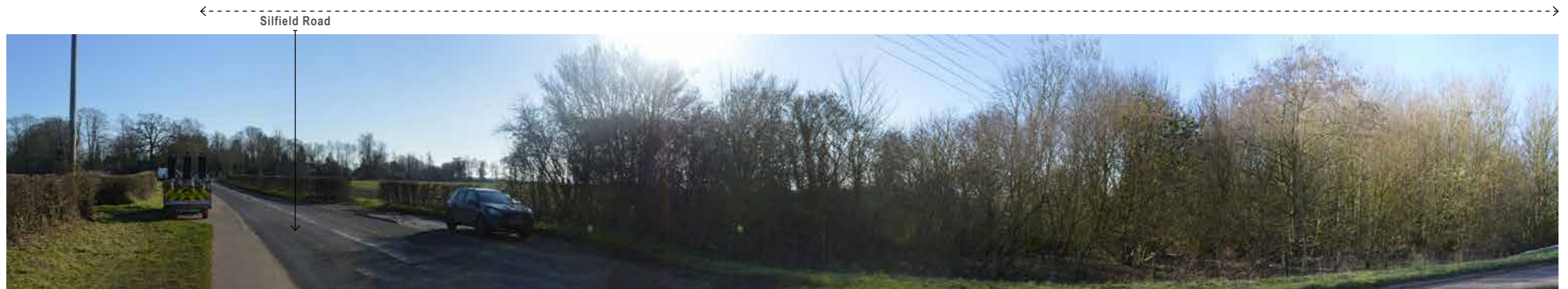
Viewpoint 14: View east towards the Site from Buck's Lane



Viewpoint 15: View north east towards the Site from Besthorpe Carr



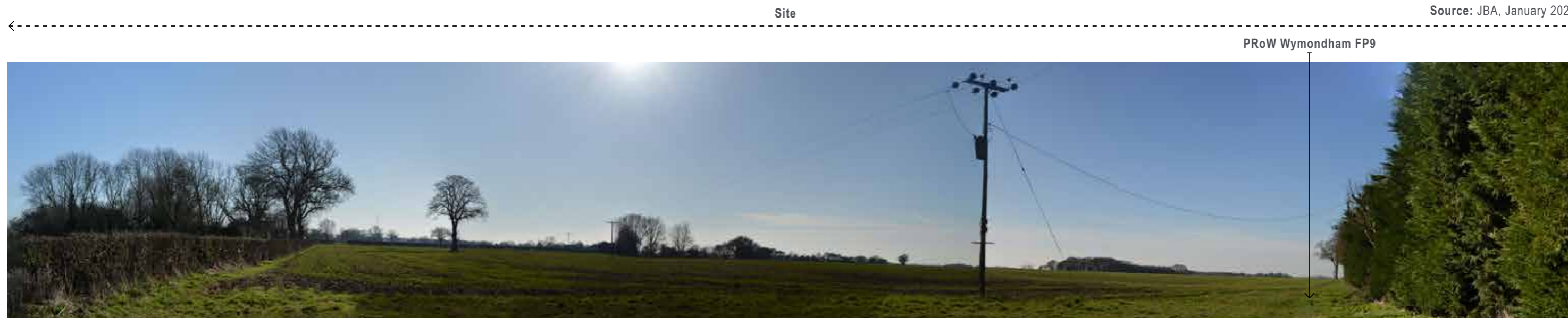
Viewpoint 16: View south-west towards the Site from Silfield Road



Viewpoint 17: View south-west towards the Site from Silfield Road



Viewpoint 18: View west across the Site from Silfield Road



Viewpoint 19: View south-west across the Site from PRow Wymondham FP19



Viewpoint 20: View south-west towards the Site from PRow Wreningham FP15



Viewpoint 21: View south-east towards the Site from Crownthorpe Road

Figure 7: Representative Views.

Source: JBA, January 2020



Viewpoint 22: View north-west across the Site from PRow Wymondham FP33

Site (north)



Viewpoint 22 continued: View north-east across the Site from PRow Wymondham FP33

5. SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS AND OPPORTUNITIES

5.1 Likely Causes of Impact

- 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 of impacts, judgements should be made regarding the nature of changes which arise specifically from the type of development being considered. The following section sets out the likely causes of impacts which would occur in relation to the proposed development incorporating residential, educational, employment and community uses.
- 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 impacts relate to the built form of residential development, incorporating highways infrastructure, and likely to extend over a series of phases in the longer term. Other built aspects of the masterplan such as the proposed educational facilities and employment land will also give rise to impacts.
- 5.1.4 Positive impacts will relate to formal areas of open space outside of the wider green infrastructure network (such as the proposed sports pitches) and to mitigation integrated into the proposed development (i.e. green infrastructure and strategic landscaping), including retained woodland, 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

- Land rising to the east of the northern parcel, increasing prominence in views from locations to the west.
- Opportunity to utilise landform to promote views from with the development to the wider landscape, including towards Wymondham Abbey to the north.

Watercourses

- Main watercourses/drainage reflect the landform with the Bays River running through the narrower sections of the valley.
- Numerous other streams/drainage channels flow from the higher ground converging with the rivers
- Connections between the watercourse/drainage network and the green infrastructure network with smaller watercourses generally lined with native hedgerows.

- Opportunity to utilise seasonal floodplains for landscape and ecological diversity as part of the green infrastructure network.

Green Infrastructure

- Comprised largely of field boundary hedgerows, hedgerow trees and linear belts of trees/woodland
- Linear green infrastructure is naturally occurring, extending along some field boundaries and watercourses but also more artificially along the A11 corridor.
- Copses/blocks of woodland are frequent within the Site and across the wider landscape, on both sides of the A11.
- The pattern of green infrastructure shows that some areas are more densely connected and continuous, but other parts have 'gaps/breaks' in the green infrastructure network; enhancing these to create key green infrastructure links/connections can be used to inform the development and landscape strategy

Development Patterns

- Historically the settlement edge of Wymondham has been defined by the railway corridor, however in recent years development has breached this pattern and extended south to reach the A11. This includes both residential and commercial areas, notably the Wymondham Business Park.
- Silfield has developed more organically with scattered development along the main roads. Beyond this, settlement across the area is limited to individual properties/farmsteads scattered across the wider landscape (including infrequent Listed Buildings) and connected by the pattern of local roads; as a consequence there are no obvious 'hubs' of existing settlement to the south of the A11 to build around in terms of destination

Access and Recreation

- A number of existing Public Footpaths pass through the Site, these areas form key access routes between the Site and the wider landscape, as such there is potential to create destinations around these routes and further linkages.

Openness to Public Views

- There are limited public views towards the Site due to vegetation within the valley; public views from the road network tends to be constrained by roadside vegetation but some intermediate distance views exist
- There are opportunities for promoting views towards important vantage points, particularly Wymondham Abbey to the north.

Openness to Private Views

- Existing residential properties along Silfield Road are relatively well contained by green infrastructure and vegetation with limited views westwards into the southern parcel.
- North of the A11, along Park Lane, the linear development faces the northern parcel of land and as such there will be direct views across the northern parcel from these dwellings.
- Individual properties are scattered throughout the wider study area and views will be available from these to a

5. SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS AND OPPORTUNITIES Continued.

greater or lesser degree subject to the immediate context of screening vegetation around the properties; for the majority, views are likely to be to the immediate context only with longer distance views screened by the layers of green infrastructure and changes in landform.

Relationship with Existing Urban Area

- There are direct relationships with the existing urban fringe in parts of the wider site area, including with Wymondham Industrial Estate and Park Lane from within the northern parcel of land. The southern parcel of land has visual links to existing residential development along Silfield Road.
- There are several local roads and/or tracks and associated road junctions which pass through the wider site area.

Scope to Mitigate

- As a greenfield site, there will be an inevitable degree of landscape and visual impact and it is necessary to avoid and reduce this wherever possible.
- There is extensive scope to mitigate landscape and visual impact, much of which relates to the scale of the proposals in themselves. These include: a landscape led approach to shaping the masterplan, avoiding impacts by guiding development away from the most sensitive receptors; and, use of the existing green infrastructure network to guide development and to create a framework for strategic scale landscape proposals.

6. PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT AND LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

6.1 Principles

6.1.1 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.

6.1.2 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.

6.1.3 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).

6.2 Preliminary Development and Landscape Framework

6.2.1 The preliminary development and landscape strategy for the Site area has been informed by reference to the landscape and visual analysis (refer to **Figures 4, 5 and 6**).

Overview

6.2.2 In the context of the wider landscape around Wymondham, the northern parcel of the Site forms part of a broad transitional area between the open countryside to the south of the A11 and the built up area of Wymondham. 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.

6.2.3 Public access to the Site is limited to two public footpaths which pass through the two parcels of land, although the local route, Verdon's Lane, enables some experience of the landscape, albeit in a more transitional capacity. The separation between main settlement areas and sparsity of any kind of clustered settlement pattern combined with the frequency of more isolated dwellings and farmsteads mean that there is little sense of destination across the wider site area.

6.2.4 Considerations of capacity in terms of the proposed development reflects the proximity to the larger settlement of

Wymondham, nearby industrial estates and the urbanising influence of the A11.

6.2.5 The outer extents of the Site retain some capacity for development by due to the strong framework of green infrastructure, however there is still a need to create a 'sensitive' and appropriate design response that creates an appropriate transition and landscaped edge between the development parcels and the adjacent countryside.

6.3 General Design Considerations

6.3.1 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

6.3.2 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.

6.3.3 The development envelope will be defined by a series of smaller parcels, each responding to the landscape constraints and opportunities such as the need to retain existing vegetation structure of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and tree/woodland belts.

6.3.4 The development parcels also have the opportunity to shape connectivity across the wider site area and its integration with the surrounding landscape context. As such, existing rights of way have been retained in their current alignments as far as possible.

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

Existing and proposed green infrastructure

6.3.6 Analysis of the existing green infrastructure network has identified a series of strategic green infrastructure links. In response to this analysis the development parcels have been shaped by the existing field pattern, including their enclosure by hedgerows, tree belts and woodlands. This ensures that the existing vegetation, and the scale and pattern of the landscape, is integrated into the layout and that existing green infrastructure across the site is largely retained.

6.3.7 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.

6.3.8 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 woodlands, 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.

6.3.9 Notwithstanding the results of any detailed arboricultural surveys, to ensure the protection of existing strategic vegetation the a buffer of at least 15m should be provided to the perimeter of Peaseacre Wood, but ideally

6. PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT AND LANDSCAPE STRATEGY Continued.

increasing in width to approximately 25m to allow for understorey planting and mown footpaths. The woodland buffer should not just be a stand-off distance but should instead create a suitable woodland edge transition zone to minimise the pressure on the woodland itself. Similarly, existing hedgerows should be safeguarded with a minimum 5m buffer, with a 10-15m zone to ensure the protection of mature hedgerow trees. Existing mature oak trees should be incorporated into areas of Public Open Space or 'Pocket Parks' as much as possible.

6.3.10 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, breaking up the built form in views from the wider landscape.

6.3.11 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.

Public access

6.3.12 Whilst the Site is subject to limited public access in the form of existing public footpaths, there is a substantial opportunity to create new connections through a range of different links. These will be focussed on promoting a variety of uses including walking and cycling and draws on potential destinations in the wider landscape.

6.3.13 There may be opportunities to utilise Peaseacre Wood for educational and recreational use, subject to managed access.

Landscape and detailed design

6.3.14 The detailed design stages can be tailored to include a high quality landscape scheme, including both public open space and private green space.

6.3.15 Areas of private garden space and the internal street scene have the capacity to include street and garden trees, as will parts of the public realm in the educational and employment areas of the masterplan. 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 screening in views from higher ground to the west.

6.3.16 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

6.3.17 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.

6.3.18 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.

6.3.19 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.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary

7.1.1 This landscape and visual appraisal (LVA) has been prepared to determine the constraints and opportunities in respect of a potential garden community on land to north and south of the A11 at Silfield, Norfolk. The LVA 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.

7.1.2 The LVA 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.

7.1.3 The Site comprises an extensive area of landscape to the north and south of the A11 dual carriageway. Whilst the landscape exhibits some of the key local landscape characteristics, there are few defining characteristics that elevate the landscape in general and many of the fields have been subject to post war intensification and hedgerow removal. Urban influences, such as the A11 and the Wymondham Industrial Estate detract from the overall sense of place and tranquillity, and recreational value is limited to a single footpath route through both parcels.

7.1.4 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.

7.1.5 The nature of visual effects is such that the greatest degree of effect will be from locations directly adjacent 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.

7.1.6 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 such as landform, hydrology, field boundaries, tree belts etc; all physical and enduring features in the landscape.

7.1.7 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 both the Wymondham urban area and the wider countryside.

7.2 Summary of Characteristics and Opportunities

7.2.1 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.

7.2.2 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.

7.3 Conclusion

7.3.1 Notwithstanding some degree of landscape and visual impact, development of the Site can come forward based on a sensitively designed mixed-use scheme with only limited landscape and visual effects at a localised level. Such impacts can successfully be avoided or reduced through effective mitigation at the detailed design stage.

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