



Barratt West Midlands

**Land at Stencils Farm, Aldridge Road, Walsall**

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

April 2017

**FPCR Environment and Design Ltd**

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

Company No. 07128076. [T] 01509 672772 [F] 01509 674565 [E] [mail@fpcr.co.uk](mailto:mail@fpcr.co.uk) [W] [www.fpcr.co.uk](http://www.fpcr.co.uk)

This report is the property of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd and is issued on the condition it is not reproduced, retained or disclosed to any unauthorised person, either wholly or in part without the written consent of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd. Ordnance Survey material is used with permission of The Controller of HMSO, Crown copyright 100018896.

Rev	Issue Status	Prepared / Date	Approved/Date
	Draft	JJ / 25 March 2017	
	Draft	JJ / 29 March 2017	
	Draft	JJ / 31 March 2017	
		JJ / 11 April 2017	

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION ..... 3

2.0 METHODOLOGY..... 5

3.0 PLANNING POLICY ..... 9

4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS..... 16

5.0 LANDSCAPE RECOMMENDATIONS..... 27

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS ..... 29

FIGURES

- Figure 1: Site Location Plan
- Figure 2: Aerial Photograph
- Figure 3: Topography Plan
- Figure 4: National Character Area
- Figure 5: Historic Landscape Characterisation
- Figure 6: Designations
- Figure 7: Photo Viewpoint Locations
- Figure 8-23: Photo Viewpoints

PAGE LEFT DELIBERATELY BLANK

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been undertaken by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (FPCR) in relation to a site at Stencils Farm. The purpose of this LVA study is to provide an assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. The landscape appraisal has been undertaken in relation to a proposed residential development.
- 1.2 FPCR are a multi-disciplinary environmental and design consultancy with over 50 years' experience of architecture, landscape, ecology, urban design, masterplanning and environmental impact assessment. The practice is a member of the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and are frequently called upon to provide expert evidence on landscape and visual issues at Public and Local Plan Inquiries.

### Site Location

- 1.3 The site lies at the eastern edge of Walsall to the north of Aldridge Road. Figures 1 and 2 show the location and context of the site.

### Proposed Development

- 1.4 The proposed development of the site is for a high quality residential development and related land uses, including site access, internal roads and green infrastructure.

PAGE LEFT DELIBERATELY BLANK

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 This LVA has been prepared based upon the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, third edition (GLVIA3), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, in 2013.

2.2 In summary the GLVIA3 states:

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

2.3 There are two components of LVIA:

- Assessment of landscape effects; assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right;
- Assessment of visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

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

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

### Assessment of Landscape Effects

2.6 GLVIA3 states that *“An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource”*. The baseline landscape is described by reference to existing landscape character assessments and by a description of the site and its context.

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

- Change or loss of elements, features, aesthetic or perceptual aspects that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the landscape
- Addition of new elements that influence character and distinctiveness of the landscape
- Combined effects of these changes

2.8 The characteristics of the existing landscape resource are considered in respect of the susceptibility of the landscape resource to the change arising from this development. The value of the existing landscape is also considered.

2.9 Each effect on landscape receptors is assessed in terms of size or scale, geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. In terms of size or scale, the judgement takes account of the extent of the existing landscape elements that will be lost or changed, and the degree to which the aesthetic or perceptual aspects or key characteristics of the landscape will be altered by removal or addition of new elements.

- 2.10 The overall landscape effect is determined by considering the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of effect on the landscape. Final conclusions on the overall landscape effects are drawn from the assessment components described.
- 2.11 This appraisal describes the nature of the landscape effects.

#### Assessment of Visual Effects

- 2.12 An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity.
- 2.13 The first stage in the assessment is to map approximate visibility. This can be done by a computer Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), or by manual methods, using map study and field evaluation. A series of viewpoints are included within the assessment that are representative of views towards the site from surrounding visual receptors. Other views of the site are included where it supports the description and understanding of the site's landscape and visual characteristics.
- 2.14 The views also typically represent what can be seen from a variety of distances from the development and different viewing experiences.
- 2.15 It is important to remember that visual receptors are all people. For each affected viewpoint the assessment considers both susceptibility to change in views and the value attached to views. The visual receptors most susceptible to change are generally likely to include:
- residents at home
  - people engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or particular views;
  - visitors to heritage assets or other attractions, where views of surroundings are an important contributor to the experience;
  - communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area.
- 2.16 Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes tend to fall into an intermediate category of susceptibility to change. Where travel involves recognised scenic routes awareness of views is likely to be particularly high.
- 2.17 Visual receptors likely to be less sensitive to change include:
- People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape;
  - People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity, not on their surroundings.
- 2.18 Each of the visual effects is evaluated in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration or reversibility.
- 2.19 In terms of size or scale, the magnitude of visual effects takes account of:
- The scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;



- The degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line height, colour and texture;
  - The nature of the view of the proposed development, in terms of the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses.
- 2.20 The geographical extent of the visual effect in each viewpoint is likely to reflect:
- The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor
  - The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development
  - The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.
- 2.21 As with landscape effects, the duration of the effect could be short to long term or permanent and the same definitions apply. The criteria used in this appraisal are included at Appendix A.

#### Overall Landscape and Visual Effects

- 2.22 The final conclusions on effects, whether adverse or beneficial, are drawn from the separate judgements on the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of the effects. This overall judgement involves a reasoned professional overview of the individual judgements against the criteria, to then make the overall judgement.
- 2.23 For this appraisal, the following descriptive thresholds have been used with regard to effects:-
- Major: An effect that will fundamentally change and be in direct contrast to the existing landscape or views;
  - Moderate: An effect that will markedly change the existing landscape or views but may retain or incorporate some characteristics/ features currently present;
  - Minor: An effect that will entail limited or localised change to the existing landscape/ views or will entail more noticeable localised change but including both adverse and beneficial effects and is likely to retain or incorporate some characteristics/ features currently present;
  - Negligible: An effect that will be discernible yet of very limited change to the existing landscape or views.

PAGE LEFT DELIBERATELY BLANK

### 3.0 PLANNING POLICY

#### National Planning Policy

##### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012)

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) (NPPF) sets out planning policies for England and is a key part of the government's reform of the planning system, which seeks to make planning more accessible. It provides a framework of economic, environmental and social planning policies, setting out what sustainable development means in practice and how the planning system can contribute to its achievement. At paragraph 1 the NPPF states

*The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.*

- 3.2 The NPPF sets a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' and includes general policy guidance on Green Infrastructure, landscape character and good quality design.

- 3.3 At paragraph 14 the NPPF states

*"At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking..."*

*For decision-taking this means:*

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
  - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
  - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."*

- 3.4 Footnote 9 of the NPPF identifies the specific designations protected by policy:

*"For example, those policies relating to sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives (see paragraph 119) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or within a National Park (or the Broads Authority); designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion."*

- 3.5 The site does not fall within any specific designations for reasons of landscape value. However it does currently lie within the Green Belt.

- 3.6 The NPPF identifies at paragraph 17 a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The following principles are of relevance:
- *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
  - *take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
- 3.7 At paragraph 109, the NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: *"Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils..."*
- 3.8 Within the NPPF paragraph 113 makes reference to judgement of landscape, its states;
- "Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks".*
- 3.9 Paragraph 114 describes how local planning authorities should consider not just networks of biodiversity but also green infrastructure, it states that they should *"set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure..."*
- 3.10 The NPPF supports good design to enhance the quality of the built and natural environment.
- "The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better people"* (para 56)
- 3.11 In relation to urban design and landscape, paragraph 58 concludes that:
- "Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that development:*
- *Establishes a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
  - *Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
  - *Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation; and*
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping"*
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG, 2014)
- 3.12 The NPPG came into force on the 6th March 2014 and is an online planning resource which provides guidance on the NPPF and the planning system. The NPPF continues to be the primary document for decision making.

## Local Planning Policy

- 3.13 The development plan for Walsall currently comprises:
- Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) 2011
  - Walsall Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2005 – ‘saved’ policies
  - UDP Proposals Map and Town and District Centre Inset Maps
- 3.14 These documents form part of Walsall's Local Plans (formerly Local Development Framework - LDF). Additional planning policy documents are prepared by the Council to offer further guidance to the policies of the ‘development plan’, and these also make up part of the Local Plans

### Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) 2011

- 3.15 The four Black Country Local Authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton have prepared a Core Strategy for the Black Country in partnership with the community and other key organisations.
- 3.16 The Black Country Core Strategy (JCS) sets out the vision, objectives and strategy for future development in the Black Country up to 2026 and beyond. It forms the basis of Walsall's Local Development Framework and will guide future development decisions throughout the Black Country.
- 3.17 The following policies are of relevance to landscape and visual matters and the proposed development:
- **CSP3 Environmental Infrastructure**
  - **CSP4 Place-Making**
  - **HOU2 Housing Density, type and Accessibility**
  - **ENV1 Nature Conservation**
  - **ENV2 Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness**
  - **ENV3 Design Quality**
  - **ENV4 Canals**
  - **ENV5 Flood Risk, Sustainable Drainage Systems and Urban Heat Island**
  - **ENV6 Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

### Walsall Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2005 – ‘saved’ policies

- 3.18 The current UDP was adopted in 2005 and was set to cover the period up to 2011. However, “saved” policies, will now stand until they are replaced by policies from the BCCS
- 3.19 The following Saved Policies from the UDP are of relevance to landscape and visual matters and the proposed development:
- **GP2 Environmental Protection**
  - **ENV1 The Boundary of the Green Belt**

- **ENV7 Countryside Character**
- **ENV17 New Planting**
- **ENV18 Existing Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows**
- **ENV23 Nature Conservation and New Development**
- **ENV24 Wildlife Corridors**
- **ENV27 Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest**
- **ENV29 Conservation Areas**
- **ENV32 Design and Development Proposals**
- **ENV33 Landscape Design**
- **ENV40 Conservation, Protection and Use of Water Resources**
- **T8 Walking**
- **T9 Cycling**
- **T11 Access for Pedestrians. Cyclist and Wheelchair users**
- **T12 Access by Public Transport (Bus, Rail, Metro and Ring and Ride)**
- **LC3 Children's Play Areas**
- **LC5 Greenway's**

Site Allocations Document (Draft Pre-Submission Consultation November 2016)

3.20 The SAD will form part of the Local Plan for Walsall within the framework provided by the Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS). The Site Allocation Document (SAD) is the plan that will identify specific sites to meet the current and future needs of Walsall. It will cover the whole of the borough excluding Walsall Town Centre and the District Centres of Aldridge, Brownhills, Bloxwich, Willenhall and Darlaston. The SAD will replace many of the policies in Walsall's current Unitary Development Plan (UDP), in particular the Proposals Map which shows the land uses that are currently allocated for individual sites.

3.21 The following policies are of relevance:

**GB1 Green Belt Boundary**

**OS1 Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

3.22 Policy OS1 covers:

- Land to the north of the site extending to and including and Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve.
- Land to the south of the site adjacent to Wyrley and Essington Canal.

**EN1 Natural Environment Protection, Management and Enhancement**

3.23 Policy EN1 covers the following ecological designations:

- Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve is a designated Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

- Land adjacent to Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).
- Some of the internal field hedgerows adjacent to Aldridge Road are designated as a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC) Linear.
- Wyrley and Essington Canal is a designated Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC).

#### **LC5 Greenways**

3.24 Policy LC5 covers:

- Wyrley and Essington Canal

#### **UDP Saved Policy ENV27 Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest**

- 3.25 Riddian Bridge situated to the north of the site on the Wyrley and Essington Canal is Grade II listed. A locally listed building is also present alongside the Canal to the south of the site.
- 3.26 The wider area includes other heritage assets within Conservation Areas, which are situated within locations more remote from the site.
- Arboretum Conservation Area
  - Old Rushall Conservation Area

#### **Other Relevant Strategies, Guidelines or Documents**

##### Designing Walsall Supplementary Planning Document for Urban Design

Adopted February 2008. SPD Revised July 2013

- 3.27 This SPD expands on 'saved' policies ENV32, ENV33 and ENV34 in the Walsall Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2005 regarding urban design, landscape design, and the provision of public art, and covers the whole of in the borough of Walsall. It also supports policies CSP4, ENV2, ENV3 and ENV4 in the Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) regarding place making, historic character and local distinctiveness, design quality and canals.

##### Urban Open Space

##### Supplementary Planning Document to the Walsall Unitary Development Plan April 2006

- 3.28 This SPD expands on "saved" policies GP3 and LC1 to LC6 of the Walsall UDP regarding provision of open spaces in the borough of Walsall. Annex D includes information on provision of Open Space, Sport and Recreation facilities. Information below is extracted from Table D1: Costings.

Type of provision	Standard (Ha /1,000 people)
Children & Young People	0.2
Parks & Gardens	1.0
Playing fields (including ancillary facilities)	1.6
Amenity space	0.4
Allotments*	0.2
Natural & Semi-natural*	2.0

\* Mainly improvements rather than new spaces.

Walsall Open Space, Sport & Recreational Facilities PPG17 Audit & Assessment (2011)

- 3.29 Sets out a series of recommendations about local standards for open space based on an assessment carried out in 2011.

Type of provision	Walsall Proposed Quantity Standard (Ha /1,000 people)	Accessibility
Children & Young People	0.17	Households to be within 600m of provision for children and young people
Parks & Gardens	1.08	Households to be within: 1,200 of a Borough site 600m of Neighbourhood site 400m of a Local site
Formal outdoor sports	0.62	To provide an accessible outdoor sports facility within 1000m of where people live
Green Corridors	0.12	To provide green corridors within 1000m of where people live
Amenity space	0.73	To provide amenity greenspace within 400m of where people live
Allotments*	0.2	To provide an accessible allotment plot within 1,000m of where people live
Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	2.7	Households to be within: 1,200 of a Borough site 600m of Neighbourhood site 400m of a Local site



Walsall Play Strategy (2012 – 2017)

- 3.30 The play strategy sets out recommended accessibility standards for children's play and for youth and adult provision.
- 3.31 The Walsall Play Strategy recommends that childrens play spaces should typically be based around a 600 metre catchment. Youth and Adult Play Provision (including multi-use games areas, tennis, BMX and basketball courts) should have a catchment of 800m and at the top level of the hierarchy proposed play hubs, located at strategic points across the Borough should have a catchment of 1000 metres.

Walsall Allotments Strategy (2007-2012)

- 3.32 The Strategy sets an accessibility standard whereby residents can expect an allotment site within 2 Km of where they live.

Walsall Green Space Strategy

- 3.33 Sets out the current supply of green space across the borough and sets out various forms of classification. Land to the north of the site and Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve is categorised as Natural and Semi-natural Green Space, and Strategic/District Community Greenspace.
- 3.34 Calderfields Golf and Country Club, adjacent to the Wyrley and Essington Canal to the south of Aldridge Road is categorised as Outdoor Sports Facilities.

## 4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

### Landscape Character

#### National Character

- 4.1 National Character Area (NCA) profiles have been prepared by Natural England for the 159 NCA's defined across England. These NCA profiles include a description of the natural and cultural features that shape the landscape, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics. Figure 4 illustrates the NCA within the context of the site.
- 4.2 At this very broad landscape scale, the site, lies within the central area of Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 67 Cannock Chase & Cank Wood. NCA No. 67 covers a large part of the Birmingham and Black Country conurbation. Consequently the landscape is extremely varied including extensive areas of urban development interspersed with farmland. There are no major rivers within the area but canals are a significant feature and major transport routes also cross the NCA.
- 4.1 With regards to future changes as a result of development within the NCA, this provides opportunities for enhancing both the landscape quality and biodiversity value through green infrastructure.
- 4.2 Key characteristics for the area are described below. However because of the broad area that the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood covers, many of the key characteristics are not particularly relevant to the site itself.
- *A varied landscape ranging from the open heathlands and plantations of Cannock Chase, through towns, reclaimed mining sites and new developments, to dense urban areas.*
  - *The dominant rounded central plateau is mainly formed of the Coal Measures of the South Staffordshire Coalfield, with other prominent hills in the south at Wren's Nest, Castle Hill, Rowley Hills and Barr Beacon.*
  - *Extensive coniferous plantations, woodlands and historic parklands occur across the NCA, even within the urban areas where they are predominantly small and include lots of young plantations.*
  - *Away from the unenclosed landscape of Cannock Chase, fields generally have a regular pattern and are frequently enclosed by mature hedgerows with some hedgerow trees. Here farming is generally mixed with arable cultivation in large fields. Livery is concentrated around the flanks of the Chase.*
  - *Heathland and associated acid grassland were once much more extensive, although significant tracts still remain. Post-industrial sites and remnant countryside within the urban areas provide a mosaic of additional valuable habitats.*
  - *The major rivers of the Trent and Tame lie adjacent to the NCA, both of which lie in broad flood plains. Streams and small rivers such as the Sow and the Penk drain radially from the higher ground into these rivers.*
  - *The canal network is a notable feature and contributes significantly to the drainage of the urban areas.*
  - *Industrial archaeology from the industrial revolution is a characteristic feature.*

- *The predominant building material of the 19th- and early 20th century buildings is red brick, with more modern structures within the urban areas.*
- *The settlement pattern is complex and contrasting, with some areas densely populated and others relatively sparse. The conurbation includes a mosaic of urban areas, former industrial land and patches of farmland, with an extensive urban fringe.*
- *The extensive networks of canals and railways reflect the industrial history of the area. Major roads include the M6, the M6 Toll and the A5.*

#### 4.3 'Statements of Environmental Opportunities' are set out within the profile:-

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

*For example, by:*

- *Improving access provision along green corridors both within and between urban areas, linking existing corridors such as those along the river channels and disused railway lines, and creating new routes in order to form a strategic green infrastructure network.*
- *Reinforcing and expanding the existing green infrastructure network of open spaces, parks, farmland and countryside, woods, wetlands, reclaimed sites and access routes throughout the Black Country, the wider urban area, the adjoining urban fringe and in and around the freestanding towns.*
- *Taking advantage of opportunities to enhance educational access, particularly to nationally important geodiversity sites.*
- *Conserving and managing the outstanding geodiversity interest, particularly at the area's eight geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and within the Black Country, and identifying opportunities to enhance the geodiversity resource linked so closely to the area's cultural heritage.*
- *Retaining and enhancing the biodiversity value of urban areas, and expanding and improving habitat connectivity.*
- *Increasing the extent of native woodland and managing existing woodlands, for example as a source of wood fuel, to improve landscape, increase recreational opportunities, increase carbon storage for climate regulation and improve water filtration to the underlying aquifer for water quality.*
- *Creating new wetlands, enhancing existing watercourses and ensuring public access to these features as part of sustainable urban drainage systems in urban areas and close to new developments.*
- *Managing and expanding access to the networks of rights of way, cycle routes, canal towpaths and access land and enhancing recreational opportunities.*
- *Maintaining and improving the existing rights of way network and the Staffordshire Way, Heart of England Way and Beacon Way long-distance routes.*

- *Planning new or improved links between urban areas and the wider countryside or major open spaces within or near the conurbation such as Sandwell Valley, Barr Beacon, Sutton Park and Chasewater.*
- *Improving access to a wider range of local sites so as to reduce recreational pressure at sensitive locations.*
- *Improving links to or within the wider network of canal towpaths and cycle routes.*
- *Conserving the industrial archaeology of the Black Country and the South Staffordshire Coalfield, particularly buildings and sites associated with the iron, manufacturing and mining industries, and the canal network, and promoting access and awareness.*
- *Protecting and managing historic parks and urban parks to conserve significant historic landscapes and important features and habitats such as veteran trees, wood pasture and urban trees and the associated invertebrate populations.*

## **County Character**

### **The Black Country An Historic Landscape Characterisation 2009**

- 4.4 In terms of County landscape character Walsall does not have a landscape/townscape character assessment. The Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation (BCHLC) divides Walsall into 14 Character Areas, and includes a Character Area Profile for each area. The site falls within Barr Beacon & Aldridge Fields (Figure 5) from which extracts are provided below:

*Summary: This area is the most rural landscape in Walsall, with field systems covering more than two thirds of its surface (although recreational land is also important). Four fifths (80%) of the area dates to before 1900. It is bounded on almost all sides by Staffordshire and Birmingham respectively.*

*Geology & Topography: The area has a mixed geology. In the west it lies on mudstone and limestone, in its central part on sandstone, mudstone and conglomerate, and east of Barr Beacon, on sandstone. In the west Rushall Hall lies on coal measures.*

*A ridge runs north-south through the centre of the area rising to 227m at Barr Beacon, the highest point in Walsall. The low point of around 124m is on the A452 Chester Road which forms the area's north-eastern boundary. Streams flow off the ridge in the east (Bourne Vale), the west (near Rushall Hall and Walsall Arboretum), and the south (through Great Barr Park).*

*Modern Character: Unusually for the Black Country, this area is characterised mainly by agricultural land and dispersed farms. Important recreational land also makes up the area and, in the central part, there are two small areas of housing, parcels of woodland, and a surviving area of ancient heath at Barr Beacon... Three of Walsall's five golf courses are located in the area, at Druid's Heath in the north, in the West adjacent to Walsall Arboretum, and at the Great Barr in the south. All were laid out in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the oldest recreational area is Great Barr Park in the very south of the area... Two small clusters of housing lie in the centre of the area. One is distinctive estate of large houses in woodland at Bourne Vale... The other is a number of detached houses from a similar period on the Longwood and Erdington Roads south of Aldridge... Also south of Aldridge, small areas of woodland survive – originating from at least the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century. Some of these are areas of former limestone quarrying... In addition to the evidence of former extractive industries, modern sand extraction still continues east of Aldridge.*

- 4.5 The HLC included pilot areas, one of which was Walsall SP02-04/98-00; NE Walsall-suburban growth; rural areas; former industrial landscape. This area is described as:

*North east Walsall was chosen because it comprises a mixed suburban and rural belt. At least three medieval moated sites fall within the pilot area and several farms with associated field systems still survive.*

*The area was also quarried for its limestone including quarries at Parks Pits and at Walsall Arboretum (Hathern Lake being a flooded quarry). Both these quarries were abandoned around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

*Victoria Terrace a street of large semi detached houses also dates to around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From this time the area around the Arboretum (which was laid out in the 1870s as a public park) was developed for housing.*

*Three current Broad Types dominate: Settlement, Recreational and Field Systems. The main settlement areas are at the west and south west of the pilot area and form part of the suburbs of Walsall, the main settlement of which lies to the south west. The two settlement areas are separated by a large recreational site, Walsall Arboretum.*

*...the northern settlement is dominated by detached housing with a few semi detached houses...There are several very small areas of apartments situated among these dominant housing types...This was clearly an area of largely middle class housing circa 80 years ago presumably having been attracted to this area due to its location on the fringe of Walsall and by the development of the Arboretum.*

#### Designations

- 4.6 This should be read in conjunction with Figure 6: Designations Plan. No designations apply to the site with regard to landscape value. However it does currently lie within the Green Belt.
- 4.7 Within the site some of the internal field hedgerows adjacent to Aldridge Road are designated as a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC) Linear. The Wyrley and Essington Canal which runs along the site's eastern boundary is a designated Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC). In addition, wetland, tree belt, hedgerow and agricultural land by the site's northern boundary are designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The Beacon Way runs alongside the Canal, which Walsall Council have identified as a proposed Greenway.
- 4.8 Within the surrounding area, land to the north of the site extending to and including and Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve is covered by local designations for nature conservation value. Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve has recreational value identified by Walsall Council as open space and Strategic/District Community Greenspace. Calderfields Golf and Country Club, adjacent to the Wyrley and Essington Canal to the south of Aldridge Road is also identified as open space.
- 4.9 Riddian Bridge situated to the north of the site on the Wyrley and Essington Canal is Grade II listed. A locally listed building is also present alongside the Canal to the south of the site. The wider area includes other heritage assets within the Arboretum and Old Rushall Conservation Areas, which are situated within locations more remote from the site.

## Topography

- 4.10 The following should be read in conjunction with Figure 3.

### Site – Landform

- 4.11 Partial containment to the site is provided by undulating topography within the local landscape. The site is situated on gently sloping land which falls to the south along Aldridge Road and to the east/north east towards the Wyrley and Essington Canal. Land rises towards the central and western areas of the site with a high point of around 150m (AOD) by Stencil's Farm. Localised low points at around 140m AOD occur by the site's northern and southern boundaries. An existing area of wetland is present within the northern part of the site.

### Context – Landform

- 4.12 Topography within the wider landscape is varied. Shallow valleys occur along minor watercourses situated to the east of the site and also to the south through Walsall Arboretum. Away from the lower lying valleys the landscape features gently undulating topography with low hills and ridgelines. To the north of the site land rises towards a low ridgeline along Bosty Lane B4154 at around 150-160m AOD. Further away from the site to the south east, ridgeline at Beacon Hill (up to around 215m AOD) forms a prominent feature within the landscape.
- 4.13 Within landscape surrounding the site are various residential developments situated on areas of localised higher ground. To the west and south west of Stencil's Farm existing residential properties lie at around 150m AOD. Properties also occur along the ridgelines along Bosty Lane B4154 and at Beacon Hill.

### **Site and Immediate Context**

- 4.14 An assessment of landscape character of the site and its immediate context has been carried out, providing a finer level of assessment than the published studies.
- 4.15 The site is located at the eastern edge of Walsall to the north of Aldridge Road. Site boundaries are defined follows:
- southern boundary is defined by Aldridge Road A454 which provides a main route between Aldridge and Walsall. Infrastructure along Aldridge Road A454 adjacent to the site includes:
    - Dual carriageway with road lighting columns along the central reservation.
    - A combined footway/cycleway runs along the westbound carriageway.
    - Grass verge and avenue trees are present along the road corridor.

- A roundabout provides access to the Dilke Pub and Restaurant and Calderfields Golf and Country Club. Existing bus stops occur along Aldridge Road opposite Stencil's Farm, by the Dilke Pub and Restaurant and by Longwood Bridge.
  - The eastern site boundary is defined by a field hedgerow along the Wyrley and Essington Canal. The Beacon Way runs along an unsurfaced route by the Canal.
  - The site's northern boundary is defined by a field hedgerows with trees situated along along a minor watercourse. The site's north western boundaries are defined by field hedgerows situated along the edge of open space by Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve.
  - The site's western boundary abuts existing housing and a housing allocation (SAD Draft Policies Map Ref HO208) situated at Stencils Farm.
- 4.16 The site comprises of several agricultural fields the vast majority of which are currently under intensive arable use. Consequently, much the site is lacking in any significant vegetation cover or other internal features of value. Along the field boundaries variable vegetation cover occurs depending on the presence of hedgerows and tree belts. There are also hedgerow and tree belts situated along parts of the site's eastern boundary (along the the Wyrley and Essington Canal) and northern boundary (along a minor watercourse). In addition avenue trees occur along Aldridge Road along the site's southern boundary (although none of these are protected by preservation orders).

### Site Context

- 4.17 The site lies at the eastern edge of Walsall to the north of Aldridge Road. The sites context includes settlements, business park, detached properties, caravan park, farmsteads, public house, golf course and country club, main roads, lanes, canal, railway line, stables, agricultural land, nature reserve, hedgerows and tree belt, wetland and minor watercourse.
- 4.18 Various developments are present along Aldridge Road immediately to the south of the site. The Dilke Pub and Restaurant and Calderfields Golf and Country Club are accessed off a lane from the roundabout on Aldridge Road. There are separate accesses to the PDN Construction Training Centre, Severn Trent Water sewage pumping station and detached and semi-detached properties at Whitby Stables.
- 4.19 Stencils Farm buildings, and caravan storage area are located by the south western corner of the site. Stencils Farm is allocated for housing allocation (SAD Draft Policies Map Ref HO208) and subject to a recent planning application (Ref). Wider residential development occurs to the north and south of Aldridge Road to the west of the site.
- 4.20 To the north and east of the site, beyond the Canal, agricultural land extends towards the Bosty Lane and Walsall Road. Farmsteads are include properties and agricultural sheds present at College Farm and Berryfields Farm. Existing commercial developments are present along Walsall Road, whilst residential settlement at Aldridge lies to the north of Bosty Lane. To the northwest residential settlement at Daw End lies beyond the Midland railway line.
- 4.21 Other residential settlement within the surrounding area including along Sutton Road to the south, and along Longwood Road to the south east. In addition there are numerous other detached farmsteads and properties.

- 4.22 Main roads within the area include Aldridge Road A454 which provides a direct route between Aldridge and Walsall. There is a segregated footpath and cycleway along Aldridge Road linking the site to facilities within Walsall and Aldridge. There is also a network of secondary roads and lanes.
- 4.23 The Public Right of Way network provides access from settlements to the surrounding countryside and connections with recreational facilities and other public highways. A public footpath crossing the site provides a link between Aldridge road and Bosty Lane, connecting to Beacon Way by Riddian Bridge. The Beacon Way provides a long distance walk through the West Midlands, and runs along the Canal adjacent to the site.
- 4.24 Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve is valued for both recreational and local wildlife. There are pedestrian routes to the Nature Reserve from the Riddian Bridge and from the residential edge of Walsall by Stencills Road.
- 4.25 Detracting features within the local landscape include electricity pylons which run north to south to the east of Longwood Road, Barr Common.
- 4.26 There are a range of property types within Walsall. The conservation areas contains a range of buildings which have historic interest or architectural merit. Elsewhere much of the mid-late C20th residential development includes typical 2 storey detached and semi-detached dwellings.

### **Landscape Value**

- 4.27 In terms of "landscape value" it is appropriate to examine the role of the site and its immediate context in terms of the range of local factors set out in the GLVIA3 (Box 5.1, page 84), and summarised in the methodology. This considers the landscape in terms of a range of factors as set out below. As a starting point, landscape designations have been considered.
- 4.28 Landscape Designations: Whilst the site does currently lie within the Green Belt it is not subject to local landscape designation with regard to landscape value. Features of local value include some of the internal field hedgerows which are designated as a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC) Linear. Wetland, tree belt, hedgerow and agricultural land by the site's northern boundary are designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The Canal which runs alongside the site's eastern boundary is a designated Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC) and the Beacon Way alongside the Canal, which is identified as a proposed Greenway. Within the wider landscape Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve is identified by Walsall Council as Strategic/District Community Greenspace.
- 4.29 The proposed development provides an opportunity to extend and connect the open space network and defined "wildlife corridors". A Linear park alongside the Canal could reinforce its role within the local Green Infrastructure network.
- 4.30 Landscape Quality (Condition): In landscape terms the site exhibits a rather degraded structure where intensive agricultural use has resulted in large scale fields with narrow field margins. Some of the hedgerows are low clipped and gappy in places with few trees present. The only notable exceptions are hedgerow and tree belts situated within the eastern part of the site and along parts of the site perimeter. The site itself is not considered to be of high quality nor in good condition.



- 4.31 Scenic Quality: The site sits within an agricultural landscape on the fringe of the urban area of Walsall. Local views of the site are seen within the context of various urban developments present adjacent to the site and within the surrounding area. Developments within close proximity to the site include the residential settlement at the edge of Walsall, and various developments are present along Aldridge Road. Commercial development located by Walsall Road are also evident within easterly views. Aldridge Road situated immediately adjacent to the site is lit with standard road lighting columns. The wider landscape also includes other residential settlements including at Aldridge and Longwood Road, as well as other residential properties, farmstead. Detracting influences within easterly views also include electricity pylons.
- 4.32 Hedgerow and tree belt situated along parts of the site perimeter and internal field boundaries are evident within some local views. However, the site itself does not convey any particular sense of scenic quality.
- 4.33 Rarity and Representativeness: The site itself does not contain any rare or unusual landscape features. There are a few hedgerows and trees present along internal field boundaries and the site perimeter which are of local value. However, such features are commonplace elements within the surrounding landscape.
- 4.34 Beacon Way is located adjacent to the eastern site boundary and identified as a potential Greenway. The proposed development provides an opportunity to extend the open space network along the Beacon Way within an enhanced setting.
- 4.35 Conservation Interest: Features of value within the site, albeit at a local level are restricted to the hedgerow and trees situated along an internal field boundary. Such features would be retained within an enhanced Green Infrastructure framework.
- 4.36 Riddian Bridge situated to the north of the site on the Wyrley and Essington Canal is Grade II listed. A locally listed building is also present alongside the Canal to the south of the site. Land alongside the Canal forms part of its setting and has potential to be enhanced within Green Infrastructure as part of the proposed development.
- 4.37 The wider area includes other heritage assets within the Arboretum and Old Rushall Conservation Areas, which are situated within locations more remote from the site. Intervisibility between the Conservation Areas and the site are much restricted due to a combination of existing vegetation and urban fabric.
- 4.38 Recreational Value:
- 4.39 A public footpath crossing the site provides a link between Aldridge road and Bosty Lane, connecting to Beacon Way by Riddian Bridge.
- 4.40 The Beacon Way runs along the Canal adjacent to the site. Other recreational facilities include Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve. Proposed development would potentially be very well connected to these facilities through the existing public rights of way network.
- 4.41 Perceptual Aspects and Associations: The site is neither “wild” nor tranquil due to its location immediately adjacent to Walsalls settlement edge and proximity to Aldridge Road. The site is not known to have any particular associations with any particular people e.g. artists or writers, or historic events that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.
- 4.42 Having considered the above factors that influence landscape value and the GLVIA definition:

*“Areas of landscape whose character is judged to be intact and in good condition, and where scenic quality, wildness or tranquillity, and natural or cultural heritage features make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important associations, are likely to be highly valued”, it is considered that the site, itself, is not a landscape of high value.*

- 4.43 To summarise, it is not designated for reasons of landscape value, and contains relatively few features of value. It lies within the close context of the existing settlement edge of Walsall.

### **Visual Baseline**

- 4.44 The interaction of urban fabric, vegetation and topography determines the potential for views to the site. A comprehensive visual assessment of the site and has been undertaken. Key representative viewpoints have been selected to explore the potential visibility of the proposed development and these enable a Zone of Visual Influence to be determined. The majority of views have been selected to represent the maximum potential visibility of the site and the potential future development. However, a small number of views have also been included to demonstrate that the site is not visible from publicly accessible locations. The photographs demonstrate varying degrees of visibility and include both short and long range views. Receptors encompass residents, users of rights of way, open spaces and recreational facilities, travellers and people at work. In overall terms, the first two categories are generally of higher sensitivity than the latter two, although the context of individual receptors can have a bearing on sensitivity.
- 4.45 The photographs were taken during March 2017 and seasonal differences have been taken into account when determining the visual effects on these receptors.
- 4.46 The viewpoint locations are shown at Figure 7 and the photographs at Figures 8-23.

### **Summary of Visual Baseline**

- 4.47 The baseline analysis results in a number of reasoned conclusions which are summarised below:
- The site has a relatively restricted visual envelope owing to the interaction of localised variations in topography, existing vegetation cover and urban fabric along the edge of Walsall. Views of the site are well screened from the vast majority of properties within Walsall. Close range views of the western part the site are limited to properties situated on Aldridge Road (Viewpoints 2 and 3), Burton Farm Road and Stencills Road.
  - Other close range northerly views are available from detached properties situated adjacent to the site’s southern boundary (Viewpoint 4) seen across Aldridge Road.
  - Views of the site from Aldridge Road are restricted to the stretch of road located immediately adjacent to the site’s southern boundary. Highways infrastructure including the dual carriageway and road lighting columns are prominent within views. Locally elevated views of the south western part of the site (Viewpoints 2 and 3) are seen within close context of existing residential properties. Views of adjacent agricultural fields within the site are filtered by existing avenue trees alongside Aldridge Road. From the roundabout junction on Aldridge Road (Viewpoint 1) views are semi-open over a low clipped gappy roadside hedge across an adjacent arable field within the site. Land rises gently to the north forming the near horizon.

The Dilke Arms public house occupies a prominent location by the roundabout. Elsewhere along Aldridge Road (Viewpoint 4), detached residential properties also front onto the road. In addition to avenue trees alongside the Aldridge Road, hedgerow trees along an internal field boundary also feature within the view. A locally elevated vantage point on Aldridge Road occurs from Longwood Bridge (Viewpoint 10). Westerly views beyond the road corridor are across fields within the site situated adjacent to the Canal. Wider views of the site are filtered by hedgerows and trees present alongside Aldridge Road and internal field boundaries.

- Close range views of the site occur from the public footpath within the site (Viewpoints 5, 6 and 7). Southerly views are across gently sloping pasture field by Stencils Farm (Viewpoint 5A). Vegetation cover includes a field hedgerow/ tree belt and avenue trees along Aldridge Road. Built development within the view includes agricultural buildings at Stencils Farm and detached properties along Aldridge Road including the Dilke Arms public house. Road lighting columns also feature along Aldridge Road. To the south west there are also long distance glimpsed views of residential properties by Beacon Hill. Northerly views are open across gently sloping, large scale arable fields (Viewpoint 5B). Existing residential properties and a caravan park are seen by the edge of Walsall. Viewpoint 6 is taken from a localised highpoint within the centre of the site, which again provides open views across large scale arable fields. Other built development within this view includes commercial developments on Walsall Road and agricultural sheds at College Farm, situated on low ridgeline. Locally increased vegetation cover includes tree belts and woodland towards Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve. At the northern edge of the site the public footpath runs along boardwalk across low lying wetland habitat (Viewpoint 7).
- A locally elevated vantage point is available from Riddian Bridge (Viewpoint 8). The Canal, and adjacent small scale pasture field are prominent within the foreground view. Hedgerow and tree belt situated along a minor watercourse partially filter views into the site, where large scale arable field gently rises towards the west. Built development includes residential settlement at the edge of Walsall (within westerly views) and commercial development by Walsall Road (within easterly views).
- Views from a permissive footpath (Viewpoint 9) situated between Riddian Bridge and Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve are semi-enclosed due to localised topography and adjacent hedgerow/trees. A localised gap in the vegetation cover allows a view over the adjacent arable field situated within the north western part of the site. Land rises to the south forming the near horizon.
- Views from the Beacon Way, adjacent to the site are typically contained along the Canal corridor by hedgerows (Viewpoint 11). Occasional gaps in the hedgerow allow views across adjacent arable fields within the site. Field hedgerows appear gappy in places. Southerly views (Viewpoint 11A) beyond the site include Aldridge Road and Calderfields Golf Club, whilst to the east commercial development is visible on Walsall Road. Distant views of high rise tower blocks within the wider conurbation are seen against the skyline. Westerly views (Viewpoint 11B) include glimpses of upper parts of residential properties situated at the edge of Walsall. Other built development within view includes agricultural sheds at Berryfields Farm. Longer distance views towards the site from the Beacon Way are generally restricted by the presence of hedgerow alongside the Canal (Viewpoint 16). Localised gaps in the vegetation cover allow glimpsed views of the site. Arable field in the northern part of the site rises to the south and is seen along the horizon. There are glimpsed views of upper parts of residential properties at the edge of Walsall and of an agricultural shed at Stencils Farm.

- There are elevated views towards the site from the public footpath situated along the low ridgeline to the north of the site (Viewpoints 13, 14 and 15). Foreground views are over pasture fields horse paddocks by College Farm and Berryfields Farm, which slope towards the Canal. Locally increased vegetation cover evident along the Canal corridor includes hedgerows and tree belt. Beyond the Canal are filtered views of arable fields within the site, rising to the west where existing residential properties at the edge of Walsall are partially screened by hedgerows within the intervening landscape. Distant views of high rise tower blocks within the wider conurbation are also seen against the skyline. To the south west there are also long distance glimpsed views of residential properties by Beacon Hill, and also of electricity pylons seen against the skyline.
- Locally elevated vantage point is available from the public footpath by the edge of Walsall near Stencils Farm. Close range view of existing residential properties are on Stencils Road are partially screened by existing hedgerow. Northerly views are across undulating farmland towards woodland at Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve. To the north east are glimpsed views of property and agricultural buildings at College Farm, and of upper parts of residential properties along Bosty Lane, Aldridge. The site itself is screened from view by field hedgerows.
- Views from public rights of way within Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve are relatively enclosed due to the presence of vegetation cover (including hedgerows, tree belts, woodland and scrub) and localised topography. Consequently there are limited views towards the site from the edge of the Nature Reserve (Viewpoints 18 and 19).
- There are few public vantage points to the south of Aldridge Road offering views towards the site. Viewpoint 20 is taken from the public footpath to the east of Fernleigh Road. Existing hedgerow and trees present within the intervening landscape largely screen the site from view. There are filtered glimpsed views of upper parts of residential properties situated by Aldridge Road. There are also distant views of commercial development on Walsall Road, backdropped by wooded ridgeline.
- Views from Walsall Road (Viewpoints 21 and 22) include commercial developments and adjacent farmstead property. Standard road lighting columns are present along Aldridge Road. Distant views of high rise tower blocks within the wider conurbation are seen against the skyline. The site is largely screened from view due to the presence of hedgerows and tree belt.
- Viewpoint 23 is taken from a localised highpoint along Bosty Lane. Residential properties are set back from Bosty Lane behind roadside footpath, grass verge and private drive. Southerly are restricted by roadside hedgerow, beyond which are pasture fields by College Farm. The site is screen from view due to the combined screening effects of localised topography and vegetation cover.
- Viewpoints 24 and 25 are taken from high ground at Beacon Hill to the south west of the site. The site is screen from view due to the screening effects of vegetation cover including tree belts and woodland present within the intervening landscape.

## 5.0 LANDSCAPE RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

- 5.1 The existing landscape resource, visual receptors and amenity of the site have informed recommendations for the design of a residential development within the site. The approach to the design of the scheme has been informed by collaboration between landscape, design, ecological and other professionals.
- 5.2 Following analysis of planning policy guidance, local landscape character and visual resources, a high quality Green Infrastructure (GI) framework will be required as part of the residential development. The site could accommodate residential development along with a comprehensive GI providing an appropriate and successful settlement edge. GI will be required in order to enhance on site features of value, with new areas of open space creating wildlife corridors linking into the surrounding countryside.

### Potential Landscape and Green Infrastructure (GI)

- 5.3 Significant landscape buffers and GI will be required in order to successfully assimilate built development within the site. Primary GI provided adjacent to the Wyrley and Essington Canal could create a satisfactory transition between the development edge and the wider countryside. Landscape buffers will be required to assist in softening views of the built development from the surrounding Green Belt. In particular GI will be required to mitigate views from adjacent Aldridge Road and also from the wider public rights of way network including the Beacon Way, as well as footpaths by Riddian Bridge and College Farm.
- 5.4 The GI proposals should incorporate a range of environmental enhancements such as:
- Land dedicated to landscape, public open space, sports pitches, play and habitat related proposals.
  - A range of public open space including formal and informal recreational space, wetland, grassland/meadow, with native broadleaved trees/woodland, hedgerow and shrub planting, habitat corridors, balancing ponds (SUDs).
- 5.5 Although much of the site area is currently occupied by intensive arable farmland, there are existing features of local value including hedgerows, trees, wetland, minor watercourse, and a public footpath. In addition Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve and the Wyrley and Essington Canal, which lie in close proximity to the site, have nature conservation and recreational value. Consequently we would recommend that the proposed development is designed in response to these features to enable their protection and enhancement.

### Landscape Design and GI Objectives

- 5.6 The key objectives of the landscape and GI proposals for the site are:
- GI is designed to be multifunctional so that it provides long term benefits for biodiversity, landscape character, sustainability, access and recreation.
  - Ensure that GI will be publically accessible and fully connected providing the local community with areas of nearby natural greenspace for play, recreation and enjoyment.

- Create a network of linked green corridors which could provide a focus for enhancing biodiversity and connectivity. Connectivity would be beneficial both in terms of local recreational value and also for visual amenity. The existing Public Right of Way network should be retained and enhanced, to ensure that access to the countryside and open space is maintained for existing users and also provided for the new residents of the future neighbourhoods.
- Particular care will be required to create an attractive soft edge to the proposed built development. A canalside linear park could ensure a suitable transition between the built development and the surrounding countryside.
- The Wyrley and Essington Canal is identified by Walsall as a proposed Greenway. A canalside linear park could create an enhanced setting to the Greenway, providing an exemplar green landscape where a variety of quality biodiverse and recreational green spaces exist together. The envisaged canalside linear park could provide opportunities to enhance links to Park Lime Pits Nature reserve, and would be well connected to the local rights of way network.
- Designated features of local nature conservation value including wetland, grassland and tree belt along Adams Brook should be protected and enhanced by the introduction of a continuous corridor of new greenspace, with the proposed built development set further back within the site.
- In addition to the primary GI corridor proposed recommended alongside the Canal, there should be other focal areas of open space which create pocket parks or greens. Greenways can form attractive routes for footpaths and cycleways permeating through new neighbourhoods and providing connections to Aldridge Road and to a potential canalside park. Vistas along linear greenways should allow views to the canalside park and the countryside beyond.
- As part of the SUDS, balancing ponds will be required. Wetland habitats should be created as part of the balancing ponds, forming an integral part of the GI framework.
- Native species of broadleaved trees and shrubs are recommended to complement existing vegetation and to provide an attractive soft edge to the built development.
- Recreational facilities, including children's play areas and sports pitches will be required within open space, situated within the GI framework. Footpath routes creating circular routes through the public open space within the site can provide convenient access from the adjoining residential areas.

### **Built Development**

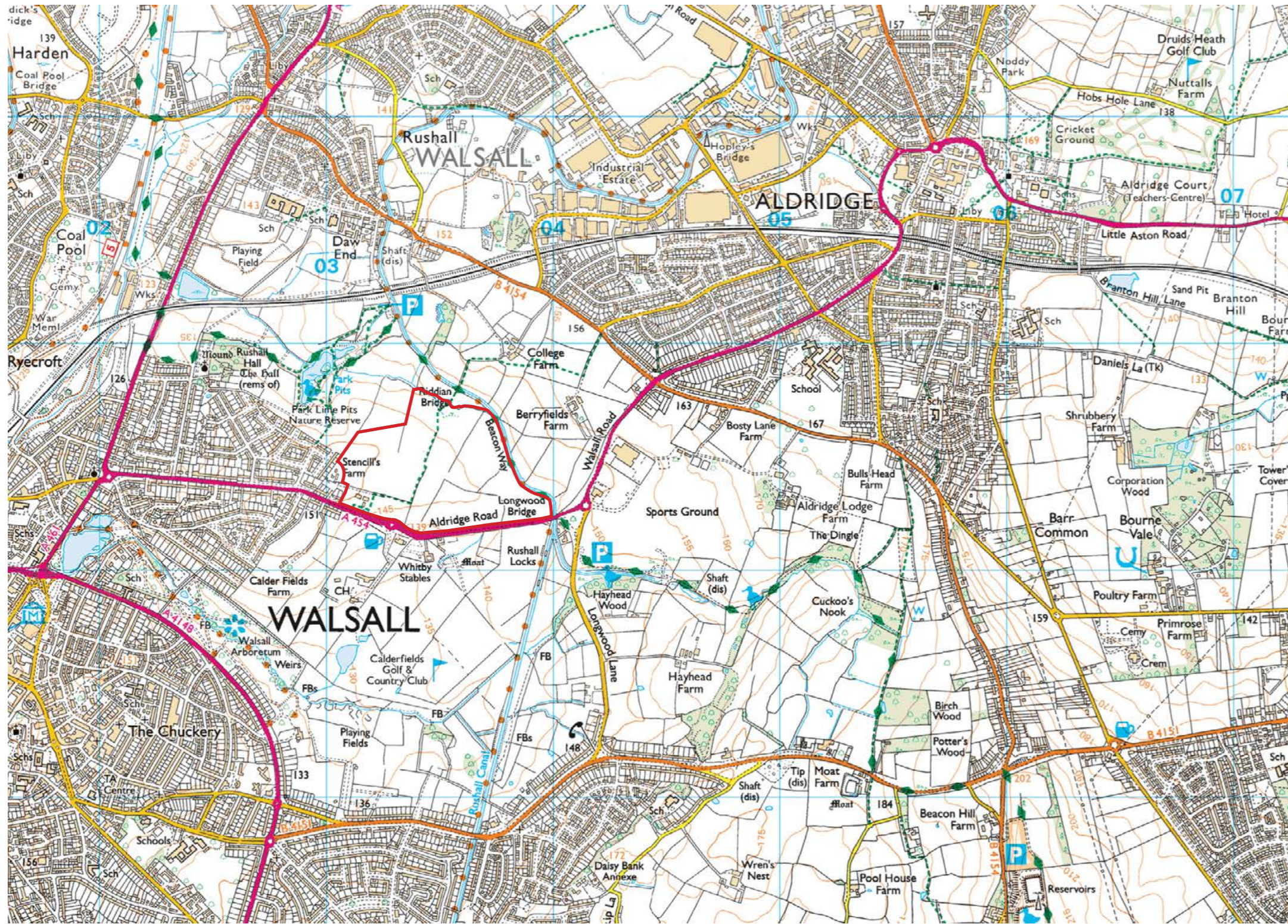
- 5.7 The buildings within the site should not exceed 3 storeys with the majority of buildings being no more than 2 storeys in height.
- 5.8 The choice of materials will need to reflect local building materials so that the built development blends visually with Walsall's settlement characteristics.

### **Landscape Management**

- 5.9 All of the landscape areas and features should be managed and maintained in the long term. We recommend that this is achieved through the implementation as appropriate of a Landscape Management Plan (LMP).

## 6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This landscape appraisal has reviewed the national, regional and local planning policy, along with the relevant published landscape character assessments and green infrastructure guidance. Whilst the site does currently lie within the Green Belt it is not subject to local landscape designation with regard to landscape value.
- 6.2 At a very broad landscape scale, the site, lies within the central area of Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 67 Cannock Chase & Cank Wood. With regards to future changes as a result of development within the NCA, this provides opportunities for enhancing both the landscape quality and biodiversity value through green infrastructure.
- 6.3 The site does not convey any particular sense of scenic quality, does not contain any rare or unusual landscape features and is not a landscape of high value. The majority of the site is currently under intensive arable use. Consequently it is lacking in any significant vegetation cover or other internal features of value. Features of local value include some of the field hedgerows and trees, wetland, minor watercourse, and a public footpath. In addition Park Lime Pits Nature Reserve and the Wyrley and Essington Canal, which lie in close proximity to the site, have nature conservation and recreational value.
- 6.4 The site sits within an agricultural landscape on the fringe of the existing settlement edge of Walsall. The site has a relatively restricted visual envelope; there are close range views (Aldridge Road, local footpaths, Beacon Way and Riddian Bridge) although these are generally within the context of adjoining urban development but will need to be respected and enhanced through new landscaping/GI.
- 6.5 The proposed development should be designed to create a high quality sustainable development with a comprehensive GI providing an appropriate and successful settlement edge. Particular care will be required to create an attractive soft edge to the proposed built development. The key landscape recommendation is to provide an appropriate and successful settlement edge in the form of a linear canalside park, forming a soft transition between the new development and countryside to the north and east and providing a linkage between the two adjoining "Wildlife Corridors". This will create significant landscape buffers and GI which would successfully assimilate built development within the site. Primary GI provided adjacent to the Wyrley and Essington Canal could create a satisfactory transition between the development edge and the wider countryside. Landscape buffers will be required to assist in softening views of the built development from the surrounding Green Belt. In particular GI will be required to mitigate views from adjacent Aldridge Road and also from the wider public rights of way network including the Beacon Way, as well as footpaths by Riddian Bridge and College Farm.
- 6.6 In conclusion, a high quality residential development incorporating comprehensive GI as recommended will be required in order to minimise adverse impacts upon landscape character and visual resources. A comprehensive Green Infrastructure framework as envisaged could ultimately result in significant long term beneficial effects. Consequently there would be no justifiable and defensible reasons to refuse planning permission for proposed development on landscape or visual grounds.

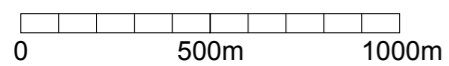


This drawing is the property of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd and is issued on the condition it is not reproduced, retained or disclosed to any unauthorised person, either wholly or in part without written consent of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd.

Ordnance Survey material - Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence Number: 100019980 (Centremapslive.com)



Scale: 1:20000 @ A3



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

J:\7700\7722\LANDSLVIA\7722 Fig 1 Site Location.indd

client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencil's Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
SITE LOCATION




scale  
1:20,000 @ A3

drawn  
MST

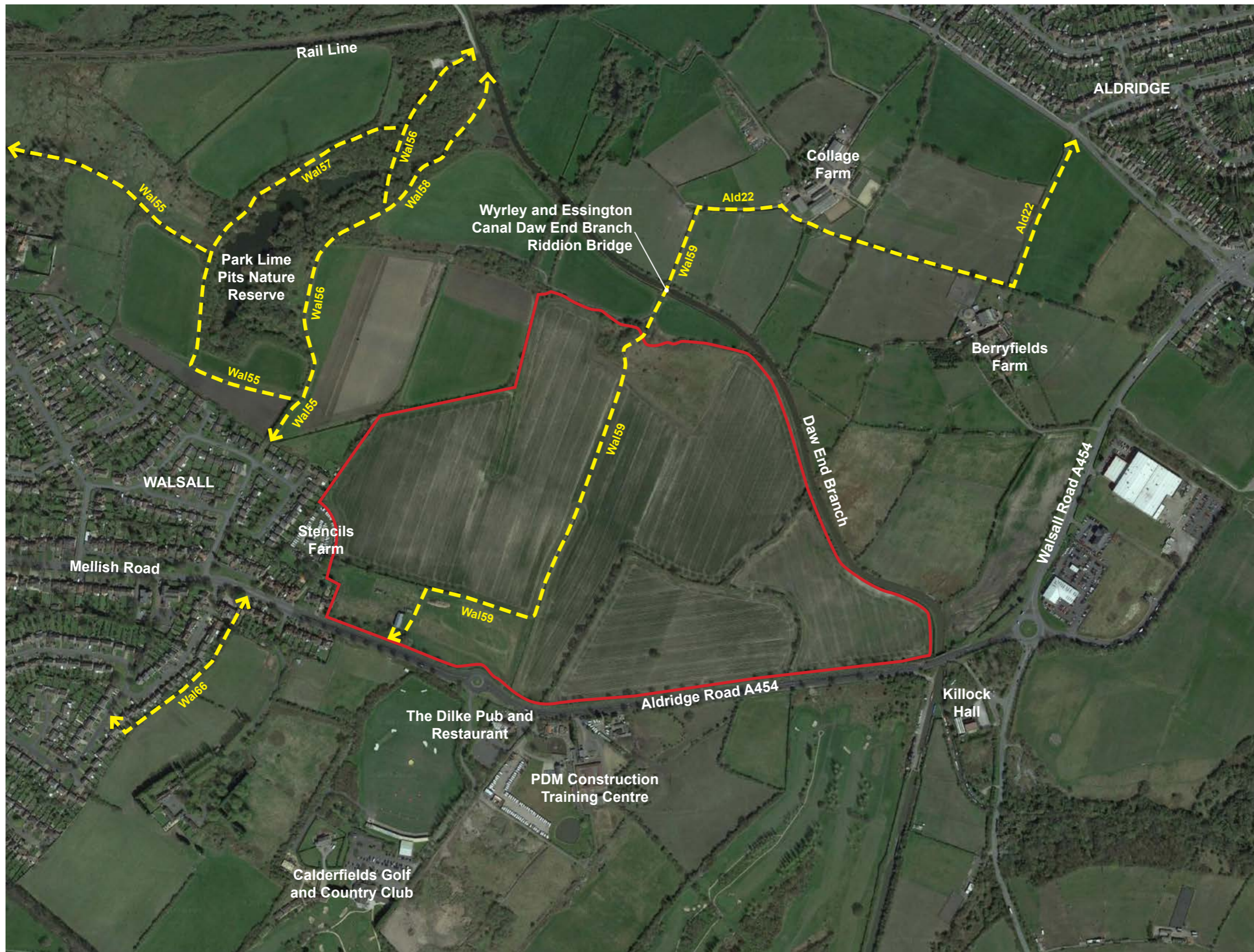
issue date  
29 March 2017

rev



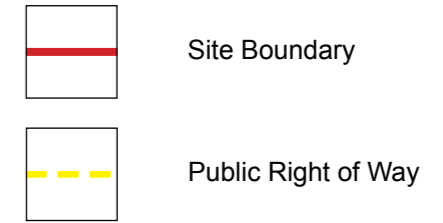
# Figure 1





This drawing is the property of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd and is issued on the condition it is not reproduced, retained or disclosed to any unauthorised person, either wholly or in part without written consent of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd.

Ordnance Survey material - Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence Number: 100019980 (Centremapslive.com)



client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

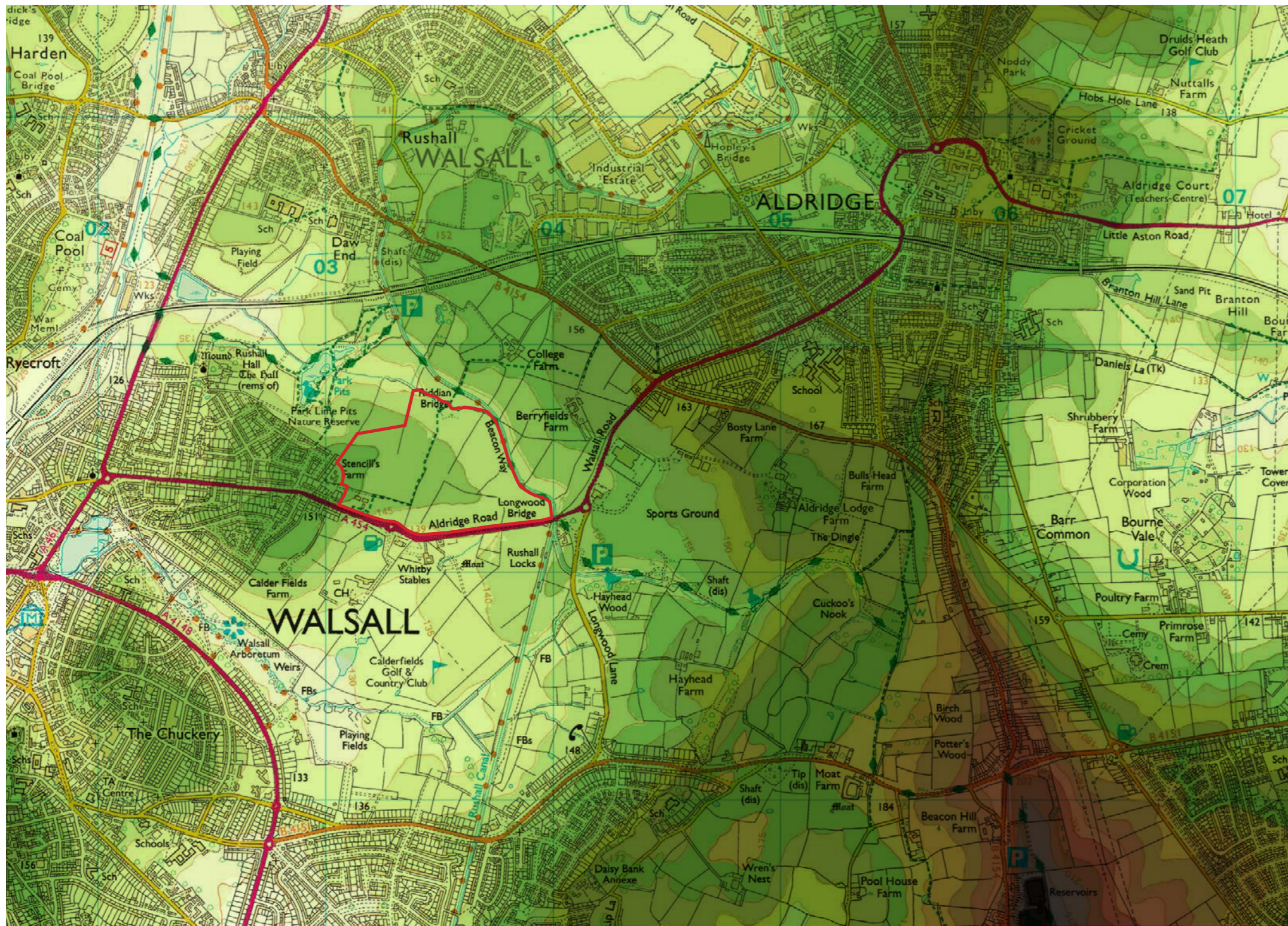


scale  
NTS @ A3

drawn  
MST

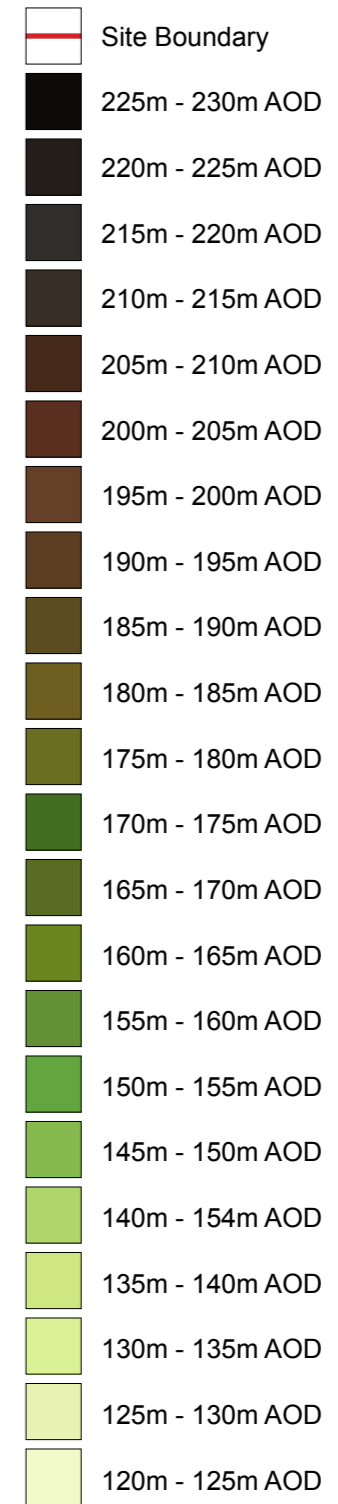
issue date  
29 March 2017

drawing / figure number  
**Figure 2**

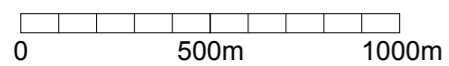


This drawing is the property of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd and is issued on the condition it is not reproduced, retained or disclosed to any unauthorised person, either wholly or in part without written consent of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd.

Ordnance Survey material - Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence Number: 100019980 (Centremapslive.com)



Scale: 1:20000 @ A3



client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
TOPOGRAPHY PLAN

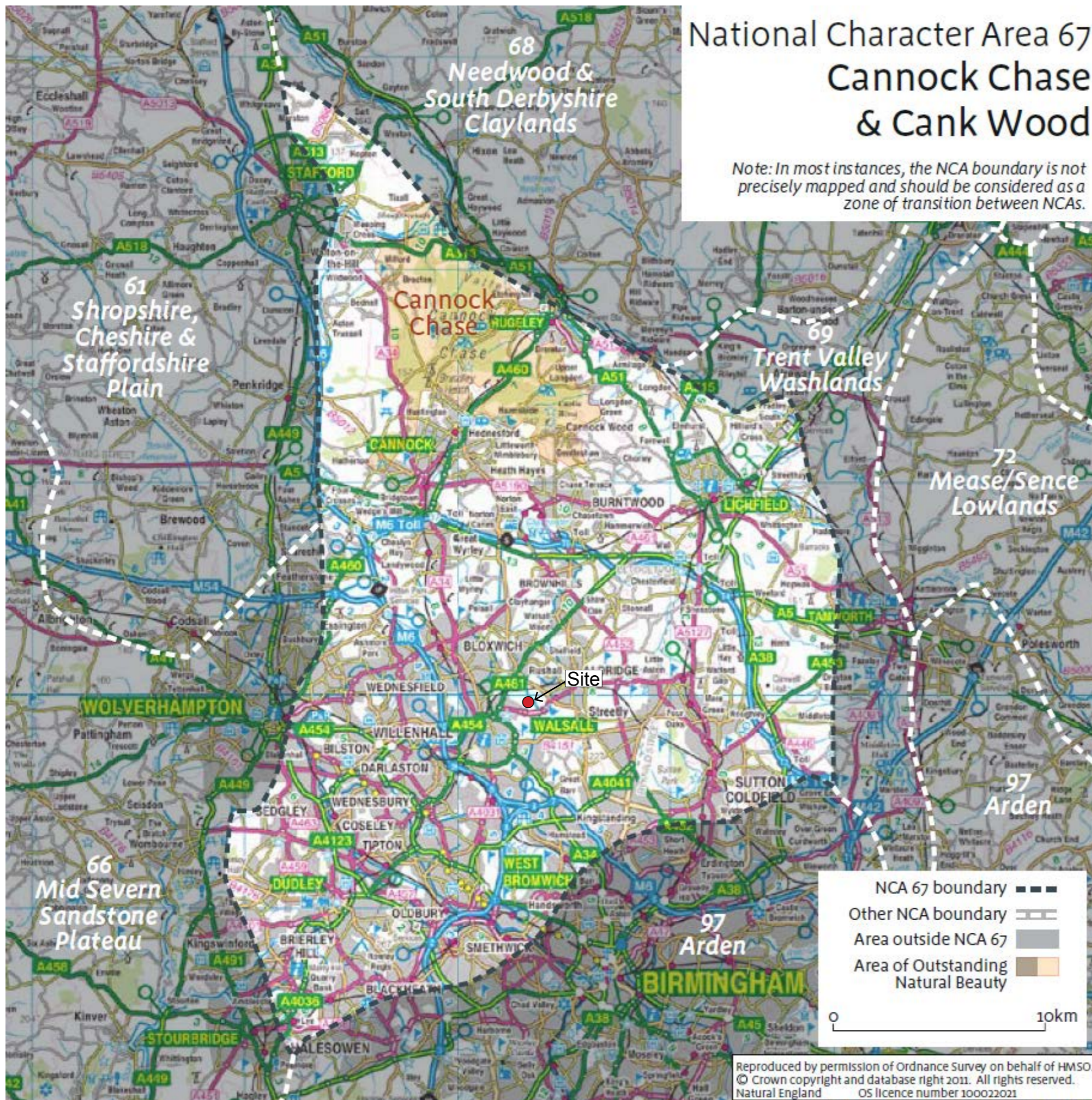


scale  
1:20,000 @ A3  
drawing / figure number

drawn  
MST

issue date  
29 March 2017  
rev

# Figure 3



# National Character Area 67 Cannock Chase & Cank Wood

Note: In most instances, the NCA boundary is not precisely mapped and should be considered as a zone of transition between NCAs.

This drawing is the property of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd and is issued on the condition it is not reproduced, retained or disclosed to any unauthorised person, either wholly or in part without written consent of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd.

Ordnance Survey material - Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence Number: 100019980 (Centremapslive.com)

Approximate Site Location

client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
**NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA  
(NCA)**

scale  
NTS @ A3

drawn  
MST

issue date  
29 March 2017

rev

**Figure 4**

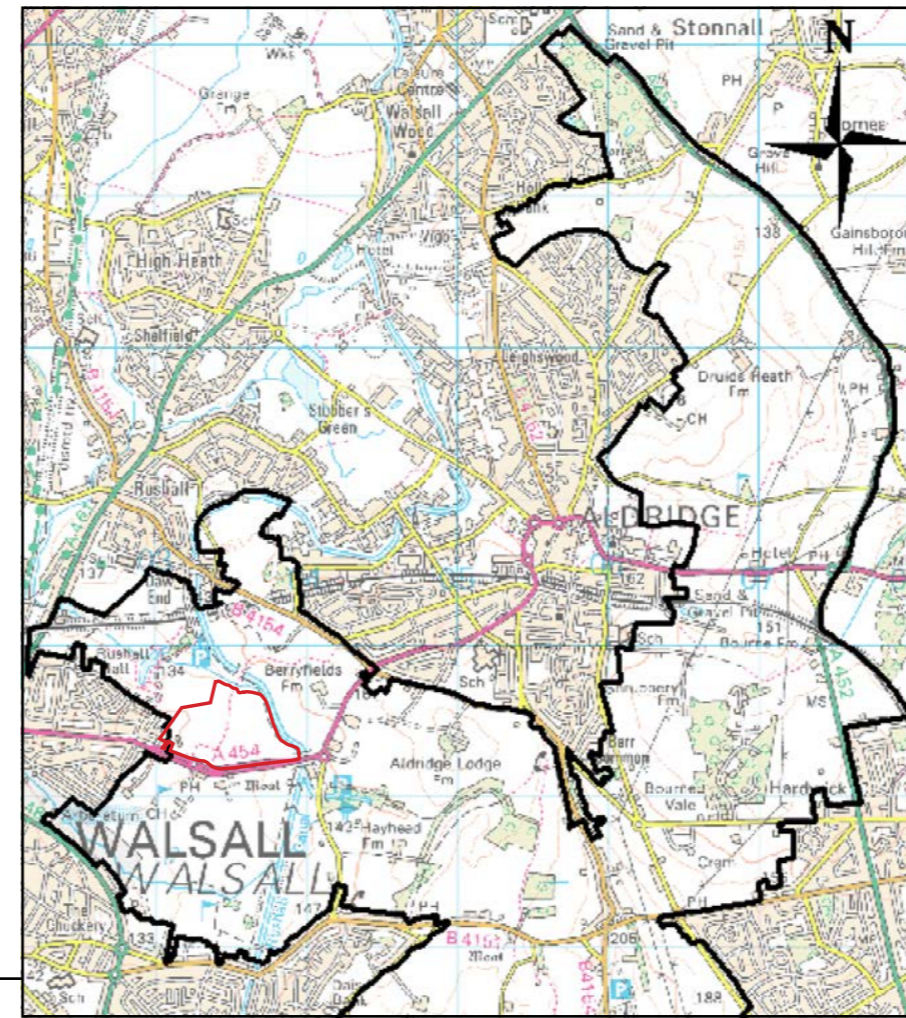
**Figure 4.12: Character Area Names**

<b>Walsall</b>	WL01	Bloxwich & Blakenhall Heath	<b>Dudley</b>	DY01	Netherton
	WL02	Streetly		DY02	Halesowen
	WL03	Aldridge East		DY03	Hayley Fields & Illey
	WL04	Brownhills & Walsall Wood		DY04	Stourbridge
	WL05	Walsall Town Centre & Industrial Districts		DY05	Dudley North
	WL06	Willenhall		DY06	Pensnett North
	WL07	Bentley		DY07	Kingswinford
	WL08	Pheasey		DY08	Pedmore & Lutley
	WL09	Barr Beacon & Aldridge Fields		DY09	Brierley Hill
	WL10	Aldridge West		DY10	Quarry Bank
	WL11	South East Walsall	<b>Sandwell</b>	SD01	Tipton Green, Oldbury & Langley
	WL12	Darlaston		SD02	Newton, Hamstead & Great Barr
	WL13	Pelsall		SD03	West Bromwich
	WL14	Rushall & Shelfield		SD04	Old Hill
WV01	Wolverhampton City Centre & Industrial Districts	SD05		Yew Tree	
<b>Wolverhampton</b>	WV02	Wolverhampton Outer Western Suburbs	SD06	Rowley Regis & Blackheath	
	WV03	South Bilston & Ettingshall	SD07	Sandwell Valley	
	WV04	Ettingshall Park & Lanesfield	SD08	Tipton & Princes End	
	WV05	Bushbury & Wednesfield North	SD09	Tividale	
	WV06	North Bilston, Portobello & Moseley	SD10	Cradley Heath	
	WV07	Wednesfield South	SD11	Central Smethwick and Cape Hill	
	WV08	Bradley	SD12	Warley	
	WV09	Ashmore Park	SD13	Wednesbury & Hill Top	
	WV10	Pendeford, Fordhouses & Moseley	SD14	Great Bridge	
	WV11	Blakenhall, Bradmore & Penn	SD15	North Smethwick	
	WV12	Wolverhampton Inner Western Suburbs			



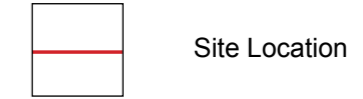
Source: Black Country HLC

**Barr Beacon & Aldridge Fields Character Area (WL09)**

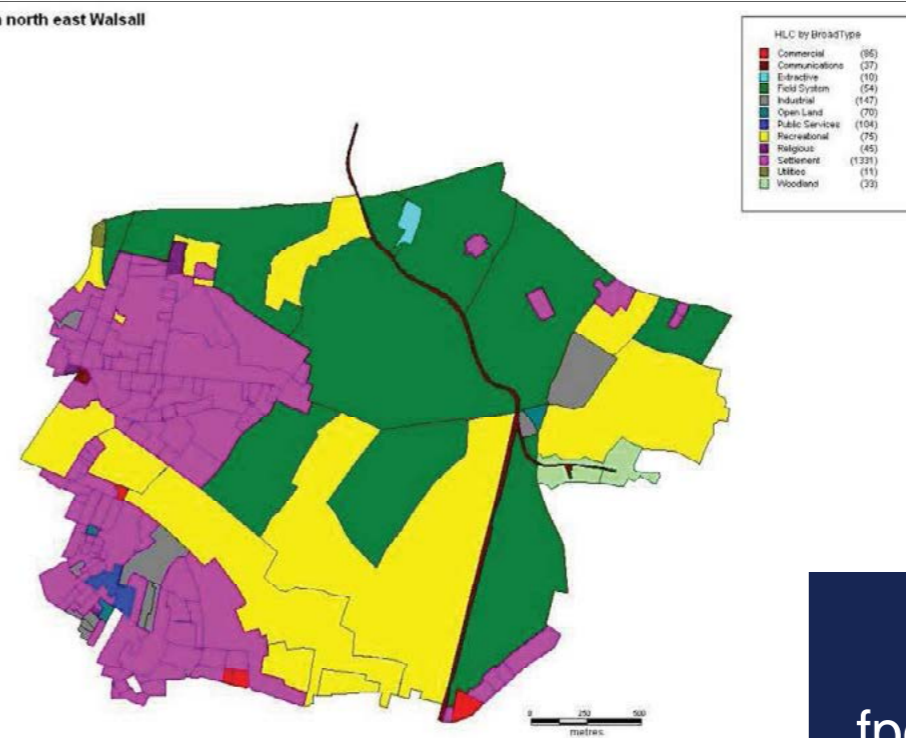


This drawing is the property of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd and is issued on the condition it is not reproduced, retained or disclosed to any unauthorised person, either wholly or in part without written consent of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd.

Ordnance Survey material - Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence Number: 100019980 (Centremapslive.com)



**3 - Current Broad Types in north east Walsall**



Map is produced from the Ordnance Survey map by Wolverhampton City Council with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, - Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. All information - Copyright Wolverhampton City Council. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence Number: LA075440

client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE  
CHARACTERISATION

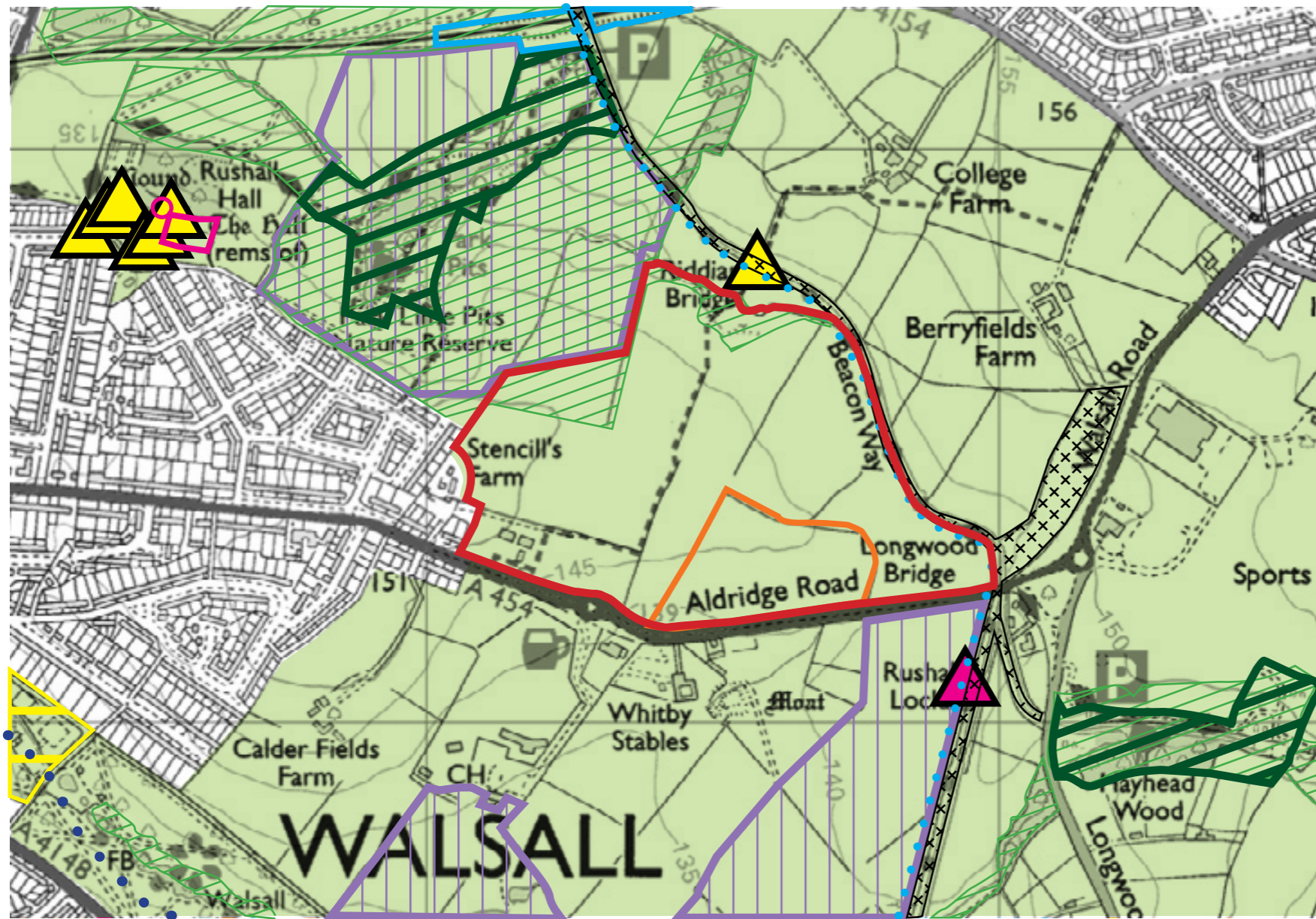
scale  
NTS @ A3

drawn  
MST

drawing / figure number  
**Figure 5**















issue date  
29 March 2017

rev

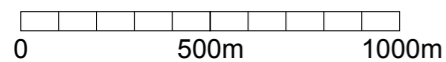


This drawing is the property of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd and is issued on the condition it is not reproduced, retained or disclosed to any unauthorised person, either wholly or in part without written consent of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd.

Ordnance Survey material - Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence Number: 100019980 (Centremapslive.com)

-  Site Boundary
-  Green Belt
-  Local Nature Reserves
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
-  Registered Park and Garden
-  Listed Building (within 1km of the site)
-  Locally Listed Building
-  Scheduled Monument
-  Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation
-  Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation - Linear
-  Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
-  Greenways (Proposed)
-  Greenways (Complete, protected)
-  Open Space

Scale: 1:20000 @ A3



client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
DESIGNATIONS



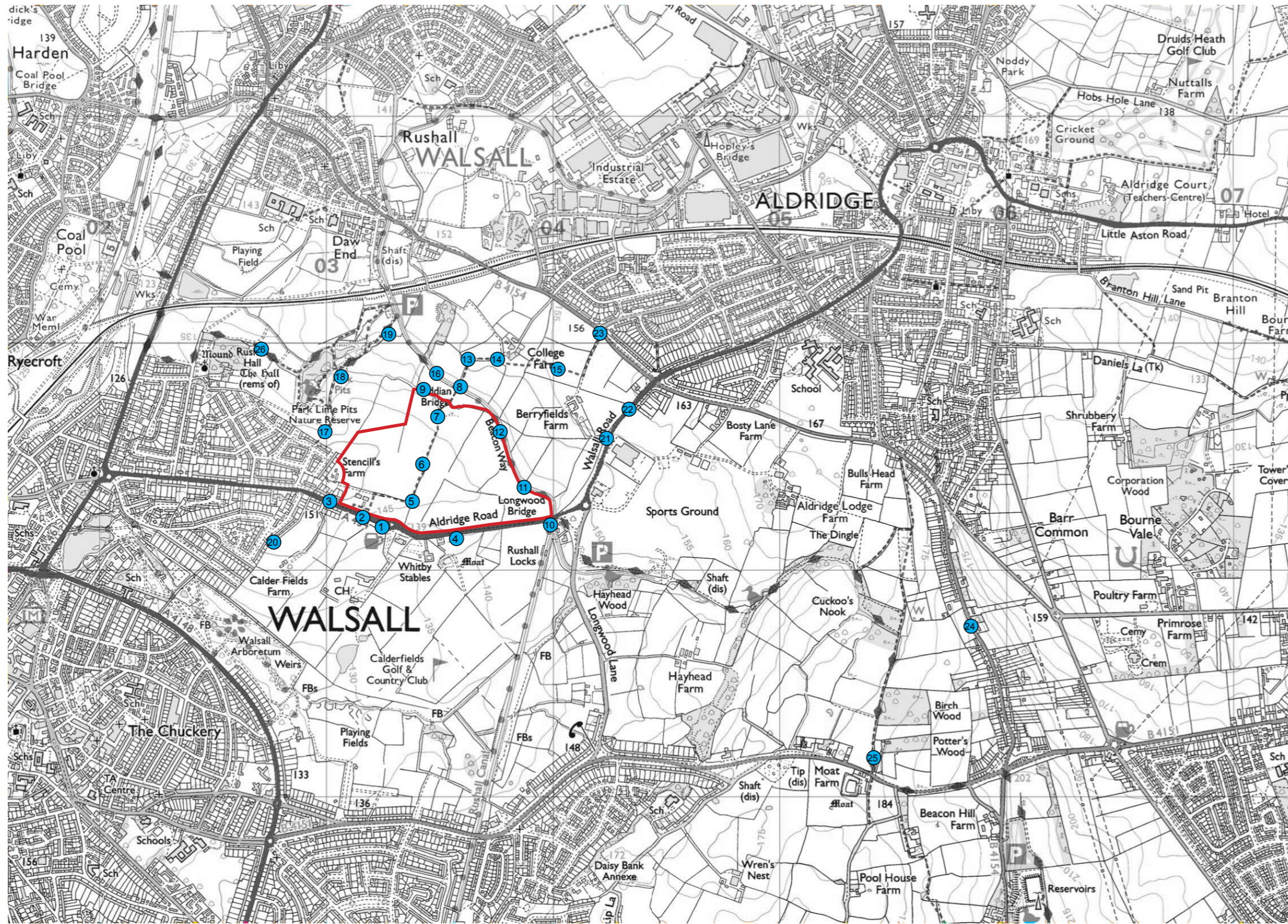
scale  
1:10,000 @ A3

drawn  
ELB

issue date  
31 March 2017

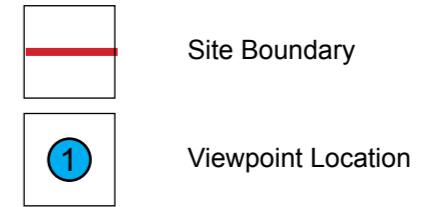
rev

**Figure 6**

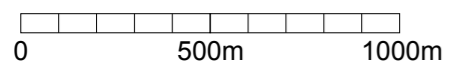


This drawing is the property of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd and is issued on the condition it is not reproduced, retained or disclosed to any unauthorised person, either wholly or in part without written consent of FPCR Environment and Design Ltd.

Ordnance Survey material - Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence Number: 100019980 (Centremapslive.com)



Scale: 1:20000 @ A3



client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
VIEWPOINT LOCATION PLAN

scale  
1:20,000 @ A3

drawn  
ELB

issue date  
29 March 2017

drawing / figure number  
rev

**Figure 7**



Approximate Site Extents



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 1: View from Aldridge Road by the Dilke Arms

Approximate Site Extents

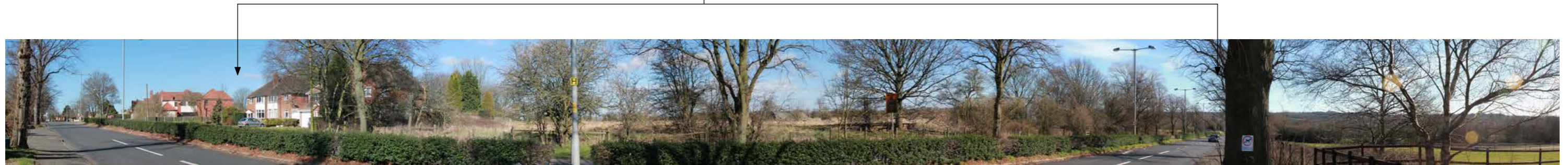


PHOTO VIEWPOINT 2: View from Aldridge Road, east of Stencils Farm

**fpcr**  
client  
Barratt West Midlands  
project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall  
drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 1 & 2

scale  
NTS @ A3  
drawing / figure number  
drawn  
ELB  
issue date  
29 March 2017  
rev

# Figure 8

Approximate Site Extents



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 3: View from Aldridge Road opposite entrance to Stencils Farm

Approximate Site Extents



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 4: View from Aldridge Road, east of Longwood Cottages

 client  
Barratt West Midlands  
project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall  
drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 3 & 4

scale  
NTS @ A3  
drawing / figure number  
drawn  
ELB  
issue date  
29 March 2017  
rev

# Figure 9






**PHOTO VIEWPOINT 5a:** View south from public footpath within the site



**PHOTO VIEWPOINT 5b:** View north from public footpath within the site

 client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 5A & 5B

scale	drawn	issue date
NTS @ A3	ELB	29 March 2017
drawing / figure number		rev
<b>Figure 10</b>		-



**PHOTO VIEWPOINT 6a:** View north from public footpath within the site



**PHOTO VIEWPOINT 6b:** View south from public footpath within the site

 client  
Barratt West Midlands  
project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall  
drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 6A & 6B

scale  
NTS @ A3  
drawing / figure number  
drawn  
ELB  
issue date  
29 March 2017  
rev  
-

# Figure 11



**PHOTO VIEWPOINT 7a:** View north from public footpath within the site



**PHOTO VIEWPOINT 7b:** View south from public footpath within the site

 client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 7A & 7B

scale  
NTS @ A3

drawn  
ELB

issue date  
29 March 2017

drawing / figure number  
**Figure 12**

rev

Approximate Site Extents




PHOTO VIEWPOINT 8: View south from public footpath on Riddan Bridge

Approximate Site Extents



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 9: View south from permissive footpath adjacent to the site

 client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 8 & 9

scale  
NTS @ A3

drawn  
ELB

issue date  
29 March 2017

rev

**Figure 13**

Approximate Site Extents



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 10: View from Aldridge Road on Longwood Bridge

Approximate Site Extents



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 11a: View south from Beacon Way, Wyrley and Essington Canal

 client  
Barratt West Midlands  
project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall  
drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 10 & 11A

scale  
NTS @ A3  
drawing / figure number  
drawn  
ELB  
issue date  
29 March 2017  
rev

# Figure 14

Approximate Site Extents



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 11b: View north from Beacon Way, Wyrley and Essington Canal

Approximate Site Extents



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 12a: View south from Beacon Way, Wyrley and Essington Canal

**fpcr** client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 11B & 12A

scale  
NTS @ A3

drawn  
ELB

issue date  
29 March 2017

drawing / figure number  
rev

# Figure 15

Approximate Site Extents



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 12b: View north from Beacon Way, Wyrley and Essington Canal

Approximate Site Extents



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 13: View south from public footpath, west of College Farm

**fpcr**  
client  
Barratt West Midlands  
project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall  
drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 12B & 13  
scale  
NTS @ A3  
drawing / figure number  
drawn  
ELB  
issue date  
29 March 2017  
rev

**Figure 16**

Approximate Site Extents



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 14: View south from public footpath by college farm

Approximate Site Extents



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 15: View west from public footpath to the east of college farm

**fpcr**  
client  
Barratt West Midlands  
project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall  
drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 14 & 15

scale  
NTS @ A3  
drawing / figure number  
drawn  
ELB  
issue date  
29 March 2017  
rev

# Figure 17



Approximate Site Extents



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 16: View south from Beacon Way, Wyrley and Essington Canal



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 17: View east from public footpath north of Stencills Road

**fpcr** client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 16 & 17

scale  
NTS @ A3

drawn  
ELB

issue date  
29 March 2017

drawing / figure number  
rev

# Figure 18



**PHOTO VIEWPOINT 18:** View east from Park Lime Pits nature reserve



**PHOTO VIEWPOINT 19:** View south from Park Lime Pits nature reserve

 client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 18 & 19

scale  
NTS @ A3

drawn  
ELB

issue date  
29 March 2017

drawing / figure number  
rev

## Figure 19



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 20: View north from public footpath, east of Fernleigh Road



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 21: View west from Walsall Road by access to Berryfields Farm

**fpcr**  
client  
Barratt West Midlands  
project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall  
drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 20 & 21  
scale  
NTS @ A3  
drawing / figure number  
drawn  
ELB  
issue date  
29 March 2017  
rev

**Figure 20**



**PHOTO VIEWPOINT 22:** View south west from Walsall Road, north of Berryfields Farm



**PHOTO VIEWPOINT 23:** View south from Bosty Lane

 client  
Barratt West Midlands  
project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall  
drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 22 & 23

scale  
NTS @ A3  
drawing / figure number  
drawn  
ELB  
issue date  
29 March 2017  
rev

## Figure 21



**PHOTO VIEWPOINT 24:** View west from Longwood Road, Beacon Hill



**PHOTO VIEWPOINT 25:** View west from Beacon Way, Beacon Hill

**fpcr** client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 24 & 25

scale  
NTS @ A3

drawn  
ELB

issue date  
29 March 2017

drawing / figure number  
rev

# Figure 22



**PHOTO VIEWPOINT 26:** View east from Beacon Way north Rushall Hall

 client  
Barratt West Midlands

project  
Stencils Farm,  
Walsall

drawing title  
PHOTO VIEWPOINT 26

scale  
NTS @ A3

drawn  
ELB

issue date  
29 March 2017

rev

## Figure 23