

Land North of Himley Road, Himley Promotional Document



VISION

Delivering a new high-quality residential development to support the community and sustainability of Himley and the surrounding hinterland.

The development aims to:

- Create a living environment of the highest standard to reflect the local vernacular and contextual views surrounding the site;
- Provide a sustainable development comprising of a range of tenure and sizes of dwellings along with new areas of publicly accessible open space;
- Create a safe and secure balanced neighbourhood which promotes social interaction and provide improved connectivity for both pedestrians and cyclists;
- Create a development that will enhance the attractiveness of Himley and Gornal as a place to live by incorporating valued aspects of local character, visual amenity, ecology, landscape and biodiversity.

INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared by DBA Estates Ltd in conjunction with Wienerberger Ltd. Wienerberger Ltd are fully engaged with the promotion of the site and are keen to see the delivery of a sustainable and suitable development to benefit both Himley and Gornal and the surrounding hinterland.

Wienerberger Ltd have significant land holdings in the area. To assist the Council with their Local Plan Review, preliminary technical work has been undertaken on the site to assist in the formation of an indicative proposed masterplan for the site. This work demonstrates that the land at Himley (the Site) represents a sustainable, suitable and deliverable site to meet the housing needs of South Staffordshire and the wider Housing Market Area. It provides evidence to demonstrate that approximately 400 homes are capable of being delivered.

In order to provide evidence of the sites' suitability and deliverability, Wienerberger have commissioned a specialist team who have undertaken various surveys to consider issues surrounding highways, access and ecology. Other survey work is ongoing and this will be reported as and when it is available. The outputs of the surveys along with other known constraints have informed the preparation of an indicative concept masterplan to illustrate just one way the site could be developed.

This document brings together the outcome of the survey work and studies undertaken to date and explains how the constraints and opportunities have informed the proposed development of up to 400 new homes set within the existing and new landscape structure.

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The proposed site (hereafter referred to as the Site) is located to the north of the B4176 Himley Road to the east of Himley and western edge of Gornal. The exact location of the site is shown in Figure 1 – Site Location Plan.

The site is bound by residential development to the north-east and east, Brick Kiln Lane and the B4176 Himley Road to the south and agricultural fields/open land and High Arcal Road to the west and north-west. Current site access is from a field access off Brick Kiln Lane.

The Site comprises a series of interlinked fields currently given over to grazing of horses and pasture with an area of mature woodland to the centre and south of the Site. There is a stream which runs through the centre of the Site, part of which falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3. Electricity pylons also cross the Site.



Eastern site looking north

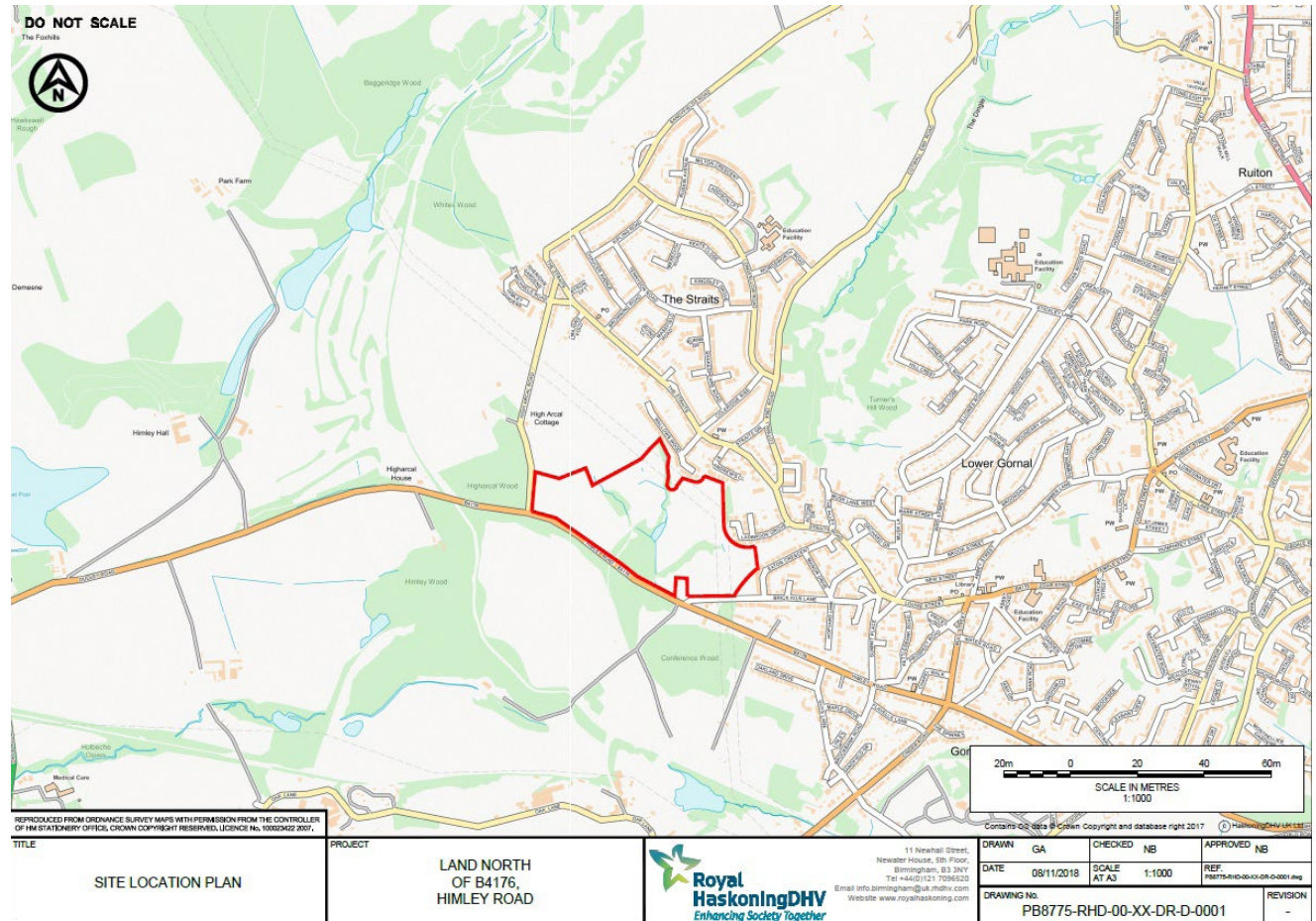


Figure 1>Site Location Plan

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT *(continued.)*

The Site measures approximately 18 hectares, split across two local authority boundaries. Approximately 11 hectares falls within South Staffordshire District and approximately 7 hectares falls within the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley.



Eastern site looking South



Eastern site looking west

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT *(continued.)*



Western site looking north



Western site looking west

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT (continued.)

Gornal is a predominately residential suburb of Dudley situated approximately 5km north-west of Dudley Town Centre. Gornal has a range of services and facilities which include, but are not limited to the following:

- Sainsbury's local supermarket;
- Primary school;
- Sports College;
- Post Office;
- Public Houses;
- Restaurants/Cafes and Takeaways;
- Small independent retailers;
- Cotwall End Local Nature Reserve;
- Social Club;
- Places of Worship; and
- A petrol filling station.

The above facilities are shown on the Facilities Map at Figure 2.



Mature tree belt through middle of site

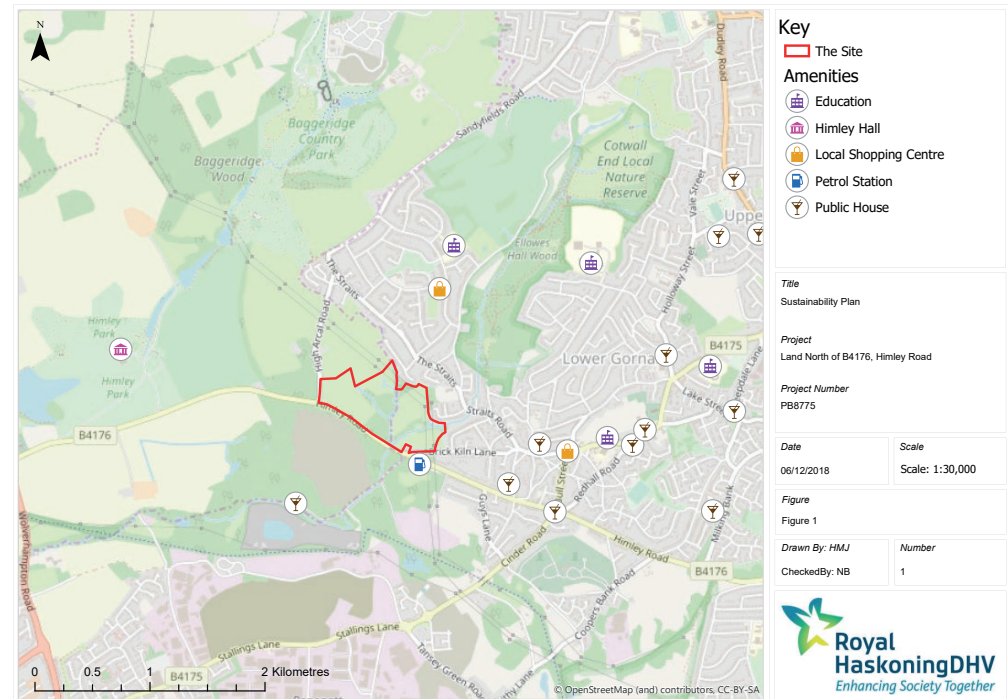


Figure 2 > Facilities Map

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT (continued.)



Local shops on Louise Street



Local shops on The Straits



The Woodman Public House



Baggeridge Social Club



Texaco Petrol Filling Station, Himley Road



The Crooked House Public House, Himley Road

GREEN BELT AND POLICY CONTEXT

“The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.” NPPF Paragraph 133

The National Planning Policy Framework (2018) sets out under Chapter 13 how the Government attaches great importance to the protection of Green Belt land. At paragraph 136 it states that “Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans...Where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans.”

Indeed, when considering a review of Green Belt boundaries, sustainable development is a key consideration as set out under paragraph 138. “...Strategic policy-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards town and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.”

The Green Belt seeks to serve five purposes. The development of land north of B4176 Himley Road would see approximately 18 hectares of land removed from the Green Belt to enable development. In meeting those five purposes, the Site can demonstrate the following:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas – Gornal is a suburb of Dudley Metropolitan Borough and whilst a sizeable settlement in itself it is not considered that development of the Site would lead to the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas. Indeed, the extension of Gornal into this area would be considered as a ‘rounding off’ of the settlement appropriate to the growing pressures of meeting housing demand in the Black Country and neighbouring authorities.



View towards The Straits

GREEN BELT AND POLICY CONTEXT *(continued.)*

2. To prevent the neighbouring towns merging into one another – The site lies between the settlements of Himley to the west and Gornal to the east. Given the site's location on the edge of Gornal it is considered to 'round off' the settlement and would therefore not extend to leading the two settlements to merge into one another. There is a significant distance between the site and development of Himley and the development of site would not seek to merge these settlements together, thereby the contribution to this criteria is considered to be minimal.
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment – To some extent this is true for all greenfield sites within the Green Belt. However, the site is well related to the existing settlement edge of Gornal within Dudley Metropolitan Borough and as such it is not considered that it will encroach any further into the countryside than existing development, thereby 'rounding off' the settlement of Gornal with the surrounding Green Belt.
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns – Neither Himley nor Gornal are historic towns. The nearest Listed Building and Registered Parks and Gardens are of Himley Hall which are separated from the Site by High Arcal Road and intervening mature vegetation and scrub. Therefore, their impact upon them is considered to be limited and as such the contribution to this purpose of the Green Belt to be minimal.
5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land – This is a generic point applicable to all Green Belt sites.

HIGHWAYS

Initial highways and access technical work has been undertaken by Royal Haskoning DHV as appointed by Wienerberger Ltd to assess the capacity of nearby road junctions, approximate trip generation data, accident collision details and assessing the optimum locations for new or improved access locations. As part of this initial assessment a review of the local highway network has been undertaken – the results of which are detailed below:

B4176 Himley Road

A single carriageway road extending between Dudley Town Centre to the east and the village of Himley to the west. The road also connects with the A449 Wolverhampton Road at a four-arm signal controlled crossroads approximately 1.7km west of the site. Traffic along the Himley Road is subject to the National Speed Limit (60mph) for the majority of its length, reverting to a 30mph speed limit approximately 110 metres west of Brick Kiln Lane. A footway is provided along the eastern side of Himley Road.

High Arcal Road

A single carriageway road extending between the B4176 Himley Road The Straits to the north of the site. Traffic is subject to National Speed Limit (60mph) reverting to 30mph approximately 150 metres to the west of its junction with The Straits. The carriageway measures approximately 5.7 – 6 metres in width and does not have provision of footways within the vicinity of the site.

Brick Kiln Lane

A single carriageway local access road measuring approximately 5 metres in width near the site. To the east of the site, the lane serves residential frontages and widens to approximately 5.8 metres. A footway is provided on the southern side of the carriageway and the lane is subject to a 30mph speed limit along its length.

The Straits Road

A single carriageway measuring approximately 7.6 metres in width serving the residential estate to the north of the site. Traffic is subject to a 30mph speed limit and footways are provided along both sides of the carriageway.

A449 Wolverhampton Road

This road forms a strategic route between Kingswinford and Stourbridge to the south and Wolverhampton to the north. It comprises sections of single and dual carriageway along its length and is generally subject to the National Speed Limit (60mph).

B4178 Stallings Lane

To the south of the site Stallings Lane intersects with the B4176 Himley Road at a four-arm signal controlled crossroads. Stallings Lane also provides an alternative connection to the A449 Wolverhampton Road, approximately 2.4km to the south-west of the site.

HIGHWAYS (continued.)



Brick Kiln Lane looking north



Brick Kiln Lane looking north

Trip Generation

An assessment of the likely number of trips generated by the proposed development has been undertaken utilising the TRICS database. Applying trip rates to the proposed number of approximately 500 dwellings, trips to and from the proposed development are as follows:

Time	Arrivals	Departures	Totals
08:00-09:00 (am peak)	69	206	275
17:00-18:00 (pm peak)	179	84	263

Table 1>Trip Generation of proposed development

HIGHWAYS (continued.)

Access Strategy

In conjunction with a site visit undertaken on 5th November 2018, a review of potential site access opportunities has been undertaken in line with a review of the constraints and opportunities of the surrounding local road network. The constraints and opportunities are listed as follows:

Local Road Network	Constraints	Opportunities
B4176 Himley Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vertical and horizontal alignment with crests and sags will need to be taken into account when measuring visibility; Topography i.e. levels between the carriageway and site, large section of the frontage would require significant engineering works to allow an access to be made; Utilities i.e. a large diameter pipe (possible foul sewer) rises along the frontage to cross the Askew Bridge. Investigations will be required to ascertain the depth of the pipe along the frontage and diversions may be necessary when the new access is formed; Traffic volumes and proportion of HGV's are reasonably high on Himley Road and some queueing occurs at High Arcal Road junction in the pm peak due to right turners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visibility for a 60mph road (215 metres) can be achieved based on on-site measurements; Consideration should be given to reducing the speed limit along the site frontage (i.e. a 40/50mph buffer on approach to the 30mph) to further reduce visibility requirements.
Brick Kiln Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing field access and access to neighbouring field needs to be considered; Visibility to the right at the junction of Brick Kiln Lane and Himley Road may limit the attractiveness/acceptability and quantum of new development which can be served from Brick Kiln Road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing field access onto Brick Kiln Lane means that the principle of access is already established; Visibility can be readily achieved with some vegetation clearance required.
High Arcal Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited opportunities due to length of site frontage along High Arcal Road. 	
Off-Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity at junction of Stalling Lane is identified as an improvement junction by the Highway Authority; Collision hotspot at Himley Road and Brookband Road junction will need to be considered in terms of highway improvements. 	

Table 2>Access Constraints and Opportunities

It should be noted however that access at both locations along the B4176 Himley Road and Brick Kiln Lane are flexible, subject to further investigation. The accesses are likely to take the form of priority T-junctions as shown in the indicative sketch layouts at Figure 3.

HIGHWAYS (continued.)

It is concluded that at this stage, based on the information gathered, that there is no reason why the site can not come forward in transport and safety terms and that access to the site is indeed deliverable.

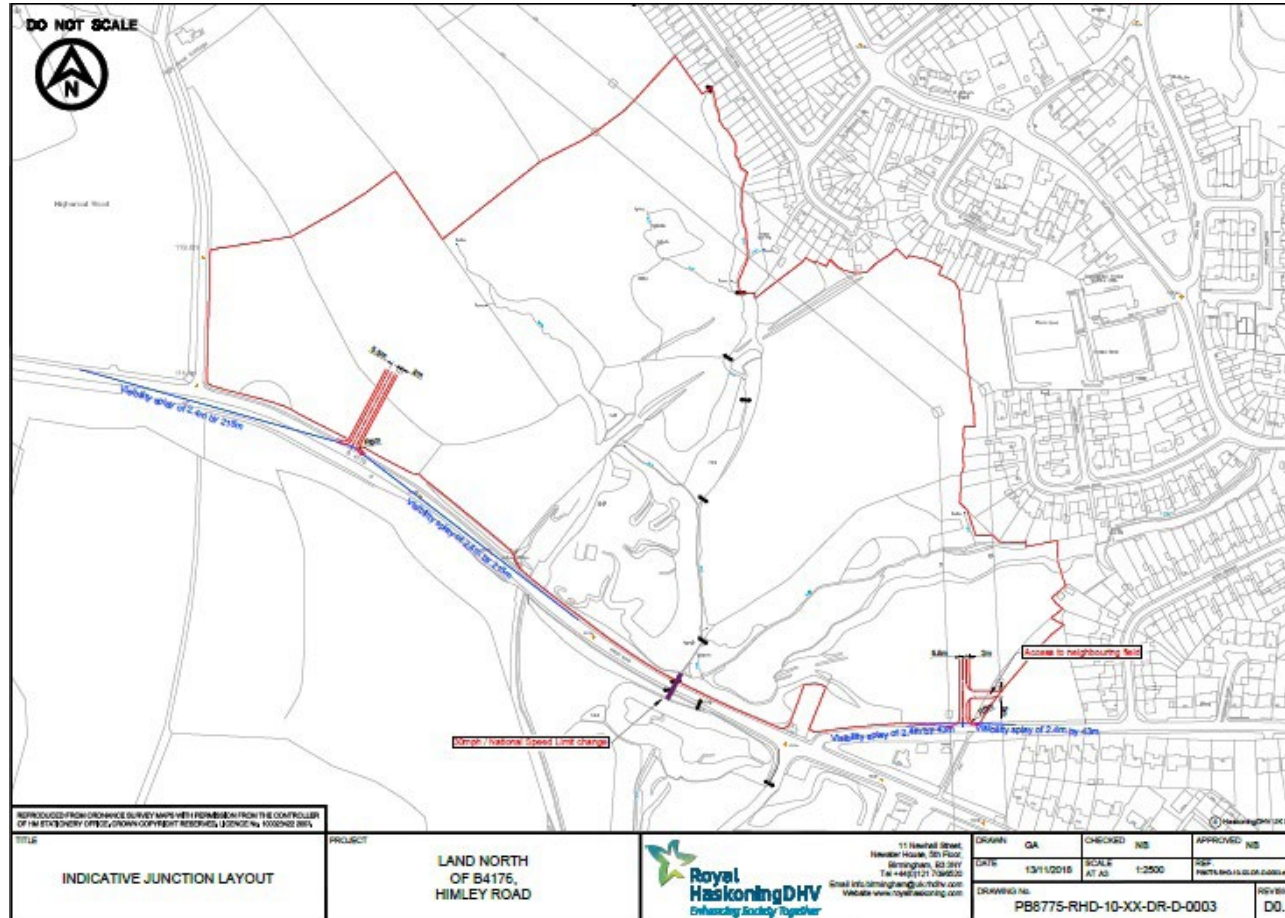


Figure 3>Indicative Access Arrangements

ECOLOGY

In order to assess the likely ecological impacts of the proposed development on the site, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Phase One Ecological Assessment has been undertaken by EcoSurv Ecological Consultants commissioned by Wienerberger Ltd. The purpose of the initial surveys is to provide general advice on ecological constraints and make recommendations for further surveys associated with the proposed development at the site.

It is known that the site was formerly an area of land that fell within an area initially identified for the production of clay for brick manufacture. The local brickworks however closed in 2006 and areas of surrounding land were subsequently identified as having some potential for residential development. For some time, the site has been used for grazing of horses along with some tipping of colliery waste. Limited site management has been undertaken which is evident by overgrown hedgerows and presence of scrub and seasonal vegetation in places within the site.

It is considered that whilst the site is likely to have some ecological impacts, the extent of these impacts cannot be determined until further survey work has been undertaken.

It does identify that part of the site (Brick Kiln Lane – SO904913) is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). It details the site as an area of remnant countryside comprised of semi-improved pasture, unmodified watercourses and associated strips of woodland and hedgerows. Semi-improved neutral grassland, marshy grassland, woodland, watercourses and hedgerows. The impact on the SINC is potentially major subject to the proposed development. This will need further interaction with the ecologists EcoSurv in the development of the indicative masterplan proposals for the site.

The most important features on the site are areas of woodlands and sections of marshy grassland present to the south-eastern section of the site. Hedgerows within the site, together with the scattered deciduous trees provide considerable potential for nesting birds and foraging bats. The ponds, areas of wetland and watercourses within the site will provide habitat for numerous species of insects and as a result provide food resources for higher trophic levels.

In order to progress with the site, in conjunction with discussions with the Council, further survey work will be undertaken which is ongoing as detailed below:

Habitats/Species	Action Required
Bats	Carry out transect surveys of the site during May – September 2019 together with static detectors being left at a number of locations within the site for 5 consecutive nights each month during April – September as a minimum to identify the species present within the site. Trees identified for felling to be surveyed during the winter when out of leaf for potential roost features for bats. If present, such locations to be graded for potential as a roost and relevant surveys undertaken.
Birds	Ensure any vegetation is cleared outside the bird breeding season or if this is not possible the vegetation should be inspected by an ecologist prior to its removal.
Badgers	A badger presence within the site was noted with a single outlier sett identified. Further surveys to local setts within the surrounding landscape to be undertaken to identify how the development may impact on the local badger population.
Reptiles	Reptile surveys should be conducted at the appropriate time to identify if reptiles are present within the site and to what locations.
Great Crested Newts	We would suggest eDNA testing of all water bodies within the site and within 500 metres to identify if the species are present in the immediate area.

Table 3>Further Survey Recommendations

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Having regard to the site context analysis and technical work undertaken to date, an indicative concept masterplan has been prepared and is shown at Figure 4.

The Site measures approximately 18 hectares with the eastern parcel within Dudley Metropolitan Borough measuring approximately 7 hectares and the western parcel within South Staffordshire District measuring approximately 11 hectares. It is estimated taking on board the constraints of the site that the net developable area will be circa 11.33 hectares.

Access

The development is proposed to be served by two independent access junctions. Both forming a standard T-junction arrangement, the first will access the site from the B4176 Himley Road at a point where a 2.4 x 215 metre visibility splay is achievable. The second will access the eastern parcel from the existing field gate access off Brick Kiln Lane where visibility splays can achieve 2.4 x 43 metres and provide access to the adjoining neighbouring field as required.

The internal road hierarchy is likely to be formed of primary and secondary routes with a small number of shared surface private drives. Pedestrian and cycle linkages will be provided within the site and adjoining the surrounding development to ensure sustainable patterns of commuting are achievable and that easy access is provided on both foot and cycle to nearby services and facilities within Gornal.



Road Signage



Gated Field Access at Brick Kiln Lane

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL *(continued.)*

Green Infrastructure and Public Open Space

There is an area of mature tree belts to the centre of the site which divides both the eastern and western sites. This mature tree belt will be retained within the development proposals providing an accessible natural greenspace with mature landscaping to maintain and enhance the ecology proposals on site and provide a benefit to residential amenity, health and well-being.

Also within the eastern parcel is an existing free flowing stream which is part culverted. This is likely to be an ecologically rich parcel of the site and will be retained in perpetuity adding to the typology of open space provided within the site.

Further work is required in relation to the role that sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs) will fulfil in the area. It is likely that surface

water attenuation ponds will be situated at the lowest point of the site to allow for free flowing natural drainage of the site.

Enhanced landscaping is proposed to the north-western boundary to create a landscape-led development which proposes to strengthen the buffer to the remaining Green Belt and offer an ecologically diverse area as well as biodiversity offsetting to the development proposals.

Development

The proposed development will take its design cues from the surrounding area. Development, with the provision of open space, in both fields will create two distinct character areas. Set in a general back to back format development will maximise the sites land area to ensure that development makes the best possible use of land.



Stream running through centre of the site



Eaton Crescent



Manor Drive

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL *(continued.)*

Development form is likely to relate to semi-detached and larger detached dwellings with small runs of terraced development. The proposals would seek to provide a policy compliant level of affordable housing ensuring a balanced and mixed community is created.

The average density, based on 396 dwellings on 11.33 hectares equates to 35 dwellings per hectare, which is reflective of the surrounding areas and seeks to maximise the development opportunities available on the site.



St Andrews Close



Wallowfields

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL (continued.)



Fig. 4 > Indicative concept masterplan

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

DBA Estates Ltd are working with the landowners Wienerberger Ltd to promote the land to the north of the B4176 Himley Road. Wienerberger Ltd are fully engaged with the process and with significant landholdings in the surrounding area are keen to see the delivery of a suitable and sustainable development which provide tangible benefits to both Himley and Gornal.

South Staffordshire District Council are currently reviewing their Local Plan which sees them having to provide for not only their own objectively assessed housing needs but also for the unmet needs of the wider Housing Market Area such as those within the Black Country. The Site falls over the boundary with South Staffordshire and Dudley Metropolitan Borough, thereby offering the perfect opportunity to meet not only South Staffordshire's housing needs, but the needs of Dudley as well. The scale of development required for the plan period, along with significant underestimation of safeguarded land required for the last plan period confirm that the Green Belt will need to be reviewed for development to meet longer term requirements and bring forward suitable sustainable sites for development now.

The site is closely related to Gornal, a suburb of Dudley and has a range of services and facilities within walking distance of the site, which include a primary school, areas of recreation, local shopping and entertainment and places of worship. It is therefore considered to be a sustainable location for development.

This document has sought to demonstrate through technical evidence completed to date that the site offers a suitable and sustainable location for development and release from the Green Belt. It is available now, suitable and deliverable thereby ensuring that the development of the site would contribute to the housing need of the District as well as the wider housing market shortfall across the Country.

Careful consideration has been given to the site and its indicative concept masterplan which demonstrates just one way in which the site can be developed. This will be an evolving process as more technical evidence is gathered over the coming months to inform further representations to the Local Plan Review and discussions with the Council's as appropriate.

