



# **Blackhalve Lane, Wolverhampton**

Site Vision

November 2018



# ST. PHILIPS

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Prepared on behalf of St Philips Ltd

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# 1 Introduction and vision

## Document format

Node has been commissioned by St Philips Ltd to undertake a masterplanning exercise for land at Blackhalve Lane, Wolverhampton, in support of the promotion of the site through the South Staffordshire local plan review process.

This document follows a best practice framework first established by CABI. This approach allows the design of a scheme to build logically and coherently on an evidence base gathered from technical briefings, desktop review and contextual analysis.

## The site

The site is comprised of five compact pasture fields located towards the north eastern extent of the city of Wolverhampton.

The greenfield site is bounded by Blackhalve Lane to the south, Wood Hayes Road to the west, a small cluster of five residential properties in the south western corner, and Oakley Farm immediately abutting the eastern boundary. The north, south and western boundaries are screened by mature hedgerows and trees. Within the site a series of linear hedgerows define the field boundaries. These hedgerows include a number of mature trees that are a strong feature of the site. In addition, an existing field pond is present in the middle of the site.

Located on Wolverhampton's rural-urban fringe, the site is also on the boundary of the two suburbs of Bushbury and Wood End, which together make up a gateway to the wider South Staffordshire countryside.

In addition to the recreational opportunities the countryside has to offer, this site location is deemed to be highly sustainable with the significant level local shops, services and amenities situated within a short walking distance.

## Vision

Establishing a vision is a vital stage in the design process, ensuring that all stakeholders are unified in their aspiration of the future for the site and that this same aspiration is maintained throughout the planning and design process.

The vision for this site is to create a residential scheme which maximises the site's existing landscape assets to provide a characterful development that integrates with both the local built environment as well as the South Staffordshire countryside.

Future proposals will seek to create a scheme which promotes healthy lifestyles for its residents through the provision of active travel, creation of community spirit and a positive local greenspace network.

**LEGEND**

 Site boundary  
(4.93ha)




0  100  
metres

FIGURE 1.1 | SITE LOCATION | 1:2,500



# 2 Appreciating the context

## 2.1 Strategic context

### Planning policy

#### *South Staffordshire*

The development plan at present comprises the South Staffordshire Local Plan, which is made up of:

- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012) which covers the plan period to 2028
- Site Allocations Document (SAD) (2018), which seeks to implement the Core Strategy

Within the Local Plan, the site is currently washed over by a Green Belt designation (Core Strategy Policy GB1) which seeks to restrict development as per the five purposes, set out in the Framework. There are no other site specific designations affecting the site.

The SAD, at policy SAD1 sets out that there will be a review of the Local Plan, which must be submitted for examination by the end of 2021. This will include a District-wide review of housing need (including assessing options to meet housing need from the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area and Black Country); a review of employment land supply; the spatial strategy; provision for Gypsies and Travellers, and a comprehensive Green Belt

South Staffordshire Council are undertaking a wholesale review of their development plan. This presents a golden opportunity to review green belt, look again at all types of housing and employment land delivery and shape a future where historic and environmental assets continue to be enhanced and protected.

A lot has changed since the Core Strategy was adopted, and the Council will have to start from first principles in many ways.

### *Wolverhampton*

The site falls largely within South Staffordshire, but a small proportion also sits within Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough, who are also reviewing their development plan.

The development plan at present comprises the Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) (2011) and its accompanying Area Action Plans, which are unrelated to this site.

The BCCS was produced jointly by the four Black Country Authorities for the plan period to 2026.

The BCCS replaced much of the Unitary Development Plan (2006) for Wolverhampton, however some saved policies, such as Minerals Safeguarding (Policy MIN1) partly cover a small area of the site.

The site sits outside of any of the Regeneration Corridors and Strategic Centres, where most new development has been focussed. The BCCS is now subject to review, where an Issues and Options document has been published. The site (Ref 123) has been submitted to the Call for Sites as part of this process.

Key	
	A Roads
	Railway
	Proposed Tier 1 Settlement
	Proposed Tier 2 Settlement
	Proposed Tier 3 Settlement
	Proposed Tier 4 Settlement
	Railway Station
	Urban Area
	Green Belt
	Open Countryside
	Strategic Employment Sites
	Bobbington Airport

\* Approximate site location

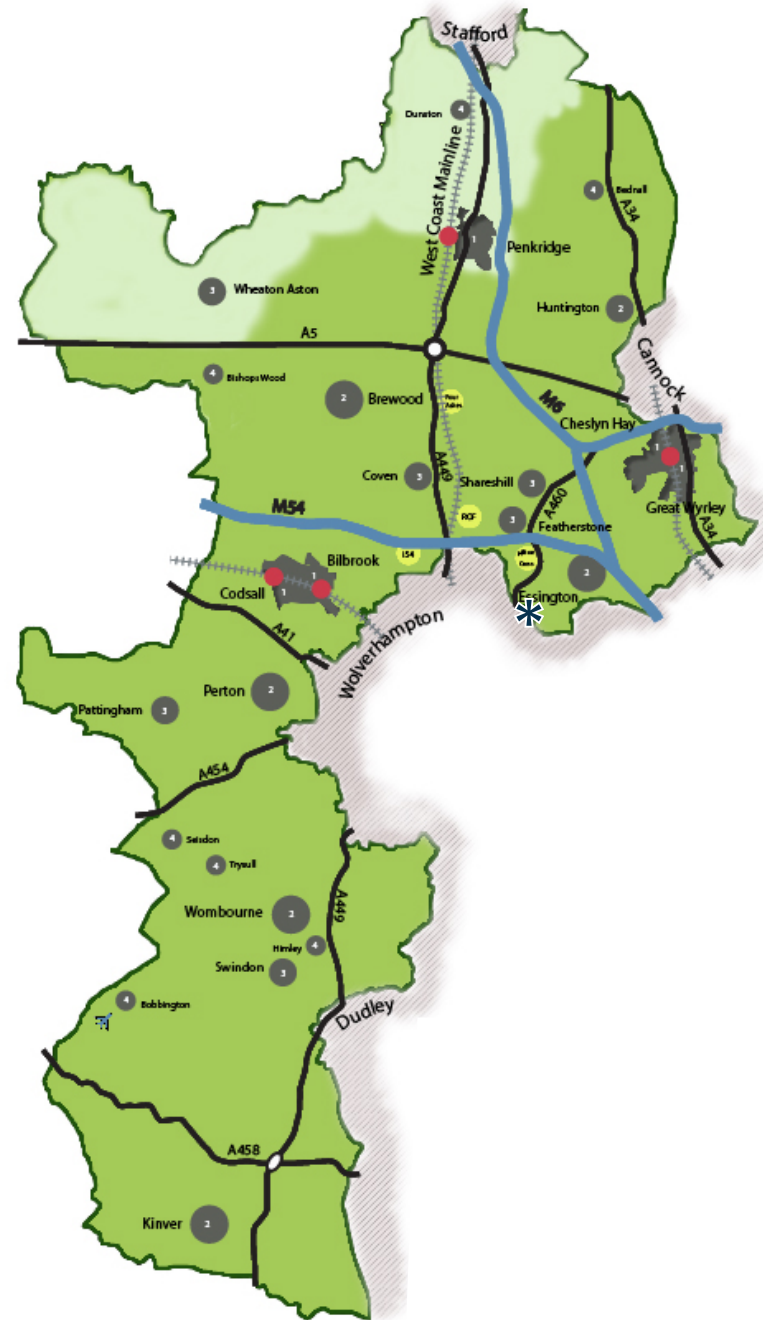


FIGURE 2.1 | THE SITE'S ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXT  
(EXCERPT FROM SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW ISSUES AND OPTIONS)

## Land use

The site is sustainably located within a 10-15 minute walking distance of many local shops, services and amenities, including two well-serviced local centres located separately at the junctions of Wood End Road and Linthouse Lane, and Blackhalve Lane and Cannock Road. Together these support two doctors surgeries, three pharmacists, a library, a community centre, two post offices as well as a number of local shops, cafés and restaurants.

The nearest primary school is Berrybrook Primary School, an Ofsted rated 'good' school located roughly 800m from the site. In addition, both Long Knowle Primary School and Wood End Primary School are within 1km walking distance of the site.

1. Berrybrook Primary School
2. Primrose Lane health centre
3. Local shops and cafés located at the junction of Wood Hayes Road and Blackhalve Lane
4. Long Knowle Community Hub





**LEGEND**

 Site boundary (4.93ha)

**Land use**

-  Urban area
-  Place of worship
-  Community centre
-  Doctors surgery
-  Pharmacy
-  Bar/ cafe/ restaurant
-  Library
-  Post office
-  Primary school
-  Secondary school



 0 1  
kilometres

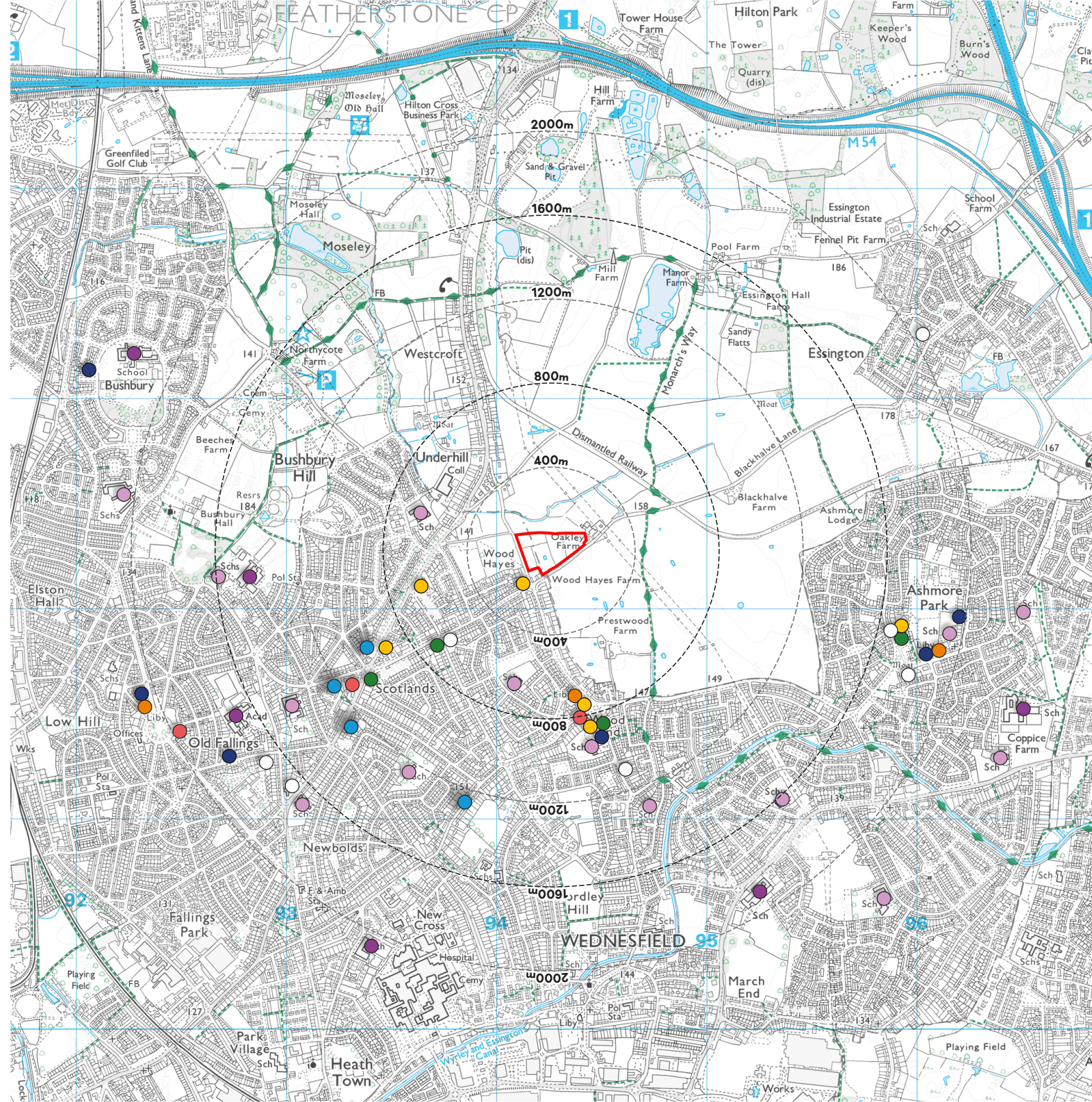


FIGURE 2.2 | LAND USE | 1:25,000

## Access and movement

Located on Wolverhampton's rural-urban fringe, the site is positioned with good immediate links to local services and amenities as well as strong wider links to neighbouring towns and the motorway network.

## Pedestrian and cycle access

The site is surrounded by a network of footpaths, public right of ways and bridleways that provide immediate links across Wood Hayes playing fields to amenities and services located along A460 Cannock Road. In addition the location provides ease of access to wider recreational routes such as Monarch's Way, a 615 mile route that approximates the escape route of Charles II following his defeat at the battle of Worcester.

## Public transport

The nearest bus stops are adjacent to the site at the junction of Wood Hayes Road and Blackhalve Lane. These provide access to bus service 71 with a peak-hour service frequency of every 10 minutes between Wolverhampton, Essington and Cannock. Additional bus stops within a 5-minute walking distance provide access to bus service 65 with a peak-hour service frequency of every 4 minutes between Wolverhampton and Fordhouses. The nearest railway station is 5km away within Wolverhampton city centre.

## Vehicular movement

The site's southern boundary and existing agricultural access fronts Blackhalve Lane and provides ease of access to the A460 Cannock Road, a strategic link connecting Wolverhampton city centre to the M54 and M6 motorway corridors.

1. Blackhalve Lane with the site to the left
2. Existing agricultural site access
3. Bus shelter on Blackhalve Lane
4. Monarch's Way public footpath



**LEGEND**

Site boundary  
(4.93ha)

**Pedestrian and cycle**

- Footpath
- Public right of way
- Monarch's Way
- Bridleway

**Public transport**

- Bus stop location
- No. 71 bus route
- No. 65 bus route



0 1  
kilometres

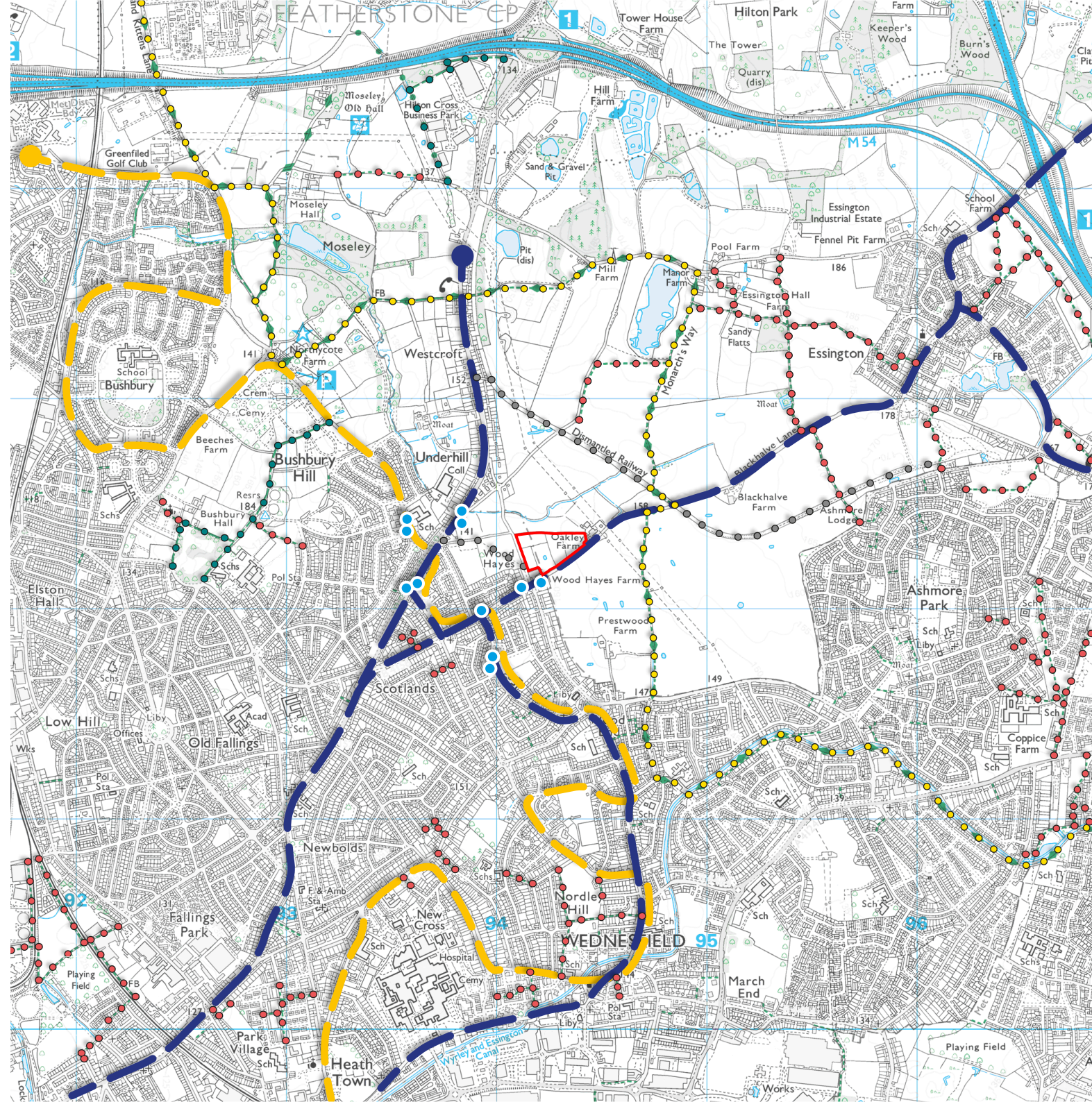


FIGURE 2.3 | ACCESS AND MOVEMENT | 1:25,000

## Heritage assets

An assessment has been conducted to establish the potential for heritage sensitivity, both within the site itself and its surrounding context

Although there are no designated heritage assets within or immediately adjacent to the site, a few lie within the wider locality. Bushbury Hill Conservation Area was designated in 1972 and covers a largely greenspace area which incorporates a mix of uses.

North east of the site is a scheduled monument, a historic moated residence where the cottage is now demolished. Moated sites are characteristic of central eastern England, the majority of which were constructed between 1250 and 1350.

No statutory listed buildings are located within the site's context. Three locally listed buildings are located within the site's wider context, the closest of which is c.650m away and not visible from the site.

In summary, there are no heritage assets within the site or within sufficiently close proximity to allow for potential impact to arise from its development.

1. Locally listed public house: The Pheasant



1

**LEGEND**

Site boundary  
(4.93ha)

**Heritage**

Bushbury Hill conservation area

Scheduled monument

Locally listed building

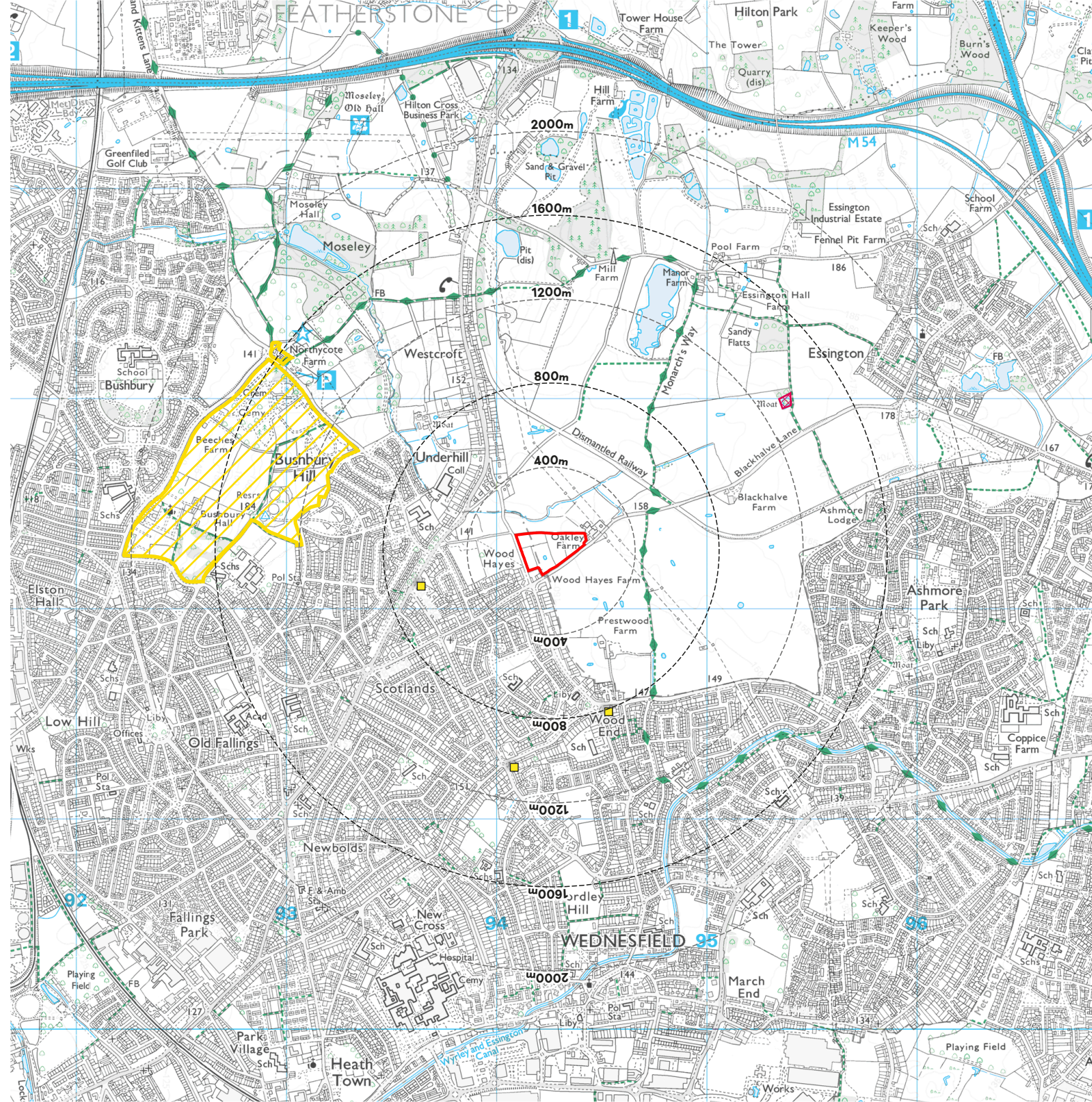


FIGURE 2.4 | LOCAL HERITAGE | 1:25,000

## Landscape

### National landscape character

The site is located within NCA67 'Cannock Chase and Cank Wood' national landscape character area. Natural England describes NCA67 as follows:

The National Character Area (NCA) forms an area of higher ground rising out of Shropshire and Staffordshire Plain NCA to the west. Much of this western boundary is defined by the transport corridor of the M6. Needwood and Claylands NCA lies to the north, separated by the Trent Valley.

The eastern edge adjoins Trent Valley Washlands NCA. The NCA lies on the watershed, with much of it draining east into the River Trent via the River Tame and a number of smaller

tributaries that drain Cannock Chase. The remainder of the NCA drains west into the Severn catchment. In the south the NCA merges with Arden NCA within the Birmingham conurbation, and here there are close links through the roads, railways and canals.

From Cannock Chase there are views west over the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain and to the north-east and east over the Claylands and the Trent Valley. To the north of the NCA the plantations and heathland of the Chase create prominent views within the area. In the south of the NCA there are also significant viewpoints at Turners Hill at Rowley Regis and at Barr Beacon east of Walsall.

Natural England cites a number of characteristics for NCA 67 'Cannock Chase and Cank Wood' including:

- 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 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.

The site sits on the edge of this character area to the south and does not reflect the heathland character of Cannock Chase itself.

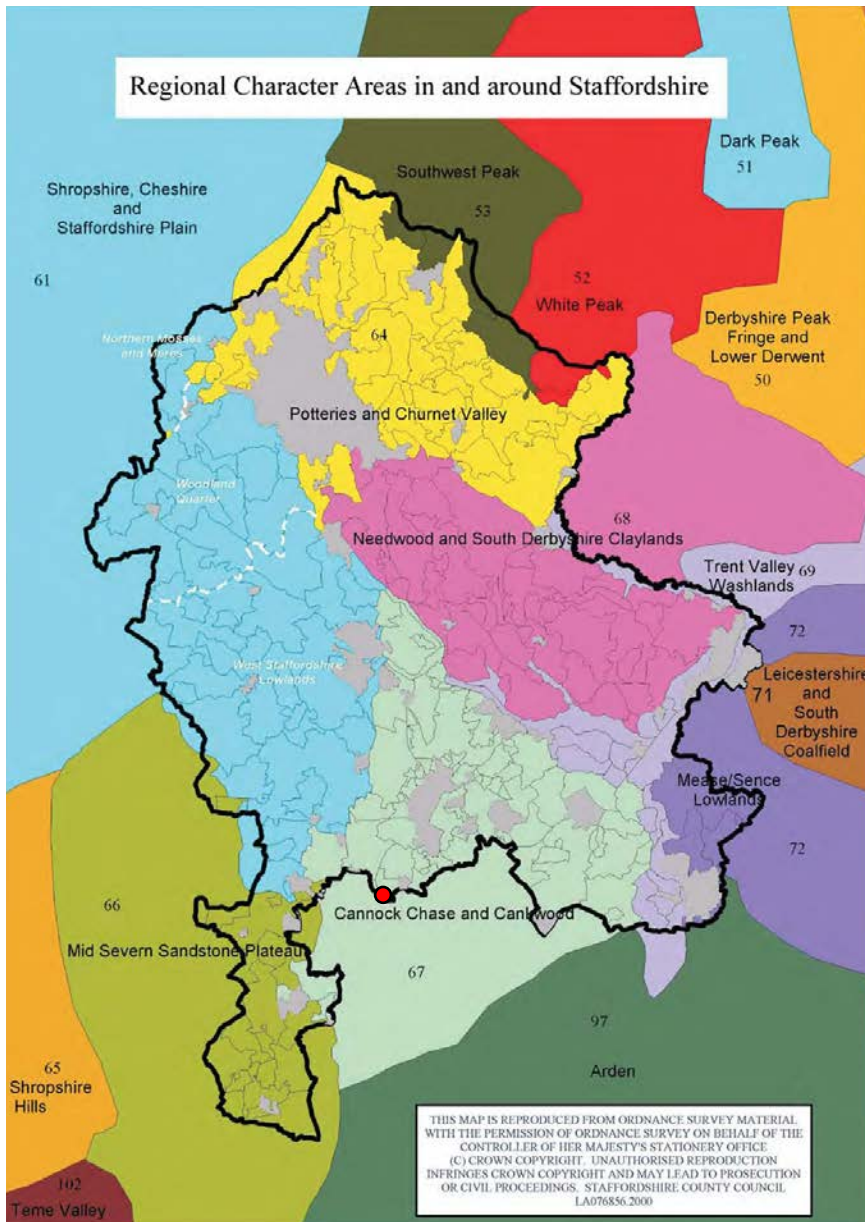


FIGURE 2.5 | NATIONAL CHARACTER AREAS WITHIN THE STAFFORDSHIRE REGION (EXTRACT FROM SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE SPG VOL.3)

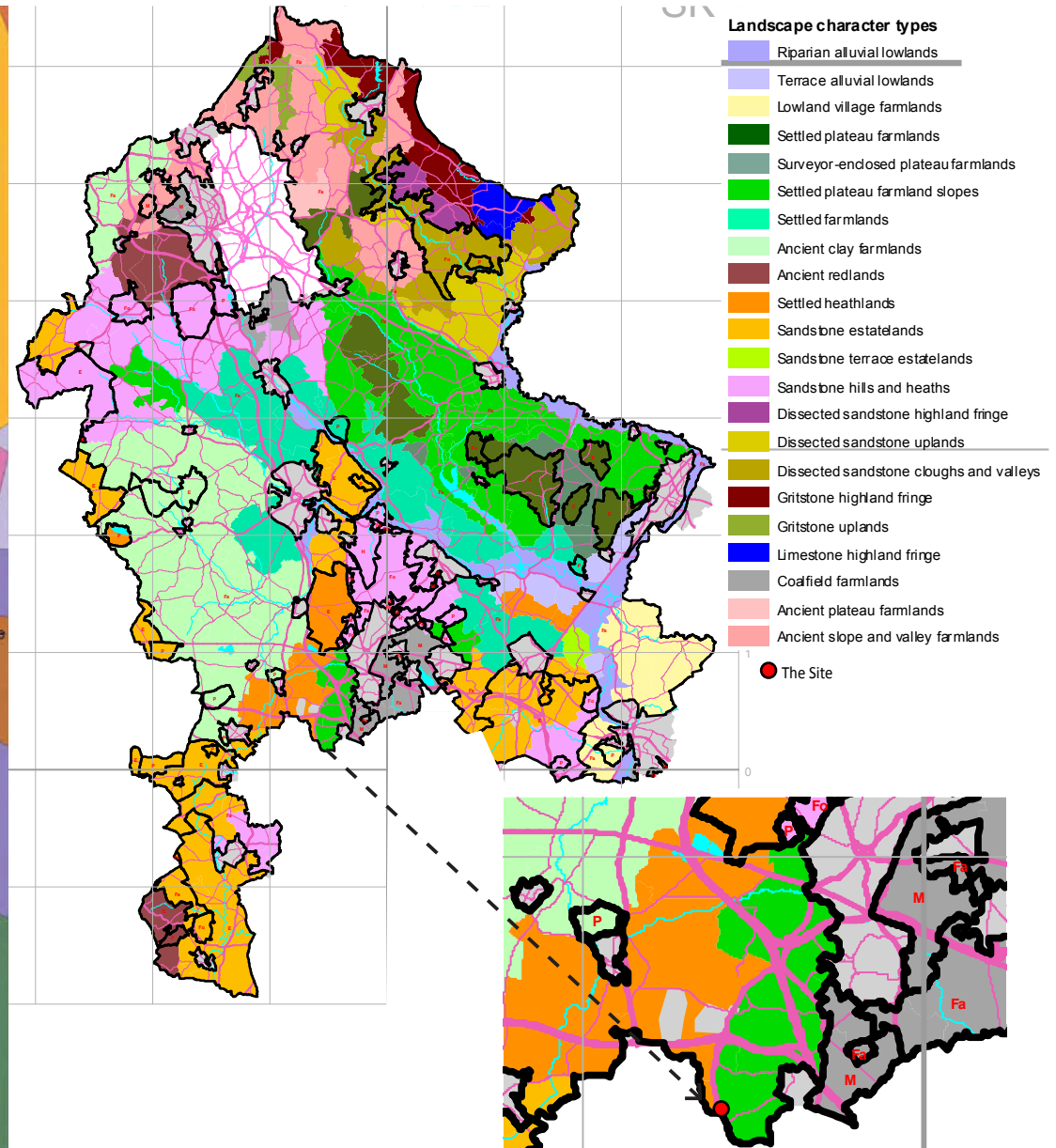


FIGURE 2.6 | LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES IN STAFFORDSHIRE (PLANNING FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGE SPG)

### **Regional landscape character**

The site is situated at a regional level in the 'settled plateau farmland slopes' character area. This is defined within Staffordshire County Council landscape descriptions as follows:

These are, in general, landscapes of the slopes below rolling plateaux, on which boulder clay overlies Triassic mudstones. The soils, which are generally non-calcareous stagnogleys, support dairying with some mixed farming in a semi-regular pattern of hedged fields, with scattered woods, often of ancient origin, and areas of remnant heath. There is a dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and farmsteads, with urban influences in places.

### **Visual character**

The single example of the type found in this Regional Character Area is a landscape of intensive arable and pastoral farming where fields have been enlarged to increase the scale considerably in places. The well-trimmed nature of the hedgerows, isolated trees and prominent rolling landform ensure that there are always views across the landscape to the distance or intermediate horizons.

The many small woods (none of them of ancient origin) and the stream valleys are important in locally reducing scale and directing views. Typical red brick farmhouses and scattered cottages are quickly losing their character by improvement or erection of large associated buildings.

The area is easily accessible due to the network of narrow winding lanes serving the farms and hamlets. Newer properties are surprisingly numerous and reduce the quality of the landscape by their visibility and inappropriate design.

### **Characteristic landscape features**

Intensive arable and pasture farming; large scale field pattern with well-trimmed hedgerows; a rolling, often pronounced landform; well treed stream corridors; dispersed red brick farms; narrow winding lanes and small woodlands.



### **Incongruous landscape features**

Adjacent urban landscape uses and encroaching urban elements such as sewage works; electrified railway; power lines; lines of fencing replacing deteriorating hedgerows.

The site is more characteristic of this regional landscape character type.

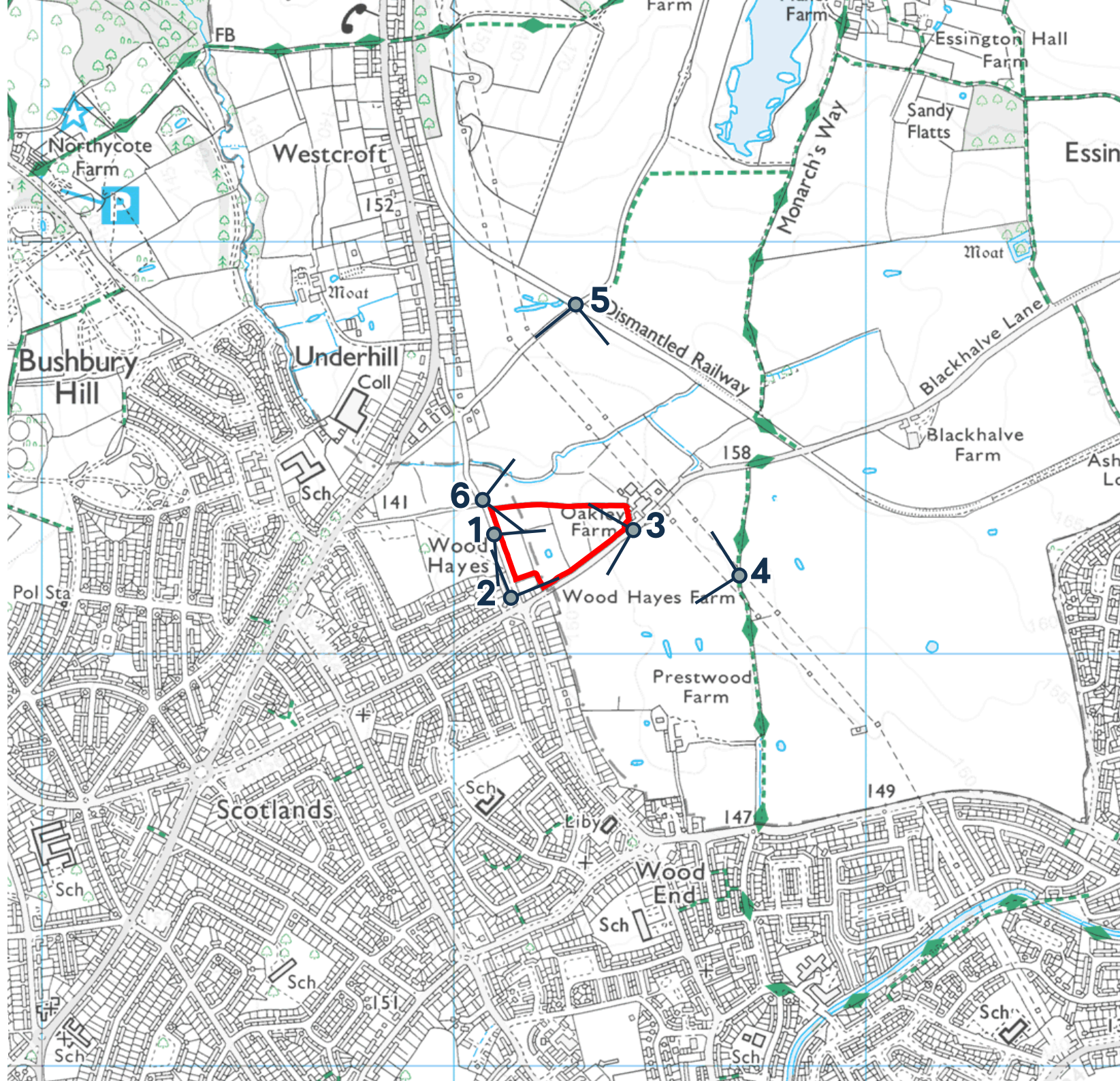
### **Landscape summary**

In summary, our desktop appraisal and site survey of landscape and visual matters have established the following key points:

- The site is within the green belt but well contained by mature trees and hedgerow on the boundaries of the site and is in urban fringe location on the edge of Wolverhampton
- The site includes five agricultural fields with mature hedgerows and large hedgerow trees
- The site is rolling in nature with an existing pond in the middle of the site.
- Oakley Farm is located on the eastern boundary of the site

- Development on the corner of Blackhalve Lane and Wood Hayes Road screens views of the site from the junction
- To the north of the site a small watercourse Water Head brook runs in a valley
- The site is most visible in close proximity to the site from Blackhalve Lane
- The site is generally screened from long distance views to the north, east and south by intervening vegetation
- Views from public rights of way on higher ground to the north including Monarch Way are all within the context of the wider urban setting of Wolverhampton itself.

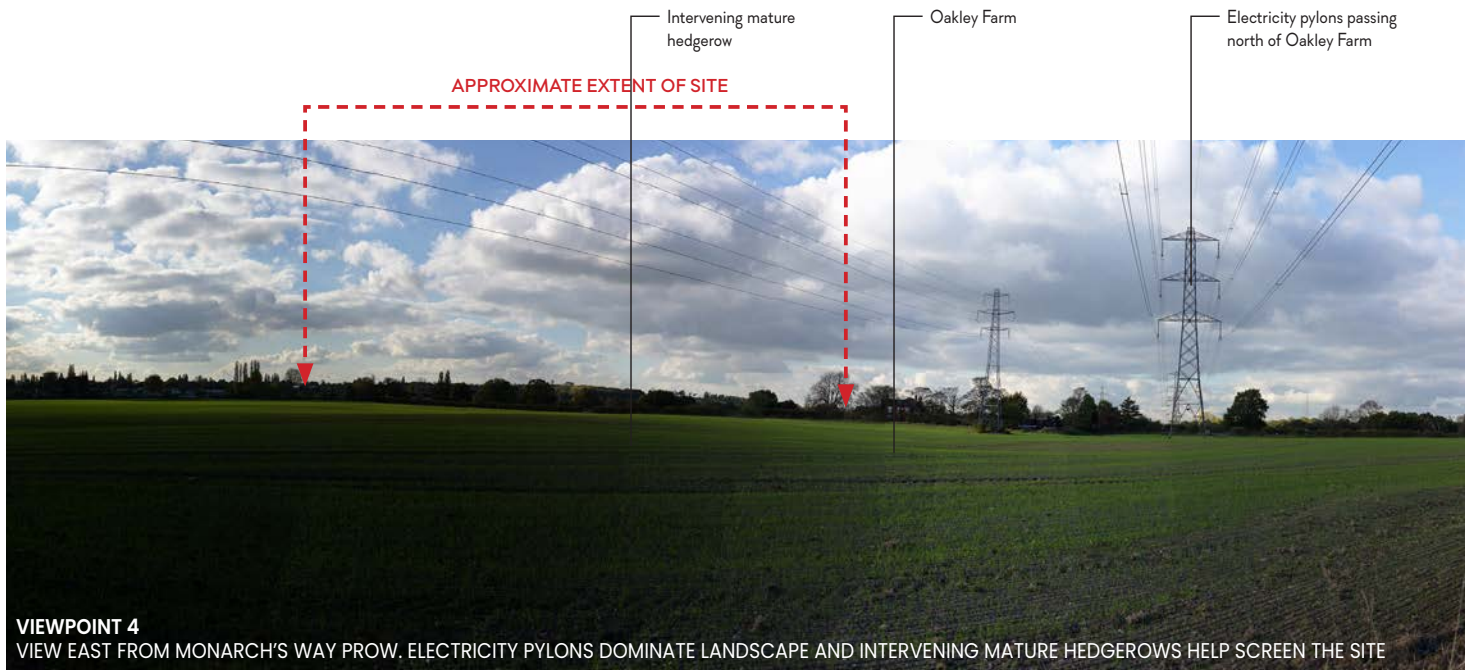
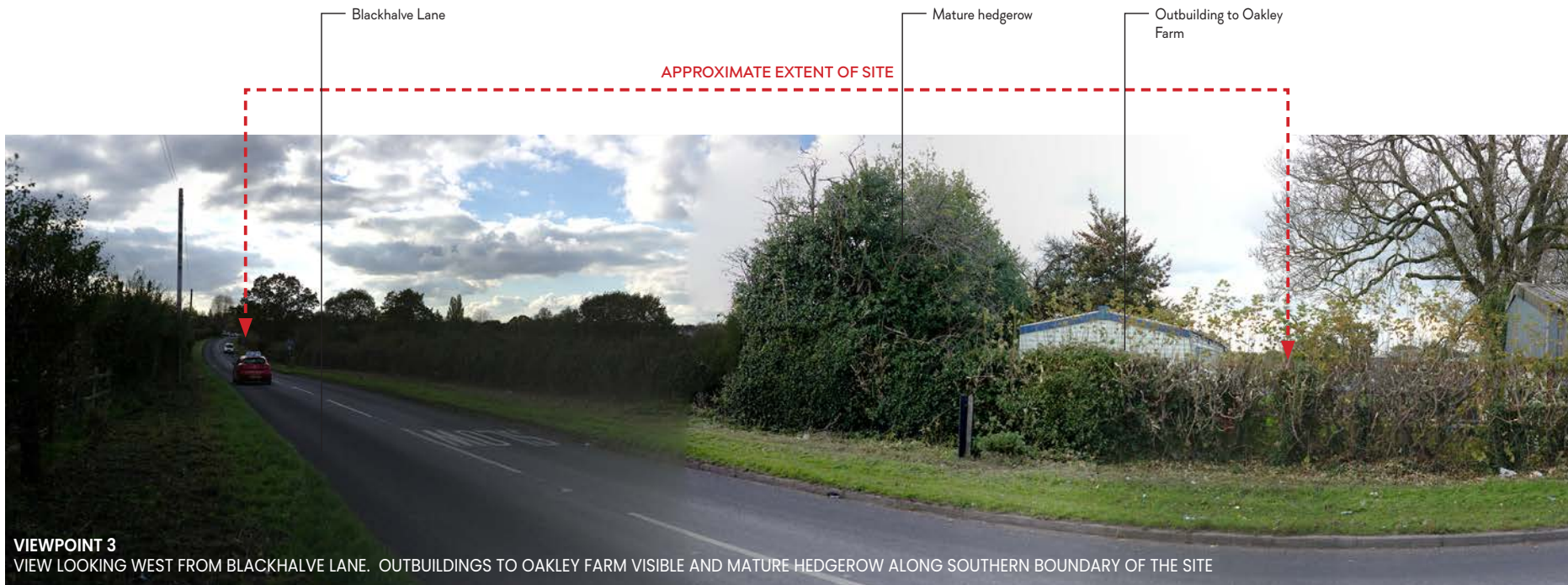
A number of landscape panoramic photos have been produced on the following pages to illustrate the points above.

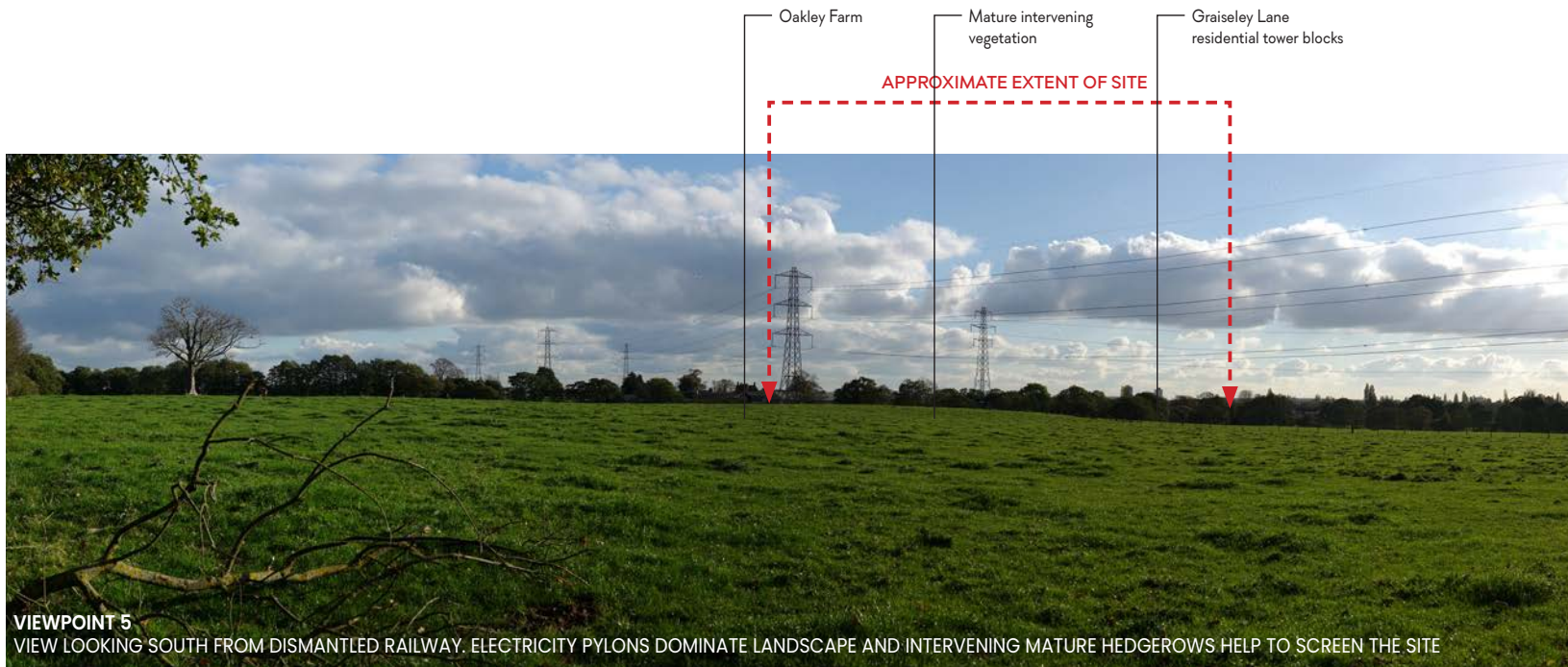


0 500 metres

FIGURE 2.7 | VIEWPOINT LOCATION PLAN | 1:12,500







## Green Belt Assessment

The site at Blackhalve Lane, Wolverhampton currently sits within the Green Belt. Around 80% of the district is designated Green Belt, and this has historically limited development to a significant degree.

As set out in the NPPF and reiterated in the Issues and Options document (p.16), it is clear that authorities should direct development away from Green Belt where possible, or where this is unavoidable, direct development away from the most sensitive areas of Green Belt, subject to sustainability and deliverability considerations.

Sites which therefore do not make a strong contribution to the role and function of the Green Belt in South Staffordshire will be considered for

potential release in order to facilitate the planned growth for the District.

We have considered the Blackhalve Lane site against the five purposes of Green Belt as set out below (NPPF)

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- To assist in the urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

## To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas

The site is located in an urban fringe location on the edge of Wolverhampton. It is well contained within the landscape being screened from long distance views by intervening vegetation, hedgerows and trees. The site has mature hedgerows to its boundaries to the south, east and north with the western boundary of the site screened by Oakley Farm.

Residential development at the corner of Blackhalve Lane and Wood Hayes Road also screens the site from this junction. This existing development to the east of Wood Hayes Road as well as the large complex of buildings at Oakley Farm and Electricity pylons give a urban fringe character to the site. The

site if removed from the Green Belt therefore forms a logical extension to the urban area that does not create urban sprawl. An opportunity exists to improve the boundary to the Green belt as existing residential development backing into the site does not have robust rear boundaries.

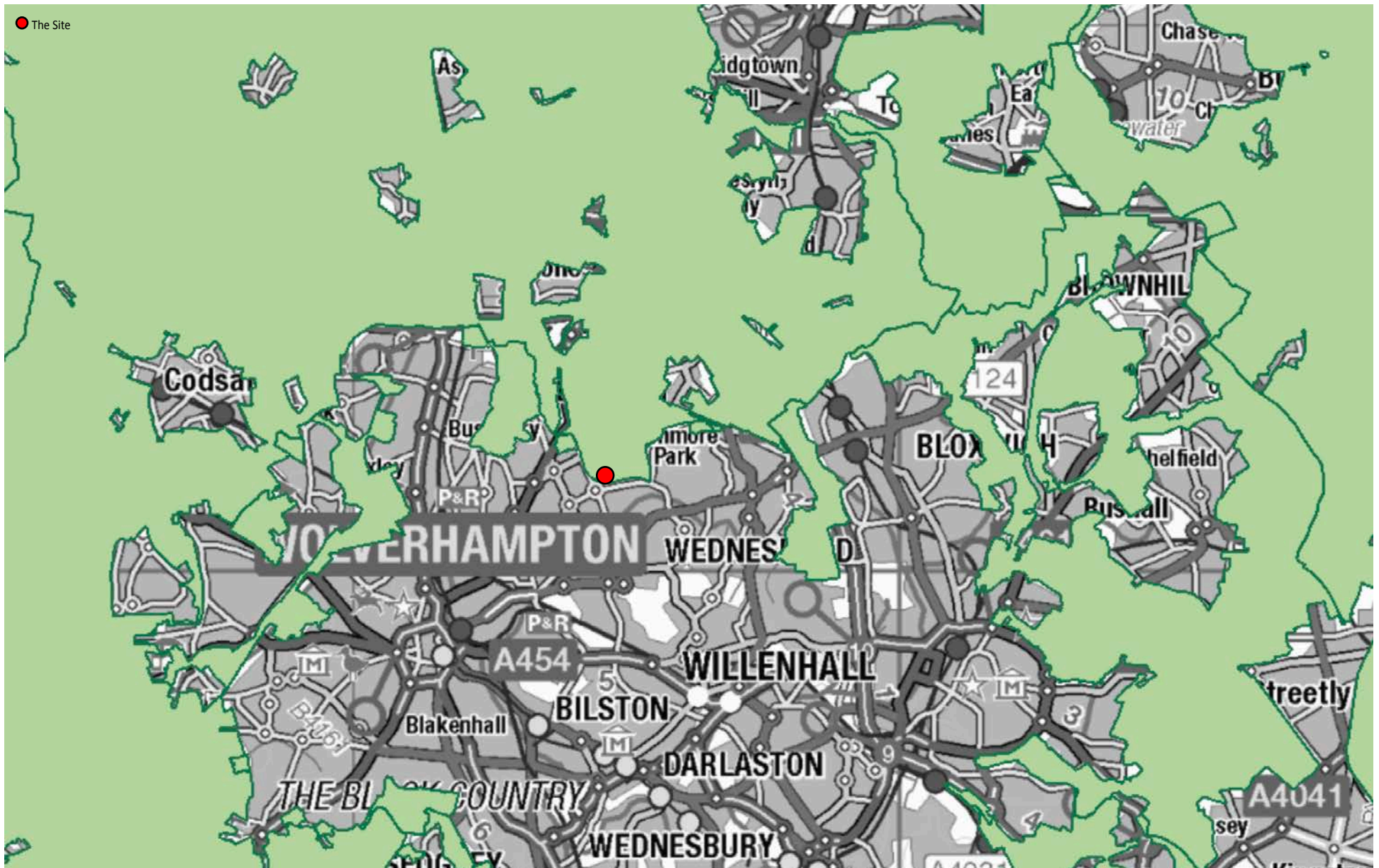


FIGURE 2.8 | GREEN BELT BOUNDARY  
 (EXTRACT FROM MAGIC.DEFRA.GOV.UK)

### **To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

The Green Belt in this location does not have a strong function in preventing settlement coalescence. The nearest non-Green Belt settlement is some distance away, in Essington, where it is separated from the edge of Wolverhampton by a very narrow area of Green Belt, where Sneyd Lane almost connects Ashmore Park with Essington in places.

To the north is Featherstone, another smaller village that has also almost merged with the wider built up area of Wolverhampton. Beyond that lies the M54 and M6 Toll before reaching the larger town of Cannock.

To some extent the merger of surrounding villages has already occurred. The contained nature of the site and the retention of a significant green wedge between the site and Essington and a lack of inter-visibility between the two will ensure that any perception of merging of settlement does not occur.

### **To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment**

Most Green Belt sites will make a contribution to openness, but being made up of smaller land parcels, the site, as already explained, is well contained with the landscape by mature hedgerows and trees and by existing development.

Views of the site are only visible in close proximity and in certain locations not at all due to the height and nature of boundary treatments. From long distance views the site is not visible and is seen in the context of the wider built up area of Wolverhampton itself.

It is proposed to retain key landscape features of the site including significant internal hedgerows and field trees.

The development will also work with the natural topography of the site. Opportunities also exist to provide mitigation planting and ecological enhancements in line with the site landscape character.



### **To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

The site is on the edge of Wolverhampton but this fringe location is not within a conservation area, nor the setting of listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments.

The nearest conservation area is Bushbury Hill approximately 1 km to the east of the site. This is screened by intervening built form and is completely separate from the context of the site itself.

The development of this site will not impact upon the special character of a historic town in that regard and it does not contribute in this way.

To assist in the urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Given the growth aspirations of the Council and the acknowledgement of the unmet need from the GBHMA it is clear that Green Belt land must be released in South Staffordshire and other neighbouring 'Green Belt' authorities. This is an absolute conclusion of the Issues and Options document.

The unmet need has been tested in scenarios which look at increasing densities, releasing additional previously developed sites and site in non green belt locations, and it is still subject to a shortfall of around 48,000 to 2036.

The remaining previously developed sites in Birmingham and the Black Country authorities that have yet to be redeveloped are no less likely to come forward if green belt is released in South Staffordshire. Issues of viability are being addressed for many sites, which are also able to access grant funding in some cases. However relying solely on such sites will not deliver the unmet need in a timely way and ultimately – there is still a requirement to release Green Belt land.

### **Conclusion**

The Blackhalve Lane site overall performs fairly poorly when examined against the five purposes of Green Belt as set out in the NPPF. All green belt sites will perform fairly well in terms of safeguarding the countryside because development will change the openness of the site. However, for a relatively modest loss of Green Belt land in this sustainable location, we consider that there are far more sensitive Green Belt sites in the District that contribute strongly to the purposes set out earlier.

## Ecological designations

An assessment has been conducted to establish the potential for ecological sensitivity, both within the site itself and its surrounding context

No statutory designated sites are within a close proximity to the site, the nearest being Noose Lane Local Nature Reserve which is located 2.9km south east of the site.

Oakley Farm Potential Site of Importance (PSI) lies partly within the site at its western end. There is no evidence of the presence of protected or notable species, however the site and immediate surrounds have potential to support a number of such birds and mammals.

In summary, there are no statutory ecological assets within the site or within sufficiently close proximity to allow for potential impact to arise from its development.

The presence of Oakley Farm Potential Site of Importance has been recorded and reflected within the design development process.



**LEGEND**

- Site boundary (4.93ha)
  
- Local landscape**
- EA flood zone 2
- EA flood zone 3
- Local wildlife site
- Site of importance for nature conservation (SINC)
- Site of local importance for nature conservation (SLINC)
- Potential site of importance
- Retained biodiversity alert site
- Woodland

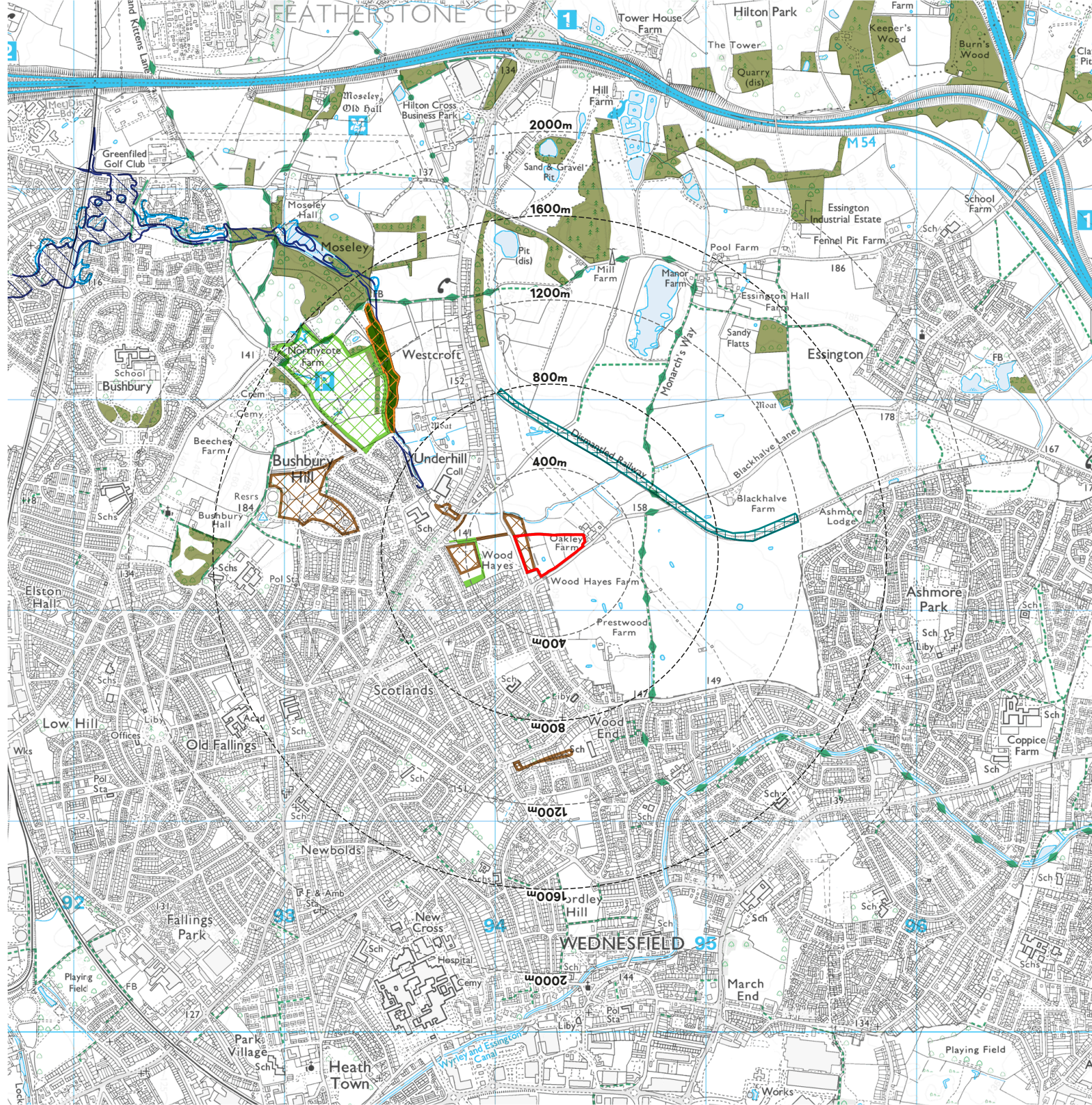


FIGURE 2.9 | ECOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE | 1:25,000

## Morphology

Consideration has been given to the built form and residential typologies surrounding the site to help inform future development proposals. The site lies on the boundary of Wolverhampton's post-war urban sprawl area and South Staffordshire's rural countryside and scattered village settlements.

Wolverhampton's post war development is comprised of long straight residential boulevards fronted by the formal repetition of large semi-detached and short terraced dwellings with generous front and rear gardens,

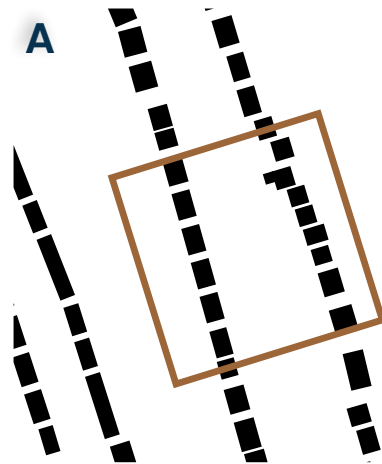
In contrast, traditional villages of South Staffordshire often began as a cluster of individual farms that expanded around a community use, such as a church or market place.



0

200

metres



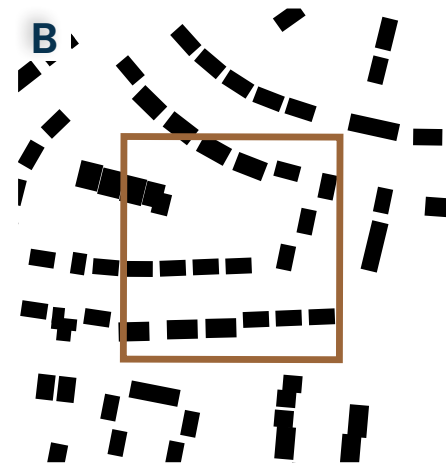
### Wood End

#### Dwelling type(s)

Formally arranged large semi-detached post-war housing with long rear gardens and front gardens that have often been converted for on-plot parking

#### Residential density

The composition of semi-detached dwelling with large front and rear garden plots supports a density of 22dph.



### Ashmore Park

#### Dwelling type(s)

Largely consistent semi-detached post-war housing, fronting long sinuous streets with wide verges and blank open space. A mixture of on-street parking and converted front gardens.

#### Residential density

The inclusion of short terraced runs and redeveloped rear garden plots creates a compact grain maintaining 40dph



### Essington village

#### Dwelling type(s)

A blend of Edwardian terraced housing fronting back of pavement, post-war semi-detached dwellings with large front and rear gardens, as well as detached mid-twentieth century housing.

#### Residential density

The contrast of development eras and variable plot sizes results in a density of 25dph



## Built character

Throughout both the surrounding suburbs of Wolverhampton and the local village of Essington, the dominant built form is large semi-detached post-war housing, set around long straight residential boulevards incorporating wide verges and some tree planting. Occasional runs of short terraces help increase the built density, which is often characteristically low due to long front and rear garden plots.

The architectural character is classic of this era, with high eaves-fronted roofs that are often hipped, with the addition of lean-to garages at the side of properties that infill the space between the dwellings. Bay windows are a common feature, both with and without gabled roof pitches. Over time the materiality has become varied, however red brick remains the dominant material with dark brown roof tiles.

## 2.2 Site assessment

### Site description

A comprehensive photographic audit of the site and its surroundings has been undertaken. Key photographs and their location are shown on figure 2.6 opposite.

The site is comprised of five small pasture fields that are currently used for light cattle grazing. It's southern boundary abuts the northern side of Blackhalve Lane and is book-ended by development, including residential housing at the western end fronting both Blackhalve Lane and Wood Hayes Road. In addition, a small operational farm fronting Blackhalve Lane immediately sides onto the site's eastern boundary.

The site's most notable features include a variable undulating topography, field boundaries which

incorporate a number of large mature trees and an existing field pond.

With the exception of the eastern field parcel, the majority of the site slopes gently north westwards away from Blackhalve Lane. However, the north western field slopes back towards the centre of the site, meeting in a shallow valley that exits the site centrally along its western boundary.

The site's eastern field parcel slopes parallel to Blackhalve Lane, gently rising towards Oakley Farm.

Three internal field boundaries run roughly north-south through the site and these possess the most notable mature landscaping, including hedgerows, several large trees and a small agricultural drainage ditch.

An existing field pond and associated scrub lies south west to the centre of the site. Although this pond was dry at the time of undertaking the site visit, it may well be wet during a period of the year and be a usable ecological habitat.

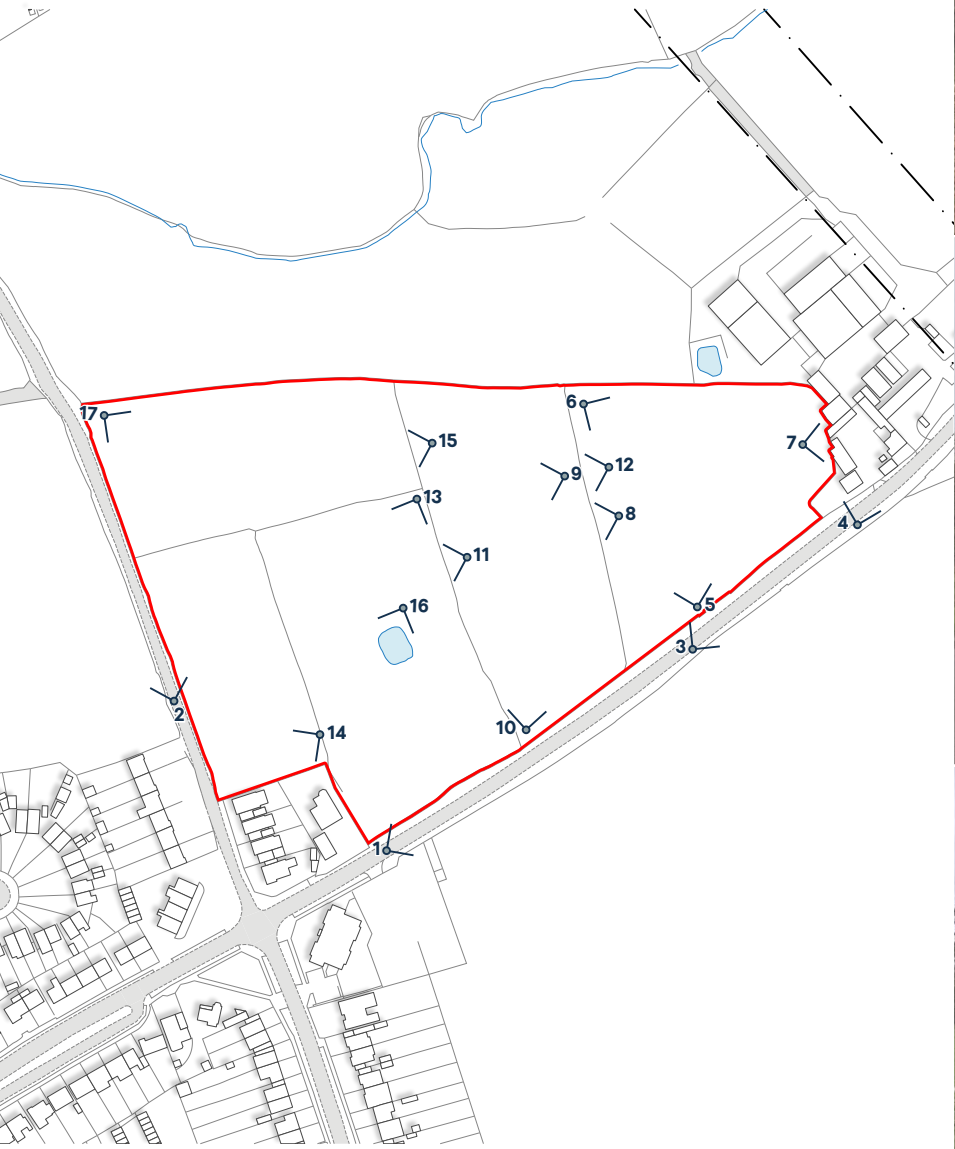


FIGURE 2.11 | PHOTO LOCATION PLAN | 1:3,500



Viewpoint photographs

1

2

3

4

5



6



7



8



9



10



11





12



13



14



15



16



17

## Arboricultural survey

An arboricultural survey has been undertaken in accordance with BS5837:2012 utilising the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) methodology on the 23rd October 2010.

The key findings of the arboricultural survey are:

- Twenty nine records have been made across the site comprising of twenty three individual trees, one tree group and five hedgerows.
- Twenty key records have been made that are important arboricultural assets and have been awarded high retention values (A1 to B2), this is due to the longevity and visual prominence they exhibit.

- Very few records (five) have been categorised as retention value 'C' due to their limited arboricultural merit or impaired condition which are unlikely to pose as a constraint to the sites re development.
- Four Category U trees have been recorded on the site that require prompt management intervention for health and safety reasons.

The most significant arboricultural constraints are:

- The twenty A1 to B2 records (20,16,1,2,4,5,7,8,10,12,14,17, 6, 11, 15, 21, H3-H5) are the chief arboricultural constraints on this site. They all exhibit Root Protection Areas, canopy extents and are of a higher retention

value and as such constrain the development design in the occupied areas.

- Many of the twenty key records are in ecologically connected hedgerows and where possible the design shall attempt to retain the continuous arboricultural features within and forming the hedgerows.
- A single privately owned and off site TPO (Wolverhampton Council) tree (T5 Amenity Tree Care) is located off site but requires design consideration to ensure its RPA is not compromised.

The arboricultural survey has provided an important technical input into the design development process. Its findings have been reflected in the resultant design for the site.



**Blackhalve Lane  
TREE CONSTRAINTS PLAN**

**Retention value key**

- (RETENTION VALUE A)
- (RETENTION VALUE B)
- (RETENTION VALUE C)
- Trees to be removed (RETENTION VALUE U)

**Root Protection Areas (RPA)**

Root Protection Areas (RPA's) have been identified and are based on BS5837:2012. RPA's have been shown as a red polyline.

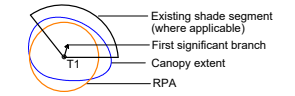


FIGURE 2.12 | TREE CONSTRAINTS PLAN | NTS

## Flood risk and drainage

An assessment of the flood risk to the site from all sources as well as any mitigation that will be required to manage this flood risk has been undertaken.

In addition, a drainage strategy to manage surface water runoff and foul water from the site has been developed to help inform the design development process. Key findings are as follows:

- All development will be contained in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore sequentially acceptable.
- All sources of flood risk are considered to be low to very low for this development.
- Although the risk from groundwater flooding is considered to be low, it is advised a ground investigation is carried out on site to confirm this and any required mitigation.
- The site's ground conditions indicate that disposal of surface water via infiltration is unlikely to be viable. Discharge into a watercourse is also considered unfeasible due to topography and third party land entry permissions.
- Consequently, surface water runoff will be attenuated and discharged via 2 detention basins, with a maximum combined volume of 1,345m<sup>3</sup>, to a Severn Trent sewer at manhole 0352 to the west of the site.
- The development will not increase runoff or flood risk downstream by utilising a sustainable drainage system to store and restrict flows to the Greenfield rates.
- The foul water drainage networks will discharge via gravity to foul sewers within Blackhalve Lane and Wood Hayes Road.

## Air quality

An initial air quality assessment has been undertaken in support of the development of proposals for the site.

This has determined the following:

- A review of both SSDC and CWC Local Air Quality Management documents indicate that the proposed development site lies within CWC's citywide Air Quality Management Area, and near to
- The nearest monitoring location to the proposed development is located approximately 1.7km to the southwest of the site, adjacent to Cannock Road (Site ID: CAN), and shows annual mean concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) lie well below the air quality objective of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.
- Therefore, it is considered that NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations on the application site will be comparable, and that air quality will not pose a constraint to the site.
- Detailed air quality assessment will be undertaken to confirm NO<sub>2</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> pollutant concentrations at the site, and to quantify increases arising from development traffic within the local area. Impact significance will then be established.
- A suitable mitigation strategy, proportionate to predicted development impact will be identified.
- It is envisaged that the mitigation strategy would be developed in liaison with SSDC and CWC, to maximise opportunities to improve air quality in the area.

## Noise

An initial noise assessment has been undertaken to establish existing sound levels at the site, and to enable assessment of sound levels against WHO and BS8233:2014 criteria, and to determine assist in specifying a suitable noise mitigation strategy for the development.

The principal noise sources in the vicinity of the site are road traffic using Wood Hayes Road, adjacent to the western boundary of the site, and Blackhalve Lane adjacent to the southern boundary. Other sources of noise include a school and nursery located approximately 300m to the west of Wood Hayes Road. However, noise associated with this use was only faintly audible at certain times during site walkover.

To attenuate sound levels from road transport sources, a general mitigation strategy has been identified. The final mitigation strategy may include some or all of the following mitigation measures, and will be informed by considerations other than noise that need to be taken into account during the layout design process. It is envisaged that the noise assessment work and mitigation strategy will be refined as the scheme progresses.

- Careful consideration of the site layout so that areas near to Blackhalve Lane and Wood Hayes Road use dwelling frontages to provide screening to gardens from the road, i.e. gardens to be located behind dwellings, facing away from the road.
- An acoustic barrier of approximately 2m height may be installed along the Blackhalve Lane boundary, to provide additional screening of sound, and therefore more flexibility for the site layout.
- The installation of 1.8 m high acoustically sound garden fencing, where required.
- Internal sound levels will be attenuated via the specification and installation of suitably attenuated glazing and ventilation systems.

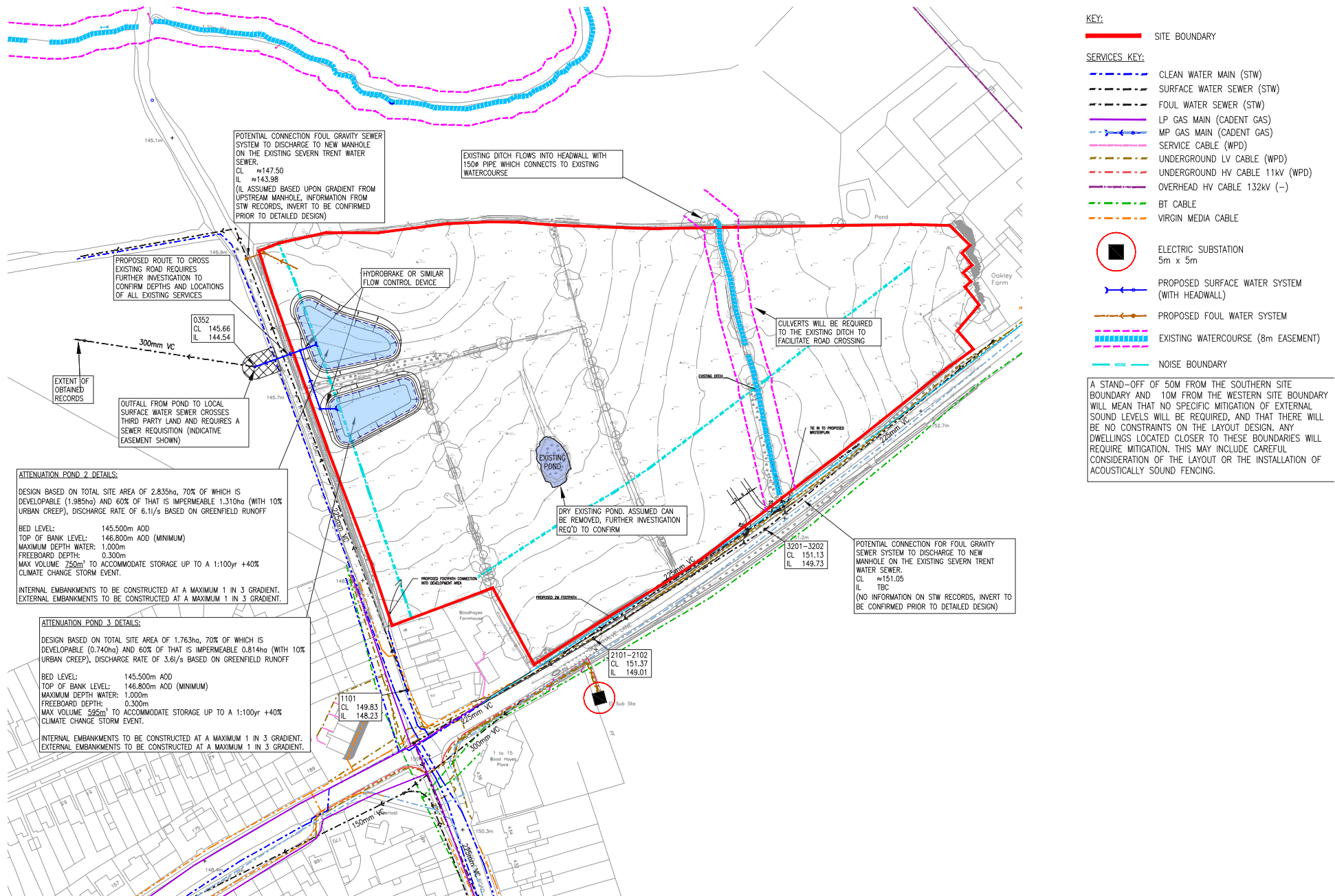


FIGURE 2.13 | TECHNICAL CONSTRAINTS PLAN | NTS

## Agricultural Land Classification

### Desktop assessment

Provisional ALC mapping does not differentiate between Grades 3a and 3b and therefore it cannot be used to distinguish Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land (BMV land is defined as Grade 1, 2 and 3a of the ALC ).

### Site survey

A detailed soil resource and agricultural quality survey was subsequently carried out in October 2018. It was based on observations at intersects of a 100 m grid, giving a sampling density of one observation per hectare.

Soils at the site were found to comprise sandy clay loams over slowly permeable reddish heavy clay loam or sandy clay loam. The subsoils display greyish and mottled colouration (gleying) to shallow depth, indicating seasonal waterlogging caused by perched water above the poorly-structured lower subsoil. The soils are imperfectly-draining (Soil Wetness Class III) with a moderate capacity to absorb excess winter rainfall.

Land of Subgrade 3a has been identified across the majority of the site due to the moderately high topsoil clay content, combined with imperfect subsoil drainage, presenting seasonal wetness limitations to machinery access.

The land is capable of supporting spring-sown (as well as autumn-sown) arable crops, but with flexibility limited by wet periods. Were the site to be developed, the loamy topsoils represent a high quality resource for reuse in gardens and landscaping.

A development of a similar scale on greenfield land elsewhere in the local area would likely result in a similar proportional loss of BMV. The Site poses a logical extension to existing built up area and is capable of utilising existing amenities, services and infrastructure; which is preferable to the development of isolated areas of agricultural land elsewhere in the District.

It is unlikely that the development of the Site would conflict with the wider local agricultural interests of highly productive agriculture or horticulture and would therefore appear to be viable for a residential development.





FIGURE 2.14 | AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION | NTS

## 2.3 Opportunities and constraints

Following an assessment of the site and its local context a number of opportunities, constraints, and technical considerations have been identified to be taken forward into the design development process. The following bullet points and adjacent plan provides a summary of these key factors affecting the site that require urban design consideration.

- **Connecting the community:** The site offers the opportunity to create a development that provides direct pedestrian and cycle connections to the local service centre (junct. of Blackhalve Lane and Wood Hayes Road) and the public playing fields opposite Wood Hayes Road.
- **Sensitive boundaries:** Consideration must be given to the relationship between the

existing residences fronting both Wood Hayes Road and Blackhalve Lane, as well as Oakley Farm to ensure these are well managed to provide both secure a private outward facing development.

- **Enhance local ecology:** The western portion of the site is designated as a Potential Site of ecological Importance (PSI). Although not a statutory designation, we see the sensitive incorporation of this asset as a key opportunity for the site to contribute to the cohesion and resilience of the wider ecological network. The relationship between any development proposals, biodiversity enhancements and the PIS should be considered carefully.

- **Working with existing assets:** There is an opportunity to utilise the site's existing landscape features, including mature trees and hedgerows, and on-site watercourses to create a sense of place within a future scheme.
- **Topography and views:** Although the site is considered relatively low risk in relation to visual impact on the landscape, the combination of rising topography and sparse vegetation along parts of the site's northern boundary allow for some filtered views to enter the site. Therefore the layout of development and the potential for additional planting should be carefully considered.
- **Character creation:** As the site lies on the rural-urban fringe between Wolverhampton's urban extent and South Staffordshire's countryside villages, proposals need to recognise and respond appropriately to both these contrasting built forms.
- **Sustainable drainage:** groundwater issues should be managed sustainably through the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) such as attenuation ponds and swales.

**LEGEND**

- Site boundary (4.93ha)
- Landscape**
  - Potential site of ecological importance (PSI)
  - Existing tree: classification A
  - Existing tree: classification B
  - Existing tree: classification C
  - Existing tree: to be removed
  - Root protection area
  - Existing hedgerow
  - Existing field pond
  - Existing watercourse
  - Watercourse easement (8m)
  - Potential storm water attenuation location
  - Contour height
- Access**
  - Existing footpath
  - Potential pedestrian/ cycle access
  - Existing agricultural access
  - Potential site access
- Miscellaneous**
  - Views into the site
  - Sensitive boundary
  - Noise mitigation zone
  - Pylon and overhead cables

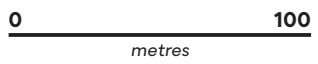


FIGURE 2.15 | OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS | 1:2,500

# 3 Creating urban structure

The detailed understanding gained from the contextual analysis and site assessment process has enabled the generation of three, site specific design principles:

## 1: Creating ecological corridors

The design should recognise the site's proximity to several non-statutory designated ecological sites and seek opportunities to create a positive response to the wider ecological network.

This could be achieved through a number of solutions, one of which may be to use the site to enhance Waterhead Brook's role as linear ecological corridor.

In addition the design could look to further focus ecological enhancements around existing features such as mature trees and existing watercourses to create north-south migration corridors through the site to allow wildlife to access Waterhead Brook.

## 2: Protecting high points

The design should account for the site's unique topography, seeking to preserve the rural character of the South Staffordshire countryside through buffering development from high points which may be subject to filtered views from both Wood Hayes Road and Blackhalve Lane.

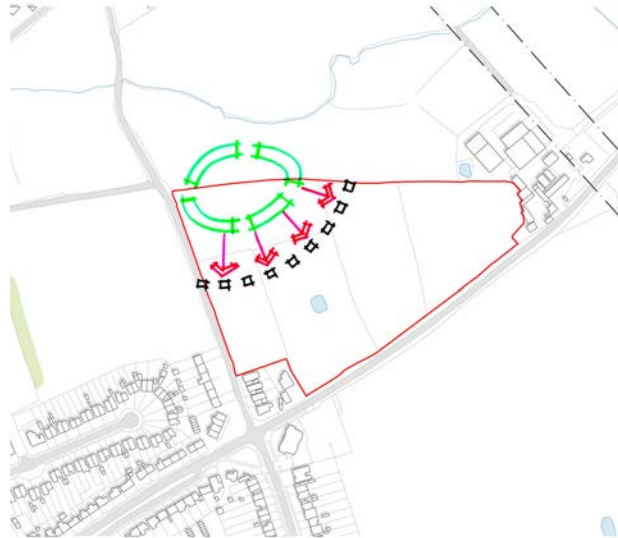
## 3: Maximising connections

The design should seek to maximise the site's sustainable location through providing opportunities for active travel modes to directly access both local shops and services located at the junction of Wood Hayes Road and Blackhalve Lane, as well as join existing footpath networks which can provide direct links with the A460 Cannock Road and local services such as primary schools.

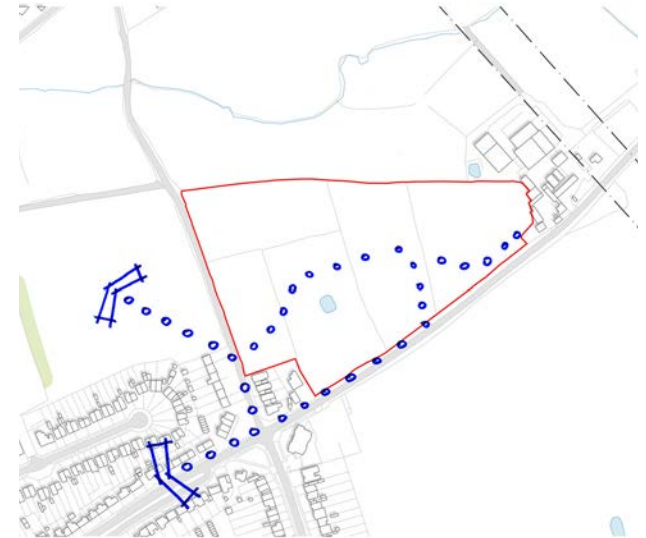
**1** Creating ecological corridors and strengthening green infrastructure



**2** Protecting high points



**3** Maximising connections



0 100  
metres

FIGURE 3.1 | DESIGN PRINCIPLES | 1:2,500

# 4 Detailing

The design for the site has been developed following the analysis of both the site and its local context. It complies with national and local design policy; responding to local character and context, and protecting local distinctiveness whilst ensuring an attractive environment for existing and future residents.

## Use and amount

The proposed site uses are as follows:

- **Residential: 2.75ha**  
This could provide approximately 100 units
- **Usable open space: 1.79ha**
- **Local equipped area of play (LEAP)**

In an effort to align with the South Staffordshire's core strategy policy H1, the proposed housing mix should provide for a variety of both dwelling sizes and tenures as well as being informed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The SHMA (2017) sets out that South Staffordshire has a need for the following dwelling sizes:

- **1 bedroom: 19.6%**
- **2 bedroom: 32.6%**
- **3 bedroom: 27.6%**
- **4+ bedroom: 20.2%**

In addition, the SHMA sets out a need for 21.6% affordable housing provision within South Staffordshire.

## Layout

The masterplan (figure 4.1) indicates the location of land uses, the vehicle and pedestrian access points to the development, the street network and the integration and retention of key landscape features such as the mature trees and hedgerows along the existing field boundaries.

The development makes use of secure perimeter blocks, increasing the levels of natural surveillance over the streets, footpaths and public open spaces whilst also limiting unwanted access to rear gardens through the back-to-back arrangement.

The internal street network is accessed via a single priority junction with Blackhalve Lane, and is structured around two

larger development parcels being separated by a green finger running north-south across the site. In an effort to promote active forms of travel within the scheme, an additional pedestrian and cycle connection has been provided along the site's western boundary to allow for direct links with the adjacent playing fields as well as local shops and services.

The public open space has been concentrated over the designated Potential Site of Importance (PSI) in addition to a north-south green finger. These proposals aim to provide a greenspace network that allows for ecological migration through the site as well as enhancing the Waterhead Brook ecological corridor, which connects Wolverhampton with the wider Staffordshire countryside.

**LEGEND**

Site boundary  
(4.93ha)

**Land use**

Residential  
Public Open Space  
LEAP Local equipped area of play

**Access**

Pedestrian/ cycle access  
Key pedestrian/ cycle movement  
Vehicular access  
Primary vehicle route  
Secondary vehicle route  
Tertiary vehicle route/ private drive

**Landscape**

Existing tree: classification A  
Existing tree: classification B  
Existing tree: classification C  
Existing tree: to be removed  
Root protection area  
Existing hedgerow  
Proposed tree  
Proposed attenuation pond  
Contours



0 100 metres



FIGURE 4.1 | DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK | 1:2,500

## Scale

Much of the development will be limited to two storeys as to remain in-keeping with character of the wider built form as well as restricting the impact of any development on existing views across the landscape. However, where appropriate increased building heights and architectural distinctiveness may be used to increase legibility or provide adequate levels of enclosure over larger spaces.

## Appearance

The Development Framework responds to both the local built context of Wolverhampton as well as the scattered rural village character of South Staffordshire. This has been achieved through maximising elements of Wolverhampton's built context such as utilising existing building lines and 'completing the block' of adjacent development, as well as providing a largely direct and linear street layout which creates a synergy with the adjacent post-war development.

Further to this, the rural village character of South Staffordshire has been embodied through the use of irregular development block patterns, in an effort to correlate with the more organic nature of village development patterns.

## Movement and access

### Pedestrian movement

The Development Framework proposes a scheme which maximises the network of routes for pedestrians and cyclists, both within the site itself as well as integrating with the site's immediate surroundings.

Although the primary all-mode access is proposed via Blackhalve Lane along the site's southern boundary, due to the site's sustainable location adjacent to local shops, and amenities such as playing fields and bus stops it is anticipated that there will be a desire to provide direct access between proposed residences and these existing uses. Therefore the layout has proposed a strong internal east-west route through the site, which interconnects

with the proposed additional pedestrian and cycle access point to the west.

### Public transport

In order to encourage the use of public transport by future residents, direct pedestrian and cycle links have been provided to both the bus stops on Blackhalve Lane and the existing footpath network that will provide easy access to additional bus services via the A460 Cannock Road.

### Vehicle movement

The site will be accessed by a single priority junction with Blackhalve Lane, roughly central along the site's southern boundary.

Due to the desire to both retain existing landscape features such as



mature trees, hedgerows and minor watercourses as well as achieve an outward facing block layout, the layout does have a degree of single sided development within the internal street network. Therefore, where possible it is proposed these outward facing streets are to be designed as shared surface or private drives with a soft materiality in and effort to create a smooth transition between the proposed development and the open space.

## Landscape

Much of the on-site usable open space provision has been focused around both the Potential Site of Importance (PSI) ecological designation, and the linear network of existing landscape feature which comprise the existing internal field boundaries.

As mentioned previously, this is in an effort to enhance the ecological functionality of these spaces as well as provide a robustness to the wider ecological network. This can be achieved through additional planting of native species in areas where there are gaps in the network, allowing for ease of movement for both plant and animal species through the site in both a north-south and east-west directions.

Additionally proposed within the open space provision is a Locally Equipped Play Area (LEAP) to service the site's future residents.

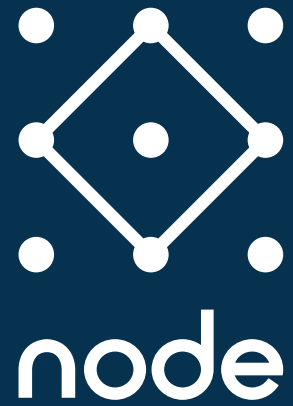
Spaces which are functional for both the future residents in a recreational sense as well as helping to support the local natural ecosystems can be hugely beneficial for reasons such as:

- Promoting healthy lifestyles through active travel and active play within well-designed and beautiful spaces
- Encouraging users to develop an understanding and respect for the natural environment, and
- Providing spaces where incidental meetings can take place between neighbours leading to the creation of a positive community spirit.

## Summary

Node has been commissioned by St Philips Ltd to prepare a masterplan for the site at Blackhalve Lane, Wolverhampton. This vision document has demonstrated that the quantum of development proposed for the site can be comfortably accommodated within the site in a design response that reflects the nature of its built and landscape context.

The proposal would create a high quality new residential development in a sustainable and desirable location where new residents would assist in supporting existing services within the local area.



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