



Land at Coventry (Brandon) Stadium, Rugby Road, Coventry

**Proof of Evidence on Landscape, Visual and Green Belt Matters
of Matthew D Chard BA (Hons) Dip (Hons) MAUD CMLI**

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On behalf of **Brandon Estates**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 My name is Matthew Dermot Chard and I am a Director of Landscape Planning at Stantec. I am responsible for all landscape projects undertaken throughout the UK by the London office.
- 1.1.2 I hold a Bachelor of Arts Degree and Postgraduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture and a Master of Arts in Urban Design from the University of Greenwich. I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI).
- 1.1.3 I have over 25 years post-qualification experience in townscape and landscape planning, design and environmental matters. I was previously an Equity Partner at Barton Willmore and have provided professional advice on townscape, landscape and visual impact assessment, and detailed design of a wide variety of developments throughout the UK. These include small and strategic-scale residential, commercial, mixed use, industrial, infrastructure, mineral extraction, utilities and recreation proposals for government departments, local authorities, public and private companies. I have dealt with sites within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Parks, Strategic and Local Gap and other local designations.

1.2 Background and Scope

- 1.2.1 A planning application was validated on 16th January 2018 by Rugby Borough Council (RBC) (Ref: R18/0186). The application was considered at the Council's Planning Committee on the 9th November 2022, which resolved that planning permission should be refused.
- 1.2.2 The Decision Notice was issued by the Council on 16th November 2022. The application was refused permission for the following reason:

"The development would result in the loss of a sporting facility that has both local and national significance and although an alternative sporting provision is proposed there is not a clearly identified need for the alternative sporting provision and therefore it is considered that the proposed benefits of the new facility do not clearly outweigh the loss of the stadium. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy HS4(C) of the Local Plan (2019), Policy LF1 of the Brandon and Bretford Neighbourhood Development Plan (2019) and Paragraph 99(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021)."

- 1.2.3 However, the application was recommended for approval by the planning officer who's report to committee dated 27.October 2022 stated at para 19.2 (p66) that:

"...Whilst it has not been allocated for housing within the Local Plan, in principle the development of housing on this site is acceptable due to the site being previously developed land. The site is however within the Green Belt but the proposed residential development would not result in an increase in the developed area of the site and will introduce development of a smaller scale and further open space, soft landscaping, footpaths and cycle paths linking to the existing footpaths surrounding the site. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than currently exists therefore the proposal complies with paragraph 149 of the NPPF."

- 1.2.4 Furthermore, the officers report to committee states at para 19.12 (p68) that:

“From an environmental objective the potential adverse impacts of the proposed development in relation to the use of the land, accessibility, trees and hedgerows, archaeology, highway safety, traffic flows, ecology, flood risk, drainage, air quality, noise, contamination, residential amenity, water conservation and carbon emissions have all been considered and weighed against the existing use and buildings on the site which are in a dilapidated state. The proposal will bring about environmental enhancements through the additional tree planting, landscaped areas and provision of large areas of green space which have the potential to encourage biodiversity. In the instances where there are any adverse impacts this can be mitigated through conditions and/or obligations within the Section 106 legal agreement and therefore the proposal meets the environmental arm of sustainable development. The scheme will provide a significant biodiversity net gain on the site and deliver sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). These benefits hold significant weight within the balance.”

- 1.2.5 This development is referred to as the 'Appeal Scheme' throughout my evidence.
- 1.2.6 The application was accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) produced by Barton Willmore. (CD 2.38). I have reviewed the LVIA and consider the assessment of landscape and visual effects to be appropriate and accurate. In addition to this no questions or queries were raised by RBC or the landscape officer during the application on the submitted LVIA and as such it is considered that the assessment within the submitted LVIA is accepted by both parties.
- 1.2.7 I was asked to appear as a witness in July 2023 and was not involved in informing or developing the scheme layout for the application stage. As such I have visited the Site and provide my own assessment of the Appeal Scheme.
- 1.2.8 An appeal was lodged on behalf of Brandon Estates (the Appellant) on 12th May 2023 against RBC and the refusal of the planning application R18/0186.
- 1.2.9 I have reviewed the documentation submitted as part of the planning application, including the LVIA and Design and Access Statement, prepared by Barton Willmore and the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) prepared by FPCR. As such to familiarise myself with the Appeal Site and Appeal Scheme I visited the Appeal Site, immediate setting and local area in July 2023. I have undertaken my own landscape and visual baseline and review of effects set out within the submitted LVIA for the Appeal Scheme which I agree with and am satisfied that I can give evidence in support of the Appeal Scheme. All conclusions are my own and based on my own professional opinion and experience.
- 1.2.10 RBC RfR does not state any landscape and visual or Green Belt related matters.
- 1.2.11 This Proof of Evidence therefore addresses the Rule 6 party SoC produced by Save Coventry Speedway and Stox Campaign Group (SCSSC), dated 23 June 2023. The issues and concerns raised within the SoC at section 7 – bullet point 6 state that:

“While it can be argued that parts of the site are previously developed, the nature of the existing activities were confirmed as Green Belt when it was designated and remain as uses regarded as appropriate within the Green Belt. The Appeal proposals would amount to a very significant intensification of built development on the site leading to large scale urbanisation within the countryside.”

1.3 Scope of Proof of Evidence

- 1.3.1 The evidence that I have prepared and provide for this Inquiry in this Proof of Evidence is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution, the Landscape Institute, and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true professional opinions.
- 1.3.2 My Proof of Evidence should be read in conjunction with the plans included within the submitted LVIA and photographs included within my Illustrative Material: Document A : Appeal Scheme Site Appraisal and Site Context Photographs & Maps; and Appendix B : Appendices.

1.4 Methodology

- 1.4.1 I have considered the likely effects of the Appeal Scheme on landscape character and visual amenity, using a methodology based on the principles set out in 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment), 3rd edition, 2013.
- 1.4.2 The LVIA methodology used in the preparation of this Proof of Evidence is included within the submitted LVIA. The LVIA methodology identifies the value and susceptibility of townscape and visual receptors to determine their sensitivity to the type of development proposed. The likely magnitude of effect (or change) experienced by these receptors, as a result of the Appeal Scheme is then considered and combined with the receptor's sensitivity, to identify a significance of effect.

2 Appeal Site Context:

2.1 Location and Land Use

- 2.1.1 As demonstrated on the Figures set out within the submitted LVIA, the Appeal Site is located to the immediate east of Binley Woods, a suburban village and civil parish in Warwickshire, although the Appeal Site lies within the jurisdiction of Brandon and Bretford Parish Council. The Appeal Site lies to the north-east of Rugby Road (A428), between Gossett Lane to the north-west and north-east, and Speedway Lane to the south-east. It is bound by existing rear gardens of residential development to the south-west, fronting onto Rugby Road. Further development is found to the east off Gossett Lane and to the south-east along Speedway Lane, where there is low density two storey residential development.
- 2.1.2 The principal land uses beyond the immediate setting of the Appeal Site within the surrounding landscape comprise small settlements, large blocks of mature woodland and agricultural land. The closest settlements to the Appeal Site are Binley Woods approximately 200m to the west and Brandon approximately 600m to the south-east. Further west (approximately 1.8km from the Site) lies the outer suburbs of Coventry.

2.2 Topography and Drainage

- 2.2.1 The Appeal Site has an almost flat landform ranging from 97m AOD at its north-eastern boundary to a low point of 95m AOD at the western boundary, near to the rear of properties situated along the A428 Rugby Road. This slight change in level across the Appeal Site is barely discernible given the nature of the existing development which provides a strong visual barrier. The landform of the surrounding landscape undulates gently.

2.3 Settlement Pattern

- 2.3.1 Locally, the Appeal Site is surrounded by residential development to the immediate north, east and south and woodland to the north. The residential dwellings to the west and south of the Appeal Site form part of an area of almost continuous development extending south along Rugby Road and, as such, is perceived as part of Binley Woods. The residential houses at Speedway Lane to the south-east of the Site form the edge of the built environment at Binley Woods. From this edge, c. 300m of open fields separate the settlements of Binley Woods and Brandon.
- 2.3.2 The fields are generally demarcated by hedgerows with hedgerow trees and woodland blocks. A disused nursery is also located in the immediate vicinity of the Appeal Site, approximately 60m to the south-west on the south side of Rugby Road. Major transport infrastructure extends through this area with the M6 passing approximately 5km to the north of the Appeal Site, between Coventry in the west and Rugby to the east. The West Coast Main Line railway extends east-west approximately 1km to the south of the Site through the settlement of Brandon.

2.4 Vegetation

- 2.4.1 New Close / Birchley Wood, a mature Ancient & Semi-Natural Oak Woodland, is located immediately adjacent to the Appeal Site's north-western boundary. Locally some of the hedges have deteriorated but substantial woodland blocks and tree belts provide a well-wooded overall landscape character providing physical and visual containment to the Appeal Site.
- 2.4.2 Brandon Wood, Piles Coppice and All Oaks Wood lie approximately 1km to the south-west of the Appeal Site and occupy a substantial area to the south of the settlement of Binley Woods. These larger areas of woodland are also recognised as Green Infrastructure Assets within the

Rugby Local Plan. Smaller woodland blocks and copses are also common across the wider landscape, particularly to the south-west of the Appeal Site. Many of these are Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland or Ancient Replanted Woodland.

- 2.4.3 The Brandon & Brentford Neighbourhood Development Plan notes that Brandon Wood is a remnant of the ancient Forest of Arden. It further notes that *“the Parish sits within the ‘Princethorpe Woodlands Living Landscape’ which has been identified as an important landscape due to the cluster of ancient woodlands present and the opportunity to enhance landscape connectivity for wildlife by creating and enhancing woodland, hedgerows and other associated habitats such as ponds and grassland rides and verges.”*
- 2.4.4 Most of the vegetation on Site is limited to its boundaries and these features contribute largely to the tree cover on Site with dense woodland and trees to the northern and eastern edges. The other boundaries include a mixture of trees, hedgerow and understorey vegetation. There is one hedgerow within the Site, extending in a north-west / south-east direction from the northern part of the Site to the centre.

2.5 Designations

- 2.5.1 The Appeal Site is not covered by any national or local landscape designations.
- 2.5.2 The whole of the Appeal Site is located within the West Midlands Green Belt where it extends between Birmingham and Coventry.
- 2.5.3 Blocks of Ancient Woodland, both Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland and Replanted Ancient Woodland, are notable features scattered across the landscape. The closest areas of Ancient and Semi-natural woodland are New Close / Birchley Woods, which is located adjacent to the Appeal Site to the north-west, Brandon Little Wood is located approximately 300m to the west-southwest of the Appeal Site and a larger block of woodland, Brandon Woods Ancient Replanted Woodland, is located approximately 600m to the west-southwest of the Appeal Site.

2.6 Heritage Assets

- 2.6.1 There are no heritage assets (listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments etc) within the Appeal Site. In the local vicinity of the Appeal Site there are a number of listed buildings which are predominately of Grade II status, with the exception of the Grade I, ‘Church of St Margaret’, which is located 1.3km to the south of the Appeal Site. From a landscape and visual perspective no heritage assets are within the visual envelope of the Proposed Development, and as a result are not affected.

3 Published Character Assessment

3.1 National Landscape Character - NCA 96: Dunsmore and Feldon (2013)

3.1.1 At a National level, the Appeal Site is located within National Character Area (NCA) 96: Dunsmore and Feldon, a large elongated NCA which stretches from Coventry/Rugby to the north, past Royal Leamington Spa and Stratford.. The Appeal Site is located within the northern extents of this NCA. The key attributes of NCA 96 that have particular relevance to the Appeal Site and its surroundings are as follows:

- *“...areas of well-wooded character and ancient woodlands, especially in the north, ... these woodlands are linked with landscaped parklands and hedgerow trees...”*
- *Predominantly nucleated settlement pattern with a low density of isolated farmsteads and some field barns sitting within a landscape of piecemeal and planned enclosure of the open fields which extended from the villages over large parts of this area...; and*
- *The busy roads and large industrial units on the outskirts of the main settlements of Leamington Spa, Coventry and Rugby exert an urban influence on the surrounding area.”*

3.2 National Landscape Character: Opportunities and Guidance

3.2.1 The NCA profile also identifies landscape opportunities relevant to the Appeal Site and surrounding area, these include:

“Protect from damage and appropriately manage the area’s historic landscape features such as its ancient woodland (oak and birch in the north...);

Plan to accommodate development pressure from the expansion of Coventry, Rugby and Leamington by designing a network of multi-functional green infrastructure which respects the surrounding landscape character and which provides for links into the wider countryside and increased opportunities for people, nature and wildlife; and

Manage and conserve all ancient semi-natural and broadleaved woodland, taking appropriate opportunities to increase small-scale woodland coverage where this enhances landscape character and maintains wider, open views which are characteristic in parts of this area.”

3.2.2 Due to the extensive area of the NCA in relation to the Site, and the wide range of landscape characteristics found within it. It is considered that the Proposed Development would result in no effects on the character of the LCA as a whole and is not considered further within my evidence.

3.3 Regional Landscape Character

Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines (1993) (CD 15.5.47).

3.3.1 The Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines was published in November 1993. Whilst not a recent document, the details relating to the character of the areas are still relevant. This report divides the region into seven Regional Character Areas. The Appeal Site lies within the area ‘Dunsmore’ that is described as “well wooded and in places urbanised”.

- 3.3.2 'Dunsmore' has been sub-divided into three different landscape types. The Appeal Site lies within the landscape type 'Plateau Farmlands' which is described as *"a simple, often heavily wooded, farmed landscape, typically confined to low plateau summits, and characterised by sandy solid and remnant healthy vegetation"*.
- 3.3.3 However, it should be noted that in a separate landscape character analysis exercise carried out by RBC in 2006, the area of the Appeal Site was attributed to the landscape type 'Dunsmore Parklands' and removed from the 'Plateau Farmlands' landscape type. For the purposes of this LVIA we will assess the later attribution of 'Dunsmore Parklands', being a more recent analysis.
- 3.3.4 'Dunsmore Parklands' is described as *"an enclosed, gently rolling estate landscape with a strongly wooded character defined by woodland edges, parkland and belts of trees."*
- 3.3.5 The key characteristic features of 'Dunsmore Parklands' that are relevant to the Appeal Site and its surroundings are:
- *"Middle distance views enclosed by woodland edges.*
 - *Belts of mature trees associated with estateland...*
 - *Mature hedgerow and roadside oaks."*
- 3.3.6 Landscape strategies and guidelines for the 'Dunsmore Parklands' that are relevant to the Appeal Site are:

General guidelines

- *"Conserve the rural character of villages by retaining existing features and local patterns in all development schemes.*
- *Protect and enhance the internal open space and irregular outline of village settlements.*
- *Landscape assessment should be a major consideration at the inception of all good schemes"*

Dunsmore Parklands

- *Maintain and enhance the enclosed wooded character of the landscape.*
- *Species selection along woodland edges should favour native tree and shrubs*
- *Identify opportunities to enhance tree cover through large scale woodland planting.*
- *Conserve and restore all primary hedgelines and manage them more positively as landscape features.*

3.4 Local Landscape Character

Landscape Assessment of the Borough of Rugby - Sensitivity and Condition Study (2006) (CD 8.6).

- 3.4.1 The Appeal Site is located within a Local Development Unit (LDU) which has been given a moderate rating on the fragility index indicating landscapes *"that are variable in character and/or more recent in origin are likely to have a greater (although not unlimited) capacity to accommodate change."*

- 3.4.2 The Appeal Site was also rated moderate in terms of visual sensitivity and noted that this rating had *“some potential to mitigate impact through tree and/or woodland planting”*.
- 3.4.3 As a result of a combination of moderate rating to landscape sensitivity and visual sensitivity, the LDU in which the Appeal Site is located, has been given a rating of moderate Overall sensitivity.
- 3.4.4 The assessment identifies the Appeal Site as being within the Dunsmore Parklands Landscape Character Type (LCT); a summary of the relevant observations are as follows:

“Dunsmore Parklands is a gently rolling estate landscape with a well-wooded character, defined by woodland edges, parkland and belts of trees. Wooded streamlines and mature hedgerow and roadside trees, (typically oak), reinforce this impression by creating a sequence of linked wooded spaces. Large blocks of woodland and smaller coverts help to create a sense of scale and enclosure in an otherwise intensively farmed landscape. Field pattern is large but poorly defined, and in places absent altogether, allowing middle distant views to wooded skylines.”

- 3.4.5 The overall sensitivity is classified as moderate as a result of both cultural (time depth) and ecological factors – primarily ancient woodlands.

3.5 Rugby Borough Council Landscape Sensitivity Study (2016) (CD 8.7).

- 3.5.1 Warwickshire County Council Landscape Architects were appointed by RBC to undertake a landscape sensitivity assessment of the landscape adjoining seven settlements within the borough: Binley Woods, Brinklow, Long Lawford, Ryton-On-Dunsmore, Stretton-On-Dunsmore, Wolston and Wolvey.
- 3.5.2 As shown on Figure 12: Landscape sensitivity to housing development at Binley Woods, within the submitted LVIA, the Appeal Site is located within Land Cover Parcel (LCP) BR_01 but the parcel has been further divided into areas of landscape sensitivity to housing development. Much of the central portion of the Appeal Site is covered by a ‘Medium’ sensitivity rating, whilst the remainder of the Appeal Site is considered to be of a ‘High-Medium’ sensitivity.
- 3.5.3 A Medium Sensitivity rating is defined as a *“Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the zone are susceptible to change and / or its intrinsic values are moderate but the zone has some potential to accommodate the relevant type of development in some situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are intermediate.”*
- 3.5.4 A High-Medium Sensitivity rating is defined as a *“Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the zone are vulnerable to change and / or its intrinsic values are medium-high and the zone can accommodate the relevant type of development only in limited situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are low.”*
- 3.5.5 A site description for Zone BR_01 is as follows:

“The zone forms part of the urban area to the periphery of Binley Woods and includes a derelict garden nursery plot to the south of the Rugby Road and a row of roadside properties and Coventry Stadium to the north. Further to the north are a small number of individual properties set in large gardens and a farm accessed from Speedway Lane. Roadside hedgerows adjacent to the derelict garden nursery include ornamental species, otherwise hedgerows are predominantly thorn and outgrown with scattered hedge trees. Other trees are apparent, with a thin mixed tree belt to the frontage of the stadium that continues along the lane, and a wooded

backdrop to the stadium. Trees within the adjacent Brandon Hall gardens are visible from this zone, as are nearby blocks of ancient woodland.”

- 3.5.6 As part for Rugby Borough Councils Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (CD 8.10). published in 2015, two potential allocations (S14/051 and S14/050) were identified on the Site in December 2015.

- 3.5.7 Zone BR_01 potential for housing development is described/assessed as follows:

“As this zone is already partially developed there is potential for some additional development, but this should extend no further east than the stadium.

Therefore application site S14/051 could be developed provided that the existing roadside vegetation to Speedway Lane and Gossett Lane, and around the perimeter of the stadium, is retained and strengthened. It is essential that a landscape buffer of a minimum of 30m is provided between the edge of the ancient woodland and any new development. The southern end of Twelve O’Clock ride (the north / south ride that passes through New Close Wood and The Grove – see Figure 2) can be accessed from Gossett Lane and this historic route should be respected and remain accessible to the public.

Application site S14/050 could be partially developed provided that the existing trees along Gossett Lane are retained in order to preserve the setting to the ancient woodland and the Twelve O’Clock ride. A landscape buffer of minimum 30m width should be provided adjacent to the ancient woodland. The row of properties on the Rugby Road appears to be a standalone group and read as much a part of Binley Woods as Brandon. In order to retain this separation the mature trees along Rugby Road should be retained and strengthened and any development should be significantly set back from the Rugby Road.”

- 3.5.8 Policy suggestions for Zone BR_01 are to:

“Retain existing trees along Gossett Lane in order to preserve the setting to the ancient woodland and the Twelve O’Clock ride. Retain existing roadside vegetation to Speedway Lane, and around the perimeter of the stadium.”

- 3.5.9 Views into the zone are identified as being very limited with a low level of intervisibility, with a visual relationship with the settlement, key views within the zone are described as:

“...urban in character, comprising housing, the Coventry stadium, the A428 and a run-down disused plant nursery.”

- 3.5.10 Traffic has been identified as the primary noise source within the zone.

- 3.5.11 The study also notes in terms of functional relationship *“the zone forms part of the urban area to the periphery of Binley Woods”* and in terms of visual relationship the study states that *“the zone relates visually to the settlement.”*

4 Summary of Relevant PLanning Policy

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 I note below the key policies of relevance to consideration of landscape, visual and Green Belt matters:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) (CD 8.1) Section 12, in relation to design, notably paragraph 130 in relation to key design objectives.
- NPPF Section 13, in relation to Green Belt, noting in particular paragraphs 137 and 138 in terms of the aim and purposes of Green Belt; paragraph 145, in respect of the positive use and quality of the Green Belt; Para 147, in respect of inappropriate development in the Green Belt; para 149 (g) in respect to limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land.
- NPPF Section 15, in relation to the Natural Environment, notably paragraph 174b.
- Rugby Borough Council Local Plan (2019) (CD 8.2), Policy GP2: Settlement Hierarchy; Policy GP3: Previously Developed Land and Conversions; Policy NE1: Protecting Designated Biodiversity and Geodiversity Assets; Policy NE2: Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure; Policy NE3: Landscape Protection and Enhancement; Policy SDC1: Sustainable Design; and Policy SDC2: Landscaping;
- Brandon & Bretford Neighbourhood Development Plan to 2031 (January 2019) Policy H2 - Development of Brownfield Land; Policy CON 2 – Environmental Heritage Assets; Policy BNE 1 – Respecting the Local Character; Policy BNE 2 – Design Principles; and Policy BNE 6 – Valued Rural Character and Setting

4.1.2 Details of the Planning Policies relevant to landscape and visual matters are contained within my Appendix 1.

5 Appeal Site and Visual Appraisal

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 The Appeal Site which is not publicly accessible comprises 10.86 hectares (ha) of previously developed land – which is accepted and noted within the officers report at Para 19.2 (p66). The existing development consists of a racetrack, spectator stands and outbuildings with substantial areas of hardstanding in connection with the former Brandon Stadium. The existing spectator stands are the most notable feature within the Appeal Site, these are linear monolithic features with a notable scale, massing, and height of approximately 11.5m.
- 5.1.2 The existing buildings within the Appeal Site are utilitarian, lacking in human interest with large blank façades and in a dilapidated and deteriorating condition, having been disused for a number of years and creating a detracting influence on the site and immediate area.
- 5.1.3 The developed nature of the Appeal Site, enclosed boundaries, and existing residential development within the immediate setting result in the Appeal Site having a much closer relationship with the existing settlement edge, rather than being part of the more rural countryside located beyond the woodland to the north.
- 5.1.4 The most notable vegetation within the Appeal Site is limited to its boundaries with the extensive areas of hardstanding (formerly car parking areas). There is some grassland growth within the western part of the appeal Site. However, the coverage experienced is dependent on the time of year. A hedgerow extends south from the most northern point of the Appeal Site, where it ends roughly within the centre of the Appeal Site.
- 5.1.5 Mature woodland forms the north-western boundary of the Appeal Site and a portion of this woodland extends into the Site boundary. Species recorded along the north-western boundary include English Oak, Hybrid Black Poplar, White Willow and Ash. This woodland is an extension of New Close Wood Ancient and Semi Natural Woodland, however the area of woodland within the Appeal Site is not designated as an Ancient Woodland, although it is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). This woodland is marked as Category B as a whole, with a few trees within it assessed as Category A.
- 5.1.6 The Appeal Site features and character are illustrated by Appeal Site Appraisal Photographs (ASAP) A to L.
- 5.1.7 *Site Appraisal Photograph A - D* are taken from within the western part of the Appeal Site. The foreground of the view is occupied by a substantial area of hardstanding which is the former car parking area associated with the speedway stadium. As set out above, this area is subject to ingress of grass and scrub-like vegetation experienced during the summer months. However, in the winter this grassland would die back to show the full extent of hardstanding present. These photographs illustrate the level of containment the mature Appeal site boundary vegetation provides, with dense mature woodland to the north of the Appeal Site - ASAP A, the domestic rear gardens of properties along the A428 Rugby Road – ASAP A and B, along with semi-mature hedgerow trees and hedgerow vegetation. The existing stadium buildings with large blank facades and industrial appearance, due to the scale and massing are seen as an anomaly in this area. This existing built form creates prominent detracting features that restricts views over the eastern part of the Appeal Site.
- 5.1.8 *Site Appraisal Photograph E – L* are taken from within the existing stadium that occupies the eastern part of the Appeal Site. The ASAP illustrate the existing degraded built form, which has been subject to vandalism and graffiti – ASAP E - J. The main western stand provides a large blank façade with its over scale, massing and size forming a monolithic feature within the Appeal Site that heavily restricts visual permeability across the Appeal Site – ASAP H. The southern boundary of the Appeal Site is currently enclosed by solid metal fencing with no visual permeability into the Appeal Site from Speedway Lane. The area of land between the

main stadium building is hard surfaced, this space was previously used as parking for the racers – ASAP I – K with a further area of parking located to the north as demonstrated by ASAP 29.

5.2 The Visual Baseline

- 5.2.1 The visual appraisal fieldwork as part of the submitted LVIA was carried out in June 2017 and 2021, the assessment viewpoints were agreed through liaison with the RBC during the pre-application process. The photography has been updated in July 2023 to demonstrate the most up to date baseline situation. The viewpoints are considered representative of a range of locations and receptors - illustrated on MDC Figure 1. There are no middle or long distance views of the Appeal Site from the surrounding landscape as a result of a combination of intervening topographical variation and vegetation, including tree belts and woodland blocks. Wireline Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs) were also prepared to demonstrate the impact of proposed built form on the Appeal Site from the agreed views and these can be found within Appendix 5 of the Submitted LVIA. These photographs are in line with the guidance as set out in LI Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/19 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals'.
- 5.2.2 Views of the Appeal Site are restricted to a limited number of locations from the immediate Appeal Site boundary as demonstrated by Appeal Site Context Photographs (ASCP) 1-7. Views from the west are from the A428 Rugby Road, from which access to the Appeal Site is currently taken. At present views into and over the Appeal Site are curtailed and restricted to the entrance which is formed of boarded gates – ASCP 1. Views to the south are possible from Speedway Lane and associated PRoW where there are breaks in the southern Appeal Site boundary vegetation – ASCP 3 and 4. However, as noted this is only from along the western section as the eastern section is entirely enclosed by metal fencing – ASCP 5. Views to the north and east are limited to short sections of the adjacent PRoW and a single residential property off Gossett Lane ASCP – 6 and 7.

5.3 Summary of Landscape and Visual Baseline

- 5.3.1 The key landscape and visual baseline characteristics that have been distilled from Section 2 and 3 are summarised below:
- The Appeal Site has an almost flat landform ranging from 97m AOD at its north-eastern boundary to a low point of 95m AOD
 - The Appeal Site is surrounded by residential development to the immediate north, east and south and woodland to the north-west.
 - No PRoWs are within the Appeal Site and as such is not publicly accessible.
 - Warwickshire Centenary Way, a Long Distance Walk, extends along the A428 / Rugby Road to the south-west of the Site. There are a number of PRoWs running parallel with the northern, eastern and southern Site boundaries.
 - New Close / Birchley Wood, a mature ancient & semi-natural oak woodland, is located immediately adjacent to the Appeal Site's north-western boundary providing physical and visual containment.
 - The Appeal Site is located within the West Midlands Green Belt, between Birmingham and Coventry.
 - At a national level, the Appeal Site lies within NCA 96: Dunsmore and Feldon which is noted for areas of well-wooded character.

- At a local level, the Appeal Site lies within LCT 'Dunsmore Parklands' which is also noted for its well-wooded character which provides a sense of enclosure and views to wooded skylines.
- The Appeal Site is a previously developed brownfield site (as acknowledged also by the LPA) which contains large linear monolithic spectator stands, numerous outbuildings and expansive areas of hardstanding in connection with the recent historic use of the Brandon Stadium Speedway.
- The Appeal Site forms a detracting void in the landscape with the dilapidated stadium and disused former activities forming a neglected and degraded character.
- The Appeal Site has strong well-defined boundary features that provides visual enclosure and physical containment from the immediate, local and wider setting.
- The location of the Appeal Site on low lying generally flat land, in combination with a limited surrounding topographical variation and extensive woodland cover and mature vegetation in the wider landscape, together with the surrounding built forms results in a very localised and limited visual envelope with views obtained of the Appeal Site from publicly accessible areas being extremely limited.
- As such views are restricted to a limited number of close range views from short sections of local roads including Speedway Lane adjacent to the south-eastern boundary and the A428 / Rugby Road to the south-west; and a single residential property along the PRow to the north-east; and PRow adjacent to the Appeal Site boundaries.

6 Contribution of appeal site to Green Belt purposes

6.1 Joint Green Belt Study (2015) (CD 8.9).

- 6.1.1 The Appeal Site is identified within the local authority boundary of Rugby. The Appeal Site is contained within Broad Area 2. The description of Broad area 2 states that it *“lies between Coventry to the west and Rugby to the east. The area contains the Registered Park and Garden of Coombe Abbey, including the Grade I listed Coombe Abbey and SSSIs Coombe Pool and Brandon Marsh.”*

6.2 Barton Willmore Green Belt Review of the Appeal Site

- 6.2.1 A Green Belt Review was undertaken within the submitted LVIA to assesses the contribution of the Site against the purposes of the Green Belt, at a finer grain than the Council assessment. The BW Green Belt review uses the published Green Belt review criteria as presented within the 2015 Joint Green Belt Study. This methodology has been reproduced within Appendix 1 of the LVIA.
- 6.2.2 The reasons stated for the considerable contribution of the Broad Area to the purposes of the Green Belt within the Joint Green Belt Study are not reflective of the Appeal Site's contribution to the Green Belt. A summary of the analysis from the LVIA is provided below, which I agree with. However, rather than giving consideration to the Green Belt boundary as a purely planning status exercise I have looked at it from an evaluative perspective having regard to features and characteristics in and around the Appeal Site, and how the Appeal Site is experienced on the ground. :
- The Site occupies a very small percentage of the total Broad Area and is already separate from both Coventry and Rugby. It lies at the edge of Binley Woods and does not contribute to the sprawl or the merging of the two settlements of Rugby and Coventry.
 - Furthermore, the Study states that the Broad Area safeguards the countryside in particular the River Avon flood plain. The Site is Previously Developed brownfield Land (PDL) and is not considered to be part of the open countryside given the existing scale of development that exists within the Appeal Site. The Site also lies outside the River Avon flood plain. It is considered as a consequence of these facts that the re-development of this Site will not harm the purposes of Green Belt in relation to safeguarding the countryside.
 - The Site is visually contained due to its topography and surrounded by vegetation blocks and does not afford views towards the historic core of either Rugby or Coventry. As such the Site does not contribute towards preserving the setting and character of historic towns.
 - The Site would support the re-development of brownfield land and contributes positively towards the purpose of assisting regeneration and encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land in the West Midlands.

6.3 Green Belt Review Summary and Conclusions

- 6.3.1 I have reviewed the Green Belt assessment carried out within the submitted LVIA and agree with the findings. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. However, as noted in Table 1 within the LVIA – which is included within my Appendix 2 - the Appeal Site is developed and comprises previously developed land and can be considered to be appropriately defined as PDL within Annex 2: Glossary of the NPPF. The Appeal Site contains and comprises the Coventry Stadium,

associated car park, infrastructure and access roads and has been assessed to provide no contribution to the Green Belt purposes as set out within NPPF.

- 6.3.2 The Appeal Site is located in an area that is surrounded by existing development to the east, west and south. In particular, the built environment to the south and west form part of the perceived settlement extent of Binley Woods with the existing development along the A428 and Speedway Lane. The Appeal Site is contained by built form and it is considered to be part of Binley Woods and would not result in unrestricted sprawl.
- 6.3.3 The Appeal Site is well contained in views from the local and wider landscape as a result of the local landform alongside the substantial mature vegetation structure to the Appeal Site boundaries and within the immediate setting. New Close / Birchley Wood along the north-western boundary and mature vegetation along the eastern, western and southern boundaries provide robust, defensible and permanent boundaries to the Green Belt. Its boundaries are well defined by components that are physical, clear, easily recognisable, and permanent.
- 6.3.4 The NPPF states that the key characteristics of the Green Belt are *"their openness and their permanence"*. The Appeal Site is not considered to be 'open' in policy terms due to the fact that the Appeal Site is previously developed land, comprising monolithic spectator stands, numerous outbuildings and expansive areas of hard standing. It is also physically contained on all sides by built form and existing substantial vegetation. These elements both individually and in combination have the effect of limiting the Appeal Sites openness particularly when viewed from outwith the Appeal Site.
- 6.3.5 The NPPF further notes in Para 149 (g) that *"limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land"* would be appropriate if it does *"not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority"*. As stated before, the Site is not considered to be 'open' and the redevelopment would assist in consolidating and enhancing the Appeal Site.
- 6.3.6 The proposed redevelopment of the Site for residential use complies with purpose five of the National Green Belt policy; 'To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land'. The proposed development also provides provision for the inclusion of a new 3G ATP pitch and sports pavilion, provides public access that doesn't currently exist, and would retain and enhance the landscape, visual amenity and biodiversity of the Appeal Site, as well as improve damaged and derelict land, thereby promoting the principles of enhancing the beneficial use of the land as outlined within Paragraph 145 of the NPPF.

7 Proposed Development and Landscape Strategy

7.1 Summary

- 7.1.1 In summary, the Proposed Development includes the demolition of existing buildings and outline planning application (with matters of access, layout, scale, and appearance included) for residential development of 124 dwellings (Use Class C3) including means of access into the site from the Rugby Road, provision of open space and associated infrastructure and provision of sports pitch, erection of pavilion and formation of associated car park (details to be confirmed).

7.2 Built Form

- 7.2.1 A key inherent mitigation measure of the Proposed Development includes the consideration of the scale and height of the residential units. The built form would be similar in scale and height to the residential units in the immediate vicinity of the Appeal Site, to provide a sense of coherence in the landscape with the residential units will be two storeys (maximum 10m ridge height). As a result, the proposed development is not uncharacteristic of the locality.
- 7.2.2 The considered design response that has been informed by the submitted LVIA means that the proposed residential built form will be located largely within the eastern extent of the Appeal Site, in and around the location of the existing stadium footprint. Built form will also be set back from the boundaries, to allow active frontages and green buffer to provide a sympathetic and sensitive edge to the to the Appeal Site that will provide an attractive and positive interface between the proposed built form within the Appeal Site and the adjacent existing properties within the immediate vicinity. Furthermore, the residential units have been set back from Rugby Road to maintain the setting of the road, this buffer will limit the perception of development along this route.

7.3 3G ATP sports pitch and associated car park and pavilion

- 7.3.1 A 3G ATP sports pitch will be located at the western part of the Appeal Site. The pitch will be set back 30m from New Close Wood and the existing residential properties off the A428, within which new tree and woodland planting is proposed to provide a sympathetic and characteristic buffer, in line with RBC's Landscape Sensitivity Study.
- 7.3.2 The car park area will be set back from Gossett Lane but in close proximity to the back of the houses along Rugby Road. Planting between the car park and the rear edge of the back gardens of the houses will be provided to soften and filter views of the car park and the sports pitch further north. An overspill car park will be present, south of Coombe Cottage and Carma. This will be a temporary car parking area that will be made of reinforced grass, thereby retaining a sense of open space.
- 7.3.3 Whilst the specific details of the pavilion are reserved for consideration at a later date, it is envisaged that this will take the form of a single storey building (up to 5m high) with a green roof and be located to the south-east of the pitch, in between the pedestrian entrance and vehicular entrance to the Proposed Development. This pavilion will be set into the mounding of the landscape, to minimise visual intrusion. As part of the inherent mitigation measures, a new planted bund will be provided along the north-eastern side of the pitch to assist in screening and also to provide a wooded character to help assimilate the Proposed Development into the wider landscape.

7.4 Open Space

- 7.4.1 The Proposed Development will be embedded within a substantial area of green infrastructure. Development will be set back from the Appeal Site boundaries to provide a

green collar around the proposed development that acts as a buffer to the existing adjacent properties and provides a sympathetic and characteristic transition between the built local and wider countryside to the north and south-east.

- 7.4.2 The Landscape proposals as shown on Figure 3: Illustrative Landscape Masterplan demonstrate the retention of almost all vegetation features within the Site, with the exception of a few Category C trees in the south-western boundary - removed to provide access to the proposed development. The southern section of the central hedgerow will be lost (approximately 112m), to facilitate SuDS and movement within the Public Open Space.
- 7.4.3 A play area will be provided within the open space, close to the proposed residential units and main access with a natural play design encouraged to reflect the outlying countryside character. Tree planting along the streets and within the wider public open space will be provided, to reinforce the wooded character of the area.
- 7.4.4 Overall, the Appeal Site wide green infrastructure will not only assist in minimising the visual influence of the built form but will improve the sense of openness as the redevelopment will remove the monolithic built form of the disused stadium that will be replaced with built form that is of a domestic scale that reflects more appropriately the local characteristic built form within the vicinity of the Appeal Site.
- 7.4.5 The public open space proposed within the Appeal Scheme will retain, enhance and reinforce the landscape structure that will retain the character of the local area and patterns of development. The Appeal Scheme has been informed by the findings of the submitted LVIA with the existing woodland maintained, strengthened and enhanced with additional woodland planting to ensure the existing level of enclosure and wooded character is retained, as set out within the strategies and guidelines for the Dunsmore Parklands LCT.
- 7.4.6 The Appeal Scheme would result in there being a reduction in developable area, the large linear monolithic buildings within the Appeal Site will be removed and replaced with development that is smaller in mass and of a more appropriate domestic scale to its location. As such, it is considered that the Appeal Scheme will overall improve the openness of the Green Belt.

8 Response to Rule 6 Party

8.1 Overview

8.1.1 The Rule 6 party SoC produced by SCS&SCG, dated 28 June 2023, raises issues and concerns within their SoC, the two main points are:

- i. The scale of previously developed land;
- ii. The Appeal proposals would amount to a very significant intensification of built development on the site leading to large scale urbanisation within the countryside.

8.2 The scale of previously developed land;

8.2.1 The officers report to committee states at paragraph 19.2 *"in principle the development of housing on this site is acceptable due to the site being previously developed land"*.

8.2.2 Given that the landscape character and visual amenity experienced of the Appeal Site is defined by the existing Coventry Stadium which occupies the eastern part of the Appeal Site, with the western part taken up by hardstanding associated with car parking for the venue, it is considered that the Appeal Site as a whole is developed.

8.2.3 It is considered that the Site is previously developed and that the Appeal Scheme would result in a smaller development footprint.

8.2.4 It is identified as a matter of Common Ground that the LPA also consider that the proposed development is compliant with paragraph 149 of the NPPF and Policy H2 of the Brandon and Bretford Neighbourhood Plan. It is agreed as set out at paragraph 5.8 of the Committee Report that the proposed development would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than currently exists.

8.3 The Appeal proposals would amount to a very significant intensification of built development on the site leading to large scale urbanisation within the countryside.

8.3.1 In addition to the purposes of the Green Belt, an essential characteristic of the Green Belt as set out in NPPF paragraph 137, is its openness. Openness can be considered on a range of bases, including by definition (absence of built development in principle); spatially/volumetrically (how much openness is taken up by built development); or in terms of a visual aspect (how the openness or its loss is perceived visually).

8.3.2 When considering change to openness it can be both positive or negative or indeed neutral in its resulting effect. There is a sound basis for reaching the conclusion that the Appeal Scheme would provide no harm to openness and that there would be a collective positive outcome or at the very least no less than neutral outcome as a result of the Proposed Development.

8.3.3 In terms of harm to this characteristic, inevitably, there would be a change to the openness from the Proposed Development by definition. The large linear monolithic buildings within the Appeal Site will be removed and replaced with development that is smaller in mass and of a more domestic scale and which is more appropriate to its context. As stated at Para 19.2 within the officers report to the committee it is considered that *"The site is however within the Green Belt but the proposed residential development would not result in an increase in the developed area of the site and will introduce development of a smaller scale and further open space, soft landscaping, footpaths and cycle paths linking to the existing footpaths surrounding the site. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than currently exists therefore the*

proposal complies with paragraph 149 of the NPPF". It is considered that the Appeal Scheme will reflect the existing character of the existing development within the immediate and local vicinity.

- 8.3.4 In addition to this when considering the spatial qualities, a comparison of the coverage of the existing stadium (only) that includes the large scale built form, outbuildings and areas of hardstanding that lie within the domain of the main stadium (fenced) against the proposed developable area of the Appeal Scheme there is actually a reduction in the overall development footprint – see my Figure 2 – Comparative Coverage Plan. The existing developed area constitutes 4.35ha, or 40.05% of the Appeal Site is currently occupied by built form, infrastructure and hardstanding of the existing Coventry stadium. In contrast to that the Appeal Scheme would result in a reduction in developable area, with only 4.07ha or 37.48% of the Appeal Site proposed for development. This results in a greater proportion of the Appeal Site comprising public open space. This will remove the expansive area of hardstanding of the former car parking that takes up the majority of the western part of the Appeal Site.
- 8.3.5 The proposed built form will be redistributed over the Appeal Site with a greater area of open space to the north with a limited section of housing within the south-eastern part. The Appeal Scheme will have a more organic form and connection with the proposed landscaping and 3G sports pitch that will include a pavilion and associated car parking.
- 8.3.6 The proposed residential development will not result in an increase in the developed area within the Appeal Site, introducing residential development of a smaller scale that is characteristic of the local setting to the east, south and west. In addition to this the proposed open space and landscape structural planting within which will be a network of footpaths and cycleways that will provide enhanced connectivity and permeability to the existing PRoW network and roads within the vicinity.
- 8.3.7 The NPPF allows for the redevelopment of previously developed sites which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. It is considered that the proposed development would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than currently exists and that the proposal complies with paragraph 149 (G) of the NPPF.
- 8.3.8 The submitted LVIA (CD 2.38) undertook a Green Belt Review where it considered the openness of the Appeal Site. The review considered that the Appeal Site to be developed, containing numerous urbanising features across the Appeal Site. These existing features have an existing effect on the perception of visual openness. The existing built form, structures and boundary fencing within and adjacent to the Appeal Site provide a strong degree of enclosure, evident to along all boundaries - see Appeal Site Context Photographs 1-7.
- 8.3.9 The visual openness of the Appeal Site experienced from adjoining residential properties is heavily restricted by the robust Appeal Site boundary vegetation and local vegetation framework. This results in limiting the overall appreciation of the size and scale of the Appeal Site from the immediate setting, as identified in published character assessments. The Proposed Development would reinforce these edges with robust new planting as part of the substantial site wide green infrastructure framework enhancing the landscape, visual amenity and biodiversity in line with paragraph 145 of the NPPF.
- 8.3.10 Regarding long term Green Belt boundaries, I consider that the proposed landscape strategy will enhance the existing vegetated edges of the Appeal Site that are themselves for the majority defined by roads or lanes. This would provide more robust long term Green Belt boundaries, reflecting considerations set out in published character assessments and guidance. Furthermore, the beneficial aspects of the Appeal Scheme that include a substantial area of public open space, will comprise landscape structural planting which accords with the published landscape character assessment strategies and guidance. In addition to this there will be a network of footpaths and cycleway that will provide an increased level of connectivity and permeability across the Appeal Site and to the immediate and local PRoW network.

I consider that the principal receptors that experience visual openness would be users of the PRow, roads / lanes and residents adjacent to the Appeal Site boundary only. At present there is limited appreciation of the Appeal Site from these locations and when viewed is seen as an area of derelict land and dilapidated development. The overall experience of users of these routes and local residents will be enhanced as a result of the betterment provided by the proposed redevelopment of the Appeal Site and the benefits of the enhanced public open space. Although the Proposed Development would change the visual experience, consideration has been given in the design process to maintaining a perception of visual openness.

- 8.3.11 Accounting for this range of considerations I consider that overall change to the openness characteristic of the Green Belt would be highly localised in extent and partly mitigated through a sensitive design approach.
- 8.3.12 Reflecting paragraph 145 of the NPPF, I have considered the potential for enhancement of access to, functionality of and quality of the landscape remaining within the Green Belt.
- 8.3.13 As part of Green and Blue Infrastructure totalling approximately 6.79ha or approximately 62.52% of the Appeal Site, the Proposed Development offers the potential for the creation of green and blue infrastructure within this brownfield site. The proposals will deliver a multitude of visually interesting and locally distinctive open spaces, to include play area, sports pitch, footpath / cycleways and informal play which would remain within the Green Belt. This is a notable enhancement in the context of the existing dilapidated and degraded brownfield land and comply with the guidance set out within the published character assessments.
- 8.3.14 Consideration of the wider benefits of the Proposed Development are considered further in the evidence of Mr Gareth Hooper.

8.4 Conclusion in relation to very significant intensification of built development on the site leading to large scale urbanisation within the countryside.

- 8.4.1 In conclusion, both the submitted LVIA and officers report to the committee consider there to be no harm to the 5 purposes of the Green Belt. The Appeal Scheme would result in there being a reduction in developable area, the large linear monolithic buildings within the Appeal Site will be removed and replaced with development that is smaller in mass and of a more appropriate domestic scale to its location. It is considered that the Appeal Scheme will reflect the existing character of the existing development within the immediate and local vicinity.
- 8.4.2 It is considered that the Appeal Scheme would clearly **not** result in a very significant intensification of built development and **nor** would it result in large scale urbanisation within the countryside. In addition to this the potential effects arising from the Appeal scheme will be highly localised and partly mitigated by a sensitive design approach. I furthermore note the potential for significant benefits arising from the enhanced access to and quality of land remaining within the Green Belt.

9 Summary and Conclusion

9.1 Summary

- 9.1.1 The Appeal Site lies to the north-east of Rugby Road (A428), between Gossett Lane to the north-west and north-east, and Speedway Lane to the south-east. It is bound by existing rear gardens of residential development to the south-west, fronting onto Rugby Road. Further development is found to the east off Gossett Lane and to the south-east along Speedway Lane, where there is low density two storey residential development.
- 9.1.2 Locally, the Appeal Site is surrounded by residential development to the immediate north, east and south and woodland to the north. The residential dwellings to the west and south of the Appeal Site form part of an area of almost continuous development extending south along Rugby Road and, as such, is perceived as part of Binley Woods. The residential houses at Speedway Lane to the south-east of the Site form the edge of the built environment at Binley Woods.
- 9.1.3 The Appeal Site which is not publicly accessible comprises 10.86 hectares (ha) of previously developed land – which is accepted and noted within the officers report at Para 19.2 (p66). The existing development consists of a racetrack, spectator stands and outbuildings with substantial areas of hardstanding in connection with the former Brandon Stadium. The existing spectator stands are the most notable feature within the Appeal Site, these are linear monolithic features with a notable scale, massing, and height of approximately 11.5m.
- 9.1.4 The existing buildings within the Appeal Site are utilitarian, lacking in human interest with large blank façades and in a dilapidated and deteriorating condition, having been disused for a number of years and creating a detracting influence on the site and immediate area.
- 9.1.5 The developed nature of the Appeal Site, enclosed boundaries, and existing residential development within the immediate setting result in the Appeal Site having a much closer relationship with the existing settlement edge, rather than being part of the more rural countryside located beyond the woodland to the north.
- 9.1.6 Views of the Appeal Site are restricted to a limited number of locations from the immediate Appeal Site boundary as demonstrated by Appeal Site Context Photographs (ASCP) 1-7. Views from the west are from the A428 Rugby Road, from which access to the Appeal Site is currently taken. At present views into and over the Appeal Site are curtailed and restricted to the entrance which is formed of boarded gates – ASCP 1. Views to the south are possible from Speedway Lane and associated PRow where there are breaks in the southern Appeal Site boundary vegetation – ASCP 3 and 4. However, as noted this is only from along the western section as the eastern section is entirely enclosed by metal fencing – ASCP 5. Views to the north and east are limited to short sections of the adjacent PRow and a single residential property off Gossett Lane ASCP – 6 and 7.
- 9.1.7 The key landscape and visual baseline characteristics comprise the following:
- The Appeal Site has an almost flat landform ranging from 97m AOD at its north-eastern boundary to a low point of 95m AOD
 - The Appeal Site is surrounded by residential development to the immediate north, east and south and woodland to the north-west.
 - No PRows are within the Appeal Site and as such is not publicly accessible.
 - Warwickshire Centenary Way, a Long Distance Walk, extends along the A428 / Rugby Road to the south-west of the Site. There are a number of PRows running parallel with the northern, eastern and southern Site boundaries.

- New Close / Birchley Wood, a mature ancient & semi-natural oak woodland, is located immediately adjacent to the Appeal Site's north-western boundary providing physical and visual containment.
 - The Appeal Site is located within the West Midlands Green Belt, between Birmingham and Coventry.
 - At a national level, the Appeal Site lies within NCA 96: Dunsmore and Feldon which is noted for areas of well-wooded character.
 - At a local level, the Appeal Site lies within LCT 'Dunsmore Parklands' which is also noted for its well-wooded character which provides a sense of enclosure and views to wooded skylines.
 - The Appeal Site is a previously developed brownfield site (as acknowledged also by the LPA) which contains large linear monolithic spectator stands, numerous outbuildings and expansive areas of hardstanding in connection with the recent historic use of the Brandon Stadium Speedway.
 - The Appeal Site forms a detracting component in the landscape with the dilapidated stadium and disused former activities forming a neglected and degraded character.
 - The Appeal Site has strong well-defined boundary features that provides visual enclosure and physical containment from the immediate, local and wider setting.
 - The location of the Appeal Site on low lying generally flat land, in combination with a limited surrounding topographical variation and extensive woodland cover and mature vegetation in the wider landscape, together with the surrounding built forms results in a very localised and limited visual envelope with views obtained of the Appeal Site from publicly accessible areas being extremely limited.
 - As such views are restricted to a limited number of close range views from short sections of local roads including Speedway Lane adjacent to the south-eastern boundary and the A428 / Rugby Road to the south-west; and a single residential property along the PRoW to the north-east; and PRoW adjacent to the Appeal Site boundaries.
- 9.1.8 A key inherent mitigation measure of the Proposed Development includes the consideration of the scale and height of the residential units. The built form would be similar in scale and height to the residential units in the immediate vicinity of the Appeal Site, to provide a sense of coherence in the landscape with the residential units being two storeys (maximum 10m ridge height). As a result, the proposed development is not uncharacteristic of the locality.
- 9.1.9 The residential built form will be located largely within the eastern extent of the Appeal Site, in and around the existing location of the existing stadium footprint. Built form will also be set back from the boundaries, to allow green frontages and provide a breathing space between the proposed built form and existing properties near the Appeal Site. The residential units have been set back from Rugby Road to limit the perception of ribbon development along this route.
- 9.1.10 The Proposed Development will be embedded within a substantial area of green infrastructure. Development will be set back from the Appeal Site boundaries to provide a green collar around the proposed development that acts as a buffer to the existing adjacent properties and provides a sympathetic and characteristic transition between the built local and wider countryside to the north and south-east.
- 9.1.11 In terms of harm, inevitably, there would be a change to the openness from the Proposed Development by definition. The large linear monolithic buildings within the Appeal Site will be removed and replaced with development that is smaller in mass and of a more domestic scale

and which is more appropriate to its context. As stated at Para 19.2 within the officers report to the committee it is considered that *"The site is however within the Green Belt but the proposed residential development would not result in an increase in the developed area of the site and will introduce development of a smaller scale and further open space, soft landscaping, footpaths and cycle paths linking to the existing footpaths surrounding the site. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than currently exists therefore the proposal complies with paragraph 149 of the NPPF"*. It is considered that the Appeal Scheme will reflect the existing character of the existing development within the immediate and local vicinity.

- 9.1.12 The proposed built form will be redistributed over the Appeal Site with a greater area of open space to the north with a limited section of housing within the south-eastern part. The Appeal Scheme will have a more organic form and connection with the proposed landscaping and 3G sports pitch that will include a pavilion and associated car parking.
- 9.1.13 The proposed residential development will not result in an increase in the developed area within the Appeal Site, introducing residential development of a smaller scale that is characteristic of the local setting to the east, south and west. In addition to this the proposed open space and landscape structural planting within which will be a network of footpaths and cycleways that will provide enhanced connectivity and permeability to the existing PROW network and roads within the vicinity.
- 9.1.14 In conclusion, both the submitted LVIA and officers report to the committee consider there to be no harm to the 5 purposes of the Green Belt. The Appeal Scheme would result in there being a reduction in developable area, the large linear monolithic buildings within the Appeal Site will be removed and replaced with development that is smaller in mass and of a more appropriate domestic scale to its location. It is considered that the Appeal Scheme will reflect the existing character of the existing development within the immediate and local vicinity.
- 9.1.15 It is considered that the Appeal Scheme would clearly **not** result in a very significant intensification of built development and **nor** would it result in large scale urbanisation within the countryside. In addition to this the potential effects arising from the Appeal scheme will be highly localised and partly mitigated by a sensitive design approach. I furthermore note the potential for significant benefits arising from the enhanced access to and quality of land remaining within the Green Belt.
- 9.1.16 The local character is defined by pockets of development and infrastructure that provide an urbanising influence of the local character which becomes more rural to the north-east. The combination of flat topography, existing settlement pattern and mature vegetation structure provides a high level of containment to the existing Appeal Site and built form. The level of enclosure and existing development within the Appeal Site result in there already being development visible from immediate views with the proposed Appeal Scheme providing development that is more domestic in scale and massing than that existing and reflects the local character. As such the landscape and visual effects arising from the redevelopment of the Appeal Site are limited and very localised from the outset.
- 9.1.17 The proposed Appeal Scheme has been designed to respond to the local character / settlement pattern and visual amenity, and the proposed footprint of the proposed built form will be smaller than the existing stadium with the built form being of a domestic scale. The layout includes substantial areas of public open space that effectively wrap around the Appeal Site providing a green edge / buffer to the built form. Furthermore, the redevelopment of the Appeal Site will provide a level of enhancements that include access to the local area through the creation of a network of footpath/cycleways through and across the Appeal Site that link with the adjacent PROWs. The positive outward facing development will provide views along corridors throughout the scheme to provide perceptual linkage with wider landscape and mitigate loss of visual openness.
- 9.1.18 The contribution the Appeal Site provides to the purposes of the Green Belt is very limited as assessed within the submitted LVIA and within Appendix 3 of this PoE. The potential harm to

openness is mitigated as much as possible, including enhanced access to footpaths. The potential harm to visual openness is limited as a result of the existing level of enclosure to the Appeal Site. It is considered that the potential harm to the Green Belt is mitigated through a well considered design rationale and high quality scheme within a site that provides very little towards the contribution of Green Belt purposes as set out within NPPF.



Land at Coventry (Brandon) Stadium, Rugby Road, Coventry

**Illustrative Material and Appendices to accompany the Proof of Evidence on
Landscape, Visual and Green Belt Matters
of Matthew D Chard BA (Hons) Dip (Hons) MAUD CMLI**

Application Reference: R18/0186

Appeal Reference: APP/E3715/W/23/3322013

On behalf of **Brandon Estates**

Site Appraisal Photographs A-L



Appeal Site Appraisal Photograph A



Appeal Site Appraisal Photograph B



Appeal Site Appraisal Photograph C



Appeal Site Appraisal Photograph D



Appeal Site Appraisal Photograph E



Appeal Site Appraisal Photograph F



Appeal Site Appraisal Photograph G



Appeal Site Appraisal Photograph H



Appeal Site Appraisal Photograph I



Appeal Site Appraisal Photograph J



Appeal Site Appraisal Photograph K



Appeal Site Appraisal Photograph L

Site Context Photographs 1-7



Appeal Site Context Photograph 1: View looking north-west from Rugby Road (A428).

This panorama is not to scale. For contextual information only

90° Horizontal field of view extract

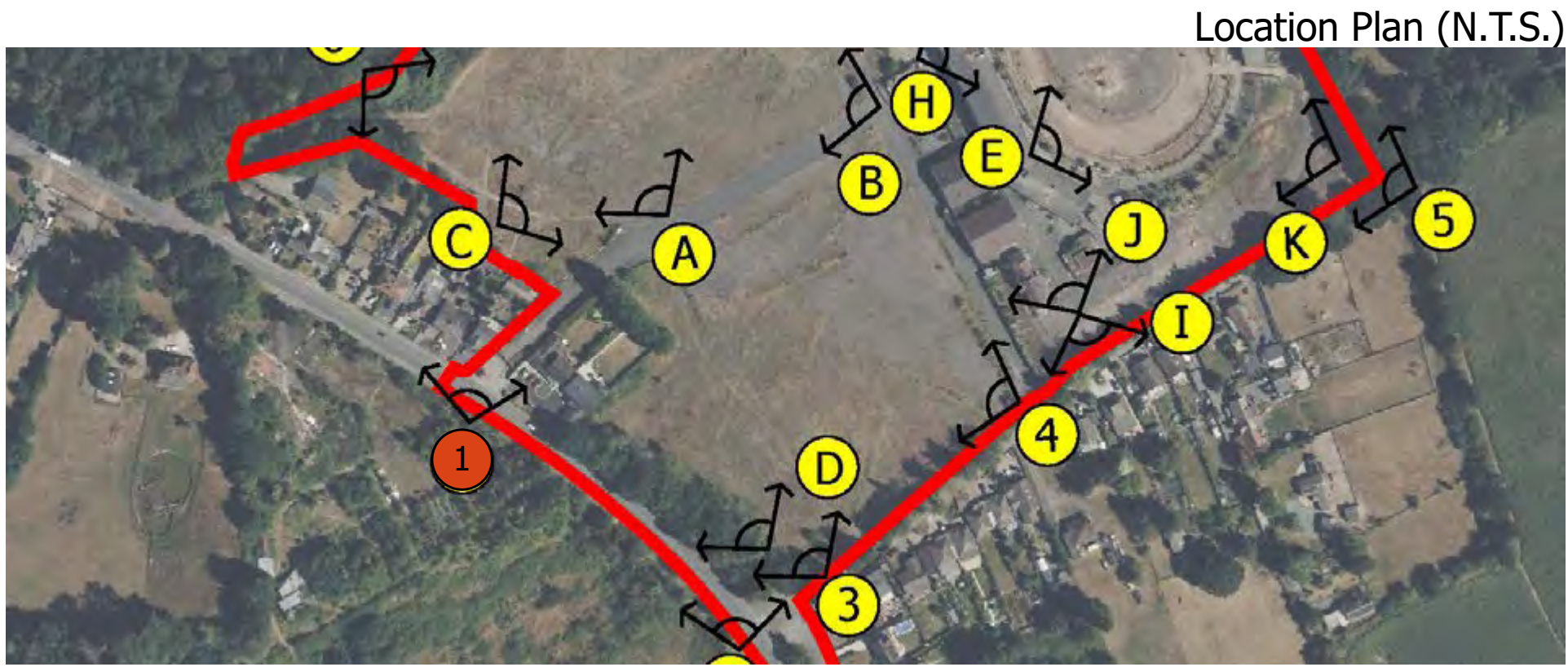


Easting: 440583
Northing: 277157
Elevation: 96m AOD
Distance to the Site: on site boundary

Date Taken: 20/07/2023
Camera: Nikon D60 (Full Frame Sensor)
Lens: 31mm fixed lens

Visualisation Type: Type 1 Annotated Viewpoint Photograph
Enlargement Factor: 100%
Projection: Cylindrical

Drawn By: AC
Checked By: MF
Approved By: MF



Approximate extent of the Site



Appeal Site Context Photograph 2: View looking north from Rugby Road (A428).

This panorama is not to scale. For contextual information only

90° Horizontal field of view extract

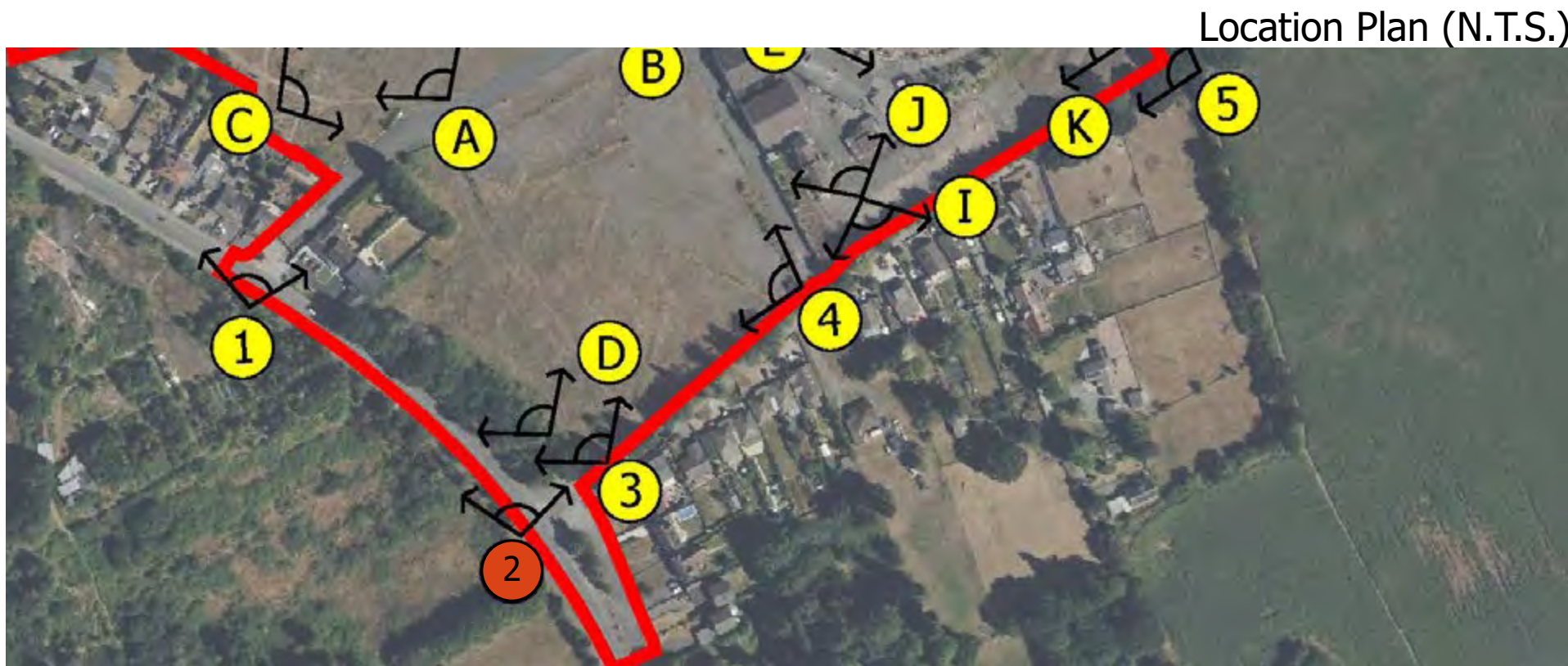


Easting: 440675
Northing: 277062
Elevation: 95m AOD
Distance to the Site: on site boundary

Date Taken: 20/07/2023
Camera: Nikon D60 (Full Frame Sensor)
Lens: 31mm fixed lens

Visualisation Type: Type 1 Annotated Viewpoint Photograph
Enlargement Factor: 100%
Projection: Cylindrical

Drawn By: AC
Checked By: MF
Approved By: MF





Appeal Site Context Photograph 3: View looking north-west from Speedway Lane.

This panorama is not to scale. For contextual information only

90° Horizontal field of view extract

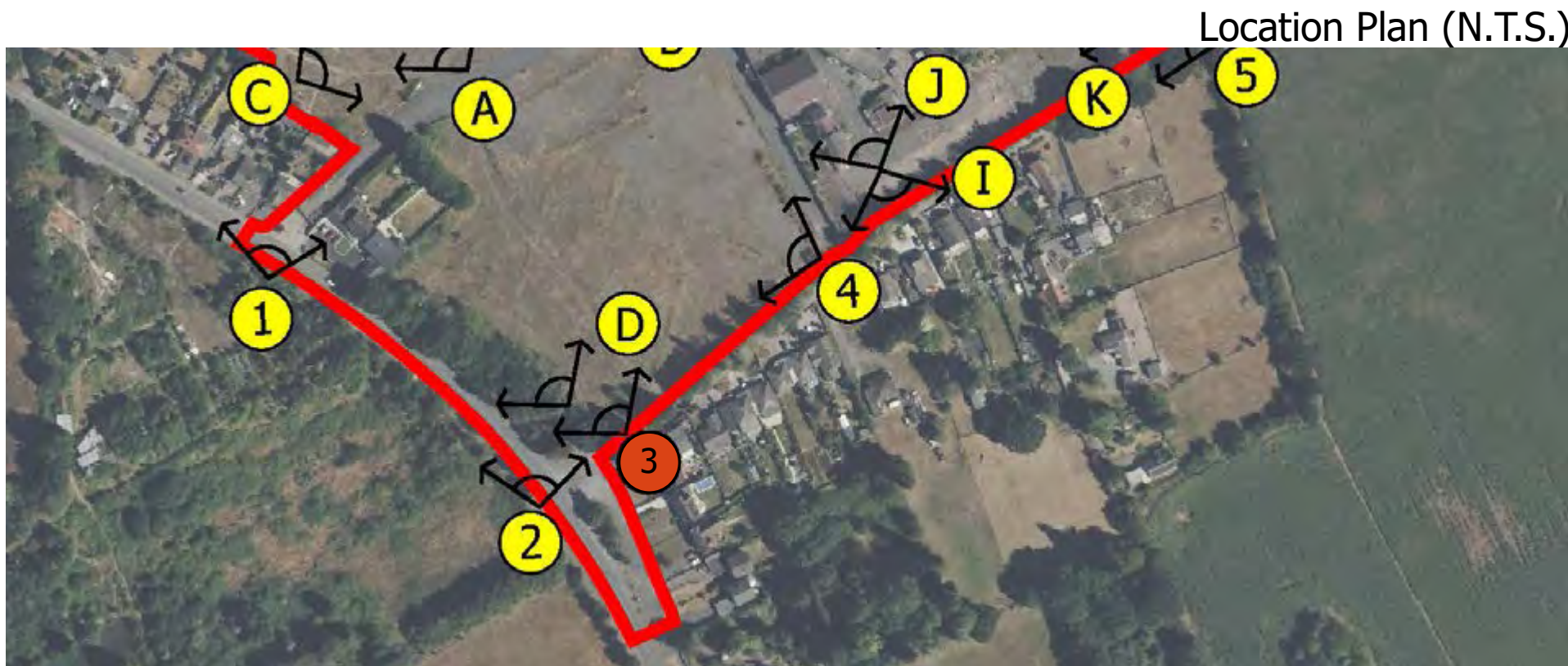


Easting: 440721
Northing: 277088xx
Elevation: 96m AOD
Distance to the Site: on site boundary

Date Taken: 20/07/2023
Camera: Nikon D60 (Full Frame Sensor)
Lens: 31mm fixed lens

Visualisation Type: Type 1 Annotated Viewpoint Photograph
Enlargement Factor: 100%
Projection: Cylindrical

Drawn By: AC
Checked By: MF
Approved By: MF





Appeal Site Context Photograph 4: View looking north-west from Speedway Lane.

This panorama is not to scale. For contextual information only

90° Horizontal field of view extract

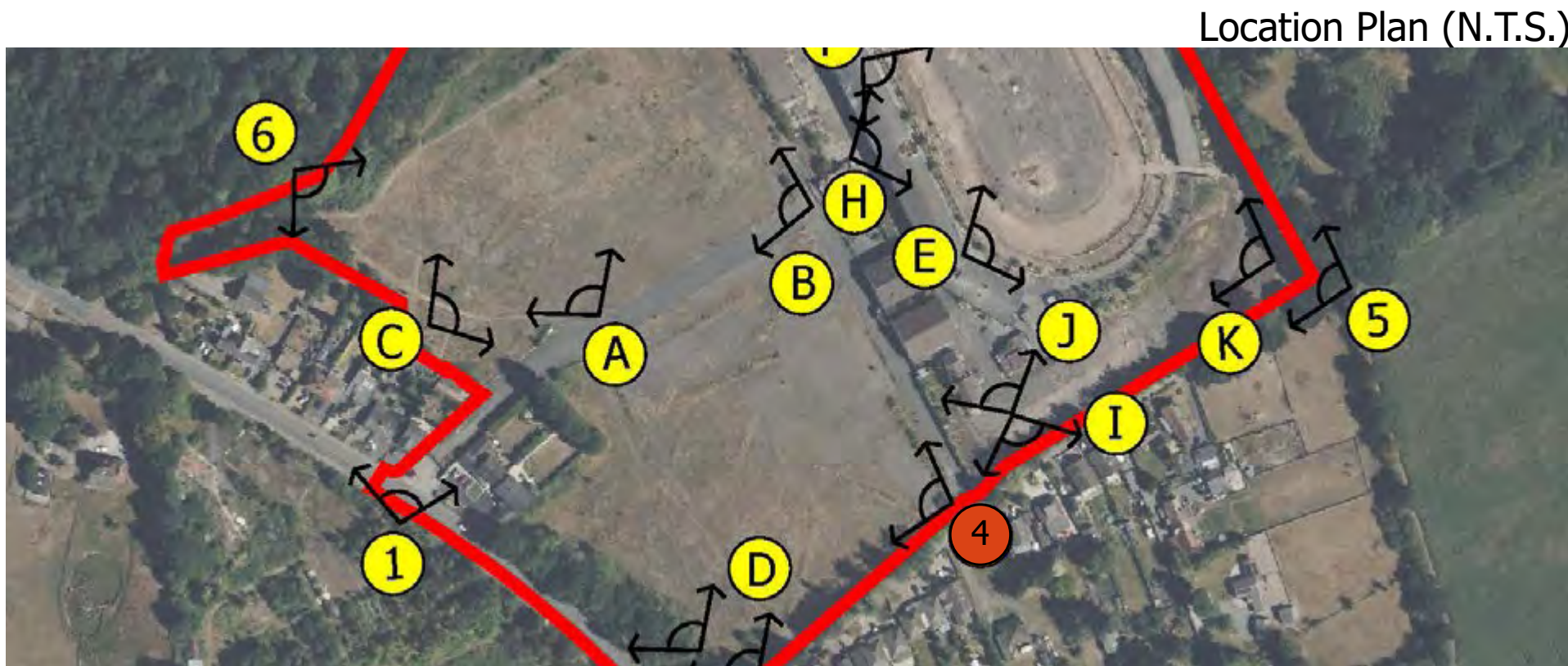


Easting: 440803
Northing: 277162
Elevation: 96m AOD
Distance to the Site: on site boundary

Date Taken: 20/07/2023
Camera: Nikon D60 (Full Frame Sensor)
Lens: 31mm fixed lens

Visualisation Type: Type 1 Annotated Viewpoint Photograph
Enlargement Factor: 100%
Projection: Cylindrical

Drawn By: AC
Checked By: MF
Approved By: MF



Approximate extent of the Site



Appeal Site Context Photograph 5: View looking north-west from Speedway Lane.

This panorama is not to scale. For contextual information only

90° Horizontal field of view extract



Location Plan (N.T.S.)

Easting:	440953	Date Taken:	20/07/2023
Northing:	277253	Camera:	Nikon D60 (Full Frame Sensor)
Elevation:	96m AOD	Lens:	31mm fixed lens
Distance to the Site:	10m		
Visualisation Type:	Type 1 Annotated Viewpoint Photograph	Drawn By:	AC
Enlargement Factor:	100%	Checked By:	MF
Projection:	Cylindrical	Approved By:	MF





Appeal Site Context Photograph 6: View looking south-east from Gossett Lane.

This panorama is not to scale. For contextual information only

90° Horizontal field of view extract



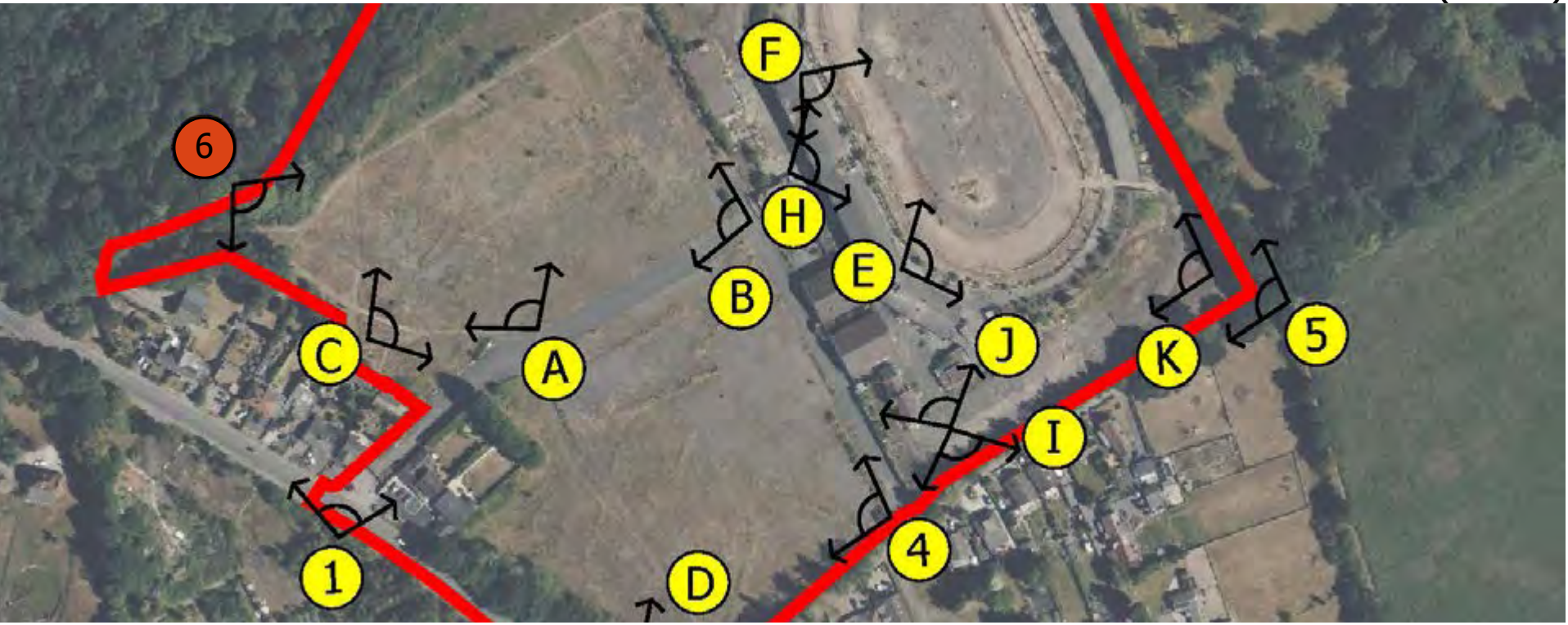
Location Plan (N.T.S.)

Easting: 440530
Northing: 277284
Elevation: 95m AOD
Distance to the Site: on site boundary

Date Taken: 20/07/2023
Camera: Nikon D60 (Full Frame Sensor)
Lens: 31mm fixed lens

Visualisation Type: Type 1 Annotated Viewpoint Photograph
Enlargement Factor: 100%
Projection: Cylindrical

Drawn By: AC
Checked By: MF
Approved By: MF





Appeal Site Context Photograph 7: View looking south-west from Gossett Lane.

This panorama is not to scale. For contextual information only

90° Horizontal field of view extract



Easting:	440955	Date Taken:	20/07/2023
Northing:	277489	Camera:	Nikon D60 (Full Frame Sensor)
Elevation:	95m AOD	Lens:	31mm fixed lens
Distance to the Site:	113m		
Visualisation Type:	Type 1 Annotated Viewpoint Photograph	Drawn By:	AC
Enlargement Factor:	100%	Checked By:	MF
Projection:	Cylindrical	Approved By:	MF

Location Plan (N.T.S.)

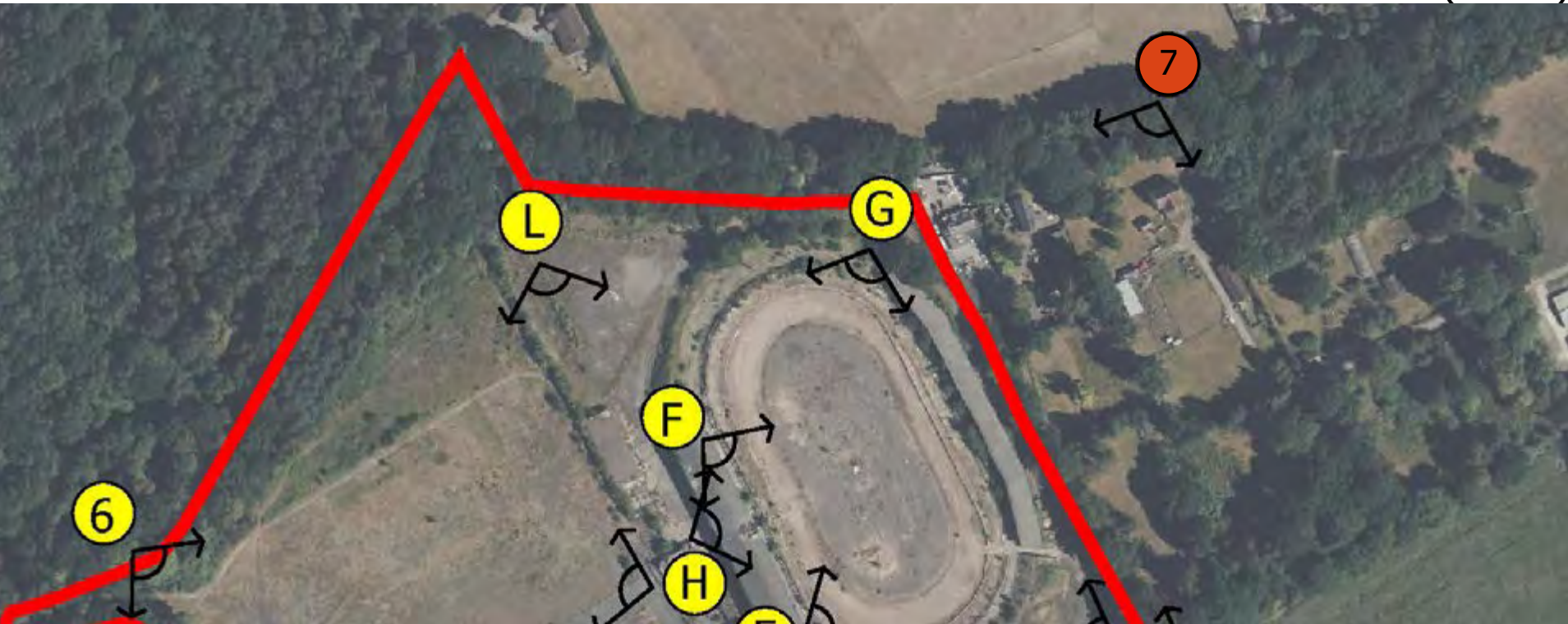
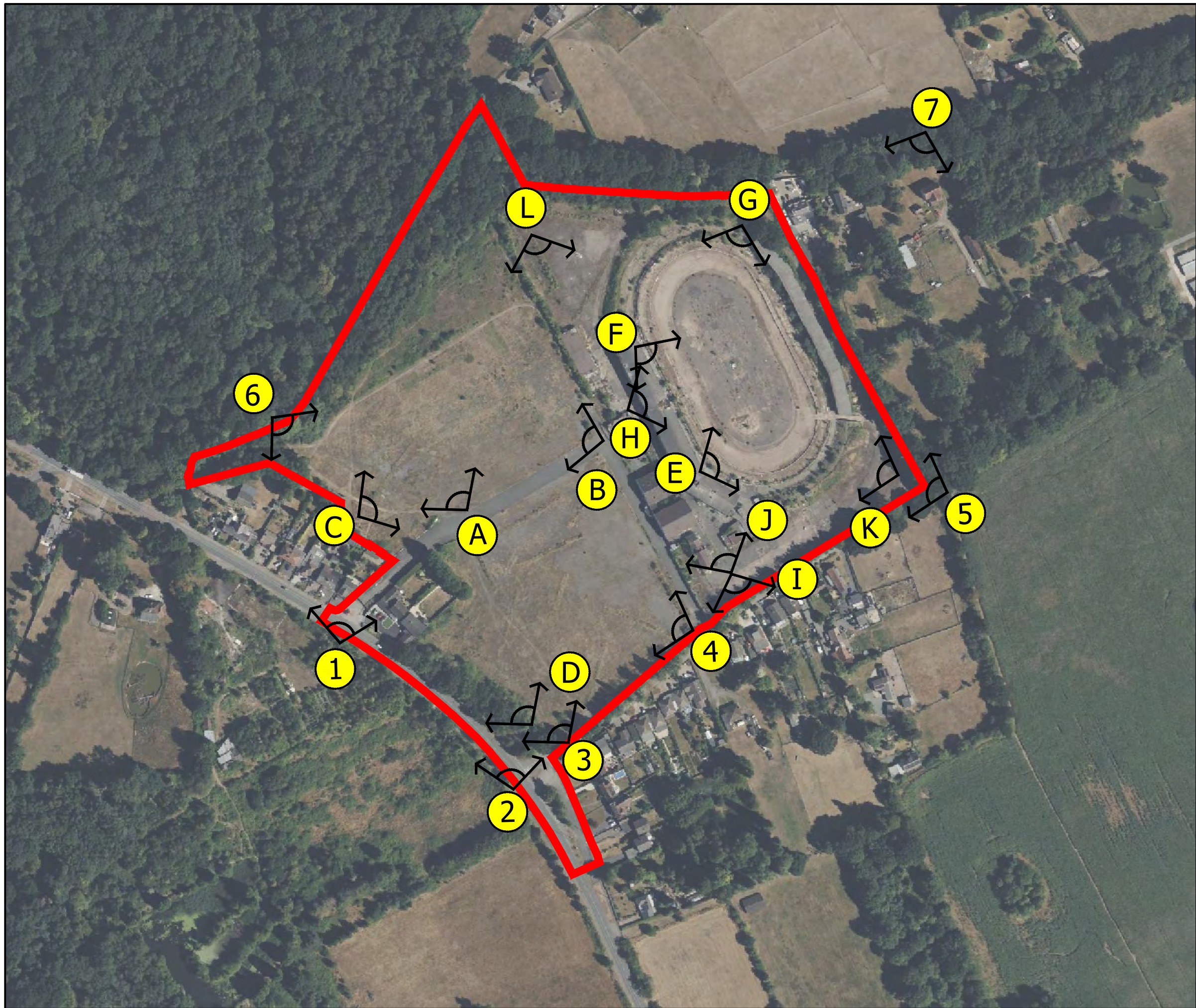


Figure MDC 1: Visual Appraisal Plan

Figure MDC 2: Comparative Coverage Plan

Figure 3: Illustrative Landscape Masterplan



The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revision	Date	Drn	Ckd
A First Draft	02.08.23	AC	MF

- LEGEND
- Site Boundary
 - Site Appraisal Viewpoint Locations
 - Site Context Viewpoint Locations

FIGURE MDC-2

Project
Brandon Stadium
Coventry

Drawing Title
Visual Appraisal

Date
31.07.23

Scale
1:2500@A3

Drawn by
AC

Check by
MF

Project No
00212

Drawing No
01

Revision
A

0 20 40 60 80 100m

N

Stantec

DRAFT

Stantec UK Limited
10th Floor
Bank House
8 Cherry Street
Birmingham
B2 5AL
T: 0121 633 2900
stantec.com/uk

Existing Stadium Coverage



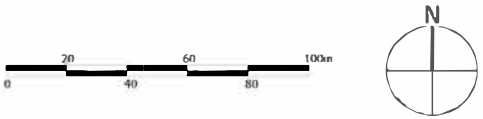
Development Coverage : 27510-9600_Rev B



The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revision	Date	Drn	Ckd
B	18.12.17	PT	EB

Updated as per client request



	Site boundary	10.86 Ha
	Existing Stadium Coverage	
	Development Coverage	4.35 Ha
	Proposed Development	
	Development Coverage	4.07 Ha

FIGURE MDC-2

Project
Brandon Stadium
Coventry

Drawing Title
Comparative Coverage Plan
(Existing and Proposed)

Date	Scale	Drawn by	Check by
11.12.17	1:2500 @ A2	KU	EB
Project No	Drawing No	Revision	
27510	9901	B	



The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revision	Date	Dwn	Ckd
K	21.12.21	LA	RMcW

Footpath and bund by pitch moved & planting added as per CM instruction

- LEGEND
- Boundaries and Rights of Way
- Site Boundary
 - Existing PROW- Footpath
 - Existing PROW- Bridleway
 - Existing PROW- Twelve O'Clock Ride
- EXISTING ELEMENTS
- Existing Tree/ Hedgerow Planting
- PROPOSED ELEMENTS
- Planting
- Proposed Trees/ Hedgerow Planting around Boundary
 - Proposed trees
 - Proposed hedges
 - Proposed Boundary Hedge & fence: the extent and alignment of new hedge will be subject to detailed condition survey of existing vegetation
 - Wetland Planting
 - Meadow Grassland
 - Bunding
 - Proposed Rain Garden
 - Proposed Grass Planting
 - Proposed Car Parking
 - Proposed Overflow Parking
- Surfacing and Paving
- Cycle/Footpath - Bitmac with crushed stone surface dressing
 - Informal Path - Worn/Mown Grass
 - Enhanced Highway Paving
 - Enhanced Pedestrian Paving
- Waterbodies
- Attenuation Ponds & Basins
- Playspaces
- Play Area
 - 3G ATP Pitch
 - Trim Trail
 - Sculpture / Public Art
- Buildings
- Proposed Pavilion with Green Roof

FIGURE MDC-3

Project
Brandon Stadium
Coventry

Drawing Title
Illustrative Landscape Masterplan

Date
21/12/21

Scale
1:1,000 @A1
1:2,000 @A3

Project No
333100212

Drawing No
BL-LD-01

Drawn by
LA

Check by
RMcW

Revision
K

0 10 20 30m

Appendix A: Planning Policy Extracts

Rugby Borough Council Local Plan (2019)

- 1.1 The Local Plan has also developed several Spatial Objectives including Environmental Spatial Objective 7 which states that new development should ***“build on Rugby’s rural market town character by protecting, utilising and enhancing historic assets and ensuring all new development demonstrates high quality design, maintaining an attractive built environment throughout the Borough.”***
- 1.2 **Policy GP2: Settlement Hierarchy** states that New development within the Green Belt *“will be resisted; only where national policy on Green Belt allows will development be permitted”*.
- 1.3 **Policy GP3: Previously Developed Land and Conversions** indicates that redevelopment of previously developed land, where proposals are compliant with the policies within the Local Plan, will be supported. In particular consideration will be given to the *“visual impact on the surrounding landscape and properties...”*.
- 1.4 **Policy NE1: Protecting Designated Biodiversity and Geodiversity Assets** outlines the need to protect designated areas and “planning permission will be refused if significant harm resulting from development affecting biodiversity cannot be:
 - Avoided, and where this is not possible;
 - Mitigated, and if it cannot be fully mitigated, as a last resort;
 - Compensated for.”
- 1.5 In terms of Ancient Woodland, the policy states that “planning permission will be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, and/or the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside of ancient woodland unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweighs the loss.
- 1.6 All development proposals in the proximity of ancient woodland shall incorporate buffers having regard to Natural England’s standing advice.”
- 1.7 **Policy NE2: Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure** highlights the requirement for the “creation of a comprehensive Borough wide Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure Network which is inclusive of the Princethorpe Woodland Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (also known as the Princethorpe Woodlands Living Landscape).” The Site lies within the Princethorpe Biodiversity Area. This will be achieved through the following:

*“The protection, restoration and enhancement of existing and potential Green and Blue Infrastructure assets within the network as shown on the Policies Map; and
The introduction of appropriate multi-functional corridors between existing and potential Green and Blue infrastructure assets.”*
- 1.8 The policy further states that ***“where appropriate new developments must provide suitable Green and Blue Infrastructure corridors throughout the development and link into adjacent strategic and local Green and Blue Infrastructure networks or assets where present.”*** The Site adjoins a recognised Green Infrastructure Asset - ‘New Close Wood’.
- 1.9 **Policy NE3: Landscape Protection and Enhancement** states that “new development which positively contributes to landscape character will be permitted.
- 1.10 **Policy SDC1: Sustainable Design** needs all development to ***“demonstrate high quality, inclusive and sustainable design and new development will only be supported where the proposals are of a scale, density and design that responds to the character of the areas in which they are situated. All developments should aim to add to the overall quality of the areas in which they are situated. Factors including the massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access should also be a key consideration in the determination of planning applications.”***
- 1.11 **Policy SDC2: Landscaping** needs to form an integral part of the overall design. All proposals should ensure that:

- ***“Important site features have been identified for retention through a detailed site survey;***
- ***Features of ecological, geological and archaeological significance are retained and protected and opportunities for enhancing these features are utilised (consideration will also be given to the requirements of policies NE1 and SDC3 where relevant);***
- ***Opportunities for utilising sustainable drainage methods are incorporated;***
- ***New planting comprises native species which are of ecological value appropriate to the area;***
- ***In appropriate cases, there is sufficient provision for planting within and around the perimeter of the site to minimise visual intrusion on neighbouring uses or the countryside; and***
- ***Detailed arrangements are incorporated for the long-term management and maintenance of landscape features.”***

Rugby Borough Council Landscape Sensitivity Study (2016)

- 1.12 The Rugby Borough Council commissioned a Landscape Sensitivity Study as part of their evidence base to support the Local Plan. The Landscape Sensitivity Study has been discussed in further detail under the Local Landscape Character section of this report as it draws upon the published Landscape Character Areas for the borough.

Brandon & Bretford Neighbourhood Development Plan to 2031 (January 2019)

- 1.13 The Brandon and Bretford Neighbourhood Development Plan now forms part of the Development Plan for Rugby Borough and was Made in June 2019. The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) will be taken into account in local planning decisions.
- 1.14 The Site, although located closer to the village of Binley Woods, falls within the administration of Brandon and Bretford Parish Council. As outlined with the Neighbourhood Area, the Site is located at the northern edge of this plan area and is part of the Brandon Hill area. The NDP notes that the group of houses at Brandon Hill (near the Site) “are separated from the main village of Brandon by open countryside on either side of the A428 Rugby Road as it drops down into the centre of the village.”
- 1.15 Policies that are relevant to landscape and views are detailed here.
- 1.16 Policy H2 - Development of Brownfield Land states that “proposals for the redevelopment of brownfield land to create new homes will be supported in principle subject to the following:
- a) ***The land is not of high environmental value;***
 - b) ***The residential use is compatible with the surrounding uses and means of access;***
 - c) ***The impact, including visual impact, on the surrounding landscape and properties is assessed as acceptable;***
 - d) ***No loss or displacement, complete or partial, of employment, community, sport or recreation uses unless it can be demonstrated;***
 - i. ***That the existing uses are no longer viable or required in accordance with other Development Plan policies and***
 - ii. ***On the basis of an objective assessment, the benefits of residential development outweigh the loss of its current use;***
 - e) ***The site in its setting and its appearance are enhanced; and***
 - f) ***There is no conflict with national Green Belt policy where applicable.”***
- 1.17 Policy CON 2 – Environmental Heritage Assets highlights the importance of new proposals providing appropriate regard “for any potential impact, directly or indirectly, on the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the designated Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and the Plantation on an Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) shown on the adjacent Map 5.”
- 1.18

- 1.19 Policy BNE 1 – Respecting the Local Character emphasises the need for development proposals to ***“demonstrate how local character has been respected in the evolution of the design in accordance with the following criteria:***

- ***Be compatible with the main characteristics of the area by respecting the settlement pattern, building styles and materials;***
- ***Mature trees which contribute positively to the character of the area and the natural environment will be protected and retained in the proposed new development;***
- ***Preserving or enhancing heritage assets;***
- ***Be of a density that reflects the character of the surrounding development and landscape;***
- ***Have regard to the impact on tranquillity, including dark skies; and***
- ***Be supported by appropriate archaeological survey and mitigation strategy where applicable.”***

- 1.20 Policy BNE 2 – Design Principles indicates the principles that new development should follow:

“The detailed design of buildings, including the materials to be used, should respond to local character and history and reflect the identity of local surroundings while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation; Be visually attractive in terms of good architecture and landscaping; The use of solar panels should ensure they are not visually intrusive from public view points especially within the Conservation Area or within proximity to listed buildings; Ensure that adequate arrangements are made to accommodate surface water and foul drainage; All new development proposals should demonstrate how the design has been influenced by the need to reduce crime and the fear of crime; and In order to preserve the rural character of the villages and the surrounding countryside, lighting should be kept to a minimum commensurate with safety considerations.”

- 1.21 The policy further explains that “new development should reflect the importance that trees and green spaces make to the character of the two villages. Innovation of design and design layout is welcomed providing it makes a positive contribution in terms of its quality, the use of materials and that it incorporates high levels of landscaping to soften the overall impact of the buildings.”

Policy BNE 6 – Valued Rural Character and Setting

“Development proposals should identify, assess and address their impact on the valued rural character and setting of the Neighbourhood Area. Rural aspects should include, but are not limited to, inter-visibility and ready access between the built and countryside areas, visual and actual separation between distinct settlements, respect for the patterns and scale of rural settlements and respect for the distinct features of the landscape and the settings of heritage assets.”

- 1.22 The policy further records that ***“open spaces and vistas play a crucial role in defining the character of areas within the Parish which have their own identity and character.”*** In particular the need to ***“protect the unique and distinct character of Brandon Hill it is important that key open spaces and vistas are protected to ensure that any new development will integrate with the existing built form and its setting.”***
- 1.23 It notes that ***“the cluster of housing known locally as ‘Brandon Hill’ where properties fronting Rugby Road and along Speedway Lane adjacent to Brandon Stadium form a discrete residential enclave that is separated from the much larger village of Binley Woods by New Close Wood to the north of Rugby Road (A428) and by the open grounds of Binley Woods School and the adjoining gardens of residential properties to the south of the A428. To the south of ‘Brandon Hill’ open fields to the north and south of the A428 together with the open***

areas within the now vacant Oakdale Nursery to the south of the A428, form an important visual separation between 'Brandon Hill' and Brandon village."

Appendix B: Table 1 from LVIA – Contribution of Appeal Site to Purposes to Green Belt

Table 1: Contribution of the Site to the Purposes of the Green Belt

NPPF Purposes of the Green Belt	Issues for Consideration as per the Joint Green Belt Study (2015)	Analysis	Score
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Does the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development and/or has the Green Belt within the parcel already been compromised by ribbon development?	<p>The Site comprises a small area of land adjoining the existing settlement edge of Binley Woods along Rugby Road. The south-western edge of the Site borders the existing ribbon development at Rugby Road and a further linear development is present at Speedway Lane forming the Site's south-eastern boundary. The existing built form on Rugby Road and Speedway Lane is perceived to be part of Binley Woods.</p> <p>The Site is situated in between and behind these areas of ribbon development and much of the frontage along the roads are already occupied by the existing housing. Development in this location will consolidate the existing areas of residential development along Rugby Road and at Speedway Lane.</p>	0
	Is the parcel free from development? Does the parcel have a sense of openness?	<p>The Site contains some existing built form, including buildings in association with the speedway track, stadium and viewing galleries. The Site is also located directly adjacent to existing residential development along Speedway Lane and Rugby Road. The remainder of the Site is formed of hardstanding which was formerly used as a car park and several ancillary security boundary features. These urbanising elements in association with being in close proximity to a large woodland and hedgerows that encloses the views out removes the 'sense of openness'.</p>	0
	<p>Critique:</p> <p>The Site is adjoined by buildings and roads on two sides and is not separate from existing built form within Binley Woods. The Site itself contains several large-scale commercial buildings and consequently is not part of the open countryside. Any development within the Site would therefore adjoin the existing built form and road infrastructure.</p> <p>Development to the north of Rugby Road is existent, as demonstrated by the residential neighbourhoods to the south and east of the Site and therefore the Site would not be an anomaly.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will be set behind the existing houses on Rugby Road in the north and green frontage in the south, which would reduce the perception of a continuing linear ribbon development along Rugby Road. The Proposed Development would occupy an area of land that is currently occupied by derelict and degraded buildings. It is a planned development that would further contribute towards integrating the two existing ribbon developments to form a holistic nuclear area of built form that would be part of Binley Woods and form its eastern limit.</p> <p>Although the Site lies within the administrative boundary of Brandon, it has a closer relationship with the rural settlement of Binley Woods and is located in an area that is perceived as being part of Binley Woods. The Site being previously developed and limited to the east by built form and strong vegetation would not increase the 'sprawl' of Binley Woods into the neighbouring countryside.</p>		

NPPF Purposes of the Green Belt	Issues for Consideration as per the Joint Green Belt Study (2015)	Analysis	Score
Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Is the parcel located within an existing settlement? If no, what is the width of the gap between the settlements at the point that the parcel is intersected?	<p>The Site is located in close proximity (approx. 200m to the east) to the existing settlement boundary of Binley Woods. The distance between the Site and nearest settlement Brandon is approximately 600m. However, Brandon is not considered to be a major settlement and therefore its presence in proximity to Binley Woods does not cause the merger of towns</p> <p>Although the Site lies outside the settlement boundary of Binley Woods as noted in the Rugby Local Plan, the presence of the built environment on Rugby Road and Speedway Lane causes this area to be perceived as part of Binley Woods and not outside it.</p>	0
	<p>Critique:</p> <p>The current settlement boundary of Binley Woods is drawn in a way that is not representative of the settlement on the ground. The Site lies in an area that is perceived as being part of Binley Woods, which is classified as a village and not a town. The nearest large settlements to the Site are Coventry, approximately 2km to the west and Rugby, approximately 8km to east. The Site is physically and visually separate to both these settlements, in particular Coventry which lies in closer proximity to the Site than Rugby. The Site is located on the eastern edge of Binley Woods and therefore in the opposite direction to Coventry, hence the development on this Site would not result in the physical merging or perception of merging of Brandon and Binley Woods or with Coventry.</p>		
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside? Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?	<p>The Site is a disused speedway stadium comprising a speedway track, viewing galleries, associated buildings and large areas of hardstanding that was formerly used as car park. Other urbanising features include various boundary and security fencing measures. The composition of the Site removes it from possessing any rural characteristics which would be key to land associated with countryside. The Site is also bordered on two sides by residential development and roads.</p> <p>The presence of the dense vegetation along its boundaries affords the Site with visual containment. The low visual envelope prevents visual encroachment into the countryside.</p>	0
	Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment of the countryside within or beyond the parcel in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel).	<p>The countryside lies to the north-west and north-east of the Site. The Site is bound by the Ancient and Semi Natural Woodland New Close Wood to the west/north-west and a dense tree belt covered by TPO to the north-east. These two landscape features provide a robust, physical and readily recognisable boundary which would prevent encroachment into the countryside.</p> <p>The countryside is also present further east, however, to the immediate vicinity of the Site there are a number of built developments such as farmsteads and a robust pattern of thick hedgerows and trees that provide enclosure to the site in terms of visibility as well as physical containment.</p>	

NPPF Purposes of the Green Belt	Issues for Consideration as per the Joint Green Belt Study (2015)	Analysis	Score
	<p>Critique:</p> <p>The Site is an area that was previously developed as a speedway and comprises a speedway track, car park and several associated built units. Therefore, the Site is not considered to be open countryside. The Site has a strong boundary enclosure in the form of the Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland; therefore, will not encroach into the countryside.</p> <p>The area within which the Site is located contains residential neighbourhoods, including the properties to the east and south of the Site (at Speedway Lane), and properties along Rugby Road.</p> <p>The Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland, New Close Wood and Birchley Wood to the north-west provides a strong boundary to prevent physical and visual encroachment into the countryside.</p> <p>The dense boundary vegetation along the north-west, north-east and east that would be further reinforced through the Proposed Development would create a robust structure that would assist in preventing encroachment into the countryside.</p> <p>The vegetation and the topography provide visual, physical and perceptual containment of the Site. This tight visual envelope prevents visual connections with the countryside and also creates a physical visual barrier to the perception of encroachment into the outlying countryside.</p>		
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Is the parcel partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town? Does the parcel have good intervisibility with the historic core of a historic town?	The Site is not within or near a Conservation Area and does not have any intervisibility with the historic core of a historic town.	0
	<p>Critique:</p> <p>The Brandon Conservation Area lies at the core of the village of Brandon. The Site, however, is not physically or visually connected with this area and therefore has no connections with the historic features within it.</p>		
<p>Overall</p> <p>Note: All parcels within the published Green Belt review have been given the score of 4 for Purpose 5. However, the Site is previously developed brownfield land and therefore this is an area that should be prioritised for redevelopment and assisting in urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land and in turn would positively contribute towards protecting other Green Belt land. Due to this reason, it can be said that the Site scores a 0.</p>			