

**COVENTRY STADIUM
BRANDON**

**Landscape and Visual Appraisal
January 2018**



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Introduction

Appointment and Scope of the Study

This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared by Barton Willmore on behalf of Brandon Estates Ltd to support the Outline Planning Application at Brandon Stadium, Coventry (the 'Site').

The Site is 10.86 hectares (ha) of previously developed land situated between the settlements of Binley Woods and Brandon, within the administrative boundary of Rugby Borough Council, in the county of Warwickshire.

The LVA provides a preliminary analysis of the landscape surrounding the Application Site and identifies key sensitive landscape and visual receptors within the study area, and outlines recommended mitigation measures for the proposed development. This appraisal is not a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).

For the purposes of this project, we have formed a judgement on the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors and considered the predicted landscape and visual impacts but no judgements on the magnitude of effect or significance of landscape effect have been made.

The appraisal process is iterative; the analysis of the baseline conditions and evaluation of the potential effects resulting from a development informs the evolution of the proposed development. It is, therefore, important to take into consideration appropriate mitigation of potential effects. In a high level Landscape and Visual Appraisal such as this, this takes the form of identification of initial opportunities and constraints with regard to landscape and visual issues.

In undertaking the landscape and visual appraisal of the Site and the wider surrounding area, there are a number of limitations and constraints affecting the outputs from this work. These include:

The baseline conditions have been established using existing character assessments, available documentation and field assessment; it is important to note that this information is open to change over time due to changes in the landscape baseline (development, changes in land management etc); and

During Site visits, weather conditions, the time of day and seasonal factors have influenced the visual appraisal and photographic record of the Site. Every effort has been made to ensure that the photographs and their locations are “representative” of the Site and its surroundings.

The LVA contains an early identification of the main landscape and visual constraints and opportunities of the Site and its setting and the possible relationship with the development proposal and the landscape, a key output is the baseline-led analysis, is contained in the Landscape Strategy.

In overview, this LVA is a report of initial landscape and visual research and is set out with the following structure:

Part One: Landscape and Visual Baseline – sets out the landscape and visual baselines and is a record of the field based study of the Site and its setting. It includes a record of desk based data trawl of published landscape character studies; identifies landscape and visual receptor groups.

Part Two: Including an early identification of the main landscape and visual constraints and opportunities of the Site and its setting and the relationship with the development proposal, a key output is the baseline-led analysis contained in the Landscape Strategy.

Figure 1. Site Context Plan



SITE

BRINKLOW CP

WOODSIDE CP

BRANDON AND BRET FORD CP

LVA Methodology

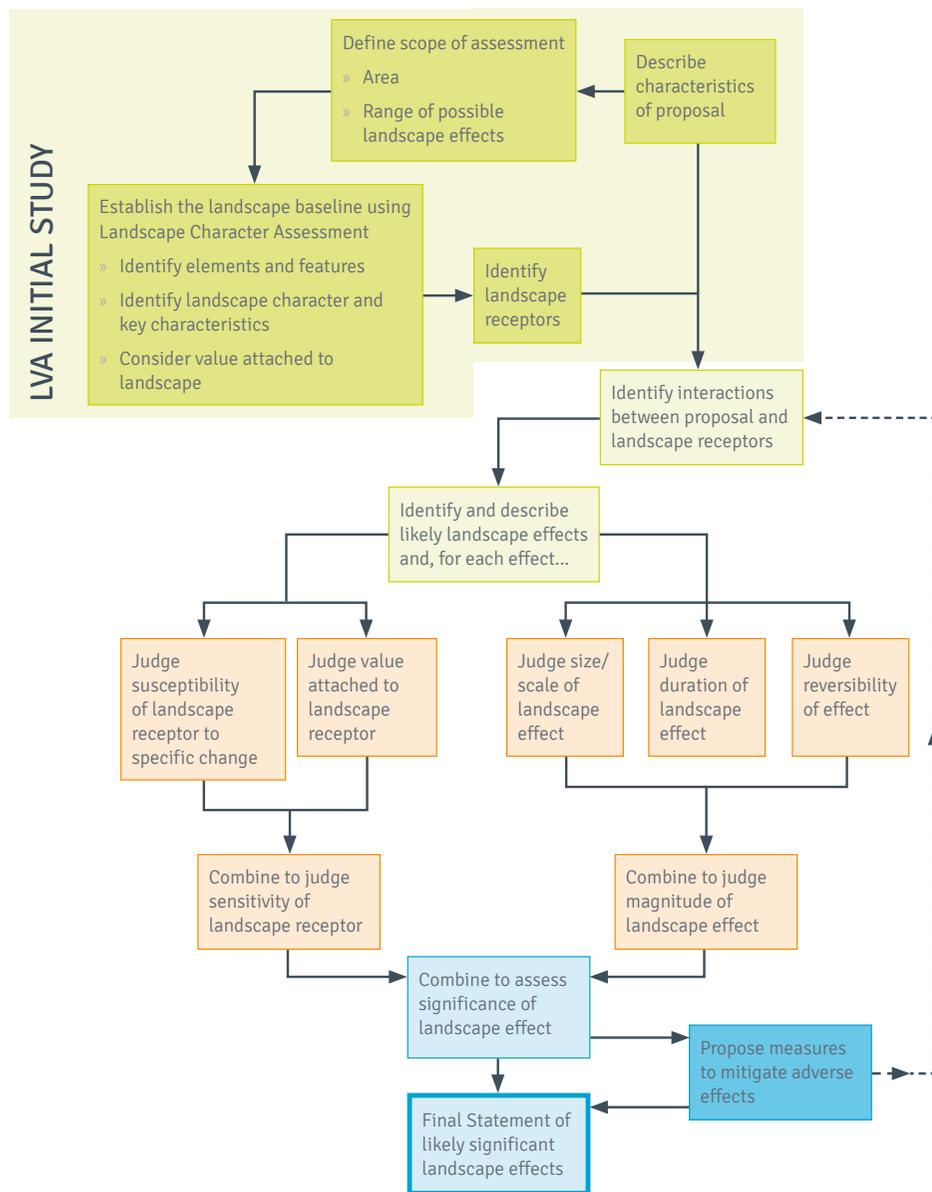
The structure of this study follows the current best practice approach set out in the principal publication for LVA work: 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third edition (GLVIA. [Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. 2013]) The Institute gives guidelines for the process of Landscape and Visual Assessment.

The Third edition of the GLVIA set out a differential between Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) studies. The LVIA study sits within the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process and the assessment of specific effects that may cause impacts on components and receptors in the landscape and visual baseline. The LVIA centres on assessment of effects. The preparation of Landscape and Visual Appraisal studies has the rigour of the EIA process but has looked to identify issues of possible harm that might arise from the development proposal and offset them through change and modification of the proposals before a fix of the proposal – this LVA has been devised as tool or body of information that will inform an evolving proposal rather than an assessment of a finalised proposal. This LVA study is not however part of a formal Environmental Statement and it is therefore described as an appraisal.

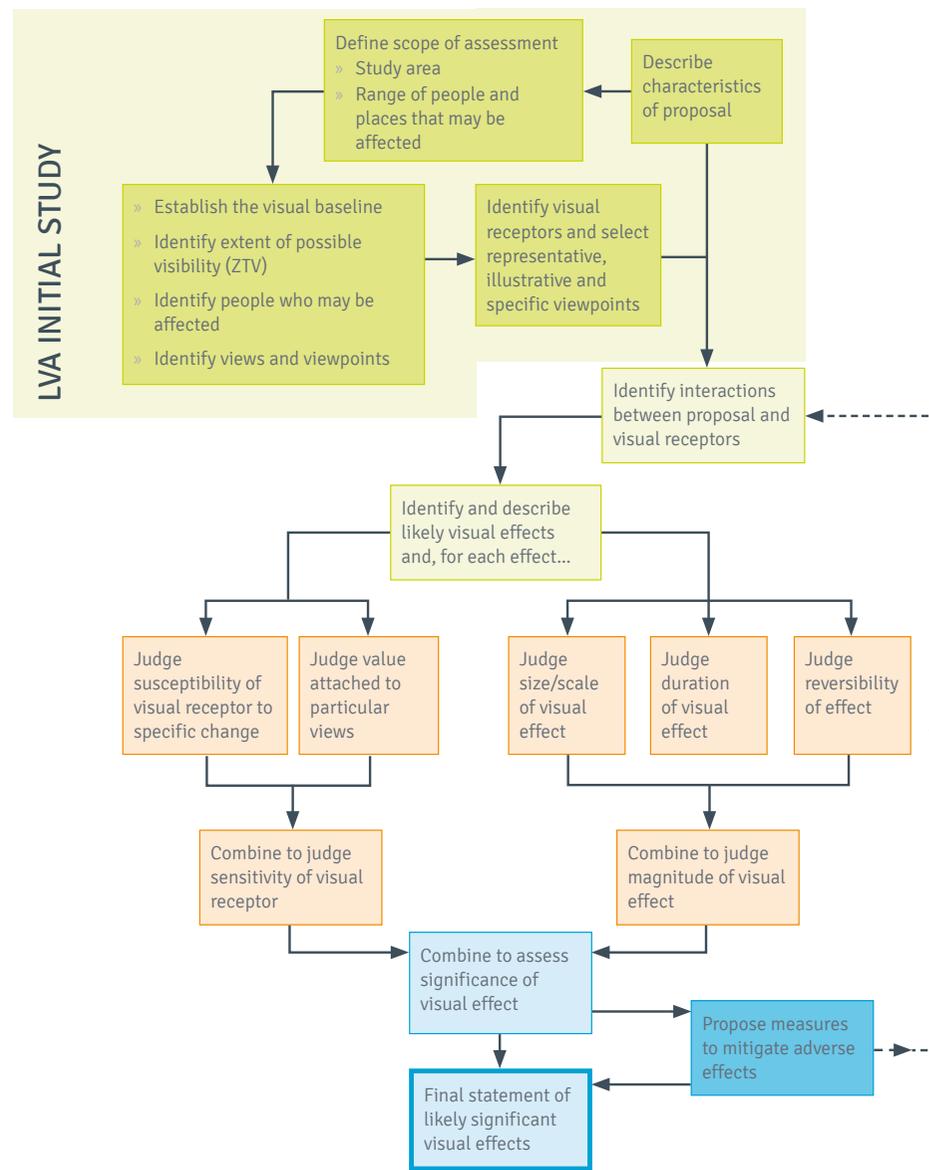
The LVA process is non-prescriptive, and experienced practitioners are required to make informed objective, and subjective judgments in the process of assessment of environmental effects. In this study a structured approach consistent with good practice has been followed.

The objectives of the LVA are to appraise the landscape character and visual qualities of the Site, its function in the landscape and its contribution to the wider landscape. It is the systematic description and appraisal of the features within the landscape, such as landform, vegetation cover, settlement pattern, built forms, transport patterns and land use that create a particular sense of place. A visual appraisal considers visual receptors, which are viewers of and within the landscape, and often includes locations such as residential or business properties, Public Rights of Way (PRoW), public open space and transport corridors.





GLVIA Steps in Assessing Landscape Effects (GLVA Figure 5.1)



GLVIA Steps in Assessing Visual Effects (GLVA Figure 6.1)





On site close to the western boundary looking east across the former carpark to the buildings of Coventry Stadium. The former access road from the A428 Rugby Road for the stadium is clearly visible in the centre of the view. Speedway Lane runs behind the stadium on the left hand side of this view. The rear gardens of the houses that front the Rugby Road are visible on the right hand side of this photograph behind the floodlight towers.

Part 1

Landscape and Visual Baseline

1. Landscape Planning Policy and Landscape Designations

1.1 Landscape Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

The (NPPF) aims to provide one concise document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England by replacing previous Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). It aims to provide a planning framework within which the local community and local authorities can produce distinctive local plans which respond to local needs and priorities.

The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", and providing it is in accordance with the relevant up-to-date Local Plan, and policies set out in the NPPF.

Twelve Core Planning Principles are set out, of which the following are relevant to consideration of landscape and visual matters, and state that planning should:

- *"not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;*
- *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
- *take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
- *contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; and*
- *conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations;"*

The NPPF then identifies and describes thirteen aspects contributing to the delivery of sustainable development which should be considered in developing local plans and reviewing planning applications. Those of relevance to the landscape and visual considerations of the Site and Proposed Development include Section 7: Requiring good design. Paragraph 58 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments, inter alia:

- *"...Establish a strong sense of place,*
- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping."*

Paragraph 61 states that:

"planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment."

The Site lies within land designated as Green Belt. National Green Belt policy is therefore relevant.

The NPPF identifies that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The five purposes of Green Belt are identified as follows:

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

The NPPF states that the essential characteristics of the Green Belt are “their openness and their permanence”. In defining new boundaries to the Green Belt, it must be ensured that these characteristics are not diminished for the areas remaining within the Green Belt designation as a direct result of development on the Site.

Furthermore, the NPPF states that when adding new areas to Green Belt, local planning authorities “should demonstrate why normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate”. Paragraph 81 provides advice on the use of land within designated Green Belts, indicating that Green Belts have a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives:

“...enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged or derelict land.”



Paragraph 83 considers the alterations of Green Belt boundaries, stating:

“Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period.”

This is supported by Paragraph 85 that states with regard to defining boundaries that local planning authorities should “not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open” and to “define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent”.

The NPPF states in Paragraph 86 that development can be prevented within a village if it should be detrimental to the openness of the Green Belt. The NPPF goes on to state that if the character of a village needs protecting for other reasons then “conservation area or normal development policies should be used” and that “the village should be excluded from the Green Belt”.

Emphasis on development to be appropriate to its location in the Green Belt is reinforced in Paragraph 87, stating:

“As with previous Green Belt Policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.”

This is supported by Paragraph 88 that states when considering planning applications:

“Local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

Paragraph 89 sets out a number of exceptions to inappropriate development, including;

“limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.”

With regard to the natural environment, Paragraphs 109–125 of Section 11 focus on conserving and enhancing the local and natural environment. The framework states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by inter alia:

“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils”.

Paragraph 110 sets out that the aim, in preparing plans for development, should be to minimise adverse effects on the local and natural environment, and that plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value.

The relevance of the National Green Belt policy to the development proposals is explained in Section 5 of this Landscape and Visual Appraisal.

Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014)

To support the policies of the NPPF, the Government has produced Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) covering a number of topics.

Under the heading of Natural Environment, sub-heading Landscape, paragraph 1, PPG supports the use of landscape character assessment as a tool for understanding the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identifying the features that give it a sense of place, as a means to informing, planning and managing change. PPG makes reference to Natural England guidance on landscape character assessment.



Joint Green Belt Study (2015)

Coventry City Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council was prepared by Land Use Consultants and published in 2015.

The Site is identified within the local authority boundary of Rugby, the Site is not covered by a land parcel but is contained within the boundary of Broad Area 2 and is adjacent to the eastern boundary of the BW1 Land Parcel.

A summary of the findings of Broad Area 2 are as follows;

‘Broad area 2 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. There a number of significant pockets of ancient woodland within the broad area, including All Oaks Wood, New Close and Birchley Woods, Brandon Wood and Piles Coppice. It makes a considerable contribution to all five purposes of Green Belt:

- *Checking the sprawl of Coventry from the west and Rugby from the east.*

- *Preventing the merging of these urban areas in the long term.*
- *Safeguarding the countryside, particularly the flood plain of the river Avon.*
- *Preserving the setting and special character of the historic towns of Coventry and Rugby.*
- *Panoramic views of the historic cores of both towns can be seen from a number of locations within the broad area.*
- *Assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.’*

Rugby Borough Council Landscape Sensitivity Study

In February 2016 Warwickshire County Council Landscape Architects were appointed by Rugby Borough Council 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. The study was published in August 2016.

The aim of this study was to provide an analysis of landscape character (including historic) for the areas around each settlement, identifying areas of low, moderate and high quality.



Figure 2. Assessment Broad Area 2.
West Midlands Joint Green Belt Study
(June 2015).



The landscape assessment further defines the Landscape Description Units (LDUs) which were identified in the Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment (published in 1993) into an appropriate number of Land Cover Parcels (LCPs). The LCPs are referred to as 'zones' in this report.

The study assigned a landscape sensitivity rating for each 'zone' for both housing and commercial development. The focus for this landscape sensitivity assessment is on identifying the landscape value as well as potential development opportunities for housing.

The Site is located within LCP BR_01, the parcel has been further divided into areas of landscape sensitivity to housing development. Much of the central portion of the Site is covered by a medium sensitivity rating.

A Medium Sensitivity 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.

A High-Medium is defined as; 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.

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.”

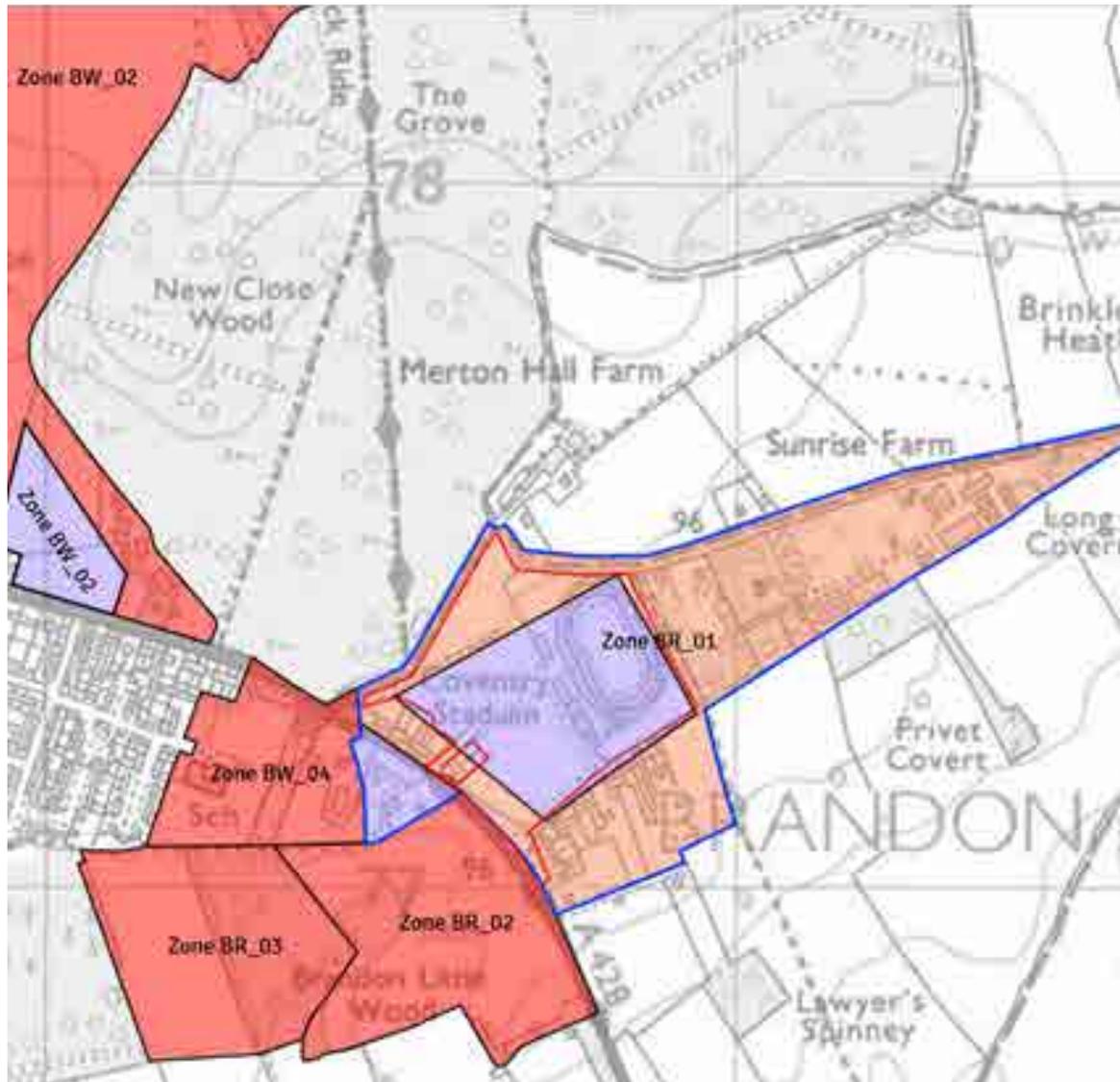


Figure 3. Landscape Assessment of the Borough of Rugby: Sensitivity and Condition Study

As part of Rugby Borough Councils Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) published in 2015 two potential allocations (S14/051 and S14/050) were identified on the Site.

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 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.”

Policy suggestions for zone 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.”

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.”

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





Site access point at the junction of Speedway Lane and the A428 Rugby Road, looking north into the site.

1.2 Landscape Designations and Heritage Assets

Designations

The whole of the Site is located within the Green Belt between Birmingham and Coventry.

Coombe Abbey a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden is located approximately 800m to the north of the Site. In the 18th century the 500 acres of land surrounding the abbey was designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown making it a historically important site in the region.

Coombe Pond, within the Coombe Abbey Registered Park and Garden is also covered with a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Designation. Within a 5km radius of the Site there are a number of other SSSI's, Herald Way Marsh (SSSI) is located approximately 2.2km to the west of the Site adjacent to the A46 and Binley Industrial Estate, Ryton and Brandon Gravel and Brandon Marsh are located approximately 2.2km to the west-southwest of the Site, Wolston Gravel Pit located approximately 2.3km of the Site and, Ryton Wood which is located approximately 4.8km to the south-southwest of the Site at its closest point.

There are a number of Local Nature Reserves (LNR) located within the A46 ring road around Coventry, the closest Herald Wat Marsh is located approximately 2.3km to the west of the Site. Other LNR's located within a 5km radius of the Site include; Stoke Floods, Willenhall Wood and, Stonebridge Meadows.

Blocks of Ancient Woodland, both Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland are notable features scattered across the landscape. The closest areas of Ancient and Semi-natural woodland is New Close/ Birchley Woods which is located adjacent to the Site to the north, Brandon Little Wood is located approximately 300m to the west-southwest of the Site and a larger block of woodland Brandon Woods Ancient Replanted Woodland is located approximately 600m to the west-southwest of the Site.

Heritage Assets

There are no heritage assets (listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments etc) within the Site. In the local vicinity of the 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

Site. Grade I listed Coombe Abbey and Moat which is located approximately 2.3km to the north of the Site. There are also a few Grade II* listed buildings within a 5km radius of the Site. These include The Priory (II*) which is located approximately 1.4km to the south south-east of the Site, West Lodge (GII*) located 1.8km to the north northwest of the Site, The Woodlands (GII*) located approximately 2.4km to the northwest of the Site and, the Grade II* listed Tennis Court at Coombe Abbey.

The closest Scheduled Monument, Brandon Castle is located just over 1km to the south of the Site.



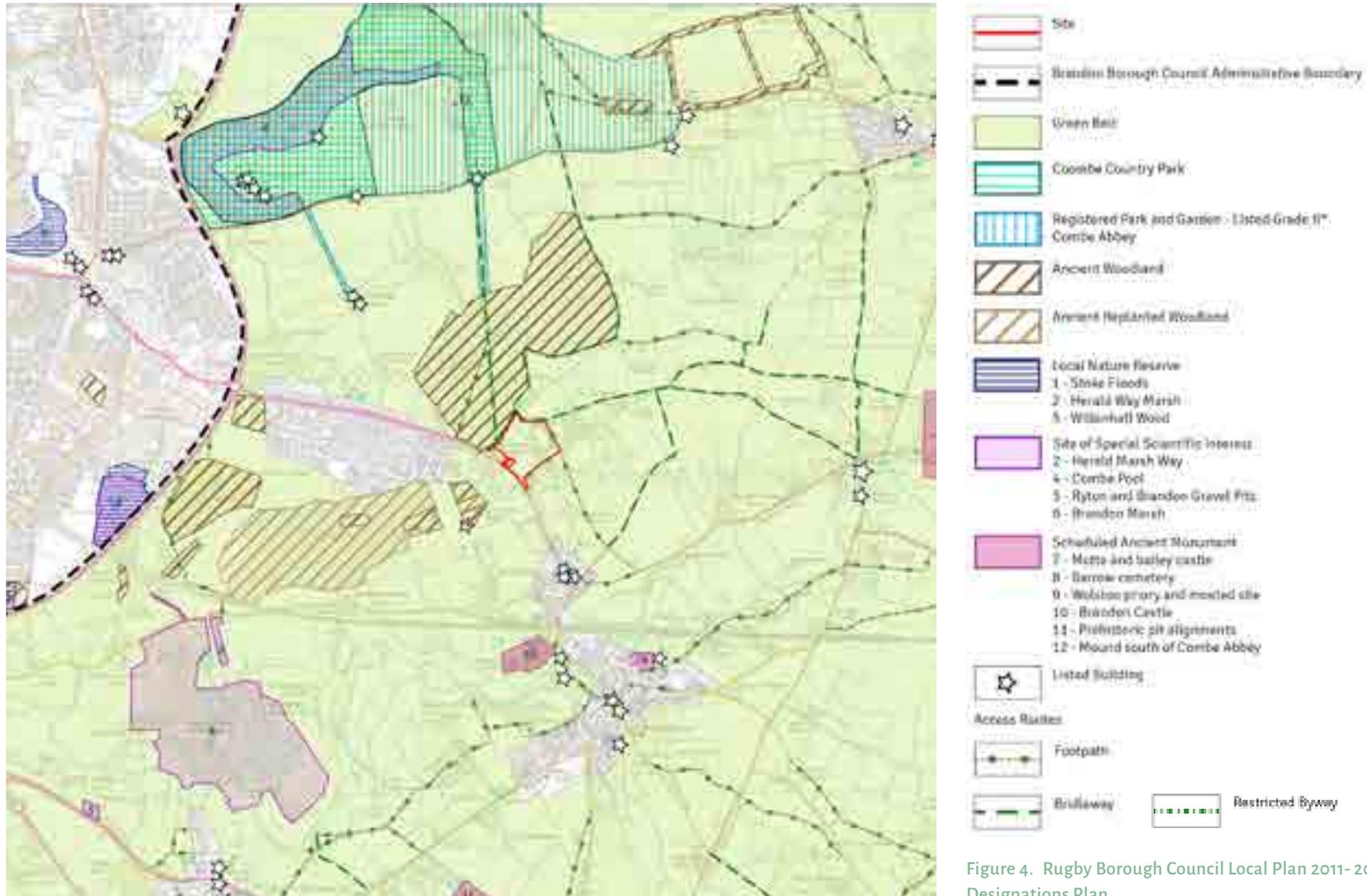


Figure 4. Rugby Borough Council Local Plan 2011- 2031 Designations Plan

2. The Landscape Baseline

2.1 Establishing the Landscape Baseline

This Landscape and Visual Appraisal has, through data research and field work, established the landscape baseline for the Site and the setting using Landscape Character Assessments. The LVA has identified elements and features within the landscape and has through reference to published sources described the landscape character and its key character prompting characteristics. The study has also considered value attached to the landscape.

2.2 The Landscape of the Site and Setting

Landform

There is a very slight change in landform across the Site, there is a Site high point along the north eastern boundary of 97m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). From this high point the landform slopes to a low point of 95m AOD towards the centre of the Site near to the back of properties situated along the A428 Rugby Road. When on Site this change in level is barely discernible.

The landform of the surrounding landscape undulates gently, influenced both by present day watercourses and activities during the late glacial to post glacial period up to 2 million years ago. The Site is located upon a relatively shallow plateau which stretches from the settlement of Binley Woods in the west to Bretford in the east, a distance of proximally 3.5km. This ridgeline is formed of a superficial deposit of Dunsmore Gravel and sits approximately 5–10m higher than the surrounding landform which is predominantly comprised of Bosworth Clay and Silt superficial deposits. Other local high points are located approximately 2km to the north of the Site along the B4027 Coventry Road and approximately 4.5km to the southeast of the Site near Lawford Heath.

Land Use

The stadium building, associated speedway track, outbuildings and spectator stands are all located within the Site. The stadium was previously used for stock car and speedway racing.

The Site also includes hard standing which has previously been used as car parking and as service yards. Portions of security fencing, turn styles and advertising signs remain on Site although many have fallen into disrepair. Areas of amenity grassland occupy areas on the northern and western periphery of the Site and along the banks for the speedway track, within the Site adjacent to much of the

northern boundary is located an area of Semi-natural broadleaved woodland.

The main land uses in the wider landscape to the north, east and west comprise; smaller settlements and to the west the outer suburbs of Coventry. Locally some of the hedges have deteriorated but substantial woodland blocks and belts provide a well wooded overall character. New Close Wood and Birchley Wood located directly adjacent to the Sites north-western boundary. Brandon Wood, Piles Coppice and All Oaks Wood are substantial blocks of mature woodland

Waterbodies and waterways are a common feature across the wider landscape, the River Avon flows to the south of the Site from Rugby across towards Coventry where it confluences with the River Sowe before flowing in a southerly direction. Pool and waterbodies associated with country estates and recreational activities such as Coombe Pool at Coombe Abbey Country Park approximately 2km to the northwest of the Site.

The M6 passes approximately 5km to the north of the Site, between Coventry in the west and Rugby to the east. The mainline railway runs approximately 1km to the south of the Site through the settlement of Brandon.

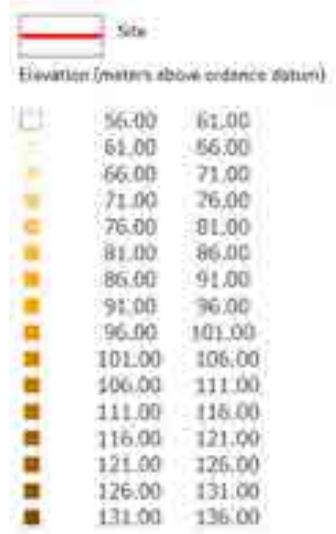


Figure 5. Topography Map

Public Rights of Way and Access

There are no Public Rights of Way which are located within the Site. Warwickshire Centenary Way runs along the A428 Rugby Road which is located in close proximity southwestern boundary of the Site. There is PRoW bridleway (Binley Woods R78) which is located adjacent to the northwest boundary of the Site, this bridleway joins to another bridleway (Binley Woods R78a) which runs along the route of the Twelve O'clock Ride towards Coombe Abbey. The bridleway runs along Gossett Lane and continues on to Merton Hall Farm where it spits traveling in an easterly direction towards Sunrise Farm. A footpath (Brandon and Bretford R303) which is located adjacent to the north eastern boundary of the Site is overgrown and impassable at present. Finally there is a footpath (Brandon and Bretford R143) which is located along Speedway Lane along the south eastern boundary of the Site.

There is a comprehensive network of PRoW's in the wider landscape, many of which follow field boundaries or the route of small tracks. The PRoW network in the local vicinity of the Site is comprised of a mix of footpaths, bridleways, byways and nationally recognised Long Distance Footpaths.

The Site is not publically accessible, although when the Site was in use as a stadium/speedway there were two pedestrian and vehicle access point off A428 Rugby Road and one off Speedway Lane.

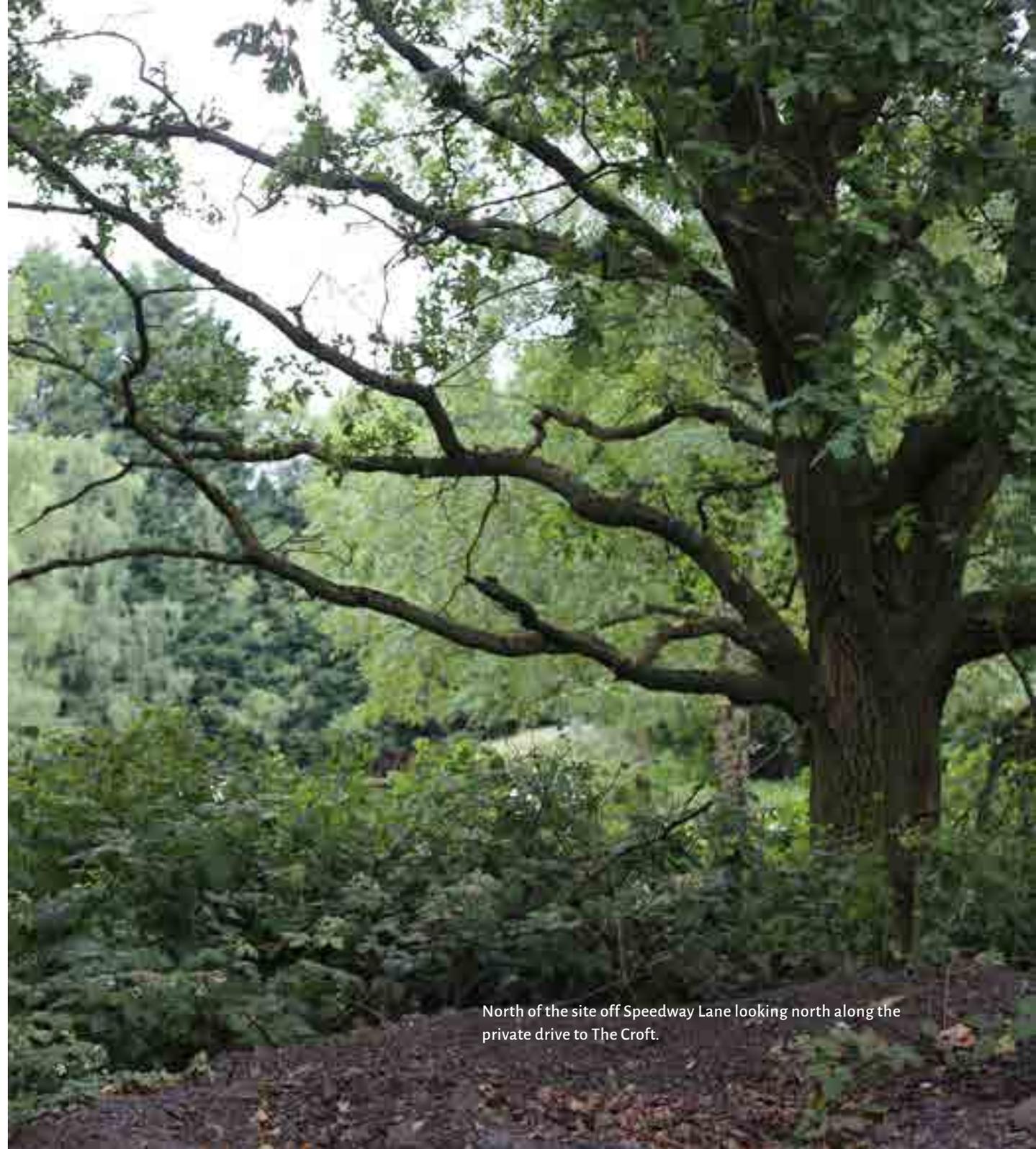
Vegetation

The Site is a single regular brown field Site which contains areas of hardstanding in connection with the Brandon Stadium race track, spectator stands and outbuildings. There is also a proportion of the Site which appears to have been in use as car parking, and as a result is devoid of substantial vegetation. Grass has colonised on the edges of the Site overtime, there is a single length of hedgerow which runs from the furthest northern point of the Site running in southerly direction stopping half way across the width of the Site. Primary species in the hedgerow include; Cherry, Laurel, Hazel and Ash. Mature woodland forms the north-western boundary of the Site, a portion of mature woodland is located within the Site boundary. Species recorded along the northwest boundary include; English Oak, Hybrid Black Poplar, White Willow and Ash.

The north-eastern boundary of the Site is formed by semi-mature hedgerow which contains shrubs reinforced by hedgerow trees. Tree and hedgerow shrub species recorded along this boundary include; Hazel, Laurel, English Oak, Birch, Holly and Sallow. The eastern boundary of the Site is formed of English Oak, Beech and Goat Willow. The south-eastern boundary of the Site is lined by semi mature and mature deciduous and evergreen tree species with an understorey of hedgerow shrubs, the boundary is adjacent to Speedway Lane along which residential properties are situated. Tree and hedgerow shrub

species recorded along the southeast boundary include; Lawson Cypress, English Oak, Goat Willow, Silver Birch, Contorted Willow, Lombardy Poplar, Leyland Cypress, Ash, Hazel, Scots Pine, Weeping Willow, Norway Spruce and Corsican Pine. The south-western boundary of the Site is formed by vegetation located adjacent to the A428 Rugby Road and the boundaries of back gardens of residential properties along the A428 Rugby Road. Tree and shrub species recorded along this boundary include; Silver Birch, Norway Maple, Flowering Cherry, Small-leaved Lime, Rowan, English Oak, Aspen, Elm, Hawthorn, False Acacia, Purple Plum, Lawson Cypress and Holly.

Within the local vicinity of the Site there are substantial blocks of mature broadleaved woodland the glacial plateau landscape supports a substantial amount of ancient woodland, New Close/ Birchley Wood a mature Oak woodland is located immediately adjacent to the Sites northern boundary. Approximately 1km to the southwest of the Site, Brandon Wood occupies a substantial area to the south of the settlement of Binley Woods. Smaller blocks and copses of woodland are also common across the wider landscape particularly to the southwest of the Site.



North of the site off Speedway Lane looking north along the private drive to The Croft.

Boundaries



Figure 6. Aerial Plan showing boundaries



Northwest

The boundary of the Site to the northwest is formed of mature woodland of the New Close/ Birchley Wood Ancient Woodland. The woodland forms a strong well established boundary which restricts views from the north.



Northeast

A tree belts located alongside Gossett Lane forms the boundary to the northeast, this boundary is further reinforced by scrub vegetation, an earth bund and corrugated metal fencing. This vegetation although not classified as ancient it is mature and dense along much of its length which limits long range views out from within the Site.



East

The eastern boundary of the Site is formed of high corrugated metal fencing, sporadically placed mature trees and shrubs, and a short length of laurel hedge associated with the adjacent residential property. Due to dilapidated nature of the fencing the PRoW footpath which runs in close proximity to the entire length of the eastern boundary is impassable due to it being overgrown with vegetation and obstructed by collapsed fencing.



Southeast

Speedway lane is located adjacent to the southwest boundary of the Site, the far eastern extent of the boundary is demarcated with corrugated metal fencing and substantial 10m high lengths of conifer hedging and sporadically placed deciduous trees. The western extent of the boundary is lined with stretches of conifers which are densely planted, however due to the nature of the form of the conifers views can be afforded in particular locations through the understorey of the vegetation.



Southwest

The backs of properties along the A428 Rugby Road are situated adjacent to the far northern extent of the southeast boundary. A mix of close board wooden fencing, garages/workshops, short lengths of hedgerow vegetation and residential shrubbery all form the boundary. The southern extent of the boundary is formed of a mix of semi mature deciduous trees with an understorey of scrub vegetation.

2.3 Landscape Character

The landscape character assessment approach is a descriptive approach that seeks to identify and define the distinct character of landscapes that make up the country. This approach recognises the intrinsic value of all landscapes, not just 'special' landscapes, as contributing factors in people's quality of life, in accordance with the European Landscape Convention. It also ensures that account is taken of the different roles and character of different areas, in accordance with the NPPF Core Principles.

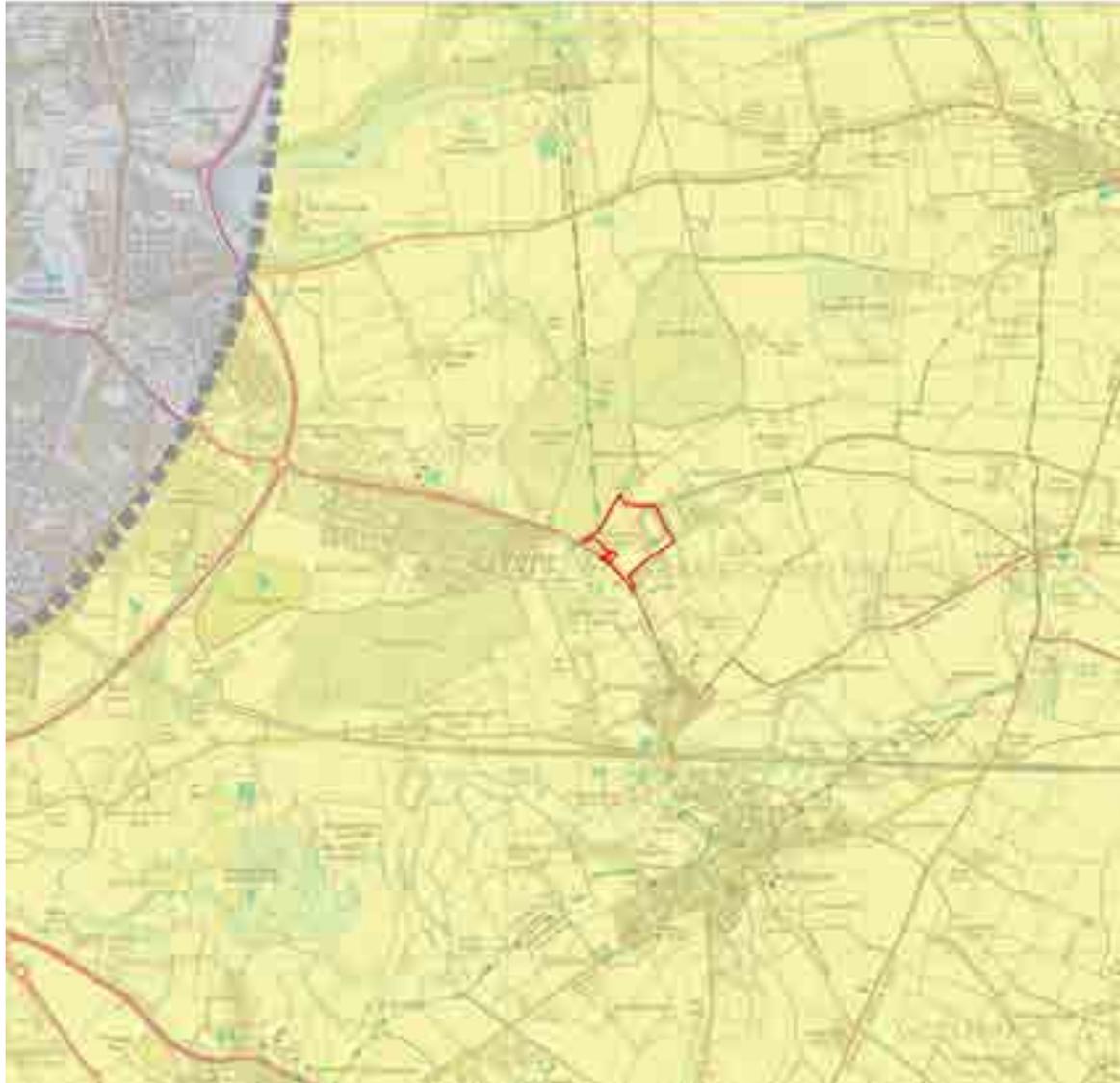
The description of each landscape is used for a basis for evaluation in order to make judgements to guide, for example, development or landscape management.

National Landscape Character

At a National Level the Site is located within National Character Area (NCA) 96: Dunsmore and Feldon. A large elongated NCA which stretches from Coventry/Rugby to the north down past Royal Leamington Spa and Stratford, stopping at the edge of the Cotswold AONB. The key attributes of the Arden NCA 97 that have particular relevance to the consideration of the residential promotion of the Site are in outline as follows:

- “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.”
- The NCA profile also identifies landscape opportunities relevant to the 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.”



- Site
- Boundary between NLCAs
- 96: Dumfries and Fife
- 97: Arden



Figure 7. National Landscape Character Plan

Local Landscape Character

Landscape Assessment of the Borough of Rugby (Sensitivity and Condition Study)

The study was carried out by the Living Landscapes Project in conjunction with Warwickshire County Council and Rugby Borough Council and published in 2006. The aim of the study was to examine the character of the landscape around the town, its sensitivity to change, the condition of the countryside abutting Rugby's urban fringe and beyond.

A Geographical Information System (GIS) data was used to produce a Local Development Unit (LDU) map for the whole County. LDUs can be grouped into Landscape Character Types/Areas, a number of LDUs that abut the edge of the town have been sub-divided into land cover parcels (LCPs).

The methodology adopted in this study involves three main components:

- a character (LDU) analysis to establish what is appropriate in a particular landscape;
- a sensitivity analysis to define the degree to which a landscape can accept change: and,
- a condition/function analysis to define the need/opportunities for enhancement.

The LDU analysis formed the basis for considering the relative sensitivity and capacity of different landscapes to accept change. Landscape sensitivity is a measure of the degree to which the countryside can accept change without causing irreparable, long term damage to the essential character and fabric of the landscape. Sensitivity is closely related to the nature and pattern of key elements that define the character of a particular landscape and any analysis of sensitivity needs to look separately at the fragility of the inherent (natural and cultural) pattern and the degree of visibility within each landscape.

The Site is located within a LDU which has been given a moderate rating on the fragility index and a moderate degree of visibility with 'some potential to mitigate impact through tree and/or woodland planting.' As a result the LDU in which the Site is located has been given a moderate overall sensitivity.

The assessment identifies the Site as being within the Dunsmore Parklands LCT a summary of the relevant observations and summaries 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.

Sensitivity – Fragility: Cultural sensitivity is generally moderate due to the historic coherent pattern which exists in this area. Where it is high this is due to a slightly older, more unified pattern (ancient woodlands are contributing to this pattern). Overall ecological sensitivity is moderate due to the ancient wooded landscape character.

Sensitivity – Visibility: Visibility is generally low, due both to the level of tree cover, as well as to the low-lying, rolling topography. It is moderate when tree cover is reduced.

Overall sensitivity: Overall sensitivity is moderate as a result of both cultural (time depth) and ecological factors – primarily ancient woodlands.

Condition: ... this area is generally in decline."

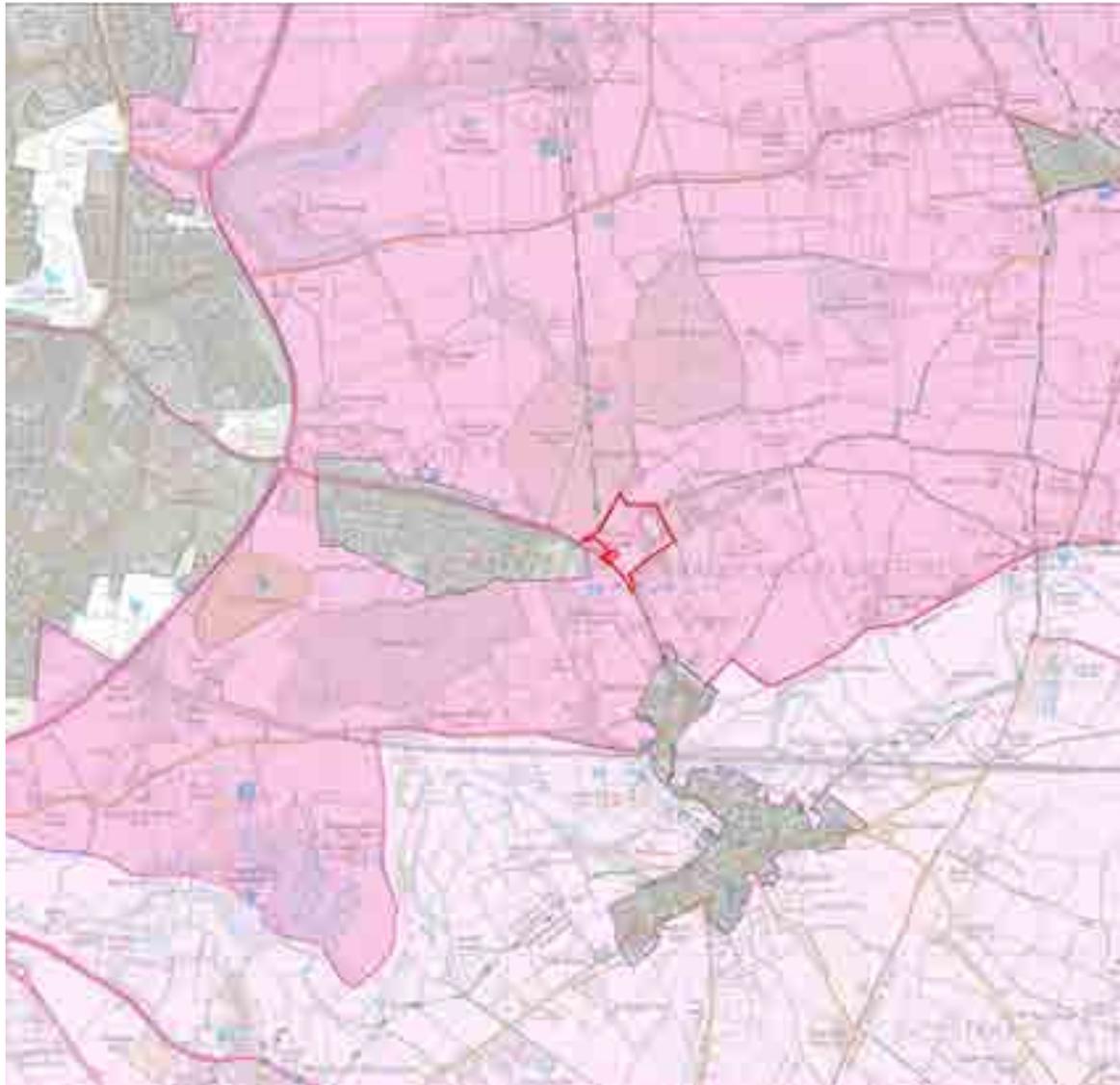


Figure 8. Local Landscape Character Plan

Site Appraisal and Character

The landscape appraisal of the Site has been undertaken and has identified the existing features and character of the Site.

The Site is 10.86 hectares (ha) of previously developed land situated between the settlements of Binley Woods and Brandon, within the administrative boundary of Rugby Borough Council, in the county of Warwickshire.

The principle landscape features of the Site are; the mature woodland along the north western boundary of the Site, the semi-mature hedgerow which contains shrubs reinforced by hedgerow trees along the north-eastern boundary, the semi mature and mature deciduous and evergreen tree species with an understorey of hedgerow shrubs along the south-eastern boundary of the Site and, the scattering of shrub vegetation across much of the Site.

Ancillary features include; a security barriers and fencing at disused vehicle entrance points into the Site; a metal security fence that partitions the Site restricting access into the speedway track and associated builds; and abandoned buildings, speedway track and spectator stands.

Summary of Site Character

In its current state, the Site appears structurally isolated and has a prevailing feeling of containment formed by the vegetation and landform, long views from within the Site are prevented primarily due to the mature boundary vegetation and in some parts existing built form.

Prominent features which can be observed from within the Site consist of the backs of residential properties along the A428 Rugby Road and the residential properties along Speedway Lane. Despite the fact that the Site is well contained visually, there is a noticeable audible connection from frequent passing traffic on the A428 Rugby Road, which is particularly noticeable in the western and southern extent of the Site.

Under the terms of paragraph 109 of the NPPF the Site is considered not to be a Valued Landscape 2.4.

2.4 Landscape Receptors

The key character defining landscape receptors: the landscape components and elements within the Site are set out in the table below with a record of their judged sensitivity to the proposed allocation.

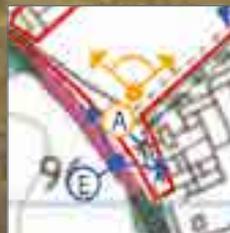
The proposed development would potentially have an effect on the following Landscape Receptors:

Landscape Receptors	Sensitivity
Landscape Character	
National Landscape Character – (NCA 96: Dunsmore and Feldon)	Low
Local Landscape Character (Dunsmore Parklands LCT)	High
Landscape components and elements	
Boundary hedgerows and hedgerow trees	High
Landform	Low

The Site features and character are illustrated by Site Photographs A, B and C.

Site Photograph A: On Site, looking north across the Site

Site Photograph A is taken on Site private land and is not publically accessible, the view looks in a northerly direction across the Site. The foreground of the view is occupied by a substantial area of hardstanding which is now becoming overgrown with grass and scrub like vegetation colonising the area. This photo illustrates the level of containment which much of the vegetation around the boundary of the Site creates. A large portion of the horizon view is occupied with edge to the mature dense New Close Ancient woodland which forms the north western boundary to the Site. To the left of the view the rear aspect and the back gardens of properties along the A428 Rugby Road can be clearly seen, along with semi mature hedgerow trees and hedgerow vegetation. The buildings of the former stadium are prominent features in the view which restrict views to the northeast and east from this location.



Site Photo A: On site, looking north across site

Viewpoint Details

Date: 27/06/2017

Grid Reference: 440693 , 277110

Elevation: 96m AOD

Distance to Site: On Site

Site boundary

Site

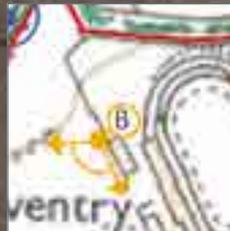
Brandon Stadium



PAN. EXTRACT

Site Photograph B: On Site looking south towards the Site entrance

Site Photograph B looks in a southerly direction across the Site, this view is taken on private land within the Site and is not publically accessible. To the far left of the view the buildings and associated infrastructure form a harsh edge, beyond the south eastern edge of the Site can be identified formed of semi mature and mature deciduous and evergreen tree species with an understorey of hedgerow shrubs. Between the gaps in the vegetation the residential properties along Speedway lane can be seen. In the central portion of the view the now redundant vehicle access into the Site can be seen, defined by fencing and metal barriers and the rear gardens to properties along the A428 Rugby Road which are demarcated by close board wooden fencing and residential shrubbery.



Site Photo B: On Site looking south towards Site entrance

Viewpoint Details

Date: 27/06/2017

Grid Reference: 440708, 277345

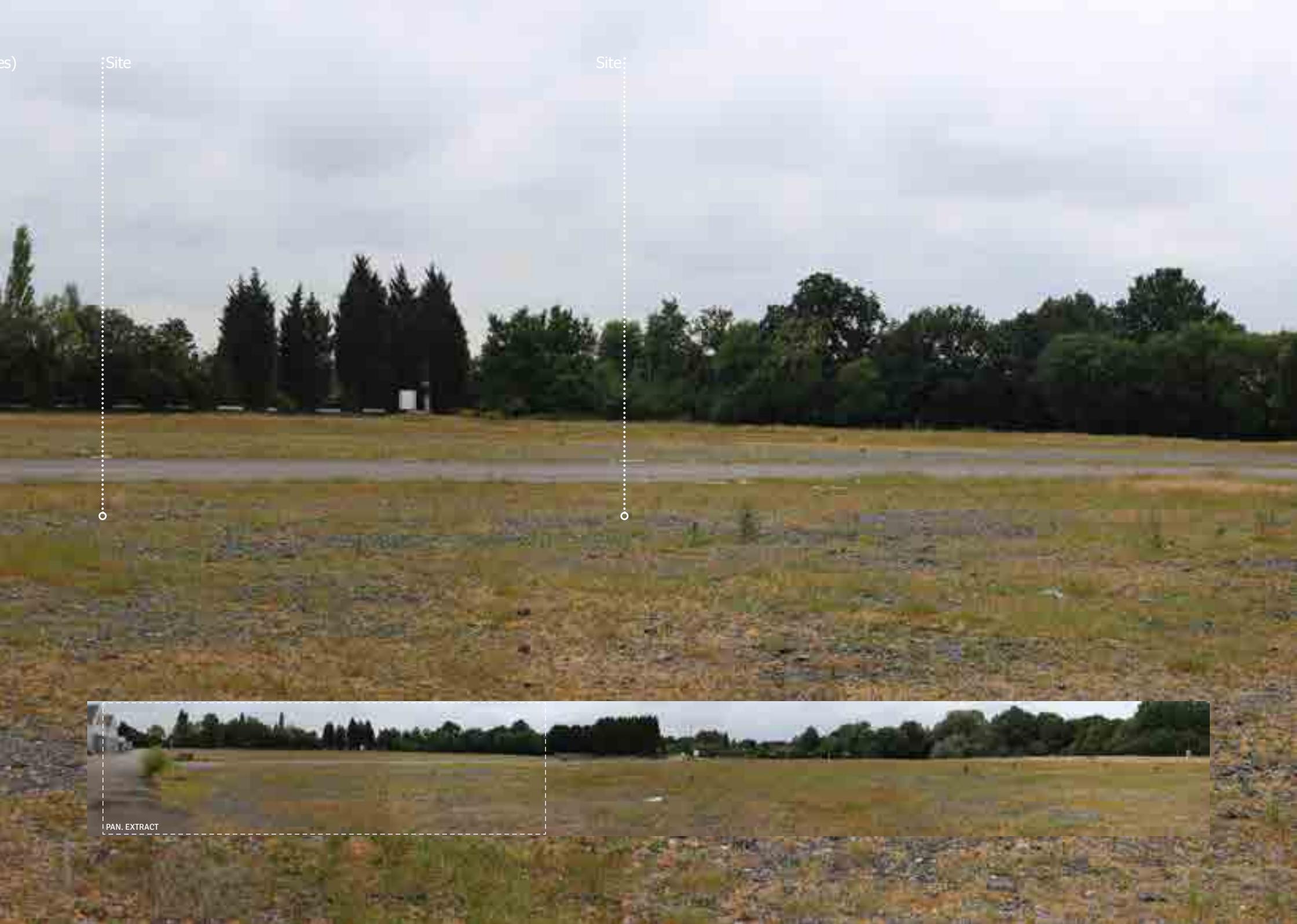
Elevation: 95m AOD

Distance to Site: On Site

es)

Site

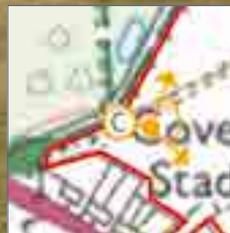
Site



PAN. EXTRACT

Site Photograph C: On Site looking east towards Brandon Stadium

Site Photograph C is taken in the far western extent of the Site so is taken in a location which is not publically accessible. The view looks broadly east towards the redundant stadium buildings and associated outbuildings and security fencing which occupies the central portion of the horizon of the view. The foreground of the view is occupied by a substantial area of hardstanding which has been colonised by grasses and areas of shrubbery. Much of the north-eastern and north-western boundaries of the Site are clearly visible demarcated by dense lengths of vegetation – mature trees with an understorey of well-established shrubs. The single line of hedgerow vegetation within the Site can be seen in the view, the vegetation is substantial and stands at between 3-4m tall with sporadic gaps in places.



Site Photo C: On Site looking east towards Brandon (Coventry) Stadium

Viewpoint Details

Date: 27/06/2017
Grid Reference: 440561, 277305
Elevation: 95m AOD
Distance to Site: On Site

Brandon Stadium

Site



PAN. EXTRACT

3. The Visual Baseline

3.1 Establishing the Visual Baseline

The likely extent of possible visibility of the Site and of the proposed development are important considerations and their definition enables an understanding, evaluation and appraisal of who may, potentially, experience a change in the view as a consequence of the development.

The best practice methodology set out in the 2013 Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment advises that the Visual Baseline is established using Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping. In this LVA ZTV modelling has been used extensively to inform fieldwork. The LVA study has also identified people who may be affected by changes, resulting from the development, in the visual baseline. An understanding of what the landscape at the edge of the settlement looks like on the ground and who the people are that look over the land: the Visual Receptors. A level of evaluation of the expectation that Visual Receptors may have, for their experience of the view is also made based on their location and activity.

3.2 Zone of Theoretical Visibility

The visual qualities and characteristics of the Site and the setting are important matters. This LVA follows a best practice methodology (identifying the extent of potential visibility, initially through Zone of Visual Influence mapping that guided the fieldwork. An understanding of what the landscape at the edge of the settlement looks like on the ground and who the people are that look over the land (the Visual Receptors) and some degree of evaluation of what they are likely to notice from their homes, or from paths and roads nearby, has been carefully evaluated.

The initial field work, informed by the ZTV model, was undertaken to define an appropriate study area from the Site boundary and was made on the basis of the extent of landscape character and features and views from the eye level of a person standing on the ground. This field work was undertaken from publicly accessible viewpoints within the immediate agricultural land and settlement. The visibility of the Site is strongly influenced by the landform, built form and vegetation, and by the extent and type of land use.

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) is a specialist programme and is defined within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment as an: “Area within which a proposed development may have an influence or effect on visual amenity”.

The ZTV illustrations in this study give a digital representation of predicted zones or areas from which a selected point within the site, may, theoretically, be visible.

The ‘Key-TERRA-FIRMA ZTV’ software has been used in this study. The principle of the application works by a series of ‘rays’ plotted to radiate from a selected point on site – the Target Point, or multiple points from CAD polylines, in a manner that represents hundreds of section lines drawn and calculated through the mapped landform of the setting. The visibility mapping is reliant on landform survey data from Ordnance Survey. Manmade elements: for example, railway or road embankments, are generally not mapped and where relevant, are added to the model from separate data sets.

The ZTV illustrations in this study give a computer representation of zones or areas that may be visible from the defined Target Points. The Visual Envelope is the map of the areas (zones) that capture all the areas of potential visibility. It is essential to make the point that this is a theoretical model that gives a valuable guide to potential visibility. The ZTV is absolute where the ground itself creates a barrier between the target point and the viewer location. Where there are no rays there will be not possible visibility of the target point. Where there are rays there may be visibility but it must be further investigated on the ground.

In this study, many of the numerous above ground obstructions that exist in settlements and in the countryside, that may cause obstructions to lines of sight: structures, buildings, trees and woodland, hedgerows etc., have also been added to the ZTV model as Visual Barriers (VBs). Some ZTVs are run as 'bare earth' models with no above ground barriers or obstructions factored-in to the model but in this study a more realistic representation has been prepared.

There is a degree of judgement in the selection of the Visual Barriers in all ZTV models as it is not possible to map and model every single obstruction – the data does not exist. VBs have been carefully modelled and are placed using GIS data sets. The ZTVs in this study show these Visual Barriers as annotated additions to the map. The degree to which VBs cause differing degrees of obstruction to the view lines is not modelled. In this study trees and buildings are modelled to cause the same substantial interruption to the line of sight.

Beyond these identified and declared VBs the illustrations of ZTV's for the site take no account, other for the Visual Barriers annotated on the drawings, of any other obstacle within the extent of the study area – the extent of the ZTV base. The visibility rays record the interruption to lines of sight that results from intervening VBs and by higher ground. On the maps where there are no visibility rays the site cannot be seen from an eyelevel vantage point of 1.60m above ground as the landform and the modelled VBs will prevent the view.



LEGEND

— Site Boundary

- - - Radius from target point @ 1km intervals

ZTV Construct - Pre Development

Visible Rays

Target Point

Visible Barriers

Buildings
Assumed height 10m

Woodland
Assumed height 12m

NOTES:

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) illustrates likely areas of visibility of the proposed development based on topographical (bare earth) information. This ZTV also takes into account features (visual barriers) that appear in the landscape that may block visibility lines such as buildings and woodland. Visual barriers are modelled as a block at assumed heights. In this case buildings are modelled at 10m AGL and woodland at 12m AGL.

The ZTV has been run at ground level to a viewers eye height; assumed at 1.60m AGL. The ZTV has been run from the following location and height:

Easting: 440709.507
 Northing: 277271.094
 Elevation: 96.105m AOD
 Height: 0m AGL

This ZTV has been run to an extent of 7km and therefore does not show possible areas of visibility outside of this area.

Figure 9. ZTV - Pre-development



LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- - - - Radius from target point @ 1km intervals

ZTV Construct - Post Development



Visible Barriers

- Buildings
Assumed height 10m
- Woodland
Assumed height 12m

NOTES:

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) illustrates likely areas of visibility of the proposed development based on topographical (bare earth) information. This ZTV also takes into account features (visual barriers) that appear in the landscape that may block visibility lines such as buildings and woodland. Visual barriers are modelled as a block at assumed heights. In this case buildings are modelled at 10m AGL and woodland at 12m AGL.

The ZTV has been run to the roof ridge height of the proposed development modelled at 12m. The ZTV has been run from the following location and height:

Easting: 440768.246
 Northing: 277306.411
 Elevation: 108.038m AOD
 Height: 12m AGL

This ZTV has been run to an extent of 7km and therefore does not show possible areas of visibility outside of this area.

Figure 10. ZTV - Post-development

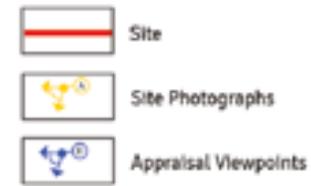
3.3 Appraisal Viewpoints

This LVA contains five representative Appraisal Viewpoints from where there are views of the Site. The Appraisal Viewpoints are the selected locations where judgements about the potential effect on the visual baseline, that may occur because of the development, have been made. The Visual Receptors that may experience the views at these locations and their activity are set out and are described. The photographs are annotated and are summer time views showing trees and hedgerows in leaf. Where deciduous vegetation currently filters or obscures sight lines the change to the winter conditions may cause a notable change in the content of views. This may apply for instance to the journey Speedway Lane and the A428 Rugby Road.

The visual appraisal has also been undertaken to determine the relationship and role of the Site within its surroundings and its approximate extent of visibility within the wider landscape from publicly accessible locations. This study has, through ZTV work and map based research followed by field work, established the extent of Visual Baseline for the Site.



Looking southeast along A428 Rugby Road to the site entrances.



LVA Photographic Record

Photographs were taken with a Cannon EOS 6D with a standard fixed 50mm lens

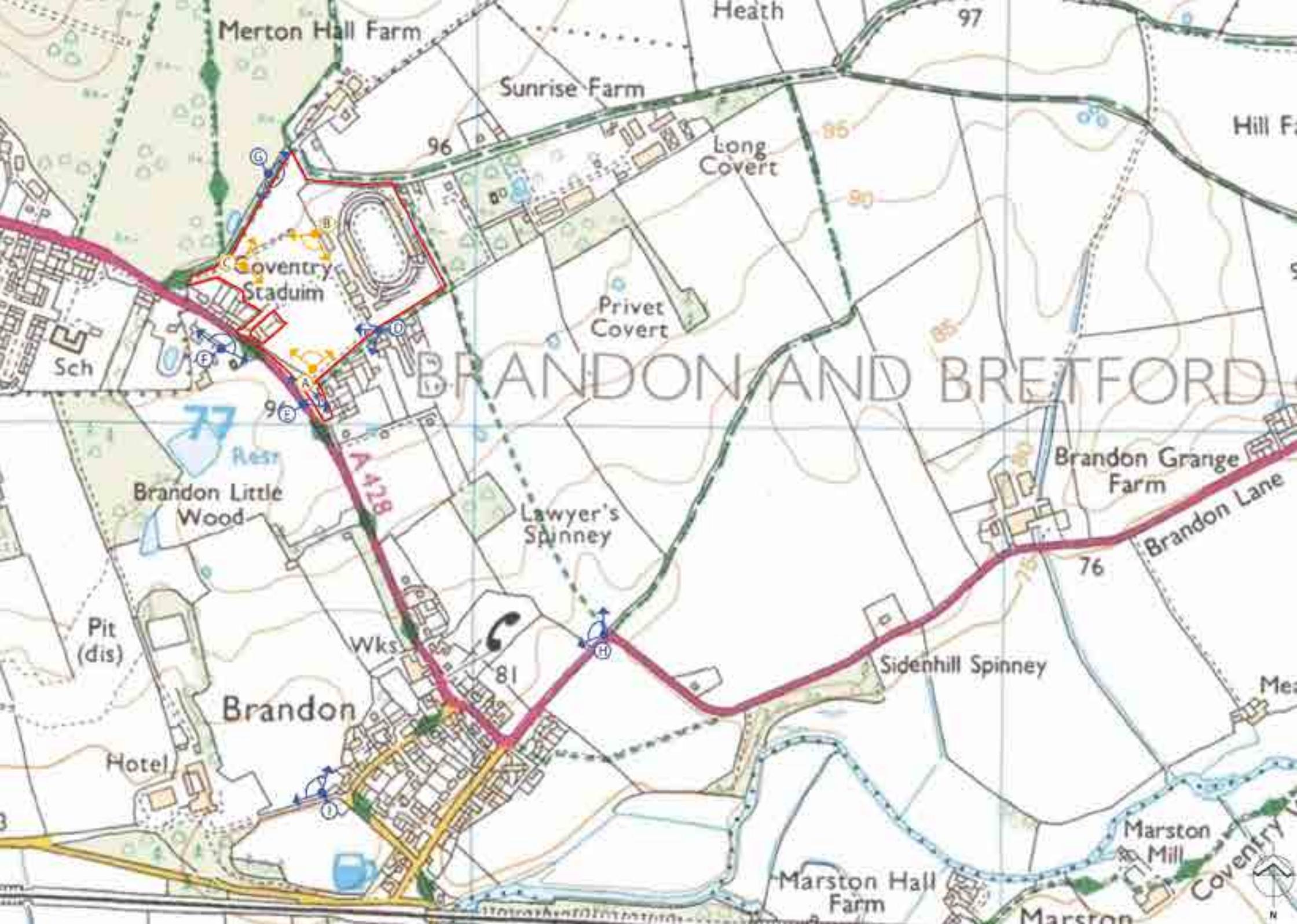
The photographs are eye level views with the camera held at approximately 1.60m above the ground.

Photomontages have been made with panoramic images taken at approximately 50% over-lap of the image. Photographs have been joined manually in Photoshop and cross checked against each process for accuracy.

Grid referenced are given for all of the photograph locations. These are not high resolution professional Visually Verified imagery ready photographs. They have been taken by Landscape Architects working on the LVA. They are selected to give a representational record of the Site and its setting.

Figure 11. Viewpoint Location Plan Aerial

Figure 12. Viewpoint Location Plan OS Map



Merton Hall Farm

Heath

97

Sunrise Farm

Hill F

96

Long Covert

Coventry Stadium

Privet Covert

BRANDON AND BRETTFORD

Sch

Rest

Brandon Little Wood

Lawyer's Spinney

Brandon Grange Farm

Brandon Lane

76

Pit (dis)

Wks

81

Sidenhill Spinney

Brandon

Hotel

Marston Hall Farm

Marston Mill

Coventry

Appraisal Viewpoint D: On Site looking south east towards properties on Speedway Lane

Appraisal Viewpoint D is taken off Site on Speedway Lane which is a single tarmacked road which runs alongside the southern boundary of the Site. Single storey residential properties are located on the southerly aspect of the road face in a broadly northerly direction, often set back slightly from the roadway, their frontages filled with generally well kept gardens with associated shrubbery and car parking spaces. Through a gap in the vegetation over a security gate the hardstanding which occupies a large area within the Site can be seen, the mature dense woodland which forms the northern boundary to the Site forms the horizon of the view. This is representative of the potential view which could be experienced by users of Speedway Lane which includes vehicular users, cyclists and pedestrians who would experience a transient partial view into the Site, there is a footpath along located along the length of the road. This view is could also be experienced to some extent by residents of the properties which face the Site.



Speedway Lane

Site boundary



Appraisal Viewpoint D: On Site looking south east towards properties on Speedway Lane

Viewpoint Details

Date: 27/06/2017

Grid Reference: 440802, 277161

Elevation: 97m AOD

Distance to Site: 2m

Site



Appraisal Viewpoint E: Off Site from Rugby Road, looking north east towards Site

Appraisal Viewpoint E is taken from the footway which is set within a deep grass verge situated alongside the A428 Rugby Road, on the opposite side of the road residential properties face onto a layby. In the central portion of the view the furthest most southern extent of the Site can be clearly seen demarcated with mature hedgerow trees which includes some conifers. The stadium buildings can be seen through the gap in the vegetation over the security gate, to the right side of the vehicle access point the entrance to Speedway Lane can be seen. This view is representative of the potential partial view which could be experienced by users of the A428 Rugby Road particularly pedestrians by also cyclists and vehicle users. It is important to note that this view is located on the route of the Centenary Way Long Distance Footpath, although this view would be transient in nature. Due to the orientation of the view it is more likely to be experienced by users traveling in a southerly direction.



Appraisal Viewpoint E: Off Site from Rugby Road, looking north east towards Site

Viewpoint Details

Date: 13/07/2017

Grid Reference: 440688, 277045

Elevation: 97m AOD

Distance to Site: 25m

Site boundary:

Speedway Lane:

Property on Speedway Lane:



Appraisal Viewpoint F: Off Site from Rugby Road, looking north east towards Site

Appraisal Viewpoint F is taken on the A428 Rugby Road, in the centre of the view the stadium buildings can be seen over the low security barrier. This view is representative of the partial view which could potentially be experienced by users of the A428 particularly pedestrians, including users of the Centenary Way Long Distance Footpath, but also to some extent vehicular users and cyclists. Several of the residential properties located along this section of the A428 Rugby Road can be clearly seen in the view their front boundaries marked by a mix of fencing treatments, low walls, shrubbery and the occasional more mature tree. Due to the nature of the boundary treatments of the residential properties in combination with the height of the buildings there is little opportunity to view the Site from other locations along the A428 Rugby Road.



Property on Rugby Road

Brandon Stadium



Appraisal Viewpoint F: Off Site from Rugby Road, looking north east towards Site

Viewpoint Details

Date: 13/07/2017

Grid Reference: 440553, 277163

Elevation: 96m AOD

Distance to Site: 15m

Site:

Properties on Rugby Road

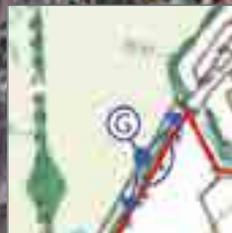
Rugby Road



PAN. EXTRACT

Appraisal Viewpoint G: Off Site from Gossett Lane, looking south to Site

Appraisal Viewpoint G is located on the bridleway (Binley Woods R78) which runs adjacent to the north western boundary of the Site along Gossett Lane a crushed stone and gravel single track road. New Close and Birchley Woods Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland falls to the north of the bridleway and continues up towards the B4428 Coventry Road. To the south of the bridleway there is mature vegetation which forms the boundary of the Site. Through the gappy understorey vegetation glimpsed views into the Site, this view is representative of the truncated view which could potentially be experienced by users of the PRow, and also visitors and residents of Merton Hall and Sunrise Farm.



Appraisal Viewpoint G: Off Site from Gossett Lane, looking south to Site

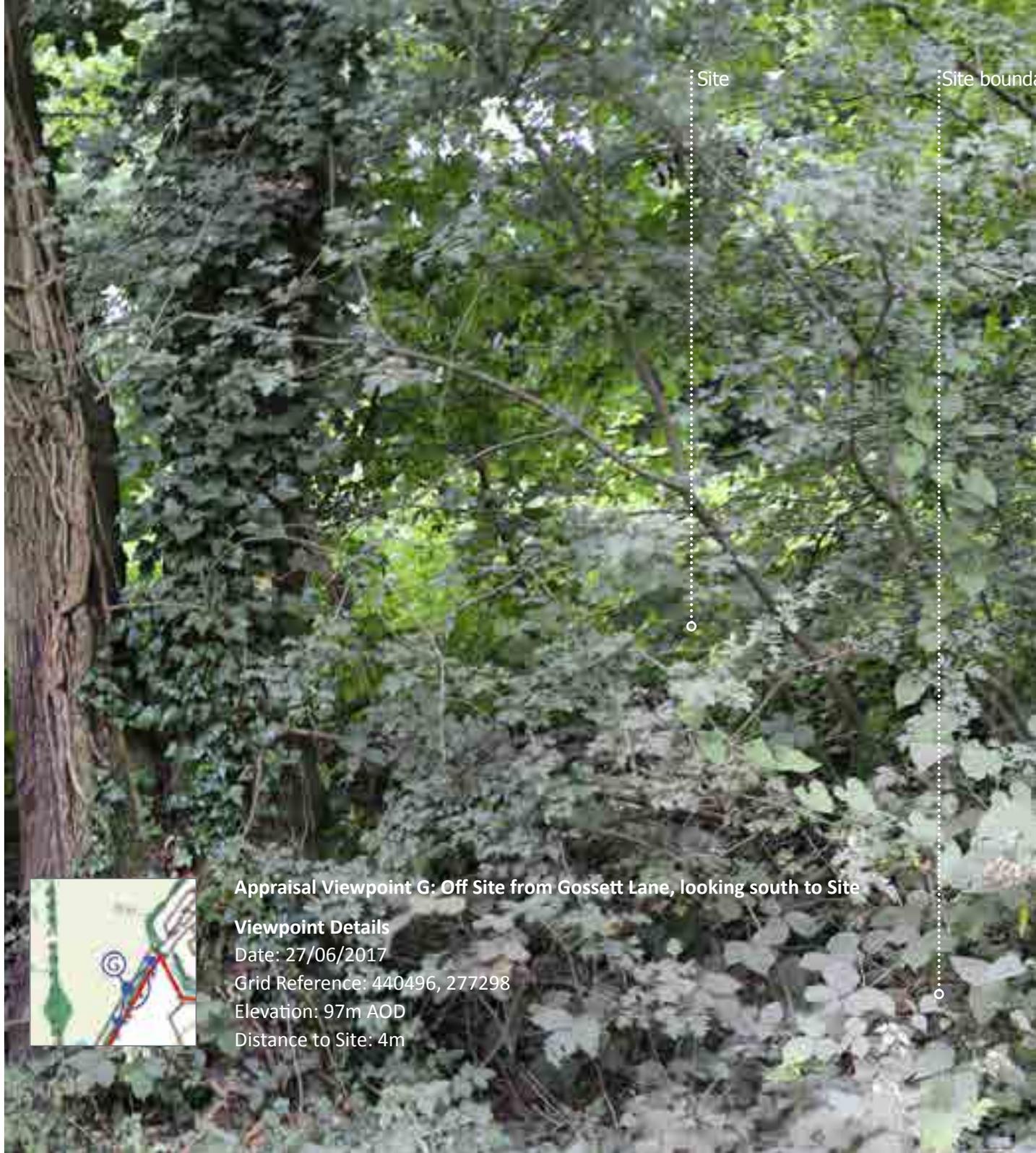
Viewpoint Details

Date: 27/06/2017

Grid Reference: 440496, 277298

Elevation: 97m AOD

Distance to Site: 4m



ary

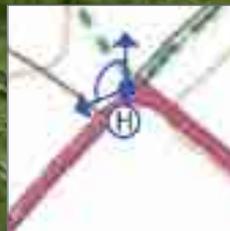
Properties on Rugby Road



Twelve o'clock Ride

Appraisal Viewpoint H: Off Site from PRow off Bretford Road, looking north west

Appraisal Viewpoint H is located off Site on a PRow footpath (Brandon and Bretford R143) located off the A428 Rugby Road to the south of the Site, the view looks in a northerly direction across a gently sloping agricultural field towards the Site. To the far right of the view residential properties and agricultural buildings can be identified located on the eastern boundary of the settlement of Brandon. Much of the horizon of the view is formed of mature copses and lengths of dense woodland, in the centre of the view Lawyers Spinney sits within the agricultural field. The PRow footpath takes a route in a northerly direction towards Speedway Lane the Site is obscured from view by mature vegetation. Between the mature vegetation a single residential property can be identified which is situated on Speedway Lane. This view is representative of the potential truncated view which could be afforded by users of the PRow footpath traveling in a northerly direction and to some extent road users including pedestrians, cyclists and vehicular users.



Appraisal Viewpoint H: Off Site from PRow off Bretford Road, looking north west

Viewpoint Details

Date: 27/06/2017

Grid Reference: 441255, 276615

Elevation: 76m AOD

Distance to Site: 0.7km

Lawyer's Spinney

Property on Speedway Lane

Site (obscured by trees)



PAN_EXTRACT

Appraisal Viewpoint I: Off Site from Lane off Main Street, looking north west

Appraisal Viewpoint I is located off Site on the driveway to the Brandon Hall and Spa Hotel, this view is representative of the truncated view which could be experienced by both guests and workers at the hotel. In the foreground of the view is occupied with the former polo grounds of Brandon Hall dotted with mature Oak trees. Brandon Little Wood can be identified on the horizon of the view, from this location the views of the Site are prevented due to the multiple layers of mature vegetation.



Brandon Wood



Appraisal Viewpoint I: Off Site from Lane off Main Street, looking north west

Viewpoint Details

Date: 27/06/2017

Grid Reference: 440717, 276307

Elevation: 78m AOD

Distance to Site: 0.8km

Brandon Little Wood:



PAN. EXTRACT

3.4 Visual Receptors

The visual appraisal was undertaken from publicly accessible viewpoints within the surrounding landscape, such as from roads and footpaths to determine the approximate extent of the area from which the Site is visible from the eye level of a person standing on the ground. The potential visibility of the Site is largely determined by the intervening landform and built form, as topographic features such as ridgelines and subtle undulations may block or curtail views towards the Site. In addition land cover has an important role in determining potential visibility as woodland, tree belts or built forms may contribute to additional blocking, filtering or curtailing of views.

There is, in most visual appraisals, a continuum of degrees of visibility ranging from no view of the Site to full, open views. To indicate the degree of visibility of the Site from roads, public rights of way and properties, three categories of visibility have been used in this appraisal:

- Open view: A clear view of a significant proportion of the Site within the wider landscape.
- Partial view: A view of part of the Site or a filtered view of the Site, or a distant view in which the Site is perceived as a small part of the view; and
- Truncated / No view: Views towards the Site are curtailed by visual barriers, such as intervening topography, vegetation or built forms.

Visual receptors are individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by the proposals for development. A range of potential visual receptors identified through desk and field based investigations. Predominantly these comprise of local receptors close to the Site and in elevated areas in the surrounding landscape.

Those receptors most likely to be affected by potential development include:

Visual Receptors	Sensitivity	Representative Viewpoint
Residents on Speedway Lane and A428 Rugby Road	High	D & F
Public Right of Way users within 2km of the Site, including the Centenary Way Long Distance Footpath	High	D, E, F, G & H
Users of Speedway Lane and A428 Rugby Road, including vehicular users and cyclists	Medium/ Low	D, E & F
Workers and visitors to Brandon Hall Hotel accessing along a private drive	Medium	I

Part One Summary of the Landscape and Visual Baselines

Dunsmore Parklands Landscape Character Type is a well wooded landscape where large blocks of woodland, smaller copses, parkland and belts of trees create a sequence of linked wooded spaces which define the scale and pattern of the landscape. Opportunities should be taken to enhance existing tree belts are areas of mature woodland to ensure a level of enclosure is retained to ensure that distant views across the landscape cannot be afforded as this would distort the scale of the landscape.

In summary, the Site is well contained in views from the wider landscape as a result of substantial belts of mature vegetation and areas of well-established woodland around its boundaries New Close/ Birchley Wood along the northern boundary and mature vegetation along the eastern, western and southern boundaries provide robust, defensible and permeant boundaries. The Site is previously developed land, comprising considerable areas of hard standing; the storage of industrial style metal cabins; and the existing built form of the stadium buildings, severally limiting its openness and sensitivity. The presence of the dilapidated buildings on Site degrade and exert

an unattractive character over the Site as a whole. Unattractive fencing and access barriers are also a detracting feature on the periphery of the Site which particularly visible from the A428 Rugby Road.

The location of the 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, results in views of the Site from publically accessible areas being extremely limited. Views of the Site are predominantly restricted to a limited number of near distance views from short lengths of local roads including Speedway Lane adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site and the A428 Rugby Road to the west of the Site; and from a limited number of residential properties along Speedway Lane and A428 Rugby Road. Views from PROWs and residential properties are valued at a local level.

Where the Site is visible, it appears unattractive and degraded, particularly in near distance views from the south and west. There are no long distance views of the Site from the surrounding landscape as a result of a combination of intervening topographical variation; and vegetation, including tree belts and woodland blocks.

Part 2

The Development Proposal

4. The Development Proposal

The design and siting of the Proposed Development has taken into consideration landscape and visual matters in order to reduce the potential for adverse effects and take advantage of the landscape and visual opportunities present within the Site and its locality. This mitigation by design approach is integrated into the parameters for the Proposed Development and includes the following measures:

- Minimising the influence of built form in views into the Site from Speedway Lane and the A428 Rugby Road by reinforcing/enhancing the understorey of the existing vegetation along the southern boundary of the Site and enhancing the boundary vegetation along the western boundary with hedgerow trees and understorey planting where vegetation is currently sparse or in poor condition, in accordance with published character assessment to soften views of the proposed built form from along Speedway Lane and the A428 Rugby Road. Indicative species: Field maple, Common alder, Silver birch, Downy Birch, Holly, Crab apple, Aspen, Wild cherry, Sessile oak, Pedunculate oak and Dogwood, Hazel, Midland Hawthorn, Hawthorn, Wild private, Blackthorn, and Guelder rose as shrubs. Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) should not be specified due to *Chalara dieback*;
- Native tree planting throughout the development should be focused on the creation of a framework that creates a backbone for the development: along the key roads, on the corners of key vistas and at nodal points/feature squares throughout the development to enhance the overall wooded character of the to create an more unified landscape in line with the management strategy of the Dunsmore Parklands LCT;
- Provision of a variety of locally characteristic green infrastructure, including meadow grassland, feature trees, hedgerows and woodland, amenity grassland and shrub planting, thereby offering structural diversity;
- Provision of public amenity space and pedestrian linkage across the Site.
- Set back of built form from the boundary along Speedway Lane and the western boundary adjacent to the A428 Rugby Road to respect the existing residential properties; and
- Focal planting of shrubs to accentuate the areas of public open space to provide legibility within the Site.

It is important to avoid, where possible, adverse impact on or removal of hedgerows and trees along field boundaries, individual trees and valuable field edge vegetation, which currently offers relatively good screening of the site. The illustrative layout for the proposals allows for retention and enhancement of the majority of the boundary hedgerows with only localised losses for the Site access off the A428 Rugby Road.

Where localised removal of vegetation takes place, measures should be taken to re-establish compensatory vegetation as part of the development proposals. Due to the nature of the development in relation to the surrounding landscape features, there is scope for direct mitigation measures. There is an opportunity to plant a substantial quantity of trees within the proposed development, further strengthening the vegetated character of the surrounding area. This would visually integrate the scheme into the surrounding landscape.

The development is set away from landscape designations, cultural and historical assets. Indirect mitigation is introduced through the careful consideration of design of the proposed development in response to existing character.



-  Site boundary
-  Primary vehicular access point
-  Pedestrian access point
-  Residential development
-  Potential location for single storey development
-  Indicative location of proposed new dwelling on Rugby Road
-  Retained access to new dwelling and existing properties on Rugby Road (front and rear access as appropriate)
-  Public Open space
-  Existing tree/ hedgerow planting
-  New trees/ hedgerow planting
-  Proposed area for attenuation
-  Foul pump station
-  Area for formal play
-  Informal/ pedestrian footpath
-  Mown path
-  Existing PROW- Footpath
-  Existing PROW- bridleway
-  Existing PROW- Tropic O'Clock Ride

Figure 13. Illustrative Masterplan

5. The Main Landscape and Visual Principles

5.1 Landscape Capacity

The 2016 Rugby Borough Council (RBC) Landscape Sensitivity and Condition Study is reproduced in part in Section 1 of this LVA. The 2016 RBC study places the majority of the Site within Zone BR_01 and describes the land as having a Medium quality in terms of condition and suggests that the zone has a medium sensitivity that has some potential or capacity to accommodate relevant development in some situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Capacity of a landscape is a consequence of defined qualities and characteristics and the ability to be resilient to a specified proposal. This LVA has looked to inform the extent, height, and broad placement of a residential development proposal in a manner that will not cause significant adverse effects. The development proposal will make a successful fit within the landscape of the Site in a manner that sits within the capacity of its landscape to accommodate the change successfully.

The work recorded in this LVA has been undertaken to explore the landscape and visual matters associated with the consideration of the residential-led development of the Site and in so doing to further inform the refinement of a development concept for the Site.

The recording, description and analysis of the landscape and visual baseline, through desk and field based work, has identified key constraints and opportunities in the landscape of the Site. In part constraints to development have to be informed by a knowledge of a possible development proposal, and in part by an appreciation of the baseline components in the landscape. The process contributes to an approach that ensures that the proposal is informed by the landscape and responds directly to the character of the Site and the setting; the aim is to make a proposal that belongs to the setting and makes a successful fit in the landscape.

The early concepts for the Site have been informed by the landscape and visual analysis work recorded in this study. The LVA has ensured appreciation of the landscape character of the Site, its relationship with the settlement pattern and with the host countryside are relevant considerations that have contributed to the shape and placement of the proposed land uses. The findings of this study now provide a further layer of knowledge and appraisal of the landscape and visual baselines of the Site and its setting.

Constraints

- The western boundary alongside the A428 Rugby Road is a relatively fast moving potentially noisy route, its influence has an impact of the tranquillity on the western and southern parts of the Site;
- Residential of properties along the A428 Rugby Road located directly adjacent to the western boundary of the Site that have the opportunity to experience views of the Site particularly from upper floor windows;
- Residents of properties along Speedway Lane who's properties face towards the Site, who have the opportunity to experience views of the Site from rooms at the front of their properties;
- Users of the A428 Rugby Road and Speedway including vehicular users, cyclists and pedestrians, who would the possibility to obtain glimpsed and partial views of the Site
- Users of the PRow network including the Centenary Way Long Distance Route and PRowS located in close proximity to the Site who could potentially experience glimpsed and partial views of the Site.
- The Green Belt designation which currently covers the whole Site.

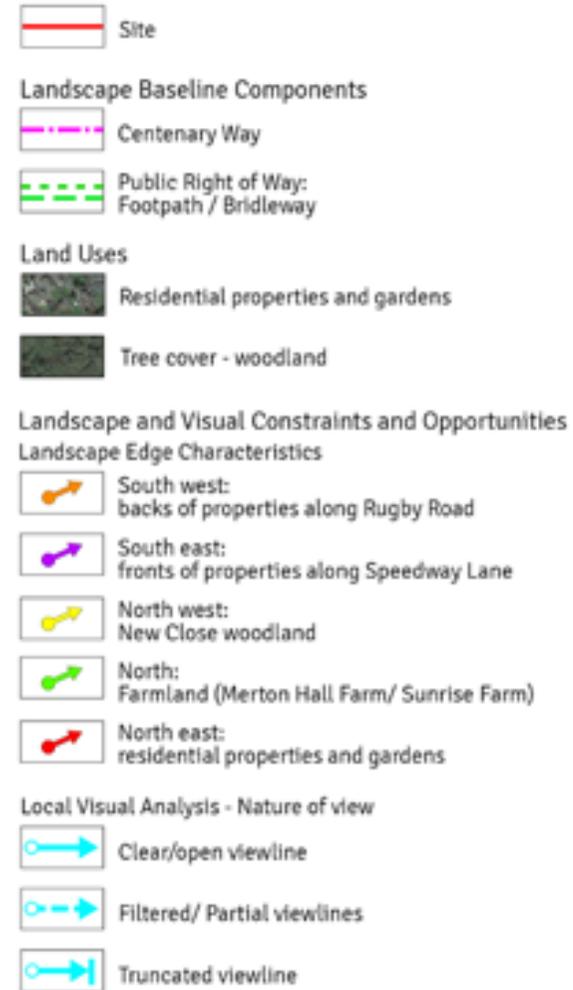


Figure 14. Landscape and Visual Constraints and Opportunities Plan

Opportunities

- Enhance Green Infrastructure of the Site in line with landscape strategy for the Dunsmore Parklands LCT linking, enhancing and protecting mature existing green assets such as hedgerows and trees;
- The active management and strengthening of the hedgerow framework, trees and woodlands, including replacement and new planting, to help to ensure the conservation of these key features for the long term as well as diversity and connectivity of habitat;
- Strengthen the boundaries of the Site with additional shrub and characteristic woodland planting where vegetation is sparse or in poor condition to filter views.
- Enhance all boundaries of the Site to provide a distinctive robust boundary to the Site and the new edge to the Green Belt;
- Implement succession planting to ensure the future of hedgerow trees, with species selection appropriate to the particular character of Brandon/Binley Woods Downy Indicative species: Field maple, Common alder, Silver birch, Downy Birch, Holly, Crab apple, Aspen, Wild cherry, Sessile oak and Pedunculate oak. Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) should not be specified due to Chalara dieback;
- For the incorporation of marginal shrub planting around the areas of attenuation to increase biodiversity;
- To secure the retention, restoration and management hedgerows, trees and woodlands to reinforce both local character and habitat value and connectivity; and
- To enhance and define a unified character along the settlement edge.

Positive improvements to the landscape includes the enhancement, regeneration and introduction of woodland planting within areas of public open space within the development to create a more unified landscape by enhancing the wooded character of the area and opportunities for enhanced Green Infrastructure across the Site. New tree and shrub planting along the boundaries of the Site should be implemented where needed to filter views, soften the appearance of the proposed development and provide a sense of scale and enclosure. Within the Dunsmore Parklands LCT primary hedgerows alongside roadsides have been identified as key structural elements within the landscape.



Looking northwest along the A428 Rugby Road near former
speedway entrance (Appraisal Viewpoint F).

Protecting the Green Belt

The Landscape Planning Policy and Landscape Designations section of this LVA makes clear reference to national policy and that Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. This study has also referred to the published West Midlands Joint Green Belt Study (WMJGBS) of 2015 and the role that the landscape of the very large Broad Area 2 makes to the five purposes of Green Belt. The 2015 Study finds that the Broad Area 2 makes a considerable contribution to all five purposes of Green Belt. The Site is a very small fraction of the Broad Area and this section of the LVA looks at the possible implications to the Green Belt as a consequence of the re-development of the Coventry Stadium.

The evolution of the development proposal has been informed by the knowledge of the Green Belt designation across the Site. (The tangible and physical matters of the landscape baseline and the components that combine to form landscape character, as well as the extent of visibility and the nature of the visual baseline have formed the main body of the evidence base that through analysis, have shaped the development proposal).

As stated, the Site at the eastern edge of Binley Woods, is covered by the West Midlands Green Belt policy. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The WMJGBS does give a scoring for the performance of the large Broad Areas, as it does for the much more carefully studied Land Parcels. The description describes the role as checking the sprawl of Coventry from the west and Coventry from the east. The Site is developed – it contains and comprises the Coventry Stadium and its car park and access roads. The Site cannot perform any role in checking the sprawl of the developed area as it is already developed or brownfield land.

Land in the Green Belt does not have to be attractive. Green Belt is not a recognition of landscape value nor of natural beauty. When Green Belt boundaries are reviewed within the Local Plan process Government national policy, as set out in the NPPF, requires local planning authorities to define new boundaries clearly, using features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

This is particularly relevant to the Site. Even though the promotional strategy is not to suggest the re-defining the Green Belt boundary there is relevance to how the existing physical features around the Site boundaries make the Site so well defined and discrete. This has a bearing on the nature of its contribution the wider Green Belt land. It sits in a

highly sustainable location at the settlement edge and every one of its boundaries is well defined by components that are substantial, clear and easily recognisable, and permanent.

The site limits are made by the following existing physical features that are well established:

- North west: New Close Birchley Woods – established and extensive broadleaf woodland
- North and north east: tree belt
- South east: Speedway Lane – tree lines and residential properties
- South: A428 Rugby Road – tree lines; residential properties.

A common feature of all the Site boundaries is the strong visual containment from public viewpoints. Views into the Site from the Public Rights of Way around the boundaries are obscured by the houses along the Rugby Road and the extensive tree and hedgerow cover along and near the boundaries prevents clear sight lines with views being filtered and obstructed by dense vegetation. The tree cover and extensive vegetation and the pattern of residential properties are features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

This physical and visual containment has been tested through ZTV modelling and through extensive fieldwork. The stadium buildings are not easy to see from viewpoints in the setting. As this study had found this is a consequence of the nature of the landform that fails to elevate either the Site, stadium or car park, or the enclosing components that block lines of sight: the tree cover of the woodlands as well as the existing buildings.

The role that the Site makes to the openness of the wider Green Belt is limited: it is previously developed land; it is not elevated nor made prominent by landform; and although the stadium buildings are quite tall (approximately 12m above the stadium floor level).

The contribution that the Site makes to the five purposes that the Green belt serves is also questionable. It is not 'open' land. The former stadium and the numerous ancillary buildings; the car park with its expansive hardstanding; signs and barriers; lights are development. There is no planting or green space within the former stadium. It has a barren and damaged quality that is not attractive. The countryside has been encroached on by the speedway land use.

Government sets further policy in terms of construction of new buildings in the Green Belt that recognises the exceptions to Green Belt policy that are presented by previously developed land: land such as the Site. The issue that is central to the re-development concerns how the proposal will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

The carefully considered residential re-development of the 'Brown Field' Site land would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. The height of residential development will be less than the stadium that currently exists. Gardens and tree planting with hedges around the road sides will ensure a verdant character: homes will be set in woodland. The containment of the Site at all its boundaries guarantees recognisable and durable permanent limits. Properties will be set well back from the boundaries. Trees are a key character driving component in the immediate existing setting and the new scheme will deliver trees through the former car park area that is currently a barren place. The scheme will be set within trees and parkland, and has the luxury of space for a large new public park because so much of the Site is to be left open. It will form a distinctive and attractive addition to the landscape without harm to the countryside or the Green Belt.

6. Landscape Led Development Framework and the New Green Belt

The Illustrative Masterplan has evolved in response to the mitigation by design requirements, as illustrated in the Design and Access Statement. The proposed layout of landscape structural planting, which responds to these requirements, as well as providing secondary mitigation measures, subject to more detailed design, is shown in the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan which illustrates the following landscape proposals and design elements:

- The retention and substantial enhancement of the mature woodland vegetation along the northwest and northeast boundaries of the Site should be supplemented with canopy trees and understorey planting in accordance with published character assessment to enhance the well wooded character of the local area;
- Native species of tree and shrub planting along the southwest and southeast boundaries of the Site where vegetation is currently sparse or in poor condition to soften the potential views of built form from nearby roadways, PRoWs and residential properties;
- Native tree planting throughout the development shall be positioned adjacent to the roads on the corners of key vistas and at nodal points throughout the development to enhance the overall wooded appearance;
- Focal planting of shrubs and trees to accentuate the areas of public open space and provide legibility within the Site;
- Setting back built form from the edges adjacent to the A428 Rugby Road and Speedway Lane to respect the existing residential properties and to allow for the incorporation of a substantial areas of public open space which presents the opportunity for the inclusion of varied grass and flower species as well as marginal plant species alongside the attenuation ponds to enhance biodiversity;
- Areas for attenuation and formal play within the areas of public open space;
- A landscape buffer of over 30m from the edge of the New Close/Birchley Wood Ancient Woodland to the proposed built form; and
- Low hedges to demarcate public and communal areas, while allowing informal surveillance and providing structure to the development.

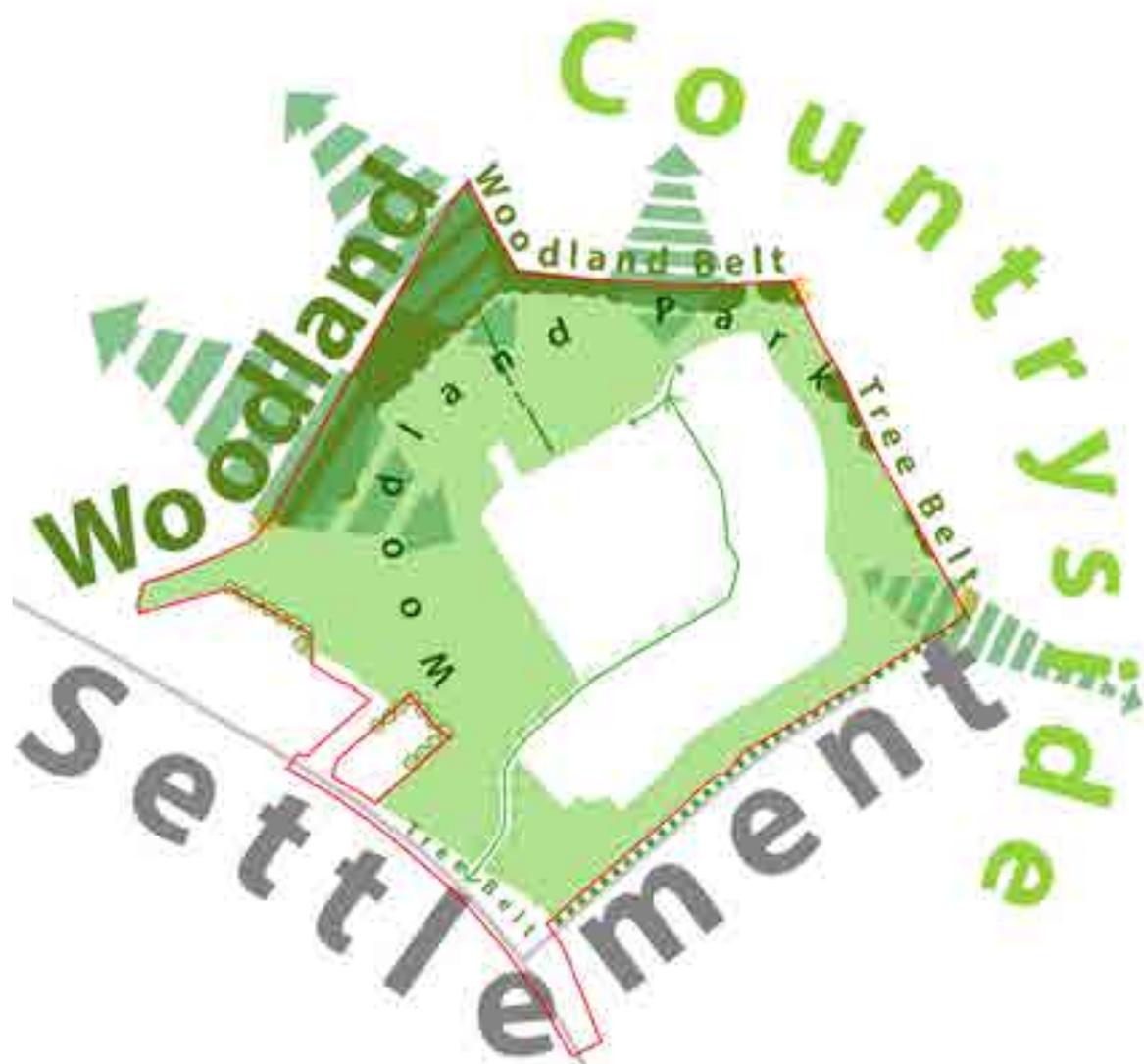


Figure 15. Landscape Framework Plan

7. The Development Proposal and the new Woodland Park

7.1 The New Landscape

The residential re-development of the former Coventry Stadium will be set in a new landscape of lawns, wildflower grassland and parkland trees and extensive areas of new woodland planting. The intention is surround the residential use with a publically accessible Woodland Park. This strategy is a response to the setting of the site and to the nature and character of the spaces along the boundaries. The woodland to north and north east will have a transition that has a quality that responds to the scale and considerable extent of New Close and Birchley Woods: the scheme for new Woodland Park in these areas will have a naturalistic planting pattern of new broadleaved woodland with woodland floor wildflower grassland in the clearings and glades.

The approach and vehicular access will not be the former northern most access between the houses on the A428 Rugby Road. The large southern, existing access will be used and will form, with the new scheme for landscaping and streetscape design, an attractive and entrance. This existing access already benefits from an existing junction and from considerable tree cover along the boundary. The trees here are covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and further detailed design work will establish a sympathetic and appropriate scheme that retains the trees and makes a positive contribution to the Rugby Road streetscape.

The existing hedge line along the north west front of the stadium will be retained for much of its length and it will contribute to the structure and framework of the new public park. New hedges of a similar native composition are proposed around the majority of the drives, lanes and streets that run at the edge of the houses and homes. This public realm boundary treatment is relevant to the place and will form an effective physical barrier as well as a visual filter that will be attractive and have a biodiversity value.

Play provision is anticipated to be an important component of the new public park. A formal play space is shown on the proposals and will, like much of the detail of the development be refined and enhanced as the proposals progress. The opportunity for a circular exercise trail is clear. So too is a play strategy that promotes a 'natural play' reference to: woodland and the enjoyment of the more natural aspects of wildlife as well as the seasonal changes through the year.

The landscape strategy for the public park is not separate to the residential scheme. The connectivity between the houses and homes with the public paths through Birchley Woods and out to the countryside to the south and east will be made through the Woodland Park. It is a unified and holistic proposal that ensures the whole scheme has a strong sense of place and a responsibility to its setting through a sympathetic and informed design strategy.



-  Site boundary
- EXISTING ELEMENTS**
-  Existing tree/ hedgerow planting
- PROPOSED ELEMENTS**
- Planting**
-  Proposed trees/ hedgerow planting around boundary
-  Proposed trees
-  Proposed hedges
-  Wetland Planting
-  Meadow Grassland
-  Amenity Grass - Lawn
-  Central Green - Lawn
- 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

Figure 16. Illustrative Landscape Concept Plan

8. Summary and Conclusions

This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been undertaken in accordance with recognised guidance and best practice set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment Third Edition or 'GLVIA3' (Landscape Institute et al, 2013).

The Application Site and surrounding area were visited on the 27th June 2017 and the 13th July 2017 by Landscape Architects including a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI).

The site visit revealed that views into the Site are limited and localised, due to existing vegetation which generally restricts visibility. When viewed from longer distances the Application Site is obscured by the surrounding mature vegetation, built form and topography.

The proposed Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates a commitment to retain and enhance the boundary vegetation with planting along all Site boundaries (with any vegetation losses strictly localised e.g. to accommodate the new Site access off the A428 Rugby Road). This approach based on the retention and enhancement of the landscape structure should successfully integrate the scheme with the local landscape and will have a positive impact of on the vegetation and habitat features and, green infrastructure connectivity.

In terms of Landscape Character, the Site has been assessed at a national level and a district level. At a national level the Site falls within the National Character Area (NCA) 96: Dunsmore and Feldon at a district level the Site falls into Dunsmore Parklands LCT. Key characteristics include defined woodland edges, parkland, belts of woodland and blocks of woodland which all help to create a sense of scale, enclosure and an overall well wooded character.

The Proposed Development will result in the redevelopment of previously developed land brownfield land. The Site is currently previously developed land that has been severely degraded by its current use, the large areas of the land covered by hardstanding are largely devoid of any vegetation which is beneficial in terms of biodiversity this in combination with the damaged and run down appearance of the remaining buildings presents an abundance of opportunities for positive contributions to and enhancement of a number of features including existing woodland edge, hedgerow trees and hedgerow shrubs and marginal shrub planting particularly within the area of proposed open space.

In terms of effects on landscape character, whilst the Proposed Development would introduce additional influences of built form which would cover a greater amount of the Site than the current land use. The proposed developments size and scale is significantly different to that of the current stadium and outbuildings which appear as large angular

dominating structures within the Site and have little connection to their surrounding landscape features. The proposed built form will be introduced to the Site in a layout which allows for the incorporation of new tree and shrub planting both within the Woodland Park and throughout the streets to soften the built form. There is the added opportunity of the varied use of building materials to provide visual interest and to reinforce the local character of the area.

Balancing these factors, it is considered that there are significant overall beneficial effects on landscape character. The positive effect of the landscape proposals on landscape character would increase further in the longer term by the establishment of the proposed planting.

It is considered that the Proposed Development would respond positively to policies at a national and district level which focus on landscape character and local distinctiveness, visual impact, design quality, the retention and enhancement of existing landscape features. As a result, it is considered that potential development on the Site could be successfully integrated into its landscape setting.

It is concluded that the Proposed Development would be acceptable in landscape and visual terms and would respond appropriately to relevant policy directions at national and local levels.



Looking northwest along the A428 Rugby Road at the site entrance near Speedway Lane.

**BARTON
WILLMORE**