

Old Station Road
**HAMPTON
IN ARDEN**

**A Sustainable
Development Opportunity**
November 2017



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Site Location



Introduction

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (“the Council”) are in the process of preparing the Solihull Local Plan Review that will enable the delivery of sustainable development to meet the Borough’s identified housing and employment needs in the period to 2033. Under the Duty to Cooperate the Borough is also required to accommodate a proportion of the unmet needs that have been identified elsewhere in the Housing Market Area.

The scale of development required over the plan period to address these needs necessitates the release of appropriate sites from the Borough’s Green Belt and their allocation for development. The exceptional circumstances required by the National Planning Policy Framework to do that clearly exist in these circumstances, where a great need for housing has been identified together with an acute shortfall in the deliverable housing land supply.

In that context, this Vision Document has been prepared on behalf of William Davis Ltd to highlight the merits of the land off Old Station Road, Hampton in Arden as a residential development site.

THE SITE

The Old Station Road Site (“the Site”) lies on the northern edge of Hampton in Arden, to the east of the railway line. It is approximately 3.2 hectares in size and comprises of an open field bounded by tree belts on its eastern and northern sides, and the rear gardens of properties on Meriden Road and Old Station Road to the south and west respectively. A public footpath runs along the southern edge of the site, forming part of a route between Old Station Road and Meriden Road.

Part of the site has a frontage with Old Station Road, a no through route stretching northwards towards the M42. Old Station Road is mainly flanked by residential and commercial development, occasionally punctuated by open fields or woodland. The site forms a gap in the existing frontage between a group of houses and “The Barns”. Commercial development lies immediately to the west of the site, between Old Station Road and the railway line, and comprises a number of offices, a health club and a timber yard.

A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Hampton in Arden was identified as an appropriate location for future residential development in the Draft Local Plan Review consultation undertaken in the early part of 2017. The site itself was identified and assessed in the Council’s Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA Site 6). That concluded that the site:

“PERFORMS WELL AGAINST SUITABILITY, AVAILABILITY AND ACHIEVABILITY CRITERIA.”

and observes that it is a:

“prime development site in a very sustainable location, adjacent to existing residential uses and close to Hampton in Arden Railway Station. Development here would round off the settlement.”

SHELAA 2016 - SHLAA Site 6 Suitability Criteria	
Access Infrastructure Constraints	5: Existing road access is adequate
Contaminated Land / Landfill Site	5: Access Infrastructure Constraints
Ground Condition Constraints	5: treatment not expected to be required
Heritage	5: Site does not include, nor is it adjacent to, a Nationally or Locally Listed Building
BMV Agricultural Land	5: Site is Grade 5 agricultural land
High Pressure Gas Pipeline	5: Site does not lie within this constraint
Flood Risk Constraints	5: Within Flood Zone 1
Bad Neighbour Constraints	5: Site has no bad neighbours
Biodiversity	5: Site is not within, or adjacent to a Local Wildlife Site
Suitability of Location Constraints	3: Site is within or adjacent to a ‘free standing rural village’

THE OPPORTUNITY

The emerging Masterplan proposals presented in this Vision Document highlight how the development of the site would deliver an attractive and sustainable development that respects and directly responds to the site’s features and setting as a natural extension to the existing settlement form of Hampton in Arden.

It is therefore, suggested that the Site is allocated for residential development in the Local Plan Review so that its delivery can make a significant contribution to meeting the identified housing needs in the Borough.

William Davis would, therefore, very much welcome the opportunity to discuss their site, its potential allocation for development, and the emerging development proposals with the Council.

REPORT STRUCTURE

The Vision Document is structured as follows:

- *Section 2: Hampton in Arden- Considers the site’s relationship with the sustainable settlement and the services and facilities therein;*
- *Section 3: Settlement and Landscape- Examines the site’s context and explains why the site’s development would have a relatively limited impact on landscape character and visual amenity;*
- *Section 4: Green Belt- Sets out why the site makes a limited contribution to the purposes of the Borough’s Green Belt;*
- *Section 5: Site Synthesis- Considers other environmental and infrastructure matters and draws the preceding analysis together; and*
- *Section 6: Masterplan- Presents a vision for the site; demonstrating its deliverability and highlighting the role it can play in meeting the Borough’s identified housing needs.*

Hampton In Arden

A SUSTAINABLE LOCATION

Hampton in Arden is predominately residential with a population of over 2,000 people, and contains a range of services and facilities, including a primary school, health facilities, village hall, library, post office, shops, food and drink outlets, recreation facilities and public open spaces. Most of these are located in the settlement core by Fentham Road and the High Street.

There are also a number of employment areas in the settlement, including the commercial development adjacent to the Site on Old Station Road.

Hampton in Arden is also very well served by public transport links. The railway station is on the West Coast Mainline with half hourly services between Coventry and Wolverhampton via Birmingham (Birmingham International Station is only minutes away and New Street Station is only 19 minutes away). The settlement also benefits from a local bus service.

Consequently Hampton in Arden was identified as an appropriate location for future development in the Draft Local Plan Review.

The Site itself is well positioned in terms of accessibility to the schools, the other services and facilities within the settlement centre and the railway station (please refer to opposite figure). They are all within easy walking distance of the site (approximately 500-700m).

The Site is, therefore, eminently suitable for residential development as future residents would be able to easily access services and facilities that meet their day to day needs, employment opportunities and convenient public transport services to Solihull, Birmingham and beyond.

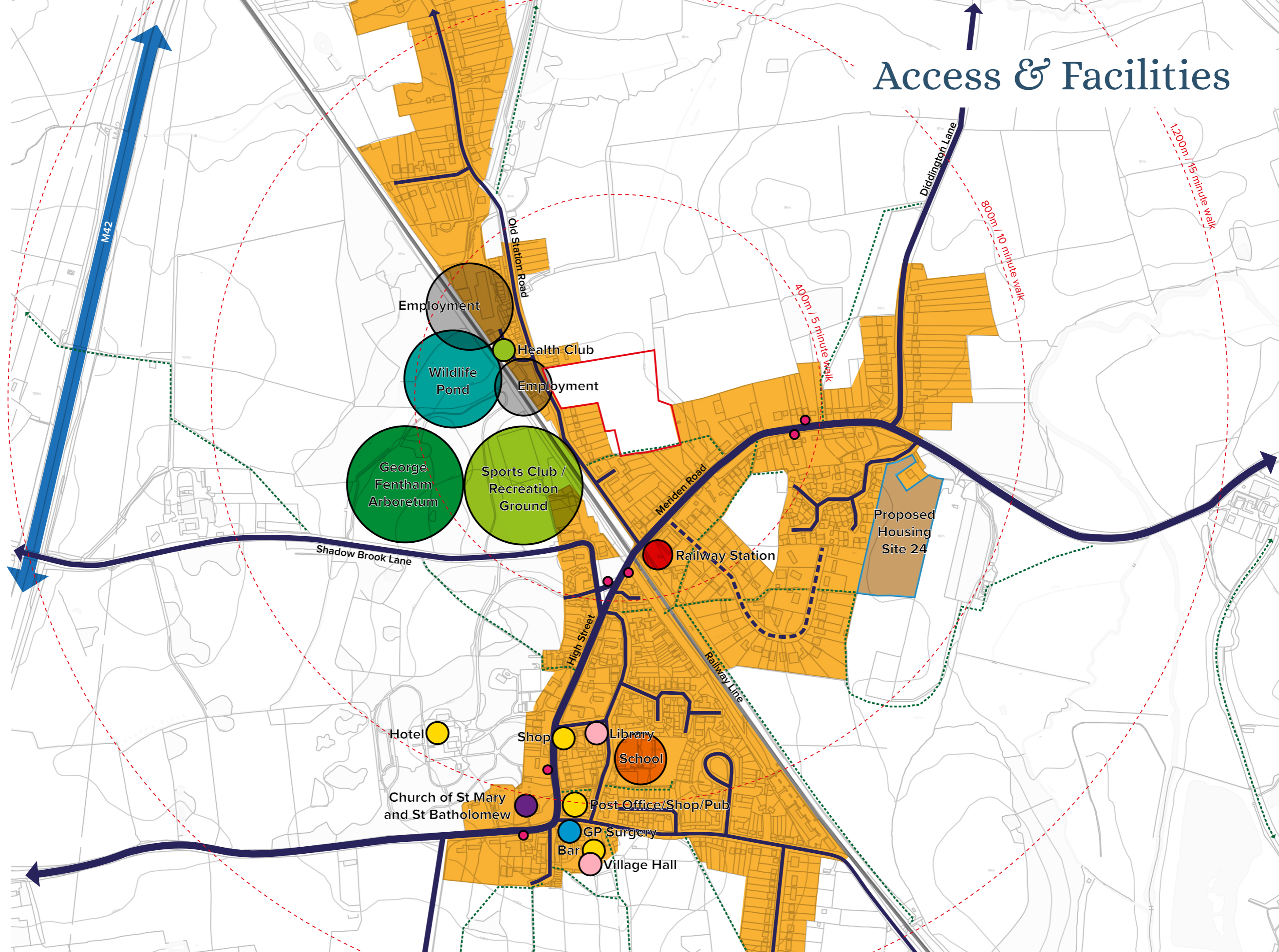
Indeed, that is recognised in the Local Plan Review evidence base. Notably the Solihull Accessibility Mapping (2016) study highlights that Hampton in Arden is a

“HIGHLY ACCESSIBLE SETTLEMENT”,

and the Site itself is one of the highest scoring potential development sites considered. It is, therefore, one of the most accessible locations in the Borough. The inherent merits of the Site (ref HA1) in this respect are also recognised in the Council’s Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (2017).



Access & Facilities



Settlement and Landscape

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The area to the north of Hampton in Arden is located within Landscape Character Area 9: Motorway Corridor (LCA9) as identified in the Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2017).

LCA9 has a

“VARIED LAND USE AND DIVERSE LANDSCAPE PATTERN”;

dominated by urban influences such as strategic highways, railway lines, pylons, industrial areas and mineral extraction. Arable and pastoral fields bound by hedgerows make up the majority of the remaining character area with pockets of woodland and some linear developments. Hampton in Arden “dictates” the settlement pattern, and the ribbon development extending along Old Station Road is highlighted. Hampton Manor and Shadow Brook and their associated woodland cover are also identified as key landscape features.

The landscape character of the site itself reflects the mixed farmland of the surrounding area to the north. It is generally flat and benefits from a robust landscape framework; notably the hedgerows that mark its boundaries and the woodland planting along the northern and eastern boundaries. There are also a couple of mature freestanding trees within the site that provide attractive landscape features.

The residential development of the site would, therefore, have a minimal impact on the landscape character of the surrounding area; particularly as the key landscape features within the site could be retained as an integral part of the development.

VISUAL AMENITY

The visual amenity of the site and its surroundings has been appraised through the preparation of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Actual Zone of Visibility (AZV). They are presented on the following pages.

The ZTV does not take into account screening provided by vegetation or buildings, and simply reflects the topography of the study area. The lighter areas represent locations where there would be a potential view of the site on that basis, with the darker areas representing those areas where there would not. It demonstrates that the gently undulating topography with its low ridgelines contains the extent of the site’s visibility.

The AZV starts to take account of the further screening provided by the settlement form and established woodland in the study area, notably that associated with Hampton Manor (to the west) and the public right of way and Shadow Brook (to the north). The AZV effectively highlights that with the enclosure provided by the existing built form and strong vegetation framework around the settlement, mean that potential views of the site are limited to its immediate surrounds to the south and west, and an area of up to 500m to the east and 1.5km to the north of the site.

There are very few public vantage points in that area, largely because of the limited nature of the public right of way network. Nonetheless an appraisal of potential view points in that area has been undertaken and is presented in the following pages. That analysis effectively illustrates the degree of further visual screening provided by the site’s own hedgerows and the woodland planting on its northern and eastern boundaries.

The true extent of the site’s visibility is, therefore, extremely limited. Indeed, it does not extend far beyond the site’s immediate surrounds. Consequently, it can be concluded that any residential development of the site would also be visually very discrete and the impact on the visual amenity of the area would be minimal.



Tree belt on northern boundary undertaken in early 2015



Established tree belt on eastern boundary

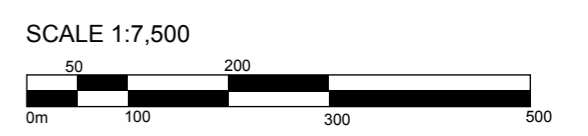
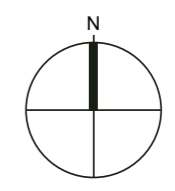


Development on Old Station Road

Landscape Analysis

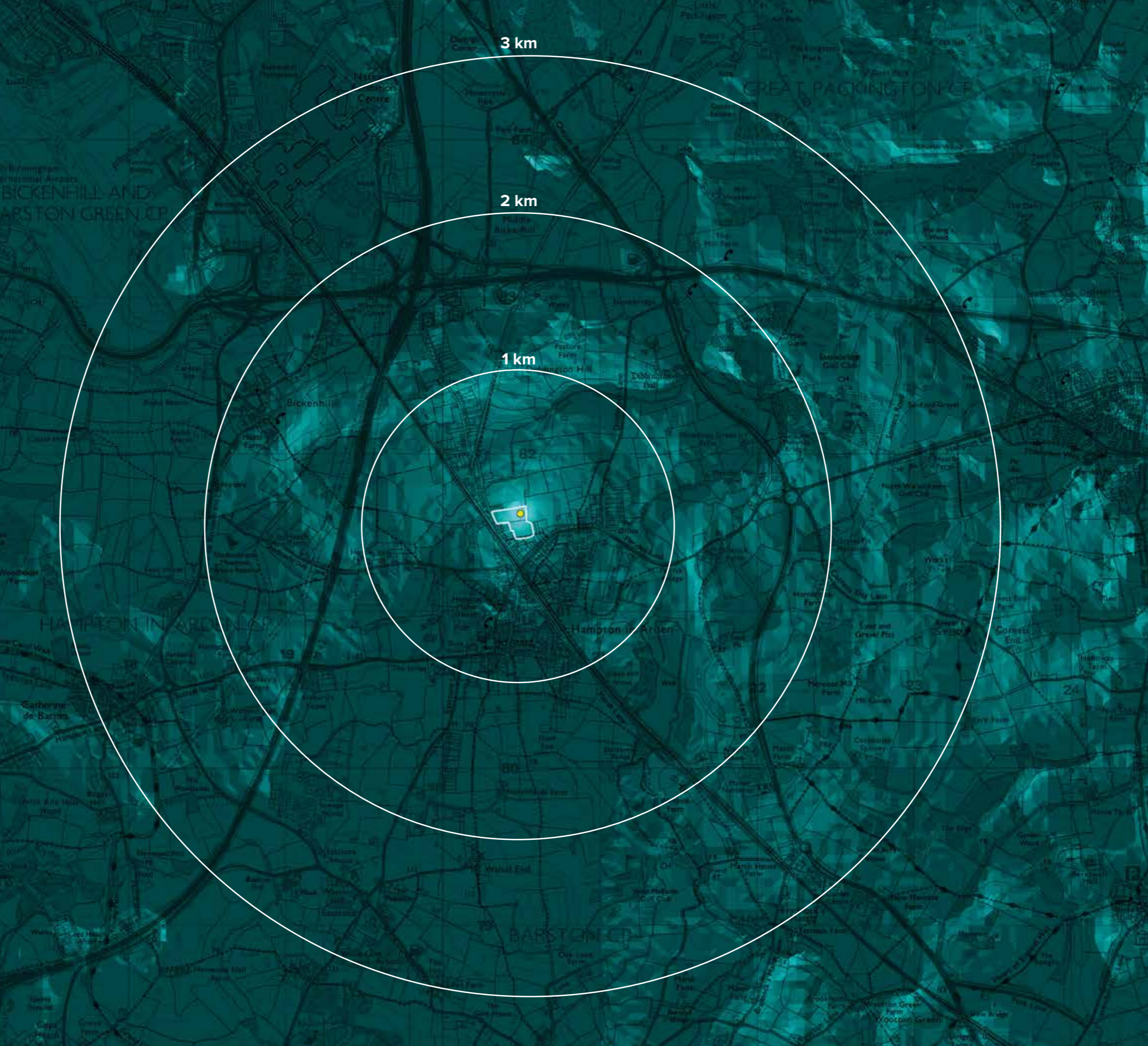


- Legend**
- Site Boundary
 - Ridgeline
 - Watercourse
 - Public Right of Way (PROW)
 - Urban Form

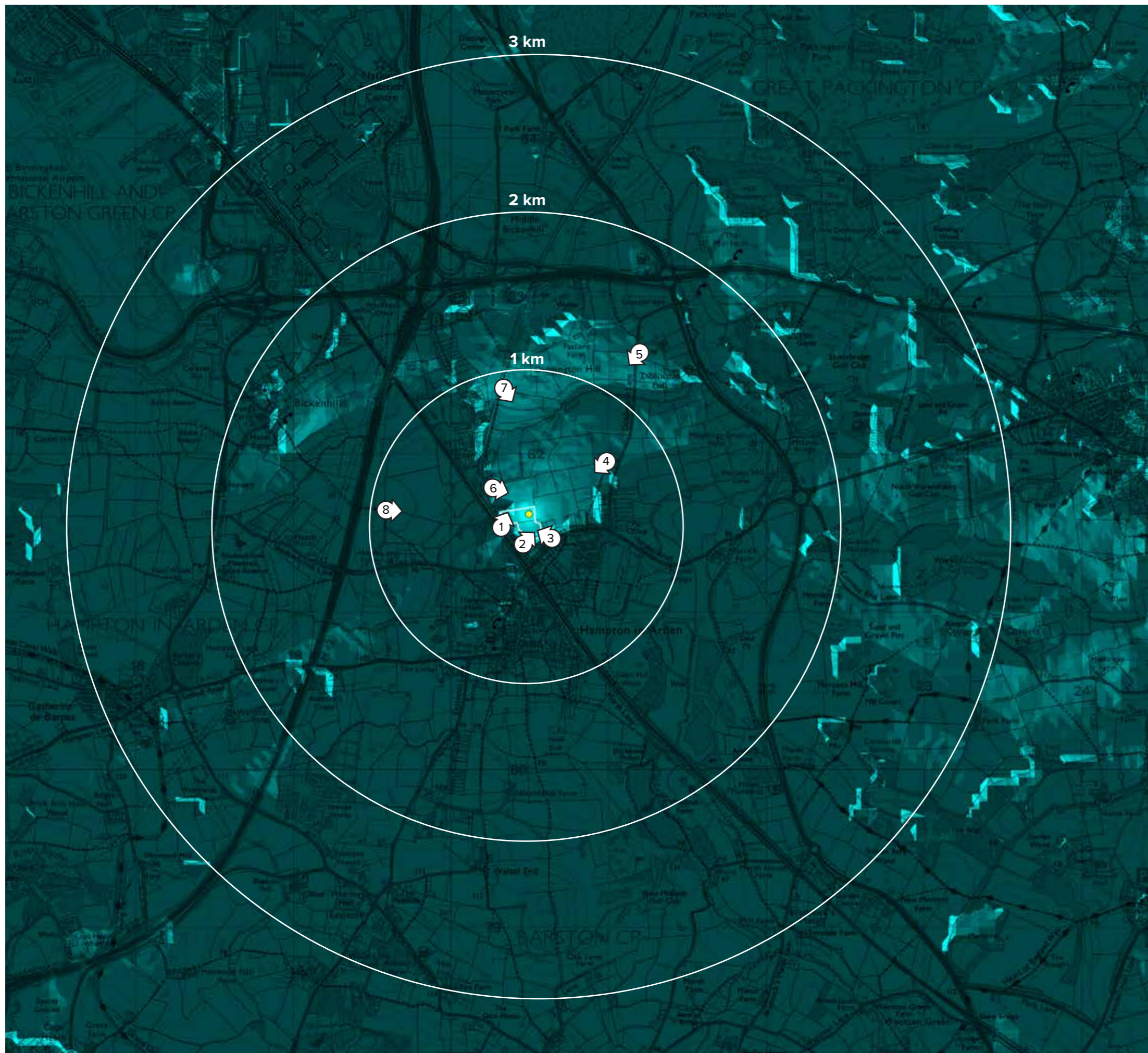


Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

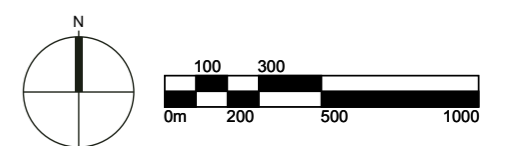
- Legend**
- Site Boundary
 - Light Source
 - Most Visible
 - Least Visible



Actual Visual Envelope & Viewpoints



- Legend**
- Site Boundary
 - Light Source
 - Most Visible
 - Least Visible
 - Viewpoint



Views

VP1: View from Old Station Road.

The western edge of the site forms a gap in the development frontage between existing properties on Old Station Road. However, the boundary vegetation currently restricts views into the site and provides a strong sense of enclosure. The housing and commercial buildings on Old Station Road are notable urbanising elements in views.



VP2: View from Public Footpath along southern boundary of site looking north east.

A sense of enclosure is provided by the hedgerows and woodland planting on the Site's boundaries. Views out to the surrounding countryside are restricted and will be further limited as the planting matures.



VP3: View from Public Footpath along southern boundary of site looking north west.

Again there are no views out to the countryside beyond, but the free standing trees within the site are prominent and attractive landscape features.



VP4: View from Public Footpath between Meriden Road and Diddington Lane looking west.

The woodland block on the site's eastern boundary effectively screens all views of the site from the east, including from the length of this public footpath.





VP5: View from Diddington Lane looking south west.

There are very few public vantage points on Diddington Lane where views towards Hampton in Arden are readily available. In views over the Shadow Brook valley from this more elevated position the commercial development on western side of Old Station Road can be glimpsed amongst a robust vegetated backdrop that effectively screens the residential development in Hampton in Arden and the site from view.



VP6: View from Old Station Road looking south east.

In the gaps between the existing development that fronts Old Station Road, views of the site are screened by the roadside hedgerow, the buildings at The Barns and the new woodland belt on the site's northern boundary.



VP7: View from Public Footpath on dismantled railway line looking south.

There are very few public routes to the north of the site. This footpath runs along a dismantled railway, but the thick vegetation that lines it screens views of both Hampton in Arden and the site.



VP8: View from Public Footpath looking east.

Robust woodland to the west of the railway line screens views of the site from the countryside to the west. In this view, the site is screened from view by the vegetation and commercial development along Old Station Road.

Green Belt

The Site's location and aspect mean that it does not form a particularly sensitive part of the Green Belt around Birmingham and Solihull, and its development would not undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt.

The merits of the site in this regard are clearly recognised in the Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment (2016), where the parcel within which the site lies (RP19) scores only 4 against the purposes of the Green Belt. That score is particularly low, notably parcels to the east (RP21 & 22) scored 5 and 6 respectively. The December 2016 Topic Paper therefore concluded:

“THE LOWER PERFORMING GREEN BELT LAND TO THE NORTH AND EAST AND THE MEDIUM TO HIGH ACCESSIBILITY PRESENT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LIMITED GROWTH.”

URBAN SPRAWL

The site is already bordered to the south and west by well established development. Notably there is a linear pattern of residential and commercial development along Old Station Road extending northwards (refer to the Settlement Form plan). The site has a frontage with Old Station Road that leads to the heart of the settlement to the south, and the nature of the site would allow it to be developed in a compact form that relates well to the existing development, infilling an existing gap in the suburban frontage in the Old Station Road corridor, whilst consolidating the overall pattern of development on the northern edge of the settlement. That is recognised in the SHELAA that refers to development on the site “rounding off the settlement”.

The location and configuration of the site, therefore, means that its development would ensure that the settlement retains a compact and balanced nucleated form, and not result in urban sprawl. It would also provide a sympathetic and well defined edge to the countryside

to the north, sitting unobtrusively within its setting by virtue of the nature of the surrounding topography and screening provided by the existing vegetation.

The Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment gives the wider area within which the site sits a score of 2 (moderately performing) in relation to this matter. However, given the analysis above, the assessment criteria indicates that the site itself is lower performing in relation to this matter and should only score 1.

COALESCENCE

The development of the site would have a negligible impact in terms of the coalescence of settlements as the nearest settlement Catherine de Barnes is 2km away, and Meriden is 2.5km to the east. In that context the development of the site would constitute a relatively small-scale intrusion on a much wider Green Belt corridor. That is reflected in the Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment that gives a score of 1 (lower performing) in relation to this matter.

COUNTRYSIDE ENCROACHMENT

Whilst the site's development would represent a limited encroachment into the countryside (in so far as the development of any greenfield site would), the urban form, topography and established landscape structure (notably the wooded plantation along its eastern edge and the new tree belt along its northern edge) surrounding the site would very much negate the perception of encroachment. Indeed, as described in the preceding section the visibility of the development would be limited to the site's immediate environs.

That is reflected in the Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment that gives a score of 1 (lower performing) in relation to this matter.

HISTORIC TOWNS

The village core and Hampton Manor Homes Estate is designated as a Conservation Area. It is, however, physically and visually separated from the Site by the railway line. The only listed buildings in the

vicinity of the site are the Old Station bungalow and a small store house associated with it (both are grade II listed), but they are located on the other side of Old Station Road and orientated away from the Site. Development on the site would not, therefore, have any impact on the character, appearance or setting of heritage assets in the settlement.

That is reflected in the Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment that gives a score of 0 (not role) in relation to this matter.

URBAN REGENERATION

The site performs the same role in relation to this matter as any other greenfield site within the designated Green Belt in the Borough.

SUMMARY

The site is located in one of the lowest scoring areas included in the Strategic Green Belt Assessment, which indicates that its performance in relation to the Green Belt purposes is very limited. In that light, and given that it is accepted by the Council that the release of sites from the Green Belt is required in order to meet the Borough's identified development needs, the site's role in the Green Belt should clearly not be seen as a constraint to its development.



Housing in the Green Belt on Old Station Road

Site Synthesis

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

The Site is an entirely suitable development site in an accessible and unconstrained location, and that is reflected in the Council's Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (2017).

The Sustainability Appraisal attributes the Site with 5 positive scores, 8 neutral scores and only 4 negative scores against the stated Objectives. The site, therefore, scores highly and very well relative to the other potential development sites that were assessed.

The positive scores relate to high degree of accessibility to community facilities, employment assets and public transport services as highlighted in Section 2.

The neutral scores relate to a range of environmental matters including landscape sensitivity, flooding, soils and amenity.

The negative scores are all given as amber, which indicates that some mitigation is required (there are no red scores indicating that a significant negative effect would result). Notably they include the relationship to historic assets and green infrastructure objectives. However, they should not be seen as a constraint to development as:

- *The development would not have a negative effect on the setting or character of the historic elements of the settlement (as set out in the preceding section);*

- *There are no records or visible evidence of archaeological features within the site other than some weak ridge and furrow;*
- *The site is not subject to any nature conservation designations;*
- *Nor is it located in the floodplain; and*
- *The public right of way running along the site's southern boundary can be retained within the development and set within public open space providing informal recreation opportunities, SUDS and scope for biodiversity enhancement.*

SITE ANALYSIS

In light of the preceding analysis, the following matters have informed the preparation of proposals for its development:

1. *The site is screened from the surrounding area by established and maturing tree belts along the northern and eastern boundaries and by properties and garden vegetation along the southern and (most of) the western boundaries.*
2. *It has a frontage to Old Station Road between a cluster of former farm buildings now in residential use and a row of detached houses. This is currently defined by a roadside hedgerow and restricts views into the site, but provides an opportunity to appropriately access the site.*

3. *Rear garden boundaries form most of the western and southern edges of the site. Most are defined by trees and vegetation, which provides a degree of enclosure or screening between the site and the back of surrounding houses.*

4. *The site mainly comprises of an open grassed field. The majority of trees and vegetation within the site are confined to its boundaries. However, there are two large mature oak trees located within the field close to the eastern edge of the site that should be retained within the development.*

5. *A public footpath route runs along the southern edge of the site connecting Old Station Road to Meriden Road. For most of its length it is enclosed by the rear gardens of surrounding properties.*

6. *Layering of field boundary vegetation to the north and east further increases the level of screening of the site, limiting any views from public rights of way within these areas.*

7. *On the opposite side of Old Station Road is an area of commercial office development and car parking. Some of the units have direct views into the site from the upper floors. Beyond this is the railway line, whose perimeter is also well defined by trees and vegetation.*



Site Analysis



Masterplan

William Davis' aspiration for the development of the site is to deliver a high quality housing development that respects its relationship with the surrounding urban form and surrounding countryside.

The emerging Masterplan proposals have been prepared with a clear knowledge and understanding of the specific characteristics of the site (the opportunities and constraints), seeking to maximise the use of existing features and respect the local context within which the development would sit. The core aim is to create an attractive and sustainable environment that responds to the site's setting, retaining natural key features, and taking advantage of the existing landscape framework to create a high quality distinctive development with a sense of place that is well integrated into its surroundings.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

This section, therefore, provides an outline of the development proposals and principles as established by the emerging Masterplan. They are as follows:

1. Access into the site would be from a new junction off Old Station Road, thus providing a direct link into the heart of the settlement. The Highway Authority have previously raised no objection to this approach
2. The development frontage along Old Station Road should reflect the existing pattern of development established by the row of detached housing directly to the south. This should include generous set backs to allow for some frontage tree and hedge planting to help tie the new buildings into the established residential character that can be seen elsewhere along Old Station Road.

3. Housing should be placed to relate well to existing surrounding properties, including the built cluster to the north and the houses to the south. In most areas there are already deep rear gardens providing an existing buffer between the existing housing and the proposed development.

4. New housing should be arranged to back on to existing rear gardens where possible to maintain a sense of privacy/security. Proposed rear gardens would also provide an additional buffer alongside the existing property boundaries and may be supplemented by tree planting where additional screening is required.

5. The existing oak trees would be retained as features within an open space corridor running along the eastern edge of the site. This would also include any attenuation/drainage features (within the lowest parts of the site) and children's play facilities (as required). Perimeter blocks have been arranged to allow easy access between the built up element of the site and the adjacent open space, with the existing trees providing focal points along the proposed internal roads.

6. The existing public right of way would be formalised along the southern boundary of the site and would be incorporated into the lane access serving a small number of properties along this edge. This would allow for some informal overlooking of the route before it disappears into the more enclosed section that runs around the back of the nearby properties on Meriden Road.

7. A small green and a cluster of distinctive housing would provide a well-defined end point to the main access road running through the site, incorporating a turning head and the public footpath.

8. A small arrival square would be located off the main access, establishing an attractive and distinctive identity for the new development.

LAND BUDGET

Site Area: 3.1ha

Net Developable Area: 2.3ha

Green Infrastructure: 0.8ha

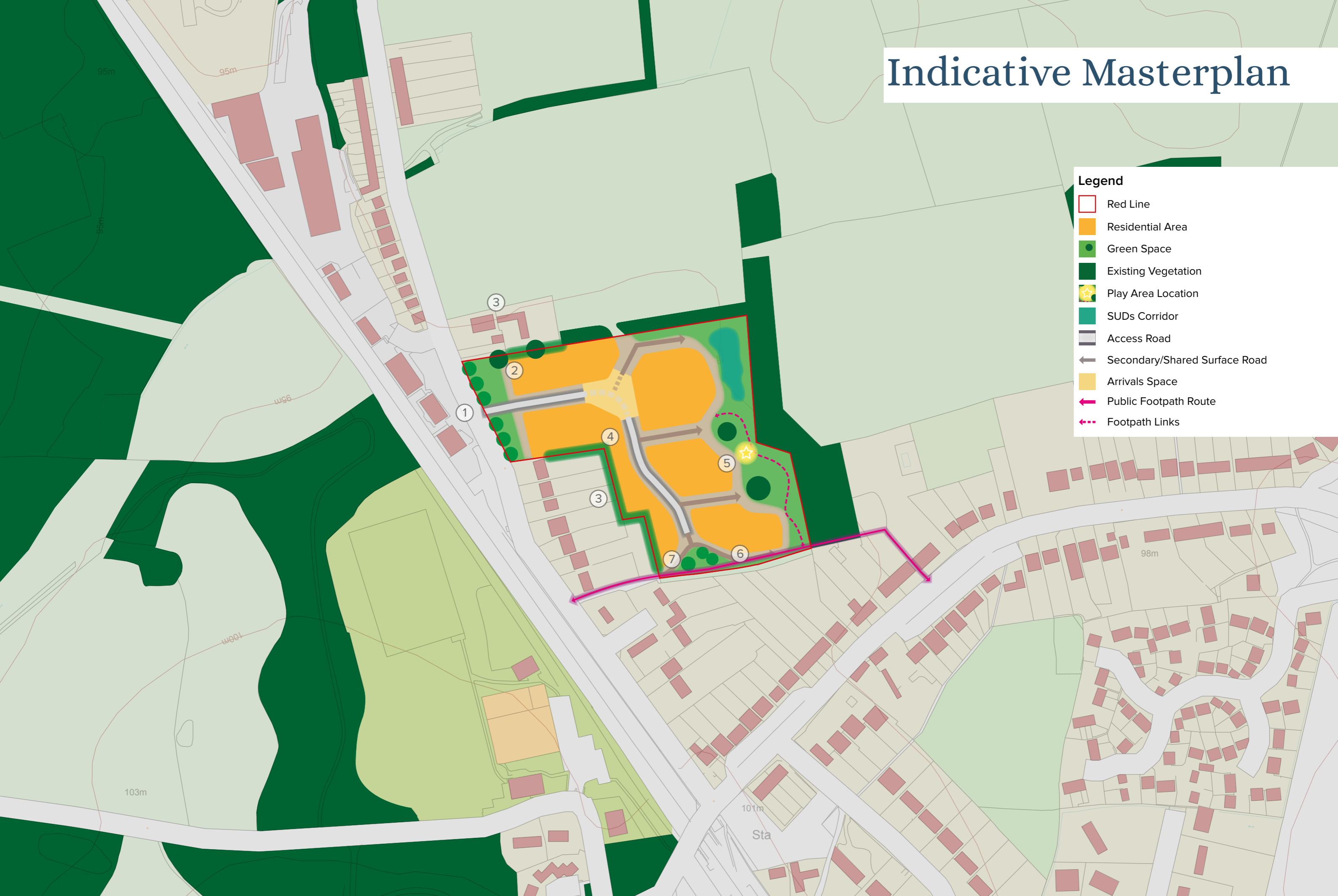
Density: 30-35 dwellings per hectare

Capacity: 70-80 dwellings, including 28-32

affordable homes

Public Open Space Requirement: 0.55-0.63ha

Indicative Masterplan



Legend

- Red Line
- Residential Area
- Green Space
- Existing Vegetation
- Play Area Location
- SUDs Corridor
- Access Road
- Secondary/Shared Surface Road
- Arrivals Space
- Public Footpath Route
- Footpath Links

Conclusion

The site at Old Station Road, Hampton in Arden is an entirely suitable development site in an accessible and unconstrained location.

Given that there is a clear case to allocate further development sites in order to meet the housing needs of the Borough in the plan period, the site could and should be removed from the Green Belt and allocated for future residential development.

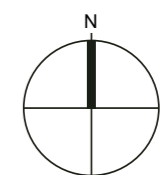
In that context, the site and Masterplan proposals for the delivery of up to 80 new homes accords with the provisions of the NPPF and would constitute “sustainable development”. Indeed, the proposed development would result in a number of significant economic, social and environmental benefits.

The development would provide much needed housing, including affordable housing, on a suitable site in a sustainable location, where residents will have access to a wide range of facilities, services and employment opportunities in Hampton in Arden, and in Solihull and Birmingham via the nearby train and bus services.

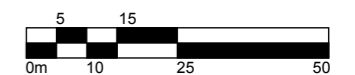
The Masterplan clearly demonstrates how a high quality housing development that respects its relationship with the both surrounding urban form and countryside, and uses the site in an effective and efficient manner, would be delivered. Notably, the Masterplan seeks to ensure that the proposals respond to the surrounding landscape character by retaining and enhancing the boundary hedgerows and trees within the site, and by providing new public open space along the eastern edge.

The site is available, suitable and the proposed development is deliverable. This Vision Document, therefore, clearly demonstrates that the site is realisable opportunity that would make a significant contribution to meeting the identified market and affordable housing needs within the plan period, and the site should therefore, be allocated for development in the Local Plan Review.

Sketch Masterplan



SCALE 1:1,250





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