

A landscape photograph showing a green field in the foreground, a line of trees with autumn foliage in the middle ground, and a cloudy sky in the background. The text is overlaid on the top and bottom portions of the image.

L&Q Estates

LAND AT BERKSWELL ROAD

MERIDEN

VISION DOCUMENT

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NOTE: THIS DOCUMENT IS DESIGNED TO BE VIEWED AS A3 DOUBLE SIDED

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01 | INTRODUCTION



PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

- 1.1 L&Q Estates is promoting land off Berkswell Road, Meriden, Solihull for residential development. The Site is located on the southern edge of the village of Meriden and is approximately 1.73 ha in size as shown edged red on **Fig 1.1**. The Site has the potential to accommodate up to 50 dwellings. This document has been prepared in response to the Solihull Local Plan Review consultation, and provides background information to demonstrate that the Site is suitable for residential development. The Site has previously been submitted to the Council for their consideration as part of the previous 'Call for Sites' consultation, undertaken during November to January 2016 as well as the Draft Local Plan Consultation (Dec 2016) and the Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation (January 2019). It is also being promoted through the Meriden Neighbourhood Plan, for which the formal Regulation 16 consultation was undertaken in summer 2020. This document builds on the work previously undertaken, and provides robust background information to demonstrate how the Site is suitable for housing development.

KEY

- LAND PROMOTED FOR DEVELOPMENT
4.28 ACRES / 1.73 HECTARES
- OTHER LAND WITHIN THE CONTROL OF L&Q
BUT NOT PROMOTED FOR BUILT DEVELOPMENT



FIG 1.1. | SITE PLAN | NOT TO SCALE

- 1.2 This document brings together assessment work from a number of disciplines undertaken by the project team which comprises of a wide range of specialist consultants who are advising on the proposals. The document also sets out the design principles which have informed the proposed masterplan.
- 1.3 This document demonstrates that the Site is suitable, available and achievable for residential development. This is particularly important given the need for the Borough to accommodate significantly more housing land than previously allocated in the adopted Solihull Local Plan (2013). The Draft Local Plan Submission (Regulation 19) consultation envisages the need to deliver 15,017 additional dwellings in the plan period (12,912 to meet local needs plus an additional 2,105 to meet needs arising from within the wider Housing Market Area). As detailed fully within Section 2 of this document, it is clear from the work that has informed the preparation of the Draft Local Plan that, to achieve the housing requirement, there is a need to release land from the Green Belt. Separate representations are made on behalf of L&Q Estates to the Draft Local Plan which set out that there is a need for Solihull Council to release more land from the Green Belt than is currently proposed with the Draft Local Plan. This document sets out that Land at Berkswell Road, Meriden, is suitable for residential development and should be considered as a housing allocation.

DOCUMENT FORMAT

- 1.4 Following this introduction, the document sets out the planning policy context for the Site and its development potential. This is then followed by an assessment of the Site which provides an overview of the technical studies and assessments that have been undertaken to demonstrate the suitability of the Site for residential development. The emerging proposals for the Site are then set out as shown on the Design Concept Plan. Finally, the document provides an overall assessment of the Sites residential potential utilising the Council's Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).
- 1.5 This Document is sub divided into separate sections as follows:

Section 1: Introduction

Section 2: Planning Policy Context

Section 3: Site Assessment:

- The Development Site;
- Landscape and Visuals Issues;
- Movement and Access;
- Flood Risk and Drainage;
- Ecology;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Other Matters

Section 4: Emerging Proposals

Section 5: Site Selection Assessment

Section 6: Conclusions

L&Q ESTATES

- 1.1 L&Q Estates is one of the largest strategic land companies in the UK, promoting and developing residential and mixed use schemes in all geographical areas. L&Q Estates plays a unique role as master developer, taking forward and coordinating all aspects of the development process from initial Site assembly through to master planning, planning promotion and Section 106 negotiations before delivering serviced land to the market place.

02 | PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 This Section summarises the extant and emerging policy context for the Site at the time of writing this document. The Development Plan for the area comprises the Solihull Local Plan (adopted December 2013).

ADOPTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Solihull Local Plan 2013

- 2.2 The adopted Local Plan sets out the long-term spatial vision for how Solihull's towns, villages and countryside will develop and change over the Plan period (2011-2028). This vision will be delivered through a strategy for promoting, distributing and delivering sustainable development and growth. Upon its adoption, the Local Plan replaced the Solihull Unitary Development Plan (2006) and is now the Council's statutory starting point in assessing planning applications.
- 2.3 Shortly after adoption, the Local Plan was subject to a successful legal challenge which means that the current Local Plan has no overall housing requirement for the Plan period. As a result, those parts of the Local Plan, that relate to housing numbers for the plan period, are not adopted.
- 2.4 In addition, two other reasons have triggered the need for Solihull to undertake an early review of the Local Plan, namely: the plans for high speed rail (HS2 Interchange Station known as Arden Cross) and the impact within the Housing Market Area (HMA) relating to Birmingham's inability to meet its own housing requirement within its boundaries, with the shortfall needing to be met elsewhere within the HMA. The growth aspirations of UK Central Hub Area, which includes Birmingham Airport, National Exhibition Centre (NEC), Birmingham Business Park and Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), the absence of adopted housing policies and housing needs across the HMA have all contributed to a situation where the Council needs undertake a Local Plan Review to ensure that a proper planning framework is in place that addresses these issues.

EMERGING DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Draft Solihull Local Plan

- 2.5 The Draft Solihull Local Plan (Fig.2.1) was originally published in November 2016, with a supplementary consultation document being published in January 2019, and the Submission Version published in October 2020. The latest iteration covers the period to 2036. The emerging Local Plan sets out the long term vision and objectives with policies that will guide development throughout the plan period. These include:
- Delivering Sustainable Economic Growth through:**
- Developing the UK Central Hub Area (Policy P1), which embraces Birmingham Airport, the NEC, Arden Cross, Birmingham Business Park and JLR. This includes:
 - creating Arden Cross – an exemplary international station with new public realm supporting the potential for commercial and residential opportunities;
 - upgrading and refurbishing the NEC – the Council will enable a broad range of developments enhancing visitor offerings, diversifying facilities and increasing international competitiveness;
 - further development of Birmingham Airport – increasing passenger, freight, terminals and transport facilities and capacity, which allows the extended runway to be maximised. The Council will also support a broad range of ancillary and complementary facilities including hotels, administrative offices car parks and other appropriate facilities to serve the airport;
 - expansion of JLR – supporting further success in the global vehicles industry through supporting and encouraging the development of JLR within its boundary defined in the Local Plan and through the release of Green Belt land; and
 - Continuing to support and encourage the development of Birmingham Business Park, within its defined boundary to support its role as a prime employment location in Borough.

- Expanding Blythe Valley Business Park (P1A), including:
 - encouraging the delivery of a major quantity of employment floorspace;
 - upgrading existing and creating new facilities; and
 - attracting investors.
- Maintaining Strong, Competitive Town Centres, which comprises specific focus on:
 - Solihull Town Centre;
 - Shirley Town Centre; and
 - Chelmsely Wood Town Centre.

Requiring Land for Housing (Policy P5):

- Delivering at least 15,017 additional homes between 2020 to 2036;
- Allocation for at least 5,270 net additional homes to ensure sufficient housing supply to deliver 15,017 homes in the period 2020 to 2036;
- Annual housing requirement is 938 net additional homes 2020 to 2036;
- New housing will be supported on windfall sites in accessible locations where they contribute towards meeting borough-wide housing needs and towards enhancing local character and distinctiveness.
- Housing will be provided as a mix of small and larger sites that will ensure a continuous supply of housing provision throughout the Plan period.
- New homes should comply with the nationally described space standards set out by Government.
- The appropriate density of new housing will be based on a number of factors, and measured on the developable area of a site. This will include site plots and estate roads, but exclude land for other development requirements such as open space, SuDS and strategic highway infrastructure. It will take into account the need to maximise the efficient use of land; appropriate mix of housing; local character and distinctiveness; scale, type and location of development with regard to accessibility of services by sustainable transport modes;

Providing Homes for All through:

- Delivery of 40% affordable housing (but taking into account site circumstances) on residential sites of major development, where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more (Policy P4A);
 - Rural Exception Sites (policy P4B);
 - Providing Market Housing, 30% 1 to 2 bedroom, 50% 3 bedroom and 20% 4+ bedroom (Policy P4C);
 - Encouraging self and custom housebuilding including 5% of plots on sites of 100 homes or more to be contributed for self and custom build (subject to individual site circumstances) (Policy P4D);
 - Housing for older and disabled people including all new build housing on major development sites to be built to Category M4(2) (Accessible and Adaptable dwellings) of approved Building Regulations Document M; Volume 1, unless it is built in to M4(3); 5% of housing on major development sites to be wheelchair user dwellings to M4(3) of the Building Regulations and all developments of 300 dwellings or more to provide specialist housing or care bedspaces in accordance with the Council's most up to date statement of need on older person's accommodation (Policy P4E).
- 2.6 In order to achieve the target of delivering additional dwellings, the Council proposes to allocate 18 Sites through the Draft Local Plan. In relation to Meriden, one housing site is proposed and set out within the Summary Table of Residential Allocations within the Local Plan Draft Submission "Land West of Meriden" Site Reference ME1. This Site is proposed to be allocated for up to 100 dwellings. The Site comprises of both previously developed and greenfield land the development of which entails the release of land from the Green Belt.

Meriden Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 2.7 Meriden Parish Council applied for Neighbourhood Area Designation in November 2014; which was approved by the Council in March 2015. Consultation on the pre-submission (Reg 14) consultation of the Meriden Neighbourhood Plan took place in September 2019. The Meriden Neighbourhood Plan Submission Draft was the subject of consultation from 29th June to 24th August 2020.
- 2.8 The Neighbourhood Plan does not contain any proposed housing allocations beyond 'Land West of Meriden' as identified through the Draft Solihull Local Plan.

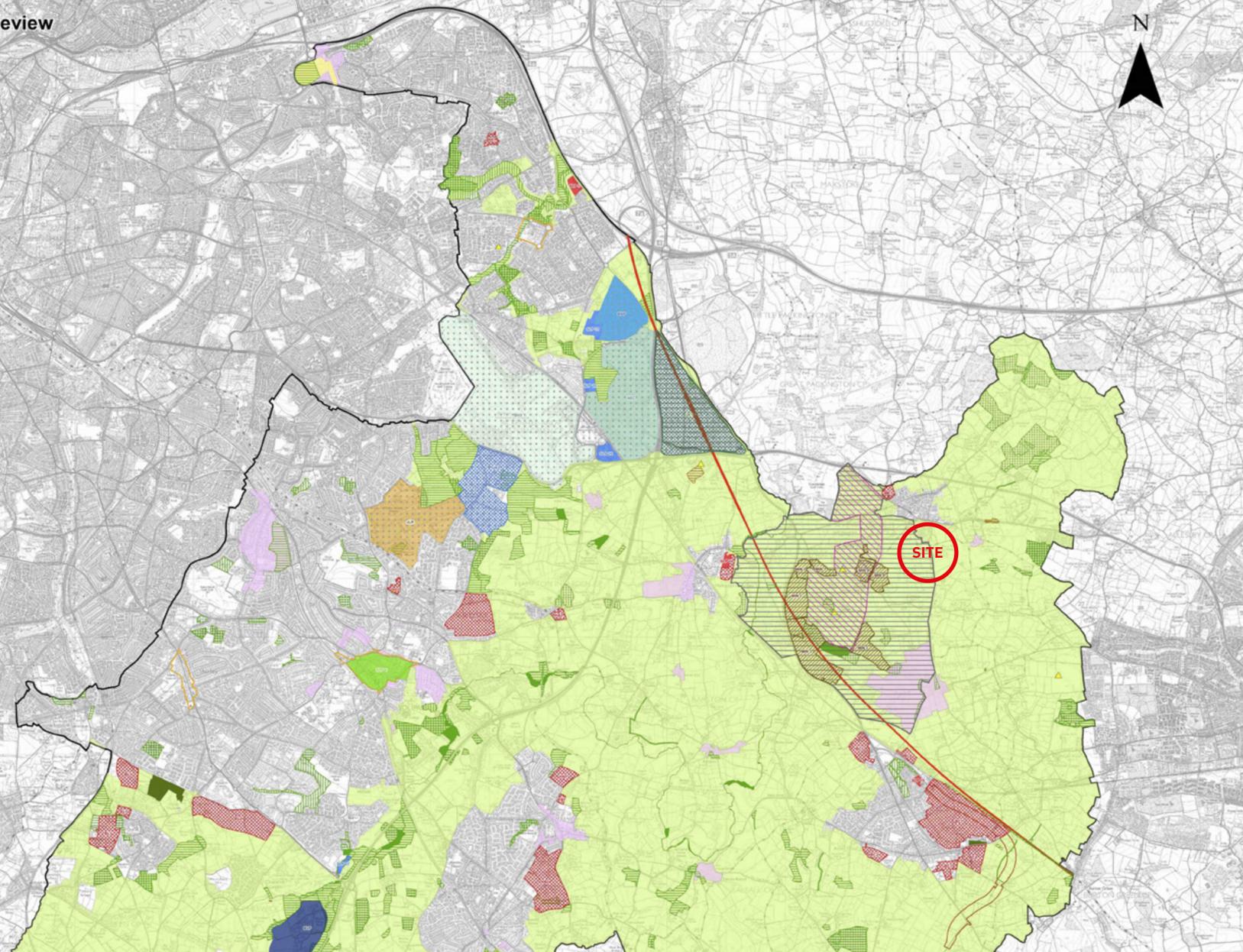
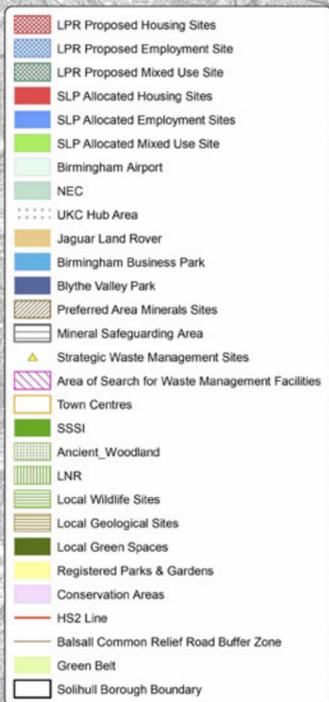


Fig 2.1. | DRAFT SOLIHULL LOCAL PLAN POLICIES MAP OCTOBER 2020 | NOT TO SCALE

STRATEGIC GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

- 2.9 Approximately 12,000 hectares of Solihull MBC is designated as Green Belt land, accounting for approximately two thirds (67%) of the Borough's land area (Fig 2.1). The Green Belt within Solihull MBC forms an integral part of the West Midlands Green Belt stretching between the Birmingham conurbation, including Solihull, and the surrounding major urban areas.
- 2.10 As part of the Local Plan Review, Solihull MBC commissioned a Strategic Green Belt Assessment to evaluate the extent to which the land currently designated as Green Belt within the Borough fulfils the essential characteristics and purposes of Green Belt land as set out in Paragraphs 134 of the NPPF.
- 2.11 The basis of the Assessment was to provide a 'policy off' approach and consideration of other constraints or the development potential of any of the Green Belt land has not been included in the assessment. The Strategic Green Belt Assessment has concluded that a number of refined parcels of Green Belt land in the Borough do not perform against any of the first four purposes of the Green Belt but, as set out above, the Assessment does not make any recommendations for amendments to the Green Belt boundary or determine whether land should be removed from the Green Belt.
- 2.12 The village of Meriden is located within Broad Area 4, with the Assessment concluding that this is an area which performs highly against the purposes of the Green Belt. This broad area also makes a contribution to the preservation of the Meriden strategic gap. The report also breaks down an assessment of smaller parcels of Green Belt land, including 3 land parcels around Meriden (RP24, RP25 and RP26). Notably, a parcel of land referred to as Land South of Main Road, Meriden (RP26) has a low performing score when assessed against the purposes of the Green Belt. The refined parcel has a combined score of between 1-3. This parcel of land is therefore considered in the Assessment to be a less sensitive area of Green Belt due to the low performing score. This Site is located

in close proximity to the L&Q Estates Site, and illustrates how this area of the Green Belt is suitable for consideration to be released from the Green Belt for housing land allocation in the emerging Local Plan.

2.13 Refined Parcel RP26 is fully within Section 3 – Landscape and Visual Issues. The need for Green Belt release has been accepted by Solihull MBC with the majority of the proposed allocations for residential and both of the proposed employment allocations being within the designated Green Belt. It is considered that a residential proposal on Land off Berkswell Road, Meriden would assist Solihull MBC in providing additional housing for the Borough in a sustainable location.

SOLIHULL STRATEGIC HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SHELAA)

- 2.14 In November 2015 Solihull Council commenced a review of the current Local Plan and launched a Call for Sites exercise alongside the Issues and Options consultation. 247 site submissions were assessed by Peter Brett Associates LLP (PBA), commissioned to undertake a Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).
- 2.15 A full SHELAA of these sites was published in November 2016 and consulted upon as part of the Draft Local Plan Review. An update has since been published in draft (October 2020) which relates to new submissions or amended sites.

2.16 In the initial SHELAA (2016) A number of sites were assessed in Meriden, including a site titled 'Land South of Meriden site (Ref: 197)' which related to the much larger area of land being promoted (as shown by the 'blue line' on the location plan). The assessment of the site concluded that the site performed well against availability and achievability criteria and faced some suitability constraints including flooding.

2.17 A draft SHELAA (October 2020) has since been published which takes account of the revised site boundaries ('revised site 197'). This concludes that the site could accommodate around 40 homes and that it performs well against suitability, availability and achievability criteria.

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA)

- 2.18 An interim SA was produced in January 2017 site reference AECOM74, and this has been updated in October 2020. However, the assessment covers the wider area, and not the 'red line' area being promoted for development, and as such and highlights concerns with landscape and loss of agricultural land, although it is clear from other scorings that the site is sustainably located. Section 3 of this vision document contains a landscape appraisal and green belt assessment which demonstrates that the promoted site would sit well within the local landscape context and provide a robust and defensible green belt boundary. Section 5 includes an assessment of the site against the SA criteria to provide the correct detail required in relation to the site being promoted.

03 | SITE ASSESSMENT

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

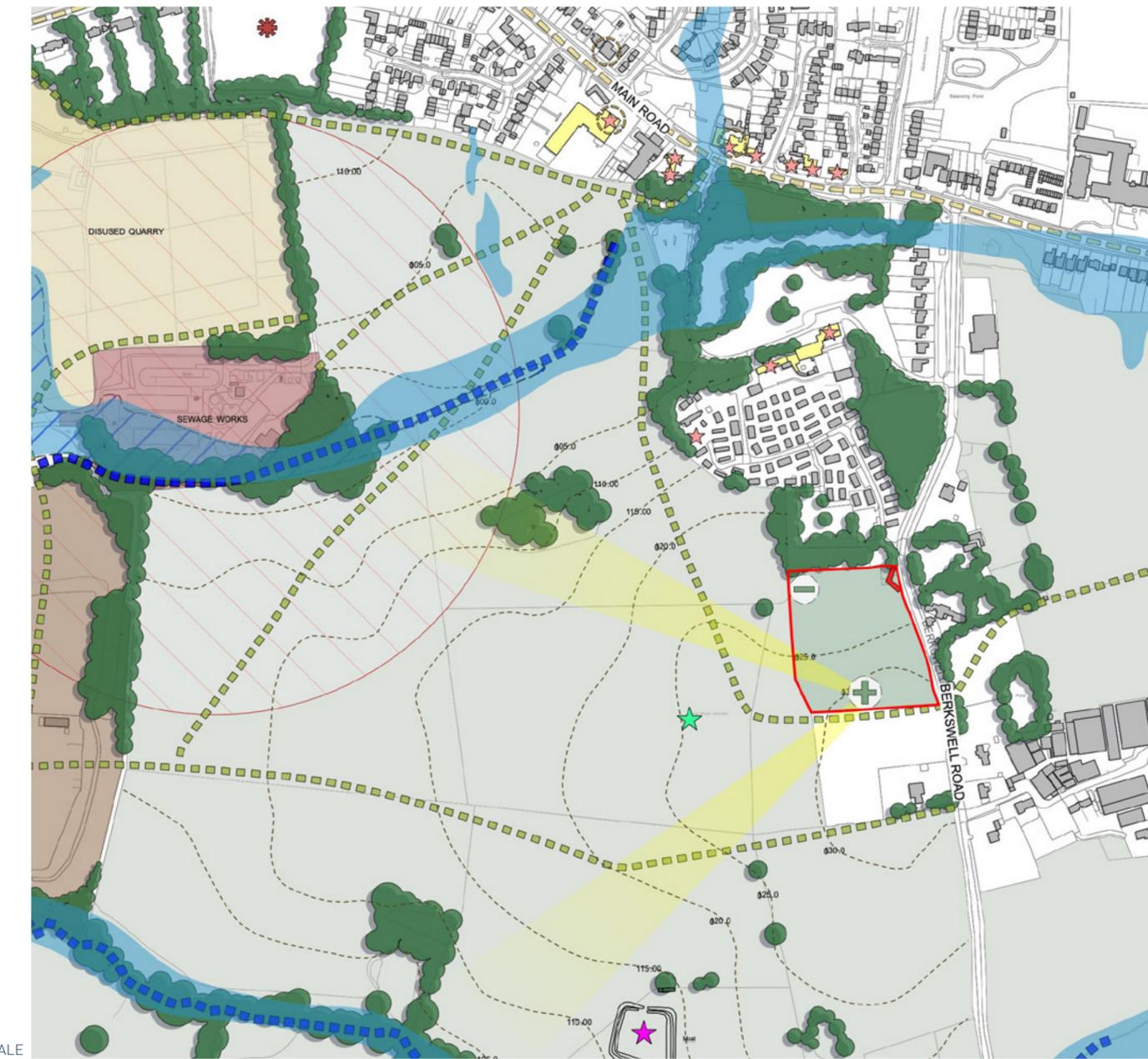
- 3.1 The Site which is promoted for development comprises part of a single agricultural field immediately west of Berkswell Road, totalling approximately 1.73 hectares, as shown on **Fig 3.1**. The Site is bounded to the west by intermittent hedgerows, mature trees to the north and east, with agricultural fencing to the south. To the north of the Site, between the Site boundary and Main Road, is Meriden Hall, a Grade II* Listed Building set within associated grounds including Grade II Listed stables and Ice House to its west. Meriden Hall is currently used for office accommodation and adjoined immediately to the by an existing mobile home park which is accessed directly off Berkswell Road. Berkswell Road defines the eastern edge of the Site, whilst the curtilage of Hornwood, a detached residential property, is located to the south.
- 3.2 The topography of the Site is relatively flat, with a localised high point to the south east which restricts views towards the Site from the wider landscape to the south and east. The Site generally falls in an east to west direction. The Site is classified as Grade 2 in terms of its agricultural land classification.
- 3.3 The Site is located in Flood Zone 1, which is the area of lowest flood risk. Flood Risk and Drainage matters are discussed in further detail in Section 3 of this document.

- 3.4 Immediately to the north of the Site is the built up area of the village of Meriden which is primarily residential in character. The areas to the west and south of the Site are primarily agricultural in nature with a number of farm complexes set within their wider agricultural holdings.
- 3.5 Meriden is one of the defined rural settlements within the Borough and is located within the West Midlands Green Belt to the east of Solihull and Birmingham International Airport. Meriden is located between Solihull and Coventry and is located approximately 6 miles to the east of Solihull and 7 miles to the west of Coventry. Meriden has a number of existing facilities including Meriden C of E Primary School, Berryfields Farm Shop complex, Hotel with restaurant and pub, and supermarket. The Site is also within easy to existing bus stops which provide for journeys to Solihull, Coventry and Birmingham.

KEY

- LAND PROMOTED FOR DEVELOPMENT
4.28 ACRES / 1.73 HECTARES
- FORMER LANDFILL SITE
- QUARRY WORKS (DISUSED)
- SEWAGE WORKS
- INDICATIVE STANDOFF DISTANCE (300M) FROM SEWAGE WORKS (TBC BY ENGINEER)
- FLOODING FROM RIVERS AND SEAS (E.A 20.01.2017)
- FLOODING FROM SURFACE WATER (E.A 20.01.2017)
- INDICATIVE CONTOUR LINES TAKEN FROM OS MAPPING (TBC)
- EXISTING VEGETATION (INDICATIVE)
- LAKE/POND
- WATERCOURSE/ DRAINAGE DITCH
- SITE HIGH POINT
- SITE LOW POINT
- PRIMARY ROAD
- PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY
- SITE ACCESS
- SURROUNDING BUILDINGS
- LISTED BUILDINGS
- LOCAL FACILITIES
- HISTORIC GIANTS DEN MOAT
- RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND OUTDOOR SPACE
- PROMINENT VIEWS FROM SITE HIGH POINTS

FIG 3.1 | SITE AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS | NOT TO SCALE



LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

Policy Context

- 3.6 The Solihull Local Plan: Shaping a Sustainable Future, December 2013 sets out the long term vision, objectives and planning policies for the borough. Those policies relevant to a study of landscape and visual matters include Policy P10: Natural Environment and Policy P17: Countryside and Green Belt.
- 3.7 The Solihull Draft Local Plan (November 2016) explains its policy context in terms of ‘Protecting and Enhancing the Environment’ at section 9. It notes the borough has a high green and blue infrastructure (GI) as one of its greatest assets, that extends beyond the countryside to include green and blue spaces of the street scene, gardens, ponds, rivers etc. The natural environment is fundamental to Solihull’s attractive urban and rural environment (para. 288).
- 3.8 Policy P10 Natural Environment is central to this, and recognises the importance of a healthy natural environment in its own right. The Council will seek to protect, enhance and restore the diverse features of its Arden landscape, and seek to create new habitat and promote local distinctiveness. The policy also seeks to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity and geodiversity across the Borough, protecting habitat and species, in particular recognised areas such as SSSIs and Local Nature Reserves. Outside designated areas, developers are expected to take full account of nature conservation and geological value, and demonstrate appropriate mitigation where development is permitted.

- 3.9 Policy P11 Water management discusses the need for all new development to have regard to the actions and objectives of the relevant River Basin Management Plan, with the use of sustainable urban drainage systems in the context of all new major development.
- 3.10 Policy P14 Amenity discusses the need to ensure a good standard of amenity of all existing and future occupiers of houses, businesses and other uses. A number of criteria are relevant including:
- High quality design;
 - Visual amenity and minimising visual impact;
 - The scale, character and appearance of new infrastructure elements related to electronic communications;
 - Safeguarding important trees and hedgerows and new planting;
 - Safeguarding areas of countryside with intrinsically dark sky from the impacts of light pollution; and
 - Protect the tranquil and locally distinctive areas in the Borough by guiding new development to locations that will avoid or minimise adverse impacts.

- 3.11 Policy P14 is cross referenced with Policy P15 Securing Design Quality (Section 10: Promoting Quality of Place), which expects all proposals to contribute to, or create, high quality spaces and places that have regard to local distinctiveness. Proposals will be expected to meet a number of key principles:
- Conserve and enhance local character, distinctiveness and streetscape quality (ref. scale, massing, density);
 - Future proofing the design and layout;
 - Provision for water management;
 - Proactive approach to responding to climate change and adoption of low carbon construction principles;
 - Conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity;
 - Respect and enhance landscape quality, including trees, hedgerows and other landscape features of value, and contribute to strategic green infrastructure; and
 - Create attractive, safe, active legible and uncluttered streets and public spaces.
- 3.12 Clearly there is a balance within these criteria between more ‘strategic; design issues, with those at a more schematic and detailed level. All established urban design principles and guidance need to be adhered to, with the design process active at prep-application stage.
- 3.13 Policy P16 concerns heritage assets, and makes reference again to the Arden landscape, and that all development proposals likely to impact on this character and significance will be expected to demonstrate how this impact has been addressed.
- 3.14 Policy P17 Countryside and Green belt, advises that inappropriate development will not be permitted in the Solihull Green belt (see below in respect of recent Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment).

Landscape Context

- 3.15 At a national level the Site is located within the National Character Area Profile 97: Arden as published by Natural England (2012).
- 3.16 Landscape character at a local level is defined by the Solihull Borough Landscape Character (2016). The Site is located in Landscape Character Area (LCA) 4: Rural Centre. The key characteristics of this LCA can be summarised as follows:
- The land falls from the east to the west towards River Blythe and then gently rises up towards the west with landform generally ranging from 90m to 140m AOD;
 - The River Blythe and its associated tributaries are a key feature within the area. Cuttle Brook, Long Brook and several pools, ditches and springs also contribute towards the drainage pattern of this LCA;
 - Area is generally rural with agriculture (mix of arable and pastoral) being the predominant use;
 - Field sizes vary, although they are generally small to medium scale;
 - Field boundaries are diverse and include hedgerows of varying condition;
 - Thick hedgerows occur often with bracken and mature oaks present;
 - Pockets of woodland including plantations are present across the area, which are generally found in close proximity to the settlements and river corridors;
 - The A4141 and the A452 are the principal roads within the character area, which are linked by several minor roads connecting the various smaller settlements; and
 - Several public footpaths and bridleways traverse the area, including the Millennium Way recreational route.

- 3.17 LCA 4 is sub-divided into four sub-areas, the Site is located within sub-area 4D. The key characteristics of sub-area 4D are as follows:
- Small to medium sized fields, boarded by field ditches and hedgerows, supporting pastoral and arable use, generally with a well wooded background;
 - Strong hedgerow structure of varying condition, many with mature hedgerow trees;
 - Oak and ash are the two dominant species in the sub-area. Poplar shelterbelts are also present adding to the wooded character of the area;
 - Red brick buildings and render are typical of the vernacular in the sub-area. Large ornamental gates are present particularly along Back Lane and seem incongruous with the rural landscape character. Farm house conversion to residential use is also evident; and
 - The lanes tend to be narrow and winding with high hedgerows.
- 3.18 In relation to landscape sensitivity, the published assessment notes that this sub-area has clear legibility with a broad road network and consistent field patterns. It states that the landscape varies in condition from good to fair. There are a few detractors including electricity pylons to the north, construction noise and presence of HGVs to the west. Overall, the landscape character sensitivity of the sub-area is considered to be high.

- 3.19 In relation to visual sensitivity, the published assessment states that this sub-area consists of generally medium to short distance views that are medium level, wide and contained, deep and shallow, and horizontal and upward in orientation. Overall the published assessment considered the visual sensitivity of the sub-area to be medium.
- 3.20 The published character assessment states that the value of the sub-area is considered to be medium.
- 3.21 In terms of landscape capacity, the published assessment states that this sub-area would typically have an overall very low landscape capacity to accommodate change. It states that the sub-area would be able to accommodate very restricted areas of small scale new development, which would need to be of an appropriate type, scale and form, in keeping with the existing character and local distinctiveness of the area.

1. VIEW FROM PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY, WEST OF BERKSWELL ROAD
2. VIEW FROM MILLENIUM WAY, LOOKING SOUTH
3. VIEW FROM MILLENIUM WAY, LOOKING NORTH
4. VIEW FROM MILLENIUM WAY



Visual Context

3.22 The visual envelope is defined broadly as follows:

- from the north, by the built form and vegetation along the existing settlement edge of Meriden;
- from the east by the existing caravan development and mature tree cover along Berkswell Road and associated with Meriden Hall;
- from the west by the sewage works, quarry and associated vegetation; and
- from the south by the rising landform towards Berkswell.

3.23 Views towards the more elevated parts of the Site are likely from the wider landscape, including from the Millennium Way recreational route. These areas will however be viewed in the context of the existing settlement edge of Meriden. The lower areas of the Site to the north are more enclosed, although retain a more 'parkland' character when viewed from the local public right of way network.

Landscape and Visual Constraints and Opportunities

3.24 Landscape and visual constraints can be used to guide the development of a proposal in a positive manner, often leading to opportunities and not just creating absolute constraints to development. The constraints are considered to be:

- the local PROW network, including the Millennium Way recreational route (providing recreational opportunities for potential high sensitivity visual receptors);
- proximity to the listed Meriden Hall;
- the location of the Site within the Green Belt, which will have some influence on the value of the local landscape; and
- the findings of the Solihull Landscape Character Assessment that identify the LCA within which the Site sits as having generally very low capacity to accommodate change.

3.25 Landscape and visual opportunities can be summarised as follows:

- Notwithstanding that the Site is located within Green Belt, there are no overriding statutory landscape planning designations;
- Existing vegetation and green infrastructure throughout the Site, including hedgerows, providing opportunities to enhance this through a comprehensive landscape strategy; and
- The opportunity to extend the existing woodland along the western edge of Meriden further south to provide enclosure to proposed development; and
- The opportunity to propose development within LCA Sub-area 4D in this location which is of an appropriate type, scale and form and in keeping with the existing character and local distinctiveness of the area, as set out in the Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment.

Role of the Site in the Green Belt

3.26 The Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Assessment Report (July 2016) identifies a number of Broad Areas of Green Belt land. It also identifies a number of Refined Parcels, which adjoin or lie adjacent to built-up areas.

3.27 The Site is located partly within Refined Parcel RP26 'Land South of Main Road Meriden'. The assessment scores each Refined Parcel against four purposes of the Green Belt. In relation to RP26, it sets out the following: (Fig.3.2)

GREEN BELT PURPOSE	RP26 SCORE
1 - CHECK UNRESTRICTED SPRAWL OF LARGE BUILT-UP AREAS	1
2 - PREVENT NEIGHBOURING TOWNS MERGING INTO ONE ANOTHER	1
3 - ASSIST IN SAFEGUARDING THE COUNTRYSIDE FROM ENCROACHMENT	1
4 - PRESERVE THE SETTING AND SPECIAL CHARACTER OF HISTORIC TOWNS	0
TOTAL	3

FIG 3.2. | GREEN BELT REFINED PARCEL RP26 SCORES

Landscape Strategy

3.28 In response to the desktop and fieldwork undertaken, an initial landscape strategy has been identified and the following landscape principles have been applied to the emerging development envelope for the area:

- The overall development envelope is defined by the visual and physical containment provided by Berkswell Road to the east and does not extend further west than built form already present to the north;
- The development envelope is located away from the more open parcels of the Site to the west and from the more 'parkland' like character to the north. This will reduce visual prominence of any new built form and means that it will not encroach across the plateau of the Site;
- Consideration should be given to the existing vegetation (including trees, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland areas). Where possible these landscape elements should be retained and integrated into the layout of both developable areas and open space.
- The location and extent of green infrastructure and open space within the Site should influence the formation and extent of the development envelope. The retained areas of vegetation (as described above) would ensure that the built form of a proposal would be contained in a robust and diverse framework of green infrastructure and open space. A strategy for retaining existing vegetation combined with proposals for new landscape planting would result in a landscape context for future proposals which show a variety of stages of establishment and maturity. This would enhance the quality of a proposal and also help to integrate the Site with the local landscape character.

- The layout of proposals for the Site should incorporate substantial areas of private garden space as well as the proposed publically accessible areas of green infrastructure as these would have the capacity to hold a substantial number of street and garden trees which will, over time, contribute to a network of green infrastructure and help to integrate the character of the Site with the surrounding landscape.
- All landscape mitigation which forms part of a proposal should be subject to a high quality detailed landscape scheme so as to ensure that the functions of the landscape components will be delivered; this would also reflect positively on the design quality of a proposal as a whole.
- In terms of a defensible Green Belt boundary, existing physical features, including the hedgerow vegetation along the western boundary of the Site, as well as new tree planting along this boundary, could form a new Green Belt boundary.

Green Belt purpose	Criteria	Summary
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.	Is ribbon or other development present? Is other development detached from the existing large built-up area?	There is some ribbon development present along Berkswell Road. The introduction of new development to the west of Berkswell Road in this location will not be uncharacteristic. Built development will not extend any further west than the existing built form to the north. On this basis, it is not considered that the proposed development will contribute to any unrestricted sprawl of built up areas.
To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	Does the area represent a 'gap' between major urban areas?	The nearest settlement beyond Meriden is Berkswell, which is located approximately 1.5km to the south. The site comprises an area of agricultural land on the south-western edge of Meriden and as such does not represent a 'gap' between major urban areas. Furthermore, neither Berkswell nor Meriden could be reasonably considered as 'major urban areas'.
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	Is the area characterised by countryside? Does the area adjoin areas of countryside? Is ribbon or other development present within the area?	The area is broadly agricultural but is influenced by a number of detracting urbanising features, these include the quarry and sewage works to the west and caravan development to the east. The existing settlement edge of Meriden is also an influence. The proposed development is of relatively small scale, given the nature of the proposed development and its context, it is considered that it will safeguard the wider landscape from encroachment.
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.	Is the area within or adjoining a Conservation Area within a historic town? Are key landmarks or the historic core visible from within the area? Does the area contribute to the setting of the historic town?	The site lies outside of any Conservation Areas and is not located within a historic town.

FIG 3.3. | ASSESSMENT AGAINST GREEN BELT PURPOSES

Potential Impact on the Green Belt and Creation of a Defensible Green Belt Boundary

3.29 In accordance with the NPPF, Green Belt boundaries should be defined clearly, using physical features that are readily recognised and likely to be permanent. It is considered that the hedgerow vegetation along the western boundary of the Site, as well as new tree planting along this boundary could form a clearly defined Green Belt boundary that ties into the existing green infrastructure to the north and south. The landscape and green infrastructure strategy for the Site also proposes new planting which will serve to break down the scale of built form and provide further containment. These mitigation measure will help to establish and enhance a robust landscaped edge to the proposed development and a definitive boundary to the future Green Belt.

3.30 Fig.3.3 sets out a summary of the likely impacts on Green Belt purpose, in landscape and visual terms, using the criteria set out by the Solihull Green Belt Strategic Assessment.

Summary

3.31 Overall the scale and form of proposed development has been influenced by the landscape constraints and opportunities of the Site and its context. Furthermore, the proposals for green infrastructure and landscaping will deliver a number of enhancements in terms of the physical landscape and the strengthening of the structure of the landscape to create a new robust, defensible Green Belt boundary to the west of the Site.

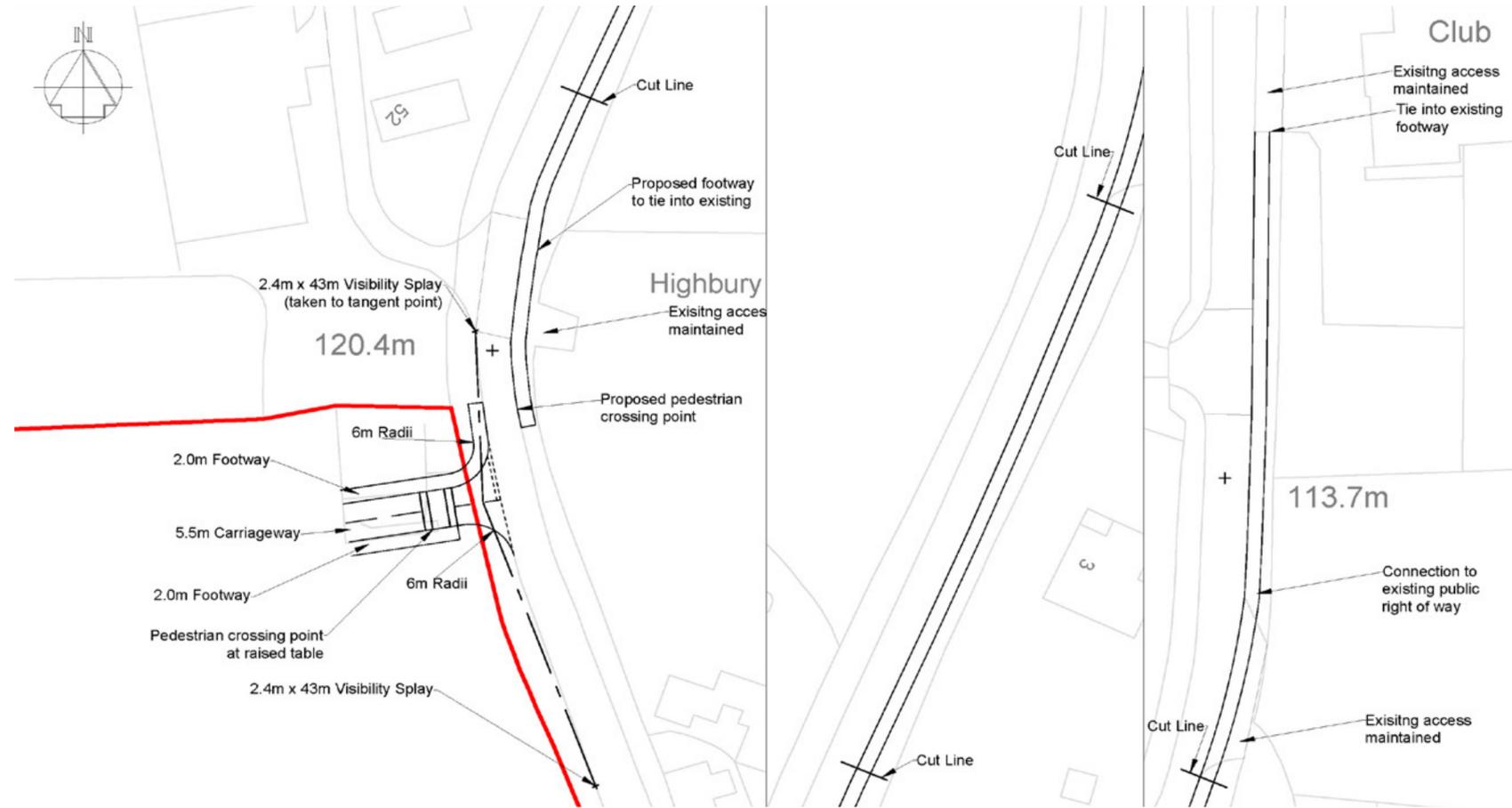


FIG 3.4. | PROPOSED ACCESS | NOT TO SCALE

MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

Access

3.32 Vehicle access to this site is proposed onto Berkswell Road in the northeast corner of the site. In line with the SMBC highway design guidance² the access has been designed with a 5.5 metres wide carriageway and 6 metres corner radii. Footways 2 metres wide are provided adjacent to the site access road.

3.33 Berkswell Road is subject to a 30mph speed limit and based on the guidance contained within Manual for Streets³ (MfS) visibility splays of 43 metres would be required.

3.34 Fig.3.4 shows the proposed access arrangements and demonstrates that the required visibility splays are achievable from a 2.4 metres setback in each direction from the proposed access.

3.35 There are currently no footways provided on Berkswell Road along the site frontage. It is therefore proposed to provide a new informal crossing point and upgrade the existing verge on the eastern side of the carriageway to provide a footway. This footway would extend north from the site to connect to the existing footway provision. These proposals would connect the site to Meriden and allow pedestrians to walk between the two.

Connectivity

3.36 In terms of pedestrian travel the Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot produced by the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation document describes the 'maximum', 'acceptable' and 'desirable' walking distances. It suggests that in terms of commuting, walking to school and recreational journeys; walk distances up to 2,000 metres can be considered, with the 'desirable' and 'acceptable' distances being 500 and 1,000 metres respectively.

3.37 For non-commuter journeys, the guidance suggests that a walk distance of up to 1,200 metres can be considered, with the 'desirable' and 'acceptable' distances being 400 metres and 800 metres respectively.

3.38 Fig.3.5 summarises the broad walking journey times that can fall under each category.

3.39 The map at Fig.3.6 depicts the 2km preferred maximum walking catchment from the development site which also includes the 'desirable', 'acceptable' and 'preferred maximum' distances. This confirms that Meriden village centre is within convenient walking distance of the site. Available facilities include The Green retail parade which includes a library, Co-op foodstore and a Budgens convenience store, public houses, a health centre and a primary school.

3.40 As outlined previously, no footway is provided on Berkswell Road along the site frontage. However, to the north of the site there is a footway on the eastern side of the carriageway. This connects to the existing footways infrastructure available through the village.

3.41 Fig xx shows that the site is within convenient walking distance of key destinations. Suitable pedestrian infrastructure in the form of footways and crossing facilities are available to accommodate these journeys once a connection to the site has been provided. Public rights of way are also available to the south and west of the site that provide a direct connection into the village. Whilst these routes are across fields, they provide an alternative pedestrian route. The public rights of way are shown.

IHT THRESHOLD	DISTANCE (METRES)		WALK TIME (MINUTES)	
	Commuting, walking to school and recreation	Other non-commuter journeys	Commuting, walking to school and recreation	Other non-commuter journeys
Desirable	500	400	6	5
Acceptable	1,000	800	12.5	10
Maximum	2,000	1,200	25	15

Fig 3.5 | WALK JOURNEY DISTANCE AND TIME THRESHOLD

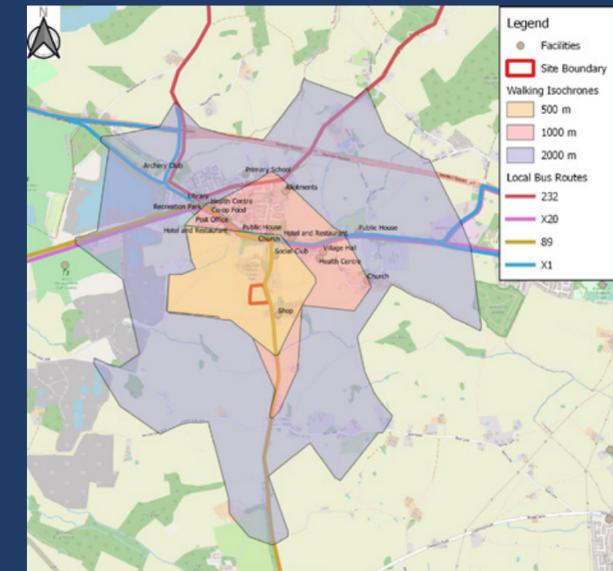


Fig 3.6 | WALKING CATCHMENT | NOT TO SCALE

3.42 With regard to cycling, it is generally accepted that this has the potential to substitute for short car trips, particularly those less than 5km, and to form part of a longer journey on public transport. Fig.3.7 presents the 5km cycling isochrone from the site. It shows that all of Meriden is within

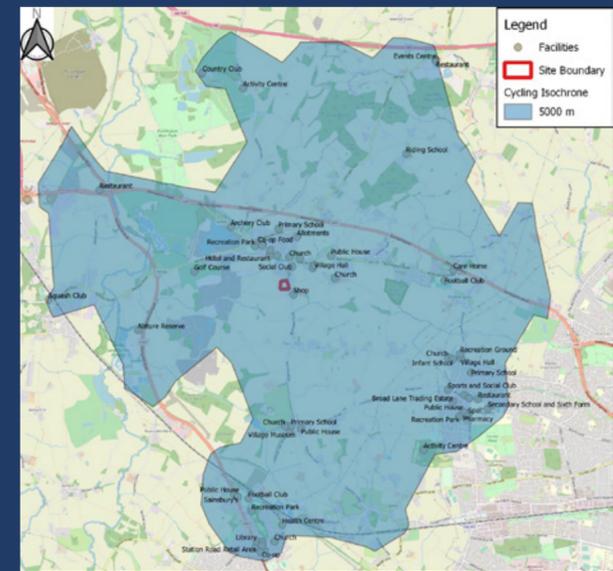


Fig 3.7 | CYCLE CATCHMENT | NOT TO SCALE

convenient cycling distance of the site. The isochrone also includes Hampton-in-Arden and Balsall Common. The eastern extent of the isochrone also includes the Hockley area of Coventry.

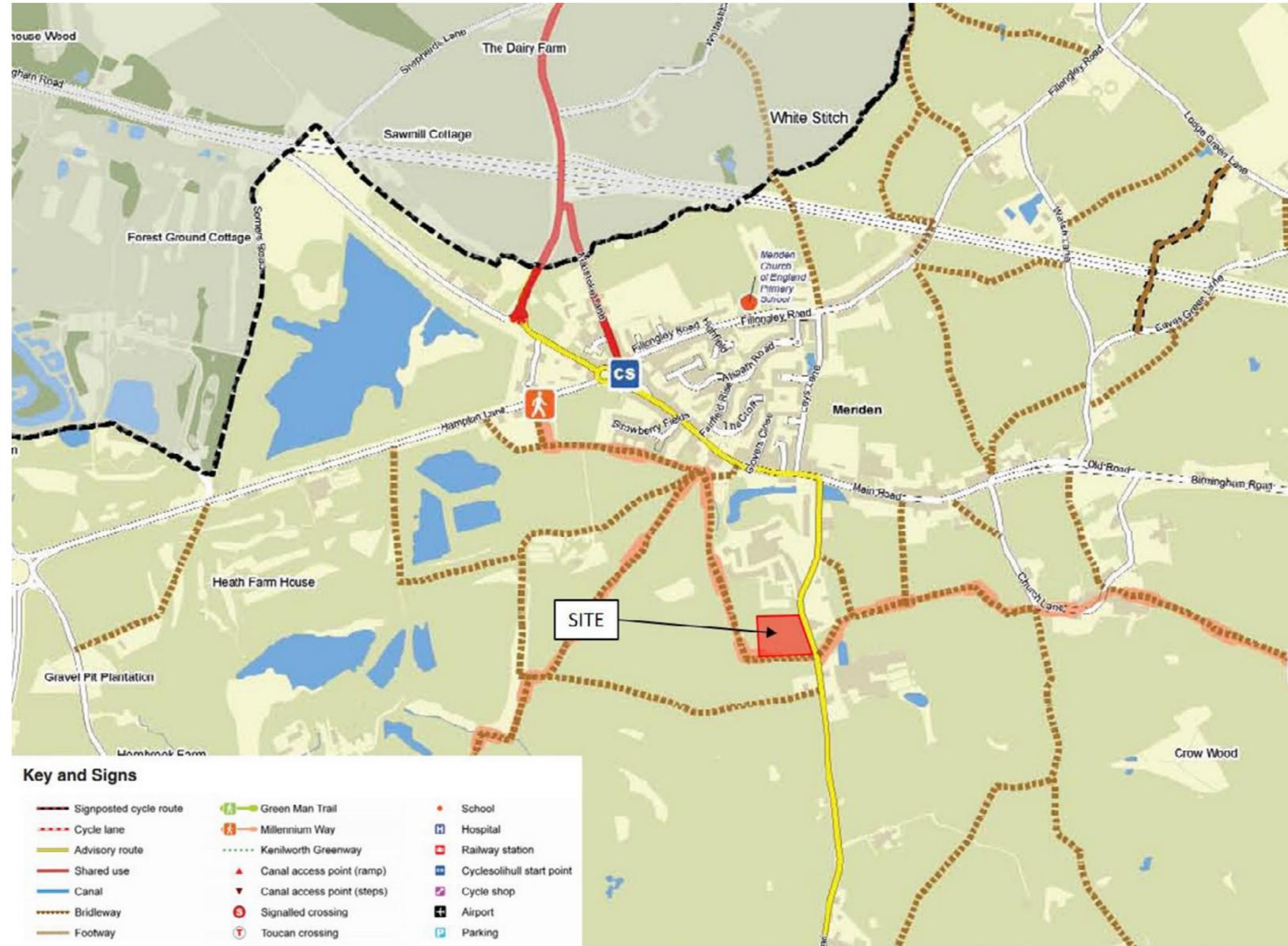


Fig 3.8 | SMBC WALKING AND CYCLING MAP EXTRACT

3.43 Fig.3.8 includes an extract from the SMBC walking and cycling map. This map designates the Berkswell Road and Main Road as being suitable for cycling.

3.44 Although not shown on the plan an on-road cycle route is provided on Main Road to the east of the junction with Berkswell Road and on Birmingham Road to the east of The Green. Further cycle routes outside of the village are limited due to the rural nature of the surrounding areas.

3.45 A Public Right of Way (PROW) runs along the site's southern boundary and connects to a network of other PROWs to provide an alternative route to Main Road and Hampton Lane to the west.

3.46 To support Solihull's Transport Strategy 'Solihull Connected' SMBC are currently developing a Cycling and Walking Strategy for the borough. The purpose of the strategy is to:

- set the overall vision for cycling and walking in Solihull
- set a clear standard for cycling and walking infrastructure
- ensure major developments consider active travel – more sustainable approach to transport
- embed cycling and walking initiatives into local policy

3.47 In terms of bus travel, The nearest bus stops to the site are located on Main Road approximately 470 metres to the north of the site. These stops comprise of shelters with seating and timetable information. These stops are served by the X20, X1 and 89 bus services. The 89 services is operated by Diamond Buses and there is a roaming zone in operation in Meriden where passengers can telephone to request the service. The 232 service is also available in Meriden from the Meriden Green bus stops. Fig.3.9 provides a summary of the available bus services.

SERVICE	ROUTES	SERVICE DETAILS
89	Coventry to Balsall Common via Meriden	3 services per day Monday to Friday
X1	Birmingham to Coventry via the Airport	30 minute frequency Monday to Sunday
X20	Coventry to Stratford via Solihull	Hourly service Monday to Saturday
232	Coleshill to Nuneaton via Fillongley	1 service per day Monday and Friday

Fig 3.9 | BUS SERVICE SUMMARY

3.48 With regard to train travel, the nearest railway station to the site is at Hampton-in-Arden approximately 4.9km to the southwest of the site. The station is managed by West Midlands Railway and has two platforms. Platform 1 serves regular southbound services to Coventry, Rugby, Northampton, Milton Keynes and London Euston. Platform 2 serves northbound services to Birmingham International, Birmingham New Street and local stops such as Lea Hall, Stetchford, Walsall, Cannock and Rugeley.

3.49 Birmingham International railway station would be an alternative destination for those traveling by train and is located approximately 7.6km to the west of the site. This station is located on the same train line as Hampton-in-Arden station.

3.50 The train stations are located outside of the walking isochrones and sufficient infrastructure is not available to encourage the majority of cyclist to cycle to them. However, Hampton-in-Arden station can be reached by the X20 and 89 bus services and Birmingham International station can be reached by using the X1 bus service.

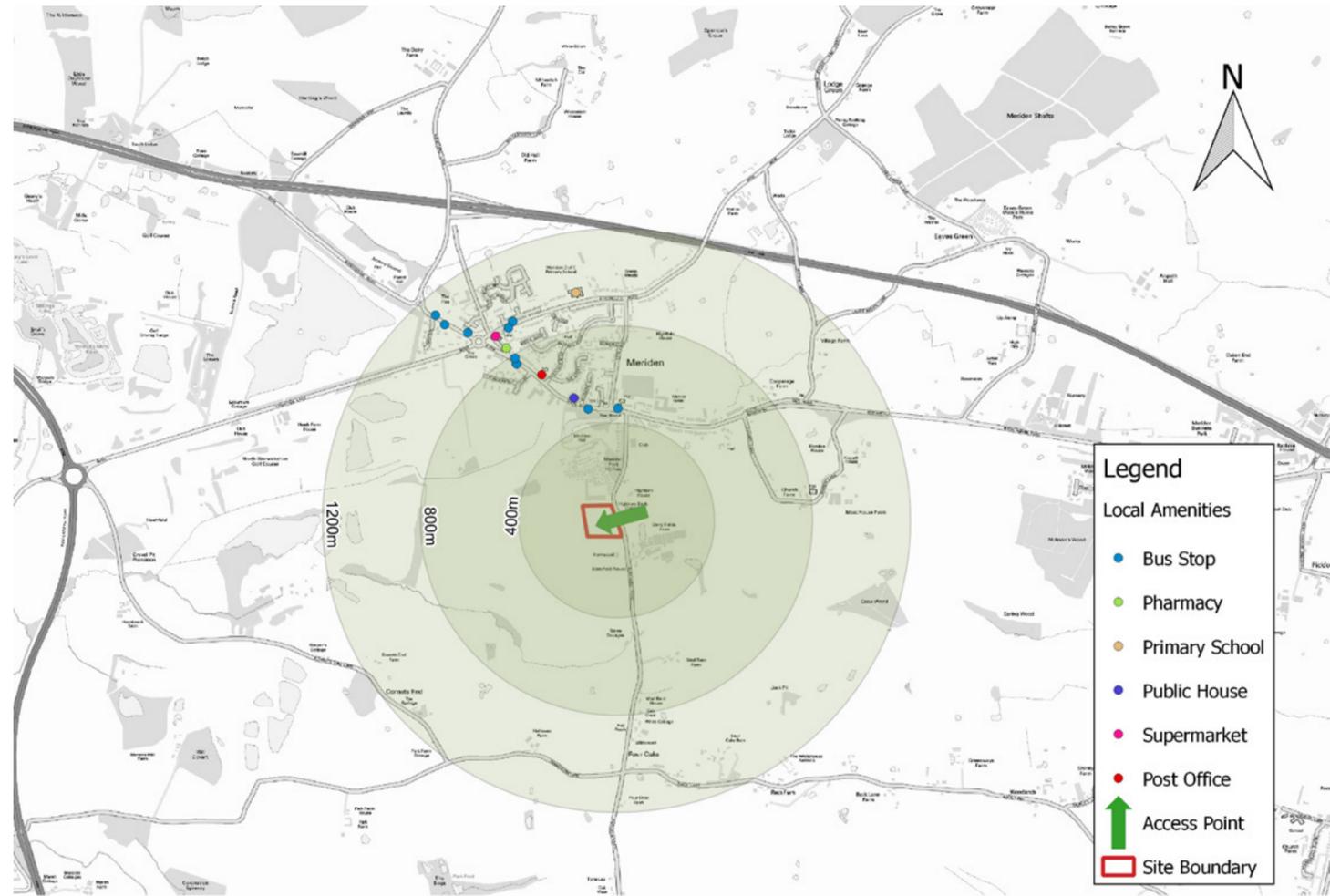


FIG 3.10. | LOCAL AMENITIES PLAN | NOT TO SCALE

Services / Amenities

- 3.51 A number of local services are located on Main Road around 400m of the Site, whilst further services are available within 800m of the Site. Including Meriden Sports Park and the Co-Operative Food Store.
- 3.52 The Site also benefits from its proximity to major employment hubs such as Birmingham Business Park, Birmingham Airport and the National Exhibition Centre, which can easily be accessed via bus. The local facilities within the surrounding area are shown on Fig 3.10.

FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

Flood Risk

- 3.53 Residential development is proposed for the eastern parcel of land known as 'Hornwood Farm', it is considered unlikely that this parcel of land would be affected by surface water flooding. The Site entirely lies within Flood Zone 1.

Drainage

- 3.54 The Site can be served by a piped connection to the Sewage Treatment Works to the west of the Site. It is proposed that surface water will be drained into the watercourse which runs to the west with appropriate attenuation.

ECOLOGY

Introduction

- 3.55 CSA Environmental have undertaken a Site visit and desktop study to identify potential ecological constraints to development, and to inform recommendations for further ecological surveys/assessments necessary to inform the promotion of the Site for future residential development (Fig.3.11).

Methods

- 3.56 An extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the Site was undertaken on 31 January 2017, in order to assess the on-Site habitats and their potential to support notable and protected species. The survey, encompassing the Site and immediately adjacent habitats that could be viewed, was conducted in dry weather conditions.
- 3.57 A Desktop Ecological Review was produced by CSA in January 2016, covering a wider area of 75ha (in the same location and adjacent land to the south), prior to the 2017 Site visit; to inform this previous report, a desktop data search of designated wildlife Sites for a radius of 1km and of records for protected/notable species for a radius of 2km from the wider Site's central grid reference (SP 239 814). The Warwickshire Biological Records Centre (WBRC) was contacted to obtain records, while details of statutory designated wildlife Sites were retrieved from the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online database.

Baseline Ecological Conditions

Designated Sites

3.58 There are no international (e.g. SPA, SAC, Ramsar) statutory designated wildlife Sites within 10km of the Site. Two national (e.g. SSSI, NNR) statutory designated wildlife Sites are present within 3km of the Site and two local statutory designated wildlife Sites are present within 3km of the Site.

3.59 Sixteen non-statutory Local Wildlife Site (LWS) designations are present within 1km of the Site.

Habitats and Flora

3.60 The Site comprises a single agricultural sheep grazed pasture field. The field is bounded by a mixture of by post and rail fencing and intermittent linear hedgerow.

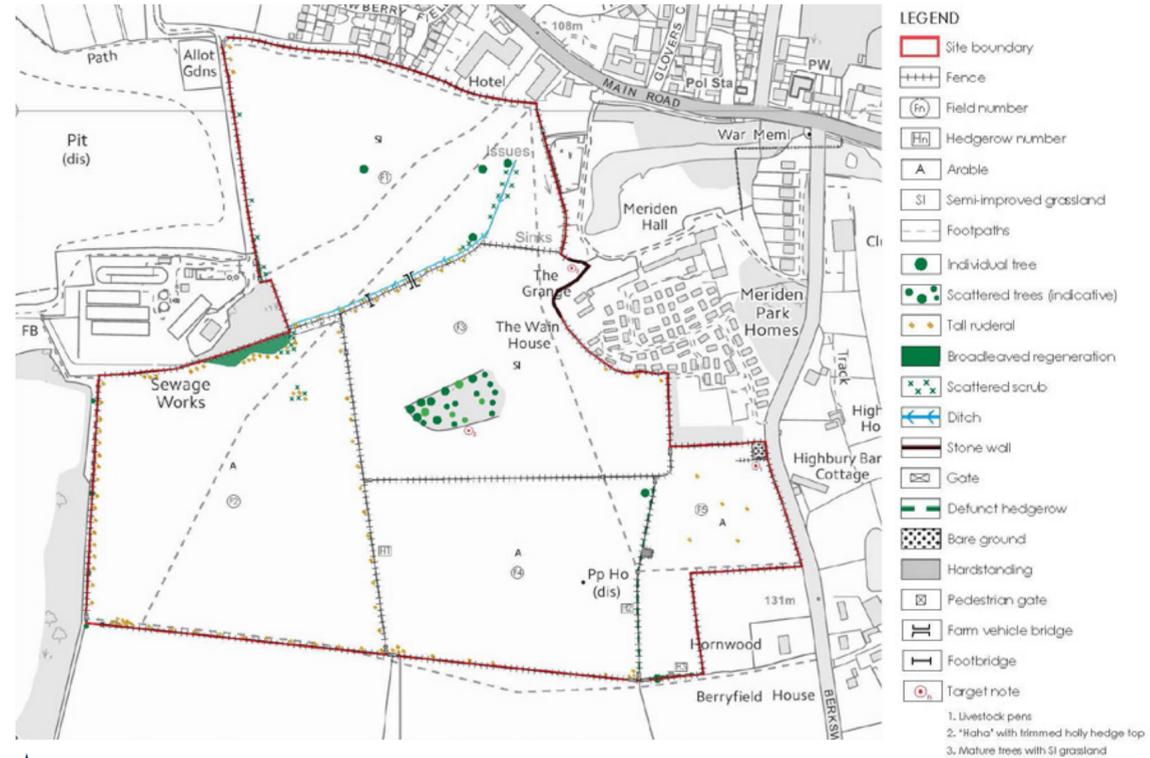


FIG 3.11. | HABITATS PLAN | NOT TO SCALE

Summary of Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

Confirmed Constraints

3.61 Development at this Site will likely require avoidance, mitigation and / or compensation measures in respect to:

Designated Wildlife Sites

3.62 Assessment would be necessary to determine any potential impact to off-Site statutory and non-statutory designations, such as Berkswell Meadows SSSI, River Blythe SSSI, Meriden Hall Pool and Woodland EcoSite and Cornets End EcoSites. This is because the current redline falls within the "Impact risk zones" on MAGIC, and for this area states that:-

Birds

3.63 The nests and eggs of wild birds are all subject to legal protection. Any clearance works to be undertaken should do so out of the nesting bird season (March-August inclusive), or immediately after confirmation from a suitably qualified ecologist that there are no active nests present. Further surveys for breeding birds are likely to be necessary.

Potential Constraints

3.64 Avoidance, mitigation and/or compensation measures may be required in respect to the following potential ecological constraints, subject to further surveys/assessment:

Badgers

3.65 It is recommended that small areas of suitable habitats on-Site should be checked for badger evidence or setts.

Bats

3.66 There are records of bat roosts within the local area and potential for bats to be roosting in on-Site trees.

3.67 Woodland habitats adjacent to the Site may provide important foraging areas and commuting corridors for bats. All bats are European protected species and subject to strict protection.

3.68 Further Bat Activity Surveys (walking transect and static detectors) are recommended to ascertain levels of bat activity.

3.69 Assessments should be carried out to determine the potential for roosting bats to be present in any trees which may be impacted by the development. If significant roosting potential is identified, then further Bat Roost aerial investigations or surveys should be undertaken to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats.

Great crested newts

3.70 Records were returned for this species from over 2km away, however, given the abundance of ponds within 500m a pond scoping exercise is recommended to assess the likelihood of great crested newts utilising on-Site habitats.

Conclusion

3.71 There are limited ecological constraints identified at this Site and those identified are fairly typical of a rural Site with the need to retain hedgerows and mature trees where possible. The Site is dominated by poor semi-improved grazed pasture and arable land which is considered to be of low ecological value, at this stage, although it should be noted that the Site survey was carried out during a sub-optimal period for botany and may need to be reassessed in the summer months. Further survey work has been recommended for badgers, bats and great crested newts in order to inform development proposals and to ensure that any legal constraints are understood and appropriate mitigation developed. Opportunities will exist to create new habitats and provide other ecological enhancements alongside development.

3.72 Considerations will need to be made regarding Biodiversity Offsetting assessments, which is now a mandatory requirement in all Warwickshire districts, consultation with the local authority and Environment bank may be beneficial.

3.73 No overriding constraints to development have been identified, subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures in respect of confirmed ecological constraints, and further recommended survey work.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

3.74 This document provides an initial assessment of potential heritage constraints for the proposed development Site Land South of Meriden. The assessment has been informed by the following sources:

- Historic England National Heritage List for information on designated heritage assets comprising Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and World Heritage Sites.
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council webSite for information on Conservation Areas.
- Warwickshire and Solihull Historic Environment Record for information on non-designated heritage assets and previous archaeological works.
- Historic cartographic sources and satellite imagery.
- A Site visit.

Designated Heritage Assets

3.75 The Grade II* Listed Meriden Hall, an early 18th-century house now divided into flats, is located to the north of Meriden Park Homes Site. Meriden Hall is set within associated grounds including a fish pond to the north (extant) and a Grade II Listed Stables and Grade II Listed Icehouse to its west. The main façade of the house faces south, historically looking towards associated gardens although now largely occupied by a mobile home park, although there are also principal views north across an associated pond. The Site has historically formed parkland associated with Meriden Hall, although is now separated from it by the mobile home park located within the former gardens of the hall.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 3.76 The findspot of a Mesolithic flint tool (microlith) is recorded to the south of the Site. Finds of a Bronze Age sword and a Bronze Age Beaker are recorded to the north-west of the Site.
- 3.77 A moat, known as Giant's Den, potentially of medieval origin, is located approximately 200m to the south of the Site. A 17th-century cottage is located within the moat (ibid).

Conclusions

- 3.78 The proposed development Site is located to the south of the Grade II* Listed Meriden Hall (Fig.3.12). The Site has historically formed parkland associated with the hall, although is now separated from the hall by a mobile home park, located within the former gardens. The setting of the Grade II* Listed Meriden Hall should be taken into account in the formulation of detailed design plans.
- 3.79 Prehistoric finds are recorded in the vicinity of the Site. There is no current evidence to suggest below-ground archaeological remains are present which would preclude development.

OTHER MATTERS

Ground Contamination and Pollution

3.80 The Site is currently in pastoral and arable use and as such there are no known ground contamination constraints.

Odour

3.81 An existing Sewage Works is located over 500m to the west of the Site which is considered sufficient distance away from the Site for the works to propose no constraint on development.



FIG 3.12. | LISTED BUILDINGS PLAN | NOT TO SCALE

04 | EMERGING PROPOSALS

DEVELOPMENT AND QUANTUM

- 4.1 The proposed developable Site extends to approximately 1.73 ha, with a net developable area of approximately 1.48 hectares (Fig.4.1).
- 4.2 Taking into account the Site's edge of settlement location and the Solihull Local Plan which sets out a high demand for 1,2 and 3 bedroom homes with a range of tenures and sizes, an average density of 35-40 dph has been applied. This will approximately provide in the order of 50 dwellings at 35dph and 59 dwellings at the upper 40dph figure. The proposed density will allow for the formation of a sustainable and balanced residential development which can respond appropriately to the local housing need
- 4.3 Green spaces have been designed to soften the development fringe and complement an outward facing lower density development. Additional planting to nearby coppices will seek to soften the development and assist in its assimilating into the surrounding landscape context. A central green space will seek to provide the development with a focal point with far reaching views of the surrounding countryside.
- 4.4 Internal facing streets would seek to achieve a higher density, this will allow for a range of types and units being provided within the development while still allowing for a lower density periphery.
- 4.5 The development has been set back from Berkswell Road to allow for the retention of the existing landscaping and to take into account the set back of the residential development along Berkswell Road to the north and south of the Site. Opportunities exist for additional enhanced hedgerow planting and to compensate for the loss of vegetation required to allow for the access to be provided to the development.

- 4.6 Development has been proposed to sit fully outside the latest flood mapping estimates (obtained from the E.A flood maps).
- 4.7 Development is to be Sited to the southern side of the existing Meriden Park Homes mobile home park away from the existing key views from within the red line boundary of the Site.

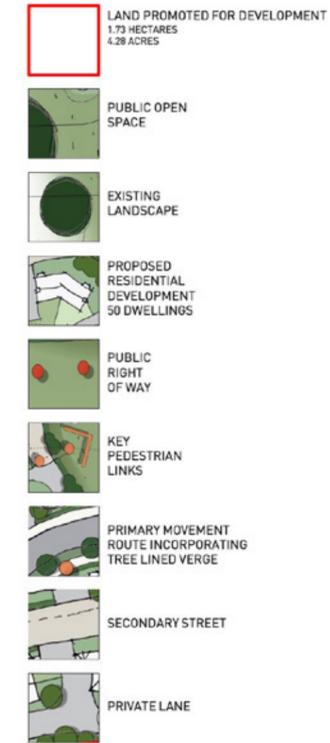
ACCESS

- 4.8 Principal vehicular access will be taken off Berkswell Road from an existing gated field access point, opposite Highbury House. Access drawings are included in Section 3 (Fig.3.4).
- 4.9 A pedestrian connection will be provided along Berkswell Road towards Main Rd to link up with existing facilities and the existing rural public footpath will provide a "Short cut" into the village for those that want to use it.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- 4.10 Land outlined in blue in Fig 1.1 will be retained as pastureland which incorporates a series of existing hedgerows, a coppice and a number of existing public right of ways running across the Site. This land provides an opportunity for the creation of Green Belt compensatory mitigation.
- 4.11 The majority of existing trees and linear shrub vegetation are proposed to be retained aside from the removal of vegetation necessary to widen the existing track to provide the Site access and internal connectivity.
- 4.12 A series of newly planted screen planting is proposed along the southern and western boundary of the development which will from an extension of the existing Coppice tree planting to the north which surrounds the Meriden Park Homes mobile home park. This will provide a new defensible green belt boundary to the south and west of the proposed development, with only glimpsed views into the development.
- 4.13 Solihull's Green Spaces Strategy sets out a requirement for green space of 2.86 hectare per 1,000 population. Using this standard, the development will require an estimated 0.34 – 0.39 hectares, which the Site can comfortably provide. These will take shape in the form of informal natural play spaces and green open spaces.

KEY



KEY PRINCIPLES

1. PRIMARY VEHICULAR ACCESS VIA BERKSWELL ROAD;
2. PRIMARY MOVEMENT ROUTE INCORPORATING KEY FOCAL JUNCTIONS AND LANDSCAPED SPACES;
3. SECONDARY STREET SERVING SMALLER CLUSTERS OF DEVELOPMENT;
4. PRIVATE LANES PROVIDING ACCESS TO INDIVIDUAL DWELLINGS;
5. KEY PEDESTRIAN ROUTES PROVIDING MAXIMUM PERMEABILITY THROUGH SITE AND LINKING BACK TO EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAYS;
6. KEY FOCAL SPACE PROVIDING A MEETING POINT FOR NEW AND EXISTING RESIDENTS;
7. KEY LONG DISTANCE VIEWS TO SURROUNDING CONTEXTUAL LANDSCAPE;
8. OUTWARD FACING DWELLINGS PROVIDING PASSIVE SURVEILLANCE OVER PUBLIC OPEN SPACE;
9. MAXIMUM RETENTION OF EXISTING FRONT HEDGE TO HELP REDUCE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON APPROACH OF MERIDEN VILLAGE;
10. REDUCED EAVES HEIGHTS AND HIPPED ROOF FORMS ON FRONTAGE/GREEN EDGE DWELLINGS TO REDUCE MASSING IMPACT; AND
11. ADDITIONAL NATIVE PLANTING TO SOUTHERN AND WESTERN EDGE.

FIG 4.1. | DESIGN CONCEPT | NOT TO SCALE





FIG 4.2. | VIEW OF SITE LOOKING NORTH FROM EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

05 | SITE SELECTION ASSESSMENT

5.1 Fig.5 provides an assessment of Land off Berkswell Road, Meriden against Solihull MBC's site selection criteria used to assess the suitability of sites within the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment, 2016 (SHELAA) (and its published draft update October 2020) and the Pre-submission Sustainability Appraisal Report (SA), September 2020. It is considered that Land off Berkswell Road, Meriden would have a low impact when judged against each individual criterion.

SHELAA SUITABILITY CRITERION	
Access Infrastructure Constraints	The site scores a 5 on this aspect, with the existing road access considered to be adequate. A site access can be provided off Berkswell Road, demonstrating that the site is suitable in access terms.
Contamination Land/ Landfill Site	The current use of the site is as an agricultural field. There are no known constraints in relation to ground contamination. An existing sewage works and quarry lie over 500m to the west of the site. The proposed development is a significant distance from the existing quarry. A full ground investigation report will be undertaken as the proposals for the site progress further.
Ground Conditions	Site achieves the maximum score regarding its suitability and treatment not expected to be required regarding ground conditions. Although not anticipated, any issues which arise could be adequately conditioned at permission stage.
Heritage	There are listed buildings located in the nearby vicinity of the site, including the Grade II* Listed Meriden Hall to the north. The proposals for the site have been carefully designed to take into consideration the proximity of nearby heritage assets, and the proposed development parcel is located at a sufficient distance away from these heritage assets to ensure that their setting would not be adversely affected.

FIG 5.1. | SHELAA SUITABILITY CRITERION TABLE

SHELAA SUITABILITY CRITERION	
BMV Agricultural Land	The Agricultural Land Classification of the site is Grade 2, which is considered to be 'best and most versatile' land. However, the majority of land around Meriden is also BMV land, meaning that any development around its edge would also result in the loss of BMV land.
High Pressure Gas Pipeline	The site does not lie within this constraint and achieved the maximum score possible. The site is therefore suitable when assessed against this criteria.
Flood Risk Constraints	The site is located in Flood Zone 1; the area at least risk from flooding. It is therefore considered that the site is suitable for residential development.
Bad Neighbour Constraints	Site scored highest in the assessment and has no bad neighbours
Biodiversity	There are limited ecological constraints identified at the site and those identified are fairly typical of a rural site. The site is dominated by poor semi-improved grazed pasture and arable land which is considered to be of low ecological value at this stage of assessment. No overriding constraints to development have been identified, subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.
Suitability of Location Constraints	The site is immediately adjacent to a 'free standing rural village'. Meriden has a number of local facilities such as a primary school, local shops and public houses. The site is well located on the edge of Meriden, and would therefore be well placed to meet the future housing growth needs of the village in a sustainable manner.
Other Suitability Constraints	

06 | SUMMARY

SA SUITABILITY CRITERION	
SA Suitability Criterion	
SA1 Contribution to Regeneration and Economic Development	Located within 60% least deprived
SA2a Distance to Primary School	The site is located 1km from the nearest primary school and scores green on this aspect.
SA2b Distance to Secondary School	The site is located 5525m from the nearest secondary school and scores yellow on this aspect.
SA3a Proximity to Bus & Train services	The site is located within 500m of an infrequent bus or train service (less than 3 bus services or 2 train services per hour)
SA3b Proximity to Principal Road Network	655m, which scores green on this aspect.
SA4a Soils	The site would result in the loss of approximately 3.9ha of agricultural land.
SA4b Minerals	The site is located within a minerals safeguard area. Any forthcoming Planning Application would address this matter in relation to the proposals.
SA7 Flooding	The site is located entirely in Flood Zone 1.
SA9 Enhance Ecological Sites	The SHELAA sets out that site overlaps or contains a local wildlife site. The site is of a strategic scale to enhance ecological works. This is incorrect, the site does not contain and is not adjacent to a LWS. There are 16 non statutory designations within 1km of the site, the closest being Meriden Hall Pool and Woodland Ecosite/ Rejected pLWS adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site which is not of LWS quality. Meriden Hall Pool and Woodland Ecosite comprises of a long pool, hedges, village pond and woodland which will not be affected by the proposals for development.

SA SUITABILITY CRITERION	
SA10 Landscape Sensitivity	The overall development envelope is defined by the visual and physical containment provided by Berkswell Road to the east and does not extend further west than the built form already present to the north. The development envelope is located away from the more open land parcels to the west and away from the more 'parkland character' to the north which will reduce visual prominence of any new built form afforded visual containment. The proposed Illustrative Layout Plan seeks to conserve and enhance where possible the existing vegetation and make best use of existing landscape elements and features on the site. Additional tree planting to extend the existing area of woodland along the western edge of Meriden is proposed to provide enclosure to the development. Existing physical features including the hedgerow vegetation along the western boundary of the site, as well as new tree planting along this boundary could form a new Green Belt boundary.
SA11 Enhance Green Infrastructure	The proposals for green infrastructure and landscaping will deliver a number of enhancements in terms of the physical landscape and strengthening of the structure of the landscape to create a new robust, defensible Green Belt boundary to the west of the site.
SA12 Enhance and Protect Historic Assets	The Design Concept Plan has illustrated how development could be carefully located to ensure sufficient separation distances are achieved between development and designated Heritage Assets. This will ensure that the character and setting of designated heritage assets would be preserved.
SA14 Amenity	No sources of noise adjacent to the site.
SA17a Distance to Healthcare	617 from local health care facility, which scores green on this aspect.
SA17b Access to Leisure Facilities	Within 400m of at least two facilities- green.
SA19a Distance to Key Economic Assets	4776m
SA19b Distance to Convenience Stores or Supermarket	Located 500m from local convenience stores or supermarket, which again scores green on this aspect.

- 6.1 L&Q Estates' emerging proposals for Land off Berkswell Road, Meriden are capable of contributing positively to meeting the housing needs of the Borough in a sustainable manner. There will be easy access to the existing facilities located within Meriden which includes a primary school, located within the village centre, supermarket, pharmacy and a number of public houses. The site is also well placed being in close proximity public transport provision, with bus stops along Main Road providing frequent connections to Solihull, Coventry and Birmingham in addition to major employment hubs such as the NEC and Birmingham Airport.
- 6.2 The technical information that has been provided within this Background Document sets out that there are no insurmountable physical constraints to the development of the site for residential development.
- 6.3 The scale and form of development has been landscape and visually led to wrap around the existing mobile home park off Berkswell Road to the north of the site. The proposals for green infrastructure and landscaping which include the new tree planting along the western and southern boundary of the site will deliver a number of enhancements in terms of the physical landscape and strengthening of the structure of the landscape to form a clearly defined Green Belt boundary that ties into the existing infrastructure to the north and south.

- 6.4 The development proposals will include the:
- The provision of a range of dwelling types and sizes including affordable housing which would assist in meeting the Borough housing needs in a sustainable location on the edge of Meriden;
 - The creation of a development that is well connected, readily understood and easily navigated, promoting a layout which reduces dependence on the car and which links to existing pedestrian networks;
 - The creation of a strong landscape structure, retaining existing hedgerows and providing new tree planting along the western boundary of the development site which will integrate the development with the surrounding landscape;
 - The provision of new areas of public open space within the development;
- 6.5 The work that has been undertaken by the project team demonstrates that Land off Berkswell Road, Meriden, is suitable, achievable and residential development on the site is deliverable. L&Q Estates look forward to engaging with Solihull Council and Meriden Parish Council to discuss the site further.

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PLANNING | DESIGN | ENVIRONMENT | ECONOMICS | HERITAGE



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