



Approximate extent of site

Southview Farm buildings

Pheasant Oak Farm buildings

To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

Appendix EDP 5
Additional Photoviewpoints
(edp5006_d026a 24 July 2023 GYo/MMc)

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To be viewed at comfortable arm's length



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

Appendix EDP 6
Landscape Strategy
(edp5006_r011f)

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Land off Hob Lane and Pheasant Oak Farm, Balsall Common

LANDSCAPE
STRATEGY

July 2023

Barwood
Development
Securities Ltd



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Introduction, Scope and Purpose

The site is located on the eastern edge of Catchems Corner, which adjoins Balsall Common to the west, and comprises two farms, a light industrial complex and a collection of agricultural fields. It is subdivided and bounded on all sides by a mixture of fences and hedgerows. Beyond these, farmland is located to the east, Hob Lane to the south, Residential Properties and Windmill Lane to the west, and the B4101 to the north. The site is broadly flat and lies at c.25m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The alignment of a proposed bypass road is located close to the eastern boundary of the site. Its character is influenced by its location on the urban edge and current land use – having regard to the noise, light and movement from nearby roads and urban areas – is not of a tranquil, intact rural landscape.

The proposals have been informed by the landscape to be of an appropriate scale and nature and some dimensions of the landscape will be positively affected by the proposals. The emerging masterplan includes the creation of additional hedgerow and tree planting, replicating characteristic features within the landscape and contributing to its visual appeal whilst softening the existing settlement edge.

The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) was first appointed by Barwood Land Ltd in 2018 to provide technical inputs on a suite of environmental disciplines, including landscape and visual, archaeology, ecology and arboricultural matters to inform the development potential of the site. EDP is currently providing these inputs into the development of the masterplan and an outline planning application.

EDP is an independent environmental planning consultancy with offices in Cirencester, Cheltenham and Cardiff. The practice provides advice in the fields of landscape, ecology, archaeology, masterplanning, arboriculture, rights of way and agricultural land matters.

This statement is a short summary of the landscape studies and strategy that have guided the evolution of the masterplan.

This statement has three main objectives:

1

To identify and present the environmental baseline conditions of the site and its setting. These comprise the physical elements and attributes that characterise the site and its role at the edge of the settlement.

2

To identify the main landscape and visual and ecological resources of the site by identifying important assets and detractors present in the baseline conditions.

3

To apply the baseline analysis to the development proposals; although this stage has occurred via consultation prior to the formation of this statement, this document demonstrates the synergistic approach.

The Site Character and Context

A review of the Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment (SBLCA) finds that the site is located within the Landscape Character Area (LCA) '*Balsall Common Eastern Fringe*'. The relevant key characteristics of this LCA to the site and its nearby context include:

- Heavy influence from the adjacent Balsall Common settlement;
- Isolated trees within hedgerows lining field boundaries;
- Gently undulating visually, containing landform reinforced by a strong hedgerow network;
- Small fields bound by strong hedgerows structure and some ditches; and
- An absence of woodland cover.


The highest point within the site boundary is c.127m aOD at the caravan storage site at the centre of the site. Landform undulates gently across the site, with the lowest point reaching 122.5m aOD in the far south-east corner. Hydrological features include five ponds within the north and south-west of the site and just beyond the southern boundary. Several wet ditches and a field drain line a number of field boundaries.


The underlying character of the Balsall Common Eastern Fringe forms an expansive, generally flat to gently undulating landscape. Combined with


characteristic structural boundary hedgerows, mature hedgerow trees and adjacent built development, distant visibility is limited to within c.1km.

The main body of fields comprise pastureland. Field parcels to the north and east are largely bound by hedgerows (varying in quality). In contrast, field parcels to the west of the development have predominantly been fenced for livestock purposes. Hedgerows to the north and east of the site feature isolated mature trees and contribute further to the structure of the landscape fabric. Farm buildings, associated hardstanding and areas of bare ground dominate the centre of the site, with adjoining infill spaces left unmanaged to develop areas of scrub, ruderal vegetation and scattered trees. The quality of the built form on site is generally dilapidated, and the on-site buildings can be seen in context with the surrounding developments to the north, south and west.

The site does not lie within any nationally or locally designated landscapes. In neither a topographic nor a spatial sense does the development capacity of the site appear to conflict with established patterns of development, nor does it threaten the identity of neighbouring settlements. Whilst the agricultural landscape of the site and its constituent landscape elements are key characteristics of the identified local landscapes described above, the character of the site is strongly influenced by its location bounding the eastern urban edge of Balsall Common.

 Site Boundary

 Public Right of Way

 Millennium Way (Promoted Route)

- 1** Site seen in context of Balsall Common's settlement edge
- 2** Field parcels bounded by hedgerows and isolated mature trees typical of Balsall Common Eastern Fringe LCA
- 3** Active farm buildings, caravan store and associated hard standing dominate the centre of the site
- 4** Mature boundary hedgerow and trees define clear edge to eastern boundary and limit views out to the wider landscape
- 5** Dense vegetation lining Waste Lane curtail views to site from the north enclosing the site
- 6** Residential buildings along Hob Lane define the southern boundary of the site
- 7** Millennium Way Promoted Route is largely enclosed by farm buildings and mature on site vegetation

The site does not lie within a locally, or a nationally designated landscape. The site does not contain any designated heritage assets, the nearest being Berkswell Windmill, an appropriate design response is proposed at the sites south-west corner.

The majority of the site comprises of habitats of predominantly low (negligible) intrinsic ecological value, including hardstanding, bare ground and buildings, species-poor grassland, wet, shaded ditches, and species-poor defunct hedgerows. Habitats of greater (local) value include five ponds (plus a boggy area and marshy grassland area), occasional mature scattered trees and species-rich hedgerows. Where possible these habitats are to be retained, protected and buffered from the development proposals. The development has been considered to incorporate suitable mitigation and enhancement measures provides an opportunity to increase the value of retained habitats (such as the grassland, ditches and hedgerows) and create new habitats (such as new wildflower grassland, woody planting, hedgerows and ponds), with associated increased opportunities for protected/notable species.

There are no woodland features within or adjacent to the site boundary. Furthermore, no ancient woodland is located within or adjacent to the site boundary. There are four areas of ancient woodland within the 2km study area with the closest c.1.2km away. The development proposals have sought to retain and buffer trees of greatest value within the site.

The Millennium Way Promoted Route runs through the site from north to south, providing connectivity to Balsall Common and the surrounding countryside. The adjacent image, is taken from Millennium Way within the site looking south toward the farmsteads. The route crosses through the site between farm buildings and the caravan store. The perception of the site from the route is that of operational farm businesses and commercial enterprises. It is far from being an attractive, scenic route as it crosses the site. The development proposals provide great opportunity to enhance the landscape, scenic qualities and connectivity for users of this route.



Route of Millennium Way through site

The emerging policy wording for BC4 2ii, from the Emerging Solihull Local Plan, requires that the site:

“a. safeguards the rural character of Hob Lane, Waste Lane and Windmill Lane; and Under 2iv

b. Provision of a significant area of public open space forming a buffer to Waste Lane.”

The character of the site is strongly influenced by its location bounding the eastern edge of Balsall Common.

The development proposals have taken a hierarchical approach to the retention of the existing tree and hedgerow network which where possible, is enhanced by new replacement and gap planting and integrated into a strong landscape structure within the masterplan.

The landscape strategy is in response to the site’s specific landscape sensitivities and opportunities by building and reinforcing the onsite fabric. In addition, the proposals provide:

- A green infrastructure framework (including areas of Public Open Space) to integrate with the landscape and provide visual amenity with biodiversity enhancement, whilst ensuring greater opportunities for open air recreation within the setting of Balsall Common Eastern Fringe; and
- A positive contribution to the urban and rural context at the eastern edge of Balsall Common by enhancing the site’s eastern boundary by planting up this boundary to the site, creating an enhanced settlement edge.

-  Site Boundary
-  Range Ring (at 1km intervals)
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Local Nature Reserve
-  Grade II* Listed Building
-  Grade II Listed Building
-  Public Right of Way
-  Millennium Way
-  Coventry Way

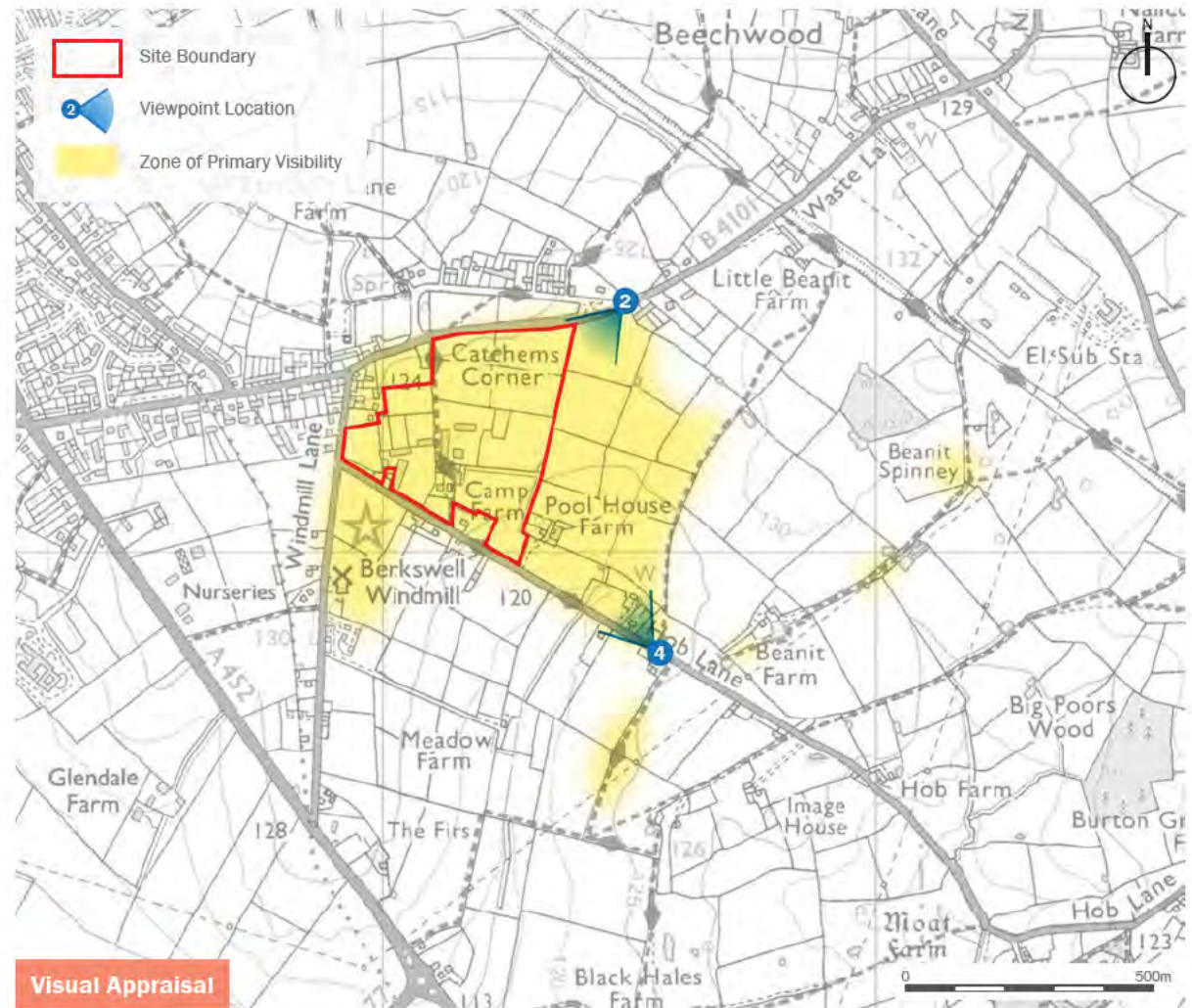


Environmental Designations

Visual Context

The site's zone of visibility is very limited. There is no potential for (distant) views into the site from the wider surrounding areas beyond c.1km. From areas outside of the immediate site context, there is very limited intervisibility between the site and the Balsall Common Eastern Fringe LCA due to the strongly vegetated site boundaries featured within the historic field pattern of the site and adjacent agricultural land, combined with the flat to gently undulating topography of the local context. Other views from the north and east are entirely limited to just beyond the site boundaries due to intervening vegetation and residential buildings along Old Waste Lane and the settlement edge of Balsall Common as illustrated below. Southern views are restricted to a very limited number of Hob Lane road users, as illustrated below, and glimpsed views on the approach from Windmill Lane due to the vegetated borders of both roads.

The challenge and opportunity is to bring forward a landscape framework that offers significant green infrastructure benefits, containing and filtering the visual influence of the development as a compact and logical extension to Balsall Common, in-keeping with the settlement characters of the Balsall Common Eastern Fringe. Built development (including extensive areas of housing) is an established and frequent component of the visual character of the area.





Viewpoint 2: Waste Lane



Viewpoint 4: Millennium Way, Hob Lane

Environmental Strategy

EDP have provided inputs from the start of the masterplanning process based on the findings of technical assessments.

The site is heavily influenced by the eastern edge of Balsall Common, and the current land use. To ensure the success of the new neighbourhood, several key objectives have fed into the masterplan process, the development of which is outlined below in relation to the key themes of **Ecology, Movement** and

Destinations:

- The design responds to the host Landscape Character Area (LCA) 'Balsall Common Eastern Fringe, by limiting tree planting within open spaces, to reflect the character of similar local spaces with isolated trees and hedgerows lining development parcels, which offers a positive frontage to the settlement edge and reinforces the strength of the onsite hedgerow network;
- The north-east and south-east corners are recognised to be more visually sensitive due to the potential for views and disruption to character on the settlement approach; areas of Public Open Space (POS) are proposed here including additional planting and strengthening along the boundaries;
- A generous green spine of POS is included along the route of the Millennium Way within the development providing a significant enhancement to the route, this will retain the current alignment of the Public Right of Way (PRoW) and feature scattered tree planting, formal and informal open space and act as an anchor to other designations and informal routes within the development; and
- Boundary vegetation is to be retained, protected and buffered with additional tree planting and grassland wildflower to encourage species diversity.



-  Existing Trees/Hedgerows Retained
-  Existing Ponds Enhanced for Biodiversity including Great Crested Newts
-  Existing Grassland Enhanced for Biodiversity

