

Pigotts Car Breakers, Strensall

GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

for

Pigotts Auto Parts

Planning | 6th February 2024

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1 Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared by The Landscape Partnership on behalf of Pigott Auto Parts in relation to the suitability of Pigotts Car Breakers (refer to Figure 01) for residential development (hereafter referred to as the 'Site'). The Site is located approximately 0.8-1.5kms to the north of the settlement of Strensall, within the administrative area of the City of York Council (CYC), close to the boundary with Ryedale District Council.

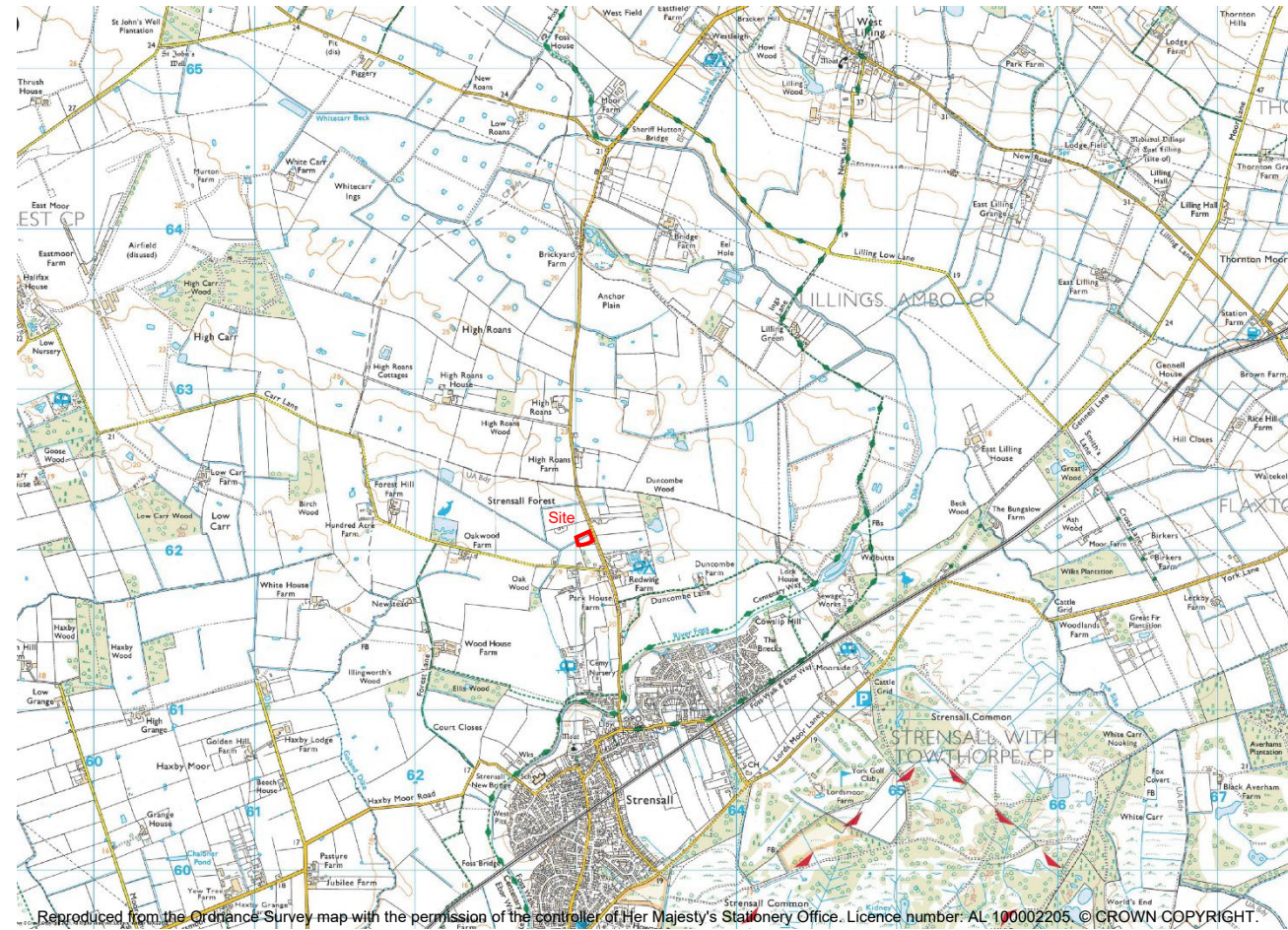


Figure 01: Location Plan

1.2 The assessment has been undertaken by Graham Farrier (CMLI) based on a desktop analysis and field survey carried out on 20 August 2021. The weather was light cloud with good light levels and high visibility. The study area covered an approximate 3km radius. The report has been updated following the refusal of Planning Application 21/02757/OUT, so that it can form part of a new planning submission, based on a revised scheme. This scheme was submitted during the consultation period of the previous application, but was not reassessed in terms of its effects on the Green Belt.

1.3 The Green Belt Assessment (GBA) sets out the following:

- ◆ context of the Site in relation to the existing and historic settlement pattern;
- ◆ main features of the Site and local context and their contribution to the Green Belt;
- ◆ current definition of York Green Belt boundaries;
- ◆ key relevant information from the Green Belt assessments undertaken by CYC;
- ◆ the presence of relevant designations in the local and wider Green Belt, and the influence on the Green Belt in the context of the Site;
- ◆ assessing visual perception of the Site, identifying key views and the visual influence of the Site and how this may change in relation to the proposed development, and defining how these influences would affect the perceived change to the openness of this part of the Green Belt; and
- ◆ assessment of the performance of the Green Belt in relation to the Site and how this would change as a result of the proposed development.

Planning Application 21/02757/OUT

1.4 The Committee Report of 16 August 2023 provided comments in relation to the Green Belt and the effects of the revised scheme considered within this updated Green Belt Assessment. This included the following salient points:

- ◆ the Site lies within the general extent of the City of York Green Belt;
- ◆ the Site should be regarded as being previously developed land and any future development should be considered against criterion (g) of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 154, and whether it would have any greater impact in comparison to the existing situation;
- ◆ the application site should be considered as appropriate development in the Green Belt;
- ◆ the Site provides a function in relation to the NPPF Purpose C and D (refer to Section 7 below);
- ◆ whilst the storage of cars for dismantling is not a permanent feature, the storage has taken place for a period of over 30 years. This has also led to the creation of an informal lay-by; and
- ◆ it was concluded that '*officers on balance would consider that the dwellings on the site would have no further impact on the openness of the greenbelt than the existing use, and it could be considered that the proposal would be an improvement in character and appearance of this site within the countryside. The existing lay-by is of a similar scale to that proposed on the plans, and as such it not considered to impact further on the openness of the Green Belt*'.

2 Site Location and Context

Location

- 2.1 The Site is located approximately 820m to the north of the existing development within the settlement of Strensall (refer to Figure 02) and approximately 10.5km to the north-east of the centre of York.

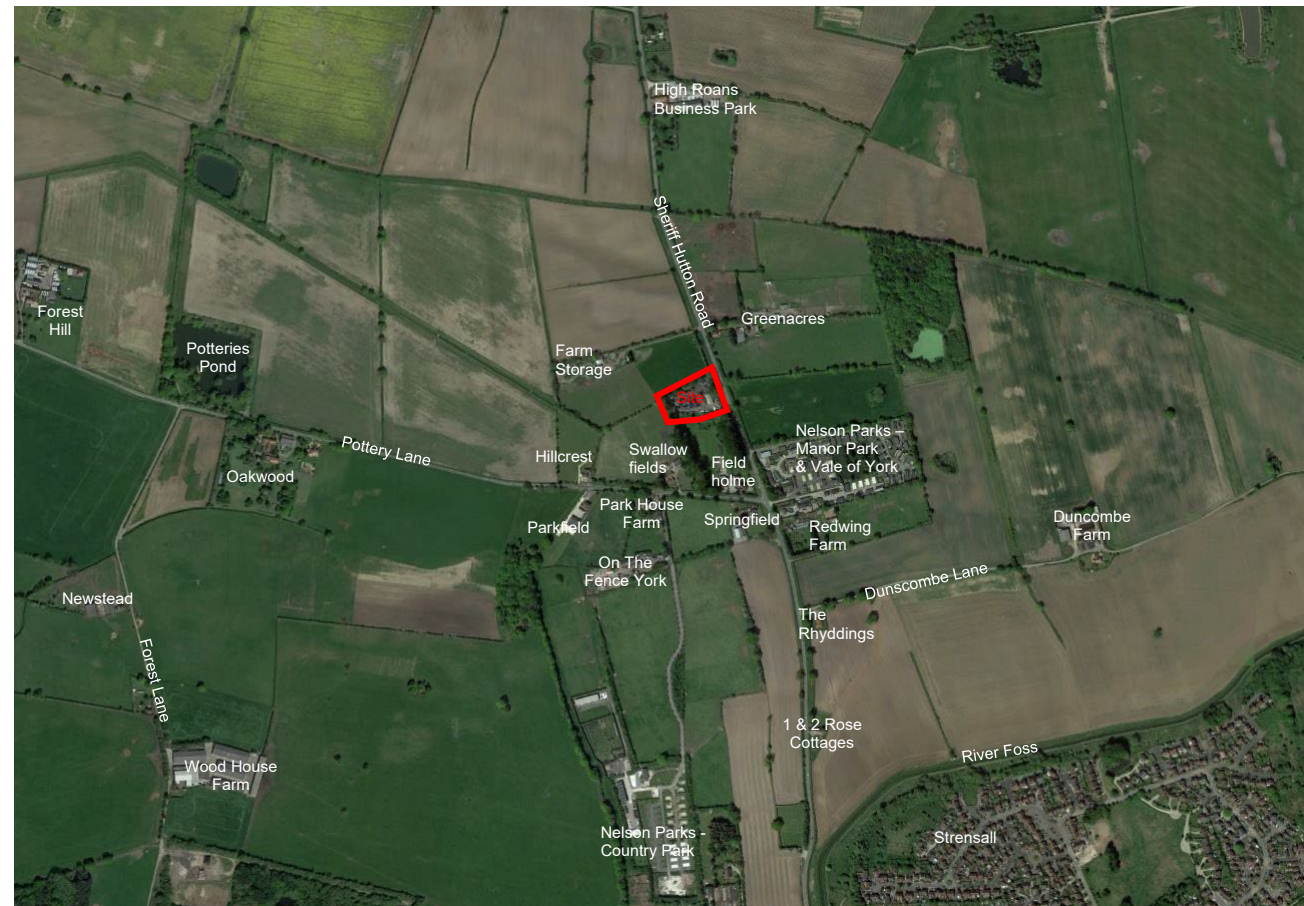


Figure 02: Local Context

- 2.2 In 2011 the parish of Strensall and Towthorpe had a population of 6,047. Employment has historically been based around a tannery, brickyards, potteries and farming, and by the local barracks, although the village is primarily a dormitory settlement for commuters to York. The village has a number of local facilities, such as grocery shops, post office, pubs, doctor' surgery, sporting facilities etc. The neighbouring Strensall Common to the south-east provides an important area for nature conservation (refer to Section 5).

Landscape Character

- 2.3 The North Yorkshire and York Landscape Characterisation Project, May 2011 identifies the Site as being located within the Landscape Character Type (LCT) of Farmed Lowland and Valley Landscapes

and the Landscape Character Area (LCA) of 28 Vale Farmland with Plantation Woodland and Heathland. LCA 28 is a large area of landscape that surrounds York. It is a landscape of low lying, predominantly arable farmland, often delineated by a network of mature hedgerows, interspersed with mixed and coniferous woodland and large heathlands on sandy soils. Remnant grasslands including 'ings' meadows on the river floodplain. Copses and shelterbelts are also key features. There is a strong sense of openness with distant visual containment by more elevated LCTs to the east and west. A scattered pattern of towns, villages and farmsteads surround York, with a network of trunk roads connecting the larger villages and towns. The landscape is assessed as having a moderate visual, ecological, and landscape and cultural sensitivity. Whilst there is a strong sense of openness, patches of woodland disrupt views. The landscape is predominantly comprised of improved agricultural fields, but there are large areas of lowland heathland such as Strensall Common. Historic landscape pattern is compromised by modern development, infrastructure and gappy hedgerows, but there are also numerous historic landscape features, including parkland landscapes, historic villages and prehistoric earthworks.

Local Context

- 2.4 The landscape around Strensall is primarily characterised by Strensall Common, York Golf Club, and farmland. The latter varies, mainly comprising a strip of narrow arable and grassland fields between the village and the golf course/Strensall Common to the east and south and an area of scattered development, horse paddocks, pasture and grassland to the north of the village loosely arranged along Sheriff Hutton Road and Pottery Lane. The landscape in these areas has small fields enclosed by tall hedgerows, several small woodlands, trees, and tree belts creating a contained character. Beyond these areas and to the west of the village, the landscape is more rural and open in character, formed primarily of large arable and pasture fields. There are also a few clay/marl pits which have been converted into fishing lakes, such as Potteries Pond to the west of the Site (refer to Figure 02). Field boundaries are variable, comprising low or tall hedgerows or open boundaries. There is general awareness of a deterioration in field boundaries, through removal or poor management. The land is largely flat, with little variation, except to the north-east where the land rises approximately 50m in height to a localised ridge on which the small village of Sheriff Hutton and hamlet of West Lilling are located approximately 3.3km from the Site. Howardian Hills lie beyond, approximately 9km to the north-east of the Site.
- 2.5 The Sheriff Hutton Road/Pottery Lane area has its own defined local character that is distinguishable from the wider open landscape. As shown on Figure 02, there are a number of scattered buildings and areas of development, which forms a hamlet-like character, these include:

- ♦ **Individual Residential Properties:** there are number of detached houses close to the intersection of Sheriff Hutton Road and Pottery Lane, including: Fieldholme, a large 2 storey brick house with adjoining residential property, storage building (consent granted for its demolition and building of new residential property App Ref 20/01065/FUL), storage area and rough grassland, with the property being used as a commercial business for garage and stable design; Swallowfields, a brick bungalow, with adjoining residential property, large shed, menage and horse paddocks; Springfield, a brick bungalow with outhouse, and barn; Hoxne Farm, a two storey brick house and bungalow to rear, which no longer appears to be a farm; Redwing Farm, a brick bungalow, sheds, barns, and storage area in poor condition and adjoining farmland; Park House Farm, a large two storey brick house with garage and garden, which appears to be connected with the adjoining timber business but is no longer a farm; Hillcrest, a brick bungalow with large garden to the rear; The Ryddings, a brick bungalow with garden; 1 & 2 Rose Cottages, a two storey semi-detached white rendered residential property;
- ♦ **Park Homes/Lodges and Caravan Park;** there are two adjoining areas of fixed park home residential development owned by Nelson Parks Ltd. The Manor Park and The Vale of York development is located at the intersection of Sheriff Hutton Road and Pottery Lane, approximately 90m to the south-east of the Site. The site provides a combined group of 66 park homes and associated facilities. The Manor Park development was consented in March 2007 (App Ref: 06/01054/FUL). The Vale of York development has had ongoing development in recent years with the latest being consented in December 2018 (App Ref: 18/01414/FUL). To the south, Nelson Parks have another development, Country Park (located to the west of Sheriff Hutton Road), providing pitches for touring caravans, large manager's house, and associated built facilities;
- ♦ **Commercial:** the Site is the location of the car breakers owned by Pigotts Auto Parts (refer to Section 3). Approximately 250m to the south-west is the On The Fence York development providing a timber business incorporating large storage buildings, sheds, containers, hard standing and storage areas. Additionally, approximately 490m to the north of the Site, lies High Roans Business Park comprised of six units;
- ♦ **Farmsteads:** there are a number of farms with quite large farmsteads within a radius of approximately 1km, just beyond the core area of development around the Sheriff Hutton Road and Pottery Lane intersection, these include: Parkfield; Oakwood Farm; Greenacres; Forest Hill; Newstead; Wood House Farm; Duncombe Farm. The farmsteads incorporate a farmhouse and a number of barns and farmyards. The Country Park development also includes an adjoining

large area of agricultural development with a number of small to large farm buildings and hard standing.

- 2.6 The combined effect of the development within the context of the Site, together with intervening horse paddocks and pasture is to create an area of semi-urban fringe character to the north of Strensall.

Historic Settlement Pattern

- 2.7 In the 19th century, Strensall was a small village set along Station Road (now The Village) and intersection with Sheriff Hutton Road. The surrounding countryside was a well defined farmed landscape with few farms and a regular linear field structure of small to medium sized fields. Many of these field boundaries have now been removed. Within the context of the Site, the following farms were present: Dunscombe Farm; High Roans Farm; Oakwood Farm; and Wood House Farm. No other built form was present within the countryside. Sheriff Hutton Road and Pottery Lane were both present in their current alignment. Several old marl pits were present close to the Sheriff Hutton Road and Pottery Lane intersection.
- 2.8 In the first half of the 20th century, Strensall started to expand with residential development extending along Lords Moor Lane. Several buildings were built at the intersection of Sheriff Hutton Road and Pottery Lane including: Fieldhome; Redwing Farm; Park House Farm; a timber business (currently known as On The Fence York); a large barn that has now been removed; and Springfield. In the 1960s and 1970s, Strensall significantly expanded with new residential developments, becoming similar to the current extent of the village. Other development within the Site and vicinity of the Site took place at the end of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century.

3 Site

- 3.1 The Site comprises the following features:
- ♦ the land was purchased in the mid-1950's for use as a timber yard. At that time there was a nissen hut and adjoining smaller sheds of approximately 3.3m in height that are still present within the west of the Site. There was also an overhead gantry and canopy in the centre of the yard used for timber milling, which is also still present, but has been relocated to the east of the Site. In 1966 the Site became a yard used for scrapping of cars, which has continued to the present day. The image below illustrates the car breakers in its early days, with associated buildings;



- ◆ additional buildings were subsequently built, including a large brick building within the east of the Site with a pitched roof up to approximately 5.9m in height. Connected to this building is a small lean to building to the north, the relocated overhead gantry and canopy of approximately 5.7m height, and three shipping containers. At the entrance to the Site is a portacabin used as an office;
- ◆ the entirety of the Site is laid to hardstanding, as either crushed aggregate or concrete;
- ◆ much of the Site is used for storing cars for breakage. The current extent of storage is shown on the topographical survey (Dwg No 6838 / 01). The cars are stacked 2 high in the holding areas. The north-east corner of the yard is used for storing car shells ready for disposal. This varies in the number of cars, becoming particularly concentrated as stock builds up and is typically stored 3 cars high, but can be higher. There are approximately 200/250 cars in the holding areas and anything up to 300 in the area awaiting crushing;
- ◆ the business currently processes approximately 1000 cars per year;
- ◆ various machinery/plant and vehicles are used within the Site, including: a crane with a jib length of 30'; two forklifts; usually at least three skips; and a mobile car press is brought in 3 or 4 times a year, clearing around 200 tonnes each time. The crushed vehicles are then taken out by a fleet of HGV's each holding around 24 tonnes;
- ◆ a vegetated bund to a height of approximately 3m along the southern boundary;

- ◆ hedgerow of hawthorn, blackthorn and rose, of approximately 3m height, with three ash trees of 22-23m height and four hybrid poplar of 22-23m height, along the eastern boundary. The tree survey identifies that the trees are Category B (Moderate Quality), except for one Category C (Low Quality) tree;
- ◆ hedgerow of approximately 3m height and five hybrid poplar trees of 22-26m height, two field maple of 12m height, three English oak of 10m height, and four ash trees of 10-12m height along the northern boundary. The tree survey identifies that there are seven Category B (Moderate Quality) trees, 3 Category C (Low Quality trees), and four Category U (unsuitable for retention) along this boundary; and
- ◆ hedgerow with a densely arranged row of hybrid poplar trees of approximately 26m height along the western boundary. The tree survey identifies that the trees are Category B (Moderate Quality), except for one Category C (Low Quality) tree. Two further Category U (unsuitable for retention) field maple and goat willow are set further into the Site.

3.2 It is noted that the Committee Report advises that the Site had been cleared of most cars and scrap metal in August 2023.

4 Proposed Development

4.1 The proposed development incorporates the following elements:

- ◆ removal of all existing buildings, built features, vehicles, fencing, hard standing, any contamination, and six Category U trees (due to arboricultural reasons);
- ◆ construction of six dwellings arranged in cluster within the eastern part of the Site, with a layout and built form having the character of a farmstead. The dwellings would be set around a courtyard with a shared surface;
- ◆ the dwellings would comprise: 2 five bed dwellings; 1 four bed dwelling; 2 two bed dwellings; and 1 one bed dwelling;
- ◆ all dwellings are two storeys, with the exception of Plot 6 which is one storey;
- ◆ Plots 1 and 2 would have four parking spaces, Plot 3 would have three parking spaces and two adjoining visitor parking spaces; and Plots 4 to 6 would each have a single parking space each;
- ◆ permeable tarmac and permeable block paving would be used as a surface treatment for the vehicular access and parking bays;

- ♦ the existing informal lay-by would be formalised, as a hard surfaced treatment to the Highways Authority's specification, together with a paved footway connection into the Site. Along this footway, and adjacent to the Site access, would be located a refuge for refuse bin collection;
- ♦ the dwellings would be set back from the Site boundaries to retain and protect all the existing hedgerows and trees and retain a 9m easement along the northern Site boundary to allow maintenance access to the adjoining water course/drain; and
- ♦ provision of new native hedgerow and trees along the southern Site boundary and strengthening of the eastern Site boundary through the planting of a native mixed species hedge, including holly to provide an evergreen content to provide a more effective screen in winter.

5 Designations

Landscape and Visual

- 5.1 There are no landscape and visual designations that lie within the Site, and context of the Site, that would be affected by the proposed development.

Nature Conservation

- 5.2 The nearest nature conservation designation to the Site is the Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation covering Strensall Common (and an adjoining Site of Importance to Nature Conservation). This lies approximately 1.57km to the south-east of the Site and does not influence the Green Belt within the context of the Site.

Heritage

- 5.3 There are no statutory heritage designations within the vicinity of the Site. The closest designations are eight Grade II listed buildings in Strensall, the closest of which is approximately 1.1kms to the south of the Site. Seven of the listed buildings are located within the Strensall Conservation Area (approximately 1km from the Site) with the other listed building located within the Strensall Railway Buildings Conservation Area (approximately 1.2km from the Site). The nearest Scheduled Monument is the Site of deserted village of East Lilling approximately 3.7kms to the north-east. There is no intervisibility between the heritage designations and the Site, and the proposed development would have no visual effect on the designations. There would be a limited association of the land within the vicinity of the Site with the Conservation Areas of Strensall and associated listed buildings, due to the land forming a small part of the wider countryside around the village and its connection with farming.

6 Views and Visual Receptors

- 6.1 The Site is located within a wider landscape that is open and flat with moderate to large fields and fragmented hedgerows. However, in the local context of the Site, the landscape is more contained and enclosed by tall continuous hedgerows and tree belts. This is also the case with the Site, where the Site is contained by tall hedgerows and tree belts. As the land is also flat in the local context, views of the Site and the proposed development would be limited. Landform falls towards the River Foss and Strensall, preventing views from the river and from the village towards the Site. There are potential views from elevated locations from the Sheriff Hutton local ridgeline and Howardian Hills. However, these are distant or very distant, in which the Site would be a very small feature within wide panoramic views. The Site would be an insignificant feature, if visible at all, to a visual receptor, and the proposed development would not be discernible as a visual change.
- 6.2 Nine viewpoints have been used within this GBA to illustrate the views of visual receptors from publicly accessible locations from different geographical locations. These have been selected based on locations of more sensitive receptors and where changes to views are most likely. Viewpoint 9 is provided to illustrate the closest elevated location, from the Sheriff Hutton ridgeline. The location of the Viewpoints is shown on Figure 03 and 04 in Appendix 1 and the views are illustrated by panoramic photographs in Appendix 1. Photographs are also provided in Appendix 1, which illustrate the character and features within the Site.
- 6.3 A brief description of each of these Viewpoints and the likely effect on visual receptors arising from residential development within the Site are described below.
- 6.4 **Viewpoint 1:** illustrates the view from Sheriff Hutton Road, opposite the Site, looking at the eastern edge of the Site. This shows the presence of the tall hedges and trees along the road and the boundary of the Site. The stacking of cars is visible through the vegetation. In winter, views into the Site would be apparent, with the existing operations clearly visible, creating an intrusive effect to the setting of the road. The proposed development would also be clearly visible in winter but would have a more appropriate and sympathetic visual appearance. This is in part due to the presence of other residential properties within the local context, the neighbouring park homes within the Nelson's Park site, and the removal of the visually poor character of the car breaking facility, which is usually associated with more urban locations. It also in part due to the proposed lower density of visible built form, in comparison to the visually dense arrangement of the existing brick building, canopy and containers visible along the eastern boundary in winter, as well as the stacked cars. It is also anticipated that the proposals would incorporate a more appropriate vernacular treatment and use of

- built materials than the existing buildings, and strengthen the vegetation along the eastern boundary to provide a more effective visual boundary to the Site.
- 6.5 **Viewpoint 2:** the view is just south of the Site along Sheriff Hutton Road, approaching the Site. The view illustrates the strong visual containment by the tall hedgerows and tree belts along the road. The tall poplars and hedge along the Fieldholme property and eastern boundary of the Site form key features within the view, and largely prevent views of the car breakers, except for the large sign and vehicles parked along the road. In winter, more open views would be possible, with filtered views of the existing buildings and stacked cars visible along the eastern fringe and above the vegetated bund along the southern Site boundary. The proposed development would also be visible to a similar extent but would be more visually appropriate and sympathetic in comparison to the existing car breakers, similar to Viewpoint 1.
- 6.6 **Viewpoint 3:** intersection of Sheriff Hutton Road and Pottery Lane looking towards the Site. View illustrates the semi-urban fringe character of the location, with the adjoining houses, gardens and garden vegetation and the park homes and access road to Manor Park and The Vale of York site, with brick walls, fences and leylandii hedge. The presence of the hedgerow, trees and garden conifers prevents views of the Site in summer and is very likely to prevent views in winter although it is possible that very glimpsed views would occur in winter. However, the proposed development would make no discernible to change in the view.
- 6.7 **Viewpoint 4:** view from Pottery Lane over the property of Swallowfields, with house, garden and large shed, and the close board fence, leylandii and poplars along the western boundary of Fieldholme. There are no views of the Site when the vegetation is in leaf. Limited filtered views of the car breakers may be possible in winter. However, the extent of hedgerow and trees along the Fieldholme boundary would be sufficient to limit views to glimpses of the car breakers. This would also be expected to remain the same for the proposed development.
- 6.8 **Viewpoint 5:** the view illustrates the more open character of the landscape beyond the local context of the Site, due the presence of the larger arable fields, where the hedges have been removed or have become fragmented along the field boundaries. The viewpoint is on Pottery Lane looking towards the Site. The bungalow of Hillcrest is visible in the mid-distance, together with the adjoining vegetation that contains the local context of the Site. This intervening vegetation largely prevents views of the existing car breakers in summer and partially in winter. There would be some glimpsed views of the proposed dwellings in winter, but these would also be seen in the context of Hillcrest.
- 6.9 **Viewpoint 6:** the view is from Duncombe Lane, a no through unmetalled road providing access to Dunscombe Lane and Lock House. The road is also the route of for Public Footpath 3/9/20. Open views are possible, over the arable fields in the foreground where hedge field boundaries have been removed. In the mid-distance the tall hedgerows and vegetation around the Manor Park and The Vale of York park home development and along Sheriff Hutton Road contain the view in the mid-distance. The park home development lying between the viewer and the Site, prevents any views of the Site and any future development in the Site.
- 6.10 **Viewpoint 7:** the lower location of the viewer within the river valley, illustrates the rising landform to the north, as viewed walking along the Public Footpath 3/13/20 and Centenary Way adjacent to the River Foss. The open field boundaries allow views over the adjoining landscape, but the landform prevents views of the Site.
- 6.11 **Viewpoint 8:** view from New Lane and the Foss Walk, Ebor Way & Centenary Way, with the viewer descending the ridgeline with views across the vale towards the Site. The hedge along the road and intervening trees prevents views of the Site. Whilst there would be filtered views through this vegetation in winter, the influence of distance and other intervening vegetation would prevent views or awareness of the Site.
- 6.12 The Viewpoints illustrate the visual containment of the Site, with views being limited to the immediate context of the Site. Any discernible changes to views arising from the proposed development, would provide a more appropriate and sympathetic influence in comparison to the existing car breakers.

7 Green Belt

Introduction

- 7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in December 2023, sets out the protection of Green Belt land in Section 13 of the NPPF, in which it identifies that the *'fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence'* (paragraph 142). It sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt (paragraph 143) as:
- ◆ Purpose A: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - ◆ Purpose B: to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - ◆ Purpose C: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - ◆ Purpose D: to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

- ◆ Purpose D: to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 7.2 The NPPF highlights that, by definition, inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 150 states that *'once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land'*. Where new Green Belt boundaries are formed, paragraph 148 f, notes the need to *'define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent'*. Paragraph 154 states that *'a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are: ...g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would: not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development'*.
- 7.3 There have been several recent appeal decisions that have further interpreted the openness of the Green Belt and the potential harm to the purposes of the Green Belt. This includes the High court challenge brought by Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) and Oxton Farm against North Yorkshire County Council and Darrington Quarries Ltd which considered the visual dimension of openness and requires that the decision maker is required to consider how the visual effects of a development would affect the openness of the Green Belt and whether these effects are likely to be harmful or benign. As openness is not defined in the NPPF, different factors are capable of being considered as relevant to the concept. This is now considered to include both visual as well as spatial factors. This was considered in the case *Turner v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Another* [2016] EWCA Civ 466 – land at Barrack Road, West Parley, Ferndown, Dorset. In this case, the judge found that the Planning Inspector had been correct in assessing that the impact of openness by comparing the existing and proposed position of a dwelling compared to a mobile home and storage yard. The judge stated openness is *'not narrowly limited to [a] volumetric approach'* but *'is open-textured and a number of factors are capable of being relevant when it comes to applying it to the particular facts of a specific case'*. The judge went on state that *'the question of visual impact is implicitly part of the concept of "openness of the Green Belt"... There is an important visual dimension to checking "the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas" and the merging of neighbouring towns, as indeed the name "Green Belt" itself implies. Greenness is a visual quality: part of the idea of the Green Belt is that the eye and the spirit should be relieved from the prospect of unrelenting urban sprawl. Openness of aspect is a characteristic quality of the countryside, and "safeguarding the countryside from encroachment" includes preservation of that quality of openness. The preservation of "the setting ... of historic towns" obviously refers in a material way to their visual setting, for instance when seen from a distance across open fields'*.
- 7.4 In February 2020, the Supreme Court provided further guidance in relation to the Samuel Smith case advising that *'as PPG2 made clear, it is not necessarily a statement about the visual qualities of the land, though in some cases this may be an aspect of the planning judgement involved in applying this broad policy concept. Nor does it imply freedom from any form of development'* (paragraph 22). The judgement went on to advise *'that is a matter not of legal principle, but of planning judgement for the planning authority or the inspector'* (paragraph 25). Consequently, the judgement of the relevance of visual impact on the green belt is a planning judgement, and not a legal one, and can be relevant. This was expanded on in a later Court of Appeal judgment in *Hook v Secretary for Housing, Communities and Local Government* [2020] EWCA Civ 486, in which Lindblom LJ reinforced the judgement that visual effects can be relevant to the question of openness as a matter of planning judgement stating *'there was no indication in paragraphs 87 to 90 of the NPPF that the aim of preserving the openness of the Green Belt excludes consideration of visual as well as physical or spatial impact'* (paragraph 22). Reference is also made to the harm to openness, not just being limited to buildings, but also other forms of development, such as those referred to in the NPPF, which paragraph 155 requires to *'preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land'* i.e. it would be contradictory if other forms of development did not affect openness. In the case of *Mr S Coveney v Surrey Heath Borough Council* in July 2017, this had regard to an appeal against an enforcement for a car park extension, the inspector considered that it did comprise an engineering operation and advised that *'I concur with the findings of the 2016 Inspector that the extension of development onto a previously undeveloped part of the site and the parking of cars on it for at least part of the day would result in some harm to openness. In reaching that conclusion, I have borne in mind the ability for some car parking to take place at certain times of year without the benefit of a hard surface. Since the extension of the car park would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt, it constitutes inappropriate development'* (paragraph 23).
- 7.5 Recent case law has indicated the importance of considering a visual understanding of the Green Belt and the effect of development on openness as part of the planning judgement process. Accordingly, perceptual considerations are an important element in determining how the purposes of the Green Belt are affected. This is reflected in the green belt assessments undertaken by CYC where views and visual perception form an important part of the qualities of the York Green Belt, particularly in relation to how the setting of York is experienced, visual perception of York on the approaches to the city, and views of York Minster. It also confirms that other forms of development,

to that of buildings, including developments which provide for the parking or storing of cars, harm the openness of the Green Belt, even where this is a temporary effect.

Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Guidance

7.6 The PAS guidance notes the need to provide informed and balance judgements on planning issues. PAS recognise the important role Green Belts have played in preventing ribbon or strip development, and the maintenance of distinct and separate settlements and the corresponding value of providing outdoor recreation on the edge of urban area and for food and energy production. The guidance also advises that it is not appropriate to arbitrarily limit the growth of town or create a sense in which there is a 'right size' to a settlement. This would be at odds with the concept of sustainability and the ability of future generations to meet their own needs as they occur in their time.

7.7 Emphasis is placed on the need for assessment against the five purposes of the Green Belt in the first instance. The guidance acknowledges that there are planning considerations, such as landscape quality, which cannot be a reason to designate an area as Green Belt, but that could be a planning consideration when seeking suitable locations for development.

7.8 The guidance outlines considerations to be made in relation to the five purposes. These are summarised below:

- ◆ **Purpose: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas** – consider the terminology of 'sprawl' and whether this has changed from the 1930s and whether development planned positively through a local plan, and well designed with good masterplanning, could be considered as sprawl;
- ◆ **Purpose: to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another** - the identity of a settlement is not determined solely by distance to another settlement but can also be influenced by the character of the place and of the land in between the settlements i.e. perception of separation. Landscape character assessments can provide a useful tool in this respect;
- ◆ **Purpose: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment** – it is assumed that this would be applicable to all parts of the Green Belt. Consequently, a measure is required to distinguish the relative contribution of different areas;
- ◆ **Purpose: to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns** - it is generally accepted that this purpose relates to very few settlements. In most towns, recent developments have enveloped the historic core, isolating it from the Green Belt; and

- ◆ **Purpose: to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land** - it is considered that the amount of land within urban areas that could be developed will already have been factored in before identifying Green Belt land. Consequently, all Green Belt achieves this to the same extent and therefore difference within various part of the Green Belt is unlikely to be distinguishable.

York Green Belt

7.9 The Green Belt is defined by the saved policies of the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), May 2008 and covered by policies YH9(C) and Y1 (C1 and C2). This defines the general extent of the Green Belt (refer to Figure 05) and the need to define the detailed inner and outer boundaries. This has yet to be completed as adopted policy. At the time of the establishment of the York Green Belt, a principle was established that this should extend to 6 miles from York city centre. The Site lies beyond this extent (as measured from any point within the city walls).

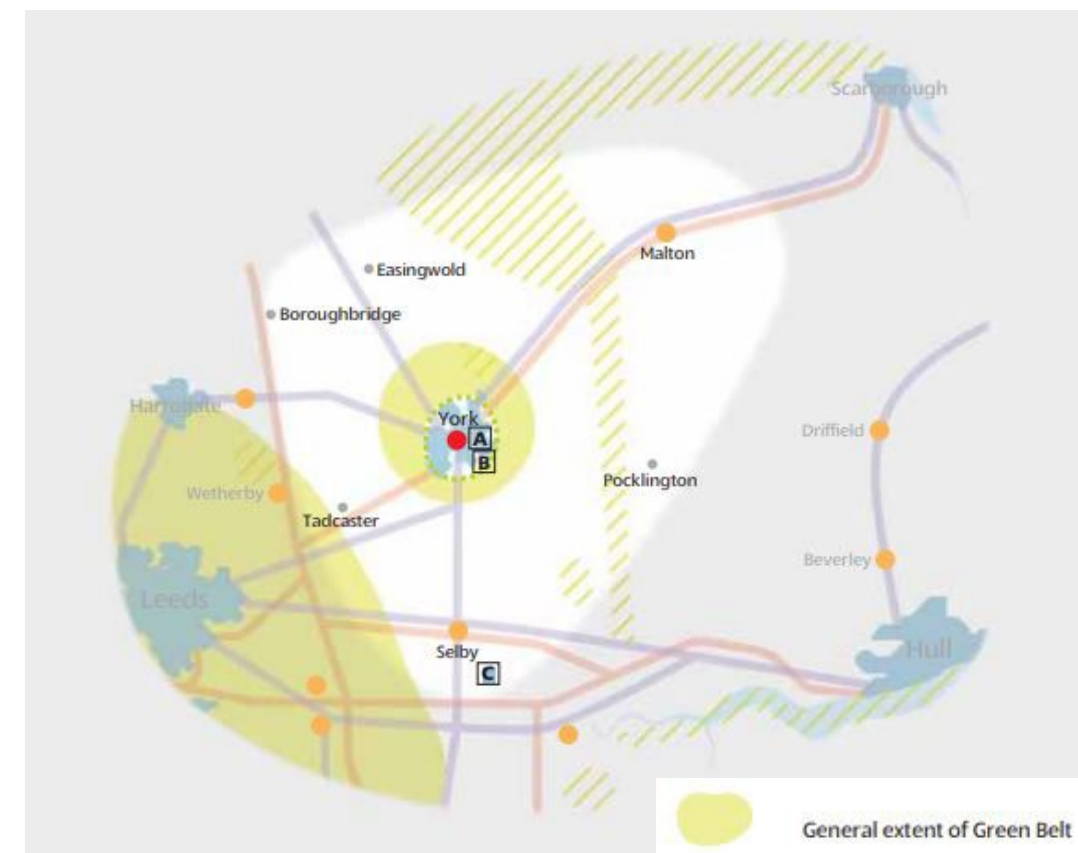


Figure 05: General extent of York Green Belt

7.10 The City of York Draft Local Plan Incorporating the 4th Set of Changes, was published in April 2005. Although not 'formally adopted', the document is currently used as the basis for development control decisions. The Local Plan defined the extent of the Green Belt providing a permanent boundary that

was capable of persisting for at least the next 20 years. Other than a very small corner in the south-east, the only part of the City of York that is not identified as being within York Green Belt, is a section of land to the north (refer to Figure 06), which includes the Site, where the Green Belt boundary is defined by Pottery Lane and Dunscombe Lane. This is also the current extent of the Green Belt shown on Magic Maps (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>).

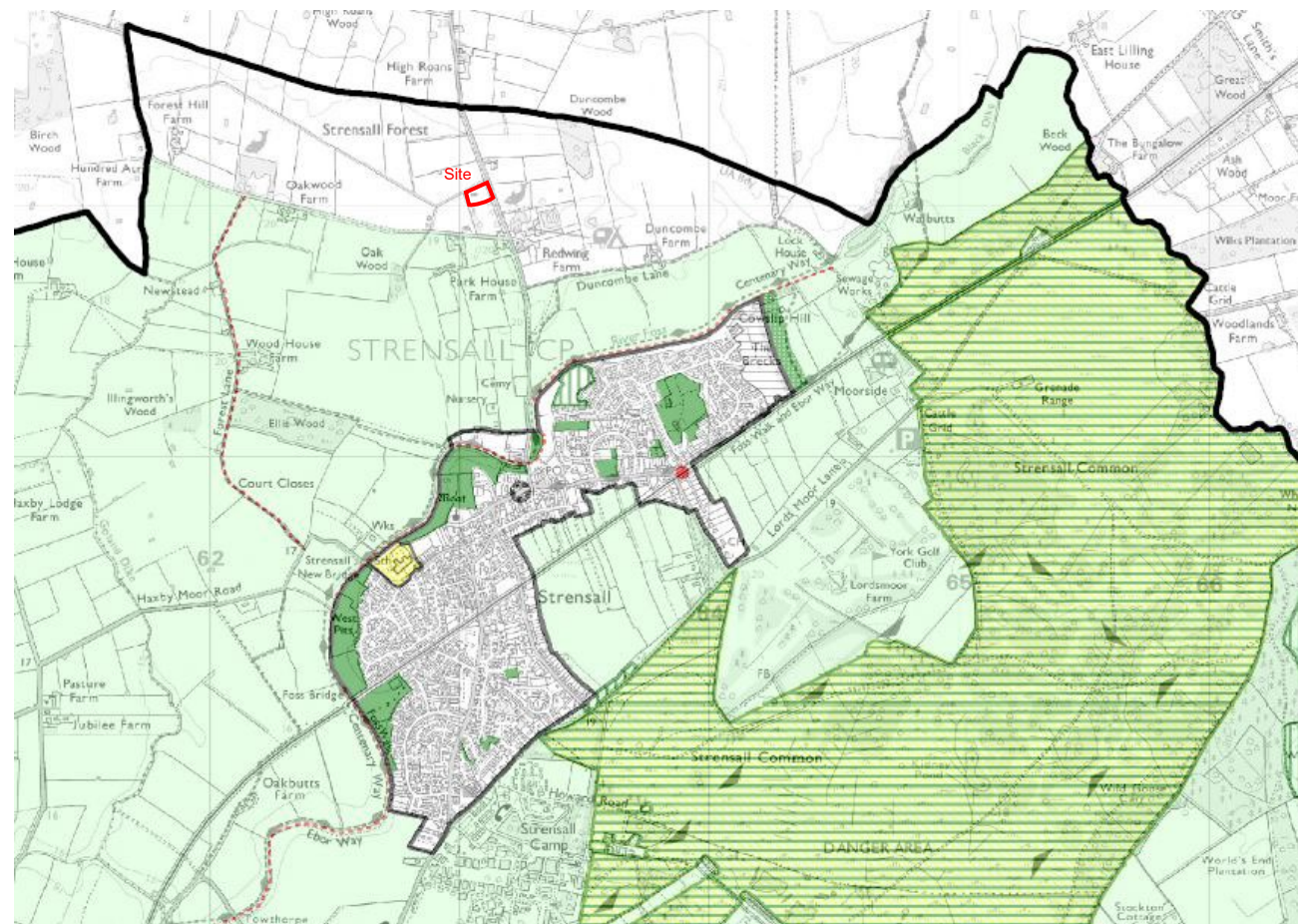


Figure 06: Extract from Local Plan 2005 Proposals Map (green belt shown by pale green hatch)

7.11 The emerging New Local Plan has been subject to public examination, and significant modifications having subsequently been made to the Local Plan. These modifications were further consulted on in February 2023. The New Local Plan proposes to extend the Green Belt to CYC authority boundary (in context of the Site), thereby including the Site. Given the advanced stage of the New Local Plan, it is considered very likely that the Site will be confirmed as being within the Green Belt when the New Local Plan is adopted.

Green Belt Studies: 2003 Green Belt Appraisal

7.12 CYC published The Approach to the Green Belt Appraisal in February 2003. It was prepared in response to the intention to adopt a permanent Green Belt for York, following the public inquiry into the examination of the City of York Local Plan that was published in 2005. A review of the existing draft Green Belt was undertaken to identify those areas surrounding the City that should be kept permanently open. This considered the five purposes of Green Belt, set out in the NPPF, and identified that Purposes B and D were the most useful for the purposes of the study, based on CYC's view that Purposes A, C and E did not assist with spatial assessment. Purpose D (to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns) was considered to be the most important to the York Green Belt and formed the focus for the study.

7.13 The study considered seven elements that could be used to define the historic character and setting of the City (Purpose D):

- ◆ open approaches to the city;
- ◆ green wedges;
- ◆ views of the Minster;
- ◆ character of the landscape;
- ◆ urban form;
- ◆ relationship between the urban edge and the countryside; and
- ◆ the relationship with the surrounding villages.

7.14 This was translated into defining four broad categories that could be identified spatially, as follows:

- ◆ areas which retain, reinforce and extend the pattern of historic green wedges;
- ◆ areas which provide an impression of a historic city situated within a rural setting;
- ◆ the setting of villages whose traditional form, character and relationship with the surrounding agricultural landscape, which is substantially unchanged; and
- ◆ areas which prevent coalescence of settlements to retain their individual identity.

7.15 The first category was identified as being represented by The Strays, The Ings, Green Wedges, and the Extensions to the Green Wedges. The second category was defined as relating to the following villages: Askham Bryan and Askham Richard; Upper Poppleton and Nether Poppleton; Skelton; Bishopthorpe; and Middlethorpe. The third category identified areas of open countryside which enable

the perception of a historic city set within a rural setting, where the open countryside is visible from a prominent location providing views of the city and its historic character and affords good views of the Minster or urban edge comprised of a Conservation Area. This was defined as being present in three areas: Area F1 – East of Tang Hall; Area F2 – South of Heslington; and Area F3 – South and West of Woodthorpe. The fourth category sought to ensure areas of undeveloped land were retained between the outer edge of the urban area and the villages and between villages to retain physical separation and the pattern of villages set within a rural setting. Six Areas were identified: Haxby, New Earswick, Huntington and Strensall; Murton the village; Bishopthorpe and Copmanthorpe; East of Knapton; Upper Poppleton and Nether Poppleton; and Skelton.

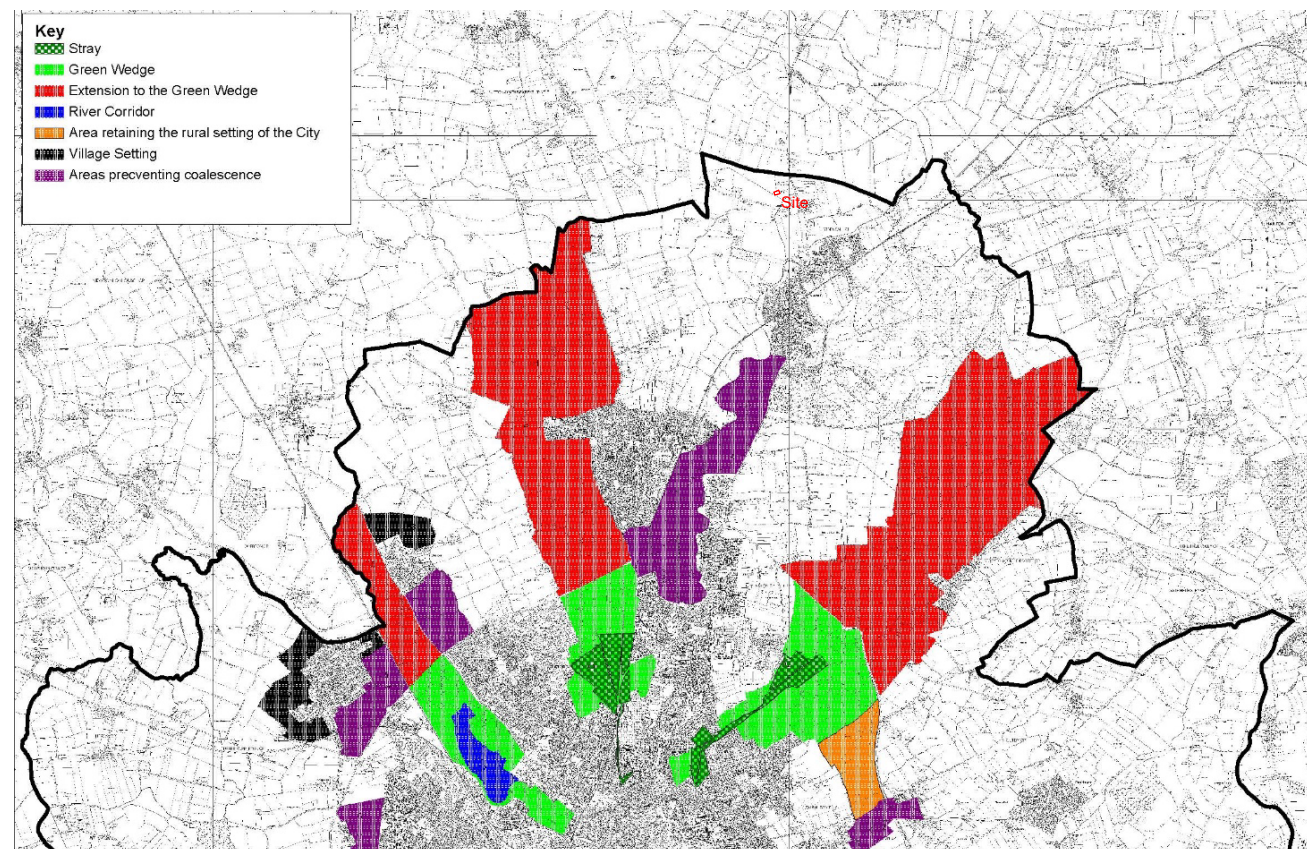


Figure 07: Green Belt Appraisal Outcomes

7.16 The spatial definition of these four categories and Areas was illustrated on two maps. The northern map is shown in Figure 07. This indicates that the Site and surrounding land lies outside of these areas and villages, and consequently does not provide a specifically important role in relation to Purpose D of the Green Belt and the historic character and setting of York.

Green Belt Studies: 2018, 2019 & 2021 Approach to Defining York’s Green Belt

7.17 Topic Paper 1 (TP1) Approach to Defining York’s Green Belt was prepared in 2018 as part of the evidence base for the emerging New Local Plan. An Addendum to TP1 was prepared in May 2019 and then revised in January 2021. The latter is the primary focus of this report. TP1 was prepared to provide ‘further detailed information about the York Green Belt and the Local Plan; specifically, the methodology and evidence for the setting of inner and outer Green Belt boundaries; the exceptional circumstances test for the removal of land from the Green Belt; the approach to Urban Areas within the Green Belt; and the allocation of strategic sites within the general extent of the Green Belt’ (paragraph 1.2). The 2021 Addendum responds to concerns raised by the Inspectors examining the New Local Plan regarding the methodology used, by clarifying the methodology and revising text in relation to the defining of the inner and outer Green Belt boundaries. Other concerns were raised, such as to whether local assessment criteria provide a clear and unequivocal connection to the Green Belt purposes.

8 Green Belt Site Assessment

Introduction

8.1 The question as to whether the Site lies within the York Green Belt, therefore, remains undetermined until the Local Plan has been adopted. This leads to the question as to how planning applications should be determined in the interim. This was considered in a High Court judgement relating to the *Wedgewood v City of York Council* [2020] case, where The Honourable Mr Justice Stuart-Smith stated that ‘the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt in and around York have not been fixed. The primary for this is that York does not have a formally adopted Local Plan’ (paragraph 11). He goes on to advise ‘the policies do not state or imply that every piece of land within the doughnut ring that is bounded by the inner and outer boundaries shall be Green Belt; nor do they say anything about whether all or some pieces of land within the doughnut ring shall not be Green Belt’ (paragraph 18). He further advises that ‘in my judgement, it is plain beyond reasonable argument that the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt around York have not been defined. It is therefore impossible to look at any planning or other document and to identify the boundaries of the Green Belt around York. RSS policies YH9C and Y1C make plain that the RSS does not define the geographical boundaries of the Green Belt’ (paragraph 18). He concludes that:

‘in the absence of a defining Local Development Plan that specifies what is and is not Green Belt, the defendant must apply the high-level policy rationally in order to determine what land within the doughnut ring is and is not to be treated as Green Belt land. In doing so, it may have regard to the 2005 draft local plan incorporating the full set of changes, as it has previously taken a policy step

by resolving to take it into account for development and management purposes. It may take into account the emerging Local Plan, provided it has due regard to the guidance at paragraph 48 of the NPPF. Furthermore, it may and should take into account site specific features that may tend to treating the site as Green Belt or not' (paragraph 34).

8.2 The 2005 Local Plan indicates that the Site does not fall within the Green Belt. The emerging Local Plan does indicate that the Site falls within the Green Belt. The Site features are defined by its use, which incorporates buildings, hard surfacing, stacked cars and various machinery / plant. The Site features indicate that this is an urban use and not a rural one or one that is appropriate to the countryside or the purposes of the Green Belt. However, given the advanced nature of the emerging Local Plan and the likelihood that this will be adopted soon, it is considered that this outweighs the other considerations and accordingly the Site should be considered as falling within the Green Belt.

8.1 This report assesses the contribution and performance of the Site in relation to the purposes of the Green Belt and the extent to which harm would arise from the proposed development. The assessment is based on the following relative contribution or performance to the NPPF purposes of the Green Belt (noting that Purpose E is widely accepted as providing the same contribution for all parts of the Green Belt and is not assessed):

- ◆ No or negligible contribution to the purpose;
- ◆ Weak contribution to the purpose;
- ◆ Moderate contribution to the purpose;
- ◆ Relatively strong contribution to the purpose; and
- ◆ Strong contribution to the purpose.

8.2 The report also assesses the relative harm / improvement to the Green Belt arising from the introduction of the proposed development within the Site:

- ◆ Major harm / improvement to the relevant purpose of the Green Belt;
- ◆ Major-moderate harm / improvement to the relevant purpose of the Green Belt;
- ◆ Moderate harm / improvement to the relevant purpose of the Green Belt;
- ◆ Moderate-minor harm / improvement to the relevant purpose of the Green Belt; and

- ◆ Minor harm / improvement to the relevant purpose of the Green Belt; and
- ◆ Negligible change or would not change the relevant purpose of the Green Belt.

Purpose A: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

8.3 Open land within the Green Belt on the edge of built-up areas provides the greatest contribution to meeting the objectives of Purpose A. In this regard the Site is not connected to any urban area, settlement or built-up area. Urban sprawl can also occur as a result of ribbon development beyond settlements. There is a notable presence of development within the Site and the countryside within the local context of the Site. However, this is scattered, and a loose arrangement of development with little connectivity between the different elements of development, although it does form a dispersed collection of development, which is more identifiable as being semi-urban fringe in comparison to more open neighbouring countryside. The areas of development are sufficiently dispersed as to not be considered as forming ribbon development. Consequently, the Site provides **no or negligible** contribution to Green Belt Purpose A, and the proposed development would **not change** this contribution.

Purpose B: to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

8.4 The Site and adjoining land are not located between any towns or villages, where there is a possibility of settlements merging and therefore the land does not provide a function in relation to Purpose B. This is also supported by the 2003 Green Belt Appraisal and 2021 TP1 Addendum assessment. Consequently, the Site provides **no or negligible** contribution to Purpose B and the proposed development would **not change** this contribution.

Purpose C: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

8.5 In determining the extent to which a specific area of land contributes to this purpose, it is important to define to what extent the land can be considered to be 'countryside' i.e. that is rural in character with a relatively open, natural, semi-natural or agricultural landscape. The greater the presence of built development, structures, and urbanising influences, the less it can be considered as being 'countryside' and thereby able to meet the function of Purpose C. The TP1 assessment identifies urbanising influences as including '*any features that compromise the countryside character, such as roads lined with street lighting and pavements, large areas of hard standing, floodlit sports fields, etc.*' As set out in Section 2 of this report, the Site and surrounding land incorporates a number of areas of built development, including: residential properties; caravan parks/park homes; farm buildings and sheds; commercial businesses. The intervening land is typically, horse paddocks and menage, rough

grazing and grassland, with tall hedges (including leylandii) and tree belts creating enclosure. This creates a loose arrangement of built form, development and features which creates a semi-urban fringe character (refer to Figure 02), that is different to the land beyond this local context, which has a more open agricultural character, with mainly large open arable fields, scattered farm buildings and limited urbanising influences. Consequently, the land surrounding the Site provides no more than a moderate contribution to Green Belt Purpose C. The Site itself illustrates clear evidence of being an urbanising influence and is more typical of a feature found within urban areas, in comparison to other neighbouring areas of built development and features, which could be considered to be semi-rural. The presence of poor quality buildings, structures, large area of hard standing, storage of vehicles up to 3 high in various stages of being broken up, and machinery/plant associated with the commercial operation, are all intrusive features within the countryside. Consequently, the Site does not include any features that could be considered to be representative of the 'countryside' and therefore provides **no or negligible** contribution to Purpose C. Whilst the proposed development would be inconsistent with concept of 'countryside', the provision of a small cluster of low density dwellings, reflecting the character of a farmstead, would be more appropriate in terms of character and appearance to the existing land use. It would also more typically reflect some of the neighbouring residential land uses and provide less of an urbanising influence. It is assessed that the proposed development would be **no worse** than the existing influence of the car breakers yard on Green Belt Purpose C, and in the judgement of TLP would provide a **minor improvement** by providing a more sympathetic and appropriate development in terms of the character and appearance of the countryside.

Purpose D: to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

8.6 There is the potential that the Site could be considered as falling within the setting of the historic part of York, as identified within the TP1 assessment. However, it is a significant distant from centre of York (more than 6 miles), in which there are a number of intervening settlements, and a significant amount of change has occurred to the intervening landscape, arising from 20th and 21st century residential and commercial development to the north of York and within the settlements of Huntington, Earswick, Wigginton, Towthorpe, and Strensall. The Site and adjoining land are not located within an area that was identified within the CYC 2003 study as having a specifically important role in relation to Purpose D. The Site has no intervisibility with York, nor any physical or visual relationship. There are no statutory heritage assets within the Site or within 1km of the Site. There is no historic relationship with the historic parts of York, other than a general link with the wider extent of farmland that encompass York. However, this association with the farmland is very limited in the context of the Site, due to the distance, in particular lying beyond the 6 miles principle for the Green Belt set out in the 2008 RSS. There is no visible/perceptible presence of the Site within a wider view of the city from

the Sheriff Hutton ridgeline and Howardian Hills. The very large distance between Howardian Hills and York centre and the very small scale of the Site are so significantly different, the Site would be very insignificant in the broader understanding and appreciation of York and the role it plays in maintaining the scale and identity of a compact city. The Site would have no influence on maintaining a connection to the open and historic setting of York or role in constraining development from coalescing with it. There is no intervisibility with the landmarks of York or visual association. Any views of York Minster from the Howardian Hills are very distant and only visible in very good visibility. The Site would be a very small part in a much wider panoramic view and context. As previously noted, the differences in scale are so significant, the Site would have no meaningful contribution in this context. The Site is not located on any of the main approaches to York. The Site is sufficiently distant from York that it has only a very minor association in relation to agricultural economy and its military defensive position. Changes to the Site since the 1950s have also changed this association, with the land no longer being used for agriculture. The land use is not associated with a rural use and could not be considered to provide a natural or tranquil use. The Site also plays no role in understanding or significance of a designated landscape, park or garden. Consequently, it is assessed that the Site provides **no or negligible** contribution to Green Belt Purpose D. The proposed change from a car breaker to residential development would **not change** this contribution, although it could be argued that the change would be a **minor improvement** in providing a more tranquil land use that is more sympathetic and consistent with other changes that have occurred to the wider setting of York within the last 100 years.

Openness

8.7 The assessment also considers the openness of the Green Belt. Based on previous case studies, this should not be just limited to a volumetric assessment, but also consider other factors such as visual impact. It should also not be limited just to the consideration of buildings, as other forms of development can affect the openness of the Green Belt. As noted in the case of Mr S Coveney v Surrey Heath Borough Council in July 2017, cars within a car park can harm the openness of the Green Belt, even when they are not necessarily a permanent feature. TLP consider it reasonable that this can also be considered to apply in the case of car breakers yard. In the case of the Site this is accentuated with the cars being stacked up to 3 or more cars high. The continued operation of car breaking has occurred over many years, providing a well established and perceived visually permanent presence. The number of cars and height of stacking does vary through the year, but there is a largely consistent presence of stacked cars across most of the Site, based on the information contained in Section 3. A volumetric assessment has been undertaken that compares the existing buildings (and cars based on the current number of vehicles that can be regarded to provide a

permanent presence within the Site and future predicted cars based on parking provision for each dwelling) and proposed buildings. This indicates that the existing development has a combined building mass (excluding the open sided canopy adjacent to the workshop) of 1,517m³ and combined mass of car storage of 6,590m³, providing a combined total of buildings and car storage of 8,107m³. The proposed combined building mass would be 2,756m³. The existing combined building footprint (excluding the open sided canopy adjacent to the workshop) is 385.23m², with the total gross internal floor areas for both ground and first floor accommodation being 788.4m², and the total area of car storage being 1,942.1m². The total proposed footprint is 578m². The total existing area of concrete hardstanding is 418m² and total area of crushed aggregate hardstanding is 2,217.67m². The total proposed hardstanding is 810m². This indicates there would be an increase in the building mass and footprint of the building, but a reduction in the floor area and significant reduction in the mass of built form and car storage and overall area of hardstanding. Whilst it could be debated as to whether car storage and hardstanding should be considered within the spatial effects on the openness of the Green Belt, there would nevertheless be an evident reduction in perceptual effects on the Green Belt.

- 8.8 As set out in Section 6 of this report, there is little visibility of the Site, due to the extent of containment by surrounding vegetation around the edges of the Site and within adjoining areas of land. Visibility of the car breakers and the proposed development is/would be limited to the immediate context of the Site. Where visible, the car breakers create a dense arrangement of built form and stacked cars set on hardstanding with no intervening vegetation. This creates an intrusive influence on views, due to the nature of the land use and activity. The proposed residential development would appear less visually dense as a built form and more localised and contained. Planting would also be used to strength the boundaries of the Site, thereby reducing its influence on its surroundings, with other planting and ecological enhancements, helping to address the secondary objectives set out within the NPPF to enhance the landscape, visual amenity and biodiversity. Whilst the proposals could not be considered to be rural in appearance, they are considered to be more visually sympathetic and appropriate to the existing site context, in comparison to the existing car breakers. This would create a perceived sense of a reduction in the effect on openness, and the creation of a greener character in comparison to the existing situation.
- 8.9 It is important that both a spatial and perceptual consideration is made to the effect on the openness of the Green Belt. The stacking of cars and the presence of machinery is a temporary presence in terms of the openness of the Green Belt. However, the presence of vehicles and operations within the Site has occurred over many years, creating a well established presence that is harmful to the Green Belt. So, whilst there would be an increase in built mass, arising from the proposed development, in terms of character and appearance, the scale and massing of features that have a

perceived harmful effect, would be notably reduced by the proposed development. TLP also consider that the proposed development would be more sympathetic and consistent with other development found within the local context of the Green Belt, in comparison to the existing car breakers, and would be of a scale that would be appropriate to a rural context, e.g. that typically found within in a hamlet or small village within the countryside. It is evident to TLP that a car breaker is more clearly characteristic of an urban environment and the proposed development provides the opportunity to provide a more sympathetic development that is more characteristic of its context and enables other enhancements to the Site. It also noted that other similar, but larger, developments have been permitted in recent years, in particular in relation to the neighbouring Manor Park and The Vale of York park homes development. It also been assessed that the Site provides little or no contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. It is, therefore, our judgement that the proposed redevelopment of the Site would, as a minimum, have no further impact on the openness of the Green Belt. However, we would go further, to advise that we consider that most observers are likely to consider the proposed development as providing a perceived benefit to the openness the Green Belt. It should also be noted that in the representations made in relation to Planning Application 21/02757/OUT, only two representations were made, one in support and one objecting. The one supporting noted the improvement to the visual appearance of the area and the other made no reference to visual appearance or the openness of the Green Belt.

9 Summary and Conclusion

- 9.1 The report has been prepared as an update of a previously prepared Green Belt Assessment that formed part of the Planning Application 21/02757/OUT. The proposed layout was amended during the consultation period with the most recent layout forming part of the current planning submission, which forms the basis of this revised assessment. As part of the Committee Report for Planning Application 21/02757/OUT, officers advised that the proposed dwellings would have no further impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing situation and could be considered to be an improvement to the character and appearance of the Site within the countryside. We concur with this judgement. This report gives a detailed assessment that provides the reasoning for this judgement.
- 9.2 The report provides an assessment of the Site features, local context, landscape character and views of the Site as a baseline to provide an understanding of the land that falls within the Green Belt. Currently, only the general extent of the Green Belt around York has been established, with the definition of the inner and outer Green Belt boundaries yet to be confirmed. Given that this is yet to be established, TLP have reconsidered the process set out by the High Court in the *Wedgewood v City of York Council* (2020) for determining whether the Site falls within the Green Belt. Given the

extent of time lapsed, since our previous assessment, the emerging Local Plan has now reached a well advanced stage, with CYC indicating that it will be adopted soon, sufficient that this should be given the greatest consideration. This indicates that the Site should be regarded as falling within the Green Belt, and accordingly has been considered as such in this report.

- 9.3 It is assessed that the Site would provide no or negligible contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt as defined within the NPPF. The proposed development would not change this contribution, although it is judged that this could be considered as providing a minor benefit to Purpose C and D. The proposals would result in an increase in built mass. However, whilst vehicles are a temporary feature in terms of the openness of the Green Belt, there has been a well established presence of hardstanding, stacked cars and vehicles on the Site over many years creating the perception of visual permanence which, by their nature, are harmful to the Green Belt. When this is taken into consideration, there would be a significant reduction in the mass of features that are harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. Case law provides a clear indication that both spatial and perceptual effects on openness should be considered. In terms of visual effects, the proposed changes would result in relatively limited visible change, due to the visual containment of the Site and the proposed strengthening and provision of hedgerows and trees along the Site boundaries. The proposed development would create a more contained area of development, restricted to the eastern part of the Site, and providing a built character that is reflective of a farmstead. The reduction in the massing of features harmful to the openness of the Green Belt and the proposed change in character would, in our judgement, very likely be perceived by most observers as providing a benefit to the openness on the Green Belt. The change to character would also provide a more appropriate and sympathetic change that reflects the local character within the vicinity of the Site and would be more typical of a more rural context. This contrasts with the character of the car breakers yard, which would be more readily recognised as relating to a more urban environment. The proposals also provide additional landscape feature, habitats and biodiversity enhancements that would help address the secondary objectives for the Green Belt.
- 9.4 Consequently, the proposed development would result in no further impact on the openness of the Green Belt and would provide an improvement to the visual and landscape character of the part of the Green Belt that the Site fall within. It is assessed that the proposed development would be appropriate and would not change the contribution the Site has to the purposes of the Green Belt, and indeed it is considered that most observers would likely regard the proposals as an improvement to the Green Belt.

Appendix 1: Figures and Viewpoints



Key

-  Site Boundary
-  Viewpoint

B21077 - Pigotts Car Breakers, Strensall

Site Context

Figure 03

Scale: NTS

January 2024

Drawn: GF Checked: JB





Key

- Site Boundary
- Radius from the centre of the Site
- 1 Viewpoint Location

B21077 - Pigotts Car Breakers, Strensall

Viewpoints

Figure 04

Scale: 1:20,000 @ A3

January 2024

Drawn: GF Checked: JB



Scale: 1:20,000 @ A3
100m 200m 500m 1km



Viewpoint 1



Viewpoint 2



Viewpoint 3



Viewpoint 4



Viewpoint 5



Viewpoint 6



Viewpoint 7



Viewpoint 9

Site Photos



