LANDSCAPE + VISUAL APPRAISAL

COWM TOP | CASTLETON | ROCHDALE

Prepared by PGLA Landscape Architects for

Barratt Homes and GLP Ltd

AUGUST 2022

FINAL REPORT

Revision C

Quality Checked	
Document: **TRO1902_LVA01** Revision - **FINAL REPORT - Rev c**	
Written by: **KLJ/PGG** Reviewed by: **PGG**	Station Hop Studios 815 Stockport Road Manchester M19 3BS Tel: 0161 238 9138 info@pgla.co.uk www.pgla.co.uk
Date: **29 September 2022**	

CONTENTS

		PAGE
01	INTRODUCTION	03
	Purpose of the document	03
	Assessment methodology	03
	Site visit and equipment	03
	Study Area	03
	Site location and description	03
	Development description	03
02	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS	04
	National landscape character	04
	Local landscape character	04
	Landscape sensitivity	06
	Landscape related designations	10
03	EXISTING SITE AND PROPOSALS	12
	Existing site	12
	Proposed development	12
04	POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS	18
	Landscape effects	18
	Visual Effects	20
05	LANDSCAPE STRATEGY AND MITIGATION	22
06	RESIDUAL EFFECTS	24
07	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	24
	VIEWPOINT DESCRIPTIONS 1 - 10	25-38

1. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

1.1. PGLA Landscape Architects were commissioned in 2019 by Barratt Homes and GLP Ltd to provide a Landscape and Visual Appraisal to analyse the potential effects that a proposed residential development at Cowm Top Lane, Rochdale may have on the surrounding landscape and visual amenity. This study will consider the potential effects in regard to a full planning application for a 495 unit residential development and associated infrastructure set within an existing landscape framework.

1.2. The appraisal investigates landscape and visual issues relating to the site and its setting through a combination of desktop research and field survey work.

1.3. The appraisal aims to:

- Establish a clear understanding of the site and its setting in respect of landscape character and visual amenity;
- Appraise the existing landscape in terms of value, condition and considers the relationship of the site with the adjacent settlement;
- Establish an understanding of the proposed development in terms of its relation to landscape character and visual amenity;
- Identify any potential direct and indirect effects of the proposed development upon the landscape;
- Identify potential effects on visual receptors;
- Determine mitigation measures necessary to reduce/eliminate any potential adverse effect on the landscape or visual amenity arising as a result of the proposed development;
- Identify opportunities for landscape based opportunities and enhancement measures; and
- Establish the likely potential residual effects of the proposed development.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

1.4. The methodology and approach adopted for this study is as used in best practice when preparing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments and Environmental Impact Assessments, therefore the baseline study and identification of key visual receptors has been progressed in accordance with best practice as put forward in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments, Third Edition, 2013 published by the Landscape Institute.

1.5. This appraisal has three objectives:

- To determine the potential effects that the impact of the development will have on the landscape character and also the visual amenity around the site and in the wider setting;
- To provide recommendations that will minimise any adverse visual effects of the development; and
- To provide recommendations that will ensure optimum integration of the site within the wider landscape setting.

1.6. The process follows a standard approach and a thorough site and context analysis was undertaken during March 2020. This has been refreshed and reviewed in August 2022.

1.7. PGLA carried out a desk based research exercise prior to visiting the site and conducted a visual assessment in the field to identify the potential effects that the proposed development may have on the character of the existing landscape and visual amenity.

1.8. The findings of this exercise are laid out in the following text aided by diagrams, plans and photographic panoramas. Section 2 considers the baseline conditions i.e. the landscape character that the site is located within and an overview of landscape related policies. This information is used as a baseline and as a benchmark to measure the potential effects.

1.9. Section 3 describes the condition of the existing site and analyses the constraints and opportunities for future development. It also considers the proposals for the site and identifies any potential effects on the landscape and the visual amenity.

1.10. Section 4 analyses the potential landscape and visual effects that may be caused by the impact of the development.

1.11. Section 5 considers the landscape strategy and mitigation that can be implemented to reduce any foreseeable adverse effects and also enhance the setting of the site; and Section 7 provides the conclusions of the report.

SITE VISIT AND EQUIPMENT

1.12. A visual analysis of the site from the surrounding area, including public footpaths and residential areas, was conducted on 31 May 2019 to understand the interfaces of the site within its landscape setting, context and the existing settlement around it. The appraisal identifies key characteristics of the existing landscape and outlines its capacity to accommodate the development.

1.13. The appraisal was carried out during the start of summer when the deciduous trees and vegetation, on and surrounding the site, were in full leaf. The screening effect of the deciduous trees, hedgerows and understorey shrubs will therefore decrease during the winter months.

1.14. Photographs were recorded using a Canon 50mm fixed focal length lens on a Canon EOS600D 18mp digital camera.

1.15. Type 1 Panoramic views were created by taking a series of overlapping photographs in accordance with guidance set out in the Landscape Institute Guidelines for Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 09/19.

STUDY AREA

1.16. The study area for the assessment of landscape and visual effects of the proposed development as shown in the figures, generally cover an area extending up to approximately 3-5km from the centre of the area proposed for development on the site.

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

1.17. The approximate centre of the site is located at National Grid Reference SD 89126 10375 and is approximately 19.63 ha (gross) in size. It currently comprises of a field, containing scattered areas of scrub, located to the south west of Castleton, Rochdale and lies to the north of M62 and east of A627(M).

1.18. The northern boundary runs adjacent to Cripple Gate Lane which is south of the industrial units along Cowm Top Lane, the western boundary runs along an existing public right of way that runs to the rear of properties on Leander Drive. The eastern boundary lies adjacent to M627(M) and the southern boundary runs adjacent to Trows Lane and the M62. All the boundaries are vegetated at varying degrees of quality, density and maturity.

1.19. Vehicular access is to be taken from Cowm Top Lane where it meets Hillcrest Road and Cripple Gate Lane. Pedestrian access into the site will be via the existing footpath along the western boundary connecting Cown Top lane and Trows Lane . The existing footpath link from Leander Drive is to be retained.

1.20. The site is located within Rochdale Borough Council and this assessment has taken into account the landscape related policies and documentation relating to landscape character and the visual amenity.

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

1.21. The proposals seek to provide a residential development to include:

- 495 residential units (Use Class C3) including a mix of 2,3, 4 and 5 bed houses;
- Pedestrian, cycle and vehicle routes;
- Parking;
- Open space and landscaping including play equipment;
- A multi-use games area (MUGA);
- Sustainable Urban Drainage infrastructure in the form of two attenuation areas located along the southern boundary;
- Application site access via Cowm Top Lane and emergency access onto Trows Lane;
- A development which respects the adjoining neighbours in terms of providing landscape buffers between existing and proposed homes;
- Landscape buffers to mitigate any effects from the surrounding infrastructure;
- A sensitive, high quality green infrastructure network that maintains and improves biodiversity in the area, whilst retaining as much of the existing hedgerows and trees where possible.

2. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER & LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

2.1. The following documents have been reviewed as part of our desktop study, which assists in setting the context for the assessment:

- The Character of England Landscape, National Character Area 54: Manchester Pennine Fringe, prepared by Natural England.
- Magic website (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside) prepared by DEFRA and Natural England.
- Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment prepared for Greater Manchester Combined Authority (August 2018).
- Adopted Core Strategy Rochdale Borough Council October 2016.

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

2.2. The Landscape Character of England is divided into a series of Character Areas representing broad tracts of landscape which share common characteristics. The site is located within the National Character Area (NCA) 54: Manchester Pennine Fringe. .

2.3. This is demonstrated in Figure 1 - National Landscape Character Area.

2.4. The key characteristics of NCA: 54 are:

- *Transitional zone between elevated, open moorlands and densely populated urban areas on lower ground.*
- *Landform is a transition from upland to lowland, with smooth shoulders of land divided by steep-sided valleys with fast-flowing rivers.*
- *Elevated vantage points provide extensive views across the adjacent Manchester Conurbation NCA.*
- *Fringe area underlain by the Carboniferous Coal Measures rising to the north and east, into the Carboniferous Millstone Grit uplands.*
- *Several rivers flow through the area from the Pennine uplands, linking with adjacent lowland areas.*
- *Woodland cover is characterised by a range of woodland types concentrated along river valleys, as well as some newer community woodlands in the urban areas.*
- *Field boundaries include dry 'gritstone' walls at higher elevations and hedgerows at lower elevations.*
- *Limited semi-natural habitats include broadleaved mixed and yew woodland, lowland dry acid grassland, lowland meadows, lowland heathland, and purple moor-grass and rush pasture, which are often fragmented.*
- *Extensive evidence of 18th- and 19th-century stone and brick-built industrial buildings, including mill lodges and reservoirs originating from the woollen and cotton industries.*
- *Historic trans-Pennine communication routes, especially railways and canals.*
- *Much of the countryside is influenced by recreational use from adjacent urban areas and the diversification of farmland, giving the area a distinct urban fringe character.*
- *High population densities across a belt of industrial towns, with busy transport networks and motorways. Almost half of this NCA is classed as urban.*

GREATER MANCHESTER LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

2.5. The character descriptions within the National Landscape Character documents tend to be very broad as they addresses the characteristics over a regional level. We have therefore focused on the local character studies by Greater Manchester Combined Authority for the benchmark of the impacts in this appraisal. (See figure 2 - Local Landscape Character Plan).

2.6. The Site falls within Landscape Character Type Urban Fringe Farmland and Landscape Character Area 27: Simister, Slattocks and Healds Green (Oldham). The key characteristics of this landscape type are described below.

Topography, geology and drainage

2.7. Rolling landscape with elevation ranging between 30 and 250m AOD. The landform becomes gentler as it falls towards the floodplains of the rivers Mersey and Bollin (from 10 to 60m AOD).

2.8. Elevated farmland to the north and east, close to the Pennine and Dark Peak foothills, mainly comprising undulating hills and valleys.

2.9. Landform dissected by narrow, often steep sided wooded cloughs, and drained by a network of streams and ponds (of local ecological value) throughout.

2.10. Underlying bedrock geology at higher elevations dominated by Pennine Coal Measures mudstones, siltstones and sandstones. The Mersey and Bollin floodplains comprise sandstones of the Wilmslow and Chester formations, as well as deposits from the Sidmouth Mudstone Formation.

2.11. Glacial till and fluvial deposits overlay the bedrock, creating the rolling landform.

Land use and field patterns

2.12. Variable land use, with the more elevated land in the north and east typified by lower grade agricultural land used for dairy farming, horse grazing and sheep rearing. Pockets of dry heath, acid grassland and moorland fringe are also present.

2.13. Pastoral land characterised by small and medium sized fields, forming various patterns from rectilinear to distinctive web shaped originating from Parliamentary enclosure.

2.14. Flatter, more fertile floodplain areas give rise to a mix of pasture and arable cultivation. Fields tend to be larger with subtle boundary features, with occasional small pasture fields to the east of Altrincham.

2.15. Field boundaries comprise often gappy, species-poor hedgerows with occasional established clumps of hedgerow trees. Post and wire fencing replaces hedges in many locations, whilst occasional stone walls provide definition at higher elevations, but many are in a degraded condition.

2.16. Frequent recreational land uses with sports fields and golf courses located close to the urban edge. The manicured lush greens of the courses contrast sharply with areas of semi-improved grazing land.

2.17. The open farmland contrasts strongly with adjoining residential and industrial urban areas, often forming a rural buffer to the Pennine and Dark Peak foothills.

Semi-natural habitats and woodland cover

2.18. Open landscape with sparse woodland cover generally limited to isolated plantation woodland, hedgerows and the steep cloughs that bisect the rolling farmland.

2.19. A small number of Ancient Woodlands (e.g. Oaken Bank Wood and Glade Wood within Hopwood Woodlands Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Rochdale) provide important habitats and wildlife corridors.

2.20. Established clumps of hawthorn and dog rose line some of the field boundaries and highways, with some incorporating mature broadleaved trees.

2.21. Other SBI-designated habitats include areas of dry heath, acid and of species rich grassland. Elton Reservoir, south-east of Bury, remains a legacy of the area's industrial past and is an important site for water fowl. Flashes also form locally important wetland habitats of industrial origin.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

2.22. The Trans-Pennine railway, dismantled railway routes and canals serve as a reminder of the area's industrial past; the importance of the Macclesfield Canal is reflected in its Conservation Area status.

2.23. Scheduled Monuments limited to moated sites north-west of Broadoak Farm (near Marple), another at Arley Hall east of Standish, and Astley Green Colliery engine house and headgear.

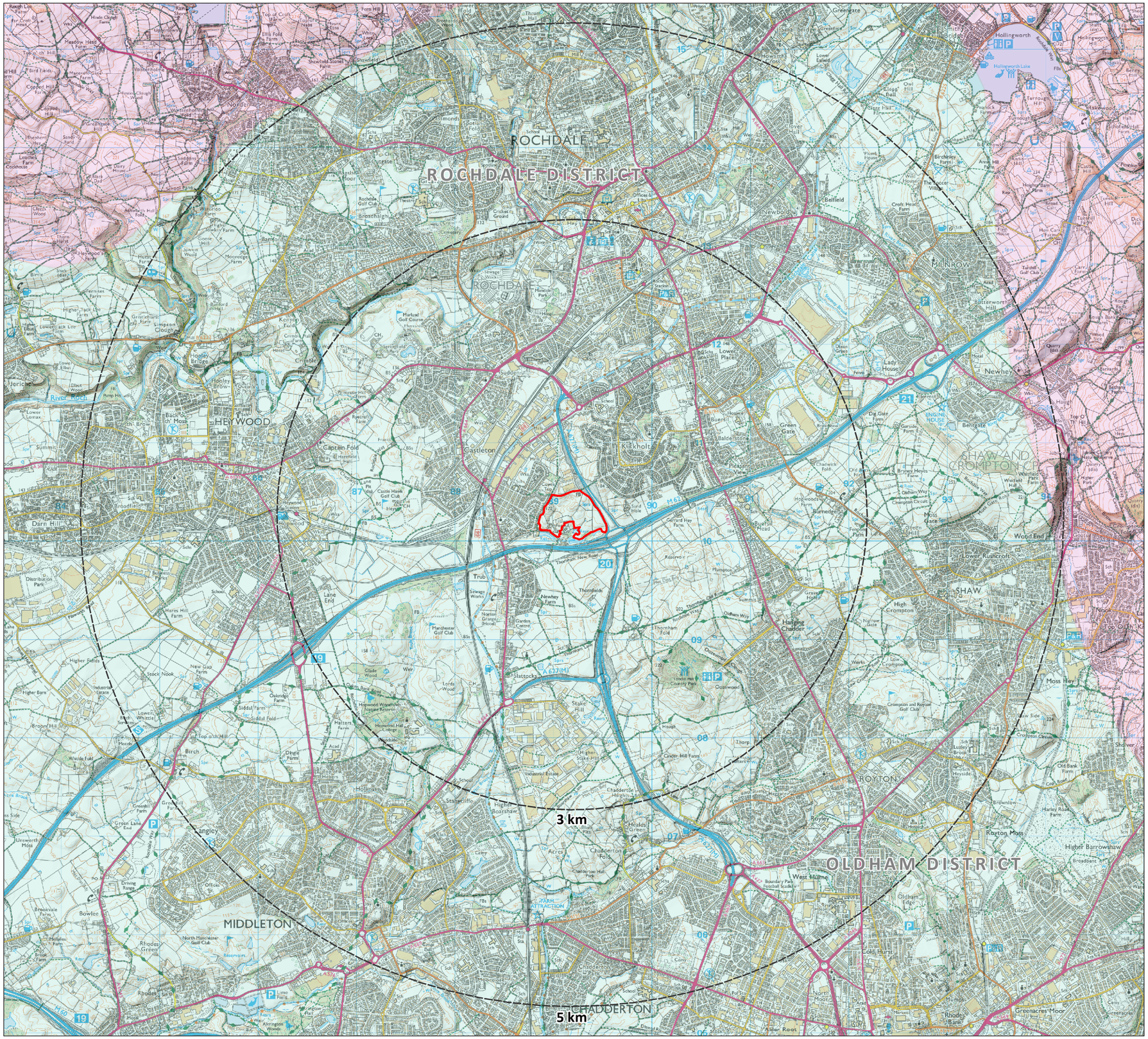
2.24. Birch village (Rochdale) and part of Summerseat (Bury) are Conservation Areas. The landscape also forms part of the setting to a number of other Conservation Areas on its doorstep.

2.25. Grade II Listed Buildings sparsely scattered throughout. The LCT includes the Grade II Listed Brandlesholme Old Hall (Bury), Hopwood Hall (Rochdale) and Old Manor Farm (Stockport).*

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

2.26. Generally a dispersed pattern of scattered farmsteads and individual dwellings constructed of locally sourced gritstone. Occasional small settlements are linked by local roads and winding country lanes.

2.27. In some areas settlement takes the form of 20th century ribbon development strung along roads. Some industrial development and distribution parks



Site Boundary

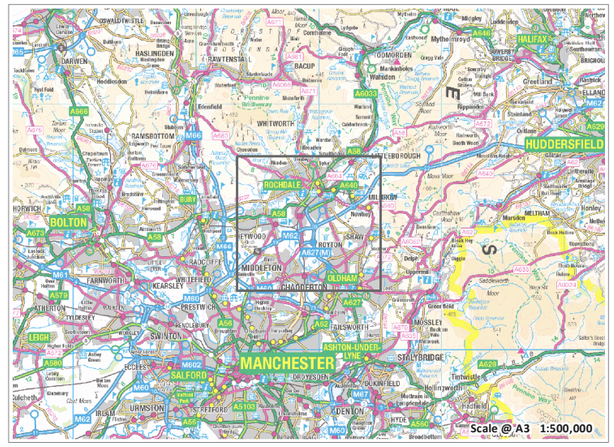
Study Area (from site centre)

Local Authority Boundary

National Character Area

Manchester Pennine Fringe

Southern Pennines



Scale @ A3

1:40,000

0 0.25 0.5 1 Km

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Figure 1 - National Character Area

are also located close to major roads.

2.28. A network of major road and rail routes, including the M62, M61 and A627(M) motorways, form dominant features with extensive cuttings, embankments, bridges and junctions.

2.29. Numerous rights of way and cycle routes permeate the landscape, linking to the surrounding urban areas. The Rotary Way and Rochdale Way are long distance footpaths connecting to the local network.

2.30. Disused railway lines provide recreation and nature conservation corridors, including in Wigan and the Midshires Way in Stockport.

Views and perceptual qualities

2.31. In general the more elevated, rolling farmland has an exposed and open character with little sense of enclosure and strong visual connections with surrounding landscapes.

2.32. Views within the floodplains are typically restricted by hedgerows, hedgerow trees and development, creating a more enclosed landscape with pockets of seclusion and relative tranquillity.

2.33. Wide panoramic views from high points over the Greater Manchester conurbation contained within a bowl dramatically flanked by the South/ West Pennines and the Peak District National Park.

2.34. Long views towards the coastal plain to the west stretch as far as Fiddler's Ferry Power Station near Widnes.

2.35. Historic mills with tall chimneys and warehouses also form landmarks on the skyline.

2.36. Transport corridors and pylon lines are very apparent, with the lack of tree cover within the rolling open farmland leaving the large roads and motorway visually exposed and audible

Intactness and Condition

2.37. This is a predominantly rural landscape of typically low grade pasture land and semi-improved grassland associated with stock rearing and rough grazing. The elevated farmland in the north and east is a generally open and exposed containing few settlements, however some areas are strongly influenced by the visual presence of the adjoining urban edge and by numerous tall pylon lines and major road and rail routes which bisect the landscape. Other areas are quieter and host a smaller network of winding country lanes connecting dispersed and isolated dwellings. Woodland is generally sparse, though the lower-lying and flatter south contains tree belts and tall hedgerows which provide pockets of seclusion. The influence of adjoining urban areas has eroded and fragmented some of traditional land uses, with industrial buildings, distribution centres and golf courses detracting from rural qualities. The noise of traffic and activity along the motorways and fast moving traffic along A and B roads weaken the sense of rural tranquillity, as does the fairly regular noise of planes overhead, particularly closer to Manchester Airport in the south. Field boundaries comprise predominately species poor hedgerows that are often gappy and in some have been replaced by post and wire fencing. Other signs of physical deterioration include derelict sections of dry stone wall gapped up or completely replaced by fencing; a prevalence of horse keeping on urban fringe (with associated over-grazed paddocks); and evidence of anti-social behaviour such as fly tipping and littering.

Landscape Sensitivity

2.38. The Character Assessments also include a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment. Within the study Landscape Sensitivity is defined as *'the relative extent to which the character and quality of an area (including its visual attributes) is likely to change.'*

2.39. The study assesses the Landscape Character Area where the site is located as being Moderate. The definition of moderate is '*some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change.*'

2.40. The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment descriptions are as follows:

2.41. Physical character (including topography and scale)

- *The landform close to the Pennine and Dark Peak foothills is often strongly undulating, rising to a height of 250m AOD.*
- *Within the lower lying floodplain areas the landform is flatter and gently sloping between 10 – 60m AOD.*
- *The rolling elevated farmland is generally very open and windswept with a simple pattern of pastoral fields defined by subtle boundary features.*
- *The elevated farmland is generally large in scale but with pockets of smaller scale within incised valleys.*
- *Lower lying farmland areas are more irregular and overlain by a medium scale field pattern separated by gappy hedgerows that add a degree of complexity.*

2.42. Physical character sensitivity rating is moderate.

2.43. Natural Character

- *Land use is largely semi-improved pastoral farmland with occasional arable fields in lowland and floodplain areas.*
- *The rolling landscape is sparsely wooded and dominated by grazing land with relativity poor levels of biodiversity.*
- *Some isolated pockets of ancient and riparian woodland of ecological value (e.g. Hopwood Woodlands LNR).*
- *Semi-natural areas of dry heath and acid grassland and some fields of species rich grassland are present and form important SBI-designated habitats for local wildlife.*
- *Established clumps of hawthorn line some of the field boundaries, with some incorporating mature stands of broadleaf trees to offer a naturalistic character to the farmland.*

2.44. Natural character sensitivity rating is moderate.

2.45. Historic landscape character

- *18th and 19th century parliamentary enclosure create a semi-regular field patterns across the rolling farmland.*
- *Dry stone walls delineate small pastures at higher elevations and provide a more traditional field pattern. Many are in poor repair.*
- *Few Scheduled Monuments within the LCT – those that are present are two moated sites and Astley Green Colliery engine house and headgear.*
- *A scattering of Grade II and II* listed buildings, mainly comprising manor houses and historic farmsteads.*
- *Birch Village, part of Summerseat and the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Areas are located within the LCT; it also forms part of the setting to others.*
- *Other industrial relicts are important evidence of past activities and land use.*

2.46. Historic landscape sensitivity rating is low to moderate.

2.47. Form, density and setting of existing settlement / development

- *Relatively sparsely populated rural area with a scattered pattern of farms and small settlements linked by lanes and some larger roads.*
- *Some areas are strongly influenced by adjoining urban areas with ribbon development along roads, utility infrastructure and large electricity overhead lines intruding into the rural landscape.*
- *An extensive transport network with rail, large roads and motorways has a dominating influence in some areas.*
- *Away from major transport networks there are quieter areas with local roads connecting dispersed settlements and isolated dwellings.*
- *Industrial developments are located near to major roads and the large Birch Service Station is located along the M62.*
- *The landscape forms a rural backdrop and important separation function between discrete urban areas, preventing coalescence.*

2.48. Form, density and setting sensitivity rating is moderate to high.

2.49. Views and visual character

- A predominantly elevated, rolling farmland with open and expansive views over the Greater Manchester conurbation.
- Views in lower lying areas are generally more contained by hedgerows and buildings.
- The tower blocks of central Manchester are visible on the horizon.
- Historic mills with tall chimneys and warehouses also form landmarks.
- The rural character is often interrupted by a network of large electricity pylons extending high above the skyline as they rise up and over Pennine and Dark Peak foothills.

2.50. Views and visual character sensitivity rating is moderate.

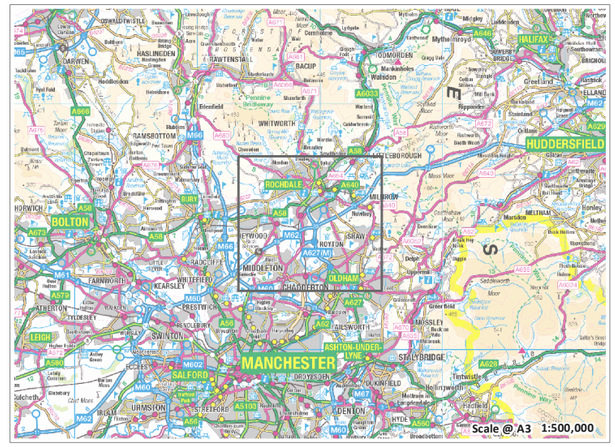
Site Boundary

Study Area (from site centre)

Local Authority Boundary

Local Landscape Character Type

- Chadderton Rolling Hills
- Incised Urban Fringe Valleys
- Open Moorlands and Enclosed Upland Fringes
- Pennine Foothills
- Urban
- Urban Fringe Farmland



Scale @ A3

1:40,000

0 0.25 0.5 1 Km

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Figure 2 - Local Landscape Character

2.51. Access and recreation

- *Network of public rights of way, long distance footpaths and cycle routes and, closer to the urban edge, informal desire lines.*
- *Many areas close to the urban edge are used for recreation with amenity grassland associated with golf courses and large areas of playing fields.*

2.52. Access and recreation sensitivity rating is Moderate to high.

2.53. Perceptual and experiential qualities

- *Some areas retain strongly rural characteristics with historic field patterns and traditional stone farmsteads and dwellings*
- *The rolling elevated farmland has an exposed open character.*
- *Pockets of seclusion and rural tranquillity are present within the lower lying areas, although these are largely open.*
- *Major transport corridors severely detract from these qualities in places, introducing visual and aural impacts.*
- *The rural character is further weakened by a network of large electricity pylons which extend urban influences.*
- *The urban edge is almost always evident although in places a lack of development and relative inaccessibility provide a feeling of remoteness.*
- *Anti-social behaviour, including fly-tipping, evokes a sense of neglect and urban fringe character in locations close to the urban edge.*

2.54. Perceptual and experiential sensitivity rating is moderate.

Overall assessment of Landscape Sensitivity

2.55. Within this landscape character type the sensitivity for 2-3 storey residential housing developments is moderate.

2.56. Steeper slopes and land at higher elevation along the Pennine and Peak fringes would have moderate high sensitivity to residential housing developments and high sensitivity to commercial/industrial developments) due to visual prominence of this rural landscape from surrounding areas. Such areas include elevated land near Thronfields Farm and Chadderton Heights to the immediate west of the A627(M), the site of Dukinfield Golf Club in Tameside (LCA 33), land along the western edge of Hawk Green and High Lane in Stockport (LCA 38), and the western and southern slopes of Pennington Hill (LCA 8, Wigan) upon which Blackrod sits.

2.57. Areas on the immediate urban edge and adjacent to main roads and motorways typically have a lower sensitivity to both scenarios, due to the strong influence development already has on the rural qualities of the landscape. Areas in Wigan particularly affected include land between the urban edge of Westhoughton and the M61, land adjacent to Astley and the A580 (both LCA 8), and land set between the urban edge of Farnworth and the M61 (LCA 10).

Landscape sensitivity by Landscape Character Area

2.58. Notes on any variation in landscape sensitivity by landscape character area 27: Simister, Slattocks and Healds Green (Oldham) for 2-3 storey residential housing developments are also classed as moderate.

2.59. Explanation for variance in sensitivity from overall LCT scores: The urban farmland between Heywood and Middleton is judged to have a moderate sensitivity to commercial/ industrial development (in addition to the housing scenario) as it lies adjacent to and contains existing large industrial development (Birch Business Park and Stakehill Industrial & Distribution Park) and is crossed by large road infrastructure such as the M62 and A627(M) which have a strong influence, detracting from the rural qualities of the landscape. However, the more elevated land in the east of this LCA (around Thornfields Farm) would be more sensitive to development due to its visual prominence from areas to the west.

Special landscape qualities and key sensitivities

2.60. The following provides a summary of the special landscape qualities and key features/attributes that would be sensitive to change (e.g. as a result of development):

- *Locations of elevated, open character with some prominent rural skylines forming a backdrop to views from adjacent urban areas.*
- *Areas of complex, undulating landform cut by distinctive steep wooded cloughs.*
- *Locally important semi-natural habitats and networks, including pockets of ancient and riparian woodland (e.g. Hopwood Woodlands LNR), patches of dry heath and acid grassland, remnant seminatural grasslands, ponds and flashes.*
- *Intact lengths of gritstone walls, hedgerows and tree clumps along field boundaries forming ecological networks and bringing definition to the 18th and 19th century and post-medieval field patterns.*
- *Unifying vernacular of stone-built traditional farms and cottages, with some listed buildings including the Grade II* Brandlesholme Old Hall (Bury), Hopwood Hall (Rochdale) and Old Manor Farm (Stockport).*
- *Conservation Areas at Birch Village, Summerseat and the Macclesfield Canal, and the role the landscape plays as a rural setting to adjacent Conservation Areas.*
- *Industrial relicts, including disused railway lines, canals, mill buildings and the nationally designated Astley Green Colliery engine house and headgear.*
- *Two medieval moated sites near Marple and Standish which are nationally designated as Scheduled Monuments.*
- *Large areas defined by a sparse pattern of scattered stone-built farmsteads, individual properties and small settlements, linked by winding country lanes.*
- *Opportunities to access and enjoy the rural landscape, including the long distance footpaths (Rochdale Way, Rotary Way, Middlewich Way), cycle routes and a strong public rights of way network crossing the farmland and emanating from adjacent urban areas*
- *The LCT's strong visual connections with foothills and uplands of the West/South Pennines and Peak District National Park, which lie to the north and east of Greater Manchester.*
- *Pockets of relative remoteness and tranquillity, including in the lower-lying south where robust hedgerows and lines of trees provide enclosure; elevated points in the north and east creating a sense of exposure.*
- *The LCT's role as an immediate rural backdrop to development and its important function in separating discrete urban areas, preventing coalescence.*

Guidance and opportunities for future development and landscape management / enhancement

- *Avoid siting any development on the highly prominent, elevated and very sparsely settled land in the elevated north and east. Conserve open, undeveloped skylines.*
- *Utilise dips in the landform, including valley slopes, and existing tree/ woodland cover to integrate new development into the landscape.*
- *Protect and where possible enhance semi-natural habitats and networks, including pockets of ancient and riparian woodland (e.g. Hopwood Woodlands LNR), patches of dry heath and acid grassland, remnant semi-natural grasslands, ponds and flashes.*
- *Strengthen and restore the dry stone wall and hedgerow network in association with any new development, reflecting local characteristics (choice of stone and building style; hedgerow species and management regimes). Encourage the restoration of traditional boundaries where fencing is present.*
- *Ensure any new development does not dilute the strong field patterns associated with the landscape.*
- *Respect local building styles and materials in new housing developments, seeking to reflect these in their design and build (particularly the use of local gritstone).*
- *Conserve the character and setting of the Conservation Areas at Birch Village, Summerseat and the Macclesfield Canal, as well as the role the landscape plays as a rural setting to adjacent Conservation Areas.*
- *Conserve remaining industrial relicts, including disused railway lines, canals, mill buildings and the nationally designated Astley Green Colliery engine house and headgear.*
- *Protect the setting and integrity of the two moated sites within the LCT which are Scheduled Monuments.*
- *Explore opportunities to develop unused Brackley Municipal Golf Course, south of Farnworth, for habitat creation with possible links with The Northern Forest initiative1.*
- *Explore opportunities to re-route the Rotary Way long distance footpath though Brackley Municipal Golf Course and thus avoid crossing over the M61.*
- *Design-in the introduction of SuDS to any new development, addressing any changes in hydrology (and subsequent knock-on effects such as increased diffuse pollution from agricultural run-off). This landscape is part of the wider catchment of a number of Greater Manchester's main river valleys.*

List Entry	Name
1025294	CHURCH OF ST MARY-IN-THE-BAUM
1084273	CHURCH OF SAINT EDMUND AND ASSOCIATED BOUNDARY WALL, RAILINGS AND GATES
1084274	ROCHDALE CENOTAPH
1084275	TOWN HALL
1162332	CHURCH OF ST LEONARD

Site Boundary

Study Area (from site centre)

Listed Buildings

- Grade I
- Grade II
- Grade II*

Conservation Area

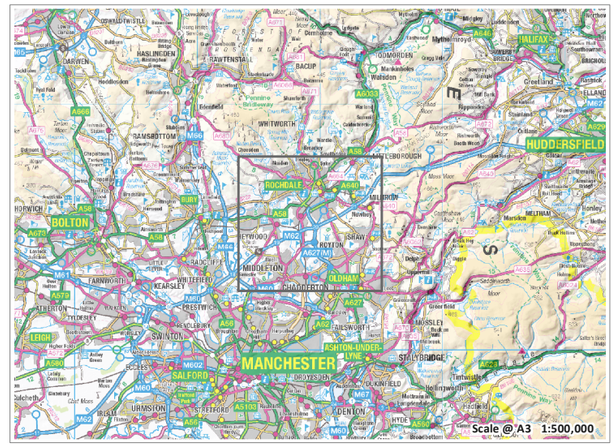
Country Park

Green Belt
Liverpool, Manchester and West Yorks.

Registered Park & Garden

Scheduled Monument

Woodpasture and Parkland



Scale @ A3
1:40,000

0 0.25 0.5 1 Km
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Figure 3 - Landscape Designations

- *Encourage woodland creation schemes on areas of low grade agricultural land, including through the Northern Forest initiative. Woodland planting along motorways and staggered blocks of planting should be used to help screen views of traffic and reduce noise.*
- *Conserve the rural road network, ensuring any new highway design minimises unnecessary signage and lighting and reflects local characteristics (e.g. road verges/boundaries).*
- *Protect the pockets of tranquillity and relative remoteness associated with the landscape, and the role the LCT plays as a rural backdrop and buffer between discrete urban areas.*
- *Conserve key views and intervisibility with the South/West Pennines and Dark Peak foothills, upland fringes and open moorlands.*

ROCHDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL CORE STRATEGY

2.61. As part of the assessment Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy (October 2016) has been reviewed and any policy guidance in relation to landscape has taken into consideration. The accompanying Planning Statement provides further details on planning policy that is relevant to the development.

2.62. Key polices that relate to landscape and visual matters include:

- Policy P2 - Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
- P3 - Improving design of new development
- G6 - Enhancing green infrastructure.

2.63. Rochdale Borough Council also provide Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which build on and provide additional guidance to help in the interpretation of the core strategy. Adopted SPDs that are relevant to this landscape and visual assessment include:

- Provision of recreational Open Space in Hew Housing SPD adopted March 2008 and updated January 2017;
- Guidelines and standards for Residential Development SPD adopted June 2016;
- Residential Design Guide SPD.

GMCA PLACES FOR EVERYONE

2.64. Places for Everyone is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts, which includes Rochdale for jobs, new homes and sustainable growth. The plan determines the kind of development that takes place in the boroughs, maximising the use of brownfield landand urban spaces while protecting the Green Belt from the risk of unplanned development.

2.65. The plan is a result of a process that began as the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework in 2014. The final plan, Places for Everyone, has now been produced and submitted to the Secretary of State.

2.66. As part of the plan, land has been identified outside the Green Belt to deliver to the Greater Manchester Strategy. The strategic allocations for Rochdale include Policy JP Allocation 25: Trows Farm.

2.67. The plan states the development at this site will be required to do the following which have been considered as part of the proposals:

- *Deliver around 550 new homes incorporating a good mix of house types including higher value family housing;*
- *Achieve excellent design and sustainability through masterplanning and the use of design codes for the whole site to ensure comprehensive development;*
- *Provide access to the site primarily via Cowm Top Lane to the north;*
- *Provide safe and attractive walking and cycling routes to the local centre of Castleton and the railway station;*
- *Provide appropriate access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure and cycle storage.*
- *Use the topography and contours within the site to deliver a well-designed scheme which incorporates good quality green and blue infrastructure having regard to existing biodiversity and greenspace corridors;*
- *Carry out a project specific Habitats Regulation Assessment for planning applications of 50 dwellings or more;*
- *Define the archaeological potential of the development site through the completion of archaeological evaluation in the form of geophysics, field walking and trial trenching for areas specified in the Trows Farm Historic Environment Assessment 2020.The masterplan must detail where significant archaeology must be preserved in situ and demonstrate how the development has responded sympathetically to this;*
- *Ensure that development provides a positive visual impact given its prominent position adjacent to the M62 and A627(M) motorways;*
- *Provide financial contributions to mitigate impacts on the highway network identified through a transport assessment;*
- *Incorporate appropriate noise and air quality mitigation along the M62 and A627(M) motorway corridors; and*
- *Provide contributions to ensure that there are sufficient school places to accommodate the new housing either through an expansion of existing schools or the provision of new school facilities.*

CASTLETON - GENERAL DESCRIPTION

2.68. The following is a description form Wikipedia:

2.69. Castleton is an area of Rochdale, Greater Manchester, England, 1.2 miles (1.9 km) south-southwest of Rochdale town centre and 8 miles (13 km) north-northeast of the city of Manchester.

2.70. Historically a part of Lancashire, Castleton's early history is marked by its status as a township within the ancient parish of Rochdale. Prior to merging with the County Borough of Rochdale in 1900, Castleton experienced rapid growth during the 19th century as a mill town in its own right, facilitated for the most part by the construction of the Rochdale Canal which is routed through the area. Castleton's growth was significant; so much so, that for a time it was almost the same size of nearby Rochdale.

2.71. Located between junctions 19 and 20 of the M62 motorway, Castleton today is a predominantly residential area, with a total population of 9,715,[2] increasing to 10,159 at the 2011 Census.

2.72. Castleton is home to St. Martin's C of E church. This example of religious Victorian architecture still stands tall to this very day. It was completed in 1863 and closed in 1991. It was refurbished in 2002/2003.

2.73. Castleton's main apparent architecture is that of the old Victorian style terraces, however there are some renovated areas and recent housing on the edges.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

2.74. Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate the local designations within the vicinity of the proposed development site. The site is not within any environmental designations such as nature reserves, SSSI's or ancient woodland.

2.75. However there are three internationally designated wildlife sites within 10km of the site:

- Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - 0.55km west and designated for its aquatic plant assemblage;
- South Pennine Moors SAC - 7km north east and designated for its European dry heath, blanket bog and woodland habitats; and
- South Pennine Moors Phase 2 Special Protection Area (SPA) - 7km north east and designated for its breeding bird assemblage

2.76. There are two nationally designated wildlife sites within 2km of the site:

- Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - 0.55km west and designated for its aquatic plant assemblage .The site lies within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Rochdale Canal SSSI; and
- Hopwood Woodland Local Nature Reserve (LNR) - 1.72km south west and designated for the presence of floating water-plantain.

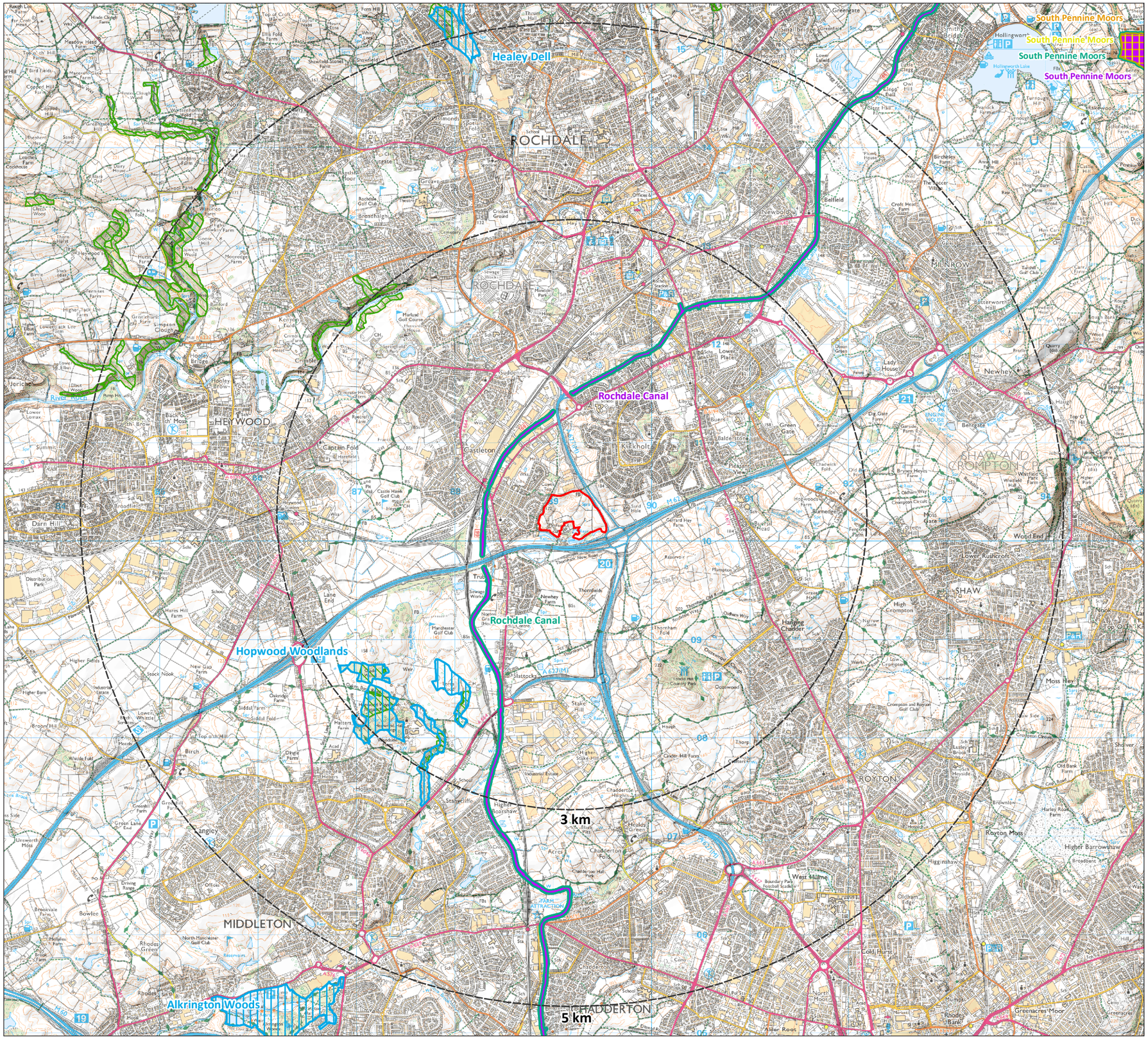
2.77. There are two locally designated wildlife sites within 1km of the site:

- Rochdale Canal (Scowcroft to Warland) Site of Biological Importance (SBI)- 0.55km west and designated for its aquatic plant assemblage; and
- A627M by Tandle Hill SBI - 30m, intersected by A627M, and designated for its habitats and plant assemblage.

2.78. Refer to the Ecology Report for further details and suggested guidance, however the report concludes that *'it is not anticipated that any designated sites would be impacted by the proposals.'*

2.79. There are no Listed buildings within the site or adjacent to its boundaries and the site falls does not fall within the conservation area.

2.80. The Liverpool, Manchester and West Yorkshire Green Belt lies to the south of the M62 and west of Castleton.



- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- Important Bird Area
- Local Nature Reserve
- Ancient Woodland Inventory
- Special Protection Area
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Special Area of Conservation

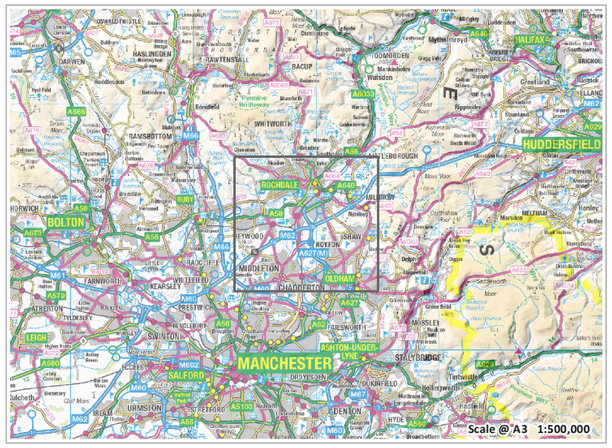


Figure 4 - Environmental Designations

3. EXISTING SITE AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

EXISTING SITE

3.1. The proposed development site is located on the south eastern settlement edge of Castleton, Rochdale. It is 1.2miles (1.9km) south - south west of Rochdale town centre and 8 miles (13km) north - north west of Manchester City Centre.

3.2. The approximate centre of the site is located at National Grid Reference SD 89126 10375 and is approximately 19.63ha in size.

3.3. Figure 6 and the following on-site photographs highlight the existing landscape condition on the site and the topography is demonstrated in Figure 7.

3.4. The site currently comprises of undulating poor semi-improved grassland with marshy grassland and dense scrub throughout. Small areas of tall ruderal vegetation, continuous bracken, defunct hedgerows and scattered trees are also to the south of the site.

3.5. Woodland lies adjacent to the site along with fishing pools to the south. Buildings associated with Trows Farm are also present.

3.6. The northern boundary is defined by Cripple Gate Lane which is a single track and footpath that runs from Hillcrest Road to the pedestrian Blue Bridge over the A627(M) to Kirkholt. The track is bound with a post and wire fence and scattered scrub and occasional trees.

3.7. The eastern boundary is defined by A627(M), there is an area of broad leaved woodland buffering the north eastern boundary with the road and there is marsh/marshy grassland in the south east with scattered trees along the boundary.

3.8. There is a public footpath that runs the length of the western boundary from Cowm Top Lane to Trows Lane in the south. The footpath, which is to be retained, is at the rear of properties on Leander Drive and is bound by fencing and some vegetation. A comprehensive overview of public footpaths and other circulation routes are recorded on Figure 7: Access and Circulation.

3.9. Pedestrian access is currently taken from Cowm Top Lane and Trows Lane and Leader Drive. These access points are to be retained and their location is demonstrated on the appraisal diagram opposite.

3.10. The site is located within Rochdale Borough Council and this assessment has taken into account the landscape related policies and documentation relating to landscape character and the visual amenity.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

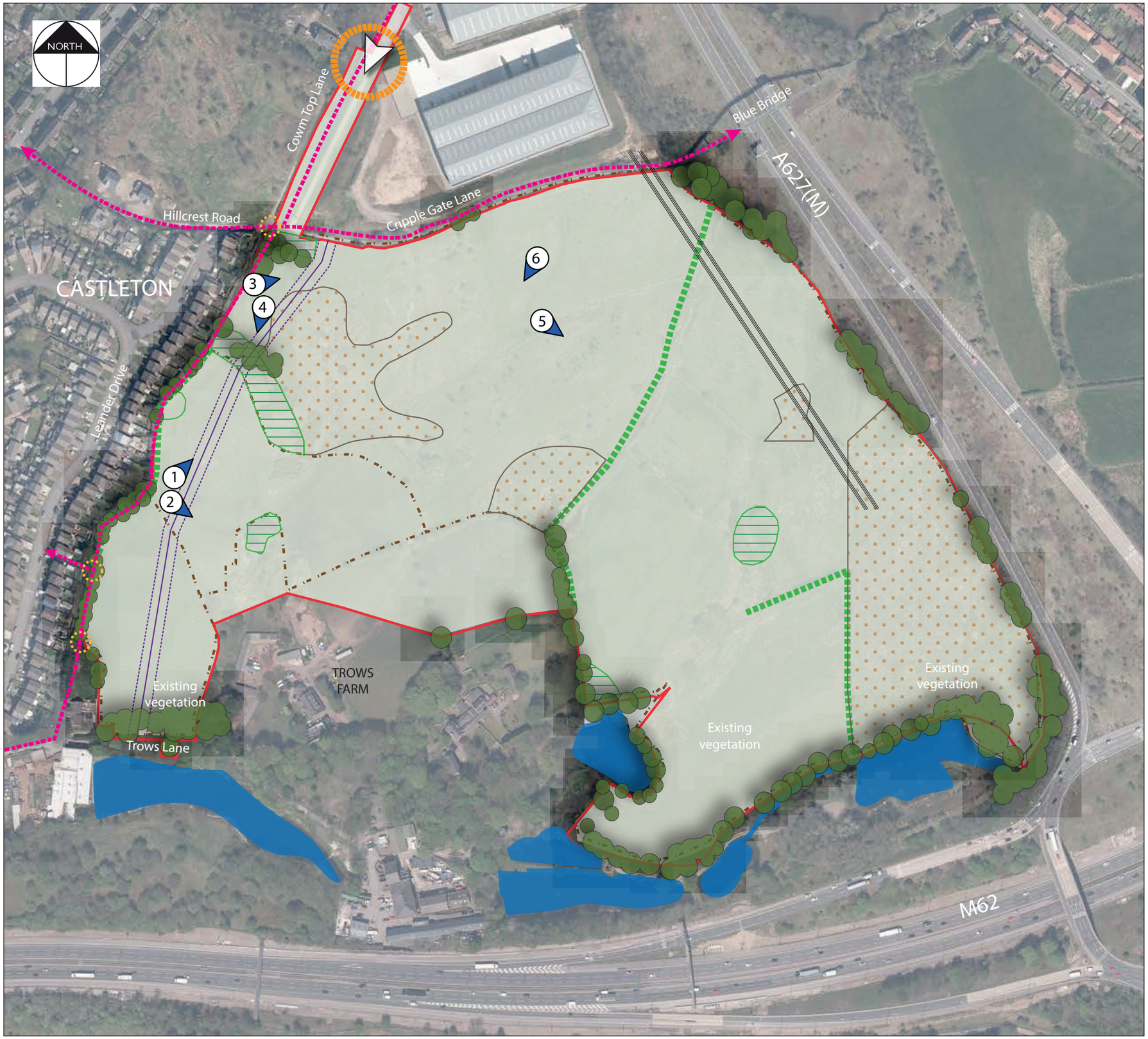
3.11. The proposal seeks to provide a residential development to include:

- approximately 495 new family homes with a range of housing sizes and tenures to help meet the demand for new housing in the area;
- a large area of public open space that will run along the entire western boundary of the development providing a buffer between the existing settlement edge and the proposed development;
- a sensitive, high quality green infrastructure network that maintains and improves biodiversity in the area, whilst retaining much of the existing boundary planting, hedgerows and trees;
- street hierarchy with appropriate boundary treatments and street tree planting;
- introduction of SuDS;
- high quality building materials and landscape elements to enhance the local character and complement the vernacular of the surrounding settlement;
- utilisation of the landform to integrate the new development into the landscape.

3.12. Access into the site is proposed from Cowm Top Lane and emergency access only onto Trows Lane.

3.13. Refer to the accompanying Design and Access Statement for further descriptions of the proposed development. Figure 5 illustrates e*SCAPE's Indicative Framework Plan.

Figure 5 - Site Layout Plan (Not to Scale) courtesy e*SCAPE Urbanists



Legend

- Site Boundary
- Existing fishing ponds
- Hedgerows
- Existing Footpaths
- Post and wire fencing
- Existing Vegetation
- Marshy land
- Scattered scrub
- Primary Access Point
- Vehicular Gateway
- Pedestrian Gateway
- Gas Pipeline and easement
- Overhead cables

Figure 6 - Landscape Appraisal (NTS)

ONSITE VIEW 1

Adjacent to the footpath that runs along the western boundary looking in a north easterly direction

ONSITE VIEW 2

Looking in a south westerly direction towards Trows Farm and the southern boundary along Trows Lane

ONSITE VIEW 3

Looking a northerly direction towards the northern boundary along Cripple Gate Lane

ONSITE VIEW 4

Looking in a south easterly direction towards the southern boundary and Trows Farm on Trows Lane

ONSITE VIEW 5

Looking in an easterly direction towards the eastern boundary with A627(M)

ONSITE VIEW 6

Looking in a south / south easterly direction across the site towards the southern boundary with Trows Lane

Site Boundary

Study Area (from site centre)

Height AOD

- 80m - 100m
- 101m - 120m
- 121m - 140m
- 141m - 160m
- 161m - 180m
- 181m - 200m
- 201m - 220m
- 221m - 240m
- 241m - 250m

Scale @ A3
1:40,000

0 0.25 0.5 1 Km
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Figure 7 - Topography

Site Boundary

Study Area (from site centre)

Public Right of Way

Bridleway

Footpath

Promoted Walking & Cycling Route

Oldham Way

Rochdale Way

South Pennine Ring

Pioneers Round

National Cycle Network

NCN Route 66

NCN Link Route (66)

Scale @ A3
1:25,000

0 0.15 0.3 0.6 Km

0 0.15 0.3 0.6 Miles

Figure 8 - Access and Circulation

4. POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

4.1. This section assesses the potential effects that the proposed development may have on the landscape character as described in the baseline in Section 2 above. The nature of the receptor, (sensitivity), and the nature of the effect, (magnitude of change) have been considered, however, as this report is a landscape appraisal rather than a full LVIA only the potential significance of effects have been stated as stated in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments, Third Edition 2013 (GLVIA3) (Para 3.3 and Table3.1).

4.2. GLVIA3, suggests that potential landscape effects should be measured at three levels;

i) effects on the site;

ii) effects on the setting of the site; and

iii) effects on the broader landscape context.

4.3. It also offers guidance on measuring effects during the operational stage i.e. at point of completion; and also residual effects such as long term effects after a certain time period. In this case we have measured the effects of the development after ten years.

4.4. Mitigation measures have also been considered and recorded as part of the appraisal to explain how the introduction of certain landscape treatments can help reduce the overall effect of any potential adverse effects.

4.5. The nature and magnitude of landscape and visual effects will change during the construction and development process. Some impacts may be severe, but short term, whereas others are minor impacts with residual effects, which may be of a permanent nature. In addition, some impacts could be mitigated by landscape and other measures, which will have benefits in the longer term. Potential impacts that may occur during the stages of the proposed development are summarised below.

4.6. Short term impacts are those that occur during the construction period. These are considered as follows:

- Site access, delivery and traffic movements;
- Earthworks and materials stockpiles;
- Construction equipment and plant;
- Utilities, including water and lighting;
- Temporary parking;
- Site compound and accommodation;
- Additional noise; and
- Additional mud to roads.

4.7. Construction impacts can be mitigated through use of good practice in construction management and through immediate restoration of areas such as site compounds used during the construction phase of the project. The residual impacts of construction will be very limited and overall are considered to be negligible.

4.8. Medium term impacts are those that occur on completion of the works:

- Presence of built structures
- New or modified access road, and
- New landscape planting.

4.9. Long term effects are considered following the completion of the works, and can be considered as residual effects. These are similar to the effects on completion but may be partially or wholly mitigated by maturing proposed landscape infrastructure, site management and other development proposals.

LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Potential Effects on the Physical Fabric of the Site

Operational Stage

4.10. This section assesses the potential landscape effects of the impact caused by the proposed development. The assessment has been made based on the operational phase only as it is difficult to fully anticipate what the construction phasing of this project will be at this stage. However, in the initial instance it is usual that there will be short term temporary adverse effects during the construction stage. This will be closely regulated by a Construction Management Plan with controlled times and vehicular movements. The site is likely to be temporarily secured along the boundaries of the site with timber hoarding to reduce noise and adverse visual effects.

4.11. In general terms, changes to the landscape fabric will only occur within the application boundary for the proposed development. The impact of the proposed development will cause long term effects on the landscape fabric through the removal of the existing field which will be replaced with a residential development, associated infrastructure and high quality landscape.

4.12. The development site generally accords with the key characteristics of the Landscape Character Type: Urban Fringe Farmland as described in Section 2 above. According to the Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment the sensitivity of the site is deemed to be moderate. There are also no national or local landscape designations that influence the character of the site.

4.13. The degree of change is considered to be major due to the obvious change to the fabric and cover of the landscape by the introduction of the proposed built form, associated infrastructure and substantial amenity space. The design of the layout has ensured the retention of the majority of existing boundary vegetation and retained and enhanced ecological corridors along the southern and eastern boundaries. The site is also located adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Castleton and bound on two sides by major arterial infrastructure.

4.14. Therefore, the potential overall effects on the site are likely to be moderate - major. This accounts for the loss of the field and a change in the fabric and cover of the landscape within the site from an open field to a residential development and associated infrastructure with newly introduced planting and accounts for the retention of all vegetated boundaries and location adjacent to the settlement edge.

Residual Effects

4.15. The landscape strategy demonstrates that additional planting provides a potential for mitigation of the adverse effects arising at the operational phase. These will not have matured sufficiently at the early stages after construction but after a period of time the introduced landscape elements will mature to soften the effects of the built development within the site. These will also offer enhanced and positive benefits to offset some of the initial adverse effects of the development. The materials of the buildings will be of an appropriate high quality and therefore offer the potential to provide an integration of the scheme into the wider landscape. Therefore, the nature of effects are likely to be minor leading to potential overall residual effects of moderate.

Potential Effects on the Landscape Setting of the Site

Operational Stage

4.16. At time of completion the noticeable effects on the landscape setting of the development site will have taken place at the access point on Cowm Top Lane and where the development is prominent along the western and eastern boundaries. The existing boundary treatments are to remain and will remain relatively unchanged except where there are opportunities for enhancement.

4.17. The development will utilise the landform which will integrate the development into the landscape and retain the local character of prominent rural skylines. The development will also sit between the existing settlement edge of Castleton and existing motorway network.

4.18. The sensitivity is deemed to be medium to account for the key characteristics set out in the local character assessments.

4.19. The nature of the effect is deemed to be minor as the new development is adjacent to the existing residential and commercial settlement edge. There is an opportunity to provide an improvement to the newly advanced edge by strengthening and restoring existing hedgerows and introducing native planting to soften an blend the development into the landscape. Links will be established to wider green infrastructure networks (especially along the southern boundary), enhancements will also be made to the recreational and biodiversity values of the site.

4.20. The potential significance of effects on the setting of the site are likely to be minor moderate.

Residual Effects

4.21. The appraisal recognises that there will be a degree of change to the setting which will include the introduction of built form that contributes to the new settlement edge of Castleton.

4.22. The proposed planting within the site and enhancements around the development boundary will provide a degree of mitigation for the

Site Boundary

Study Area (from site centre)

Building

Woodland

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Area where Development may be visible

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility is calculated using an Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 digital terrain model (DTM).

The maximum development building height is 9 m from ground level, and observer height assumed to be 1.8 m. Visibility is calculated from the site boundary.

OS Terrain 5 is a 'bare-earth' terrain dataset, and therefore does not account for the screening effect of any surrounding buildings or vegetation.

Buildings and woodland areas from the OS OpenMap Local dataset have been added to the DTM to indicate the potential screening effect of buildings and vegetation. Indicative heights used are 9m (approximately 2 storeys) for buildings and 15m for woodland.

Scale @ A3 1:25,000

0 0.25 0.5 1 Km

0 0.25 0.5 1 Mile

Figure 9 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

potential adverse effects arising at the operational phase.

4.23. In particular, hedgerow planting that will infill the occasional gaps on the eastern will mature after a period of time to help fully integrate the development into the landscape. Therefore the residual effects are likely to be minor.

Potential Effects on Broad Landscape Context

Operational Stage

4.24. This section describes the effects on the local Landscape Character Type: Urban Fringe Farmland .

4.25. The nature of receptor (sensitivity) of this character area has been assessed as moderate. The site is not located within any nationally recognised landscape or cultural designations. The general quality of the wider landscape is characterised as elevated open character with prominent rural skylines adjacent to urban areas.

4.26. The nature of effects (magnitude of change) has been assessed as imperceptible. The proposed development will have no adverse effect on the broader character area. Change in views experienced by users of the rights of way within the immediate vicinity of the site and the character areas are assessed in the Visual Amenity section later in this document.

4.27. The proposed development will be introducing a significant number of new hedgerow plants and trees along the boundaries and within the proposed development as part of the overall design and therefore the adverse effects are considered to be reduced by the beneficial effects that the planting and other landscape interventions will introduce. The development will also work with the existing landform to integrate it into the landscape.

4.28. The potential likely significance effects on this LCA has been assessed as negligible-minor due to the associated landscape interventions which will improve the current condition and status of the landscape characters as described in Section 2 above.

Residual Effects

4.29. The overall landscape character area will benefit from the maturity of the introduced landscape which will help to integrate the site into the landscape and potentially enhance the ecological and biodiversity of the green infrastructure in and around the development site. The nature of effects (magnitude of change) has been assessed as imperceptible.

4.30. The potential significance of effects are likely to be negligible due to the maturing of the proposed landscape planting.

VISUAL EFFECTS

4.31. This section considers the potential visual effects of the impact caused by the proposed development. The appraisal has been made based on the operational phase only as it is difficult to fully anticipate what the phasing and construction operations of this project will be at this stage.

Effects on Visual Receptors

4.32. The potential landscape and visual effects noted in this document are those experienced during the operational phase of the development as well as the long term residual effects.

4.33. Figure 9: Viewpoints Location Plan, illustrates the locations of the considered and identified visual receptors. These have been selected with the criteria that all views are taken from positions that have general public access and a clear view of the site. Consideration has also been given to the visual effects on the residential amenity of the adjacent properties that face onto the development.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

4.34. Figure 9: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), illustrates the areas which any of the activities of the proposed development, be they temporary or permanent, are likely to be potentially visible in terms of topography. GIS techniques were adopted for establishing a ZTV based on topographical information but these tend to be theoretical and although take into account settlements and the obstructive effects of vegetation such as hedgerows and woodland these latter items are not always up to date in the available GIS data sets and therefore the visual influence and visual envelopes are verified by fieldwork.

4.35. The ZTV is a very useful tool for demonstrating where the development cannot be seen from due to topography, settlement and large tracts of vegetation. For this proposal the ZTV was established by 3D computer software linked to Ordnance Survey data and then tested through fieldwork during the site visits. The programme was run to account for the two storey building at a maximum height of 9m to the ridge and to cover a distance of 3km from the proposed development site.

4.36. The following qualifications apply to the ZTV:

- There may be a number of areas from which there is the potential to view part of or the entire proposed development but these are from areas which are not publicly accessible and to which it is unlikely that they gain regular access, e.g. farm land and private property.
- The ZTV does not account for the likely orientation of a viewer, for instance, whether they are static or travelling in a moving vehicle such as a car.

4.37. Viewpoints were selected on the basis of which locations provide the clearest views of the site and are also the most accessible to the public. Some viewpoints also represent areas which may be perceived to be sensitive to the visual effect of the proposed development due to their nature or proximity, but which in reality have restricted views of the site.

4.38. Visual receptors have been analysed for the likely visual effects on the landscape and visual amenity from medium and long range to relatively close range and from within the immediate setting. The ZTV suggests that some views may be achieved from an extensive area around the site but these were discounted in the field due to the screening effects of extensive vegetation and built form and farm buildings. This was verified by field study and were discounted from the assessment.

Visual Receptors

4.39. The visual receptors are represented by viewpoints that consider the likely effects on the nearby settlements and residential amenity; recreational areas such as public footpaths, national trails and parks. Consideration has also been given to transport routes such as roads.

Settlements and Residential Amenity Receptors:

4.40. Within the vicinity of the site residential receptors include a number of dwellings along the existing settlement edge of Castleton. However it is the rear of properties along Leander Drive that are adjacent to the site and they are likely to only experience a change of view from the rear upper stories.

4.41. Residential receptors around Castleton, Trub and Thornham were also considered however these were discounted from further assessment due to the lack of visibility of the site through intervening built form and vegetation.

Recreational Receptors

4.42. There are public footpaths that run the northern and western boundaries of the site. These have been considered and represented in viewpoints 1, 2, 3 and 4. There is a wider network of public rights of way and varying levels of visibility. These are represented in Viewpoints 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Cultural Receptors

4.43. There are no listed buildings or scheduled monuments that affect the site but there are a number of listed buildings within the vicinity, these are detailed in Figure 3. The cultural receptors have therefore not been further assessed in this report.

Transport and Road Receptors

4.44. Travelling receptors include those using major and minor roads in close to the site. In this case the only roads in close proximity to the site are the A627(M) to the east of the site which is represented in Viewpoint 5. Viewpoint 6 represents Trows Lane to the south and Viewpoint 9 represents users of Thornham Old Road

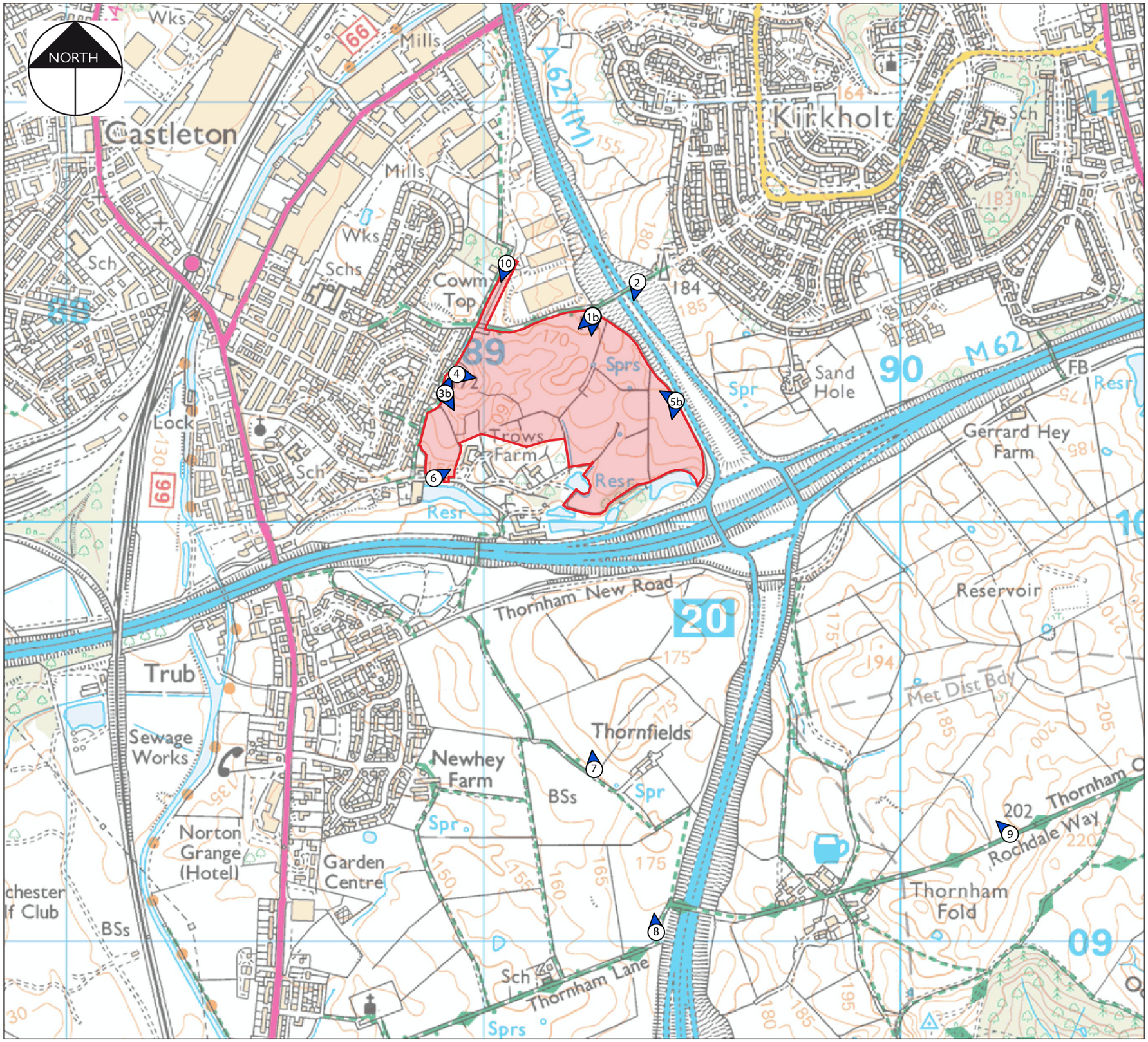
4.45. Travelling receptors are considered to be low in terms of sensitivity to development.

Predicted effects on residential receptors

Operational Stage

4.46. Residential properties located in the immediate vicinity on Leander Drive are likely to experience a medium degree of change from the existing view, however these will be viewed from non-principal rooms at the rear of the dwellings.

4.47. The proposals put forward in the landscape strategy seek to reinforce the vegetated boundary with additional structural planting and these will soften the effects of the built form over time. There will also



KEY

Site Boundary

Viewpoint locations

Figure 10 - Viewpoint Location Map (Not to Scale)

be a large area of public open space that will provide a landscape buffer between the rear boundary and proposed development. The development will also follow the landform so it is likely that in some locations only the rooftops and upper storeys will be visible allowing views into the wider landscape to be retained.

4.48. The nature of the receptor (sensitivity) of the residential amenity is considered to be low to account for the non-principal rooms of the dwellings facing the development. The likely nature of effects is deemed to be minor and therefore the potential significance of effects is likely to be negligible minor.

Residual Effects

4.49. The planting will mature and offset the adverse effects of the development over time. The buildings should be of such a quality to provide an attractive interface between the settlement and the wider landscape. The development should be reflective of the local vernacular in terms of materials and styles for the buildings and the landscape should be consistent with the overall character of the area.

4.50. In time the planting will mature providing a substantial screen to the development from these dwellings and the potential significance of residual effects could be reduced to negligible.

Predicted Effects on Recreational Receptors

Operational Stage

4.51. The public footpaths around the boundaries and within the surrounding vicinity are considered to be of medium sensitivity as they are not located within any landscape designations.

4.52. The footpaths that surround the boundaries of the site will undergo a major change in view with the introduction of the development. However it is proposed that the footpath along the western boundary will be set in an area of high quality public open space, which aims to enhance the user experience.

4.53. The current boundary treatments will be enhanced with any gaps infilled, plot boundary treatments within the development and large landscape buffers around the all the sites boundaries will help to soften the built form and integrate the site into the landscape. The site will also be viewed in context of the existing residential and commercial settlement edge of Castleton and therefore will not look incongruous to its surroundings.

4.54. Generally, the viewpoints identified demonstrate that the represented receptors undergo a minor degree of change leading to a potential significance of effects of moderate-minor at the operational stage.

Residual Effects

4.55. The potential significance of residual effects will be reduced to negligible-minor for the majority of recreational receptors as the planting matures on the boundaries to the development site and within the areas of public open space.

Predicted Effects on Travelling Receptors

Operational Stage

4.56. The site can not be seen from the majority of the surrounding road network including Cowm Top Lane and the M62 due to landform and intervening built form and vegetation.

4.57. The selected viewpoints from A627(M) and Trows Lane generally illustrate the range of visibility that can be achieved from the roads when travelling adjacent to the site and it is clear that any experience of the proposed development will be limited. The sensitivity of the transport receptors is considered to be low and the degree of change ranges from minor to imperceptible.

4.58. The likely significance of effects of the proposed development on the receptor are likely to be minor or negligible.

Residual Effects

4.59. The potential residual effects will be reduced to negligible as the proposed planting matures on the eastern boundary to provide a softening effect of the built form of the development.

General Note on Predicted Effects

4.60. Viewpoints 1-10 provide a more detailed analysis and descriptions that lead to the overall grades of the visual assessment.

5. LANDSCAPE STRATEGY AND MITIGATION

5.1. The proposals are for a full planning application for 495 unit residential development with associated infrastructure, SuDS, landscape buffers and public open spaces.

5.2. The development of the layout for this site has taken the existing green infrastructure into account to provide a residential development, set within an already mature landscape structure.

5.3. There are significant opportunities for new tree planting and landscaping within the site, and infill planting especially along the boundaries.

5.4. There is a large area of public open space located along the western site boundary creating a high quality landscape feature within the development which will create a buffer and recreational space between the properties of Leander Drive and the proposed development.

5.5. There will be areas of public open space along all the boundaries which will restore and strengthen existing vegetated boundary treatments and provide improvements to the settlement edge to Castleton.

5.6. The basic elements of the landscape strategy for the site can be summarised as follows:

- Retention where possible, of the existing elements that make up the site's green infrastructure, such as tree and hedges along the boundaries and integrating these into the development, providing the scheme with an immediate sense of maturity;
- Ensuring the gaps in the existing hedge along the boundaries, in particular the A627(M) are in-filled with native trees and hedge planting. Evergreen species of holly could be included in the mix to provide effective screening through the winter months;
- Ornamental and native hedge planting to be planted in and around the proposed development to soften the effects of the built form;
- High quality mixed native tree and hedge planting will be planted in and around the proposed public open space and along the streets. There will be a network of footpaths providing connectivity to existing local networks and the development. Proposals seek to not only aesthetically enhance the existing settlement edge of Castleton but increase biodiversity levels and the recreational and ecological value of the site.

5.7. The landscape strategy has been taken into account when considering the mitigation for the identified potential adverse landscape and visual effects arising at the operational stage of the proposed development and this is further illustrated on Figure 11 opposite.

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Indicative Development Parcels
- Indicative Roads
- Existing Footpaths
- Indicative Footpaths
- Existing Vegetation
- Indicative Vegetation Tree lined streets and hedgerow front boundaries
- Indicative Detention Basins
- Primary Access Point
- Vehicular Gateway
- Pedestrian Gateway

Figure 11 - Indicative Landscape Strategy (Not to Scale)

6. RESIDUAL EFFECTS

6.1. Mitigation measures can be introduced to assist with the offsetting or reducing of any identified adverse effects and this includes introducing a robust landscape strategy and framework into the development including perimeter structure planting and public open space.

6.2. The buildings should be of such a quality to provide an attractive interface between the settlement and the wider landscape. The development should be reflective of the local vernacular in terms of materials and styles for the buildings and the landscape should be consistent with the overall character of the area. The layout should also utilise the landform conserving the rural skylines.

6.3. In time the planting will mature providing a substantial screen to the development from the general receptors the potential significance of effects identified at the operational stage could reduce the overall residual effects of the development.

7. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

7.1. The site is located at Cowm Top Lane, on the south eastern settlement edge of Castleton, Rochdale. The site is part of the Strategic Allocations for Rochdale as set out in the GMCA Places for Everyone Plan. The site is Policy JP Allocations 25: Trows Farm.

7.2. The proposed vehicular access is from Cowm Top Lane and the existing pedestrian access into the site from Trows Lane, Leander Drive and Cowm Top Lane is to be retained.

7.3. The proposed redevelopment of the site aims to provide 495 new homes set within a strong landscape framework (see Figure 11) that comprises of:

- approximately 550 homes with a range of housing sizes and tenures to help meet the demand for new housing in the area;
- high quality areas of public open space;
- a development which respects the adjoining neighbours in terms of providing landscape buffers between existing and proposed homes;
- landscape buffers to mitigate any effects from the surrounding infrastructure;
- a sensitive, high quality green infrastructure network that maintains and improves biodiversity in the area, whilst retaining as much of the existing hedgerows and trees where possible.;
- Pedestrian and cycle links to the local public right of way network.

7.4. The layout and landscape strategy for the proposed development has taken full account of the advice and guidelines provided in Rochdale Borough Councils Core Strategy and SPDs.

7.5. There is a Public Right of way that runs along the western boundary and also along Cripple Gate Lane to the north of the site. The surrounding public rights of way are illustrated in Figure 8.

7.6. The assessment of the potential effects on the landscape concludes that there will be an immediate change in the character of the existing site as the proposed development and associated infrastructure are introduced. There is potential for any identified adverse effects being reduced over time as the planting and landscape framework within the site matures.

7.7. The setting of the site will benefit from the introduced planting to infill the gaps in the hedgerow along the eastern boundary with the A627(M) and the introduction of landscape buffers along all its boundaries. The proposed development is likely to have an imperceptible effect on the broad landscape character. However, the landscape proposals are considered to be potentially beneficial as they will reflect the native species of the surrounding landscape, development follows the landform and proposals are consistent with the Landscape Character description for the Urban Fringe Farmland Landscape Character Type.

7.8. The visual assessment has demonstrated that the proposed development will have some general effects on the immediate residential amenity of the properties on Leadner Drive but these will be mostly viewed from non-principal rooms to the rear of the dwellings.

7.9. The users of the public footpath networks will experience a range of effects from major to imperceptible to the visual amenity at time of completion and the residual effects are likely to reduce to minor or negligible as the proposed planting matures. The long to medium view range footpath network will experience negligible effects due to the existing settlements, landform and vegetation within the countryside and the development will be viewed in context of the existing settlement edge of Castleton.

7.10. In conclusion, the long term residual effects of the development are not likely to exceed minor in terms of significance to the overall landscape and visual amenity. Potential adverse effects that have been identified to be present at the operational stage, especially on the site and its setting will be reduced and offset by the mitigation provided in the potential planting scheme described within the landscape strategy.

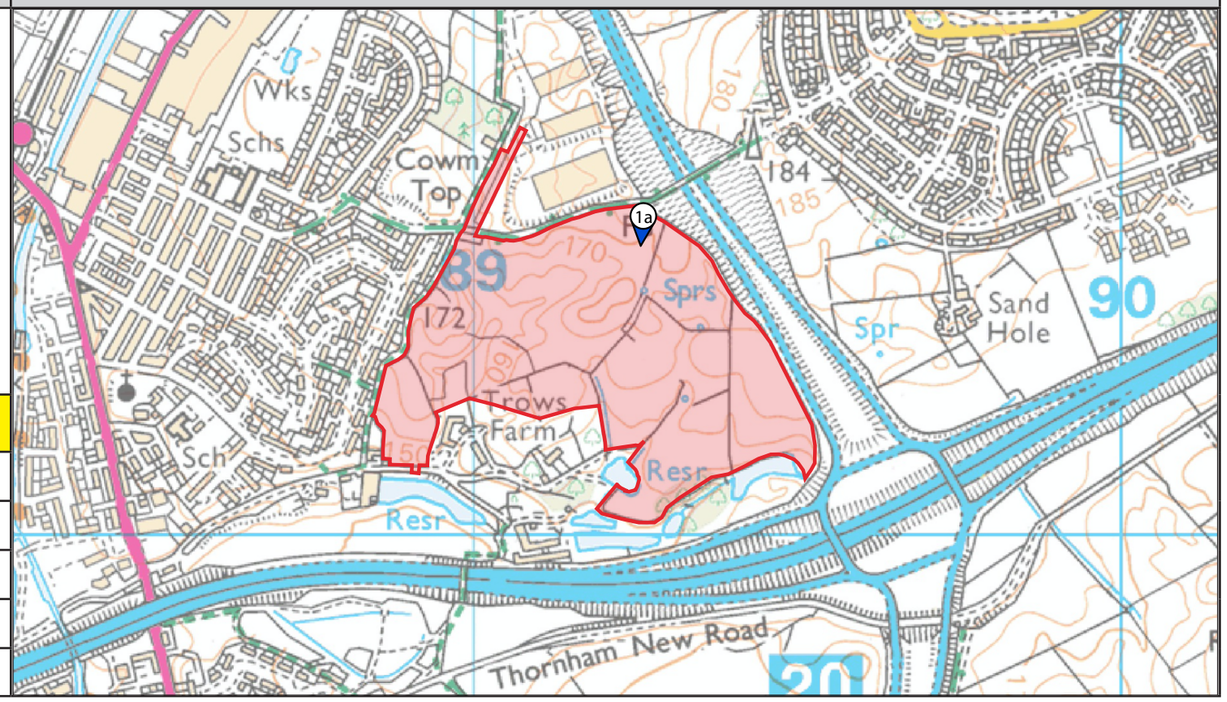
7.11. Therefore, the findings of this report demonstrate that the site is able to accommodate the proposed residential development without causing undue harm to the landscape character and visual amenity of the site and surrounding countryside and footpath network.

VISUAL BASELINE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION

The viewpoint is located on the northern boundary in the north eastern corner of the site looking in a south westerly direction across the site. Located on the footpath that runs along Cripple Gate Lane, the fields and areas of scattered scrub are visible in the foreground. There are a number of vertical elements visible within the site and surrounding landscape including telegraph poles and overhead cables that partially run across the north eastern portion of the site. The street lighting that line the M62 are visible through gaps in the dense vegetation that bounds Trows Lane along the southern boundary. The topography within the site and surrounding landscape allows views out towards Thornham to the left of the photograph and towards Manchester City Centre and beyond to the right of the photograph. Although the foreground view will change with the introduction of the built form, utilising the landform the long range views could be retained. All vegetation along the boundaries, and where possible within the site, is to be retained, bringing a sense of maturity to the site which will help to integrate the development into its surroundings

LOCATION MAP



VIEWPOINT 1A

DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Cripple Gate Lane
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational, Transport
LOCATION OS GRID	SD 89288 10406
ELEVATION IN METERS	175m
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0m

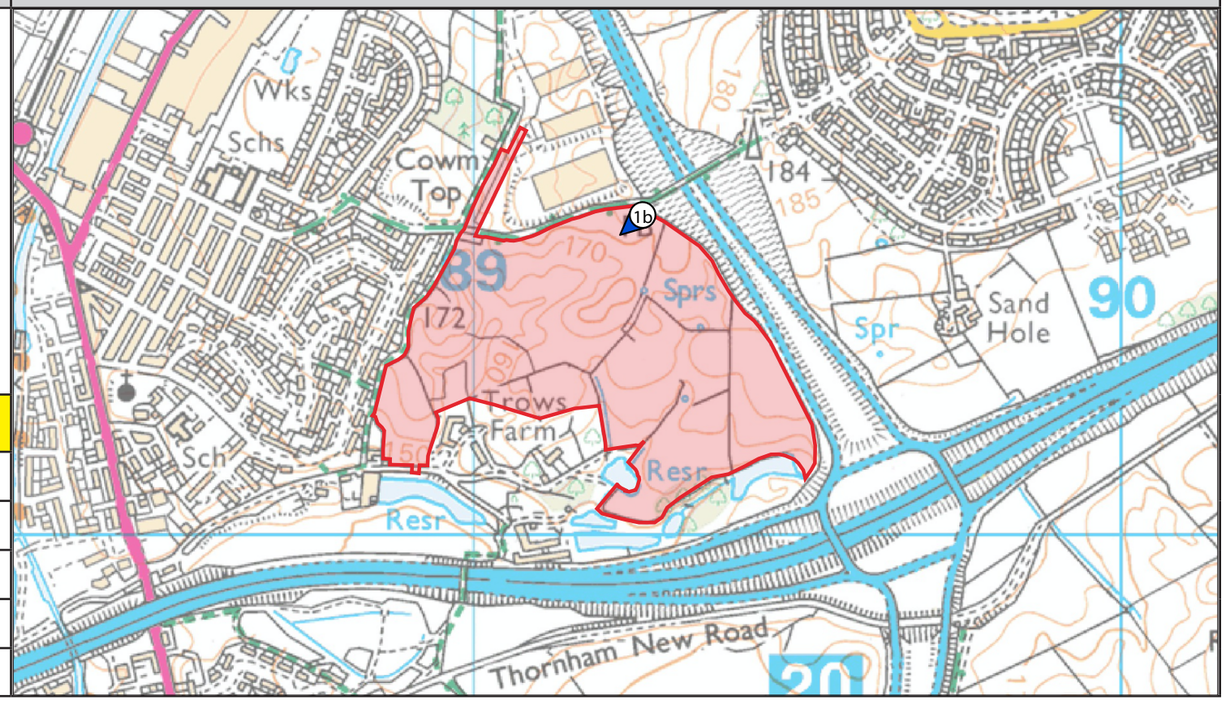
VISUAL BASELINE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION

Located at the same location as Viewpoint 1a, this viewpoint looks across the site in a south westerly direction towards the south west corner of the site. In the foreground of the photograph the site is clearly visible with scattered areas of scrub and occasional trees within the field. The vegetated southern boundary along Trows Lane is visible in the mid ground screening the existing properties and fishing ponds along Trows Lane and the M62 beyond. The topography of the site allows views to extend out towards Manchester City Centre and to the right of photograph Fiddlers Ferry Power Station, Widnes is visible on the horizon. The roofline of some properties along Leander Drive on the western boundary are partially visible to due to the undulating landform.

The introduction of the development will change view in the foreground but due to landform and positioning of the housing long distance views could be retained. The existing vegetated boundaries are to be retained.

LOCATION MAP



VIEWPOINT 1b

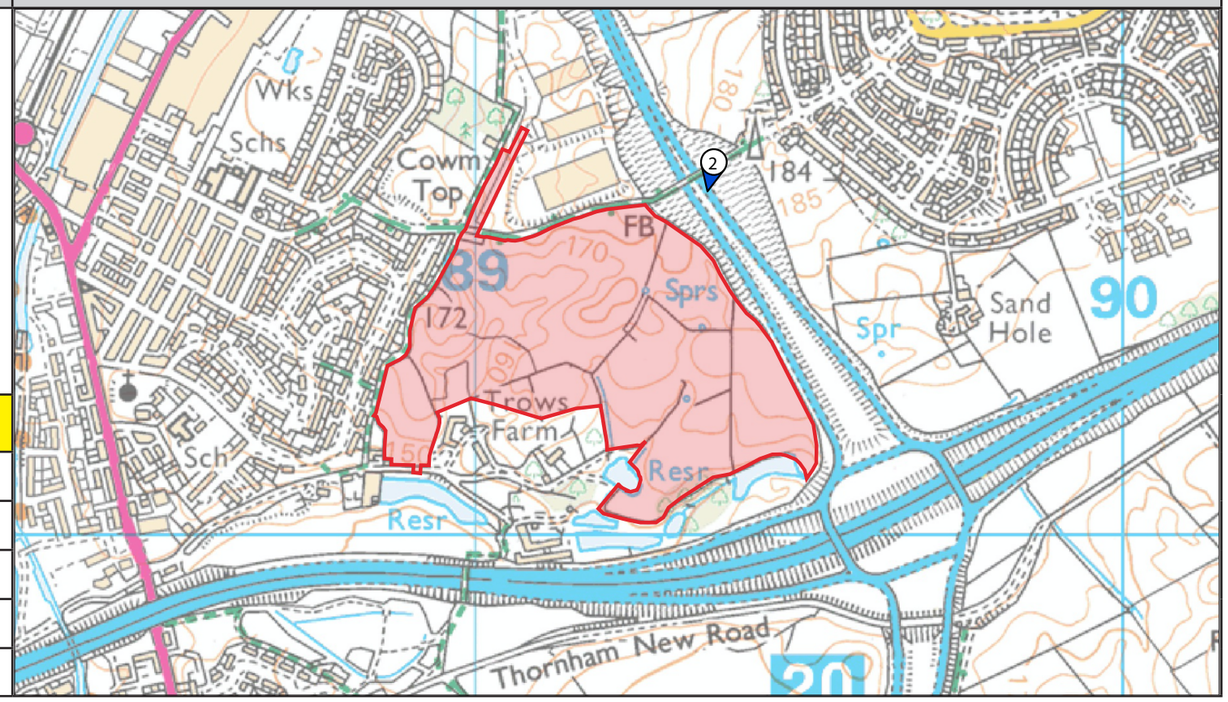
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Cripple Gate Lane
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational / Transport
LOCATION OS GRID	SD 89288 10406
ELEVATION IN METERS	175m
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0m

VISUAL BASELINE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION

This viewpoint is located on the pedestrian Blue Bridge that crosses the A627(M) connecting Cripple Gate Lane and the eastern settlement edge of Castleton with the south western settlement edge of Kirkholt. Looking in a south westerly direction towards the eastern boundary of the site, only a small portion of the site is visible due to the extensive vegetation along the boundary. The proposals intend to retain the boundary vegetation and infill any gaps with native planting which will soften any views of the proposed built form.

LOCATION MAP



VIEWPOINT 2

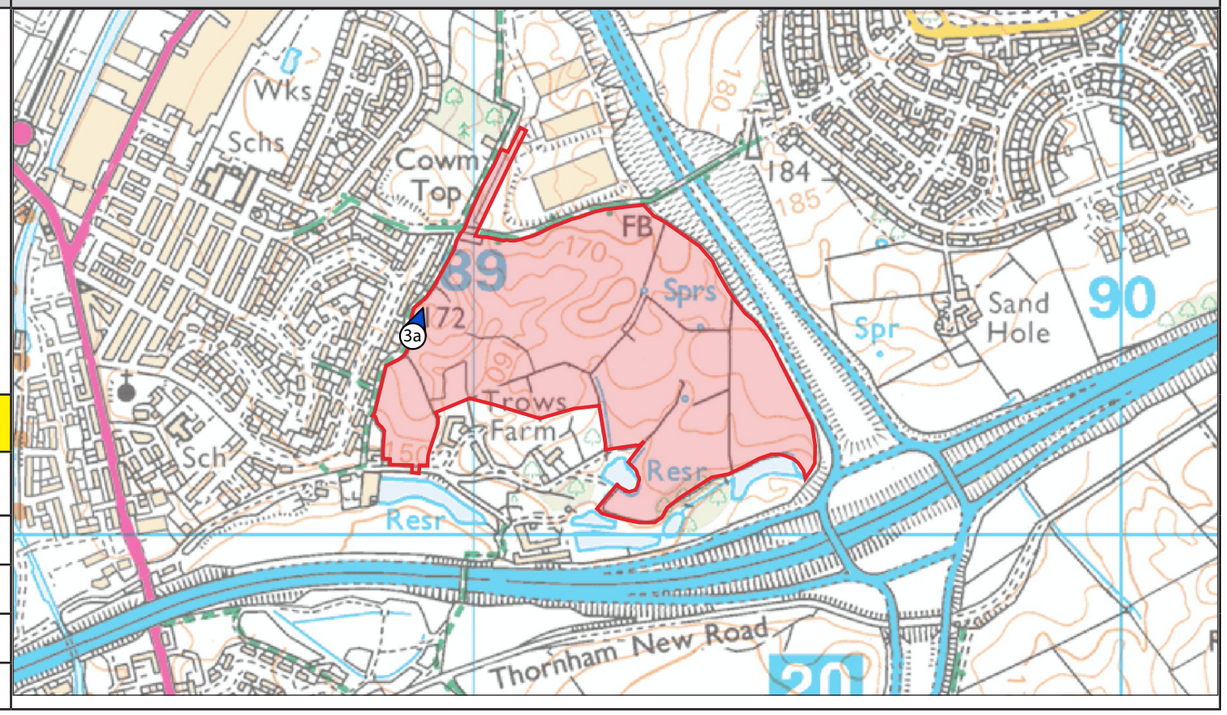
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Blue bridge over the M627(M)
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	SD 89365 10565
ELEVATION IN METERS	180m
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	110m

VISUAL BASELINE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION

This viewpoint is located on the public footpath that runs along the western site boundary along the rear of properties on Leander Drive. The footpath is bound by a poorly maintained post and wire fence and scrub vegetation of various heights and density. The viewpoint is looking in a north / north easterly direction towards the northern portion of the site. Due to the landform and vegetation within the site, views along the northern boundary are screened. The roofline of industrial units is visible above the vegetation. The areas directly adjacent to the footpath is proposed to be a high quality area of public open space beyond which will be the proposed built form which will be soften by hedgerow boundary treatments and street trees.

LOCATION MAP



VIEWPOINT 3a

DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on the footpath along the western boundary at the rear of Leander Drive
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	SD 88905 10315
ELEVATION IN METERS	163m
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	1m

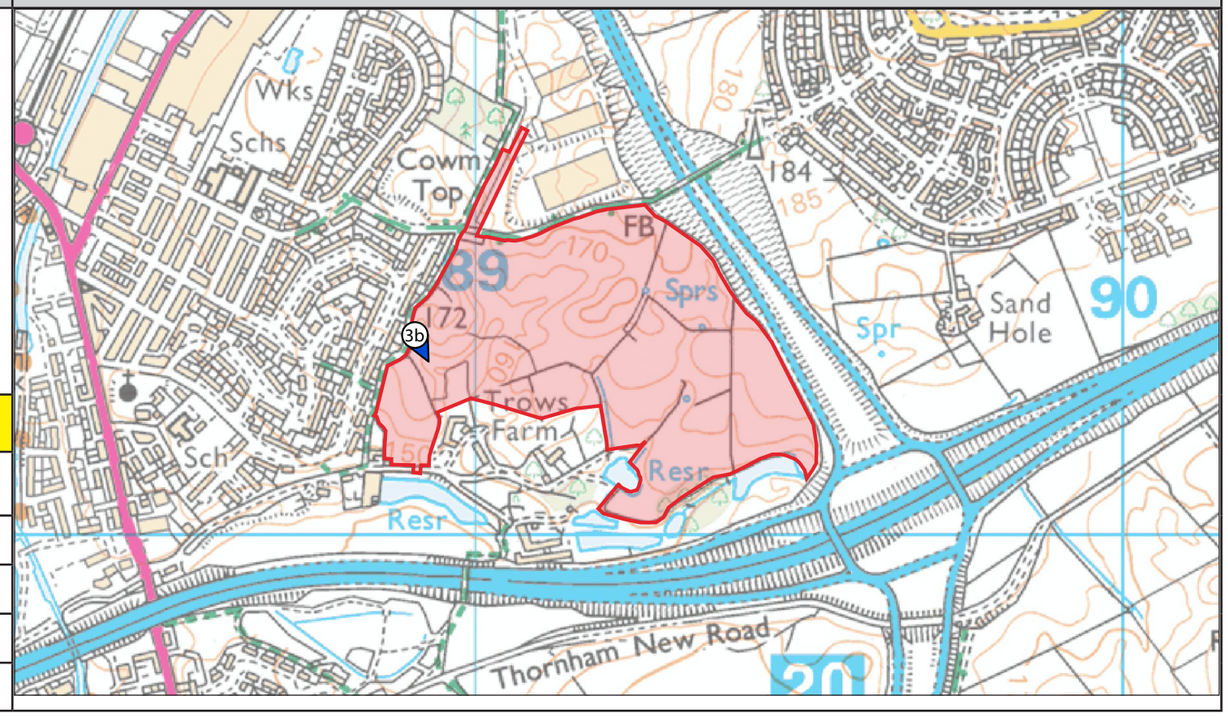
VISUAL BASELINE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION

Located at the same position of Viewpoint 3a on the public footpath along the western boundary, this viewpoint looks in a south easterly direction towards the southern boundary. Areas of scattered scrub are visible throughout the site, the undulating landform and dense vegetation along the southern boundary screen views of Trows Lane, associated properties and the fishing ponds. The M62 and A627(M) are not visible from this location. Views extend out into the wider landscape and Tandle Hill Country Park is visible on the horizon.

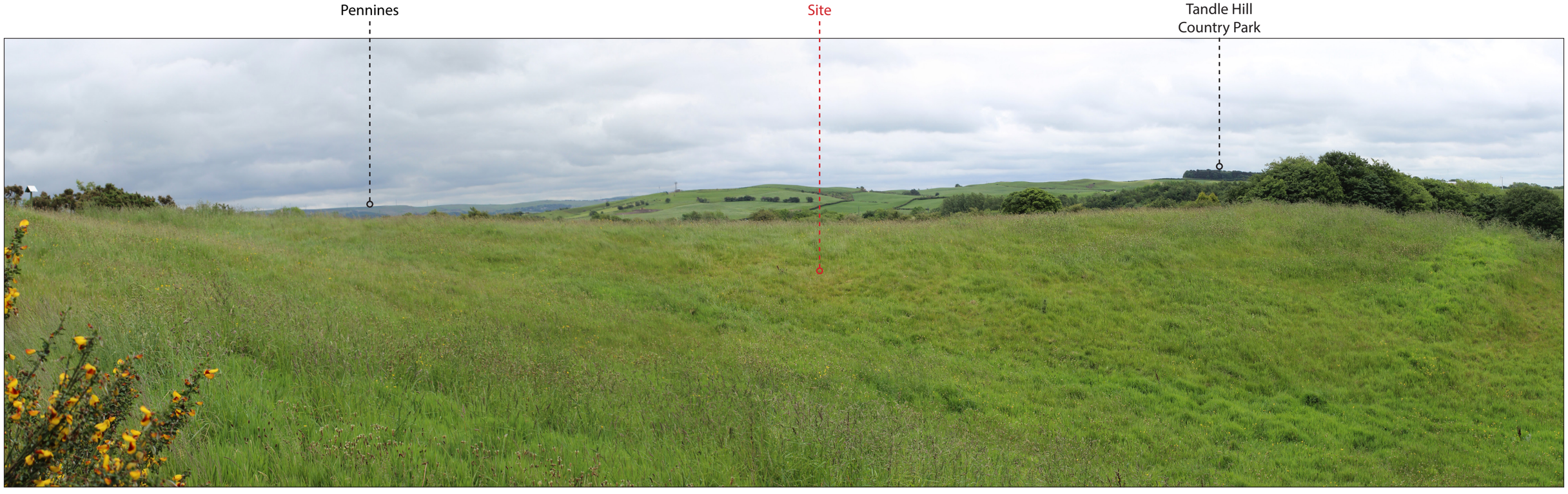
The footpath is to be retained and a large areas of public open space is proposed to run along the entire western boundary. This will soften the view towards the proposed build form which will sit in the mid ground. Utilising the landform should allow the long range views to be retained.

LOCATION MAP



VIEWPOINT 3b

DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on the footpath along the western boundary at the rear of Leander Drive
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	SD 88905 10315
ELEVATION IN METERS	163m
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	1m



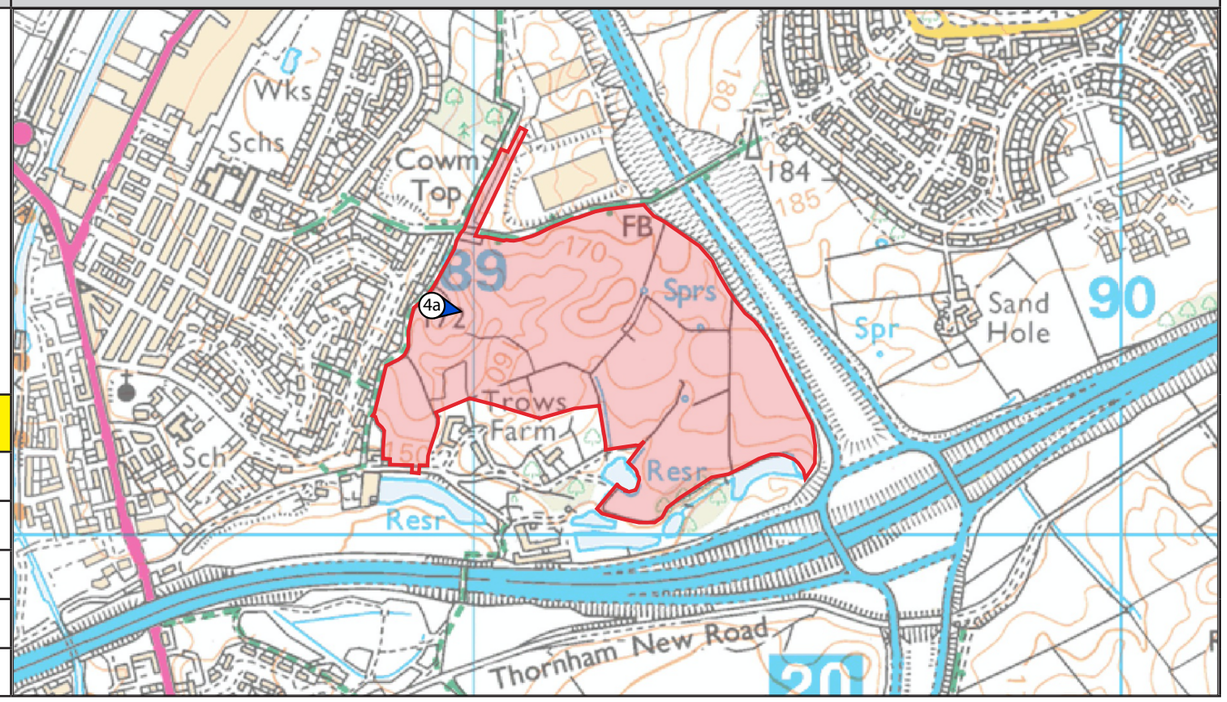
VISUAL BASELINE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION

Located on the footpath that runs along the western boundary, at a point north of Viewpoint 3, this viewpoint looks in an easterly direction across the site. The field in is visible in the foreground however the boundary vegetation and western and southern boundaries are not visible due to the site's topography. The top of areas of scattered scrub are visible within the mid ground. Views extend out into the wider landscape with Tandle Hill County park visible on the horizon in the right of the photograph and out to the Pennines on the left of the photograph.

The proposals seek to have to have a large area of public open space along the western boundary which will help soften views towards any built form, however due to the landform it is likely that only the top floors/rooftops of part of the development would be visible from this location and long distance views could be retained.

LOCATION MAP



VIEWPOINT 4a

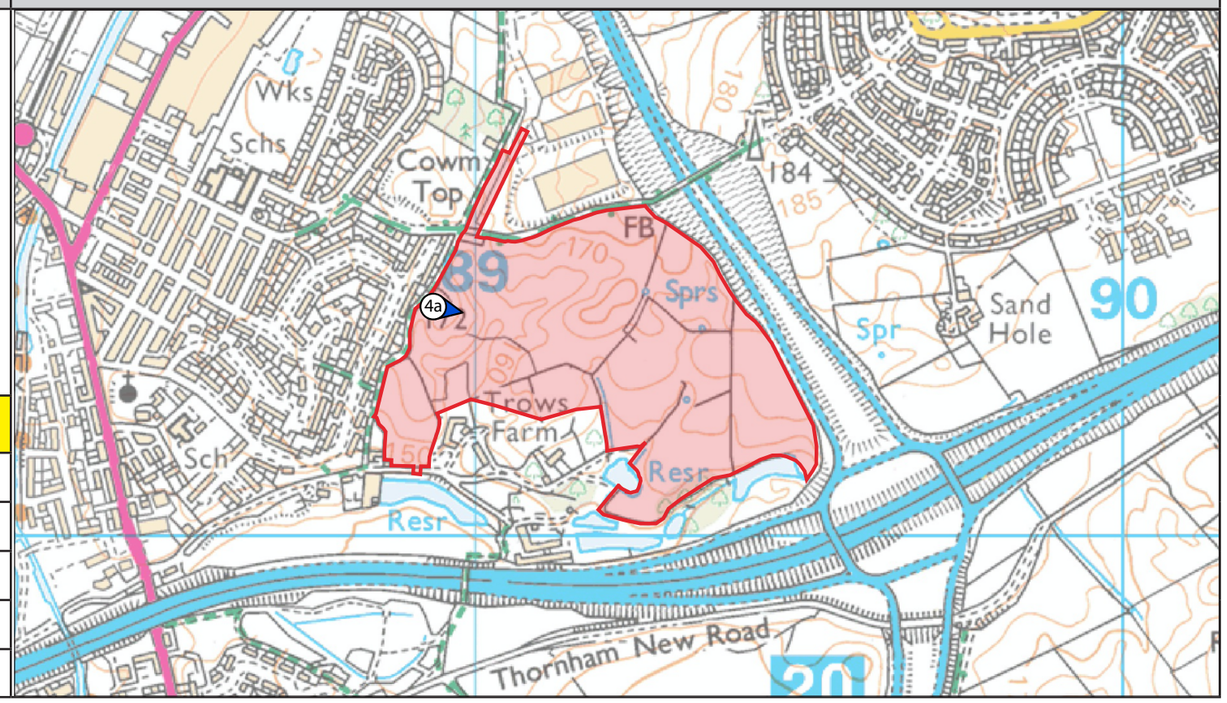
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on the public footpath on the western boundary
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	SD 88920 10351
ELEVATION IN METERS	168m
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0m

VISUAL BASELINE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION

At the same location as Viewpoint 4a, this viewpoint looks in a south westerly direction towards the southern boundary. The footpath is bound by a post and wire fence which is in poor condition and also various rear boundary treatments of the properties on Leander Drive. The proposals seek to retain the footpath and implement a large area of public open space and detention basins in the south west of the site, therefore much of this view will remain unchanged with some of the built form and road infrastructure visible to the left of the photograph. The POS will be soften the view towards the proposed build form.

LOCATION MAP



VIEWPOINT 4b

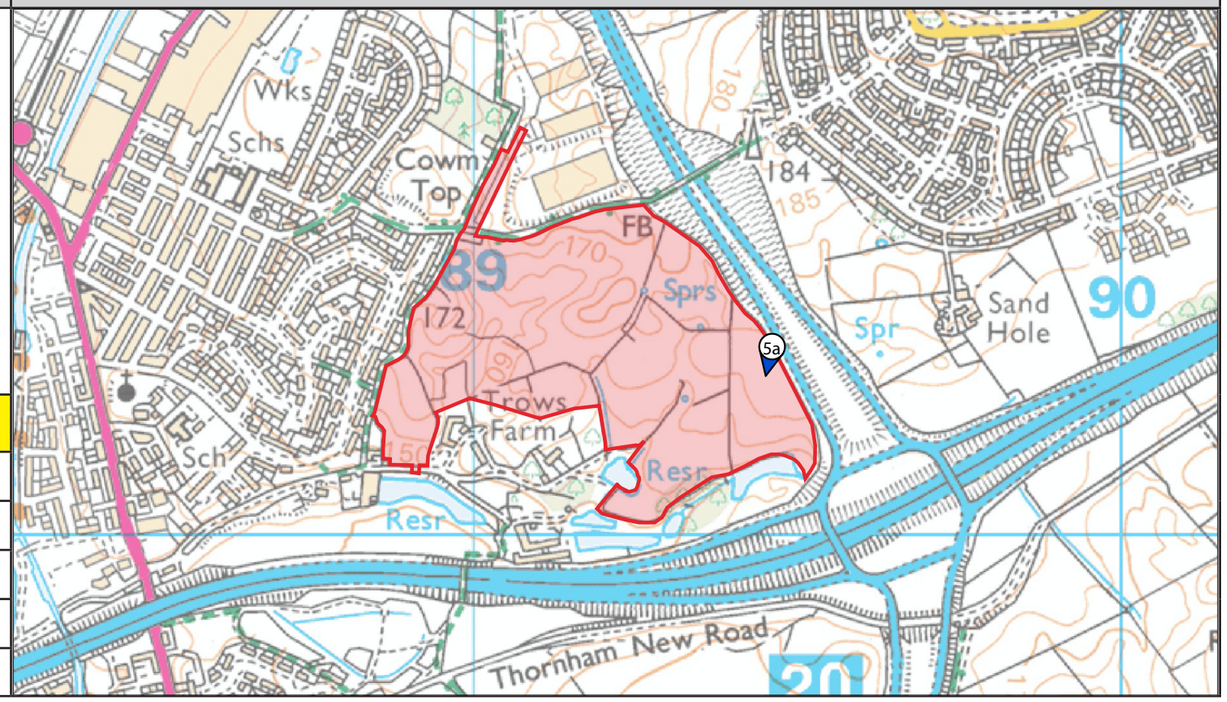
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on the public footpath on the western boundary
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	SD 88920 10351
ELEVATION IN METERS	168m
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0m

VISUAL BASELINE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION

Located midway on the eastern boundary, this viewpoint represents users of the A627(M). At a gap in the boundary vegetation this viewpoint is looking in a south westerly direction towards the southern boundary. As the photograph demonstrates the boundary is heavily vegetated screening views to Trows Lane and M62. The proposals seek to enhance the eastern boundary and infill any gaps in the existing hedgerow which will mitigate the visual effects of the proposed built form within the site.

LOCATION MAP



VIEWPOINT 5a

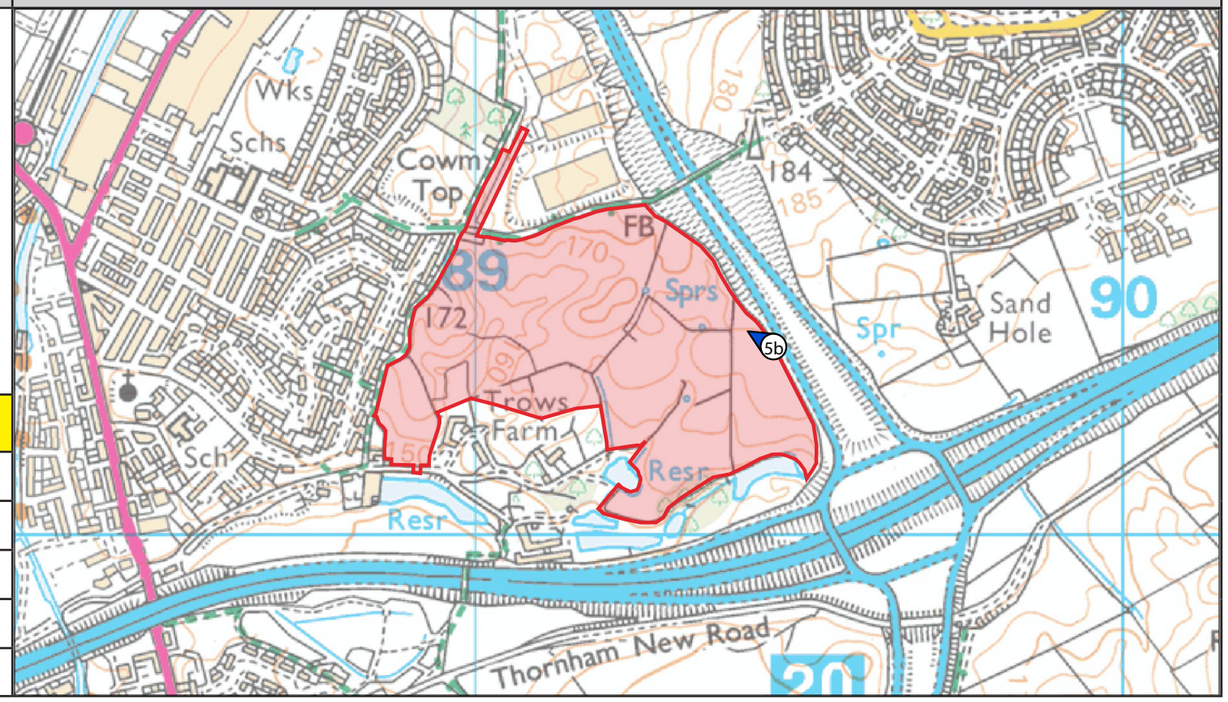
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on the boundary with the A627(M)
RECEPTOR TYPE	Transport
LOCATION OS GRID	SD 89461 10287
ELEVATION IN METERS	171m
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0m

VISUAL BASELINE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION

The viewpoint is located in the same position as Viewpoint 5a but looking in a north westerly direction towards the northern and eastern boundaries. Vegetation within the site and along the boundaries screen views of the eastern boundary and the rear of the properties along Leander Drive. The overhead cables, associated telegraph poles and the roofline of the industrial unit at the end of Cowm Top Lane are visible in the north eastern portion of the site. The photograph demonstrates the vegetated eastern boundary. It is proposed that gaps in the hedgerow will be infilled which will therefore reduce visibility into the site and soften the built form when viewed from the A627(M).

LOCATION MAP



VIEWPOINT 5b

DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on the eastern boundary adjacent to the A627(M).
RECEPTOR TYPE	Transport
LOCATION OS GRID	SD 89461 10287
ELEVATION IN METERS	171m
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0m

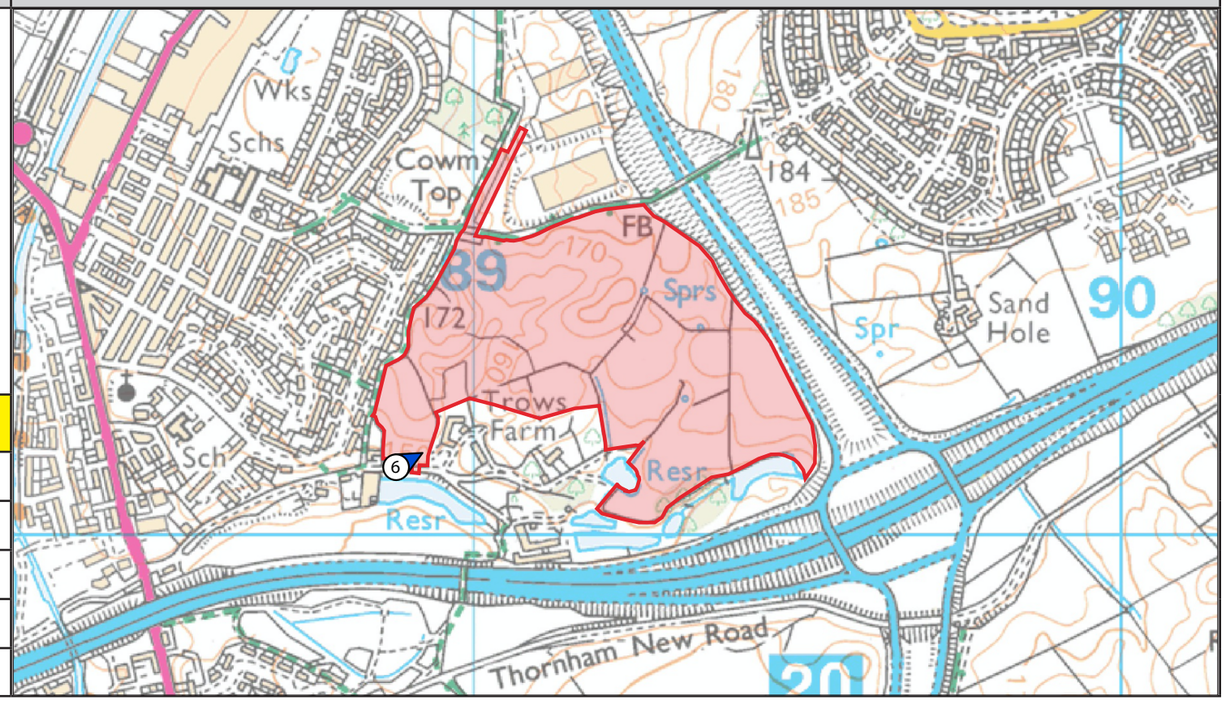
VISUAL BASELINE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION

Viewpoint 6 is located on Trows Lane which runs along the south eastern boundary of the site. Trows Lane leads to Trows Farm, a residential property, fishing ponds and a couple of commercial units. The lane is bound by vegetation at varying degrees of density and maturity. As the photograph demonstrates there are filtered views into the site where there are gaps in the vegetation. The banking along the southern boundary with Trows Lane also restricts views across the site.

The proposals allow for large areas of public open space in the south eastern portion of the site which will allow boundary vegetation to be retained and infilled and enhanced where necessary. Therefore it is unlikely that the built form within the development will be clearly visible from this location. Glimpsed views maybe achieved but they will be softened by the proposed landscape treatments.

LOCATION MAP



VIEWPOINT 6

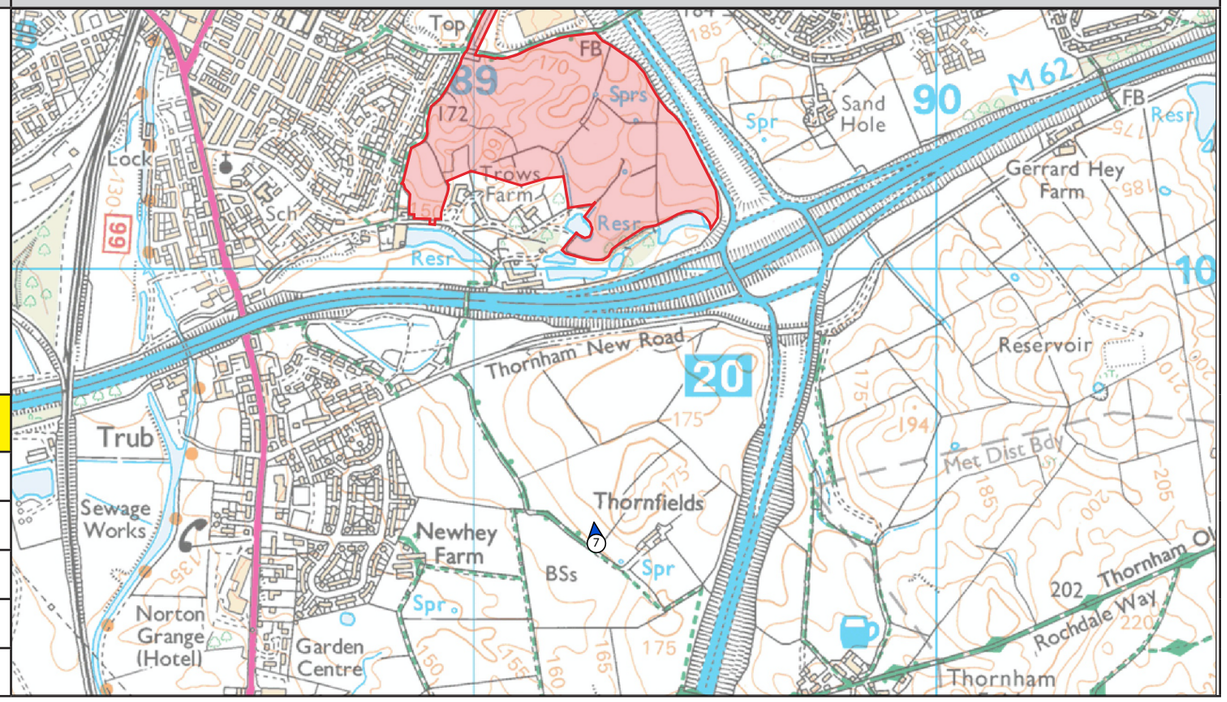
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Trows Lane
RECEPTOR TYPE	Transport
LOCATION OS GRID	SD 88874 10100
ELEVATION IN METERS	152m
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	10m

VISUAL BASELINE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION

Located on a public footpath/track to the south of the site and south of the M62, Viewpoint 7 is looking in a northerly direction towards the site. There are open fields in the foreground of the photograph and long range views extend out towards the Scout Moor Wind Farm. Vegetation along Trows Lane and bounding the M62 restrict views into the site. Landform will allow portions of the proposed development to be visible from this location, however it will be viewed in the context of the existing settlement edge of Castleton and therefore will not be incongruous within the landscape.

LOCATION MAP



VIEWPOINT 7

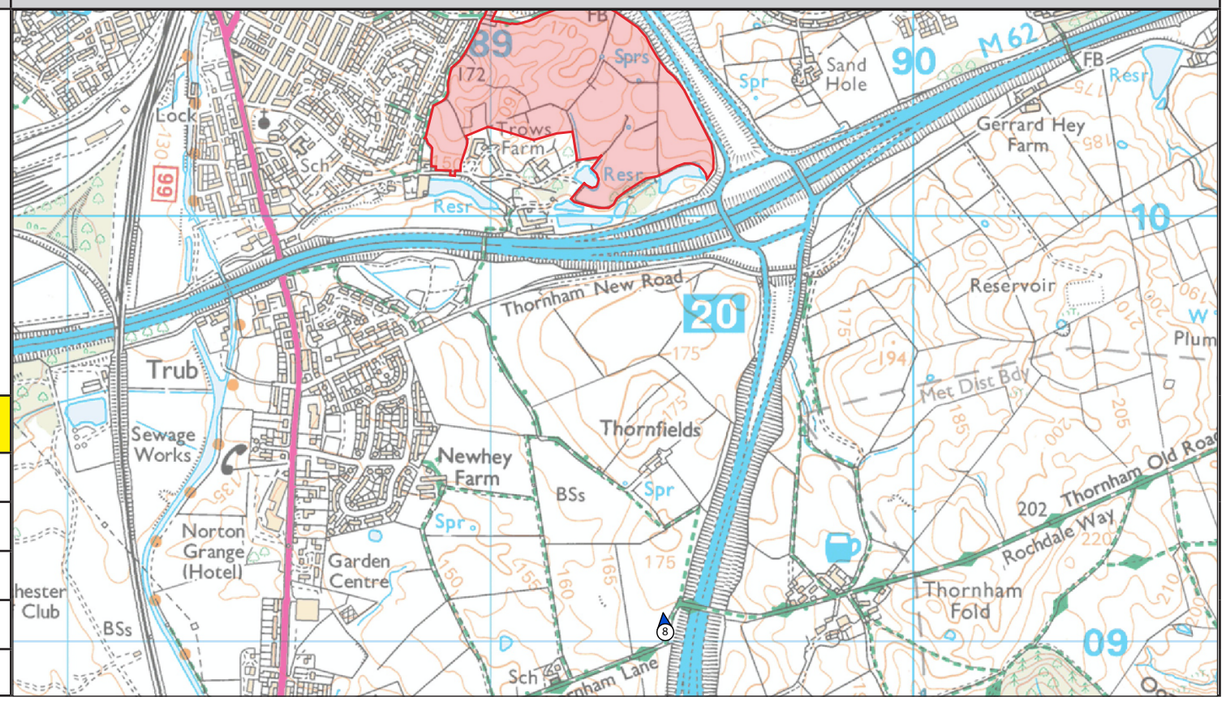
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located public footpath near Thornfields Farm
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	SD 89268 09394
ELEVATION IN METERS	166m
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	625m

VISUAL BASELINE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION

The viewpoint is located on Thornham Lane which also forms part of the Rochdale Way National Trail. Looking in a northerly direction towards the southern boundary of the site, this photograph demonstrates that the site is not visible from this location due to intervening vegetation and the landform within the surrounding landscape. Therefore the proposed development will not alter the view.

LOCATION MAP



VIEWPOINT 8

DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Thornham Lane/ Rochdale Way
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational / Transport
LOCATION OS GRID	SD 89411 08995
ELEVATION IN METERS	168m AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	1.01km

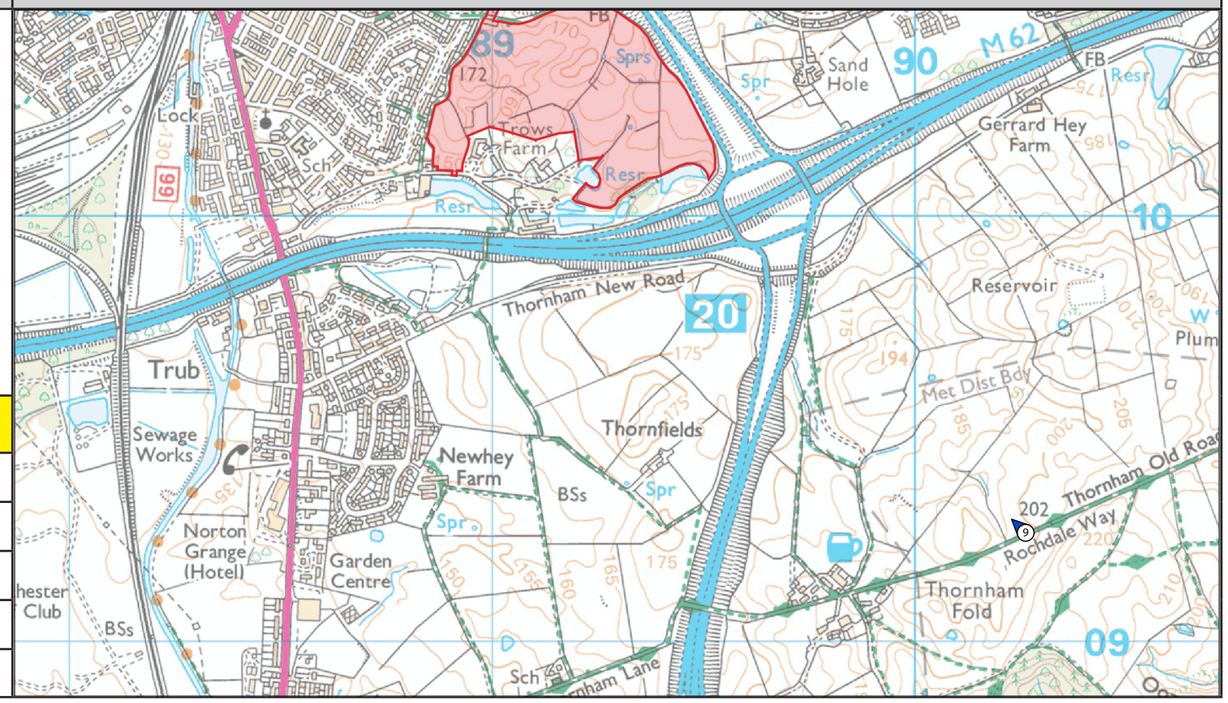
VISUAL BASELINE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION

Viewpoint 9 is located on Thornham Old Road which also forms part of the Rochdale Way National Trail. Looking in a north westerly direction towards the south east of the site. In the foreground of the photograph there are agricultural fields bound by mature hedgerows, part of the site can be seen in the mid ground along with the settlements of Castleton and Rochdale to the right of the photograph. The industrial units along Cowm Top Lane are clearly visible in the middle of the photograph. Views extend out towards the Scout Moor wind Farm and the moors within Rossendale. Vegetation and landform within the intervening landscape and site restrict visibility to all of the site.

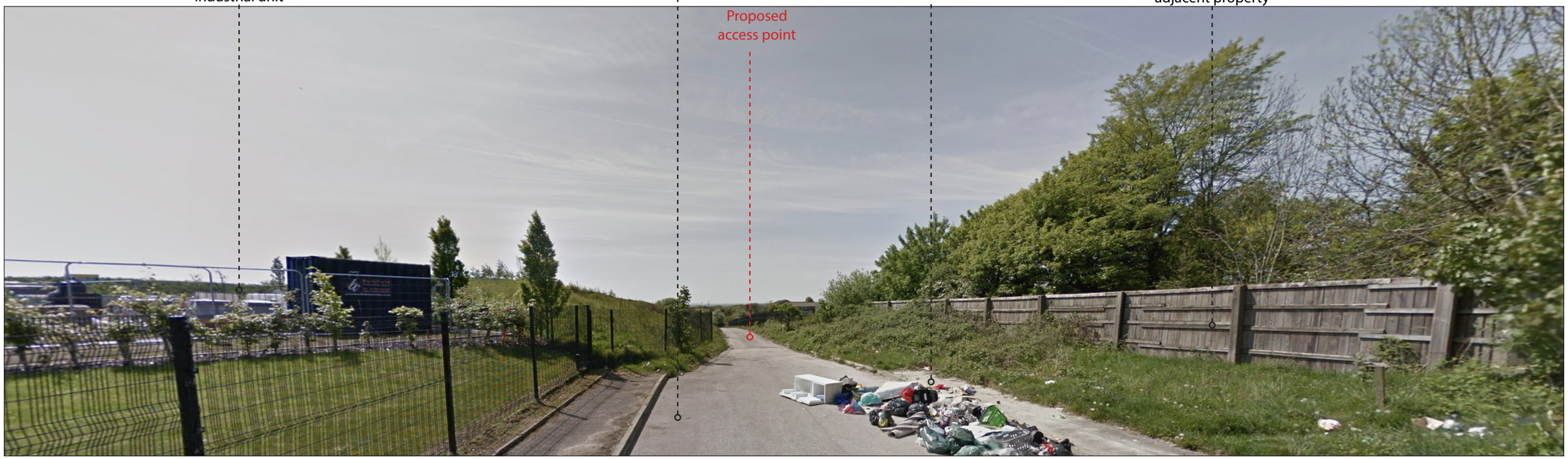
The proposed development will therefore be viewed in context of the existing settlement edge of Castleton and will not be incongruous within the landscape.

LOCATION MAP



VIEWPOINT 9

DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Thornham Old Road / Rochdale Way
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational / Transport
LOCATION OS GRID	SD 90278 09256
ELEVATION IN METERS	198m
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	1.1km



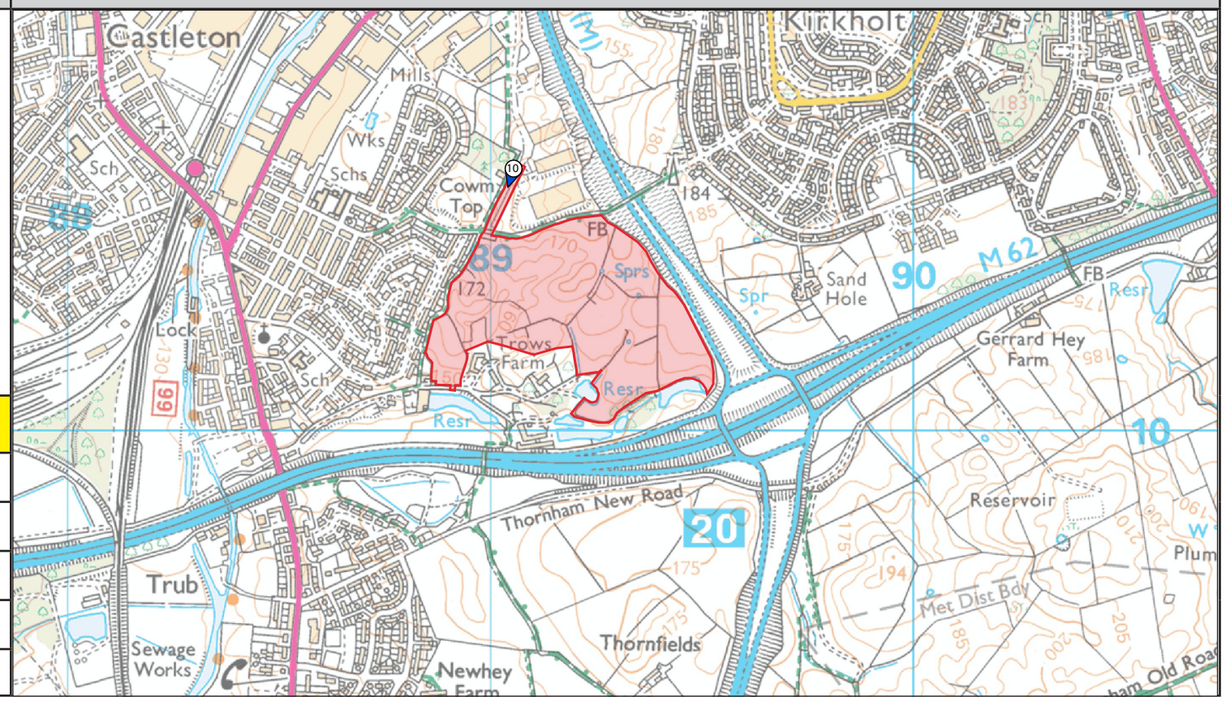
VISUAL BASELINE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION

Viewpoint 10 is located at the end of Cowm Top Lane where it becomes a public byway. It is looking in a south westerly direction towards the proposed entrance to the development. A large industrial unit has been built at the end of Cowm Top Lane and the associated car parking and landscape treatments can be seen to the left of the photograph. Cowm Top Lane is not a through road and as the photo demonstrates is frequented by fly tippers which is typical of the landscape character area. The rear boundary treatments of the property to the right of Cowm Top Lane are a combination of fencing and hedgerow and trees.

The proposed development is unlikely to be visible from this location due to the intervening landform and vegetation and the location of the proposed units.

LOCATION MAP



VIEWPOINT 10

DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Cowm Top Lane / Public footpath
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational / Transport
LOCATION OS GRID	SD 89005 10530
ELEVATION IN METERS	177m AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	20m

Produced by:

Station Hop Studios
815 Stockport Road
Manchester
M19 3BS

0161 238 9138

Info@pgla.co.uk

www. pgla.co.uk