

BROADWAY FARM, BROAD OAK, BOTLEY, HAMPSHIRE

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL WITH IMPACT STATEMENT
OCTOBER 2022

ISSUE SHEET

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

fabrik Chartered Landscape Architects have been appointed by CCW Services Ltd of Broadway Farm, Broad Oak, Botley to carry out a Landscape and Visual Appraisal with Impact Statement (LVAIS) of the Site associated with the proposed warehouse and an ambulance parking area and its surrounding area, in order to consider the likely physical and visual impacts arising as a result of the proposed development. This application also aims to provide landscape betterment to the landscape relative to concealing the existing development within the wider ownership of CCW Services.

The methodology for the LVAIS is based on the ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ (third edition) by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (Routledge, 2013) and has been agreed with the Landscape Officer for Eastleigh Borough Council.

The Site lies within the designated Settlement Gap between Hedge End and Botley, Hampshire in the Eastleigh Local Plan (2016 - 2036). It is not covered by any other landscape designation at the national, regional or local level, nor does it lie within a protected viewing corridor protected by policy. The Site is bound by a deciduous woodland treebelt (also designated at SINC) to the north and east, Broad Oak road / A334 with residential dwellings to the south, warehouses and commercial operational ground to the west. A small ‘gap’ in the northern woodland block occurs due to the electric power cables.

The existing operation of the wider CCW Services is well contained by the surrounding vegetation. Views looking out from the Site to the east are limited to the immediate woodland treebelt to the north and east of the Site; glimpsed and partial views of the fields to the immediate north of the Site occur through the vegetation gap underneath the overhead pylons; views looking out from the Site to the west are limited to the existing warehouse, the built form within the wider operational area of CCW Services its associated dwellings and the short grassland to the immediate west; views looking out from the Site to the south comprise the residential dwellings along Broad Oak / A334, the commercial property for Skoda Dealership and the Fir Tree Farm House at a distance, filtered through the winter vegetation.

Views looking into the Site are limited to the residential receptors and transient receptors from Broad Oak road / A334 and Bridleway 026/17/2 to the south of the Site. However, dwellings along Broad Oak road / A334 often side onto the road, therefore, views of the Site are predicted to be associated with predominantly bedrooms. Those views are often partial and filtered through the winter vegetation. Partial and glimpsed views of the existing operational area and the warehouses of the wider CCW Services occur in the southern portion of Woodhouse Lane, where road side vegetation is absent.

In policy terms, Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) strategic policy S6, Protection of Settlement Gaps states that:

- “1. *Development within a Settlement Gap as set out in the policies map will be permitted provided that:*
- a. *it would not undermine the physical extent and/or visual separation of settlements; and*
 - b. *it would not have an urbanising effect detrimental to:*
 - i. *The character of the countryside; or*
 - ii. *The separate identity of the adjoining settlements.”*

Furthermore, the Site lies within the Settlement Gap 7 - Hedge End and Botley within the Eastleigh Borough Council Countryside Gaps Background Paper (June 2018) as part of the Local Plan examination documents, but it does not lie in the narrowest part of the Gap. The paper describes that: “*The gap between settlements is very fragile as experienced from Broad Oak/A334 and would be seriously undermined by intensification of the existing development immediately adjoining this road corridor, or the removal of associated mature tree cover*”. It concluded that: “*the most vulnerable parts of the gap between the two settlements are the land north and south of the Broad Oak/A334 corridor...Any intensification of built development along the Broad Oak/A334 corridor should be resisted.*”

The sequence of views experienced moving between the settlements within the Settlement Gap on the north side of Broad Oak road / A334 comprises fields, individual dwellings, commercial premises of CCW Services, woodland and fields beyond to the north. Therefore the gap in this location is not a continuous area of countryside free from domestic and commercial visual influences.

Similarly, the sequence of views experienced on the south side of Broad Oak road / A334 comprises a line of individual residential dwellings and fields beyond to the south. Therefore the Settlement Gap on the south side of the road is not continuous countryside free from development.

On its own the Site does not perform a significant visual role in the gap, as demonstrated in the visual assessment, views of the Site are limited and visible in the context of the neighbouring warehouses.

The Site also lies within the Gap Analysis Area I - Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green and sub-area 16 in the Eastleigh Borough Settlement Gap Study (October 2020).

Area 16 is assessed as fulfilling all the criteria of the functions of the Gap, however, the Site itself, has minimal contribution to that, considering the following:

- The Site is significantly enclosed by woodland and existing built form, therefore, it does not contribute to preserving the open nature of the Gap. Furthermore, the proposed development is located in an area that is well contained visually due to the combination of intervening landform, built form or vegetation.
- The sense of separation between the two settlements are defined by its built edge, woodland blocks and landform. The Site does not lie adjacent to the settlement edge, and is readily separated by the woodland block to the north and east, built form to the west and road network to the south. Therefore, the Site does not contribute significantly to maintaining the sense of separation between settlements.
- The proposed built form will intensify the commercial character in the part of the Gap. However, the proposed treebelt and vegetation within the Site and the wider land ownership areas of CCW Services will positively enhance the landscape character in the localised area. Therefore, the proposal contributes to defining the settlement character as the proposals will in time conceal both the existing and proposed built form and associated operations.
- As there is limited intervisibility between the Site and the settlement edges of Hedge End and Botley, the proposals will not contribute to any risk of actual or perceived settlement coalescence.
- Similar to the above, the Site lies in the centre of the Gap and is bound by the physical attributes surrounding the Site. Therefore, the land on its own plays little

role in separation of the settlements.

The Site on its own does not perform a significant part of the Settlement Gap. It forms part of the peripheral area to existing commercial operations. Despite the scale and mass of the warehouses of the CCW Services operating area, this area and the Site forms a discrete parcel within the Settlement Gap and does not connect physically with the fields outside the Site.

The proposals include the erection of a warehouse, similar to the existing warehouses within the CCW Services Site, a hard surface parking area to the northwest of the Site and along the perimeters of the eastern section of Site on a mound. To the north of the Site, a native treebelt and individual tree planting filling in the vegetation gaps along the northern perimeter with native hedges to the southern perimeter of this section of the Site. A 20m SINC woodland buffer is proposed to the north and east of the Site, where the existing tarmac will be reversed back to grassland, native hedgerow and shrub planting, with individual trees scattered across the area, together with an attenuation basin. Furthermore, a 15m wide native treebelt with understorey planting is proposed adjacent to Broad Oak road / A334.

With the development in place, the distinct character and amenity of this part of the physical Gap between Hedge End and Botley will remain; retaining the sequence of fields, dwellings, commercial, fields, woodland and therefore all of the current elements of the gap and retaining the overall dimension of the Gap between Hedge End and Botley. These two settlements will not coalesce through the implementation of the proposals. Although there will be additional built form within the Gap, the implementation of tree planting will improve the overall landscape character in the localised area and in time provide a physical and visual enhancement to the landscape and minimise the impact of the existing buildings and operations within the wider land ownership.

The proposed warehouse and the parked vehicles are anticipated to be screened from the settlement edge of Hedge End, along Woodhouse Lane, due to the dense woodland block to the north and east of the Site. The proposed treebelt with whip planting along the northern edge of the Site will gap up the existing vegetation, which is fragmented. Upon maturity, the proposed planting will effectively conceal the existing built form and storage areas in views from the north, providing a visual enhancement to the proposed car parking area in the long term.

Views of the proposed treebelt and understorey whip planting along the southern edge of the eastern section of the Site will be visible along Broad Oak road / A334, the thoroughfare between the settlement of Hedge End and Botley, which will improve the character and amenity in this localised area. Therefore, with the development in place, the character and amenity of the perceived Gap between Hedge End and Botley will not be altered. The existing elements will remain, including the fields, the individual residential dwellings and the commercial premisses. The visual separation between the two will continue to be retained and improved by the proposed treebelt vegetation in time.

In policy terms, the proposed development will not diminish the existing sense of visual separation of settlements. Whilst there are buildings present within the gap, there is limited intervisibility between the existing settlement edges. With the development in place, the distinct character and amenity of this part of the physical Gap between Hedge End and Botley will remain and retain the sequence of fields,

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

dwellings, commercial, fields, woodland and therefore all of the current elements of the gap, retaining the overall dimension of the gap between Hedge End and Botley. These two settlements will not coalesce through the implementation of the proposals. Although additional built form will be added within the Gap, the implementation of tree planting will improve the overall landscape character in the localised area and in time provide physical and visual enhancement to the landscape and minimise the impact of the existing buildings and operations within the wider land ownership.

The proposed built form is set back from Broad Oak road / A334 to the south and visually concealed by the existing woodland block to the north and east, the existing warehouses to the west. Therefore, the visual separation identity of Hedge End and Botley will remain unaltered.

In conclusion, it is considered that the Site is readily influenced by the adjacent built form. A sensitive approach to the location and use of façade materials for the warehouse and the proposed treebelt planting to the northern and southern edge of the Site, together with the 20m wide landscape buffer along the northern and eastern edges of the Site, will create a positive response to the Gap and assist to conceal both the existing and proposed developments and provide landscape and visual betterment from the baseline situation overall. Furthermore, the proposed vegetation will not alter the visual, perceptual and physical coalescence of the two settlements.



FIGURE 2.1 – EXTRACT FROM ORDNANCE SURVEY PLAN SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE SITE (FABRIK, 2022)

INTRODUCTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

fabrik Chartered Landscape Architects have been appointed by CCW Services Ltd of Broadway Farm, Broad Oak, Botley to carry out a Landscape and Visual Appraisal with Impact Statement (LVAIS) of the Site associated with the proposed warehouse and an ambulance parking area and its surrounding area, in order to consider the likely physical and visual impacts arising as a result of the proposed development. The existing tarmac area to the north eastern corner of the Site will be removed and converted to a semi-natural landscape buffer in relation to the Site of Importance Nature Conservation (SINC). This application also aims to provide landscape betterment to the landscape relative to concealing the existing development within the wider ownership of CCW Services.

This LVAIS sets out landscape policy specifically focusing on the Settlement Gap (together with any related policy on ecological and heritage assets) and any supporting guidance documents / informatives and then goes on to describe the constituent baseline landscape elements (the existing geology, soils, landform, drainage, vegetation cover, land use, settlement, the history of the landscape and the way that landscape is experienced) which together inform landscape character, landscape condition and value. The LVAIS then describes the baseline character and amenity of the identified visual receptors (considering the visual envelope, the different groups of people, places affected, the nature of the view and the visual amenity). Any mitigation measures and assumptions which have informed the assessment of effects are set out after the description of the proposed development. The effects of the proposed development are then considered against each of the landscape and visual receptors relative to the operational stage of the project. The penultimate section of this LVAIS comprises a landscape policy assessment.

The location of the Site is shown on the plan opposite. The red line area extends to 1.25ha.

The methodology for the LVAIS is based on the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (third edition) by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (Routledge, 2013). A full methodology is set out at Appendix 1 and has been agreed with Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Officer.

2.2 DESKTOP RESEARCH

The desktop survey carried out as part of the LVAIS included the review of Ordnance Survey maps, interactive maps, aerial photography, published landscape character assessment documents, planning policy and the emerging development proposals. The extent of the baseline and therefore the impact appraisal is broadly defined by the Zone of Theoretical Visual Influence (ZTVI) as determined by the initial desk study and verified in the field and therefore extends to 1km from the centre of the Site.

The desk top assessment also identifies any likely changes to the current baseline situation which are likely to be in place prior to the proposed development proceeding.

2.3 FIELD WORK

The field work was carried out in January, March and August 2022 and recorded the existing landscape elements within the Site; the contextual landscape elements; and identified a series of key visual receptors. The visual assessment element includes a photographic survey of the Site taken from a series of representative key views, chosen to represent a range of locations including both public and private views, distances and directions around the Site. The weather conditions and camera lense were also recorded.

2.4 OFFICER’S COMMENTS

A planning application (reference number: F/22/93195) was submitted in relation to the Site for the construction of a warehouse for storage and distribution (Class B8) together with a parking apron for first response vehicles and ancillary works. Two sets of comments have been received from the Eastleigh Borough Development Management Consultant, both dated 28th July 2022, during the determination period. Responses to each of the comments are set out as follows:

First set of comments:

- I note that the previous application F/21/91859 was withdrawn. I cannot see any significant changes to the current proposals from the previous scheme, so I assume this new application is merely to submit additional information. Given the lack of substantive change to the proposals from the withdrawn application, I have to conclude that the previous landscape objections to the proposals remain valid.*

In response: In comparison with the previous application F/21/91859, a significant number of landscape measures have been proposed within the Site. These include native hedges to the eastern and northern sections of the Site; treebelt planting along the northern edge of the Site supplementing the existing field boundary vegetation; a treebelt along the southern edge of the Site along Broad Oak road / A334; and a 20m wide landscape buffer to the existing woodland / SINC. These measures will create a positive response to the Gap and will assist in concealing both the existing and proposed development, providing landscape and visual betterment from the baseline situation overall.

- The principal landscape objection is that the site is within designated Countryside and a settlement Gap as identified in the adopted Local Plan. Any development within these areas should be resisted as it is erosive and counter to Policy. Any expansion to the east of the existing boundary hedge will diminish the Gap and have an urbanising impact. Whilst I agree with Fabrics statement that '... this part of the gap along the road corridor of Broad Oak is not pristine rural countryside either side, which contains low density ribbon development comprising dwellings and commercial premises.' this does not provide sufficient justification for a proposal which will further diminish the Gap. Indeed, the historic erosion of the Gap by piecemeal development makes it even more important to resist further diminution of the Gap.*

In response: Strategic policy S6 - Protection of Settlement Gaps, within Eastleigh Borough Council's Local Plan (2016 - 2036) identifies that development within the Gap will be permitted provided that it would not undermine the physical and visual

separation of settlements, and would not have an urbanising effect. Proposals should enhance the function of the Gap.

With the development in place, the distinct character and amenity of this part of the physical Gap between Hedge End and Botley will remain. The sequence of fields, dwellings, commercial uses and woodland will be retained, preserving the overall character of the Gap and preventing coalescence between Hedge End and Botley.

The proposed built form is set back from Broad Oak Road (A334) to the south and is visually concealed to the north and east by the existing woodland block, and to the west by the existing warehouses. In time, the proposed car parking area will be wholly screened by the proposed treebelt to the north of the Site, the new hedges to the south of the northern parcel and the existing vegetation to the south of the wider CCW Services. Therefore, the visual separation between Hedge End and Botley will remain unaltered.

The existing character of the Site is influenced by the adjacent built form. A sensitive approach to the location, orientation and use of façade materials for the warehouse, along with the proposed treebelt planting to the northern edge of the Site and the southern edge of eastern section of the Site, will create a positive response to the Gap and will assist in concealing both the existing and proposed developments, providing landscape and visual betterment from the baseline situation overall. The implementation of tree planting will improve the overall landscape character in the local area; will, in time, provide physical and visual enhancement to the landscape; and will minimise the effects of the existing buildings and operations within the wider land ownership. Therefore, the proposals will not result in the visual nor physical coalescence of the two settlements.

- Increased pressure for future expansion of development to the south and east of the proposed warehouse which would further diminish the Gap.*

In response: The current edges of the Settlement Gap are defined by the residential dwellings and road networks to the east of Hedge End and to the west of Botley. The two settlements are physically separated by a series of fields, with boundary vegetation. Field boundary vegetation provides visual separation between the two settlements. Similar to the point made above, with the proposed warehouse in place, the character and amenity of this part of the physical Gap between Hedge End and Botley will be retained. The Gap is characterised by the sequence of fields, dwellings, commercial uses and woodland, which will remain.

- Possible impacts on the adjacent Ancient Woodland SINC.*

In response: The existing tarmac car parking apron will be removed and replaced with a 20m wide landscape buffer the north and east of the Site, comprising native hedgerow / shrub planting, individual trees and rough grass, effectively mitigating any effects on the SINC arising from the proposed development.

- Visual impact as the proposed warehouse is on raised ground (see sections within Fabrik LDAS)*

In response: The proposed warehouse lies at a similar surface level to the existing warehouses nearby. The visual baseline demonstrates that the existing warehouses

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are predominantly truncated in views from the south towards the Site by a combination of vegetation and built form. There are partial, glimpsed views of the existing warehouses from Woodhouse Lane across the fields, but limited to the local area, where vegetation gaps occur. The proposed treebelt to the north of the Site will screen the proposals in time.

- Deliverability of proposed screen and hedge planting. The photograph of the existing hedge (in the Boyle & Summers DAS) does not demonstrate a serious commitment to effective planting in the past. This planting is in very poor condition.*

In response: The proposed planting is outlined in drawing D3150-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-1000, D3150-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-1001 and D3150-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-1002. The planting specification, including planting selections, trees pits, planting guidelines, aftercare and maintenance are outlined in drawing D3150-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-1000. A further maintenance and management schedule will be developed at the detailed stage.

- I could not find any detailed planting proposals for the site. These are required at this stage, and should not be Conditioned, since bolstering screening of the development is a fundamental part of the proposal.*

In response: The proposed planting is outlined in drawings D3150-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-1000, D3150-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-1001 and D3150-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-1002, which are submitted as part of this application.

- I concur with the Ecology Officer’s observation regarding the extension of hardstanding in the NE corner of the site (apparently undertaken without planning approval) and its adverse impact on the adjacent Ancient woodland. This also diminishes the Gap, and I would support reinstatement of this area to its previous state.*

In response: This application includes the removal of the majority of the existing hardstanding in the NE corner of the Site, to be replaced with a 20m wide landscape buffer offset from the existing woodland / SINC. The landscape treatment within this area includes a 3-5m wide native hedgerow and shrub planting, individual trees and rough grassland. These measures will mitigate any harm arising from the development to the existing woodland.

Second set of comments - LVAIS Part 1

- The LVIAS is a comprehensive document, but not the easiest to decipher, as it has been split into different sections. In places the overlap and cross-referencing is difficult to follow.*

In response: The document was split to facilitate submission, in response to the file size required to upload planning applications to the planning portal. In this submission, the file will be split into chapters wherever possible, so that it is easier to navigate.

- Unless I have missed something, I could not locate all the viewpoint photographs as Appendix 2 Photos. Part 1 includes viewpoints 1-4, while Appendix 2 Photos Part 2 covers Viewpoints 12-17. I could not locate viewpoints 5-11? However, I did locate the most prominent viewpoint montages (noted as agreed with the Landscape Officer) Viewpoints 2, 16 & 17.*

In response: Similar to the previous point, this new submission will include all viewpoints in the appendix to improve legibility.

- A section of the Countryside Gaps background paper is quoted, and I have highlighted in red sections,that in my view, are pertinent to this application: Furthermore, the Site lies within the Settlement Gap 7 - Hedge End and Botley within the Eastleigh Borough Council Countryside Gaps Background Paper (June 2018) as part of the Local Plan examination documents, but it does not lie in the narrowest part of the Gap. The paper describes that: “The gap between settlements is very fragile as experienced from Broad Oak/A334 and would be seriously undermined by intensification of the existing development immediately adjoining this road corridor, or the removal of associated mature tree cover”. It concluded that: “the most vulnerable parts of the gap between the two settlements are the land north and south of the Broad Oak/A334 corridor...Any intensification of built development along the Broad Oak/A334 corridor should be resisted.”*

In response: Despite the wider CCW Services immediately adjoining Broad Oak Road (A334), the proposed warehouse is set back from the road corridor and visually concealed by the existing woodland block to the north and east, and the existing warehouses to the west. The only proposal along this road corridor is tree planting with understorey whip planting, which will make a positive contribution to the local landscape. The character and amenity of this part of the physical Gap between Hedge End and Botley will be retains. The Gap is characterised by the sequence of fields, dwellings, commercial uses and woodland, which will remain.

- ‘The sense of separation between the two settlements are defined by its built edge, woodland blocks and landform’. I disagree with this statement as it implies only woodland blocks contribute to the ‘sense of separation’. Open fields, such as this site, are another significant contributor to the sense of separation within a Gap.*

In response: Whilst fields do form part of the Site, these are not typical of the open fields found in the wider countryside. They are readily influenced by the existing industrial development within the wider CCW Services and visually concealed by the woodland to the north and east of the Site, vegetated banks to the south along the road corridor and the field boundary trees to the north and west. The proposed treebelt will further screen the proposals. Therefore, the proposed development will retain the existing gap in terms of the sense of separation between the two settlements.

- ‘The proposed built form will intensify the commercial character in the part of the Gap. However, the proposed tree belt and vegetation within the Site and the wider land ownership areas of CCW Services will positively enhance the landscape character in the localised area. Therefore, the proposal contributes to defining the settlement character as the proposals will in time conceal both the existing and proposed built form and associated operations.’ It is interesting to note that the report accepts that the proposed built form will intensify the commercial character of the site. This is something, as noted above, that the Gaps background paper states should be resisted. Although the proposed planting may ‘positively enhance the landscape character’, I question how deliverable the majority of the suggested planting is, bearing in mind it is outside the application boundary? In addition, the condition and quality of previously implemented planting already on CCW land, does not set the most encouraging precedent for delivery of further successful planting.*

In response: It is acknowledged that the proposed built form will intensify the commercial character of the Site. However, the effects are limited to the character of the Site and will not affect the wider context, as the proposals are set back from Broad Oak Road (A334).

The application boundary has now been extended to cover all the landscape proposals, including the proposed treebelt planting along the northern edge of the Site, the SINC buffer to the north and east of the Site and the treebelt planting along Broad Oak road / A334. The planting standards are specified in drawing D3150-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-1000 to D3150-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-1002, and guided by the specifications. Detailed planting proposals will be developed at the next stage.

- ‘Similar to the above, the Site lies in the centre of the Gap and is bound by the physical attributes surrounding the Site. Therefore, the land on its own plays little role in separation of the settlements.’ It may be that the land on its own plays ‘little role’ in the separation of the settlements, but it does play SOME role contributing to the wider physical separation of settlements. If the site is developed it will inevitably lead to a diminishing of the Gap, however small.*

In response: The Site is not an open field and includes areas which are previously developed. The grassland does not connect physically with the fields outside the Site, being separated by vegetation. The Site is relatively enclosed by the woodland block to the immediate east and north, and by the existing warehouses to the west. The character and amenity of the Site is heavily influenced by the existing commercial use of the wider CCW Services, the busy thoroughfare of Broad Oak Road (A334) and the commercial premises nearby. The landscape proposals will create a positive response to the Gap and will assist in concealing both the existing and proposed development, providing landscape and visual betterment from the baseline situation overall. With the development in place, the character and amenity of this part of the physical Gap between Hedge End and Botley will be retained. The Gap is characterised by the sequence of fields, dwellings, commercial uses and woodland, which will remain.

- ‘With the development in place, the distinct character and amenity of this part of the physical Gap between Hedge End and Botley will remain.’ I disagree. The character of the physical gap is not dependant on whether it can be seen from the public realm or not. The fact is, the proposal will see an open field replaced with a large warehouse, thus diminishing the Gap.*

In response: As previous stated, the Site is not a typical open field found in the countryside. It is relatively enclosed by the woodland block to its immediate east and north and by the existing warehouses to the west. The character and amenity of the Site is readily influenced by the existing commercial use of the wider CCW Services, the busy thoroughfare of Broad Oak Road (A334) and the commercial premises nearby. The visual envelop of the proposed built form is limited. The proposed landscape measures will further screen both the existing and the proposed built form.

- ‘Therefore, with the development in place, the character and amenity of the perceived Gap between Hedge End and Botley will not be altered. The existing elements will remain, including the fields, the individual residential dwellings and the commercial premises. The visual separation between the two will continue to be retained and improved by the proposed tree belt vegetation in time.’ The ‘existing elements’ will remain but will be reduced in extent. Part of an open field will be lost to development. There is insufficient detail on the proposed planting and it’s*

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deliverability to state the visual separation will be retained and improved.

In response: Part of the grassland will be lost to development. However, it is not typical of the open fields found in the countryside. The Site is heavily influenced by the commercial development within the wider CCW Services and does not connect physically with the fields outside the Site, being separated by vegetation. Again, the planting proposals can be found in drawing D3150-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-1000 to D3150-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-1002.

Second set of comments - LVAIS Part 2

- Figure 4.5 - looking at this plan, with selected widths of the Settlement Gap indicated, the Gap is narrow (under 1km wide) and as such, resisting any further diminishing of the Gap is important.

In response: The proposed built form lies within the existing CCW Services and in the centre of the Gap. With the development in place, the commercial character of this part of the Gap will remain and the distance between the two settlements will be retained.

- Item 4.3.5 The role of the Site within the settlement gap

Although the report says the site does not form a significant part of the Gap, there can be no doubt the site does form 'a part' of the Gap. Bearing in mind the already diminished character of the Gap, any remaining open land contributes to the Gap as a whole, and further loss should be resisted.

'Despite the scale and mass of the warehouses of the CCW Services operating area, this area and the Site forms a discrete parcel within the Settlement Gap'. The argument appears to be that if the site is a well screened 'parcel' of land it does not contribute to the Gap. I disagree. Just because the site cannot be seen, does not mean it does not physically contribute to the Gap.

In response: The proposed development within the Site will not diminish the Gap in terms of the physical and visual separation between the two settlements, as justified above.

Second set of comments - LVAIS Part 3

- This part of the report focuses on the key views, especially View 2 from Woodhouse Lane from the North and Viewpoints 16 & 17 from the existing bridleway to the south of the site.

I accept the views are an accurate representation of the on-ground situation. Viewpoint 16 appears to have the most open glimpses of the new warehouses, and as such will have some impact on the wider scene.

Mitigation relies primarily on planting that is offsite (although on land within the applicant's ownership). There is insufficient detail on this planting or a programme of implementation to assess if this might effectively screen views long-term. We would need legally binding guarantees this planting would be delivered, and further work is required to ensure this planting would be implemented professionally and maintained to ensure long-term establishment.

In response: The application boundary has now been extended to cover all the landscape proposals, including the proposed treebelt planting along the northern edge of the Site, the SINC buffer to the north and east of the Site and the treebelt planting along Broad Oak road / A334. The planting standards are specified in drawing D3150-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-1000 to D3150-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-1002, and guided by the specifications. Detailed planting proposals will be developed in the next stage. Planting outside the application boundary could be agreed by condition.

- Item 7.6 Materials - I would recommend dark grey cladding (not green as noted) is specified as this will be more recessive in views.

In response: This has now been addressed.

- Item 9.2 Effects on landscape receptors

I disagree with the statement 'With the development in place, the distinct character and amenity of this part of the physical Gap between Hedge End and Botley will remain and retaining the sequence of fields, dwellings, commercial, fields, woodland and therefore all of the current elements of the gap, retaining the overall dimension of the gap between Hedge End and Botley. These two settlements will not coalesce through the implementation of the proposals.' It is my opinion that the loss of part of an open field to development, however small, will inevitably lead to some coalescing of settlements.

In response: The proposed development within the Site will not diminish the Gap in terms of the physical and visual separation between the two settlements. Therefore, the loss of part of the field within the CCW Services will not lead to coalescing of the two settlements as justified above.

Second set of comments - LVAIS Appendix 2 Photos Part 1 & Part 2

- These views demonstrate there are limited locations from which the site can be seen. Some descriptive commentary and, in places, an indication of the location of the site, would have been helpful.

In response: The photographs shown in the Appendix are enlarged versions of the photographs in the main LVAIS document, following the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/19: Visual Representation of development proposals (17 September 2019). All descriptions and annotation of the photographs are provided in the main document.

Second set of comments - Appendix 1 Methodology

- This details a broadly acceptable basis for the appraisal as it follows widely adopted criteria.

In conclusion, the LVAIS report does not significantly alter my initial landscape comments on the proposal.

In particular, there is nothing presented to alter my view that in landscape terms the proposed addition of a further sizeable warehouse on an open grass field, will not only diminish the Gap physically, but would also have an urbanising effect

detrimental to the wider Countryside setting.

In response: The proposed warehouse is set back from the road corridor and is in line with the existing warehouses. The proposals do not comprise isolated built form in an open field, but are set within an area heavily influenced by the existing commercial activities. Due to the limited intervisibility between the Site and the wider countryside, the effects arising from the proposals would be limited.

LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

3.1 LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGICAL AND HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS

3.1.1 DESIGNATIONS

The Site lies within the Countryside between Hedge End and Botley, Hampshire and within the designated Settlement Gap identified at the Eastleigh Local Plan (2016 - 2036). The Site is not covered by any other landscape designation at the national, regional or local level, nor does it lie within a protected viewing corridor protected by policy.

The woodland treebelt to the north and east of the Site, abutting CCW Service ownership boundary, is designated as Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

There are several Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) spreading across the study area, including the following:

- Bottom Copse, to the north-west of the study area
- Manor Farm, to the south of the study area;
- Newhouse Farm Woodland & Swamp, to the north-east of the study area;
- Botley Mill Woodland, to the east of the study area;
- Pudbrook Lake, to the south-east of the study area;

The area to the east of the woodland treebelt is designated as Historic Park and Garden in the Historic England website. It comprises four separate residences – Holmesland, The Old Coach House, Holmesland Farm and Holmesland Cottage, with lawn, shrubs, small lake with lime avenue and shelter belt trees to the east. Similarly, Botleigh Grange Hotel, lies to the west of the Gap, built in the 17th century, is also designated as Historic Park and Garden. However, both of them are privately owned and not accessibly by the public, except access to the hotel.

There are four Ancient Woodlands within the study area, including the following:

- Bottom Copse, to the north-west of the study area;
- Wangfield Lodge Copse, to the north-east of the study area;
- Gould Copse, to the south of the study area;
- Trullmill / Pinkmead Copses, to the south-east of the study area.

Solent and Southampton Water RAMSAR lies to the south-east of the study area.

Refer to Figure 3.1 - Landscape landscape related designation map.

3.1.2 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The Site lies between the Gap between the settlements of Hedge End and Botley.

Hedge End is a town situated to the east of the City of Southampton. The original settlement is believed to get its name from a farm at the end of a hedge on a road from

Botley. The original hamlet of Hedge End first established in Botley Common, which is at the bottom of a hill. It rises up to Netley Common, where is rich with natural streams and springs. The development of two new roads (Northam Road and St. Johns Road) in the 17th and 18th century and the M27 motorway in the 20th century facilitated the expansion of Hedge End, with business parks and superstores.

Upper Northam Road and St. Johns Road were part of the operational routes for the flow of military vehicles during World War II, as Hedge End was on the outermost edge of a huge marshalling site set up in Hampshire by the military, where some of the Southampton citizens rented accommodation or sought shelters leading up to D-Day.

In Hedge End, carnivals take place annually on the first Saturday of July since 1921. The original intention was to raise money to pay for the services of a nurse, there were no medical facilities locally at that time.

Botley is a historic Saxon village, which received its market charter from Henry III in 1267. It lies on the upper banks of River Hamble, a picturesque coast of the Solent. The Romans built a road from Chichester to Southampton, Botley was a natural crossing point by the River Hamble leading to Southampton. Gradually it became a settlement, which could be dated back to the 10th century. Botley has possessed a place of worship for at least nine hundred years. James Warner, Lord of the manor of Botley provided the land to build the All Saints Church in the 1830s.

Botley Conservation Area lies to the east and south-east of the study area. It was originally designated in 1975 but formally adopted by Eastleigh Borough Council in 2005. William Cobbett, a journalist and political writer, in the 1800s, described Botley as 'the most delightful village in the world'.

3.1.3 ROAD CORRIDOR AND PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY CONTEXT

The key transport corridors within the study area are Broad Oak road / A334 to the immediate south of the Site, which is the main thoroughfare from Botley to Hedge End, with residential dwellings and commercial premises each side of the road; Holmesland Lane and Brook Lane to the east of the study area, together with the residential built form along these corridors, form the physical boundary of Botley.

Similarly, Woodhouse Lane to the north-west of the Site, together with the intermittent commercial and residential built form along the road, form the physical boundary of Hedge End.

Public Rights of Way primarily spread across the north-eastern, eastern and southern sections of the study area and are either Footpaths or Bridleways, connecting the settlements of Hedge End, Botley and Botley Green to the north of the railway, or leading to the main road network, such as Broad Oak road / A334 and Winchester Street.

There is no long distance route nor national trail crossing the study area.

Refer to Figure 3.2 - Public Rights of Way Map.

3.1.4 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Refer to the extracted draft Local Plan (2016-2036) shown in Figure 3.4 in the following pages.

A new road (Policy BO3, shown in purple dotted line in Figure 3.4) is in the process of being implemented along Woodhouse Lane. It connects the two allocated housing sites (Policy S3, shown in orange) and an employment site (Policy WE2, shown in blue hatch), crossing the current Settlement Gap between Botley and Hedge End. On completion of these allocated developments, further physical attributes of the Settlement Gap will be intensified by more built form.

3.2 POLICIES

3.2.1 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

The July 2021 NPPF seeks the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The following issues and policies of the NPPF are pertinent to the proposed development and this LVAIS.

Section 2 deals with achieving sustainable development. At para 8, subsection c relating to an environmental objective, it states: "to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change..."

Section 12 sets out the requirements for achieving well-designed places. Para 130 states that: "Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit."

Para 131 deals with trees and states that: "Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure...that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments, that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.

Section 15 deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Para 174 states that: "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

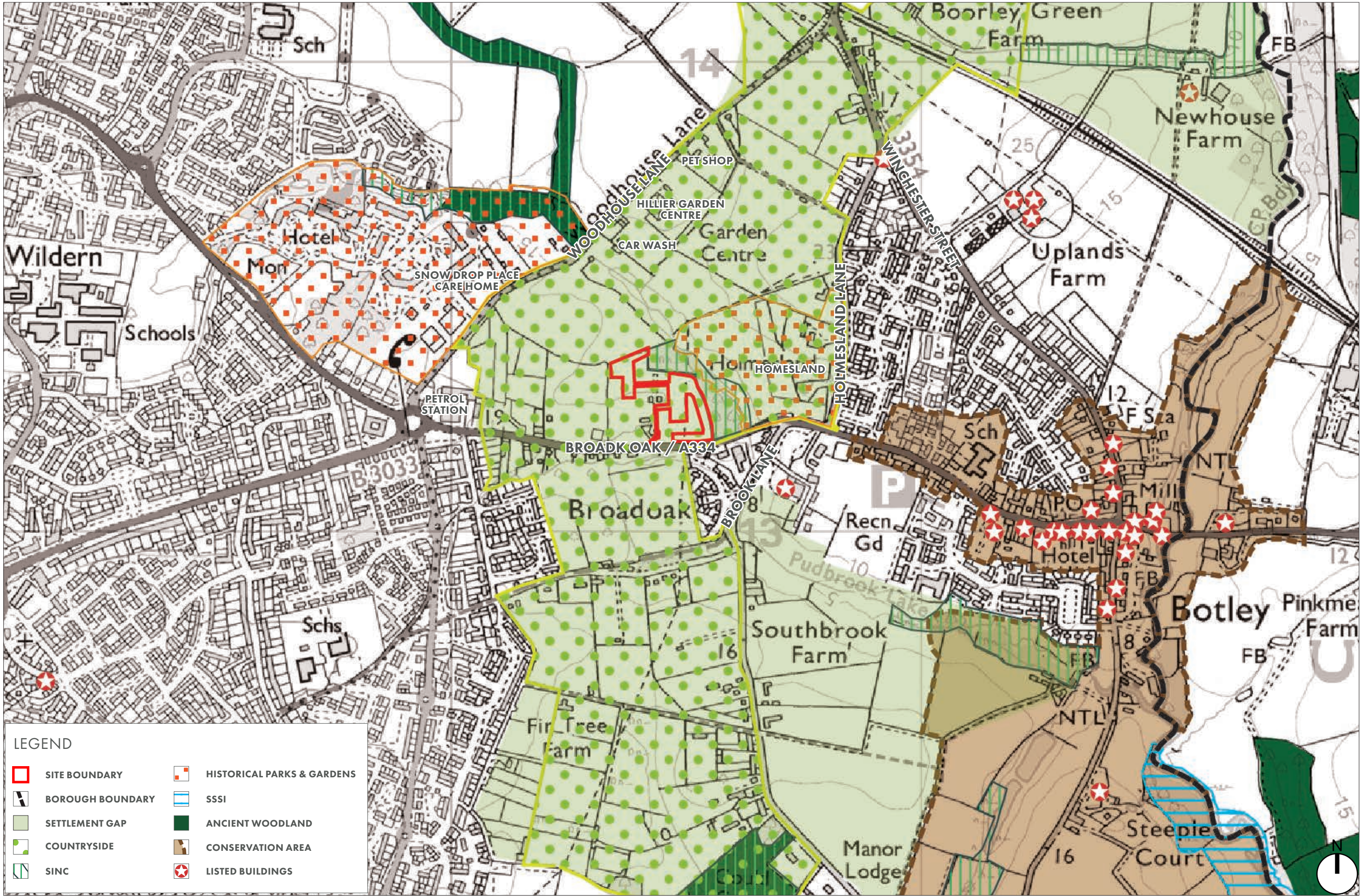


FIGURE 3.1 – LOCAL LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS (FABRIK, 2022)

4.0

LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

3.2 POLICIES

3.2.1 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) (CONTINUED)

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the nest and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland."

With regard to the sub-section on ground conditions and pollution, para 185 states that: "Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:

- a) Mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;
- b) Identify an protect tranquil areas which have remaining relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason;
- c) Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation."

Section 16 deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Para 199 states that: "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation..."

Para 200 states that: "Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks and gardens, should be exceptional..."

3.2.2 PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE

The NPPF is supported by the on-line resource Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) There are a number of sections that relate to this LVAIS as set out below.

Climate change is considered in Section ID 6-001-20140306 (Revision date :15 March 2019). Paragraph 001 states that: 'local planning authorities should ensure that protecting the local environment is properly considered alongside the broader issues of protecting the global environment. Planning can also help increase resilience to climate change impact through the location, mix and design of development. Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles which the National Planning Policy Framework expects to underpin both plan-making and

decision-taking'.

Guidance on the natural environment is set out within Section ID 8-20190721 (Revision date: 21 July 2019). Paragraph 029 relates to trees and woodlands, and states that: 'Well-placed and well-chosen trees on streets and in urban spaces can provide a range of benefits: encouraging walking and enhanced physical and mental health; contributing to local environmental character and distinctiveness; providing habitats for wildlife; reducing noise and excessive heat; and supporting sustainable drainage. Changing climate, in particular hotter summers and more frequent periods of dry weather, and unknown pests and diseases, will place new pressures on green infrastructure in the long-term, so trees of the right species and age profile are essential'.

Guidance on the historic environment is set out at Section ID 18a-20190723 (Revision Date: 23 July 2019). Paragraph 036 of this section considers landscape and identifies that: 'The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally designated landscapes but also the wider countryside. Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence...The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully'.

The guidance on design is set out at Section ID: 26-20191001 (Revision date 1 October 2019). Paragraph 001 under this section reiterates paragraph 130 of the NPPF and identifies that: 'permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development'..

3.2.3 NATIONAL DESIGN GUIDE

The National Design Guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. Paragraph 20 sets out the components of good design, including layout, form and scale, appearance, landscape, materials and detailing. The 10 characteristics of a well designed place are described in paragraph 35 as follows:

- 'Context - enhances the surroundings.
- Identity - attractive and distinctive.
- Built form - a coherent pattern of development.
- Movement - accessible and easy to move around.
- Nature - enhanced and optimised.
- Public spaces - safe, social and inclusive.
- Uses - mixed and integrated.
- Homes and buildings - functional, healthy and sustainable.
- Resources - efficient and resilient.
- Lifespan - made to last'.

3.2.5 LOCAL

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036)

The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 was adopted on 25 April 2022. It sets out the policies and plans to guide future development to 2036. It will be used to determine planning applications in the Borough and replaces the 'saved' policies in the Adopted Local Plan 2001-2011.

Policies pertinent to this report are as follows:

Strategic policy S5, New Development in the Countryside, in permitting new development in the countryside the Borough Council will seek to:'a. avoid adverse impacts on the rural, woodland, riparian or coastal character, the intrinsic character of the landscape including the avoidance of adverse landscape impacts on areas adjoining national parks and their settings, and on the biodiversity of the area..."

Strategic policy S6, Protection of Settlement Gaps states that: "1. Development within a Settlement Gap as set out in the policies map will be permitted provided that:

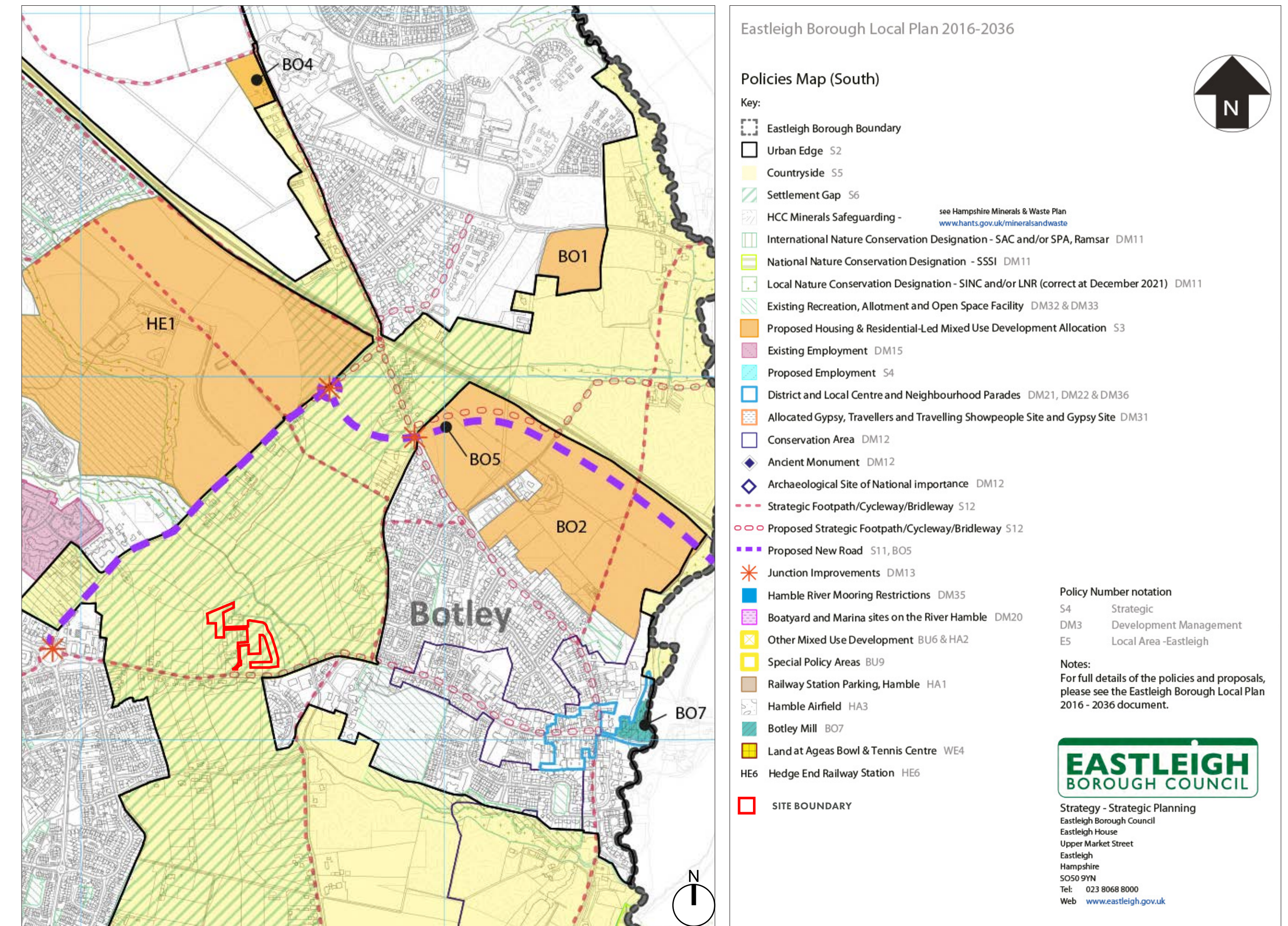
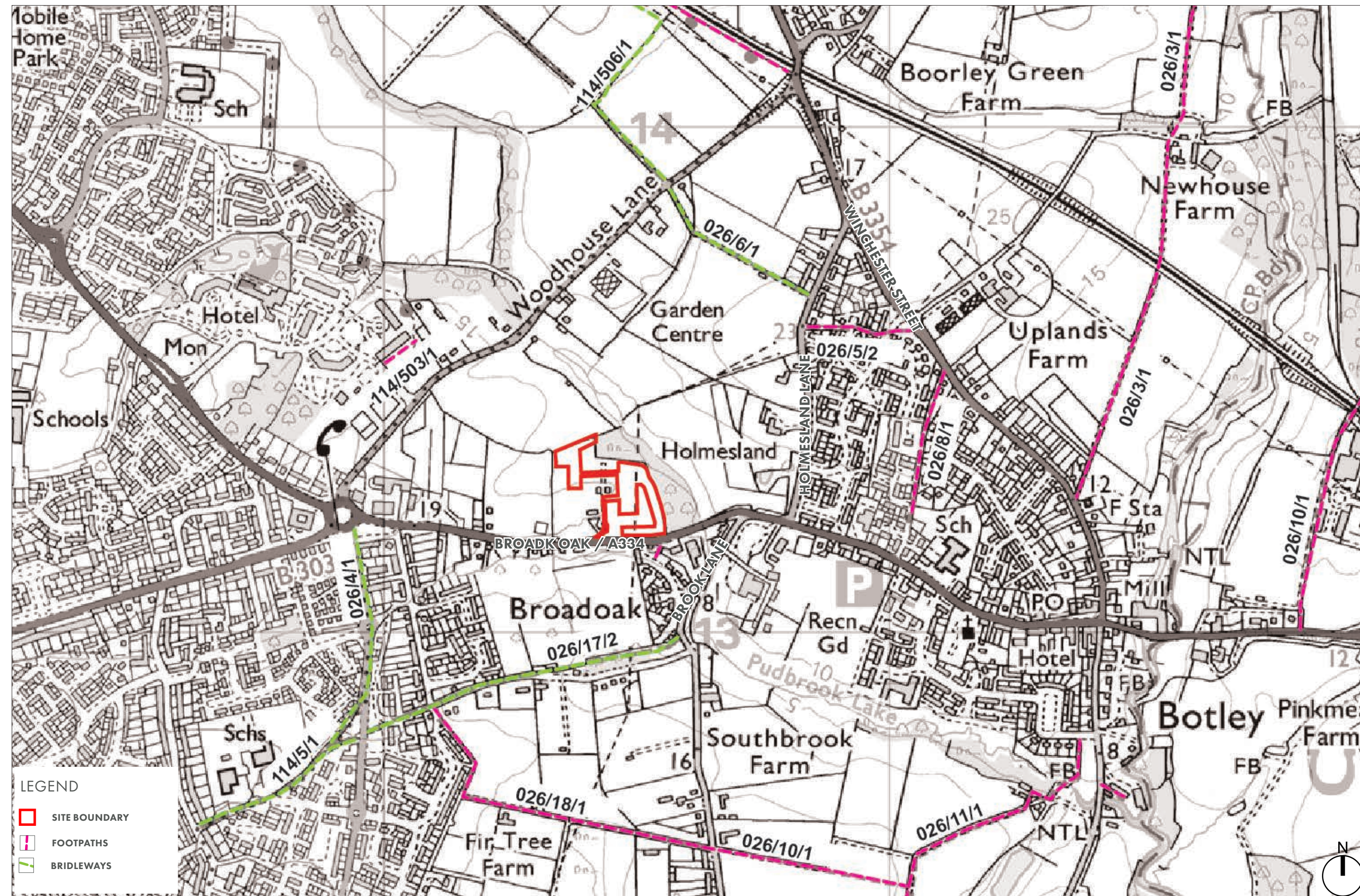
- a. it would not undermine the physical extent and/or visual separation of settlements; and
- b. it would not have an urbanising effect detrimental to:
 - i. The character of the countryside; or
 - ii. The separate identity of the adjoining settlements."

It goes onto states that: "Any new development within a settlement gap should not physically and/or visually undermine the gap between settlements. Any new development including the intensification or redevelopment of existing activities within gaps should seek opportunities to enhance the function of the gap. Consideration will be given to how the proposed siting, design, colours, materials and any storage of materials, lighting, boundary treatment, landscape features, landscape improvements and/or appropriate long term management arrangements serves to ensure the proposed development meets the criteria in policy S6."

Strategic policy S9 - Green Infrastructure states that:"Through new development and other initiatives the Borough Council will seek to achieve the provision, retention and/ or enhancement of the following forms of multi-functional green infrastructure, including provision of:

- i. landscape scale strategic links across the Borough boundary, to and between the Borough's settlements, the countryside..."

Policy DM1, General criteria for New Development states that: "All new development should (as relevant):



LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

3.2 POLICIES

3.2.5 LOCAL

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) (Continued)

a. not have an unacceptable impact on, and where possible should enhance:

i. residential amenities of both new and existing residents; the character and appearance of urban areas, the countryside...;

ii. biodiversity (avoiding significant adverse impacts); and

iii. the significance of heritage assets;

c. take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character, appearance and land uses of the locality or neighbourhood, and be compatible with adjoining uses and be well integrated with these in terms of mass, scale, materials, layout, density, design and siting, both in itself and in relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views. Where adjoining development is poor in urban design terms, new development should contribute to improving the character of the area;

d. not involve the loss of or damage to trees, woodlands, hedgerows, ponds, priority habitats or other landscape features of value to the character of the area, for appearance or biodiversity unless they can be replaced with features of equivalent or enhanced value, (recognising that some species and habitats may be irreplaceable);

e. include a landscape scheme covering the design and layout of external space;

g. provide satisfactory management arrangements for all landscape, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement."

Policy DM11, Nature Conservation states that: "Development will not be permitted if it is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)... unless it can be demonstrated that:

a. there are no alternative solutions;

b. the adverse effects are unavoidable;

c. measures are taken to mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects;

d. there is an overall biodiversity net gain; and

e. if there are any residual adverse effects which cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated, the benefits of the development must clearly outweigh the adverse effects on the nature conservation value of the site and any broader impacts on national and local designations."

3.3 GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

3.3.1 COUNTRYSIDE GAPS BACKGROUND PAPER (JUNE 2018)

As part of the examination documents for the Local Plan (2016 - 2036), Countryside Gaps Background Paper was published for the hearing session held on the 5th January 2021.

The Site lies within the Settlement Gap 7 - Hedge End and Botley, but does not lie in the narrowest part of the gap.

The following physical attributes were identified as supporting the definition of character and separation of settlements, with the assessment matrix for Hedge End and Botley Gap in response to each of the definitions set out the following:

- "The land lies between settlements; Assessment Matrix: Some land is not strictly between the settlements, some has planning permission for development.

- The land is predominantly undeveloped; Assessment Matrix: There is scattered development through the area and some is along the main road (Broadoak/High St), there is development approved at Sovereign Drive.

- The land is predominantly open; Assessment Matrix: More open to north, (as existing) to south buildings, trees, hedges intervene.

- The land has a coherent land management pattern; Assessment Matrix: Variety of uses including residential, grazing, commercial, recreational.

- The land has clearly defined boundaries; Assessment Matrix: Roads, gardens, hedges.

- The land contains major roads, rivers or railway lines that serve as physical barriers between settlements; Assessment Matrix: Woodhouse Lane, Brook Lane and Holmesland Lane.

- The land includes public footpaths or roads which provide a transition from one settlement to another; Assessment Matrix: Linked by Broad Oak/High St and footpath/bridleways

- The individual settlements shows a distinctive character/urban form; Assessment Matrix: Varied typology.

- The individual settlement have a strong urban edge. Assessment Matrix: Inconsistent."

The key landscape and urban character features pertinent to this part of the Gap are described as:

- "Undulating landform with low ridges;
- Medium sized fields with treed hedges and copses;
- Intrusive urban development evident in places;
- Some fragmentation of fields into pony paddocks and disused land between Botley and Hedge End;
- The edges of Botley adjoining the undeveloped countryside comprise the urban character areas HEWEB 46, Victorian to post war dwellings.47, 60s to 70s development. 79, 70s and later dwellings and the properties on the High Street within the conservation area backing onto the countryside;
- Community buildings, school development, a commercial garage and post war development at Cobbett Way extend into the countryside west from the playing fields south of the A334;
- The edge of the Hedge End settlement (actually partly within Botley Parish), south of Woodhouse Lane comprises residential character areas 39, Pre-Victorian to present linear low density development (extending east into the countryside). 77, 70s-80s cul de sac development.75, 70s cul de sac development;
- The proposed development (HE1) off Woodhouse Lane is located between the existing development at Hedge End south west of the railway;
- Linear low density dwellings are also located in the countryside between Botley and Hedge End on Brook Lane."

The Intervisibility, Severance and Urban Form pertinent to this part of the Gap are described as:

- "From Broad Oak/A334 connecting Botley with Hedge End the extent of the gap between the 2 settlements is unclear because of the linear development on the southern side of the road and the sporadic development on the northern side. The perception of leaving one settlement before entering another relies more on the apparent change in character experienced between the two settlements as on the lack of development.
- The gap between settlements is very fragile as experienced from Broad Oak/A334 and would be seriously undermined by intensification of the existing development immediately adjoining this road corridor, or the removal of associated mature tree cover.
- Future planned development north east of Hedge End on Woodhouse Lane (HE1) and north East Of Botley (BO2) will reduce the separation between the settlements as perceived from existing rights of way, the railway corridor and the proposed Botley by pass."

It is concluded that: "the most vulnerable parts of the gap between the two settlements are the land north and south of the Broad Oak/A334 corridor and the narrow area between the proposed new extensions at Hedge End and Botley. Any intensification of built development along the Broad Oak/A334 corridor should be resisted."

Despite the scale and mass of the warehouses of the existing CCW Services operating area, this area and the Site forms a discrete parcel within the Settlement Gap. It is bound by the mature woodland block to the east and north, which is an additional layer separating the Site from Botley, in conjunction with the fields adjacent to the settlement edge. The Site has an existing relationship with the built form from the wider CCW Services. Despite part of the Site being grassland, it does not connect physically with the fields outside the Site and is bound by the busy Broad Oak road / A334. Furthermore, the Site lies in the central part of this Gap and readily influenced by its immediate commercial and residential development, and the Site does not lie

LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

within the narrowest part of the Gap.

3.3.2 EASTLEIGH BOROUGH SETTLEMENT GAP STUDY (OCTOBER 2020)

Eastleigh Borough Settlement Gap Study was prepared by Deacon Design Ltd on behalf of Eastleigh Borough Council, as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan (2016 - 2036).

The Site lies within the Gap Analysis Area I - Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green and sub-area 16. Refer to Figure 3.5 - Area I Field Finding Plan (North) in the following page.

The openness of the this gap is described as: "In keeping with the landscape character, the study area is split into two main landscape areas with open grassland/ farmland to the north; and enclosed small scale paddocks to the south.

Dense tree belts and woodland, combined with varying field boundaries, also influence its sense of openness and largely prevents intervisibility between the settlements."

The landscape and urban features that define the current Gap boundary are summarised as below:

- "Established character of ribbon development with large rear gardens along Brook Lane and Holmesland lane forming the boundary to Botley;
- Suburban housing to Hedge End with varying quality of defining field boundaries / oaks;
- Strong line of highway vegetation / field boundaries to Winchester Road and Woodhouse Lane with some encroachment associated with the garden centres and associated uses;
- The railway line vegetation and vegetated bridge;
- Woodland blocks to southern boundary."

The current Green Infrastructure within the Gap include the following:

- "Watercourses with mature vegetation and woodland blocks supporting key ecological connectivity to River Hamble;
- Some field boundaries provide a degree of continuity / green linkages;
- Railway line vegetation."

The Site lies within the sub-area 16 and it is described as: "Combination of ribbon development, scattering of mature trees and paddocks to the rear provide a short lived but clear change of character from the built form edges to Hedge End and the wooded arrival to Botley. Whilst the horse paddocks are poor in landscape character, the remnant field boundaries and open nature contribute to the separation between the two settlements particularly when experienced from the A334 and bridleway No. 17."

Area 16 is assessed as fulfilling all the following criteria of the functions of the Gap:

- The area helps preserve the open nature of the Gap.
- The area helps maintain the sense of separation between settlements.
- The area plays an important role in defining the settlement character.

- The area plays an important role in separation of settlements at risk of coalescence.
- The land is necessary in preventing the coalescence of settlements.

It goes on to states that: "This area lies at the narrowest section between Botley and Hedge End and performs all Gap functions. The fields on both sides of Botley Road (A334) contribute to the perception of Gap's openness and the separation between the two settlements. Thanks to the open nature of those fields, and their predominantly undeveloped character, the sense of leaving / arriving to either of the settlements is maintained despite the short distance (approximately 300m). The fields also contribute to the separation of the settlements for viewers on the bridleway No. 17 to the south."

However, the Site itself does not perform the criteria listed above. The Site is relatively enclosed by the woodland block to its immediate east and north; existing warehouses to the west. The character and amenity of the Site is readily influenced by the existing commercial use of the wider CCW Services, the busy thoroughfare of Broad Oak road / A334 and the commercial premises nearby.

The opportunities for Gap enhancements pertinent to this Site are as follow:

- "Reinforce field boundary and highway boundaries with hedgerow planting. This should apply to the both the edges and throughout the Gap to support visual separation, provide ecological connectivity opportunities and reinforce local landscape character.
- Retain and enhance important woodland / coppice and associated watercourses that combined provide a clearly defined natural barrier and supports a strong sense of physical / visual separation whilst supporting biodiversity and ecological connectivity through the Gap."

3.3.3 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - CHARACTER AREA APPRAISALS (JANUARY 2008)

Local Development Framework - Character Area Appraisal was prepared as part of the supplementary planning document. The Site does not lie within the area of appraisals, however, the south-west of the study area covers by Character Area 39. Refer to Figure 3.6 - HEWEB Character Area Map shown on the following pages.

The key findings of Area 39 pertinent to the Site are as follows:

- "Route structure: Main thoroughfare.
- Landform: Flat
- Nodes/Landmarks/Views: None
- Planting: Prominent - semi-mature broad leaved / mixed ornamental."

Guidances for Area 39 pertinent to the Site are as follows:

- "Mitigate the effects of the heavy vehicular traffic in new development using measures such as boundary planting, set backs, transition spaces and orientation of internal spaces.
- Maintain the predominant building setbacks."

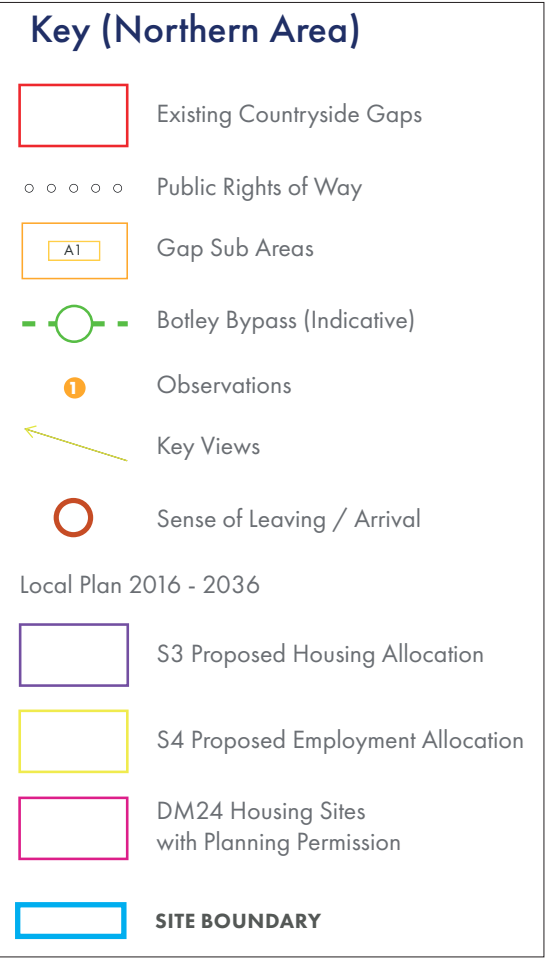


FIGURE 3.5 – AREA 1 FIELD FINDING PLAN NORTH, BOTLEY, HEDGE END & BOORLEY GREEN MAP (DEACON DESIGN AND EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL, 2020)

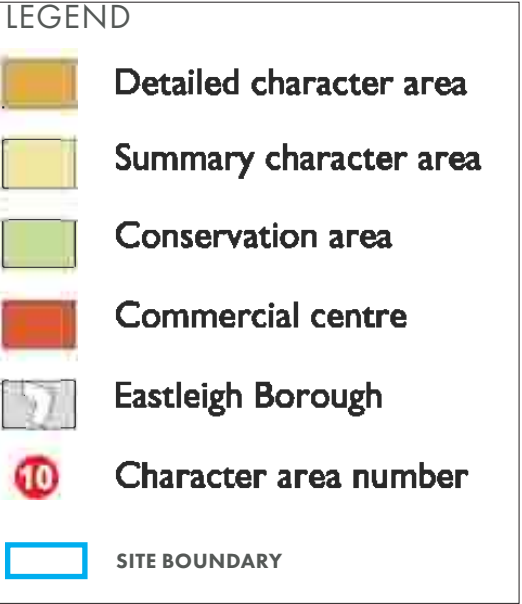
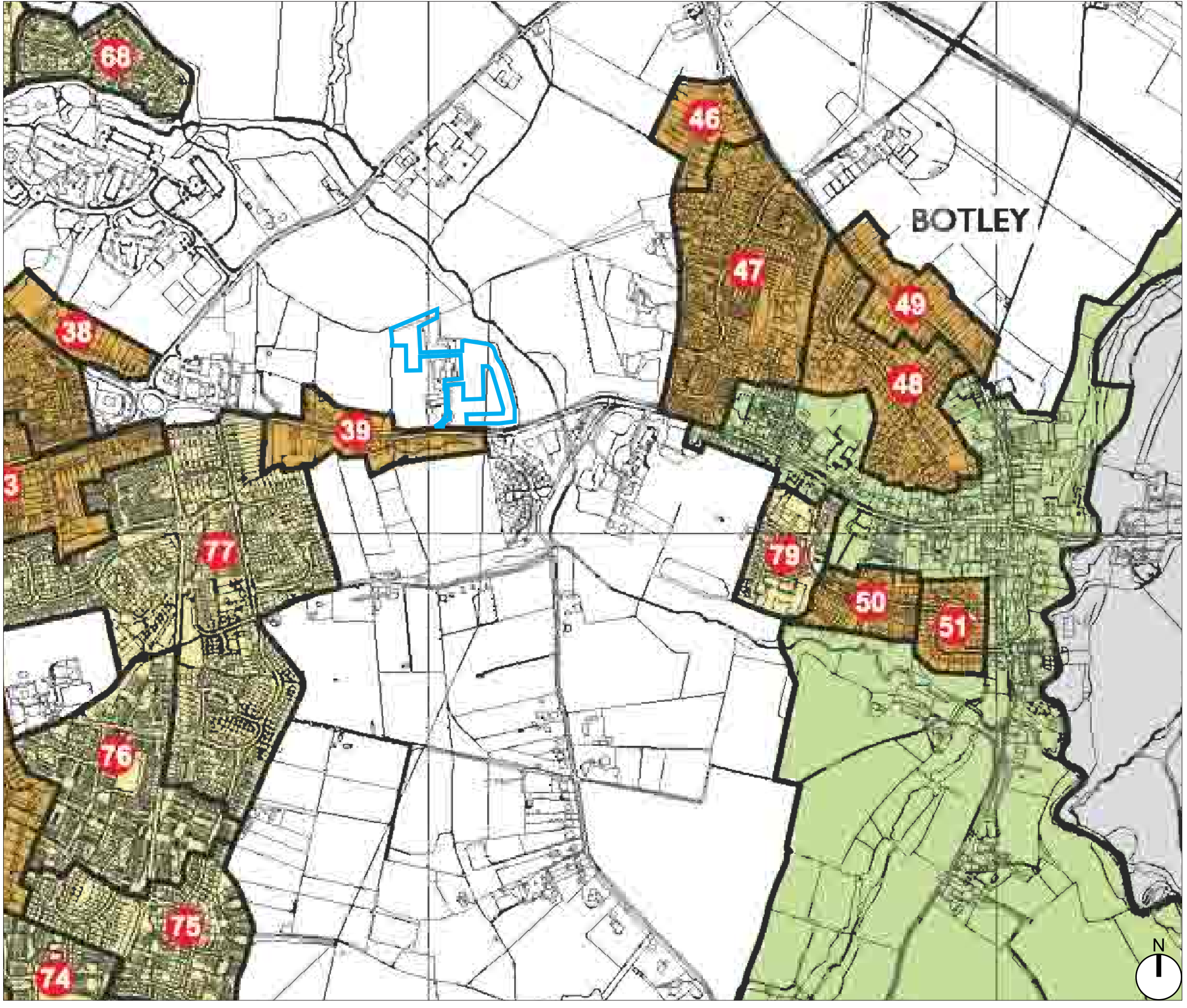


FIGURE 3.6 – HEWEB CHARACTER AREA MAP (EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL, 2008)

4.0

BASELINE CONDITIONS

4.1 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The term 'landscape' commonly refers to the view or appearance of the land as perceived by people. Landscape applies to any natural, rural, urban or urban edge areas, in land, water and seascape areas.

Landscape character is the combination of both natural / physical, cultural / social and perceptual / aesthetic influences, which give rise to a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse and which define the 'sense of place'. The landscape is not therefore simply a visual phenomenon.

The following sections set out the landscape character framework of the study area from the district and borough scale based upon existing character assessments undertaken by Hampshire County Council and Eastleigh Borough Council.

4.1.2 COUNTY LEVEL CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

The study area lies primarily within Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment (interactive), Character Area 2e - Forest of Bere West. Refer to Figure 4.1 - The key characteristics pertinent to the Site are as follows:

- "A low lying landscape with shallow undulations, predominantly south sloping.
- Hedgerows often low but with individual spreading mature oaks...
- Extensive C.20th development, including urban expansion and infilling of common-edge settlements."

The experiential / perceptual characteristics are described as: "Views are predominantly short and often with a wooded backdrop... its peripheral landscapes have more development and urbanising influences, e.g.... high voltage power lines..."

In terms of Landscape Character Type, the Site lies within the northern edge of the Lowland Mosaic Small Scale. The key characteristics pertinent to the Site are as follow:

- "Often small enclosures, small areas of woodland and undulating topography which produces the sense of a small scale landscape;
- Small semi natural and ancient woodland copses and hedges of varying character."

Its historic landscape character is described as: "Landscapes which have a high proportion small scale field enclosures. They can be recent formal enclosures, with a previous use as common land or small scale informal enclosures or small field assart with little remaining woodland. There are few copses and woodland although hedges may be well treed."

Its visibility is described as: "Locally low lying, intervisibility with other landscape types reduced because of the latter's relatively high presence of woodland.

Very enclosed intimate landscape, due to the small fields with high hedges and the

higher surrounding land."

Refer to Figure 4.2 - Landscape Character Type Map.

Value: Medium

4.1.3 BOROUGH LEVEL CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

The Site lies at the southern edge of Area 9 - Horton Heath Undulating Farmland within the Landscape Character Assessment for Eastleigh Borough (December, 2011). Refer to Figure 4.3 - Area 9 map.

The key characteristics pertinent to the Site are as follow:

- "Medium size fields usually with good hedges and hedgerow trees rather than woodlands;
- Unmanaged or inappropriately managed agricultural land."

The visual sensitivity for Area 9 is described as: "Trees belts and hedgerow trees are notable features; however the area is largely open, with rural views normally ending at wooded horizons."

Value: Medium

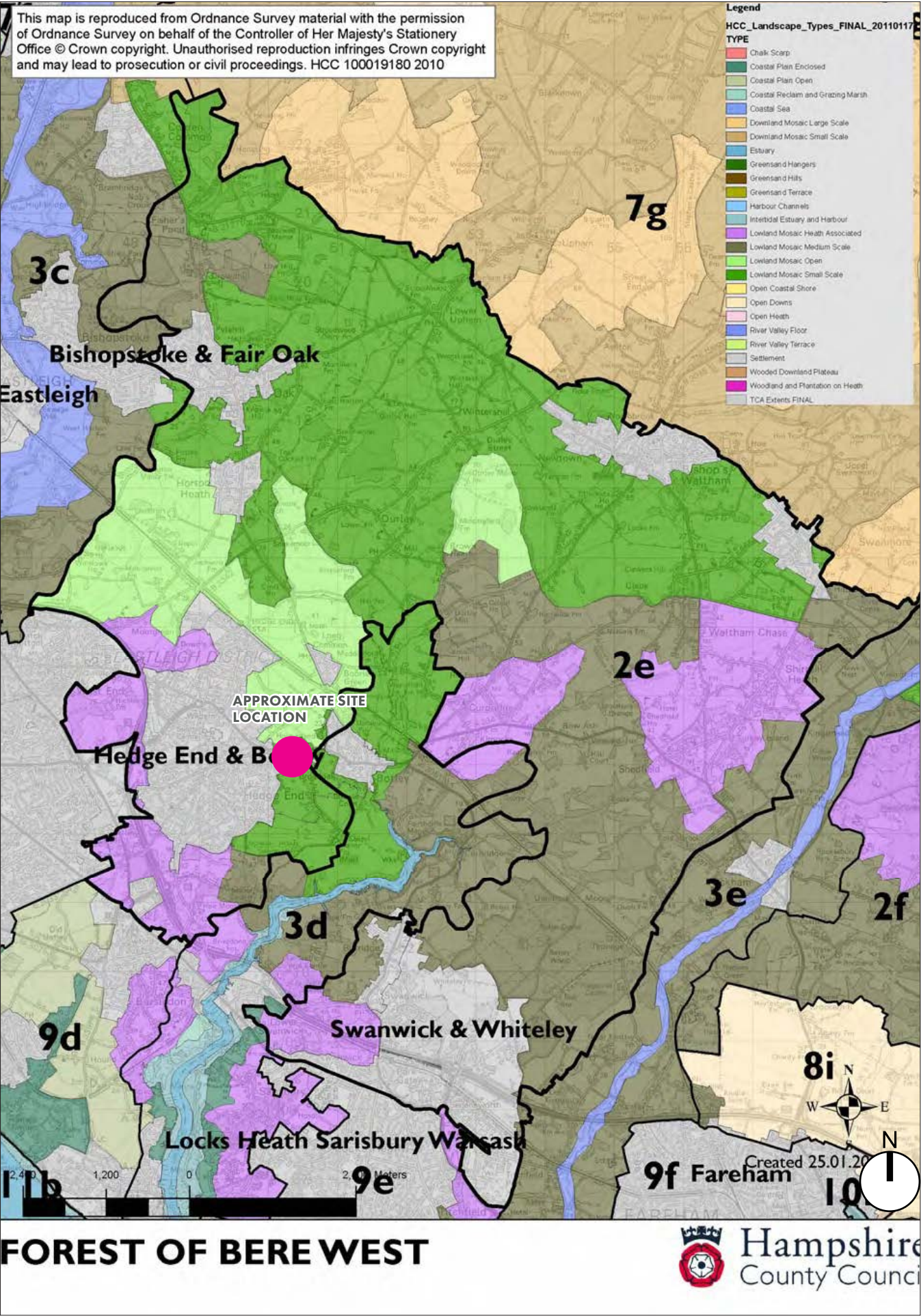


FIGURE 4.1 – HAMPSHIRE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA MAP - FOREST OF BERE WEST (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, MAY 2012)

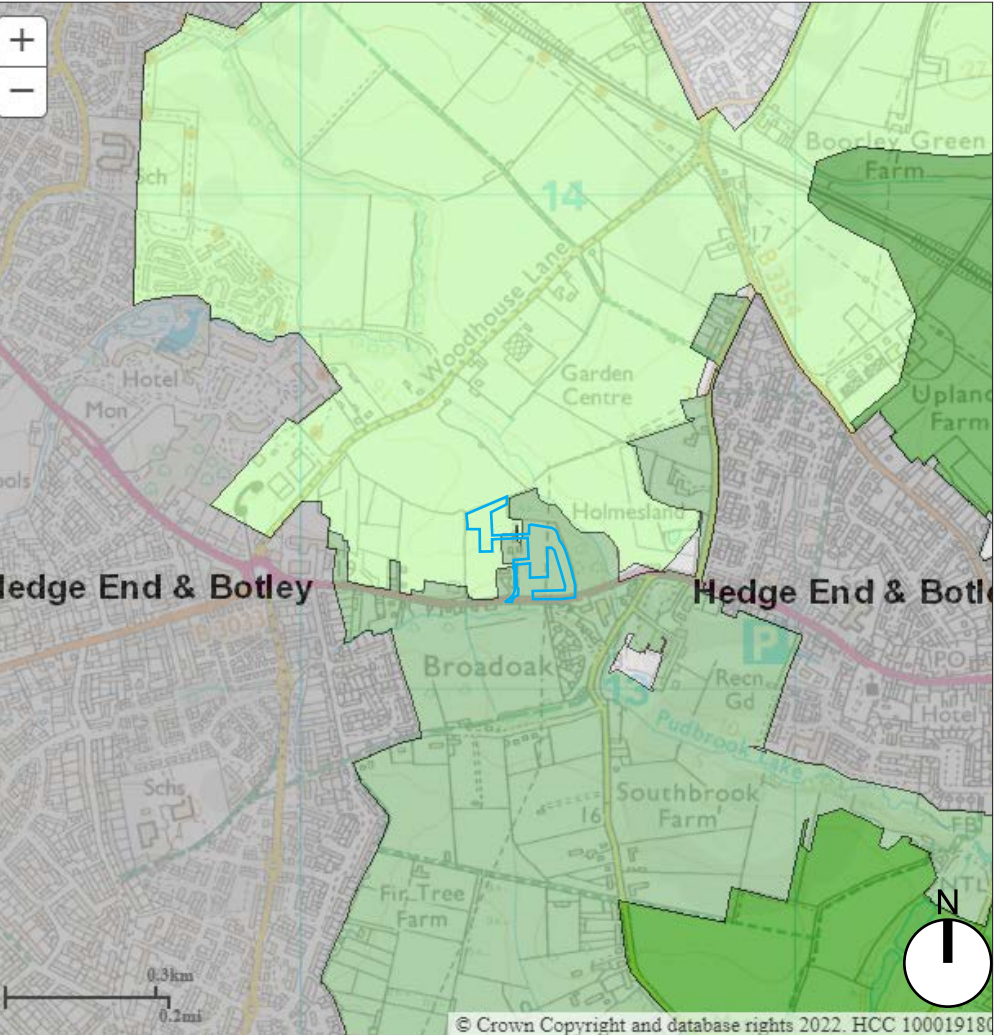


FIGURE 4.2 – EXTRACT OF HAMPSHIRE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE MAP (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, 2022)

SITE BOUNDARY

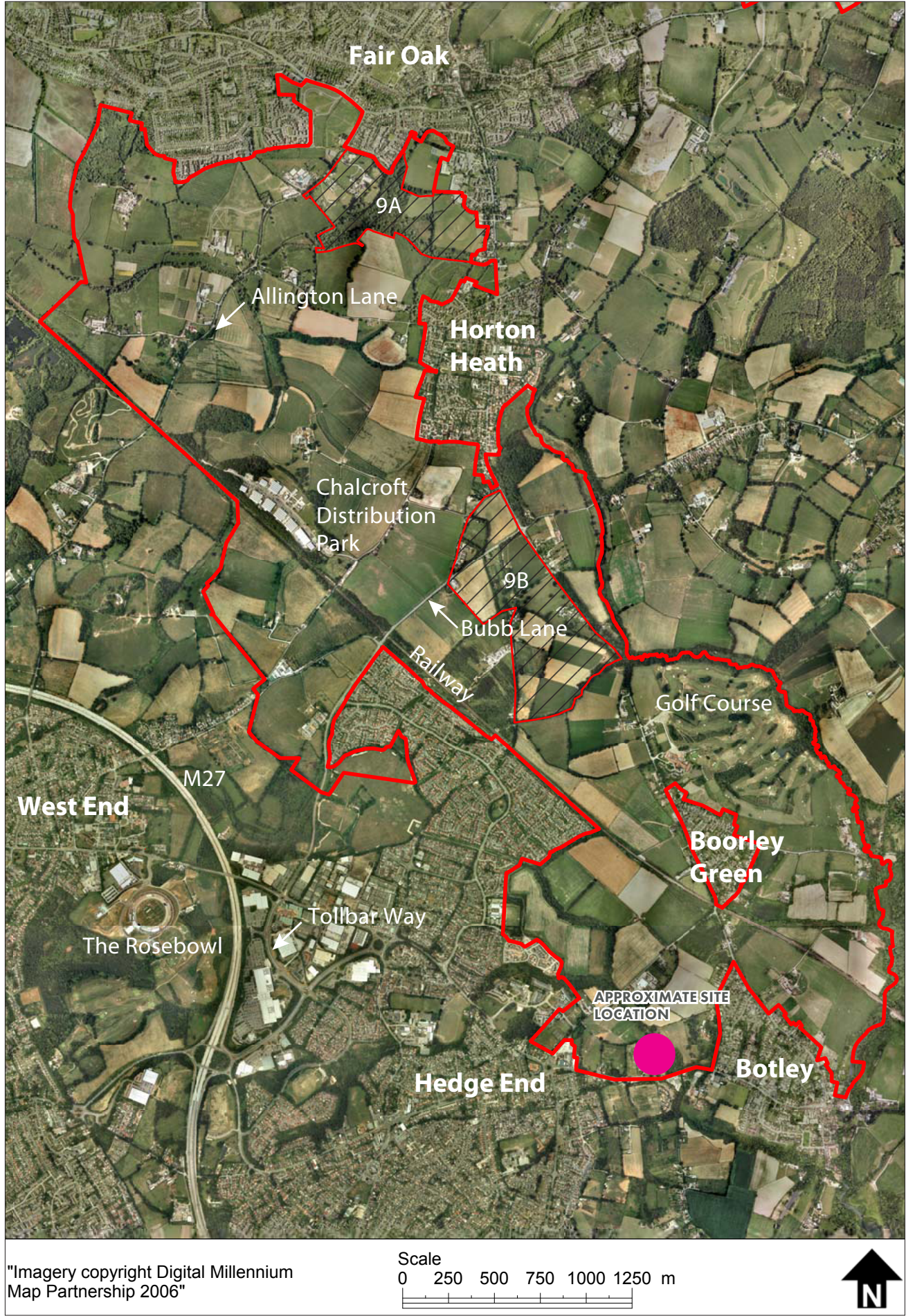


FIGURE 4.3 – EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 9 MAP - HORTON HEATH UNDULATING FARMLAND (2011)

4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

4.2 CONTEXTUAL LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

4.2.1 NATURAL

Geology and Soils

As identified in Chapter 3 of the Landscape of Eastleigh Borough Council, the study area lies within the Valley Gravel geology type, associated with River Hamble.

The soil within the study area is identified as Typical Stagnogley soil type by Eastleigh Borough Council. It is often poorly-drained and comprised a mixture of clays and sands.

Landform and Drainage

The topography of the study area is illustrated on Figure 4.4.

The central section of the study area lies on the tributary valley associated with River Hamble at approximately 10m AOD forming the lower valley side. The land rises to the north and east at approximately 25m AOD covering the settlement of Botley and Boorley Green. Similarly, the land rises to the west at approximately 35m AOD covering the core settlement of Hedge End.

Vegetation Cover

Medium, irregular size arable fields and pastureland are characteristics to the centre of the study area within the Settlement Gap. Treebelts and hedgerows often define the field boundaries and follow the tributary streams associated with River Hamble.

The most significant woodland is the one to the immediate east of the Site, which comprises primarily deciduous species. There are groups of mature trees within the Holmsland Estate to the north-east of the Site along the settlement edge of Botley and form part of the physical attributes of the settlement boundary.

4.2.2 CULTURAL / SOCIAL

Land Use

The land use within the study area comprises residential dwellings of Hedge End and Botley settlements, farmland and their associated stables, workshops and paddocks. There are industrial and commercial buildings, such as Hiller Garden Centre, car dealerships and service station along the main transport corridors, such as Broad Oak road / A334 and Woodhouse Lane. These are often medium to large scale and in character with this part of the Gap.

The allocated developments under the draft Local Plan (2016 - 2036), including the residential developments S3 and employment development WE2 will intensify the urban character in the study area.

Refer to Figure 4.5 - Land Use Map.

Settlement Pattern / Setting / Building Heights / Urban Grain:

The study area captures the settlement edges of Hedge End and Botley, which comprises primarily two storey residential dwellings, with traditional red brick facades, and pitched roofs. Built form within the Settlement Gap is a combination of semi-detached, detached residential dwellings, two storey height commercial building, petrol station, warehouses, workshops and stables, dotted along the main transport corridors and sometimes within the countryside landscape.

The historic centre of Botley lies within the Conservation Area to the east and south-east of the study area, away from the settlement edge.

The skyline is often informed by trees, power cables and interspersed with built form along main movement corridors such as Broad Oak road / A334 and Woodhouse Lane within the Gap.

Time Depth

Before World War II, the land within the study area was largely farmlands and woodlands. Hedgerows, copses, ponds and river streams were an integral part of the farm system, grazed by livestock and gaming. Refer to Figure 4.6 - Historic Map.

Botley was the largest settlement in Eastleigh in the 1800's, although it is still a village.

Hedge End grew rapidly with developments of new housing after World War II. Agriculture was also intensified to achieve food self-sufficiency within Britain.

4.2.3 PERCEPTUAL AND AESTHETIC

The landform of the east of the study area is closely associated with the River Hamble valley floor, whilst the west forms a low local ridgeline.

The land use within the study area is rather diverse, including residential dwellings, commercial buildings, warehouses and built form associated with farms, paddocks, set aside and pastureland. Therefore, the overall character is textured, muted but also colourful in some locations, including some business signages along Woodhouse Lane and Broad Oak road / A334.

The visual perception along Broad Oak road / A334 is limited to elements adjacent to each side of this thoroughfare, such as the residential and commercial built form and the steep bank near the Site. The experience of leaving Hedge End and arriving to Botley was indistinctive and fleeting. There was no clear definitive space along this road providing the sense of separation between the two settlements.

Similarly, along Woodhouse Lane, besides the existing built form and vegetation, the emerging built form, such as the allocated housing developments and the Deer Park School, will form or already forming the physical edge along this road. However, there are some local views to the fields to the east of the road. The perception is therefore, a combination of a sense of enclosure and openness.

The study area is not remote or tranquil, due to the settlements of Hedge End, Botley and the heavy traffic along the key road network.

Views within the study area is limited to the local level, and often terminated at the treebelts along the field edges or built form. The Eastleigh Borough Settlement Gap Study describes the openness of this Gap as: *"In keeping with the landscape character, the study area is split into two main landscape areas with open grassland/farmland to the north; and enclosed small scale paddocks to the south. Dense tree belts and woodland, combined with varying field boundaries, also influence its sense of openness and largely prevents intervisibility between the settlements."*

4.2.4 THE PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE COUNTRYSIDE GAP

The settlement edge of Hedge End is defined by Woodhouse Lane to the west of the study area, together with a mixture of residential and commercial built form and activities along the road. Trees and hedgerows along the southern portion of Woodhouse Lane are intermittent, and often wrap around the field boundaries.

The frontages of the northern portion of Woodland Lane are often open with limited landscape elements, but lie on a higher landform than the southern portion of Woodhouse Lane. The allocated developments (S3 and HE1) both side of the road will form a stronger development line along Woodhouse Lane extending from the south and reduce the current sense of gap in this location.

The settlement edge of Botley is defined by the ribbon residential development along Holmsland Lane and Brook Lane, together with the former Holmsland Estate to east of the Site. Mature vegetation and small copse often skirt along the roads, which provide an additional layer to the sensitivity of the settlement edge. The allocated development (S3) will extend the settlement to the edge of the railway line. The Botley Bypass link (BO5) is under construction, which crosses the Gap linking Hedge End and Botley.

The character and amenity of the Settlement Gap to the immediate context of the Site comprises some small pockets of land separated and well contained by field boundary vegetation and woodlands, a range of mix used development, including the commercial premises of CCW Service, residential dwellings, Hillier Garden Centre, car wash facilities and a pet store. Therefore, this part of the Gap is relatively concealed by these physical attributes and readily influenced by the existing development and lack of the sense of a distinctive separation between the settlement of Hedge End and Botley.

4.0

BASELINE CONDITIONS

4.2

CONTEXTUAL LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS (CONTINUED)

4.2.5

SUMMARY OF CONTEXTUAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The key characteristics of this landscape are the relatively gentle landform associating with the valley floor and the pattern of medium size fields, generally bound by mature hedgerows or treebelts. Small woodland blocks lie to the centre of the study area within the Gap and often follow the river streams associated with River Hamble. These limit the intervisibilities between the Site and the area to the north-east of the Site.

Broad Oak road / A334 is the main thoroughfare between Hedge End and Botley. It is often busy and noisy. Developments are emerging along Woodhouse Lane, including new houses and the Deer Park School. Therefore, the built character of the study area is gradually intensifying, providing a clear developed edge to the Gap to the north-east.

Electricity cables and pylons are detracting features in the local landscape crossing the Settlement Gap.

The overall value of the contextual landscape is judged to be Medium.

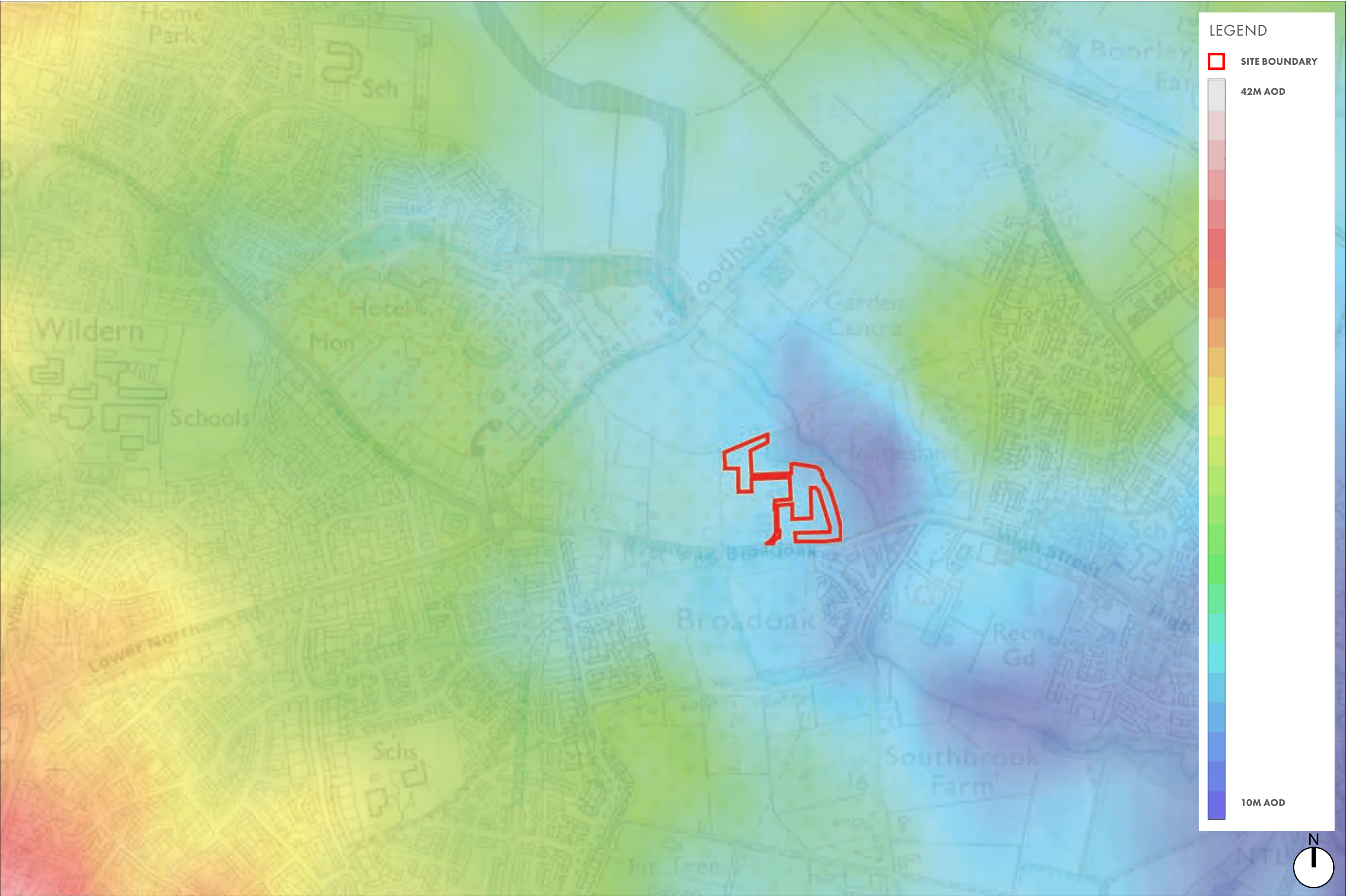


FIGURE 4.4 – PLAN ILLUSTRATING TOPOGRAPHY MAP (FABRIK, 2022)



FIGURE 4.5 – LAND COVER AND KEY FEATURES OF THE GAP (FABRIK, 2022)

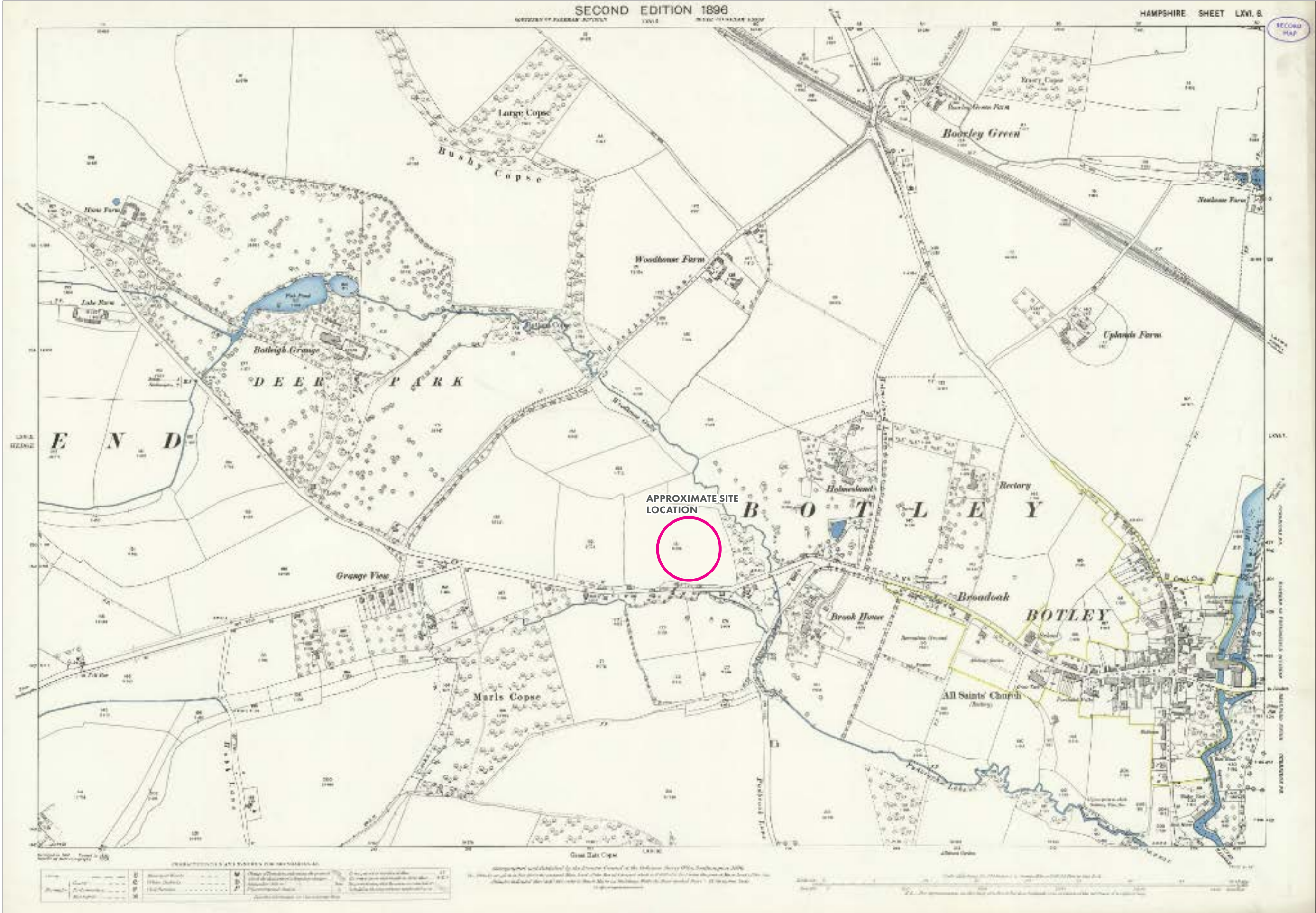


FIGURE 4.5 – HISTORIC MAP 1841 - 1952 (<https://www.OLDMAPSONLINE.ORG/>)

4.0

BASELINE CONDITIONS

4.3 SITE DESCRIPTION

4.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Site is bound by a deciduous woodland treebelt, which is also designated as a SINC, and fields, to the north and east; Broad Oak Road (A334) and 1 to 2 storey dwellings to the south; and warehouses and commercial operational ground and dwellings associated with the client business, CCW Services, to the west, with a small field beyond.

The Site can be broadly split into three character areas linked by an existing tarmac access from east to west. Refer to Figure 4.7.

- The eastern section: A combination of a grassland area with laurel hedging forming part of the wider field parcel (to the east along the woodland edge and the south along Broad Oak road / A334) and a tarmac surface (currently used for ambulance vehicle parking and wooden pallet storage to the north-east);
- The centre section: The main access into CCW Service off Broad Oak road / A334, paved with tarmac and bound by 1.5-1.8m high close board fence either side of the entrance road; and the internal access linking the Site between the east and the west;
- The northern section: An area of short grassland with conifer hedges to the east, intermittent treebelt to the north and west behind the security fences; and the remaining field parcel to the south.

4.3.2 NATURAL

Geology and Soils

Although there are no watercourses crossing the Site, it forms a small part of the wider Valley Gravel geology. The soil within the Site appears to be sandy and clayey, relatively dry and lack of any signs of positive microorganisms, such as earthworms and bees. Therefore, the condition of the soil is considered to be poor overall and typical of the area. Due to the existing soil condition, the Surface Water Drainage Strategy, submitted as part of this application, concluded that infiltration will not be feasible for the disposal of runoff.

Value: Low

Landform and Drainage

Except the Site entrance, the overall topography of the Site is relatively gentle. It slopes down to the northern and eastern edge towards the woodland, southern edge towards the wider field boundary adjacent to Broad Oak road / A334.

A minor crest (at approximately +14.30m AOD ground level, +17m AOD top of bunds) in the eastern section of the Site, at the bunds separating the field and the tarmac area. The bunds are man-made to assist in screening the internal arrangements of the Site.

The Site falls to approximately +12.5m AOD to the northern edge and approximately +13.5m to the southern edge. The Site entrance is steep, slopes down from approximately +15m AOD to approximately +12m AOD joining the Broad Oak road / A334. The overall ground plane gently falls to the east towards the woodland block and the ditch.

There is a steep bank interfaces between the edge of the field to the south of the wider CCW Services and Broad Oak road / A334, which accommodating an approximately 3m level change.

There is no pumping station nor public surface sewers within the Site. The hard surface area is drained either towards gullies or the vegetated edges, it also drains through the bunds to the grassland as evidenced by the pipe work through the bunds. A ditch runs along the northern edge of CCW Services, which flows into a tributary of the River Hamble.

Value: Low

Vegetation Cover

Some of the eastern section and the whole northern section of the Site are laid to grass, forming part of a wider field parcel. Laurel hedges are planted on top of the bund to the east, separating the Site and the current CCW Services car parking area. There is a bund to the eastern section of the Site, mostly bare, with patches of self sown grass emerging.

A row of intermittent mature trees skirts along the northwestern boundary of the Site, but outside the Site, filtering some of the views between this part of the Site and Woodhouse Lane to the north.

The key vegetation feature is the woodland block to the east and the northeast of the Site, forming a key part of the Sites setting. Therefore, limits the intervisibility between the Site and the east and the northeast, towards Botley settlement.

Value: Medium

4.3.3 CULTURAL / SOCIAL

Land Use

The eastern section of the Site comprises tarmac surfacing and is currently used for ambulance vehicle parking; and an area of short grassland, as part of the wider field parcel. Similarly, the northern section of the Site forms part of the wider grassland. The centre section of the Site, a hard surface area, links the main access to the Site and the current operational area of CCW Services.

Value: Low

Built form / Scale / Mass / Height / Grain:

There is no built form within the Site. However, it is readily influenced by the warehouses (approximately 7m in height) to the immediate west of the Site within the current operational area of CCW Services. The bungalow to the west of the Site entrance is also a key built form in the immediate context. One to two storey height, semi-detached and detached dwellings are present intermittently to the south of the Site along the other side of the Site across Broad Oak road / A334.

Value: Low

Time Depth

The Site was part of the wider countryside pastoral fields before World War II, when Botley and Hedge End were both still small settlements. In the 60's, the settlements expanded, with more residential dwellings and commercial built form.

Warehouses to the west of the Site were erected broadly in the last couple decades, contribute to part of the diverse built and landscape character along Broad Oak road / A334.

Value: Low

4.3.4 PERCEPTUAL AND AESTHETIC

The colour of the Site is primarily muted due to the grassland and the monotone nature of the tarmac and the recessive colour of the warehouses and associated structures. However, the colour of the parked ambulance vehicles within the Site are a discordant, bright element in the overall muted landscape. As a result, they are discernible from some local locations in the local landscape through the winter vegetation gaps.

The northern section of the Site is perceptually slightly more tranquil than the rest of the Site, due to its grassland form and being set back from Broad Oak Road (A334). There are frequent lorry and car movements in part of the eastern section of the Site. Therefore, it is less tranquil when compared to the northern section. The centre section of the Site is perceived as the busiest part of the Site, due to its primarily function of being the main access into the Site and the wider CCW Services operational area.

The Site is relatively enclosed by the woodland block to the east and northeast, warehouses and the bungalow to the centre. The Site is elevated from Broad Oak Road (A334). Therefore, the traffic along the road is often not perceived from within the core of the Site.

Beside the laurel hedges along the perimeters of the eastern section of the Site, the key landscape feature is the woodland block to the east and northeast of the Site, which limits the intervisibility between the Site and Botley settlement.

The electric cables and pylons is the key detractor within the Site.

Value: Medium

4.0

BASELINE CONDITIONS

4.3 SITE DESCRIPTION (CONTINUED)

4.3.5 THE ROLE OF THE SITE WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT GAP

The current edges of the Settlement Gap are defined by the residential dwellings and road networks to the east of Hedge End and west of Botley. A series of fields between these two settlements form the physical distance, the vegetation defining the field boundaries provide further separation and limiting the intervisibility between the two settlements. Within the Gap, residential and commercial built form is already perceived along Broad Oak road / A334 and in the immediate context of the Site. This part of the gap therefore is not pristine rural countryside, but is already influenced by a range of built form present within the immediate setting to the Site. The Site on its own does not perform a significant part of the Settlement Gap. It forms part of the peripheral area to existing commercial operations.

Despite the scale and mass of the warehouses of the CCW Services operating area, this area and the Site forms a discrete parcel within the Settlement Gap. It is bound by the mature woodland block to the east and north, which is an additional layer separating the Site from Botley settlement, besides the fields adjacent to the settlement edge. The Site has an existing relationship with the built form of the wider CCW Services. Despite part of the Site is a grassland, it does not connect physically with the fields outside the Site and bound by the busy Broad Oak road / A334.

The electric cables and pylons sweep across the Site forming a low key visual detractor crossing the Site.

Value: Medium - Low