

Landscape & Visual Briefing Note

Project: Land on the south-eastern edge of Bayston Hill, Shropshire (7344)

December 2020

1 Introduction

- 1.1. It is understood that Gleeson Strategic Land are requiring initial input to support the principle of development and promotion for its site at Land on the eastern edge of Bayston Hill, Shropshire, for residential development of up to 250 dwellings (7.7ha developable area), through the current Local Plan Review. Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd has been commissioned to review potential landscape and visual matters and provide an overview of any likely landscape constraints and opportunities present within the site. A desktop study and site visit have been undertaken alongside a high level review of the landscape and visual situation in order to provide recommendations for developing the site and any necessary landscape mitigation that may be required.
- 1.2. This briefing note provides an overview of the baseline landscape and visual situation and potential landscape and visual effects providing further information to support the associated Landscape Opportunities and Constraints Plan attached. It is anticipated that a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be undertaken at the appropriate planning stage.

2 Baseline Assessment

- 2.1. The site lies adjacent to the south eastern settlement edge of Bayston Hill, a large village in Shropshire, it is bound to the east by the A49 / Hereford Road, which connects with Shrewsbury, approximately 5km (3 miles) to the north and numerous small towns and villages to the south, including Church Stretton and Ludlow. To the north east of the wider Bayston Hill village, approximately 580m from the site, lies Tarmac Bayston Hill Quarry, with further quarrying activities located within the local area to the east, these contrast with the wider arable landscape and form notable developments / landscape features within the local area.
- 2.2. The site is an irregular shaped linear parcel of land that comprises of arable land. The landform within the site rises from the south eastern corner at approximately 83m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to a high point at the western site boundary of 115m AOD. There is a small but pronounced ridge that starts to rise within the centre of the site and runs parallel with the southern section of the western boundary. The landform to the south west continues to rise to a local high point of Lyth Hill, at approximately 165m AOD and to Sharpstone Hill to the north west, at approximately 97m AOD within which lies the quarry, the local and wider landscape to the east at around 85-95m AOD.
- 2.3. For the most part vegetation associated with the site is limited to the site boundaries, the northern section of the eastern boundary is defined by a mature tree belt that aligns the A49

/ Hereford Road. Further mature vegetation is found along the small ridge which runs within the centre of the site and the southern part of the western boundary, there are a number of mature trees within this vegetation that contribute to the local landscape character. The Southern part of the eastern boundary and the southern boundary are relatively open with little to no vegetation. The northern section of the western boundary is defined the rear gardens of existing residential development off Cornwall Drive, Wellbury Close and Betley Lane. There is a significant variance in the boundary treatments to include numerous types of fencing and mature hedgerows. The northern boundary is defined by the domestic rear garden boundaries of two large detached residential dwellings.

- 2.4. Features of note within the landscape include a listed building and two Scheduled monuments these are located within the local setting to the north east and east, respectively.
- Bayston Farmhouse – Grade II Listed, located at the south end of Burgs Lane, approximately 550m to the east of the site;
 - The Burgs – Scheduled Monument – located 260m to the north east of the site; and
 - Iron Age settlement site in Bomere Wood – Scheduled Monument – located to the 1.35km to the east of the site boundary.
- 2.5. There is existing residential development backing onto the north western and western site boundaries, located off Cornwall Drive, Wellbury Close and Betley Lane, respectively, that would have potential views over the site. This existing development and A49 transport corridor surround the site and form an urban backdrop / setting to the site – isolating it from the more open landscape to the east and south - refer to plans **ASP1 & ASP2**.
- 2.6. At present there are two existing vehicular access points into the site, these are located at the north eastern and south eastern corners of the eastern boundary off the A49 / Hereford Road.
- 2.7. Overall, the immediate and local landform together with the mature vegetation structure and existing built form result in views towards/over the site being limited to the site boundaries, the immediate setting and local area to the east / south east.
- 2.8. The location and context of the site is illustrated on **ASP1** Site Location Plan and **ASP2** Site and Setting Plan.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 2.9. There are two footpaths within the site – PRoW FP0406/14/2 – this runs from Lyth Hill Road, along the southern and eastern boundaries of a number of small horsiculture fields to the immediate south west of the Site, the route then enters the site along the western boundary, from here it cross the large eastern field of the site. The route exits at the eastern boundary, crossing the A49, where it becomes FP0406/15/1, later becoming FP0406/16/1 and passing through the immediate and local arable fieldscape.
- 2.10. PRoW FP0406/28/1 runs parallel within the north western site boundary, along the rear boundaries of existing residential development off Cornwall Drive. The route ends at the north eastern corner of the site.

- 2.11. There is currently a good level of connectivity between the site and the immediate and local landscape. However, the proposed development of the site provides a clear opportunity to deliver a notable enhancement to the existing routes and increase the immediate PRoW network with the provision of additional informal footpaths and routes throughout any proposed public open space.

Landscape Related Policy

Adopted Shropshire Local Plan

- 2.12. The site is covered by the existing Shropshire Local Development Framework which consists of the following documents

- Core Strategy DPD - adopted 24 February 2011
- Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Adopted Plan – adopted 17 December 2015.

- 2.13. The following policies within the Core Strategy are considered to be of some relevance to the site and its setting, in terms of landscape character:

- Policy CS4: Community Hubs and Community Clusters;
- Policy CS5: Countryside and Green Belt;
- Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles; and
- Policy CS17: Environmental Networks.

- 2.14. The following policies within the SAMDev are considered to be of some relevance to the site and its setting, in terms of landscape character:

- Policy MD1: Scale and Distribution of Development;
- Policy MD7a: Managing Housing Development in the Countryside; and
- Policy MD7b: General Management of Development in the Countryside.

Emerging Shropshire Local Plan

- 2.15. At the time of writing Shropshire Council had carried out consultation on a 'Regulation 18' Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan from Monday 3 August 2020 - Wednesday 30 September 2020. This additional consultation at the Regulation 18 stage of plan making represents a change to the currently published Local Development Scheme (LDS). The Regulation 19 (publication version) of the Local Plan, along with consultation on the 'soundness' of the plan, is now expected to be undertaken during autumn / winter 2020 with the proposed submission of the Local Plan within early 2021.

Landscape Character

- 2.16. The Shropshire Landscape Typology – September 2006, identifies that the Site is located within the *Upstanding Enclosed Commons Landscape Type* (LCT), the assessment identifies that the key characteristics as:

- *“Upstanding, sloping topography*
- *Regular to sub-regular pattern of hedged fields*
- *Medium to large scale landscapes*
- *Dispersed settlement pattern”*

2.17. The assessment provides a description of the overall character of the LCA as;

“This landscape type occurs in a limited number of locations in central, western and north-western Shropshire, and is distinguished from the previous landscape types by the lower altitudes at which they occur. They are formed of a mixture of Precambrian (Norbury Hill, Lyth Hill and Bayston Hill) and igneous (Mynd y Bryn) and sedimentary (Rhydygroseau) Ordovician rocks. These strata give rise to landscapes with prominent, upstanding topographies and predominantly poor soils.

Pastoral farming of improved grassland represents the most widespread land use, although on Lyth Hill mixed farming is more prominent. Relict patches of rough or acid grassland and moorland survive in places – for example, on the crest of Lyth Hill - and in more marginal locations the landscape is beginning to revert to a pre-enclosure state.

The predominant field pattern consists of regular or sub-regular hedged fields, associated with a dispersed pattern of farmsteads. However, a secondary component comprised of small irregular fields associated with cottages and smallholdings can be seen in places.

Woodland is largely confined to coverts and tree groups, with some relic ancient woodland on Lyth Hill, whilst additional tree cover is provided by scattered hedgerow trees.

These various elements create medium to large scale landscapes, which because of the sloping landform, generally offer open views, even where hedgerow trees are present.

The field systems and settlement patterns within this type are characteristic of landscapes derived from former upstanding commons and, in the case of Lyth Hill, woods and commons. Lythwood lay within the medieval Long Forest and was retained by the Crown after 1301, when the extent of Shropshire’s forests was drastically reduced.

The irregular and planned field systems were created through successive phases of enclosure between the 16th and 19th centuries. The sub-regular field patterns tend to be earlier, with irregular hedgerows that contain greater numbers of trees. The later planned field systems are characterised by straight hedges with few, if any, hedgerow trees.

The areas of smaller fields, associated with cottages and smallholdings, result from ‘encroachment’ onto these commons between the 16th and 18th centuries. The village of Bayston Hill, between Lyth Hill and Sharpstones Hill, originated in this way, although later 20th century housing developments have modified the historic settlement pattern.”

Shropshire landscape & visual sensitivity assessment - Bayston Hill

- 2.18. In 2008 White Consultants were commissioned to undertake a landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment for defined areas around the main settlements of the three districts- South Shropshire, Bridgnorth and North Shropshire.
- 2.19. This complemented the countywide Landscape Character Assessment by Shropshire County Council and has been used as evidence base for the allocation of sites for development within the Bridgnorth SAMDev Plan.
- 2.20. The study assessed the capacity of the landscape to accommodate housing and employment development, identifying those landscapes that should be protected from development.
- 2.21. The study has been carried out at a local level of landscape character assessment based on Landscape description units (LDU) and land cover parcels (LCP). The site is located within the northern part of LDU: Bayston Hill B [20BYH-B].
- 2.22. The study concludes:

“LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

This is an intensively farmed landscape with sparse natural features that are at risk of further erosion, especially tree and hedgerow loss. Sensitivity is higher to the north of the parcel where recreation and community facilities are concentrated and to the east along Lyth Road, which means overall the sensitivity of the landscape to change arising from new housing is medium and to employment is medium-high.

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

This area has an eroded rural character with more sensitive areas to the south and north of the parcel at the settlement edge and recreational facilities and although the larger central area of the parcel is less scenic, there are relatively high numbers of sensitive receptors which means that the views experienced are of medium-high sensitivity to change arising from new housing and high sensitivity to change arising from new employment.”

The Visual Environment

- 2.23. An initial site visit has been undertaken and the Photographic Record is appended to this briefing note. Due to the combination of landform, mature vegetation structure within and associated with the site boundaries and built form within the localised setting views of the site are largely restricted to the site, the immediate setting and local area to the east / south east. There are partial views of the site possible when heading north towards the village from along the A49 / Hereford Road, that bounds the eastern site boundary, with views heading south more heavily screened by the existing mature tree belt that defines the northern part of the eastern boundary.
- 2.24. Internal views of the site are possible from two footpaths – Footpath FP0406/16/1 which runs along the north western / northern site boundary (Ref viewpoints 1) and Footpath FP0406/14/2 - within the southern part of the site (Ref viewpoints 4a & 4b). Beyond the site, views are possible from the immediate area, glimpsed views are possible from a short section of FP0406/14/2 (Ref viewpoints 5). Beyond this point the landform rises towards Lyth

Hill Road and views become heavily restricted by the combination of landform and intervening vegetation and built form (Ref viewpoints 6). Further partial views towards and over the site are possible from a slightly elevated position along Berries Lane, approximately 270m to the north east of the site (Ref viewpoints 9).

- 2.25. To the immediate east of the site the more open nature of the arable landscape allows views towards and over the site taking in the existing settlement edge of Bayston Hill (Ref viewpoints 7). As the PRoW extends into the local landscape, which is relatively flat, the site is partially visible in the wider context of the settlement edge – from Bayston Farm, which farmhouse is Grade II Listed, approximately 550m to the east of the site (Ref viewpoint 8) and from Norton Farm, approximately 890m to the south east of the site (Ref viewpoint 10). Beyond this, views of the site are highly restricted by intervening mature vegetation and gently undulating landform to include those from the high ground at Lyth Hill, approximately 935m to the south east (Ref viewpoints 11).
- 2.26. Overall views of the site are limited to the immediate northern and western boundaries as a result of existing development and landform, and from the immediate and local landscape to the east. There are clear opportunities to enhance the degree of enclosure to the site by restoring lost landscape features that would create a green gateway along the A49 / Hereford Road.

3 Landscape and Visual Review and Opportunities & Constraints

- 3.1. Given the scale and location of the site there is a potential risk of adverse landscape and visual effects if the proposals are not carefully and sympathetically designed. However, it is envisaged that the development of this site will adopt a high quality, landscape-led approach ensuring that the proposals can be successfully integrated without significant adverse effects upon the receiving landscape character or visual environment. Refer to plan **ASP3** Landscape Opportunities and Constraints Plan.
- 3.2. Any development within the site should incorporate the following elements:
- Retain and enhance the existing site boundary vegetation as part of the site wide green infrastructure, where possible, creating a characteristic and robust landscape setting for the new development. This would substantially enhance the existing vegetation that defines the site boundaries with additional proposed incidental internal green spaces breaking up the massing of any proposed development and reinforcing the landscape character;
 - The site wide green infrastructure, to include native structural planting, should reflect the local character and mitigate potential harm to; views / the setting of listed building & scheduled monuments within the immediate setting; on the local landscape character; and the visual environment, in particular;
 - Respond to and respect the setting of views from PRoW within the site and those located within the immediate and local landscape to the east;
 - Respond and maintain the character of village, existing residential properties and roads adjacent to the site boundaries;
 - Layout to include a significant area of Public Open Space within the southern part of the site and along Hereford Road to maintain and provide an appropriate distance

between the proposed development and the site boundaries, this would create an enhanced green gateway / entrance to the village when approaching from the south;

- Create opportunities to increase public access and the integration of the existing PRoW within the layout and Public Open Spaces. The enhanced / easily accessible open spaces within the Site would not only assist in the provision of formal and informal recreation facilities but break up the built environment and assist in placemaking;
- Create new, varied habitats that are characteristic of this landscape setting. In particular, native hedgerow, hedgerow tree and woodland planting should be incorporated into the landscaping scheme to reinforce the presence of this characteristic local landscape feature and to increase connectivity between the existing habitats off site;
- Adopt a positive outward looking layout to ensure that the proposals do not appear to be turning their back on the receiving landscape and create an appropriate transition between the built environment and immediate landscape;
- Incorporate a simple palette of materials and architectural detailing that reflect the local vernacular.
- The inclusion of an organic site layout would respond to the setting and provide an enhanced settlement character, that would allow the proposals to be seen as an integrated feature within the context of the wider rural setting.

3.3. Overall, it is considered that the proposed landscape treatment, when combined with the existing retained vegetation, would ensure that the proposals benefit from a high degree of physical and visual integration, with the vegetation structure reflecting the local landscape character and providing a high level of visual containment. The assessment of landscape opportunities and constraints would feed into the emerging masterplan to ensure that a sympathetic layout that respects its landscape and visual context can be achieved.

4 Summary

4.1. As set out above, the site is not subject to any qualitative landscape designations. The site is located adjacent to the existing settlement edge which bounds the northern and north western boundaries, with the eastern boundary bound by the A49 / Hereford Road. The nature of the landform within the site and immediate setting, along with mature vegetation structure that characterises the site's setting and existing built form would assist the integration of future proposed built form within the site from the outset.

4.2. In addition, the adoption of a sensitive, landscape-led approach to the design development of the proposals would ensure that the proposals can be successfully integrated in this location without significant adverse landscape or visual effects in the longer term.

4.3. As part of an iterative design process the defining characteristics of the local landscape and site context will inform the proposed layout to provide a cohesive development that responds sensitively to the existing landscape character and provides localised and wider landscape enhancements.

4.4. The nature of the current arable use, the extent of mature vegetation associated with the site boundaries result in there being a clear opportunity for numerous landscape

enhancements. A landscape strategy should look to retain the features of value and provide a site wide strategy that re-establishes lost vegetated boundaries and provides a greater level of connectivity with the immediate and local landscape. These enhancements would provide a robust verdant setting to the proposed development, reflect the characteristics of local landscape and create a green gateway to Bayston Hill village.

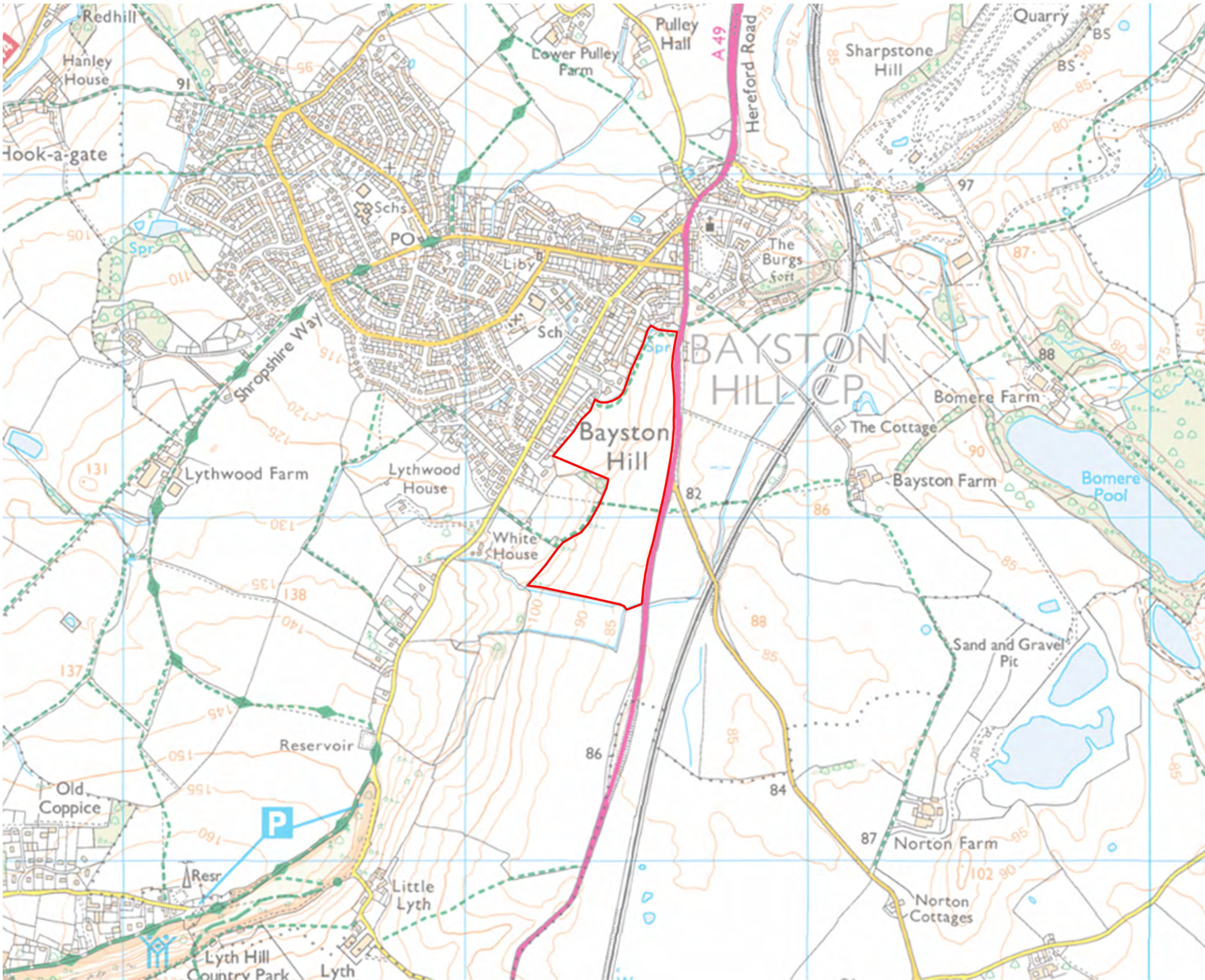
- 4.5. Views of the site are largely restricted to the site, immediate setting and local area to the east / south east as a result of the rising topography within the site in combination with the mature vegetation structure and built form within the localised and local setting.
- 4.6. It is considered that the site has the capacity to accommodate a sensitively designed residential development which would not give rise to significant landscape or visual effects and is in line with adopted planning policy. Proposed development would not be out of context and presents opportunities to improve access across the immediate and local area and to recreational facilities, enhance the local and wider landscape and improve biodiversity through habitat creation.
- 4.7. It is considered that subject to the inclusion of the landscape elements outlined above, development on the site can be accommodated in this location without detriment to the localised or wider visual amenity and that the integrity of the receiving landscape character would be preserved, with proposed landscape features contributing positively to the identified landscape character.

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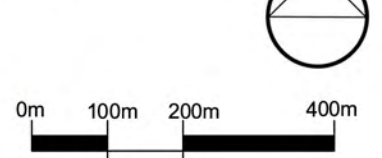
18th December 2020

Enclosed:

- Plan ASP1 Site Location Plan
- Plan ASP2 Site and Setting Plan
- Plan ASP3 Landscape Opportunities & Constraints Plan
- Photographic Record to include Viewpoint Location Plan



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Key:
 Application Site Boundary

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

aspect landscape planning

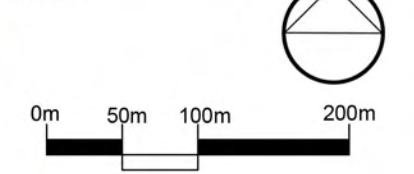
TITLE
 Bayston Hill, Shropshire
 Site Location Plan

CLIENT
 Gleeson Strategic Land

SCALE 1:10,000 @ A3	DATE NOV 2020	DRAWN SB	CHK'D CJ
DRAWING NUMBER 7344 / ASP1 / SLP		REVISION	



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- Key:
- Application Site Boundary
 - Public Rights of Way
 - ▲ Listed Buildings

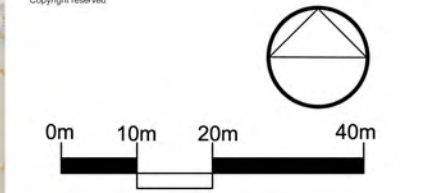
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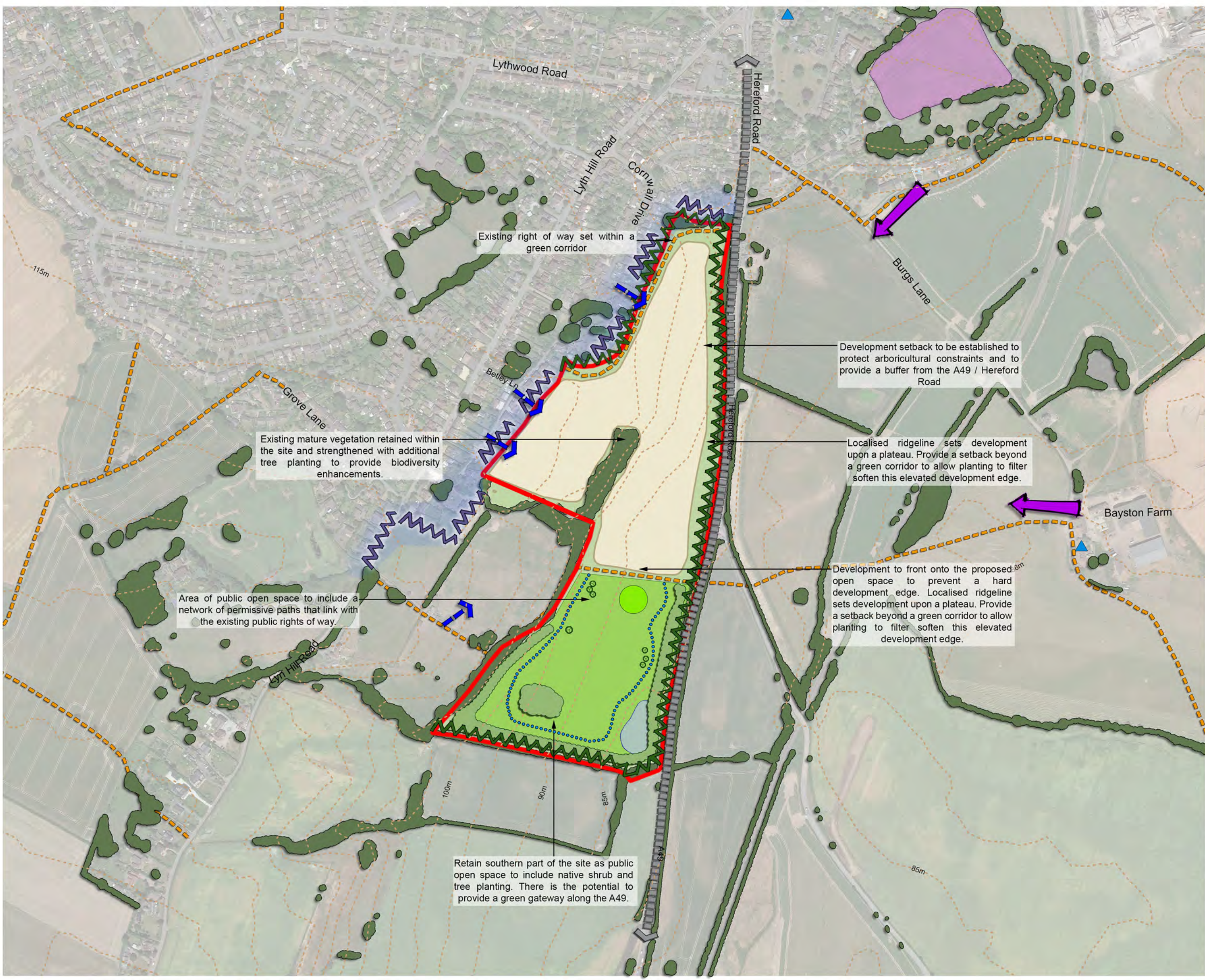
TITLE
**Bayston Hill, Shropshire
 Site & Setting Plan**

CLIENT
Gleeson Strategic Land

SCALE 1:5000 @ A3	DATE NOV 2020	DRAWN SB	CHK'D CJ
DRAWING NUMBER 7344 / ASP2		REVISION	



- Key:
- Application Site Boundary
 - Public Rights of Way
 - Listed Buildings
 - Existing Vegetation
 - Local Views
 - Close Range Views
 - Landscape Buffer
 - Existing Urban Edge
 - Area of Public Open Space
 - Potential Location for Play Area
 - Attenuation Basin
 - Scheduled Monument (The Burgs)
 - Proposed Native Planting
 - Proposed Footpath / Cycle Link
 - Existing Main Transport Route
 - Contours
 - Developable Area (7.7ha)



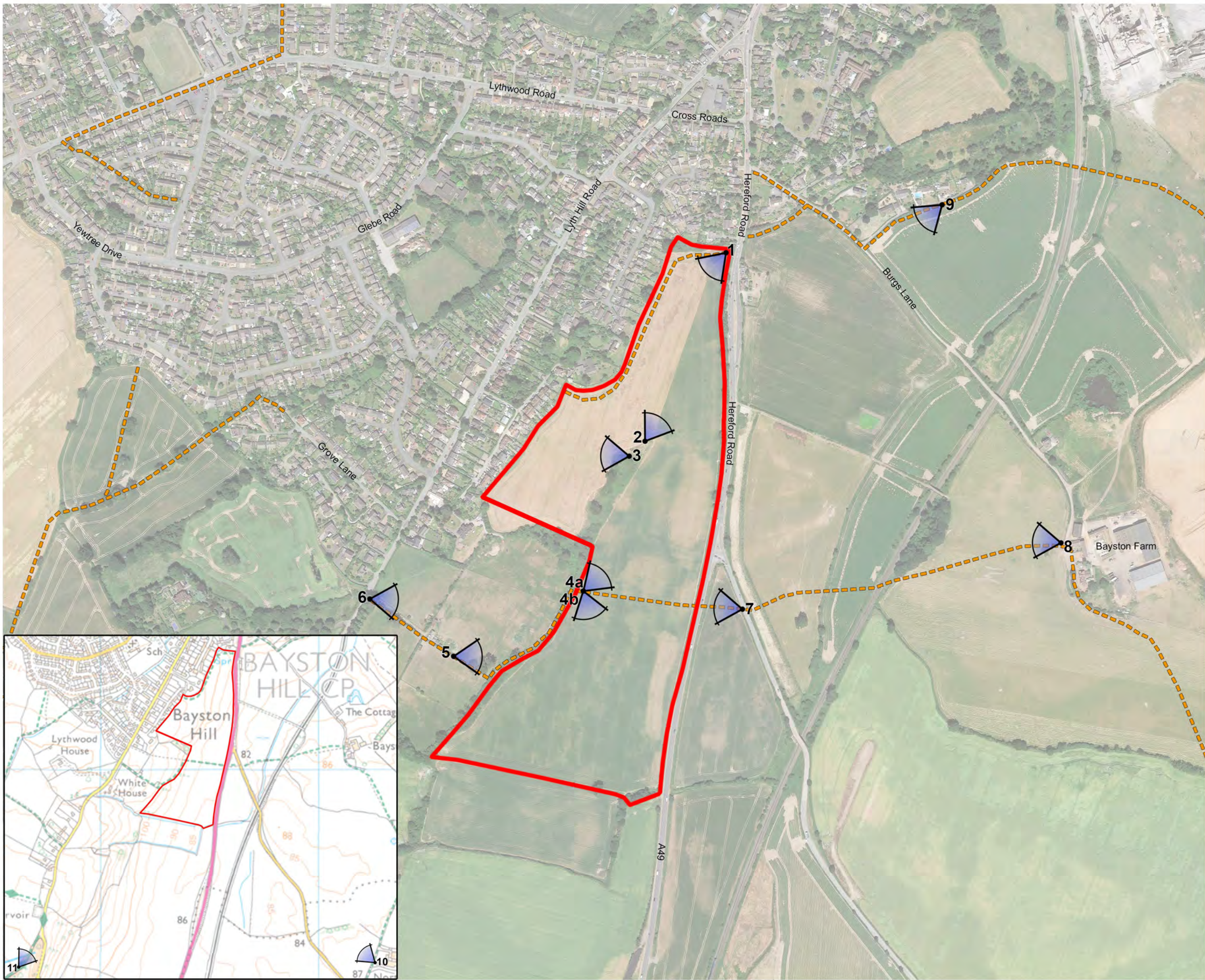
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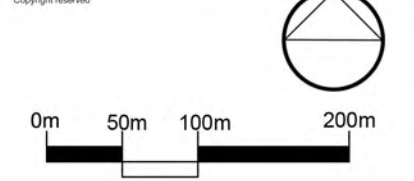
TITLE
Bayston Hill, Shropshire Opportunities & Constraints

CLIENT
Gleeson Strategic Land

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- Key:
- Application Site Boundary
 - Public Rights of Way
 - ▲ Viewpoint Location

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

aspect landscape planning

TITLE			
Bayston Hill, Shropshire Viewpoint Location Plan			
CLIENT			
Gleeson Strategic Land			
SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
1:5000 @ A3	DEC 2020	EL	MF
DRAWING NUMBER		REVISION	
7344 / VLP			



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 348625, N 308540 Date & time of photograph: 17/04/2013 09:45 AOD & Viewing height: c. 95m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 1**



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Viewpoint Coordinates: E 348461, N 308242 Date & time of photograph: 01/12/2020 10:09 AOD & Viewing height: c. 98m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 3**



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Viewpoint Coordinates: E 348220, N 307947 Date & time of photograph: 01/12/2020 10:19 AOD & Viewing height: c. 112m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 5**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 348108, N 308031

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AOD & Viewing height: c. 122m AOD 1.6m

Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.

Viewpoint 6



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 348656, N 307991

Date & time of photograph: 01/12/2020 10:49

AOD & Viewing height: c. 81m AOD 1.6m

Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.

Viewpoint 7



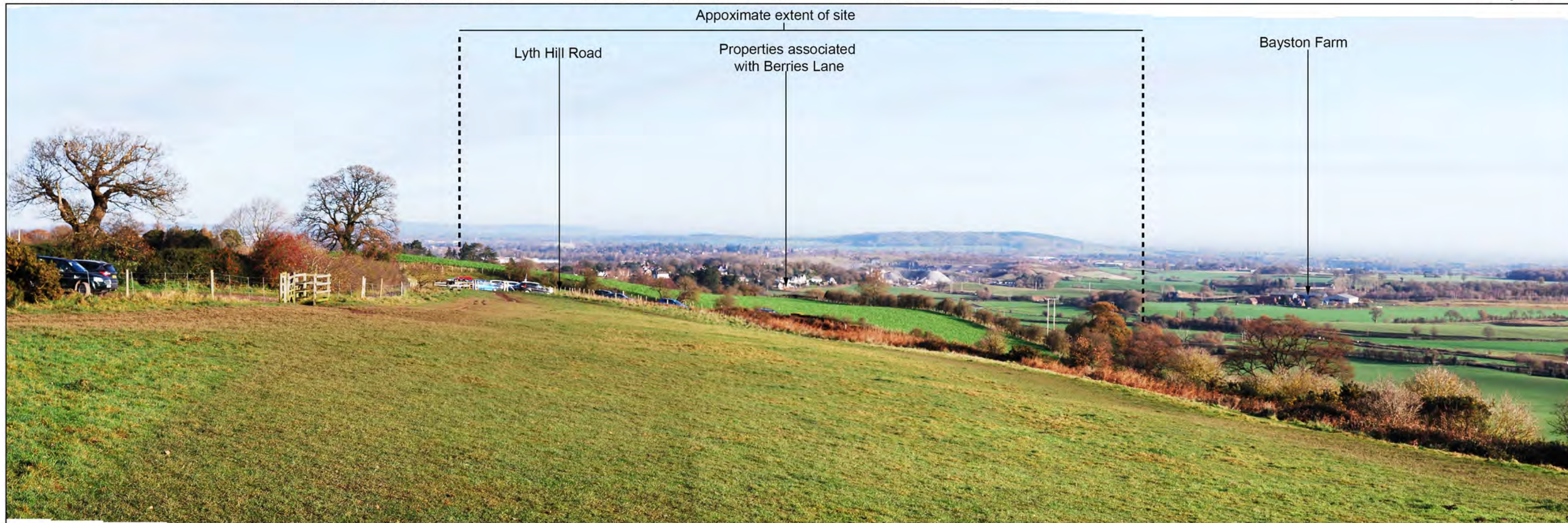
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Viewpoint Coordinates: E 347632, N 307091 Date & time of photograph: 01/12/2020 12:06 AOD & Viewing height: c. 154m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 10**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 349253, N 307117 Date & time of photograph: 01/12/2020 10:31 AOD & Viewing height: c. 86m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 11**