

MIRA Technology Park South Site, Nuneaton
Landscape and Visual Evidence and Appraisal

Volume 1 Landscape and Visual Evidence

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1. Introduction

1.1. Appointment

1.1.1. The terra firma Consultancy was appointed in July 2021 by ERI MTP Ltd. to provide landscape architectural services in support of the proposed development of land south of the Horiba MIRA site. Our services involve the production of a Landscape and Visual Evidence and Impact Appraisal (LVE&IA) which, all in light of the client brief, comprises:

- Developing an understanding of the site and its setting;
- Defining what matters most about the landscape and visual aspects;
- Incorporating these into the best possible development proposals which maximises opportunities and potentials; and
- Minimises and mitigates harm;

1.1.2. For the purposes of the planning process the above work is presented in two volumes:

- Volume 1 Landscape and Visual Evidence (LVE) comprises our understanding of the site and its setting and the identification of what is important. This is critical in developing context-appropriate proposals and minimising harm and is the starting point for our work. The design and assessment should not be viewed as a linear process but rather an iterative one, with the identification of potential harm and mitigation informing the design at every stage, along with the work of other disciplines.
- Volume 2 Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal will comprise the assessment / appraisal section of the final landscape report which will be completed once the final design is confirmed and will be as an impartial assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the final proposals.

1.2. Report structure

1.2.1. Volume 1 is set out as below:

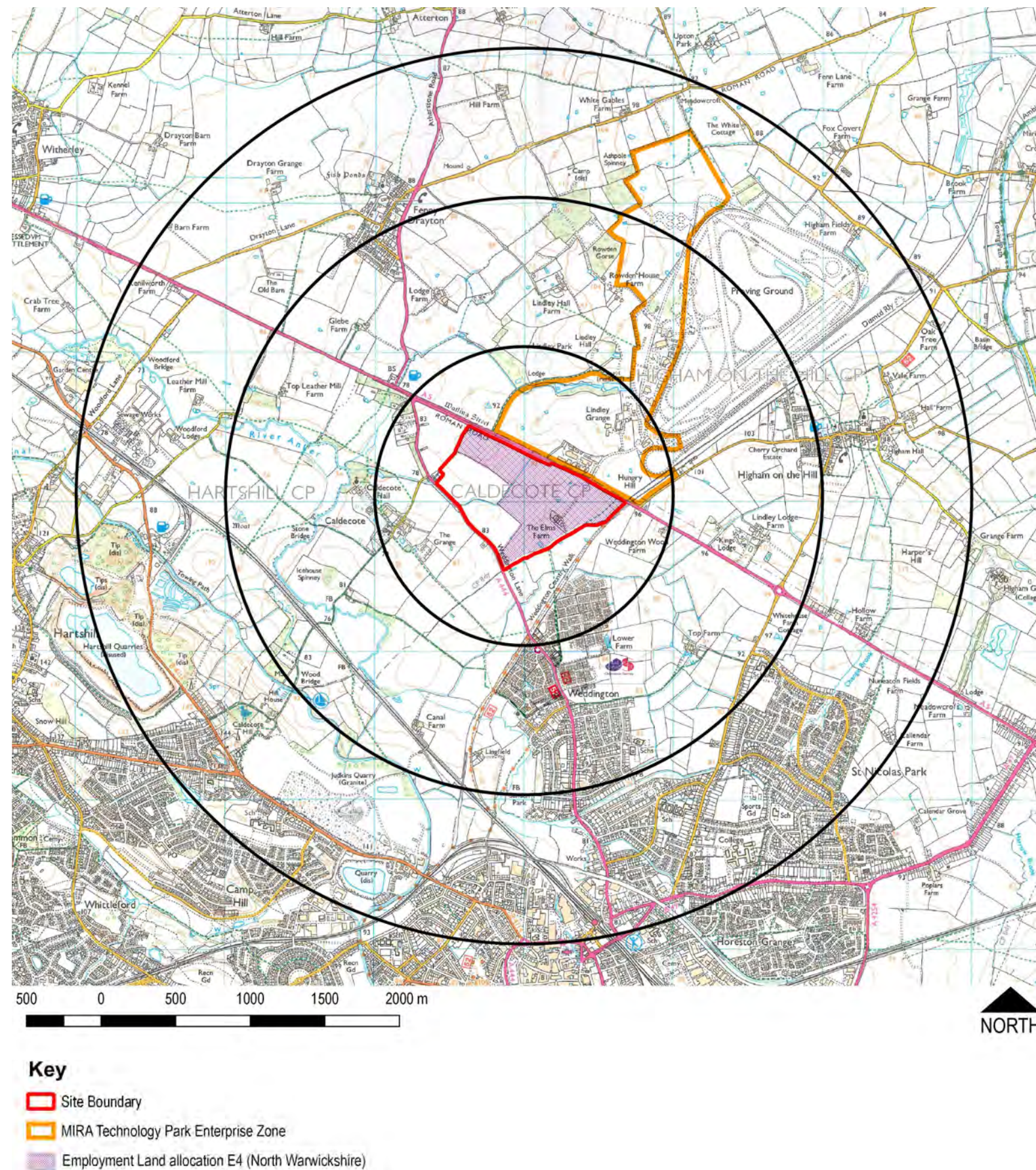
- Introduction; report structure; project brief; site location;
- Policy framework; planning policies; landscape character assessments; planning evidence;
- Landscape elements, qualities, functions and character: description and sensitivities;
- Views: description and sensitivities;
- Summary of emerging key design drivers; constraints and opportunities.
- Appendix 1: Landscape and Visual Evidence methodology
- Appendix 2: Landscape Baseline Table

1.3. Project brief

1.3.1. The brief for the design team is to produce an outline planning application for the development of land south of the Horiba MIRA site. The brief for landscape architectural input is to advise on a landscape led approach the location and arrangement of site plan on the site and to assess the impact of the development on the wider landscape and views.

1.3.2. A large part of the site is allocated for employment purposes which sets out the parameters of the development and the key sensitivities.

Figure 1 - Site location



1.4. Site location

- 1.4.1. The site is located to the north of Nuneaton, approximately 3.5km from the town centre and is bounded on two sides by roads, the A5 to the north and the A444 to the south-west. The Weddington Country Walk bounds the site to the eastern boundary for approximately 250m and connects the site to Nuneaton town centre by cycle route.
- 1.4.2. The Horiba MIRA site lies to the north, across the A5, and stretches approximately 3km north-east and includes large vehicle testing grounds and numerous research, testing and manufacturing units as well as a training centre, headquarters and office buildings. The Horiba MIRA site contains the 'MIRA Technology Park Enterprise Zone' as indicated by the orange line in Figure 1.
- 1.4.3. The site contains a proportion of land allocated for employment purposes which sets out the parameters of the development and the key sensitivities which is indicated by the purple hatch in Figure 1.

2. Policy and guidance framework

2.1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021)

2.1.1. The NPPF confirms that the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development and that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning policy-making and decision-making should take into account the roles and character of different areas and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services. Paragraph 174 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *'protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)*
- *'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 best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland*
- *'minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures'*

2.1.1.1. Paragraph 100

- *Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.*

2.1.1.2. Paragraph 131

- *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 new streets are tree-lined⁵⁰, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.*

2.2. North Warwickshire Local Plan (Sept 2021)

2.2.1.1. Policy E4 - Land to the south of Horiba MIRA Technology Park & Enterprise Zone

2.2.1.2. Part of the site contains an area allocated within the Local Plan for employment which connects the site to the Horiba MIRA Enterprise Zone to the north of the A5.

2.2.1.3. As well as assessing the heritage and non-heritage assets close to the site, the allocation sets out guidelines for the masterplan of the site, which include:

- *The provision of sustainable transport measures including a cycle and footpath link along the A5 to Atherstone and Mancetter.*
- *Access to the cycle/pedestrian route to the south east of the site.*
- *A significant landscape buffer to the southern and south eastern boundaries of the site.*
- *Means to maximise on site solar energy generation.*
- *Means of controlling lighting and in particular to minimise impact on Caldecote.*
- *The location and type of any small incubator units.*

2.3. Landscape character assessment

2.3.1. Relevant published landscape character assessments are listed below. These have been reviewed and the relevant key characteristics and guidelines taken into account in section 4 and the table in Appendix 3. The most recent of these is the North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment (2010) which has a good level of detail and identifies valued characteristics as well as detractors and strategies. Therefore we have focussed on the North Warwickshire LCA, adding other aspects from the national and NCAs as well as our own observations, where they add to our understanding.

- National Character Assessment - NCA 72 Mease/Sence Lowlands
- Regional Level - North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment (2010) Character Area 3: Anker Valley

2.4. National Design Guide (2021):

The National Design Guide supports paragraph 134 of the NPPF which states that 'development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes.'

The NDG sets out the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics to be used to inform development proposals and their assessment by local planning authorities. The most relevant characteristics to LVE are:

2.4.1. Characteristic 1: Context: Enhances the surroundings

2.4.1.1. Para 38 describes this 'the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings.' Para 39 states that 'An understanding of the context, history and the cultural characteristics of a site, neighbourhood and region influences the location, siting and design of new developments. It means they are well grounded in their locality and more likely to be acceptable to existing communities. Creating a positive sense of place helps to foster a sense of belonging and contributes to well-being, inclusion and community cohesion.'

2.4.1.2. Para 40 states that well-designed places are:

- based on a sound understanding of the features of the site and the surrounding context, using baseline studies as a starting point for design;
- integrated into their surroundings so they relate well to them;
- influenced by and influence their context positively; and
- responsive to local history, culture and heritage.

2.4.2. Characteristic 2: Identity: Attractive and distinctive

2.4.2.1. Para 50 describes this as 'the identity or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is not just about the buildings or how a place looks, but how it engages with all of the senses. Local character makes places distinctive. Well-designed, sustainable places with a strong identity give their users, occupiers and owners a sense of pride, helping to create and sustain communities and neighbourhoods.'

2.4.2.2. Para 51 states that Well-designed places, buildings and spaces:

- have a positive and coherent identity that everyone can identify with, including residents and local communities, so contributing towards health and well-being, inclusion and cohesion;
- have a character that suits the context, its history, how we live today and how we are likely to live in the future; and
- are visually attractive, to delight their occupants and other users.

2.4.3. Characteristic 5: Nature: Enhanced and optimised

2.4.3.1. Para 90 describes this as ‘Nature contributes to the quality of a place, and to people’s quality of life, and it is a critical component of well-designed places. Natural features are integrated into well-designed development. They include natural and designed landscapes, high quality public open spaces, street trees, and other trees, grass, planting and water.’

2.4.3.2. Para 91 states that well-designed places:

- integrate existing, and incorporate new natural features into a multifunctional network that supports quality of place, biodiversity and water management, and addresses climate change mitigation and resilience;
- prioritise nature so that diverse ecosystems can flourish to ensure a healthy natural environment that supports and enhances biodiversity;
- provide attractive open spaces in locations that are easy to access, with activities for all to enjoy, such as play, food production, recreation and sport, so as to encourage physical activity and promote health, well-being and social inclusion.

2.5. Summary

2.5.1. The key implications of the above policies, assessments and guidance have been considered further in relation to landscape and visual aspects in the following sections 4-6.

3. Landscape elements, qualities, functions and character

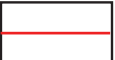
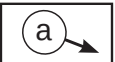
3.1. Methodology

3.1.1. The landscape elements, qualities, functions, and character of the site and its wider area are described in the table set out in Appendix 3 and summarised below. These form the landscape baseline evidence which both informs the development proposals and, where likely to be affected by the development, form the landscape receptors against which the proposals are assessed. The sensitivity of landscape receptors is established by combining judgements on value with those on susceptibility to the type of change proposed, in line with the methodology set out in Appendix 1.

Figure 2 - Site description



Key

-  Site boundary
-  Site view
-  Gated entrance from A5

3.2. General description of existing site and setting

- 3.2.1. The site comprises of large arable, predominantly bounded by mature hedgerows and drainage ditches. The A5 Watling Street runs the entirety of the northern boundary with large mature vegetation to the eastern boundary. To the north of the site lies the Horiba MIRA Technology Park, a vehicle proving grounds and also numerous large scale buildings and infrastructure to support them. Access to the site can be gained via a gated entrance on the A5 from a roundabout and a small agricultural track to the south.

Figure 3 - Site photos

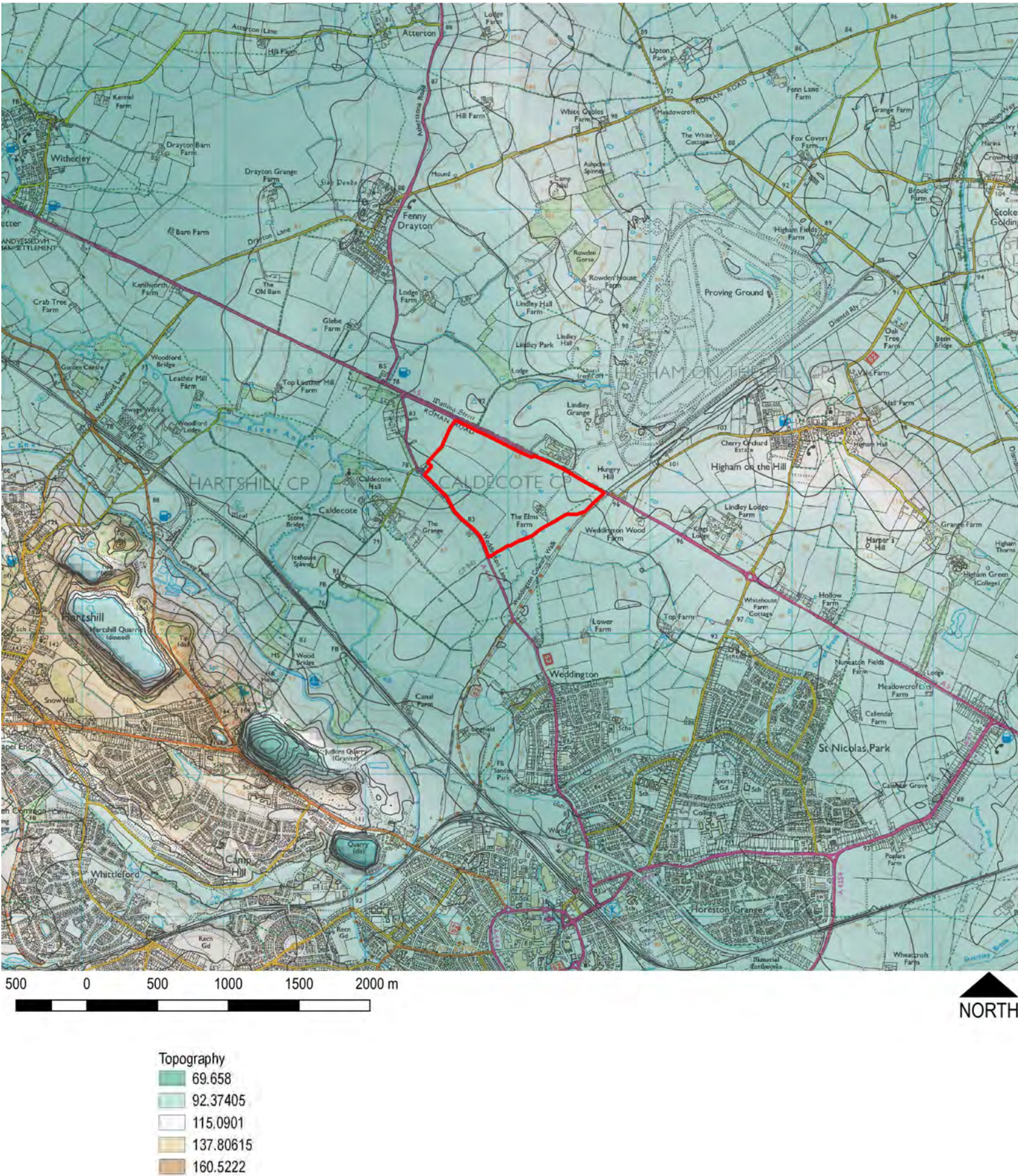


Viewpoint a: View towards the centre of site with strong boundary trees to the western boundary (left of photo). The gentle rolling topography of the site is evident, with the ground plane to the south obscured by landform. In the far distance, higher ground is visible to the south of the site.



Viewpoint c: View towards centre of the site from the south-west with strong hedgerow to the south (right of photo) and internal ditch and vegetation within the site (left of photo). The large scale of the fieldscape is evident and the topography of the site is also seen from this viewpoint.

Figure 4 - Topography



3.3. Geology, topography, soils

- 3.3.1. The site slopes dramatically from the north, bordering the A5, to the south, bordering the A444.
- 3.3.2. The site sits within a broad, open valley with higher land to the south, around Hartshill which can be seen in Figure 4. Extensive mining on the higher ground is evident from the topographic mapping and can also be seen from the site.
- 3.3.3. There are areas of flat land that has signs of flooding, possibly due to poor soil drainage in the area. The site soils are likely to contain a high clay content as found on the Horiba MIRA site to the north.
- 3.3.4. Any effects on topography will be confined to the site itself. Topography is one of the key characteristics of the site and its immediate context, contributing to the character of the site through its relative elevated position which affords views towards higher ground the south it therefore is of a medium value, but has high susceptibility to the type of change. Overall this element has a medium/high sensitivity at the appraisal stage.

Detailed topography (key not applicable)

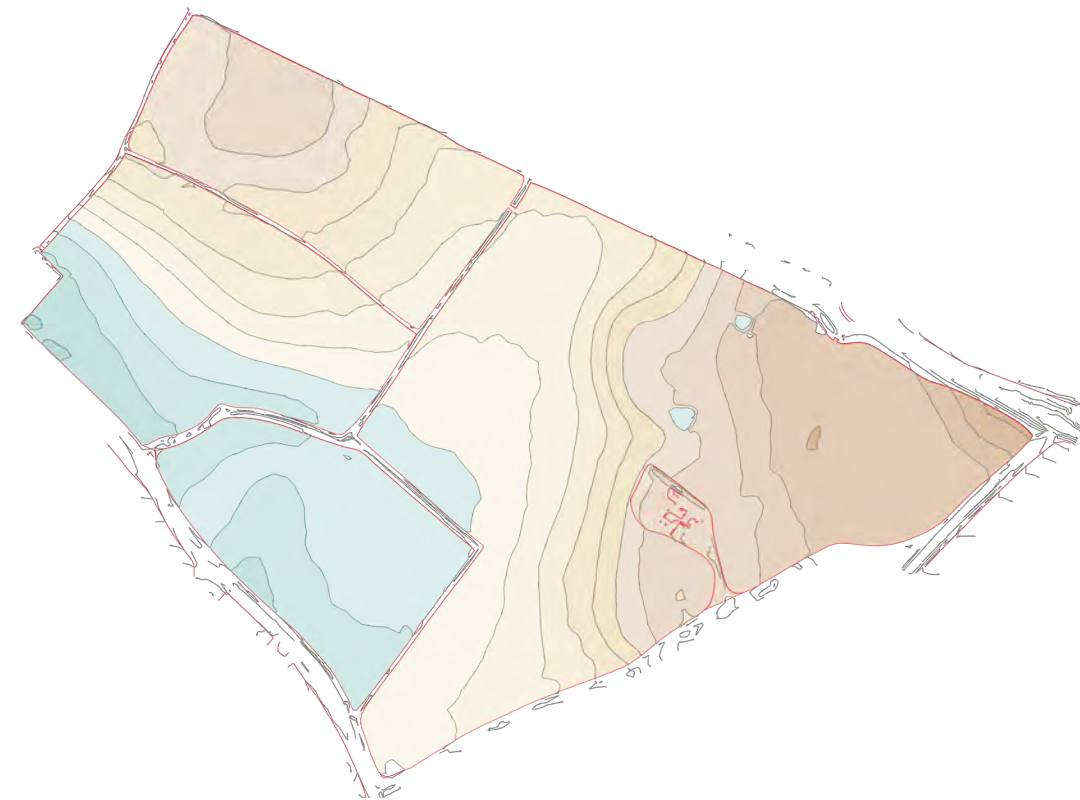


Figure 5 - Vegetation and biodiversity



3.4. Site vegetation and biodiversity

- 3.4.1. The site's internal areas contained very little vegetation due to the crop cover but has a connected network of established hedgerows. These contain a mixture of species, predominantly hawthorn, blackthorn and field maple and have very few hedgerow trees.
- 3.4.2. Any effects on the vegetation will be confined to the site itself. Vegetation is one of the key characteristics of the site and its immediate context, contributing to the character of the site with a strong hedgerow framework and strong, mature eastern boundary. The vegetation and biodiversity of the site has a high susceptibility to the type of change and overall has a high sensitivity at the appraisal stage.

3.5. Eastern boundary trees

- 3.5.1. The site's eastern boundary contains a large number of mature trees which are a significant positive landscape feature. The species are predominantly oak, field maple and ash with some specimens approximately 16m tall. The trees offer a substantial boundary to the eastern side of the site and provide significant ecological benefit.
- 3.5.2. The trees along this boundary are not necessarily reflective of the wider vegetation on site so are seen as a separate landscape receptor with a high susceptibility to change and an overall high sensitivity.

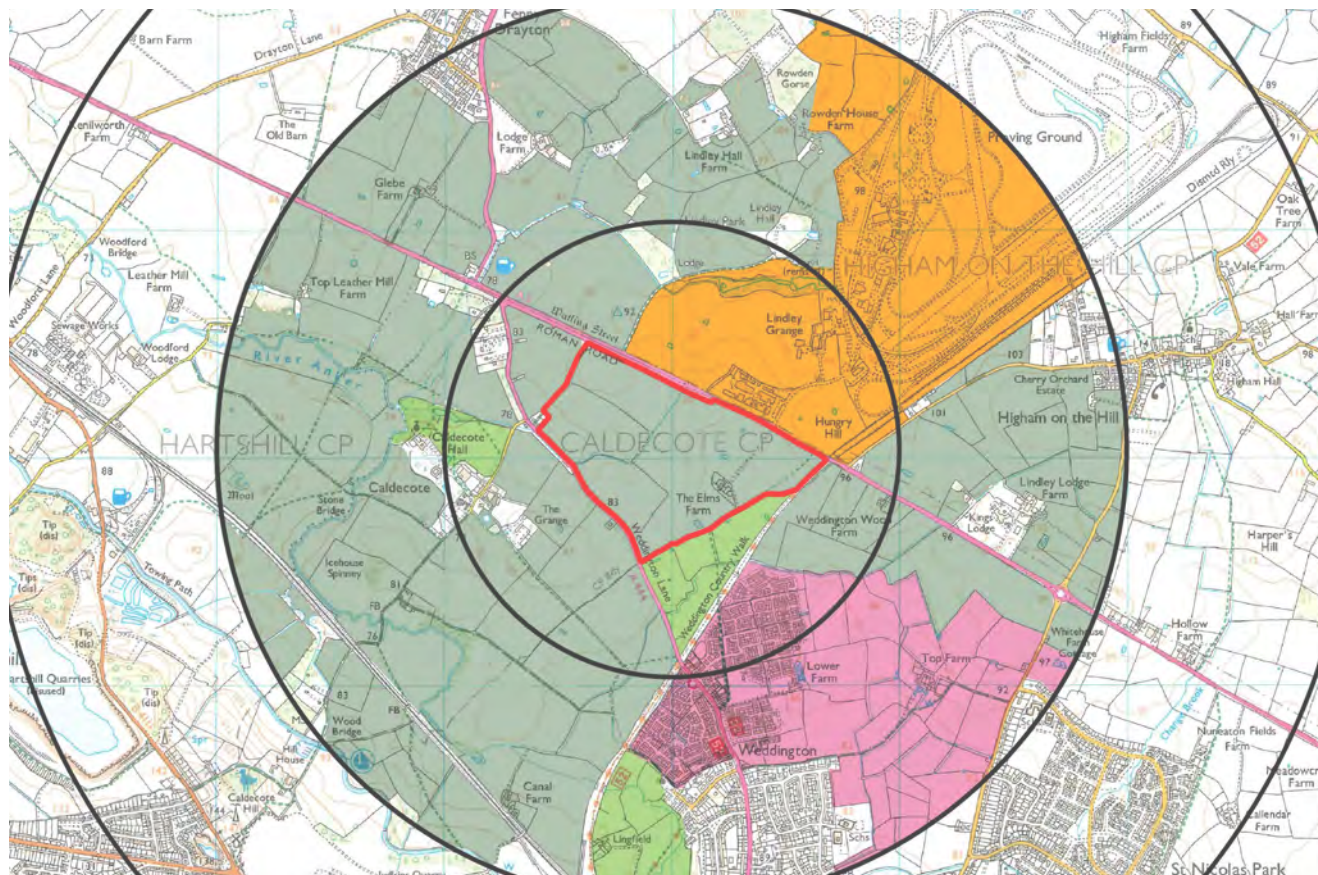
Figure 6 - Hydrology



3.6. Hydrology

- 3.6.1. The site contains a number of drainage ditches which link together and appear to connect to a stream at the southern edge of the site. The site also contains two ponds which (at the time of visiting) contained a small amount of water.
- 3.6.2. The hydrological function of the ditches on the site provide a valuable function and contribute positively to the site's character. This is typical of the wider landscape with wetlands being a feature in the wider landscape character area, therefore would be susceptible to any changes. The overall the hydrological function of the site has a medium sensitivity.

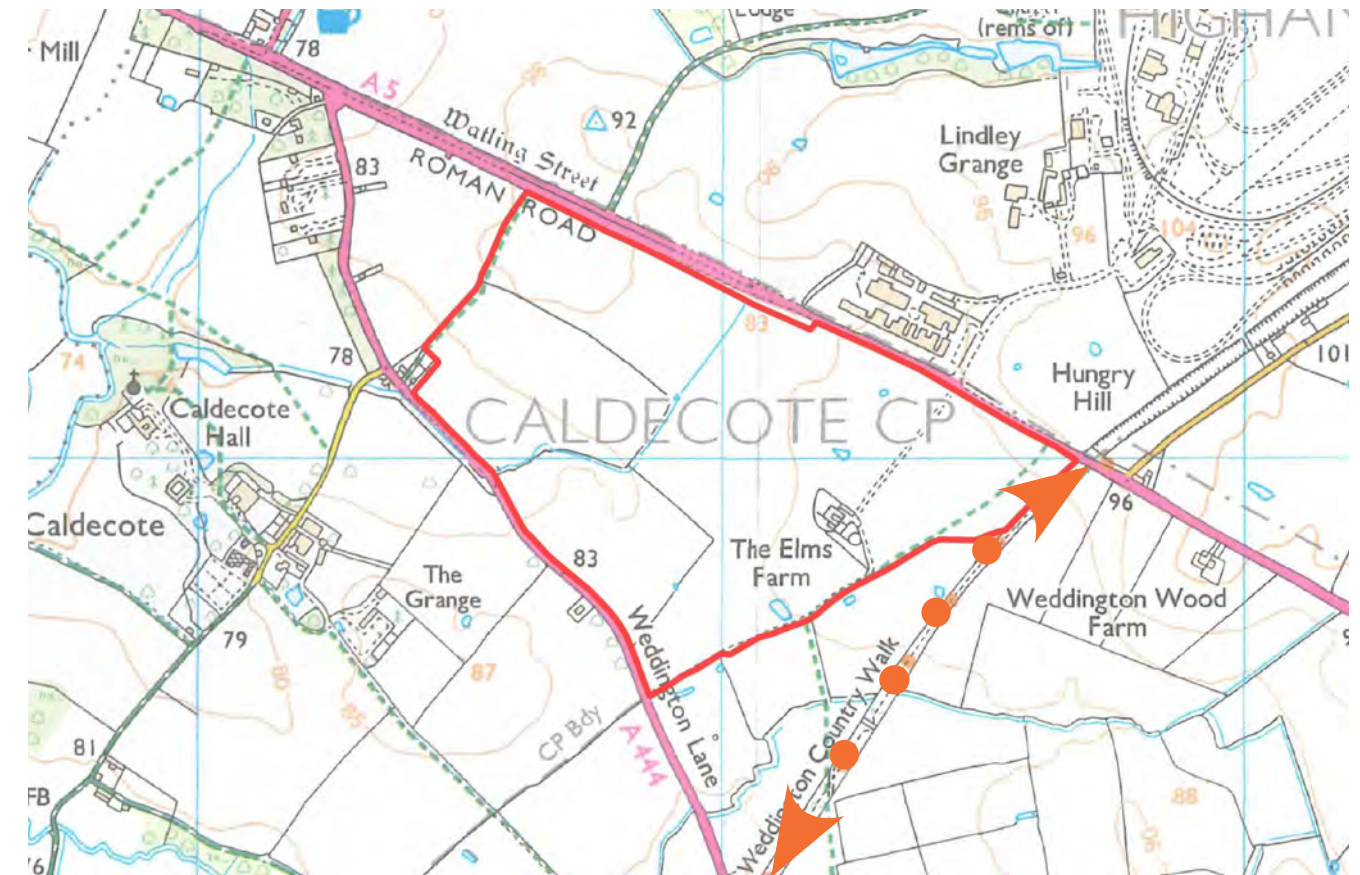
Figure 7 - Land use



3.7. Land use

- 3.7.1. Land use across the site contained entirely arable farming (shown in dark green) with a variation of crops which is typical of the wider landscape. There are small pockets of parkland landscape and informal parks. An area of informal park bounds the site to the south-east (shown in light green) and appears to be used by local residents, although this is likely to have been previously used for pasture.
- 3.7.2. The arable fields around the site are large-scale but get smaller, the closer to the trainline and river Anker with some of these smaller fields being pastoral. There are significant residential areas planned for the north of Nuneaton which extend close to the site and A5.
- 3.7.3. The Horiba MIRA site (shown in orange) is evident on site which contains a number of different land uses, some of which are completely unique. The A5 is a physical barrier between the site and the Horiba MIRA site although a number of buildings face onto the site.
- 3.7.4. Any changes on the land use of the site will also effect the surrounding land use as it is a key characteristic of the local landscape. The land use of the site and its surroundings has a medium susceptibility to the type of change due to its proximity to the MIRA site and overall has a medium sensitivity at the appraisal stage.

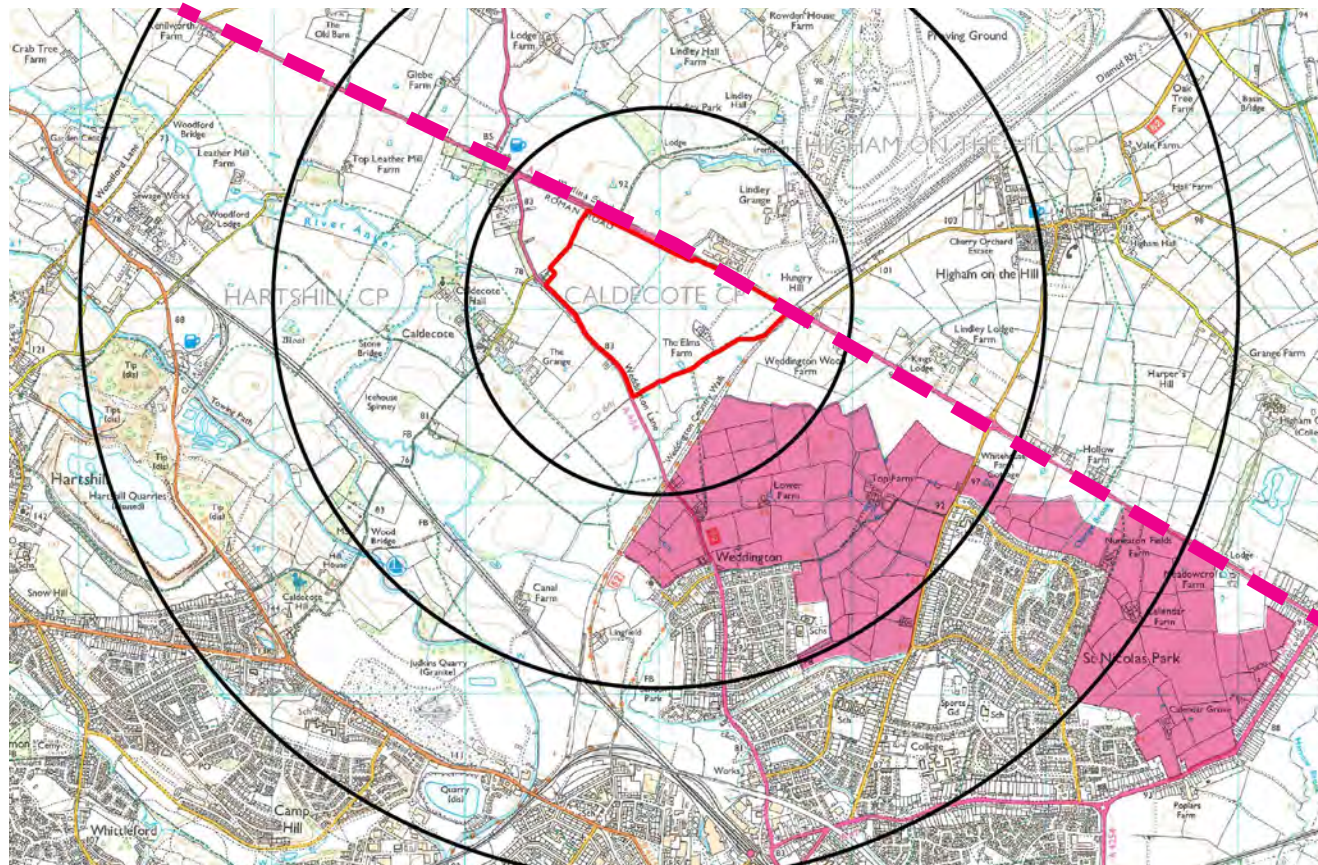
Figure 8 - Access and recreation



3.8. Access and Recreation

- 3.8.1. The Weddington Country Walk runs along part of the eastern boundary, which is a long distance cycle route connecting north Nuneaton to the A5. This is well used by local residents and users are likely to be highly sensitive to change.
- 3.8.2. The site also contains two Public Right of Way which both run diagonally across the site but do not appear connected or well maintained.
- 3.8.3. Any changes to the access and recreation will likely affect the wider landscape as the footpaths connect much of the surrounding area to Nuneaton town centre and its peripheral towns and villages. This landscape element is judged to have a medium susceptibility to the type of change with an overall medium sensitivity.

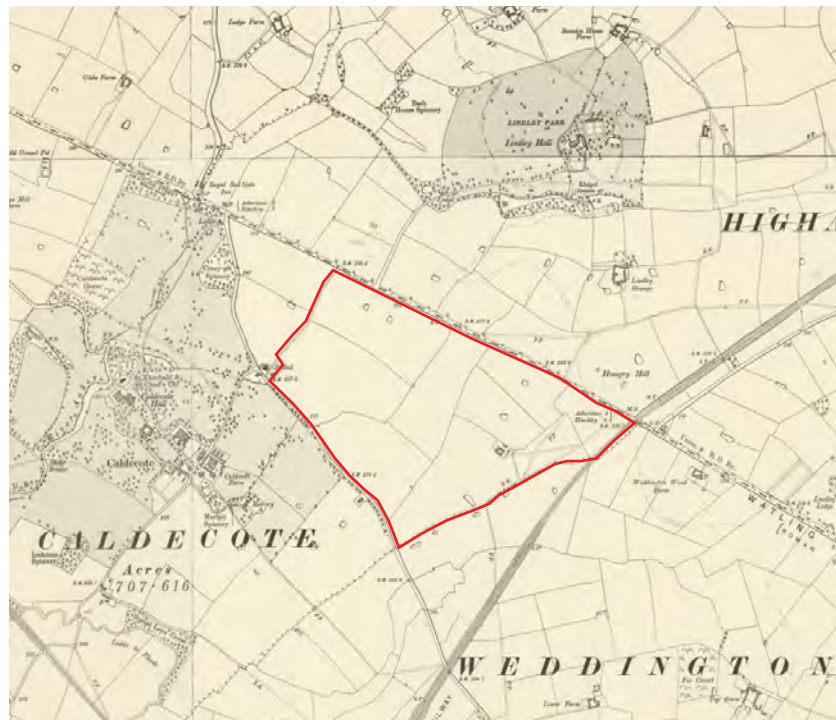
Figure 9 - Settlement and road pattern



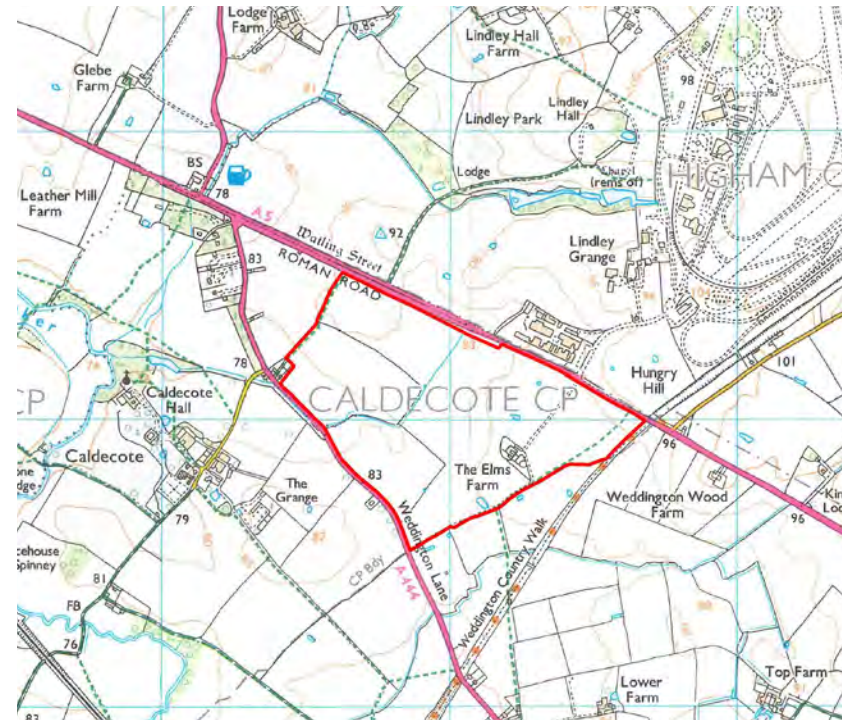
3.9. Settlement and road pattern

- 3.9.1. The site sits outside of any settlement, with Nuneaton to the south-east (not visually connected) with little to no settlement close to the site but there is significant housing developments to the north of Nuneaton and Weddington (shown with pink hatch). This new development abuts the Weddington Walk, to the east, whilst it does not connect to the site, the proposed development does significantly extend the settlement to the north.
- 3.9.2. The vegetation to the south-eastern boundary contributes positively to the settlement pattern, offering a buffer to the residential development in Weddington and a green network of hedgerows within the site provides a backdrop for any proposed development. A green framework within the site should inform the proposed development. We ascribe a medium overall sensitivity to this aspect.

Figure 10 - Landscape Elements - Heritage



1888-1913 historic map



Current OS map

3.10. Heritage

- 3.10.1. The north of the site is bounded by the A5 Watling Street which is an historic route that was used by ancient Britons and the roman Empire and was considered to be the southwestern boundary between Danelaw, Wessex and Mercia. The long-standing route has likely defined the settlement pattern along its route, for example, the A5 defines the boundary between Warwickshire and Leicestershire.
- 3.10.2. The Weddington Country Walk contains a bench with the inscription 'IN LOVING MEMORY OF BOUDICA, QUEEN OF THE ICENI, WHO DIED NEAR WATLING STREET' shown in the bottom photo.
- 3.10.3. The western boundary of the site lies close (approx.500m) to Caldecote Hall, a Victorian Manor house that sits within a parkland landscape. The estate contains the church of Theobald and Saint Chad which is a grade II* listed building.
- 3.10.4. Although the sites surroundings contains some historic elements, they are not apparent on site (a separate archaeological report will deal with this) and are therefore do not strongly contribute to the site's landscape character, and we ascribe a low value and susceptibility to change resulting in a low sensitivity.



Memorial bench with Boudica inscription on Weddington Walk

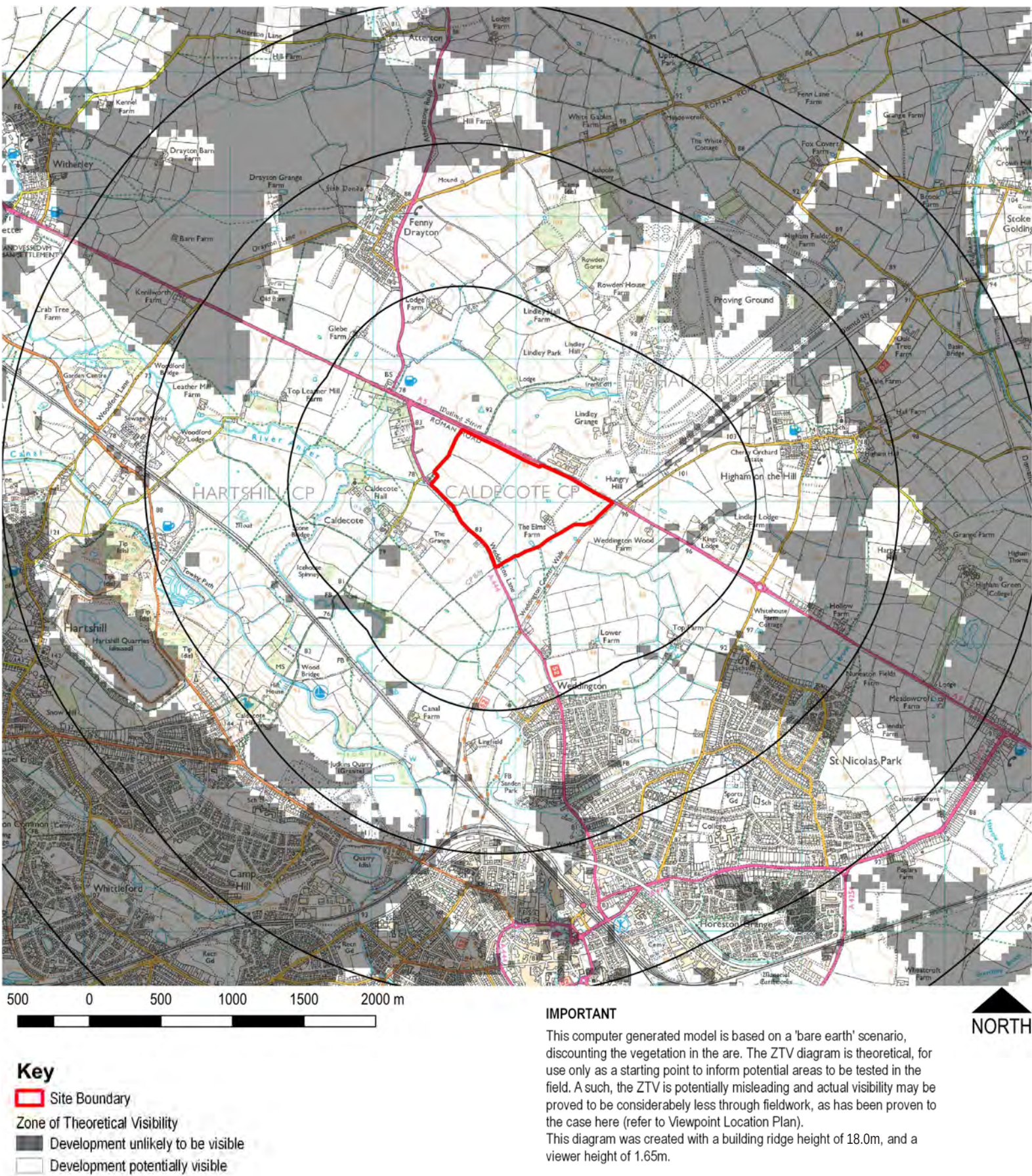
3.11. Perceptual qualities

- 3.11.1. The site sits within a predominantly agricultural landscape and therefore contains elements that contributes positively to a rural character. The site is not within any statutory landscape designations and is broadly representative of the wider landscape character area, Anker Valley.
- 3.11.2. As identified in the wider landscape character assessment, busy transport corridors influence the rural, tranquil nature of the landscape character area. The north of the site is negatively affected by the road and traffic noise of the A5 which is a national speed limit road.
- 3.11.3. Further to the south, the aural intrusion from traffic is lessened due to the lower ground level. There are far reaching views to the south, where the valley sharply rises and extraction works are visible. To the north, views of the Horiba MIRA site are prevalent with long facades along the A5.
- 3.11.4. To the north, views of the Horiba MIRA site are prevalent with long facades along the A5. There are far reaching views to the south, where the valley sharply rises and extraction works are visible. This is identified in the landscape character assessment as a key characteristic and we therefore ascribe a medium overall sensitivity to this aspect.

3.12. Condition

- 3.12.1. The site is broadly representative of the wider landscape, as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment, with large scale arable fields lined by mixed native hedgerows. The wider character area suffers from the negative influences of the A5 transport corridor and this is apparent on the site.
- 3.12.2. The LCA also identifies the negative impact of large scale development on the landscape character, in particular around Atherstone. The LCA management objective is to conserve and restore the rural character of the area.
- 3.12.3. The sites proximity to busy roads lessens its value and susceptibility to change and we would therefore ascribe an overall medium sensitivity to this element.

Figure 11 - Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)

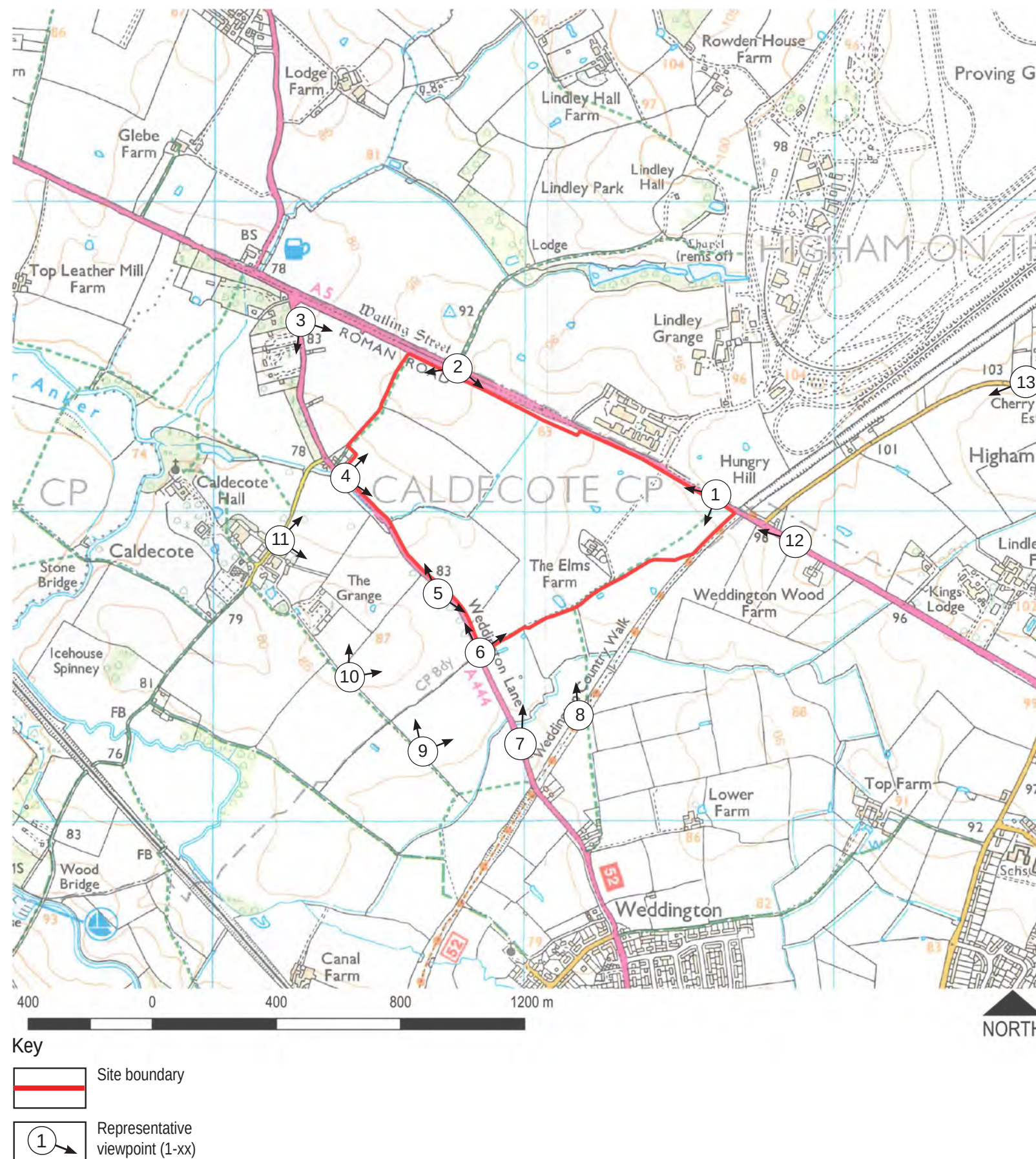


4. Views

4.1. Methodology

- 4.1.1. The visibility of the site is influenced by the topography of the surrounding area and the presence of features such as buildings and vegetation. The topography of the area is illustrated in Figure 4 and this is the basis for the diagram showing the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) Figure 11. The ZTV is used to guide fieldwork, ruling out areas where the likely proposed development would be screened by landform. The visual study zone has been limited to 3 km, beyond which views are unlikely to be affected. Likely views from private houses are assessed from within the site.
- 4.1.2. Figures 12 and 21 indicate the location of photographic viewpoints. Figures 13 to 20 and 22 to 24 set out photographs annotated to describe the distance of the viewpoint from the site, the direction of the view, the nature of the viewpoint, type and relative numbers of visual receptors and the visibility of the existing site. Views of a similar nature which are likely to be affected by the development, are grouped together below and an overall assessment of the sensitivity of the view receptors is made by combining judgements on value with those on susceptibility to the type of change proposed, in line with the methodology set out in Appendix 1. These view receptors form the visual receptors against which the proposals are assessed. The potential visibility of the proposed development and any seasonal changes to that visibility are also described next to each photograph and this informs the emerging development proposals. Viewpoints with no existing or potential view of the site are not considered further.

Figure 12 - Viewpoint location diagram 1km



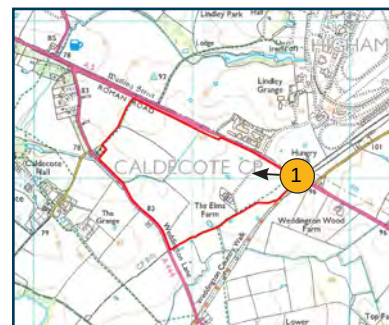
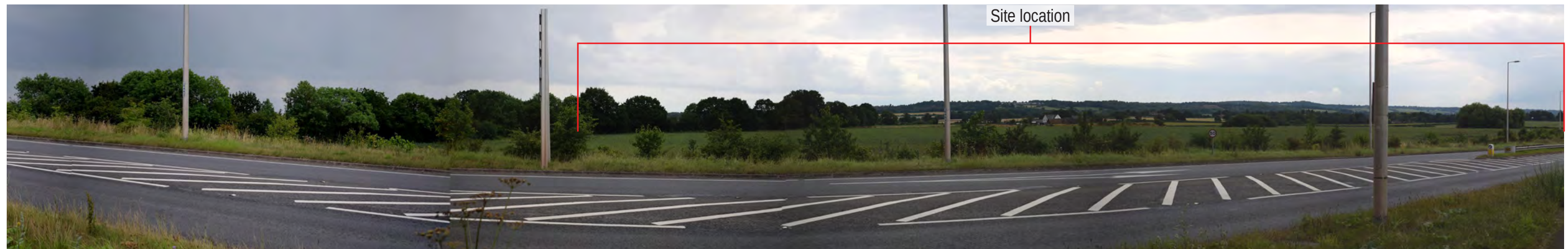
4.2. General description of visibility

- 4.2.1. Much of the site is visible from the north, when travelling on the A5 or from the limited footpaths to the north with the higher ground to the south forming a backdrop. Views from footpaths to the south of the A444 are likely to be more sensitive receptors, including the private houses near Caldecote.

4.3. Specific viewpoints

- 4.3.1. Viewpoints represent as wide a range of situations as possible within the area of possible visibility as defined by the ZTV and include identified important views, sequential views along key routes, and views representative of a range of contexts and view receptors, at a range of distances. Figure 12 indicates the location of photographic viewpoints. Figures 13-22 set out photographs annotated to describe the distance of the viewpoint from the site, the direction of the view, the nature of the viewpoint, type and relative numbers of visual receptors and the visibility of the existing site. This forms the visual baseline. The potential visibility of the proposed development and any seasonal changes to that visibility are also described next to each photograph and this informs the emerging development proposals.

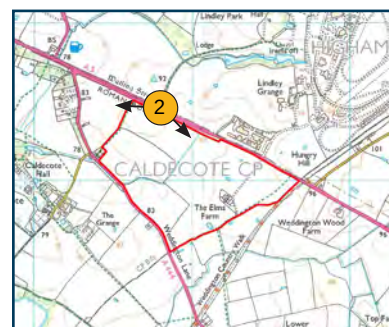
Figure 13 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoints 1



4.4. View from A5 footpath (viewpoints 1)

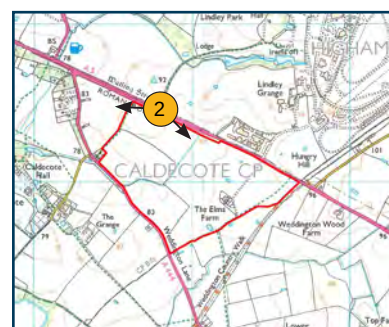
- 4.4.1. These views represent a progression along the north boundary of the site along the route of the A5 footpath. View receptors would be mostly drivers on the road who would be travelling at speed in a oblique angle to the site boundary. As the view is outside of any settlement there may be some expectation of open countryside which gives these views some, but not the highest, value and susceptibility to the type of change. Therefore we assign these views an overall medium sensitivity.

Figure 14 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoint 2



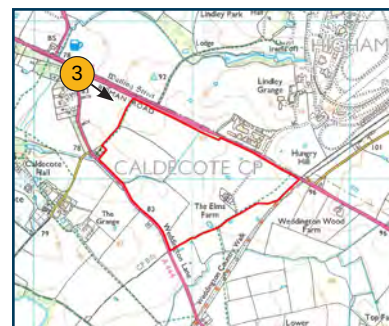
4.5. View from A5 footpath (viewpoints 2a and 2b)

4.5.1. These views represent a progression along the north boundary of the site along the route of the A5 footpath. View receptors would be mostly drivers on the road who would be travelling at speed in a oblique angle to the site boundary. As the view is outside of any settlement there may be some expectation of open countryside which gives these views some, but not the highest, value and susceptibility to the type of change. Therefore we assign these views an overall medium sensitivity.



Viewpoint 2b

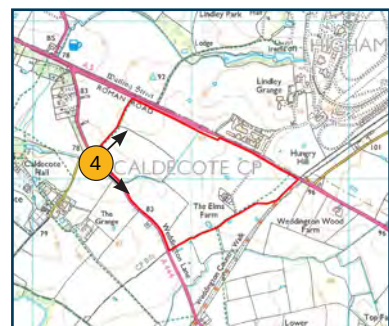
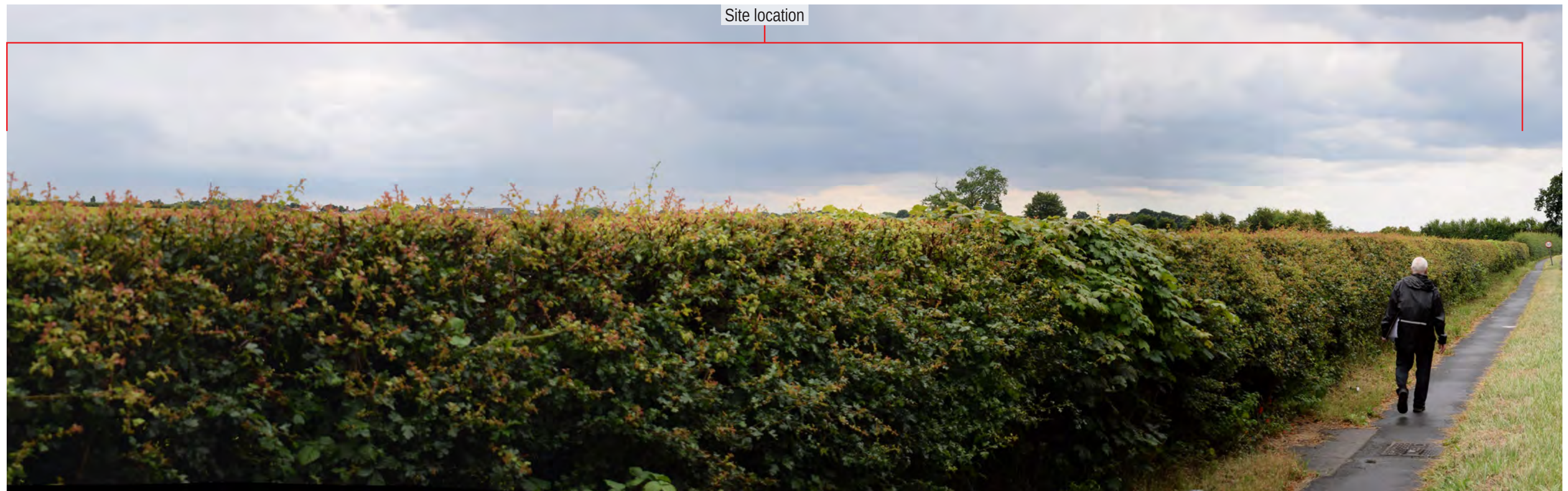
Figure 15 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoint 3



4.6. View from A444 (viewpoint 3)

- 4.6.1. Looking west from A444 towards site from approximately 400m away. The the land in the foreground rises to the site boundary obscuring the site's ground plane. The A444 is a semi-rural road that connects the A5 to Weddington and contains a large amount of trees on both sides of the road. View receptors would be mostly drivers on the road who would be travelling more slowly than on the A5 road and generally with their attention on the road ahead, but also cyclists and walkers who would be more focussed on their surroundings. As the view is outside of any settlement there may be some expectation of open countryside which gives these views some, but not the highest, value and susceptibility to the type of change. Therefore we assign these views an overall medium sensitivity.

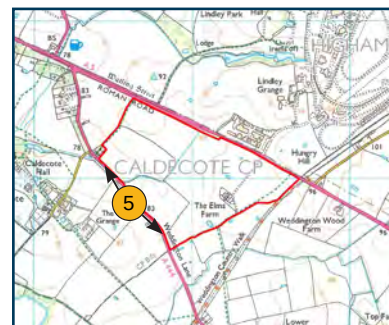
Figure 16 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoint 4



4.7. View from A444 (viewpoints 4)

- 4.7.1. Looking north-east towards the site from the A444 footpath, the view is dominated by the boundary hedgerow which is predominantly hawthorn. Some large trees are visible in the background but views are foreshortened by the hedgerow. View receptors would be mostly drivers on the road who would be travelling more slowly than on the A5 road and generally with their attention on the road ahead, but also cyclists and walkers who would be more focussed on their surroundings. As the view is outside of any settlement there may be some expectation of open countryside which gives these views some, but not the highest, value and susceptibility to the type of change. Therefore we assign these views an overall medium sensitivity.

Figure 17 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoint 5



4.8. View from A444 footpath (viewpoints 5a)

4.8.1. Looking north towards the site from the A444 footpath, the view is dominated by the boundary hedgerow which is predominantly hawthorn. Some large trees are visible in the background but views are foreshortened by the hedgerow. View receptors would be mostly drivers on the road who would be travelling more slowly than on the A5 road and generally with their attention on the road ahead, but also cyclists and walkers who would be more focussed on their surroundings. As the view is outside of any settlement there may be some expectation of open countryside which gives these views some, but not the highest, value and susceptibility to the type of change. Therefore we assign these views an overall medium sensitivity.



Viewpoint 5b

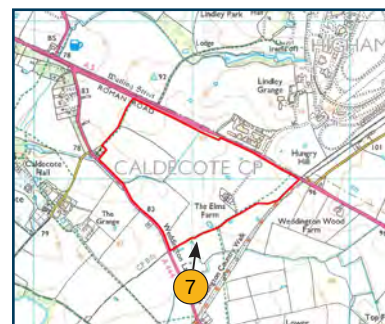
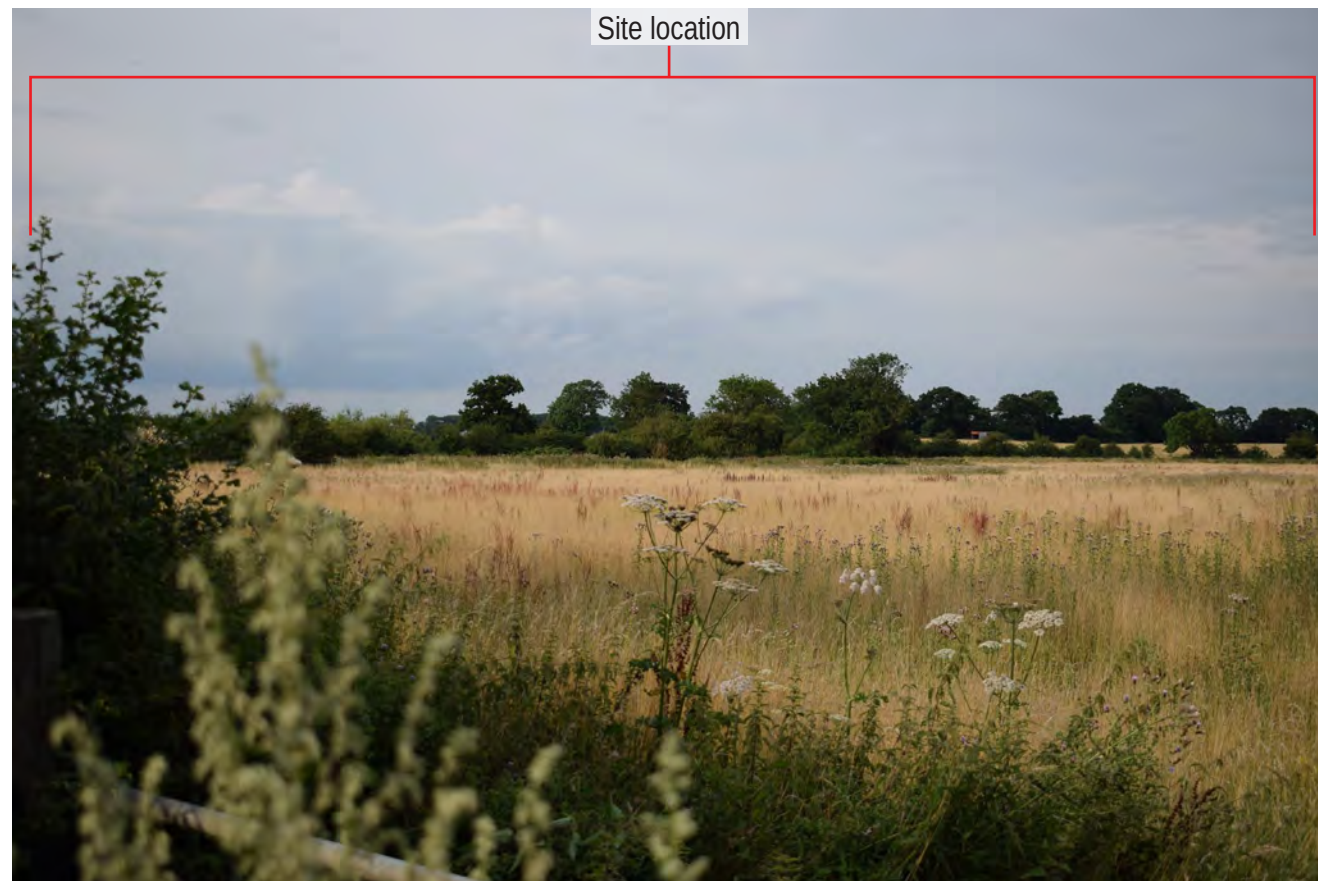
Figure 18 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoint 6



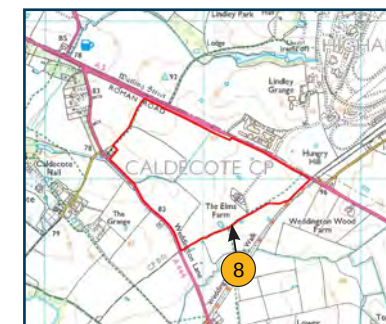
4.9. View from A444 (viewpoints 6)

- 4.9.1. Looking north towards the site from the A444 footpath, the view is dominated by the boundary hedgerow which is predominantly hawthorn with an agricultural gate and entrance to the site, serving Elms Farm. Some large trees are visible in the background but views are foreshortened by the hedgerow. View receptors would be mostly drivers on the road who would be travelling more slowly than on the A5 road and generally with their attention on the road ahead, but also cyclists and walkers who would be more focussed on their surroundings. As the view is outside of any settlement there may be some expectation of open countryside which gives these views some, but not the highest, value and susceptibility to the type of change. Therefore we assign these views an overall medium sensitivity.

Figure 19 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoints 7-8



Viewpoint 7:
Looking north approximately 450m south of the site, from Weddington Country Walk. The view is dominated by the vegetation on the Weddington Walk and the mature trees to the south of the site. The Weddington Walk has a leafy rural character with views from its elevated position.

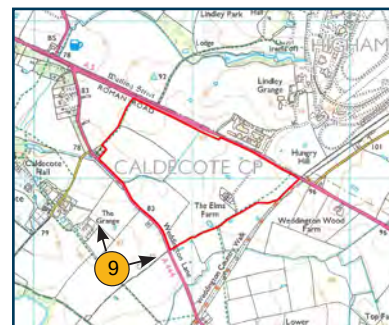


Viewpoint 8:
Looking north approximately 450m south of the site, from Weddington Country Walk. The view is dominated by the vegetation on the Weddington Walk and the mature trees to the south of the site. The Weddington Walk has a leafy rural character with views from its elevated position.

4.10. View from Weddington Walk (viewpoints 7 and 8)

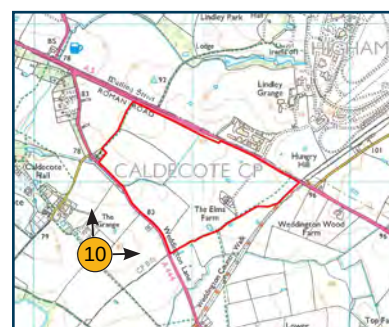
- 4.10.1. These viewpoints represent the progression along the Weddington Country Walk by pedestrians or cyclists from the local area. The users are likely to be engaged with their surroundings and therefore will have a expectation of scenic beauty which gives these views high value and susceptibility to the type of change. Therefore, we assign these views an overall high sensitivity.

Figure 20 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoints 9-10



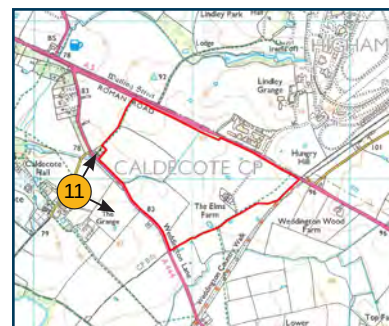
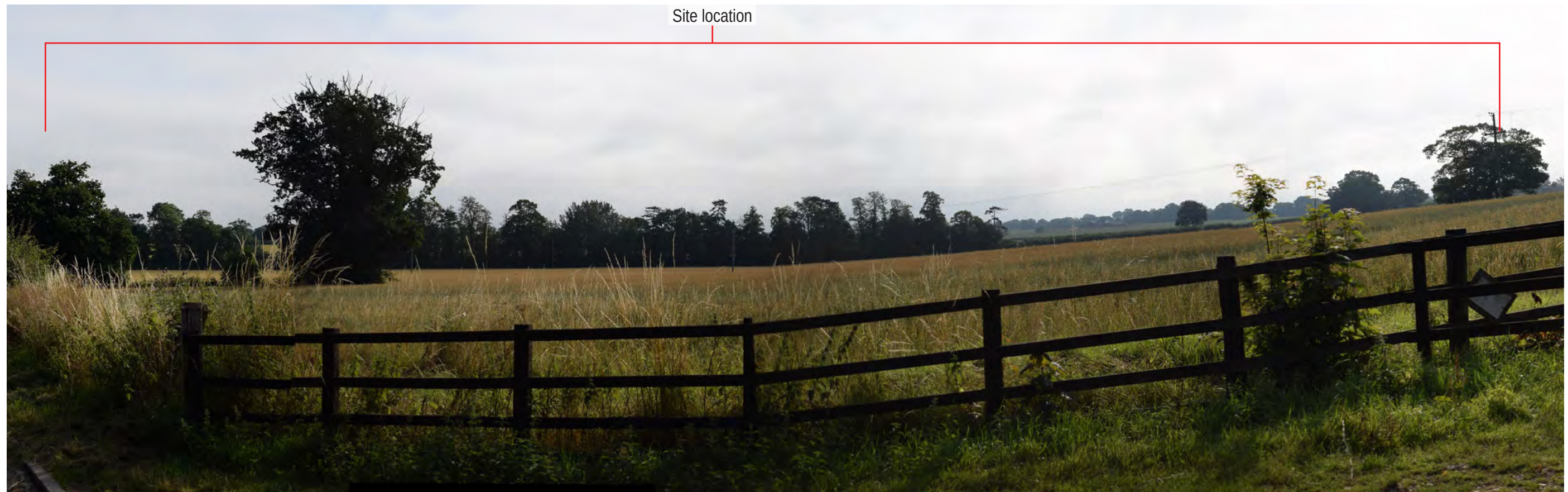
4.11. View from Public Right of Way to south of site (viewpoint 9 and 10)

4.11.1. These views represent a progression along the lane along the PRow to the south of the site, facing north, towards the A5. These views are far reaching and span from the large arable fields in the foreground, the Horiba MIRA site in the background, although this is distant and not in the direction of travel along the footpath. View receptors would mostly be walkers but also cyclists and potentially horse-riders who would be more focussed on their surroundings and would all have an expectation of scenic beauty. This would result in a high value and susceptibility to change and therefore we assign these views an high sensitivity.



Viewpoint 10

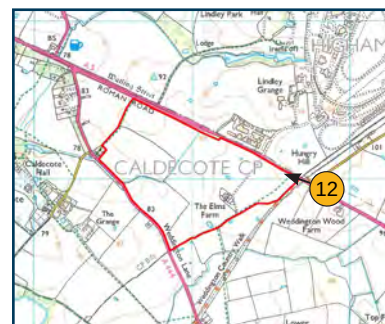
Figure 21 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoint 11



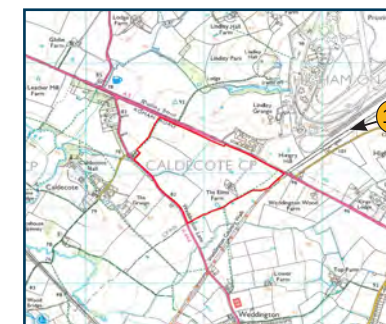
4.12. View from Caldecote (viewpoint 11)

4.12.1. This view represents the view from Caldecote village, to the south-east, approximately 300m from the closest part of the site. A large proportion of the view is foreshortened by the arable field in the intervening view with large, mature trees blocking much of the view towards the site with some of the ground plane of the site is visible, including Elms Farm. Receptors from this view are likely to be drivers accessing the village but may also include walkers and horse-riders who may have a view from an elevated position. It is likely that the receptors will have a greater engagement with their surroundings and would all have an expectation of scenic beauty. This would result in a high value and susceptibility to change and therefore we assign these views an high sensitivity.

Figure 22 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoints 12-13



Viewpoint 12:
Looking west from approximately 200m from the site's north-eastern corner on the A5. Trees and hedges along the road screen the site beyond. The A5 is a national speed limit road.
The site is not visible from this view.

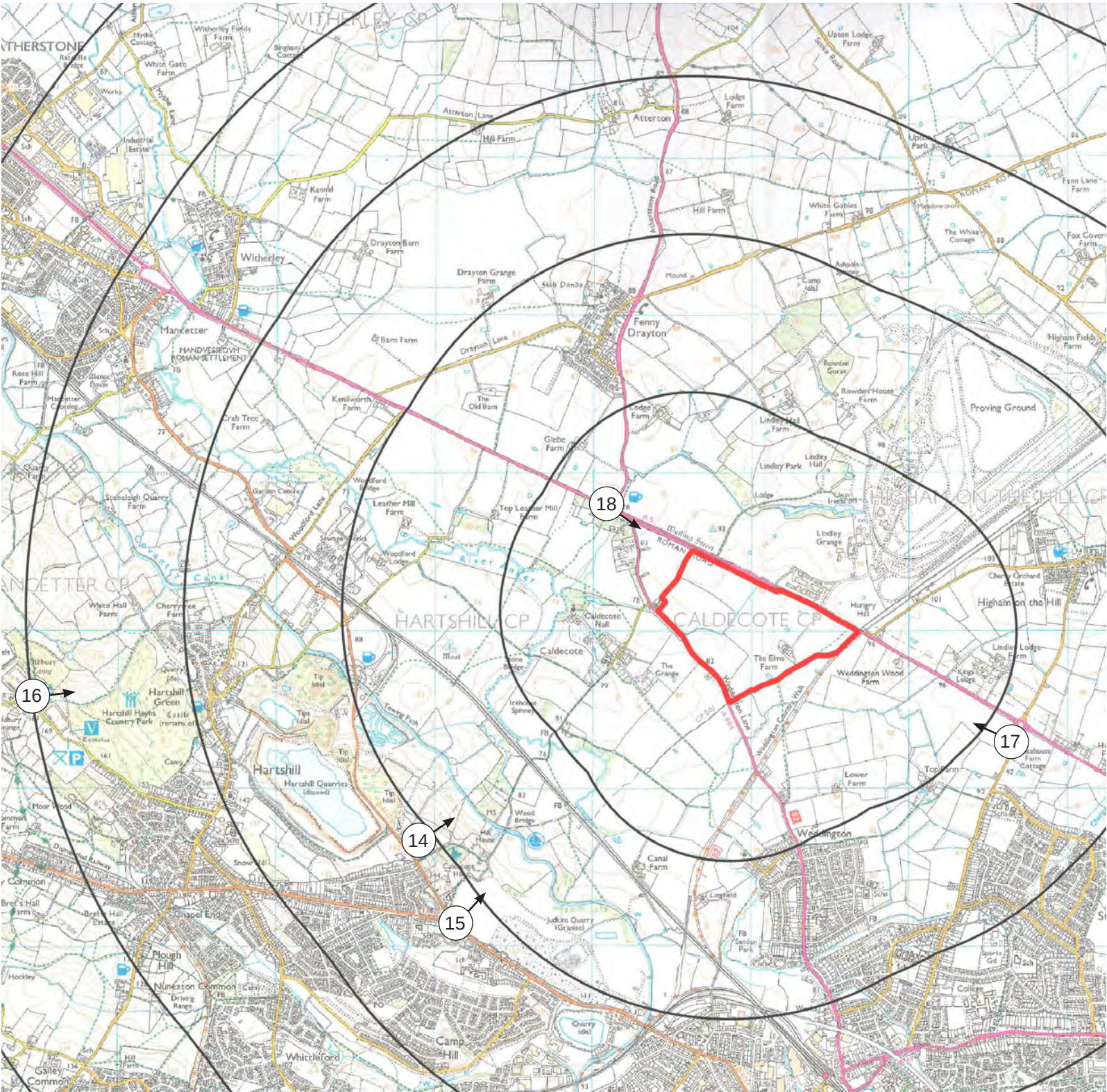


Viewpoint 13:
Looking south-east from approximately 1km from the site's north-eastern corner on the A5. Trees and hedges along the road screen the site beyond.
The site is not visible from this view.

4.13. View from A5 and Higham Hill (viewpoints 12-13)

4.13.1. These views represent views from local roads to the east of the site's north-eastern boundary. View receptors would mostly be drivers on the road who would be travelling with their attention on the road ahead, but also cyclists who may more focussed on their surroundings. The views are far reaching to the south with higher ground in the south, visible to the receptors. As the view is outside of any settlement there may be some expectation of open countryside which gives these views some, but not the highest, value and susceptibility to the type of change. Therefore we assign these views an overall medium sensitivity.

Figure 23 - Viewpoint location diagram 4km



Key

Site boundary

Representative viewpoint (14-19)

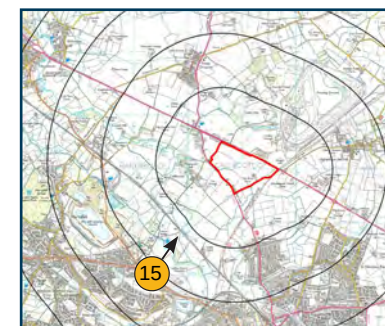
4.14. General description of visibility

4.14.1. Distant views from within the site to the higher ground south of the site indicated the need to test views outside the general scope of the ZTV. The views chosen were identified as those with a higher engagement with the surroundings, such as the Hartshill Country Park.

Figure 24 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoints 14-15



Viewpoint 14:
Looking north-east from approximately 3km from the site's southern boundary. Some intervening vegetation partially screens the site with it in the far distance.

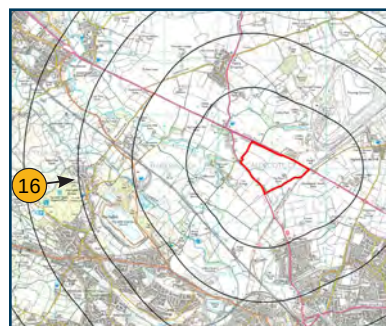


Viewpoint 15:
Looking north-east from approximately 3km from the site's southern boundary. Some intervening vegetation partially screens the site with it in the far distance. The view is dominated by the former quarry.

4.15. View from elevated ground (viewpoints 14-15)

- 4.15.1. These views represent views from higher ground to the south of the site at an elevation of approximately 138m AOD. View receptors are likely to be drivers on the road who would be travelling with their attention on the road ahead. It is likely that walkers using the footpaths would be engaged in their surroundings with the elevated position offering far reaching views to the north. All would have an expectation of scenic beauty, which gives these views some, but not the highest, value and susceptibility to the type of change as the views are within the settlement. Therefore we assign these views an overall medium sensitivity.

Figure 25 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoints 16-17

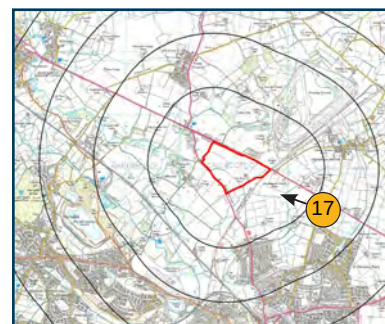


Viewpoint 16:
Looking east from approximately 4km of the site's western boundary. The view is dominated by intervening vegetation within the Hartshill Country Park. This view is identified local viewpoint on the Ordnance Survey map.

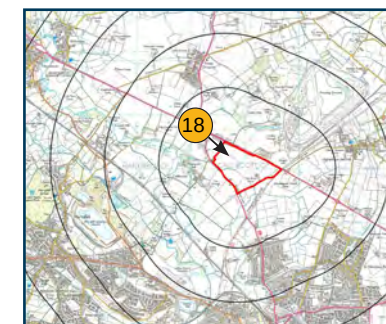
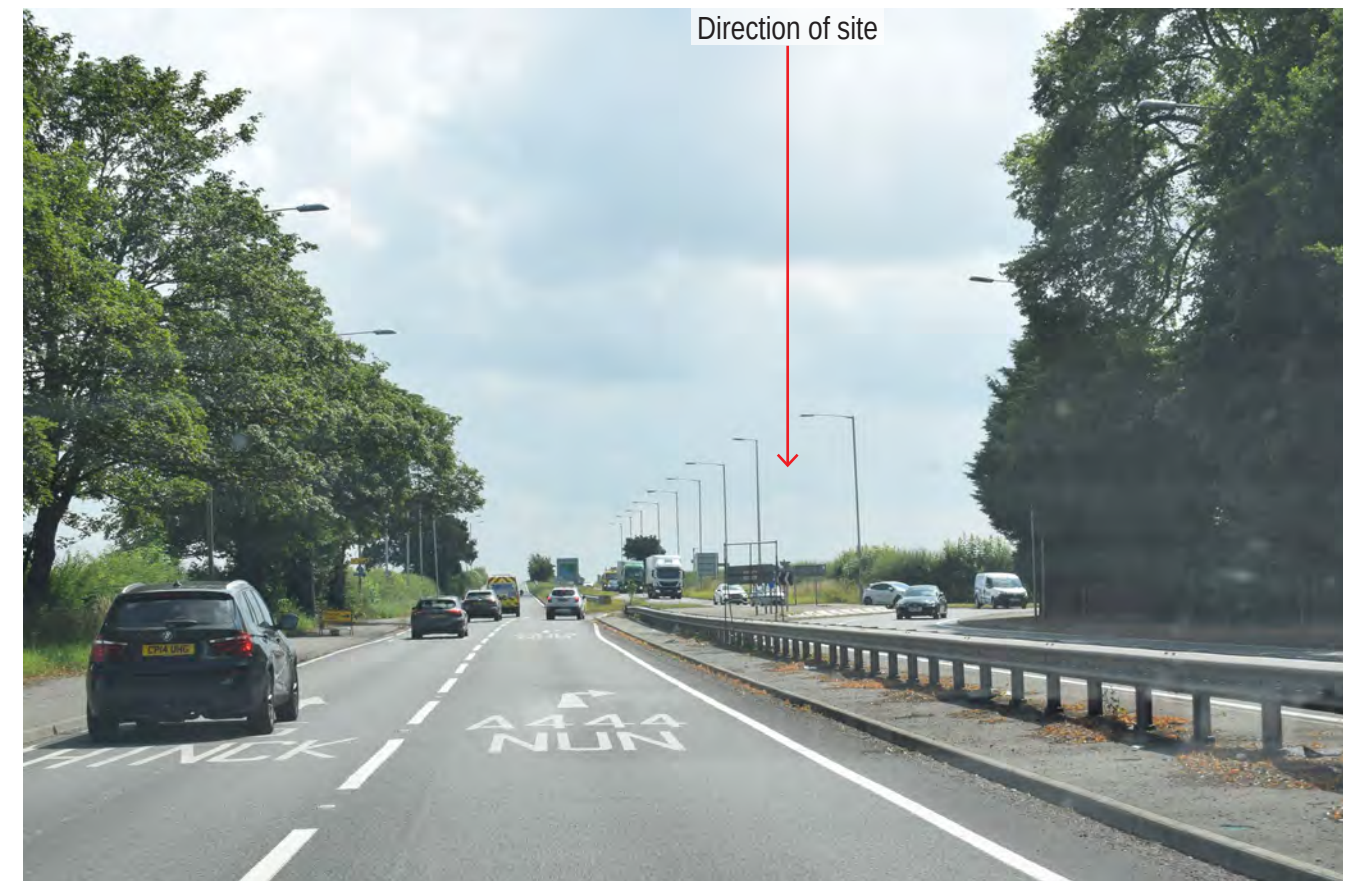
4.16. View from Hartshill Country Park (viewpoints 16)

- 4.16.1. This viewpoint represents the far reaching views from the Hartshill Country Park, to the west of the site. View receptors would be walkers and cyclists using the park with their attention focussed on their surroundings with an expectation of scenic beauty within the Park. This gives this view a high value and susceptibility to change, we therefore assign the view a high sensitivity.

Figure 26 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoints 17-18



Viewpoint 17:
Looking west from the Higham Lane approximately 1.2km from the site's eastern boundary. The view is dominated by the intervening arable field. Higher ground is visible to the south-west with expansive views across the valley.
The site is not visible from this view.

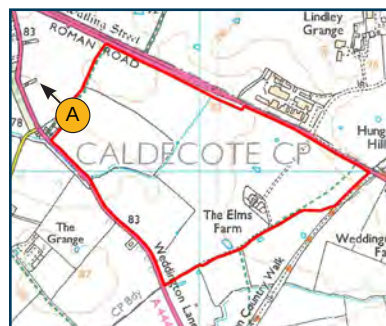


Viewpoint 18:
Looking east from the A5, close to the junction with A444. This view is predominantly focused on the road ahead and vehicles on both sides of the road. There are significant, mature trees lining the road, in the foreground but these do not continue to the site.
The site is not visible from this view.

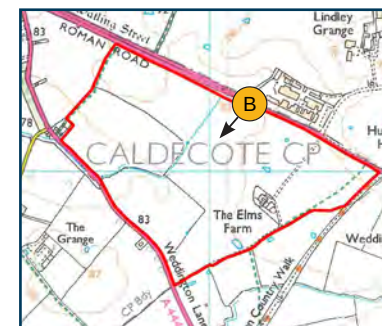
4.17. View from A5 and Higham Lane (viewpoints 17-18)

4.17.1. These views represent the views from local roads close to the site. View receptors would be drivers on the road who would be travelling at speed with their attention on the road ahead. It is unlikely for walkers and cyclists to use these roads due to the speed and nature of the roads. It is anticipated that the receptors would have a low value and susceptibility to change therefore we assign these views as overall low sensitivity.

Figure 27 - Views from within the site



Viewpoint A:
Looking west from within the site towards residential properties on A444.



Viewpoint B:
Looking south from within the site towards residential properties on the A444 and the elevated ground to the south.

4.18. Views from private dwellings

- 4.18.1. There is a possibility of limited views from a small number of private properties in the immediate site area which cannot be checked as part of this study. These private views have been estimated by assessing the visibility from the lane adjacent to the site. Most private views of the site are somewhat filtered by existing vegetation, or already contain buildings within the view. Overall these view are considered to have a high sensitivity.

Figure 28 - Opportunities and constraints



5. Summary of key design drivers, constraints and opportunities

5.1. The key sensitivities, constraints and opportunities are summarised below and illustrated in Figure 27.

- Inter-visibility from the Caldecote should be carefully considered to ensure potential effects on the heritage assets are mitigated.
- Long distance views from sensitive receptor using Hartshill Country Park should be considered and mitigation should be included where possible.
- Existing drainage ditches and hedges should be retained and protected where possible.
- Any development should consider the impact on the users of the A5 and the effects of the traffic noise on the potential users of the site.
- Weddington Country Walk is a well used and therefore highly sensitive landscape and visual receptor. Careful steps should be taken to avoid any potential negative effects on the users.
- Any development on the site should consider a large landscape buffer to the south of the site which could include ponds for ecological benefit, utilising the lowest part of the site.
- Where possible, any development on the site should work with the existing landform and any spoil from excavation is utilised on the site in the form of bunds.

6. References

- National Character Assessment (NCA, 2014)
- National Design Guide, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2019)
- National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
- The Landscape Institute and IEMA 'Guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessment' 3rd Edition (2013)
- The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage: 'Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland' (2002)
- Natural England: 'Agricultural Land Classification mapping' (2010)
- MAGIC website
- North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment (2010)

Appendix 1: LVE Methodology

1. Scope and methodology of study

1.1. Scoping of the study

The geographical scope of the landscape baseline included the site itself and parts of the area immediately surrounding the site likely to be impacted by the proposals.

The landscape character of the wider area, as described by landscape character assessments carried out at regional level has been reviewed and used as context. A detailed character assessment of the site and its immediate setting has been carried out as part of this study.

The geographical scope of the visual study was established through the creation of a computer-generated zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) which ruled out some areas where landform would block views. The remaining areas of potential visibility were then checked in the field by visiting publicly accessible areas and photographs were taken to record views towards the site.

1.2. Methodology Guidance

This study has been undertaken in a systematic fashion based on the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' 3rd Edition (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and The Landscape Institute, 2013), referred to in this report as GLVIA3 and Natural England's An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014).

1.3. Desktop research

The desktop survey included the review of OS maps, aerial photography, landscape character assessment documents and related planning policy, as well as the applicant's development brief and reports by other consultants on the team.

1.4. Method statements

The photographic survey was undertaken in summer, meaning that vegetation was with leaf cover, therefore not able to demonstrate 'worst-case' visibility in winter. Where seasonal changes in screening are relevant this has been noted in the photograph descriptions.

The ZTV was created in ArcMap by importing a georeferenced Ordnance Survey (OS) map base and bare-earth digital terrain model (DTM). The DTM shows only landform and does not account for structures or vegetation which rise above ground level and potentially screen views. Points were added to represent heights of proposed built form in a number of locations across the site. Running a viewshed analysis then showed areas from which a 1.65m height viewer could potentially see proposed built form with no structures or vegetation blocking views. Areas with potential views of the proposed development were visited (where publicly accessible) and photographs taken to record the nature of views. Any areas from which there was no visibility were ruled out of the fieldwork.

It should be noted that the establishment of a ZTV is a potentially misleading exercise, showing an indiscriminate level of visibility using a 'bare earth' scenario, without consideration for vegetation and built form that may often prevent views, and takes no account of the extent of accessible viewpoints. It is a desktop exercise, a tool to inform the scope of fieldwork that has then to be tested in the field to check the reality of the situation. An LVE and LVIA should be proportional to the nature of the proposals to which it relates and there may be no need to carry out a ZTV exercise. This should be judged on a project by project basis, in consultation with the Local Planning Authority if necessary, when agreeing the scope of the study.

2. Evaluation criteria for Landscape Sensitivity

2.1. Reporting on the landscape baseline

The landscape baseline is established through careful fieldwork and review of published Landscape Character Assessments. Landscape Character Assessments at national, regional, district and local levels are critically reviewed to establish the most relevant in terms of scale, level of detail, methodology, age. A brief explanation of this approach is given:

- Map, describe and illustrate the character of the landscape by appropriate means;
- Identify landscape based designations and others (conservation, heritage etc.) that may be impacted by the development;

- Identify and describe the individual elements and aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape that contribute to the character;
- Indicate the condition of the landscape;
- Establish the relative value of the landscape as attached to it by society.

2.2. Landscape receptors

The landscape receptors need to be identified; these are components of the landscape such as individual elements or features, qualities or landscape character that are likely to be affected by the scheme.

2.3. Sensitivity of landscape receptor

The sensitivity of the landscape or feature of the landscape as a receptor needs to be established. This is determined by combining judgements on value with those on susceptibility to type of change or type of development proposed.

2.3.1. Determining value of landscape receptor

Value can be understood through relevant landscape designations, the use of available landscape character assessments (as a starting point) and information on status of features (such as conservation areas and tree preservation orders). The basis for judgements should be linked back to evidence from the baseline study.

A range of other factors can also help in the identification of value:

- Landscape quality (condition) of physical state: includes extent to which typical character is represented, intactness and condition of individual elements
- Function as an ecosystem service
- Scenic quality: level of appeal primarily to the senses (not wholly visual)
- Rarity: presence of individual elements or features, or rare Landscape Character Type
- Representativeness: where a particular character, or element / feature is considered particularly important example
- Conservation interests: where features of interest add value to landscapes such as wildlife, archaeological, or historical / cultural interest. These can have value in their own right.
- Society: the relative value attached to the landscape by society, either formally or informally.
- Perception: recognition of perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty or tranquillity
- Associations: connections to art, literature or events that contribute to perception of value and material available on local or community interests.

Judgements on value should be determined on a scale of high, medium or low:

HIGH ↑ ↓ LOW	High value, with acknowledged or perceived positive character and quality, multi-functional ecosystem services provision
	Medium value, with acknowledged or perceived positive character and quality that may have been reduced through alteration or degradation of character or features, some provision of ecosystem services.
	Low value, without acknowledged or perceived positive character and quality, little or no provision of ecosystem services.

2.3.2. Determining the landscape receptor's susceptibility to type of change

Susceptibility to change is the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the type of change or type of proposed development without undue consequence for the maintaining of the baseline situation, or the achievement of landscape planning policy or strategies. The basis for judgements should be linked back to evidence from the baseline study.

Judgements on susceptibility to change should be determined on a scale of high, medium or low:

HIGH susceptibility to change ↑ ↓ LOW susceptibility to change	Not able to accommodate proposed type of change or type of development without detrimental consequences to the baseline situation or landscape planning policies and strategies.
	Medium susceptibility to change; may be able to accommodate proposed type of change or type of development without detrimental consequences to the baseline situation or landscape planning policies and strategies.
	Low susceptibility to change; able to accommodate proposed type of change or type of development without undue consequences to the baseline situation or landscape planning policies and strategies.

2.3.3. Level of sensitivity of landscape receptor

By combining judgements on value with those on susceptibility to type of change or type of development proposed, the level of sensitivity of a landscape receptor should be defined as high, medium or low.

Where judgements on value and susceptibility to change differ (e.g. value may be high, with a medium susceptibility to change) professional judgement will be used to determine the overall sensitivity.

3. Evaluation criteria for visual sensitivity

3.1. Reporting on the visual baseline

- The visual baseline report should:
- Identify the area in which the development may be visible;
- Identify the different groups of people who may experience views of the development;
- Identify representative viewpoints where views will be affected and the nature of those views, including where these are within the site area;
- Identify any recognized viewpoints (known viewpoints in the landscape);
- Identify any views characteristic of the landscape character area;
- Identify any illustrative viewpoints (that might identify a particular effect or issue).

3.2. Photographs

Photographs were taken using a Nikon D5300 digital SLR camera at a 35mm focal length using a 18-55mm variable zoom lens set at a focal length of 35mm, which is accepted as being equivalent to a fixed 50mm lens on a non-digital SLR, which is in turn generally accepted to most closely represent views seen with the naked eye. It has been noted against photographs where a wide-angle focal length setting was used in order to show close up foreground views, or where a zoom setting was used to show more detail in a distant view.

3.3. Visual receptors

The visual receptors need to be identified; these are the people within the area who will be affected by the changes in views and visual amenity.

3.4. Sensitivity of the visual receptor

The sensitivity of the visual receptor needs to be established. This is determined by combining judgements on value of a particular view with those on susceptibility to type of change or type of development proposed.

3.4.1. Determining value of the view

This is a judgement of value attached to the particular view, through planning designations, recognition of historic, tourism or cultural value, or through community or perceived value. The basis for judgements should be linked back to evidence from the baseline study.

Judgements on value should be determined on a scale of high, medium or low:

HIGH ↑ ↓ LOW	High value within a high quality landscape, or a recognized viewpoint (at any level from local to national).
	Medium value within a medium quality landscape.
	Low value within a low quality landscape.

3.4.2. Determining the visual receptor’s susceptibility to type of change

Judgements are dependent on the occupation or activity of people experiencing the views and the extent their attention or interest is likely to be focused on the on views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.

Judgements on susceptibility to change should be determined on a scale of high, medium or low:

HIGH ↑ ↓ LOW	Visual receptors particularly susceptible to change in general due to a high level of interest in the surrounding landscape. Receptors most susceptible to change are likely to include residents at home, people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape, visitors to heritage assets where the landscape contributes to the experience and communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area.
	Visual receptors with a medium susceptibility to change in general due to a medium level of interest in the surrounding landscape. Travellers on road, rail and transport routes are likely to fall into a category of medium susceptibility to change, however where travel involved scenic routes this is likely to increase as awareness of views is heightened.
	Visual receptors with a low susceptibility to change in general due to a low level of interest in the surrounding landscape. Receptors least susceptible include people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation that does not involve or depend appreciation of views and people at their place of work where attention is not focused on their surroundings

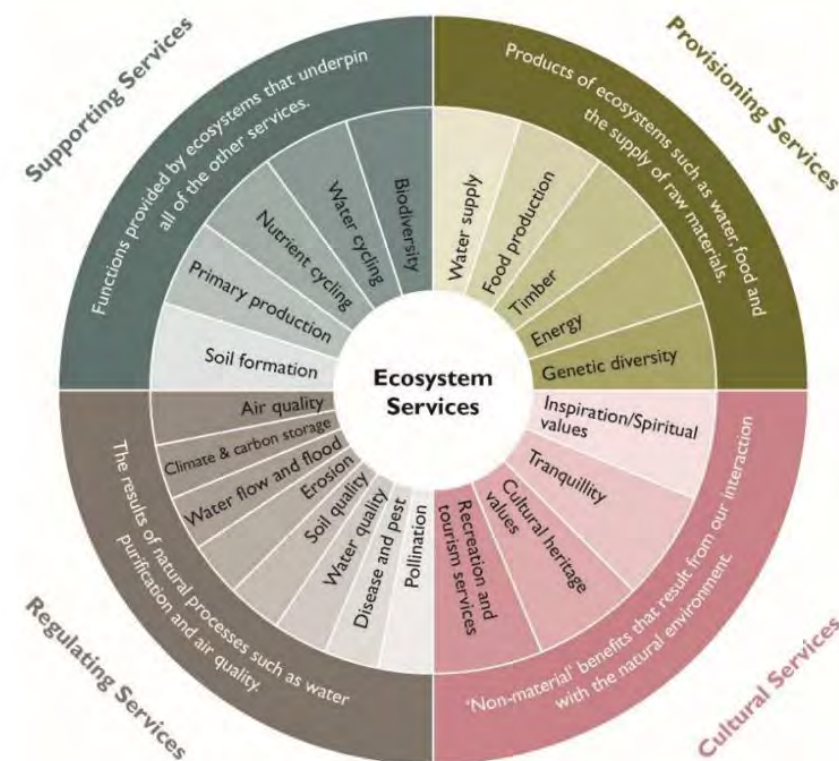
3.4.3. Level of sensitivity of the visual receptor

By combining judgements on value of view with those on susceptibility to type of change or type of development proposed, the level of sensitivity of a visual receptor should be defined as high, medium or low.

Where judgements on value and susceptibility to change differ (e.g. value may be high, with a medium susceptibility to change) professional judgement will be used to determine the overall sensitivity.

4. Glossary of key terms

- **Ecosystem services:** Ecosystem services are products and processes of the environment that lead to benefits for people. The UK National Ecosystem Assessment – a major study of the value of the environment to people – defined ecosystem services as: ‘The benefits people obtain from ecosystems. These include provisioning services such as food and water; regulating services such as flood and disease control; cultural services such as spiritual, recreational, and cultural benefits; and supporting services such as nutrient cycling that maintain the conditions for life on Earth.’ Ecosystem services are the result of the interaction of human and natural systems, including the way that environments are designed and managed (see image below, courtesy of South Downs National Park Authority).
- **Landscape character:** A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.
- **Landscape character area:** Geographically identifiable areas of landscape that have their own individual sense of place.
- **Landscape character type:** Landscapes sharing broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historical land use and settlement pattern, which may have been found in different parts of the country.
- **Time depth:** The visible evidence in the landscape for change and continuity over periods.
- **Tranquillity:** A sense of a lack of disturbance from either visual or noise intrusion.



Ecosystem Services wheel, courtesy of South Downs National Park Authority

Appendix 2: Landscape Baseline Table

	Regional North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment (2010) Character Area 3: Anker Valley	NCA Additional characteristics from: NCA 72 Mease/Sence Lowlands	Terra firma observations (most detailed characteristics)
Geology / topography / soils	Valley landform and strongly undulating to the north. Wide open views across the valley from the upper slopes.		The site slopes dramatically from the north, bordering the A5, to the south, bordering the A444. There are areas of flat land that has signs of flooding, possibly due to poor soil drainage in the area. The site soils are likely to contain a high clay content.
Hydrology	The River Anker passes through the character area but is not overtly obvious and is only evident from bridges crossing it as it weaves through the valley floor. There are areas of river flood meadow near Caldecote and Polesworth, some of which is designated as SSSI. Management objective: <i>Encourage natural regeneration of trees and vegetation alongside watercourses and promote small areas of wetland planting in areas currently lacking in habitats.</i>		The site contains a number of drainage ditches which link together and appear to connect to a stream at the southern edge of the site. The site also contains two ponds which at the time of visiting, contained a small amount of water.
Land use	It is identified as predominantly an intensive arable farmland with occasional pastoral land around settlements. Occasional parkland is found in the area including Caldecote Hall. There is a busy transport corridor along the A5 and its associated urban land uses.		Land use across the site contained entirely arable farming with a variation of crops. The Horiba MIRA site is evident on site which contains a number of different land uses, some of which are completely unique.
Vegetation and biodiversity	This area contains few areas of woodland and pockets of riparian scrub with regenerating woodland within the former quarries. Large arable fields are bounded by hedgerows with tree cover predominantly limited to oak with small pockets of substantial tree cover. This character area contains areas of birch and scrub wetland. Management objectives: <i>Encourage natural regeneration of trees and vegetation alongside watercourses and promote small areas of wetland planting in areas currently lacking in habitats;.</i> <i>Encourage ecological management of grassland areas and wetlands.</i> <i>Conserve the historic field pattern, with priority given to restoring and strengthening primary hedge lines including those alongside roads.</i> <i>Manage hedgerows to enhance the field pattern by planting up gaps, allow hedges to grow by reducing cut rotation intervals to 3 yearly intervals for wildlife benefits.</i>		The site's internal areas contained very little vegetation due to the crop cover but has a connected network of established hedgerows. These contain a mixture of species, predominantly hawthorn, blackthorn and field maple and have little to no hedgerow trees. The western boundary contains a large number of mature trees with a significant amount of large oaks. The northern boundary (along the A5) contains relatively new native planting with a mix of species.

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Settlement and road pattern	This character area's boundary is defined to the north by the A5 Watling Street with Atherstone located centrally to the area. This character area is under development pressure from the fringe settlements including from north of Nuneaton. There is a network of busy lanes that connect peripheral settlements to Nuneaton and the larger roads in the area.		There is little to no settlement close to the site but there is significant housing developments to the north of Nuneaton and Weddington. This new development abuts the Weddington Walk, to the east, but does not connect to the site. The north of the site is bounded by the A5 Watling Street and the A444 to the south.
Access and recreation	Management objective: <i>Encourage only informal recreational activities appropriate to nature conservation within the valley</i>		The Weddington Country Walk runs along part of the eastern boundary, which is a long distance cycle route connecting north Nuneaton to the A5. The site also contains two Public Right of Way which both run diagonally across the site but do not appear connected or well maintained.
Heritage	Relatively tranquil parkland landscape character around Caldecote Park. Agricultural intensification has resulted in the loss of field hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Management objective: <i>Conserve and restore areas of existing Parkland at Grendon Park and Caldecote Hall.</i> <i>Conserve the historic field pattern, with priority given to restoring and strengthening primary hedge lines including those alongside roads.</i>		A5 Watling Street is an ancient Roman road but there is little to no evidence of this today but there is potential for archaeological finds. The Weddington Country Walk contains a bench with the inscription 'IN LOVING MEMORY OF BOUDICA, QUEEN OF THE ICENI, WHO DIED NEAR WATLING STREET'. The western boundary of the site lies close (approx.500m) to Caldecote Hall, a Victorian Manor house that sits within a parkland landscape. The estate contains the church of Theobald and Saint Chad which is a grade II* listed building.
Perceptual qualities	The character area is predominantly agricultural and as such is considered relatively tranquil with some urbanising influence from busy transport corridors and busy connecting lanes between peripheral settlements. It is a visually open and broad landscape with views reaching across the valley. Management objective: <i>Conserve and restore the rural character of the agricultural landscape</i>		The north of the site is negatively affected by the road and traffic noise of the A5 which is a national speed limit road. Further to the south, the aural intrusion from traffic is lessened due to the lower ground level. There are far reaching views to the south, where the valley sharply rises and extraction works are visible. To the north, views of the Horiba MIRA site are prevalent with long facades along the A5.
Cultural connections / memories			Weddington Country Walk connects Nuneaton town centre to the wider countryside and PRoW network and is therefore highly valued by local residents. The Country Walk runs along an historic train line route and previously connected Nuneaton to Market Bosworth.
Condition	Large scale development around Atherstone negatively influences the character area. The LCA states that the rural character should be conserved and restored.		The site is relatively representative of the wider landscape with large arable fields lined by mixed native hedges but it suffers from the negative influences identified in the LCA (the A5 transport corridor).