

Options for Future Urban Expansion in Warwick District Considerations for Sustainable Landscape Planning 2014 Addendum

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Prepared for
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Appendix A – Analysis of three proposed development allocation areas.

Land at Campion Hills Recreation Area, Royal Leamington Spa
Land NE of the Red House Farm Allocation (Lillington Expansion Area).
Land at Castle Sixth Form College, Kenilworth

Appendix B – Assessment of two Green Belt planning representations.

Land off Warwick Road, south east of Kenilworth.
Land at Red House Farm, Lillington, (Proposed southern extension to the existing land allocation).

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**Options for Future Urban Expansion in Warwick District
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1.0 Introduction/Background.

- 1.1 Warwick District Council (WDC) have previously appointed Richard Morrish Associates (RMA) to provide preliminary landscape planning advice relating to potential development allocation sites within Warwick District. In 2012 RMA produced the *Considerations for Sustainable Landscape Planning* report which provided advice on several defined land parcels around Warwick and Leamington, should they come forward in future planning allocations. The report also considered the potential cumulative landscape impacts for a range of development being promoted in the locality at that time.
- 1.2 In February 2014 WDC appointed RMA to review three more sites that the Council have considered might be appropriate for residential development allocation. These are:
- Land at Campion Hills Recreation Area, Lillington, Leamington Spa.
 - Land NE of the Red House Farm land allocation, Lillington, Leamington Spa.
 - Land at Castle Sixth Form College, Kenilworth.
- 1.3 The method of assessment for these three sites has followed the methodology set out in the 2012 report – identifying some landscape planning principles based on existing character, views, landscape condition, settlement pattern, access, planning goals and other criteria. Fieldwork for the new studies was undertaken in late February 2014. Notes and analysis relating to the three sites is included in this report as *Appendix A*.
- 1.4 WDC have also received two additional representations proposing development on land within the West Midlands Green Belt. Development at these locations had previously been discounted. The two representation sites have therefore also reviewed in this study and are included as *Appendix B*. The sites are:
- Land off Warwick Road, south east of Kenilworth.
 - Land at Red House Farm, Lillington, (a proposed extension to the existing land allocation).
- 1.5 Limitations / Disclaimers. The process of impact assessment for each of the study sites has required a broad brush approach with assumptions about the final form and density of development that might be proposed at each site. Little analysis has been possible regarding indirect construction requirements – which might include new roads, drainage, energy services or community facilities – and might result in significant off-site impacts. Such matters should influence a final evaluation of sustainability of development at each site. Eventual requirements for infrastructure provision might greatly influence landscape and visual impact considerations in the final analysis.
- 1.6 Although the study tries to summarise known site assets, there has been no detailed appraisal of ecological and heritage values at each site. Further evaluation of landscape and visual impacts will also be necessary as part of an iterative planning process for detailed development proposals. In addition, no detailed topographical survey data has been utilised at this stage, so that details regarding site conditions, site access, drainage etc will also require further analysis.
- 1.7 The study has not included any consultation with local residents who may have relevant local knowledge and opinion that could and should influence development outcomes.

- 1.8 This '2014 Addendum' should ideally be read in conjunction with the 2012 study – especially in regard to the general opportunities and constraints for sustainable landscape planning. That were set out in that report

2.0 Summary of site assessments and conclusions for the three proposed allocation sites.

2.1 Land at Campion Hills Recreation Ground, Lillington, Leamington Spa.

This generally flat, green field site forms a small and underutilised part of the Campion Hills public open space. It is generally well enclosed by mature woodland from residential neighbours to the north and north-west and from the Newbold Comyn Park to the south east. It will be situated on high ground south of the Lillington residential estate and development here is anticipated to be partially visible from parts of Leamington, Whitnash and Heathcote. The development would have moderate to substantial landscape and visual impacts to users of the existing open space – although these users will be transient and the zone of influence would be relatively small. However, it is considered that a small residential development could be successfully integrated into the landscape and that with an appropriately sensitive approach to design, landscape and visual impacts could be minimised.

- Adjacent woodland and trees should be retained for the benefit of new residents and park users. New management plans should be prepared to ensure ongoing sustainable maintenance and enhancement of this resource.
- Development design must ensure retention of safe, attractive routes into and through the public open space. Style, mass and height must be sensitive to the setting. In general it is recommended that building units do not exceed 2 storeys – but 3 storey buildings might be considered in the north-east corner of the site.
- It is recommended that special consideration is given to boundary design so that the parkland setting is not degraded by unattractive or dysfunctional residential boundaries and so that the security and privacy of future residents is safeguarded.

2.2 Land NE of the Red House Farm Allocation, Lillington, Leamington Spa

This site will constitute a small but significant extension beyond the present settlement footprint at the east end of Lillington. It will be potentially notable in views from parts of Cubbington and from scattered dwellings along *Welsh Road* and also footpaths to the east. However the previous JGBS study (2008) concluded that the abrupt transition from the existing tall flats to open countryside at Lillington might be mitigated by well-considered settlement expansion in this locality. This mainly flat site is at a similar level to the existing settlement and the allocated Red House Farm site to the south. There would be potential to integrate all three areas (ie the existing estate and the two extension areas) to maximise development potential whilst also ensuring provision of appropriate and sustainable new 'multi-functional' green space. This could help to create a high quality living environment and an enhanced urban-rural interface.

- Land at the northern edge of this site is steep and will ideally be safeguarded for the 'multi-functional' green space.
- Substantial new planting is required to define the eastern boundary and to mitigate likely visual impacts.
- Design should ensure a gradation of building height – where a maximum of 2 storey housing is envisaged adjacent the boundaries with open countryside.
- The best trees and boundary vegetation may be retained and incorporated into design pending detailed survey. Where planting will be lost it must be adequately compensated.

2.3 Land at Castle Sixth Form College, Kenilworth

The site has previously been regarded as part of the established settlement at Kenilworth and, although much of the site is playing field, a change of use to residential development is not considered likely to greatly intrude on the character or function of the adjacent Green Belt. There are a number of trees and some sections of boundary hedge which should be considered for retention, but development at the site is otherwise unlikely to result in significant landscape

impacts. With appropriate consideration of layout, building height and use of open space and new landscape elements visual impacts to near neighbours could be minimised. Appropriate tree protection methods will be required during construction – but to sustain the larger trees in perpetuity it may be best to retain them within ‘public’ space. A ‘multi-functional’ open space is suggested adjacent the southern boundary. This would allow all residents to benefit from the southern aspect and views; allow space for tree planting that will soften the urban-rural interface; allow space for surface water attenuation if required; and, provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

3.0 Summary of site assessments and conclusions for the two representation sites.

3.1 Land off Warwick Road, Kenilworth.

Development as outlined in the Richborough Estates representation for land off Warwick Road would constitute a notable extension to the existing settlement footprint at Kenilworth and would significantly reduce the section of open countryside between Kenilworth and Leek Wootton. It would run contrary to other purposes of Green Belt in that it would encroach into countryside, would impact on the setting of Kenilworth and will not assist urban regeneration (although a small area of land adjacent Kenilworth Cricket Club appears to be unused paddock at present). There would be potential impacts on existing land-use in that close residential development may undermine the sustainability of the Cricket Club.

3.2 Concept plans supporting the residential development appear to propose appropriate green infrastructure and in time there would be the potential to enclose the new housing from the south. Vegetation along the Leamington/Kenilworth rail line and Bullimore Wood substantially enclose the site from the east. Existing vegetation along Warwick Road may be possible to partly retain and the proposed road access point appears to be practicable. Further detailed survey and review would be required – but in essence, if it was accepted that a significant portion of the functional Green Belt between Kenilworth and Leek Wootton was to be sacrificed, then the concept plan submitted would appear to be appropriate pending confirmation of other infrastructure needs.

3.3 The additional Rugby Club development proposed to the south and east of the Richborough Estates housing scheme is also considered likely to have adverse impacts on the character of the Green Belt and the setting of Kenilworth. Although it could be argued that this landuse will retain an ‘open’ landscape, likely requirements such as extensive ground modelling and terracing to achieve flat pitches, flood lighting for winter operations, as well as club buildings, parking and access arrangements will combine to ‘urbanise’ an historic rural landscape. If development of these facilities was accepted here, a range of design conditions are suggested.

3.4 Land at Red House Farm, Lillington. (Proposed extension of existing land allocation).

The representation on behalf of HE Johnson proposes a considerable southern extension to the Red House Farm land allocation at Red House Farm, Lillington. The existing allocation mainly utilises flat paddocks and arable land lying within 200 metres of the established residential settlement. The representation promotes extending the boundary of ‘settlement’ up to 400 metres further south and would create a significant addition to the settlement footprint. In addition the topography in this location slopes steeply to the south, is unlikely to be developable and has been promoted for open space and extensive woodland planting.

3.5 It was previously concluded that the principally flat Red House Farm allocation site would have limited landscape and visual impact impacts and residual impacts that would be relatively straightforward to mitigate. There would be some potential to enhance and rationalise the existing urban/rural interface. Existing field boundaries broadly define the natural break of slope. The southern extension now proposed would introduce development onto the more prominently visible south-facing slopes located south and south-west of the present riding school. Whereas the landscape led planning approach depicted in the concept plans has merit, and in time the proposed woodland could perhaps greatly mitigate views of the development and create an acceptable

urban/rural interface, significant landscape impacts are likely to result from development of this area. Many other aspects of this proposal are apparently not yet assessed – including access requirements and service infrastructure. Other sustainability issues that would need further review include the ‘walkability’ of a significant southern extension (links to existing services) and the viability of remaining agricultural land parcels.

- 3.6 This scheme has also been considered alongside the proposed ‘NE extension to the Red House Farm allocation’. Development at all three sites together would be likely to have significant cumulative impacts on the local setting. It is considered that the NE extension would be less intrusive in the overall landscape setting and that it may offer more potential for sustainable development than the land promoted south of Red House Farm. It is concluded that the proposed southerly extension is the least desirable option for future settlement expansion at Lillington and that WDC should give it low priority in future analysis.

4.0 Overall Conclusions.

The sites reviewed are considered to offer a number of opportunities to create sustainable urban expansion areas, pending further detailed site survey and evaluation of infrastructure requirements. As highlighted in the original *Considerations for Sustainable Landscape Planning* report, for successful sustainable design much will depend on a sensitive approach to development implementation and also a fully considered and planned approach to long-term management of communal areas and landscape features.



Mast in south-east corner of site. Note also the mature trees along south and east boundaries.



Path adjacent allotments on east boundary. This appears to provide access to the mast site.



East path - looking south. Note proximity of mature trees - 7 oak, 2 poplar, 1 beech.



Access gate to east path on Black Lane. Note proximity to veteran oak.



Looking north-east at trees on north boundary - with 7 large poplars, 2 veteran oaks but mainly young ash and blackthorn. Note existing access to Leicester Street, left.



The existing site entrance on Leicester Street is a main pedestrian route and also access to Black Lane. Retention of safe pedestrian access to the public open space should be high priority in any new design.



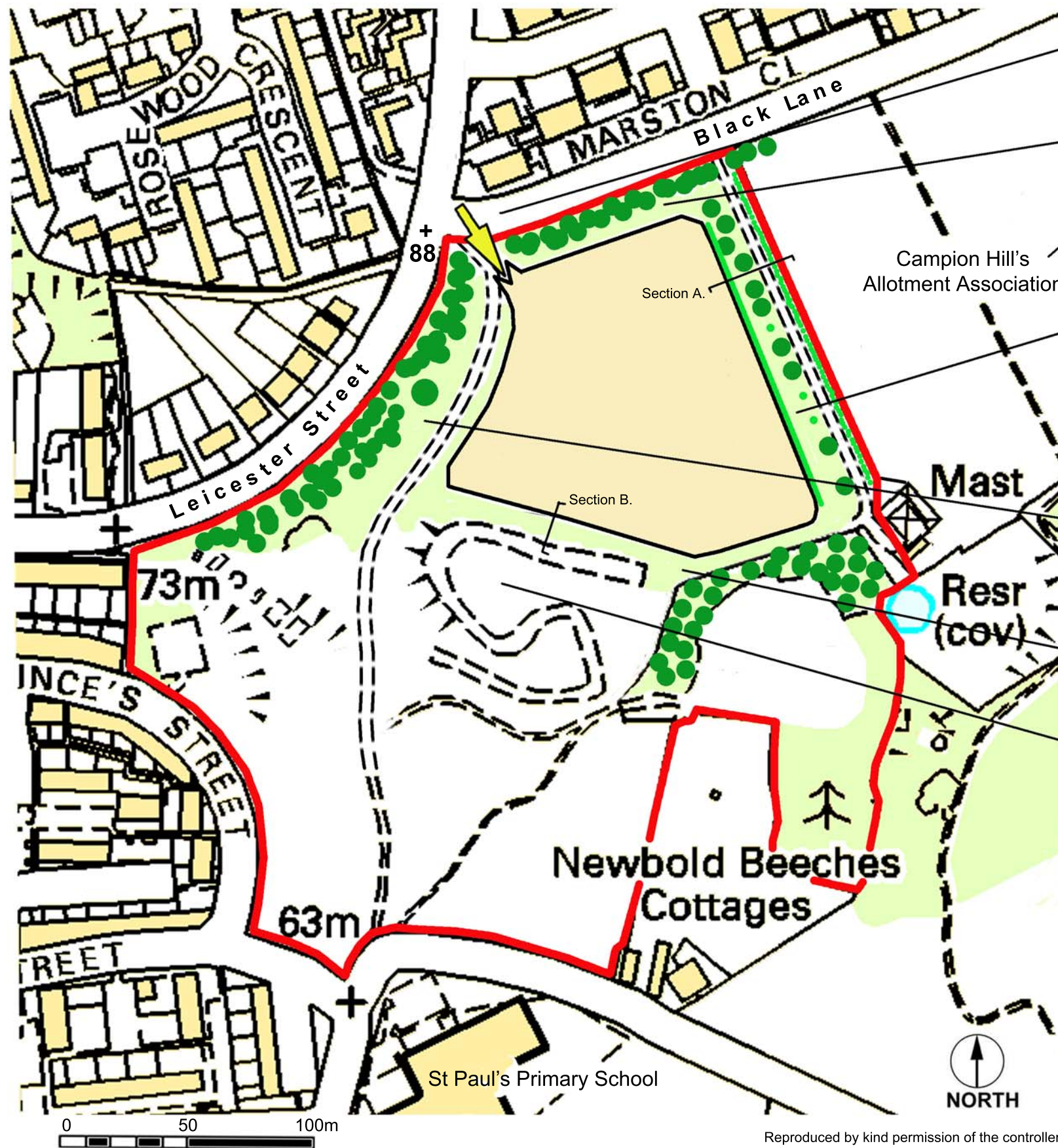
Panoramic view south and south-west from the site - looking over Leamington and towards Whitnash, Heathcote and Warwick. Residential development at the site will clearly be intervisible with the town below, but good design would help to integrate new build with the mainly 'green' setting. The BMX track in foreground is on steep ground and would ideally be retained.



Existing dual-use path on western boundary of the site.



Large veteran oak on western edge of site.



Access to the site would appear to be most suitable from Leicester Street - pending detailed highways review. However it will be essential to retain a safe, preferably segregated, cycle and pedestrian access to the public open space and school to the south.

Retention of the northern shelterbelt would benefit existing and future residents. However new management input is required to ensure a sustainable stand.

The allotments are not especially attractive. A new native boundary hedge would screen and enclose them (refer to sketch section).

A 'green corridor' is recommended on the eastern boundary. This would sustain existing access (including service access to the telecommunication mast) and allow the retention of a number of veteran trees. New tree and shrub planting could ensure sustainable retention of tree cover and landscape character (refer to sketch section).

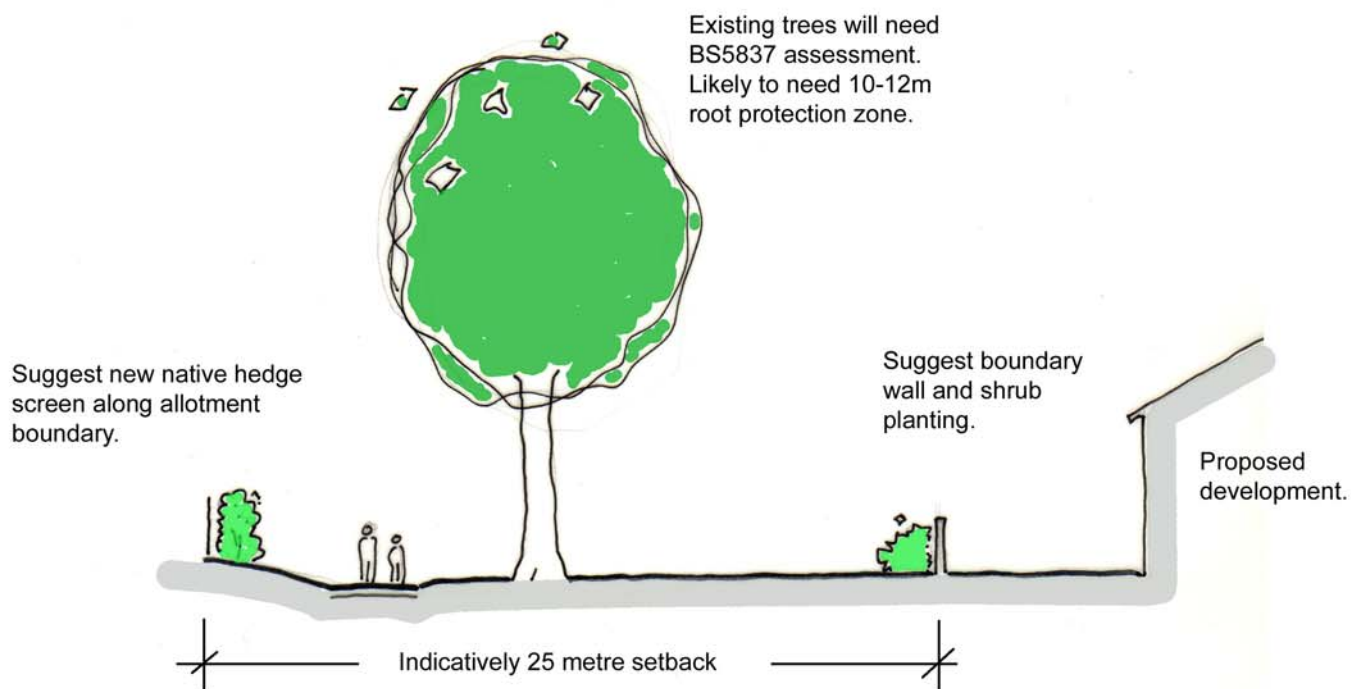
It will be essential to maintain the existing dual-use path access along the western boundary. This is an important route to the public open space and school/residential areas to the south. The adjacent woodland shelterbelt requires management input and a large veteran oak tree should be protected.

A setback is also proposed along the southern boundary to retain public access and space for sustainable management of trees and the BMX facility.

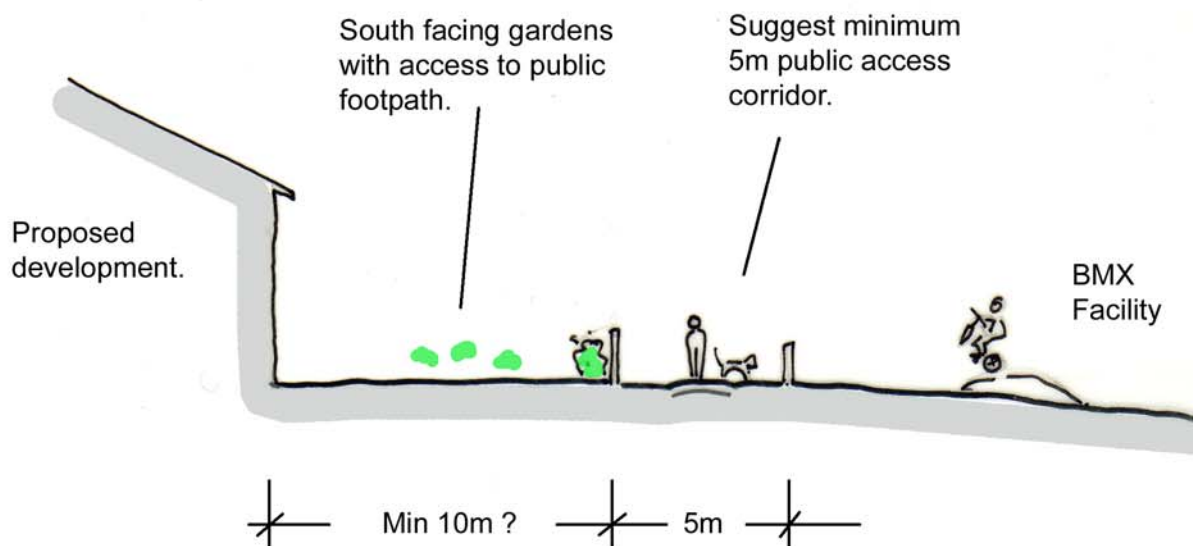
Suggest retain the existing BMX area with appropriate setbacks and access.

Refer to accompanying sections.

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Figure 1.2 Land at Campion Hills
Sketch Plan.



Section A - Suggested approach to design of eastern boundary area.



Section B - Suggested approach to design of southern boundary.



Eden Court and Southorn Court from 'The Crest', looking south.



Looking east from Newland Road towards Ashton Court with Southorn Court in the background. The communal space around buildings in this part of the estate has little function or amenity value. Parked cars tend to dominate the contemporary setting. However there are a few established trees.



External space at Eden Court - appears to have little usage. The site boundary (right) includes medium size trees (Acer, Alder, Birch, Ash).



Looking north-east towards Cubbington from the southwest corner of proposed Lillington expansion area. The estate boundary to left is mainly bramble and has fly-tipped rubbish. The field hedge to right includes Ash trees to 8-10m height.



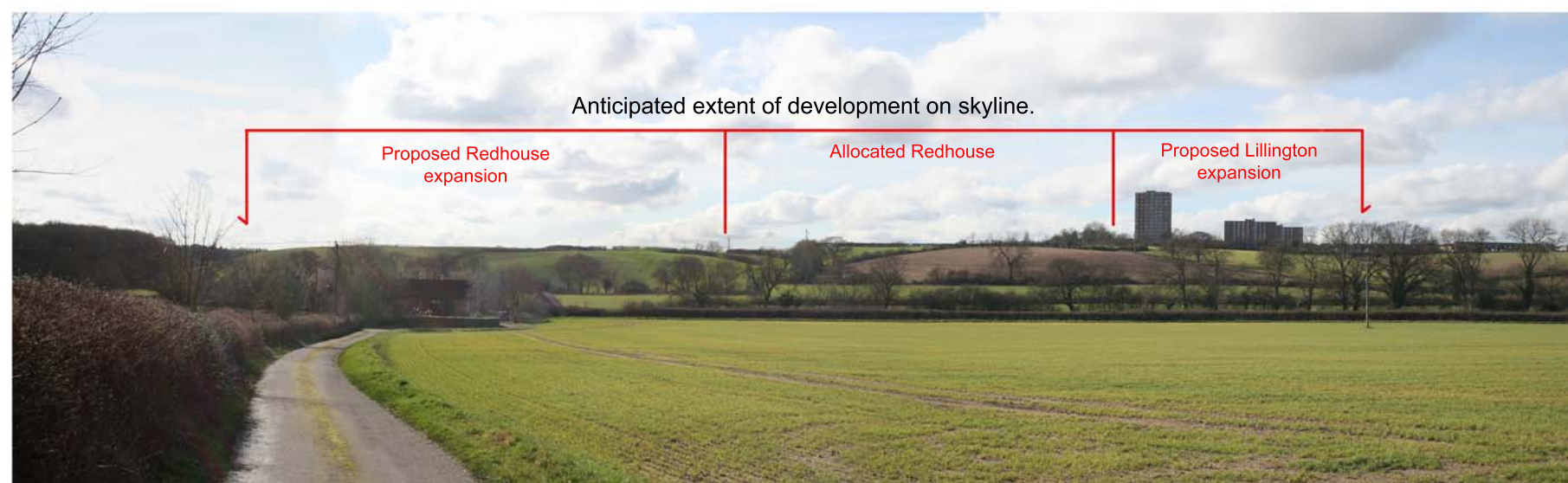
Panoramic view north towards Cubbington from the north-east corner of proposed expansion area. The topography falls away steeply at this edge of the site and may require significant engineering works to develop. The site boundary is defined by a low, mainly hawthorn field hedge. Note housing off Langdale Close and Cumberland Crescent on high ground to left and Thwaites factory in valley to right.



Panoramic view looking south from rear of Cubbington Sports and Social Club and the Primary School - with 'Hill Farm' in the mid ground and Eden Court in the distance. Development in the proposed Lillington expansion area would be distantly visible from here (approximately 1km away).



Panoramic view looking north-west from Welsh Road at the entrance to 'Ford Farm'. Depending on design it is likely that development in the Lillington expansion area and that proposed at Redhouse Farm would both be notable on the skyline in these views.



Panoramic view west from Welsh Road at entrance to Tanner's Farm. A larger proportion of the land proposed for development at Redhouse Farm is anticipated to be visible from this location.



1. Existing entrance from Rouncil Lane. The corridor is around 15m wide including shrub beds.



2. North-west school boundary defined by hedgerow - with single storey buildings beyond.



3. The western school boundary features a variety of shrubs, fences and trees (mostly beyond boundary), and is adjoined by housing and large gardens (Sovereign Close).



4. Looking north-west from school grounds towards dwellings at Sovereign Close. Note mature trees within school grounds.



5. Mature trees along eastern school boundary - with Kenilworth Town FC beyond.



6. Mature copse in north-east corner of playing fields. Some trees are in poor condition.



7. There is a variety of fencing, hedging and small trees along the northern playing field boundary with Rouncil Lane dwellings. These residents will presently have some long views to the south from 1/F windows.



8. View looking south over the playing fields. Note dwellings to left (east) on Towers Close, and school buildings to right.



9. Gypsy Lane - near Towers Close. School site to the left.



10. Gypsy Lane at Rouncil Lane entrance.



11. Looking east on Rouncil Lane near site entrance.

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Figure 3.1 Kenilworth 6th Form College
Photographs i.



View looking south from Kenilworth 6th Form College Playing Fields. Note St John's Allotments to left (east) and dwellings at Sovereign Close to right.



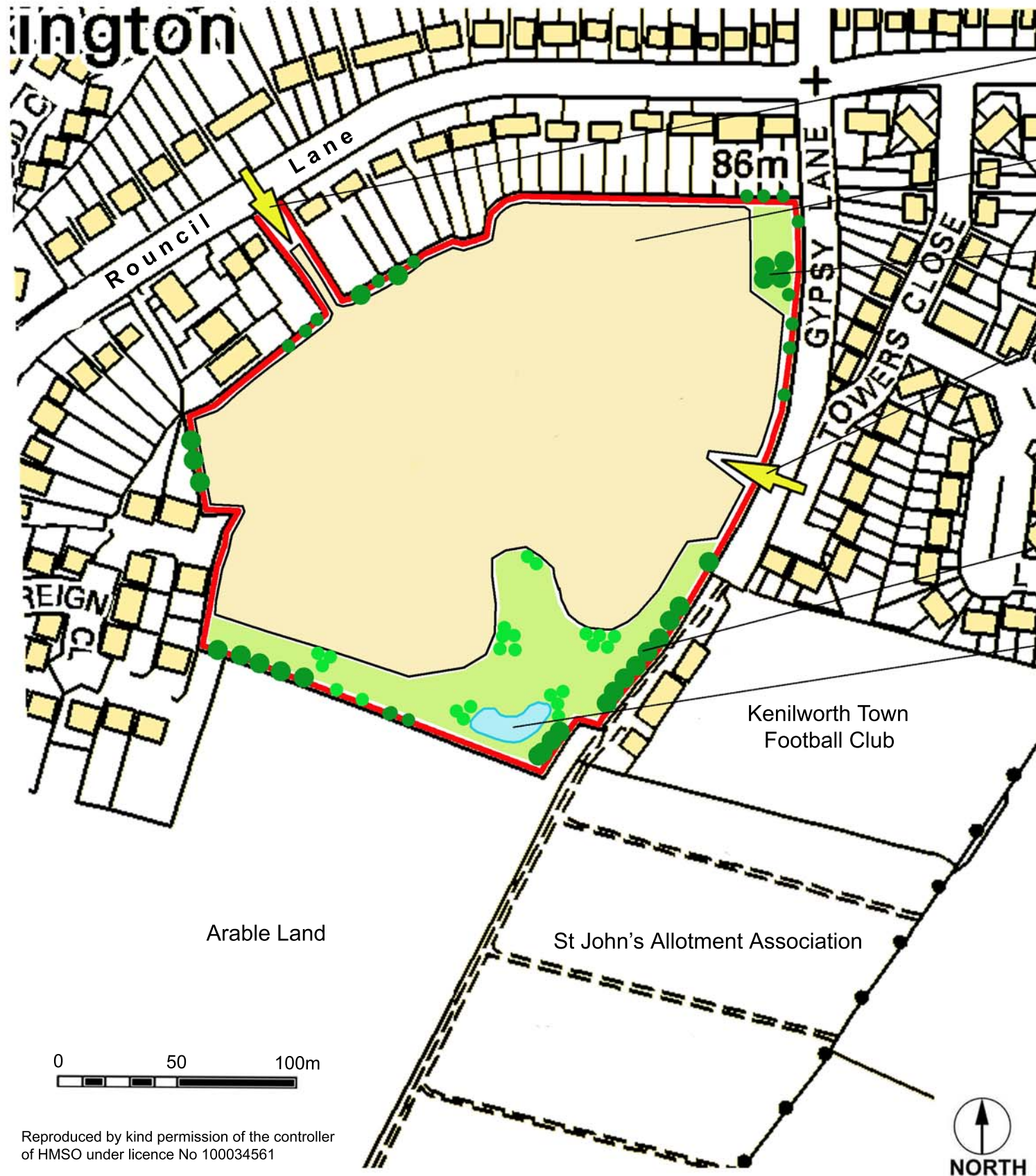
View looking north from the boundary of Leek Wootton 'War Memorial' Recreation Ground. It is anticipated that development at Kenilworth Sixth Form College would be distantly visible, but that appropriate development would not be separable from the existing settlement. In fact it is likely that dwelling houses would be less notable than the existing school buildings. Proposed development at 'Land off Warwick Road' would also be visible from this position.



View looking north from a public footpath that runs between Leek Wootton and Hill Wootton. Proposed development at 'Land off Warwick Road' would be prominent from this position (see red line). Proposed development at the Kenilworth School site might also be distantly visible.

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Figure 3.2 - Kenilworth 6th Form College
Photographs ii.



- Existing school access appears to be wide enough to provide suitable access road for the new development - and retain a separate dual use path and screen planting adjacent the neighbouring property boundaries.
- New development design should setback buildings from existing properties to avoid shading and overlooking existing gardens - and wherever possible preserve southerly views. Protection of neighbours trees and hedges would be required.
- Retention of an existing group of mature trees may be most practicable if incorporated into an open space.
- The Gypsy Lane access would appear to be too narrow for upgrade to an adoptable road width should a second site access be required. The junction with Rouncil Lane could also be problematic. It is more likely that a second access could be provided via Towers Close (see suggested location).
- Retention of existing trees on the eastern boundary would be of benefit to the development and general amenity and may be most practicable within a retained public open space (POS).
- The low south-east corner could be the most appropriate location for any surface water attenuation areas - and these might be integrated into POS for amenity and biodiversity benefits. The plan indicates extending 'green space' a little way into the main development area. This or a similar approach may help to break up the housing layout and introduce spatial variety. POS along the southern boundary would ensure a permanent managed 'green buffer' along the most sensitive edge of settlement fronting the Green Belt.

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Legend:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Study boundary | Water / balancing ponds |
| Existing trees / vegetation | Indicative development |
| New structure planting: woodland / hedges / screen belts | Indicative access |
| Open space / meadows | |

Figure 3.3 - Kenilworth Sixth Form College Site.
Sketch Plan